Good Governance, National Security and Economic Development in Nigeria: A Political Diagnosis of Boko Haram Insurgence

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Abstract

The thrust of the survival of any nation is embedded on its security situation. Insecurity is a threat to development because it produces economic stagnation. However, the situation is not absolutely, if at all so in Nigeria given the insurgency of Boko Haram and its attendant negative consequences on the economy of the country. The work utilized the theory of Good Governance and National Security in analyzing Boko Haram insurgency and the Nigerian economic development. Deriving from the above, it was discovered that there is a close relationship between and among good governance, national security and economic development through the study of Boko Haram insurgency. The study therefore argued that the only thing that can sustain development and curb insurgencies in Nigeria is good governance, as what we are witnessing presently is the resultant implication of contrapuntal maladministration that had hitherto characterized the Nigerian state.

Keywords: Good Governance, National Security, Economic Development, Insurgencies, Boko Haram.

1. Introduction

Good governance is a concept in political discourse that has acquired a considerable emotive force; especially with its derivative positive consequences to national security and economic development. However, the challenges of national security at the vagaries of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria are giving both scholars and policy makers, serious concern. Hence, the work is a deliberate attempt to explicate the linkages between and among good governance, national security and economic development given the socio-political cataclysmic consequences of the emergence of Boko Haram and its overwhelming implication on our corporate national existence. The concept of governance, from early 1990s, attracted considerable interest from international aid donors concerned with political and administrative obstacles to successful economic development in the Third World (The Social Science Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition, 1996:348). Here, governance, by a derivative nomenclatural extension, is taken to mean good governance.

The emergence of Boko Haram has always been attributed to poverty, lack of good governance and the deplorable educational system in Nigeria, especially in the North. Though this has been refuted in many quarters; beyond this assertion, is an unstated agenda which is not even, in any way, connected to enthroning Sharia in the core Northern states of Nigeria. It is equally unfortunate that the insurgents are fighting to uphold what they think they intend to displace. The analysis of the work has revealed the true state of the nation, as regards Boko Haram insurgency and its close relationship to being a product of bad governance, poverty and stark illiteracy of the underlying mission by even the insurgents.

2. Theorizing Good Governance and the National Security

Governance applies to the exercise of power in a variety of institutional context; the object of which is to
direct, control and regulate activities in the interests of people as citizens, voters and workers. For political scientists, governance refers to the process of political management which embraces the normative basis of political authority, the style in which public affairs are conducted, and the management of public resources (The Social Science Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition, 1996:347). Central to the definition of governance are the following:

1. Accountability, which denotes the effectiveness with which the governed can exercise influence over their governors.
2. Legitimacy, which is concerned with the right of the state to exercise power over its citizens, and the extent to which those powers are perceived to be rightly exercised.
3. Transparency, which is founded on the exercise of mechanisms for ensuring public access to decision making.

Where the above factors are strictly observed, we say there is good governance. But where they are subject to violation, we say there is bad governance. Good governance therefore becomes an affirmative observation of accountability, legitimacy and transparency in administrative management at whatever level(s) – private or public.

Nevertheless, some factors have been identified as being responsible for crisis of governance in Africa, or simply put, bad governance. These factors, three of which have been outlined, include:

1. Corruption
2. Self-interest and
3. Loss of political legitimacy owing to weak or undemocratic leadership

These three factors, identified as the bane for the crisis of governance in Africa (Nigeria included), have permeated the leadership fabrics to the level of institutionalization or near-institutionalization thereby making it very difficult for leaders to be extricated from the web of this glued administrative nemesis.

As a corollary, National Security is a cherished value associated with the physical safety of individuals, groups, or nation-states, together with a similar safety of their most cherished values. It denotes freedom from threats, anxiety or danger. Therefore, security in an objective sense can be measured by the absence of threat, anxiety or danger. More importantly, security has a subjective sense, which can be measured by the absence of fear that threat, anxiety or danger will materialize (Nnoli, 2006: 16).

No matter how much safety there is in objective terms, unless there is confidence that such safety exists or will exist, there is no security. Even when no safety exists in objective terms but there is confidence that it exists, then there is likely to be security, at least in the short term. This might be called false security (Nnoli, 2006: 16). Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan (1950) defined security as “high value expectancy” (cited in Nnoli, 2006:16). This definition stresses both the subjective and speculative character of security via the usage of the term ‘expectancy’.

3. Boko Haram Insurgence And Economic Development In Nigeria

The emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has not only paralyzed the already bastardized economy but threatens our corporate national existence. Like other insurgencies in Nigeria, the Boko Haram has been attributed to poverty, which also is a product of bad governance. Nigeria has the wherewithal necessary to command and even become a world power but the contrapuntal maladministration over the years had succeeded at rendering this dream illusory.

Consequently, Boko Haram is reinforcing the economic comatose of the Northern Nigeria and therefore impoverishing the people the more and making life unbearable for both the indigenes and non indigenes who perpetually live in fear thereby re-echoing the insecurity situation and forcing many out of the region. Drawing from the national security theorizing, insecurity subjective exists when there is a threat of attack. Nonetheless, Boko Haram insurgency speaks volume on the economic backwardness of Nigeria while projecting serious cataclysmic consequences in the future should the insurgency even end now. The level of
destruction and distrust prevalent within Nigeria as a result of Boko Haram insurgence has become so devastating that it would take ten or more years’ consistent virile policy(ies) to address as well as redeem the situation.

Recent Green-White Coalition (2013) revelation has it that Boko Haram was a creation of the United States through the CIA agents and American Embassy in Nigeria. According to the revelation:


The report further revealed that the CIA has been running secret training and indoctrination camps along the porous and vulnerable borderlands of Niger, Chad and Cameroun. It maintains that in these camps, youths from poor, deprived and disoriented backgrounds are recruited and trained to serve as insurgents. The agents who supply these youths lure them with the promise of better life and work for Allah and further indoctrinated to believe they are working to install a just Islamic order from the ungodly one that currently holds sway in Nigeria. The American CIA programme officers of this project prudently remain in the background, living the day-to-day running of the camps to supervisors of Middle Eastern origin specially recruited for this purpose. After several months of indoctrination and training on weapons handling, survival tactics, surveillance and evasion techniques, the insurgents are now put on stand-by for the next phase of the operation (http://newsrescue.com/boko-haram-a-cia-covert-operation-americas-destablization-plots-against-nigeria-greenwhite-coalition/ixzz2NVfXxr9L). The next phase of the operation involves the identification and selection of the targets which had already been mapped out by the American Embassy. If buildings are the targets for attack, the weapons and technical equipment to be used are kept in safe houses. The countdown to the attack involves ferrying of the insurgents and quarantined at safe houses for the H (appointed) hour. After the attack, in the ensuing panic, the insurgents make their escape into safe houses to dispose the weapons and disappear and dissolve later into the local population. The technical angle of sending out e-mails and messages of responsibility for the attack to the media in the name of Boko Haram is done through secure telecoms equipment by the American programmers of the operation which can hardly be traced. If the selected target is to be bombed by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), the building is cased for days and the devise inserted when security is lax. The devise is then detonated by an in-built timing mechanism or by a hand held detonator some distance away from where the bomb is placed. If on the other hand the attack is to be carried out by a suicide bomber, the person to carry it out would have been severely drugged with a synthetic crystalline compound called LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide), which is a powerful hallucinogenic drug manufactured by CIA to disorient the person(s). In such a state of mind, the person would have no clue as to what he is programmed to do having been turned into a veritable human robot (http://newsrescue.com/boko-haram-a-cia-covert-operation-americas-destablization-plots-against-nigeria-greenwhite-coalition/ixzz2NVfKfGFTf).

However, within the context of this work, we are not interested at interrogating why America is doing this; rather, why has Nigeria created the opportunity for this to thrive? The problem therefore is, can a graduate with well-paid job be recruited to waste his life all in the name of fighting an ungodly administration or government? That the CIA succeeded or is succeeding to recruit and train jobless youths in the act of terrorism (if at all the revelation is anything to go by), boils down to lack of good governance in Nigeria which had flagrantly refused to take care of those citizens that are vulnerable to being used as human robots. Closely related to the above is the porous nature of our borders without corresponding security surveillance to checkmate the activities going on within and outside the areas. This has made it very possible for the borders to be used as perfect rendezvous for recruiting and training societal deviants in the act of terrorism.

The only problems that cannot be solved by good governance are non-existing ones. By a derivative implication therefore, good governance is a panacea for the insecurity and the economic doldrums characteristic of the Nigerian society. These are the problems Nigeria has continued to suffer right from the
military era. Perhaps, with the return of Nigeria to democratic rule, one should have expected that the situation would improve, but as Adele (2011: 60) noted that:

The transition to civilian rule has created its own challenges for national security and socio-political development, as demonstrated by diverse conflicts, upheavals and anti-state/government agitations especially in the Niger-Delta, South-East and now in the menace of the Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria.

He has more importantly identified that these problems are paradoxical in nature because they impinge on the basic issues of poverty, socio-political grievances, human rights and the ethnic question. However, if the above internet sources are sustained, then, Boko Haram insurgents are unwittingly fighting to enthrone the very thing they hate with passion by covertly perpetuating the interest of the West which they view as common enemy that must be crushed. Accordingly, poverty and socio-political underdevelopment are not conquered through arm-struggle but instead, through coordinated struggle of minds imbued with constructive criticisms and policy initiatives.

Similarly, there is a nexus between strong democratic leadership and good governance which are exemplified in the three components of good governance – accountability, legitimacy and transparency. A strong democratic leadership, beyond being a legitimate and transparent one, is an accountable leadership. It is only accountability that can sustain good governance and where there is a technical maneuver, bad governance reigns supreme. This explains why Nigeria has refused to develop notwithstanding all the potential paraphernalia of development it is imbued with.

As a corollary to the above, beyond the nexus between strong democratic leadership and good governance, there is an intricate linkage between and among good governance, national security and economic development. Consequently, economic development derives from the national security which also derives from good governance. Where good governance is in critical short supply, national security is compromised and economic development is eroded and insurgencies thrive.

The argument would be made more lucid considering the diagrams below vis-à-vis the graphical interpretation.

Diagram A

The central big circle in the diagram represents the state bearing the image of strong democratic leadership. The small circles represent the legion of people looking up to the state for their survival. The black boxes represent the resource-generating sectors of the state. The lines linking the black boxes with the central circle represent the channels through which the state milks the resources. The zigzagged lines represent the nexus through which the state gives back to the legion of people that which was milked from the resource-generating sectors and the big box housing the entire elements represents the territorial society. The more there are the resource-generating sectors, the more the state generates and the more it gives back to the people, and the more security and economic development there are also.
This diagram represents a significant difference from the diagram A with reduction in the number of resource-generating sectors and an emergence of a black circle representing an insurgent group with a fighting arrow targeted at the state. The emergence of this group is not unconnected to the grievance arising from the reduction in the number of resource-generating sectors from other parts of the society; yet, no corresponding preferential treatment from the state. Here, due to the decline in the resource-generating sectors of the state, the political leadership finds it difficult to provide adequately for its citizens but at least, there is provision of the quantity capable of taking care of the legion of peoples' daily need. The people in this society are likely to lend credence to the state in fighting the insurgents from one part. Security is seen as collective responsibility of both the state and the people; hence, the collective fight against the enemy while hopefully looking up to the state to improve the resource-generating sectors of the society for onward adequate provision of better life for them (that is, the people).

In this society, the resource-generating sector has collapsed to a gigantic but less sufficient monolithism and the state actors (the politicians) can rarely give back to the legion of people anxiously looking up to the state for their survival. The grievance arising from the situation has given rise to more insurgent groups fighting to gain more resource allocation and attention which the state may or may no longer have, and because the people receive little or nothing from the state, they are less willing to help the state fight the insurgents. The uprising continues to exacerbate whereas the state also continues to shrink. The insurgents are seen by the people to be fighting for a just course. Here, bad governance has corrosively gained control and the state actors scamper to accumulate the less available resources of the society for their private use in anticipation of their generation yet unborn.
This society has been taken over by anarchy and the state barely finds a room to even exploit the already miniaturized monolithic resource-generating sector let alone giving back to the legion of people. The society has virtually degenerated to the state of nature where life of man, as explained by Thomas Hobbes, was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. Due to the fact that the state has failed woefully in providing for her citizens and that the people must feed, even the legion of people who barely have anything to live on, are no longer safe in spite of their state of impoverishment. The state has withered away but not the type suggested by Karl Marx in his scientific communism but rather the type suggested by the anarchists in their utter condemnation of the state as a regulating instrument of the society.

Nevertheless, a society does not collapse at once. It takes incremental process sustained through contrapuntal maladministration to erode the resource of the state and derivatively create accompanying destruction of what the society lives for, and eventually results to anarchy and disintegration. Never mind that diagram B represents sharp decline in the resource-generating sectors of the state, the situation is often not so. In most cases, it starts with the neglect of one sector especially following vibrant domineering overture of few which propels the state to abandon those considered redundant but without the knowledge of the political actors of their efficacy in sustaining the domineering ones. This is where strong democratic leadership plays crucial role in determining what constitutes good governance. It takes only the strong democratic leaders to understand the implications of a given policy on the economy especially when the economy is still vibrant or relatively so.

3.1 Graphic interpretation of the Diagrams

Graph A

Keys:
A= Good Governance
B= Resource-Generating Sector(s)
C= National Security
D= Economic Development
E= Insurgencies
The graph A suggests that once there is good governance and it is improved upon, the resource-generating sectors of the state will also be increasing and same with national security and economic development, and insurgencies are bound to decline. Graph B suggests that the decline in good governance elicits corresponding decline in the resource-generating sectors of the state and same with national security and economic development, while insurgencies are on the increase.

However, the diagrammatical representations of the gradual corrosion and erosion of good governance exemplified in utter degeneration of the resource-generating sectors of the society and the subsequent grievance arising therefrom suggests that the more resource-generating sectors of the state, the more resources the state has to allocate to the legion of the people, and the less aggrieved the people. By implication, the lesser the insurgencies and the more national security and economic development there are.

The resource-generating sectors of the society, as used in this work, do not suggest those that are in comatose or moribund rather, the ones that are vibrantly functioning.

From the foregoing, one may begin to ask, what is responsible for the corrosion of good governance and the subsequent nemeses following therefrom? This question has already been answered. The work itemized three factors responsible for this as:

1. Corruption
2. Self-interest or selfish interest
3. Loss of political legitimacy owing to weak or undemocratic leadership.

4. Conclusion

The work has succeeded at arguing that both bad governance (arising from the selfish interest of leaders built on the use of state power for material acquisition) and insurgencies (arising from the desire of the insurgents to lure the state through violence to grant their wishes) are all products of greed which is a precondition for corruption and other social vices that follow suit. According to Reno (2006: 26), “greed and opportunity play important roles in motivating some individuals to fight.” There is no difference between the politicians who fight and kill in order to gain the state power by all means possible and the insurgents who also fight and kill in order to drive home their selfish desires and needs. They are all products of greed and opportunity. Greed because they all desire to have what they presently lack by merit or demerit, and opportunity, because they had or still have access to the means for securing them. The politicians have the money to distribute and buy votes and the insurgents have the arms with which to threaten, main and destroy.
in order to have their way. Greed and opportunity must agree before individuals or groups engage in a fight. While the greedy politicians and insurgents have their way to loot the state by whatever mechanism, the remaining relatively greedy legion of people without corresponding opportunity to have their way are left to exist in the mercy of the remnant left over or forgotten by the politicians and the insurgents. Therefore, while greed is the necessary condition for both bad governance and insurgencies, opportunity is the sufficient condition for them.

Nonetheless, greed is responsible for corruption, self-interest and persistence governance of either weak democratic or undemocratic political leadership in the face of the total rejection from the governed (absence of legitimacy).

5. Recommendations

As a matter of urgent national importance, the state represented by the political actors should hasten to revive all the ailing resource-generating sectors of the economy – agriculture, mining, education, in addition to commerce and industry. What is means is that, budgeting more for security (like was the case with the 2012 national budget), while not bad, is not a panacea for the insurgencies Nigeria is enmeshed in today.

Corruption should attract capital punishment unlike the leap service paid to it in addition to a shameful situation where a pen-robber (worse than an armed-robber) is found guilty of corruption and is made to pay paltry sum as a recompense while waiting for amnesty to continue in the loot.

Finally but also importantly, the country has no alternative to securing her borders and regulating the influx of foreigners to the state. As a matter of fact, all Nigerian borders should be high-walled to regulate this influx. With these three recommendations; especially the second point, Nigeria will attain an enviable height while maintaining a society devoid of insurgencies and the issue of amnesty to insurgents (which is one of the worst solutions) will not even be contemplated.

References