

Critical Perspectives on National Security Strategies in Nigeria

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Edited by

Anthony O. Chukwu, Caroline Obiageli
and Nafisatu Dahiru Muhammad

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FOREWORD

My years of military service in the Armed Forces of Nigeria—which spanned over thirty-five years—were quite a revelation of the criticality of security strategy to national cohesion. This must never be taken for granted but continually interrogated for sustainable peace and security. Nigeria’s dire security challenges in the last decade seem intractable. The government and people have witnessed a never-ending escalation of insurgency and terrorism that have claimed many lives and destroyed properties. While these human and material costs are unacceptable, the rate at which the degenerating security situation hinders commerce and peaceful coexistence and promotes ethnic divisions is frightening. Fortunately, however, the government, people, and critical stakeholders have continually tried to end this sad situation.

Strategy and security are critical elements for the attainment of peace, especially for a developing nation like Nigeria. In simple terms, when there is an absence of security, it basically means that the strategies adopted are faulty and need to be reviewed. For a nation seeking to achieve sustainable growth and development, citizens must have the requisite state of freedom and peace, amongst others, to lead meaningful and productive lives.

In their quest to interrogate Nigeria’s national security strategy and forge a way out of the current situation, the authors (military personnel and civilians) and editors of this book, have endeavoured to analyse the security environment of Nigeria frankly and objectively.

I have perused the chapters of this book and have been quite impressed by the authors’ depth of research and eclectic perspectives. Different from the media image and coverage, the perspectives of the authors of this book are rather a bold call to action to the Nigerian people and their leaders. The authors critically reviewed the spectrum of security issues, including food security, human security, economic security, and energy security amongst others. They also examined the connection between security and strategies, identified gaps between them that are peculiar to Nigeria, showed the consequences of these gaps in terms of insecurity, noted the lessons learnt, and made recommendations for changes.

I am delighted to write the foreword to this book that will provide readers the opportunity to gain fresh insight and perspectives into Nigeria's security and strategy. I highly recommend it to scholars, researchers, military experts, security experts, key political stakeholders, and policy-makers.

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PREFACE

Never before in the history of Nigeria has the nation been so exposed to the spate of insecurity as is currently the case. The global security rating of the country is exasperatingly at its lowest, comparable to Africa's worst cases such as Libya and Somalia. No part of the country is demonstrably insulated from the scourge of violent extremism that has blighted the national landscape. It is probably on account of this gravely distressing development that some observers have blithely characterised Nigeria as a country at war with itself.

Contemporaneously, the scope of insecurity is wide-ranging, encompassing different forms of armed non-state actors and separatist groups taking recourse to violence against the Nigerian state and its people. Thus, the climate of insecurity has expanded beyond the machination of a few pockets of committed irredentists to sprawl menacingly across all the geo-political zones of Nigeria. The effects on the basic human ecosystem have been profoundly debilitating. Consequently, the national security strategy and transformations have resurged and gained currency both in military and public policy discourses. Paradoxically, unfurling discourses are uncovering fundamental tensions. These, in part, are a result of the tenuous, stymied, and sometimes ambivalent conditions or assumptions underpinning policy and practice directions. Furthermore, situated experiences reveal a number of paradoxes that not only weaken the foundation of publicly espoused strategic thrusts but also expose considerable lacunae in conventional modes of analysis. The stark reality of today's Nigeria, with the growing complexity of security challenges, appears to be leading to an inescapable conclusion. That is, national security policies and strategies are being scuttled by the sheer lack of collective consciousness and revitalised mindsets for addressing and resolving the dialectical complications embodied in the "national question."

Thus, the multifaceted phenomenon of violent extremism, even if considered a proxy rather than the manifestation of security quagmires, has severely deepened discursive tensions pertaining to national security architecture. The same is also true of countermeasures for managing the pervasive everydayness, grotesque indiscriminateness, and brazenness of acts of violence complicating the security environment. It is against this background that the need and urgency to re-examine extant approaches to

national security strategy compellingly gains traction and contextual relevance.

This book, *Critical Perspectives on National Security Strategies in Nigeria*, provides a clear discursive lens to stimulate new modes of analysis and understandings. It does this through its contributory chapters, by interrogating the praxis of security and strategic transformations in the context of sustainable nationhood and applying the intersectionality to illustrate specific challenges in fostering national sustainability. From this subject position, a case is established for genuine commitments to recalibrate the fundamental axioms of national security in ways that are sensitive and responsive to the nation's subjectivities.

Notwithstanding its direness, the adverse security condition does not render the country a hopeless or failed nation. Indeed, there is a dint of cautious optimism, albeit juxtaposed with pessimism, for a positive turnaround. The good news is that the prevailing security challenges are not deeply ideological (apart from Islamic State West Africa Province [ISWAP] and Boko Haram [BH] skirmishes in the north east and north west) or irreversible. Rather, instrumental utility appears buried underneath the motivation of some of the known rogue groups such as the Niger Delta militants and possibly the IPOB. However, there is bad news too, nestled in a raft of governmental failures partly traceable to institutional weaknesses. Cumulatively, they unwittingly mitigate intentional strategies to contain or overturn potent security threats. Implicitly, despite the shortcomings in wholly resorting to kinetic approaches in reversing the tide of violent extremism, the military establishments, for example, have had to contend with difficulties that cannot realistically be construed as a sign of weakness or dilution of professionalism. Rather, the widely reported handicaps mirror fundamental problems nesting within the broader national development policy direction (or misdirection). Therefore, the solution to Nigeria's security problems does not fully reside with the military/security agencies but in governments' policy choices relative to inclusive growth and development. There are still many knowledge gaps in this domain of inquiry. Therefore, the complexly muddled security environment of the country provides considerable latitude for more vigorous, multidisciplinary, and pluralistic approaches in analysing, evaluating, and formulating appropriate response strategies.

Arguably, the most fearful existential threat confronting Nigeria is the danger of implosion due to schisms among erstwhile insurgent groups and the emergence of more radicalised offshoots. The newly emergent cohorts (e.g., Autopilot IPOB, Oduduwa separatists) are seemingly more audacious in their manoeuvrings and also enjoying international visibility

and support. The point needs to be made that insurgency (the most enduring form of recalcitrant anti-state mien) does not emerge as a formed phenomenon. Nearly all insurgent scenarios are indeed an outcome of failed dialogue. Breakdown of productive dialogic engagements rides on the back of known institutional dysfunctionalities (e.g., felt-marginalisation and socio-economic exclusions). When the oxygen conveyer in the form of ideas of discontent are muffled, allowed to fester, and probably considered unnecessary irritations at the outset, over time, the resonant power of discourse begins to diffuse with greater intensity within a social system, winning more “hearts and minds.” Issues that could easily have been nipped in the bud are then profiled more poignantly to stimulate radical extremism. Overcoming such a state of being hinges particularly on dialogic engagement as a counter-offensive strategy, analogous to a “battle of ideas and minds.” This sort of battle, especially when mindsets are normalised, is hugely difficult to overcome through the sole use of extreme force. However, a more positive outcome is possible through the superiority of counter-narratives and subtleties of communicative engagements. Resorting exclusively to militaristic strategies to completely overcome and extinguish an insurgency has not worked anywhere in modern times. The sooner this is acknowledged in policy and strategy processes the better for Nigeria.

Essentially, *Critical Perspectives on National Security Strategies in Nigeria*, if thematically repurposed, is a leitmotif for reconceptualising the dynamics of Nigeria’s security climate. Undoubtedly, the theme holds out tremendous prospects for further research. For academic researchers who consider security management as discursive practice embedded in socio-economic relations of power, it is undoubtedly a field of vibrant contestations and full of exploratory potentials. It will certainly continue to attract, engage, or challenge “critical thinkers,” from the military to urbane bureaucrats, from scholars to politicians, and so on. This is largely because it is a scholarly arena that is fertile, ever-evolving, and continually exposing new possibilities when deeply interrogated. Perhaps, there is also a philosophical angle to this that, in part, has much to do with constructions, dialectics, and, sometimes, contradictory reconstitutions or reconstructions of “national security” in both theoretical and practical settings.

On the finer points of the constituent chapters of this book, it is particularly difficult to summarise the arguments and positions adduced. While it may be unnecessary to clearly delineate the boundaries and interconnectedness of the contributions, the book on the whole demonstrates a wide variety of intellectual purposes and practice approaches. In many ways, it stretches theoretical and discursive aspects of contemporary movements in national security strategy. In doing so, newer directions and

agendas are introduced, all of which give impetus to the need to continue to explore the landscape of national security strategy in Nigeria.

I congratulate the erudite editors of this book for painstakingly knitting together diverse analytical standpoints to afford refreshing insights. Without a shadow of doubt, remarkable strides have been taken in this book to steer towards different inflections in the discourse of national security strategy. Indeed, this book is essential reading for policy-makers, military strategists, researchers, and general-interest readers. I hope that readers will find this particular title fascinating and useful.

Professor A. S. Nwankwo

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CHAPTER ONE

WHITHER IS NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY?

ANTHONY CHUKWU, CAROLINE OBIAGELI
AND NAFISATU MUHAMMAD

Abstract

The unalterable reality that has subsisted for a while for Nigeria and Nigerians is a high level of insecurity that has seemingly defied any sort of solutions. Knowing that the effort of the Nigerian government to tackle the insecurity is no more than a stoical recipe for passivity and quietude, the question that arises for all and sundry, which this book seeks to answer is: Whither is Nigeria's National Security Strategy? This introductory chapter does the following things. It begins by showing how security and strategy are tied together. This is followed by the examination of the ascendancy of unending insecurity in Nigeria perpetrated by Boko Harm, bandits and ethnic separatists. Finally, it gives an overview of the contributions of the authors and how the chapters not only build into another but also how the terms "thinking", "security" and "strategy" "in their broadest possible sense hang together in their broadest possible sense".

Security and strategy intertwined

Military professionals and civilian scholars agreeing on national security strategy is not a Venn diagram often illustrated by book authors. Yet, this rarity is what is showcased in this book—a sort of presentation and representation of scholarly views on Nigeria's national security and strategy by civilians and military professionals.

Security and strategy are closely intertwined; in this sense, security lives in strategy, and strategy lives in security. Thus, the improvement of strategy plays a major role in advancing security. The recognition of their

intersection is evidenced in their development and use by states as tools to champion values, rights, and freedom as well as guarantee the stability of their polity. Put differently, they intersect as weapons of peace. While strategy involves plans and agendas executed to address security concerns and ensure freedom from fear of any kind—that is, want and indignity—and freedom for economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, and political security, security is the lack of adversarial situations or menacing shenanigans propagated by foreign and domestic enemies due to strategic measures.

In this context, we must take a closer look at these concepts to be able to appreciate the different approaches and critical perspectives of the authors who essentially argue that Nigeria has more work to do to end the present insecurity zeitgeist.

To begin, we shall discuss security. In political philosophy, the story of the social contract is the story of security. This is essentially what the Hobbesian version and other variants presuppose, and it is why the social contract is the basis of the state and its parasitic outgrowth called government. Moreover, in Aristotelian thought, security is a common good that the individual cannot provide for themselves; instead, the state can and should provide it. Therefore, centring the safety and protection of people's lives and properties is the priority of statecraft for want of an umbrella term.

Security has remained a shifty rather than settled term. In a Kuhnian sense, it has shifted from a state-centric and zero-sum paradigm to a multi-centric and multi-sum iteration (Al-Rodhan, 2007; Romm, 1993; Paleri, 2008). The conception of security has expanded beyond the traditional state-centric sense because conflict is no longer a “versus” battle between states in a conventional war fought with military sinews along clearly drawn battle lines, based on rules of engagement and war conventions (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, 1998; 2005; Emmers, 2004); now, it encompasses security threats to the state, the people, the environment, and others suborned by non-state actors operating out of any state where they have a safe haven. The non-state actors who may or may not be connected to any global terror network have the capacity to recruit fighters, receive funding, buy weapons, and carry out attacks against their target anywhere and at the time of their choosing. In view of this, security is no longer the sole business of the state for the sole benefit of protecting the state or addressing its concerns—a state-centric zero-sum game. Instead, it has become the collaborative efforts of the people and the state for the protection of the people, state, and other layers and dimensions of society such as the environment, borders, culture, and so forth. Therefore, in no uncertain terms, security has become a cooperative venture both internally

and externally—multi-sum. Whereas, internally, cooperation is between the people and state, externally, it is between states, organisations, and the people.

Broadly defined, security consists of the protection of a country against political, terrorist, military, economic, health, cyber, environmental, and other threats. The presence of any, some, or all these is indicative of insecurity. In other words, security is akin to a jigsaw puzzle with pieces that must neatly fit together to ensure cognition—visual and mental.

In a zero-sum paradigmatic sense, security is about the defence of the state's sovereignty, and as such, it is known as national security. Perceived from the military perspective, Luciani (1988: 151) defines national security as “the ability to withstand aggression from abroad,” while Morgenthau (1985: 165) describes it as “the integrity of the national territory and its institutions.” For Kumar (2010), national security deals with consolidating the condition precedent of a state, meaning that it maintains the conditions that keep a country functional, that is, political, social, and economic stability, territorial integrity, freedom, rule of law, and so forth.

On the other hand, human-centric security differs from national security, which requires military might. Instead, it lacks any predisposition to military power, and its substrates, which can sometimes overlap, are as follows: economic security, energy security, environmental security, food security, cyber security, and security from terrorism and criminal activities (Romm, 1993; Paleri, 2008).

Contrastingly, strategy is a key plan of a country to deal with the security concerns of citizens as well as address foreign and domestic threats. It is a clear expression of the security needs, interests, and goals of a country and how to meet them. Peculiarly used in government, politics, and security spheres, strategy is a forward-looking document or blueprint deliberately designed to prepare governments to deal with issues and threats that may arise in the future. While the strategy may reflect on the varying forms of threats and how they may develop, and equally attempts to provide reasonably accurate predictive assessments of threats, including whether they are possible only in the very short term—usually less than a year—or a longer time frame, that is, beyond a single year, ultimately, strategy is a plan of action. Whatever the time frame may be, strategy almost always endeavours to render threats unfeasible by devising viable countermeasures. However, the length of time for strategy differs from country to country depending on the format and complexity.

For security and strategy to crystallise in any country, the government has to be the equator. The government appraises every possible security problem and a strategic response to it. In other words, the government has

to assess risks, identify threats, and pinpoint vulnerabilities; at the same time, it has to develop appropriate offset. Governments base responses to risks mostly on the imminence of attacks and the magnitude of the ensuing consequence to the country's interests. Hence, the risk of an imminent attack with severe consequences for a country's interests is an unsafe risk that attracts immediate mitigation. However, if it were neither imminent nor of severe impact, it is a risk that can be managed, and doing so is prudential. But, unlike risks, threats and vulnerabilities are unsafe and cannot be wagered, managed, and/or mitigated. Thus, imperatively, countervailing measures are implemented to effectively neutralise threats and shield vulnerabilities promptly. In essence, a national security strategy gives every government intending to centre the safety and protection of its people's lives and properties the ability to stave off insecurity.

Even though it seems that every traditional government adopts this organising principle to keep the social contract, a different valence has emerged in Nigeria in the past two decades or more. It is the valence of insecurity that has led many people to sour on their country and leaders. Accordingly, the next section will discuss how Nigeria failed to deliver security

Boko Haram, bandits, and the ascendancy of unending insecurity

In the mid-2000s, Boko Haram—a Salafist Sunni Islamic sectarian movement based in Borno state, northeast Nigeria, which initially sought to reform Islam but later metamorphosed into a radical armed jihadist group—pushed down the boulder of insecurity, which is still rolling. The leader of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf, and his followers—because of their Muslim reformist agenda—view themselves simply as the “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad” (Jama’atu Ahlis-Sunnah Lidda’awati Wal Jihad). Herein lies the unmistakable yet misconstrued purpose of Boko Haram. They are really about, it would seem, the right and appropriate role Islam could play in governance and society (Husted, 2022). This must have been rightly prompted by their experiences of living in the area of Borno state in particular and northeast Nigeria in general, both of which were characterised by poverty, inequality, corruption, and contentious politics. So, since they didn't run anything but were at the mercy of those who did, they blamed Christians, Nigerians from all walks of life, and Muslims with Western influence for running the country to the ground, as it were. Thus, they resorted to opposing Christianity, Western influence, and middle-of-the-road Muslims as well as more moderate forms of Islam. They

backed up their position and opposition to the government with violence against any government institutions and symbols of government, including launching “attacks on police stations in several northern Nigerian cities in 2009” (Husted, 2022). In response, the Nigerian government reacted typically in a panicked fashion, by having the Nigerian security forces arrest, detain, and execute Yusuf as well as killing hundreds of his devotees (Husted, 2022) on 30 July 2009. Instead of backing down and running for cover, “Boko Haram regrouped under Yusuf’s former deputy, Abubakar Shekau” (Husted, 2022), and expanded and escalated “operations to include largescale bombings, assertions of territorial control, and cross-border attacks in neighboring countries” (Husted, 2022). Consequently, it acquired “notoriety for its brutality, including its use of women and children as suicide bombers, and drew global attention with its 2014 abduction of 276 girls from a school in Chibok, Borno state, which gave rise to the “Bring Back Our Girls” social media campaign” (Husted, 2022).

Owing to an internal dispute, “an Islamic State-affiliated offshoot, the Islamic State West Africa Province (IS-WA, ISIS-WA or ISWAP),” branched out from Boko Haram and “established itself as the stronger faction and one of the most active IS affiliates globally” (Husted, 2022). The basis of IS-WA’s emergence was to distance “itself from the indiscriminate violence that came to characterize Boko Haram, renouncing the killing of Muslim civilians and vowing to focus attacks on Christians and state targets” (Husted, 2022). However, this faction provided some state-like services (e.g., basic law enforcement) in its areas of operation, forging ties with some communities. On the other hand, it exceeded Boko Haram “with a high degree of success [. . .] by conducting raids on security forces, which have yielded significant war spoils in the form of material and other supplies” (Husted, 2022).

Due to the Nigerian government’s ill-managed confrontation with the seemingly well-equipped and expansive Boko Haram’s armed Islamic movement, the enormity and reach of Boko Haram began to spread away from its core and starting point, Maiduguri, the capital of Borno, and expanded beyond the confines of Nigeria to the borders of the neighbouring countries of Chad and Cameroon. As it did so, its signature trail of destruction, death, devastating pain, and anguish followed.

On another note, banditry is high on the scale of terrorism-induced insecurity. Arguably, both terrorism and banditry presently constitute the immediate cause of insecurity in Nigeria. According to Conklin (1992), banditry is theft carried out with violence or threat of violence by a person previously unknown or contacted by the victim. Although it may be typically unprovoked or unpredictable, it remains a violent crime to rob a

victim of valuable goods. Looking at it as armed banditry, Slatta (1987) sees it as the use of force or threat of force ordinarily by a group of men to take away someone else's belongings.

As it thrives in certain places such as geographically isolated and forested areas, highways, hills, bushes, and bush paths, banditry has become common in Nigeria's border communities, which are characterised by these features, and in several porous links to Nigeria's immediate neighbours such as Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.

Furthermore, banditry in Nigeria is not unconnected to herder–farmer conflicts that have existed between the divergent interests and ways of life of pastoralists and farming communities within Nigeria.

In the middle belt of Nigeria, where pastoral communities border farmers, the competition for land, water, and pasture is vicious due to the degradation of the environment. Those herders who lose their herds in conflicts and become unemployed resort to cattle rustling (Brenner, 2021) facilitated by ungoverned spaces that “unequipped police and military personnel are unable to reach” (Brenner, 2021), as these areas can serve as effective hiding spots. However, large-scale criminal activity such as banditry requires the use of arms to become a viable livelihood; thus, the bandits in Nigeria took up arms as “illegal arms are very prevalent in north-west Nigeria” (Brenner, 2021). Emboldened by firepower and safe conducive terrain, the greed-driven bandits sought to diversify their money earning to multiple streams. Hence, they ramped up and escalated their activities from cattle rustling to human rustling known as kidnapping, given that the ransom for a human is much costlier than that for a cow. Furthermore, the bandit gangs controlled the gold mines (“Small Arms Proliferate in Nigeria,” 14 North. 2021), and they also engaged in armed robbery and criminal raids (WANEP, 2021). Additionally, in some instances, they took hostage a whole community and imposed regular taxation on them. The devastating criminal attacks of bandits have exerted significant material, social, and psychological losses for the victims (Odekunle, 1986; Muggah and Batchelor, 2002).

Ultimately, Nigeria's national and homeland security weakened significantly under the impact of the fatal consequences of banditry in different parts of Nigeria over several years (Kuna and Jibrin, 2015) and the resulting security implications (Makarenko, 2004), combined with Boko Haram's truncation of national security writ large, including the limitation or violation of all forms of right and freedom—i.e., cultural, social, socio-economic, ecological, territorial and economic—as well as the creation of socio-political vulnerabilities. Other dimensions of security affected by Boko Haram include the following: physical security, community security,

economic security, food and nutritional security, regional security, and livelihood security (Usman, 2012). Combined, these dimensions can be subsumed under human security as Mahbub ul Haq (1994) noted.

The adverse security profile wreaked on Nigeria by the joint activities of Boko Haram and bandits is a modern-day version of the anomie propounded in Émile Durkheim's strain theory that subsequently inspired a retinue of contributors such as Robert Merton, Albert Cohen, Richard Cloward, Lloyd Ohlin, and Robert Agnew. Thus, the bandits and Boko Haram terrorists replicated the anomic deviant behaviour contained in strain theory to the point where security in north-eastern Nigeria could no longer be guaranteed.

In the face of this, the government sought to crack down on the activities of the bandits and Boko Haram jihadists by sending in the military. However, rather than back down, Boko Haram seized the opportunity to engage in the full jihadist rebellion that it had always longed for. Accordingly, since the early to mid-2000s, the continuous conflict between Boko Haram and the military has been ongoing in north-eastern Nigeria, resulting in large numbers of civilian victims—almost 350,000.¹ Furthermore, Boko Haram, too, has been losing fighters. Yet Boko Haram has not only continued fighting but also been equally effective in continuing to wear down Nigerian military troops. Though the Nigerian military are usually opaque about casualty number, June 2018 and September 2019 independent estimates of Nigeria's military casualties put it “at anywhere from hundreds of soldiers to in excess of 1000” (Carsten, 2019). The number could be revised upwards if the military releases the casualty numbers.

With Nigerians reeling from the virulence and breadth of violence from Boko Haram and bandits, and people asking questions and demanding answers about the role of government, the Minister of Defence, Maj. Gen. Bashir Salihi Magashi, responded that Nigerians should take up arms and defend themselves. “We shouldn't be cowards” (Carsten, 2019), he said. Such tone-deaf advice from a leader of the people to arm themselves and fight terrorists is the modern-day equivalent of “let them eat cake.” It reeks of leadership that is out of touch with the people.

Meanwhile, other crises and conflicts over resource control, restructuring, and separation by ethnic nationalities—that is, by Igbo (Biafra) and Yoruba (Oodua nations) people—among others are either ongoing or simmering with the potential to flare up later. This evidence suggests that Nigeria may remain in a perpetual state of crises and conflicts for the foreseeable future. Moreover, it also indicates that—perhaps in a certain

¹ <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/boko-haram-nigeria>.

way—Nigeria’s security and strategy are not on the statecraft level necessary to deliver security. Hence, Nigeria has to rethink how to deliver security with the right strategy.

Therefore, this book is a response to the idea of rethinking security and strategy in Nigeria. It not only fosters debate but also constructively addresses the issue of Nigeria’s security and strategy. As the editors, we assembled authors—civilians and military personnel—to write chapters addressing this issue with stimulating and refreshing scholarly insights.

In the language of the law, what Boko Haram and the bandits are doing is sedition, and according to political science, it is anarchy. In the language of logic, the leaders’ response is deemed illogical as Boko Haram and bandits press their foot on Nigeria’s throat while the leaders do not respond with the full deck of critical perspectives to deliver security.

Similar to other books, this book does not intend or pretend to serve as the final word that identifies and addresses all the ingredients of the issues engaged, that is, the poor security and strategy delivery in Nigeria. Thus, beyond an analysis of Nigeria’s ethnic composition and security issues pertaining to the activities of Boko Haram jihadists and bandits, it merely offers takes on how to rethink the delivery of security and strategy in Nigeria. Furthermore, this book is timely as Nigeria is still mired in these conflicts and crises with no end in sight to the killing and destruction of properties, and the leaders are not investing serious efforts and endeavouring enough to meet the bar of the social contract.

Overview

This book is not another compendium on Boko Haram or bandits in Nigeria per se. As topical research issues, they are over-flogged already. Rather, this book deals with critical perspectives on national security and strategy. Of course, Boko Haram and bandits are causal agents of insecurity; however, the focus here is on the government, gaming out responses to insecurity. When a group attacks or harms other groups or individuals with impunity within a government’s sovereign space it is not only an indictment but also a shock to humanity. To avoid such situations, every government has to act in closer accord with the moral ideal, moral universe, or organising principle of government traditions to protect and secure lives and properties. The audacity of Boko Haram and bandits evidences the flaw of the Nigerian state in its failure to build a government that delivers security and counters extremism and terrorism.

As terrorism increases in leaps and bounds in Nigeria, security moves from the quaint to the existential, and the people sour on their

government, the contributors to this book have sought to look at how security and strategy based on critical perspectives can be achieved. The book is unique because the civilian and military contributors offer different perspectives that complement each other and chart a course for Nigeria. In what follows, let us briefly discuss the focus of each chapter.

In the chapter by Chido Onumah and Uche Ugboajah, they make a case for information as a common good to guarantee freedom, liberty, and human rights. According to the duo, information makes the society. Free access to and the dissemination of information not only protects democracy but also enhances national stability, advances national security, and promotes accountability. Thus, in this age of democratised information where, for instance, anyone with a cell phone in any location can witness and break news that can inform, entertain, or aid an investigation, the authors view media as a common public platform that benefits everyone. They conclude by touching upon some difficulties in inter- and intra-media relationships, media impact on democracy, and national stability on the basis of the Nigerian media experience.

M. Ogar Agi's focus on information—a little dissimilar from the above—was on the nexus between clear thinking, information management, and national security. For him, clear thinking is imperative for information management and national security. In this sense, he argues that citizens must have the unbreakable freedom to acquire and share information in the manner of their choosing—secured or open. However, the catch is as follows: originators of information must be accountable for the consequences of the accuracy or inaccuracy of their information and manner of use. This means that filtering information through clear thinking before sharing is key, and the same applies to government information managers who must meticulously collect, analyse, and disseminate information; additionally, they must also keep it secure from unintended use and unauthorised users. He forbids them from abusing national security information through dereliction, leaking, or malicious targeting of innocent citizens, all of which are violations of clear thinking and may end up defeating national security.

Ja'afar Ibrahim seems to acknowledge the inevitability of conflict and instead focuses on the use of precision weapons when military field operations ensue. He notes that the challenges inhibiting the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) from attaining precision in military battlefield operations include the following: high operational casualty rates, insufficient defence funding, limited manpower capacity, and poor R&D. Subsequently, he laid out the prospects for allaying the challenges, including a huge budgetary allocation to modernise the AFN, and acquire precision technology for battlefield operations.

Following the previous chapter, Michael E. Onoja examines the necessity of conducting a national security strategy from the logical space of reason. The chapter argues that the Nigerian military needs to deploy critical and strategic thinking to analyse and control complex national security challenges. It suggests how to rethink Nigeria's modern national security and strategy. The space of reason helps define military operations and ensures unit cohesion, unity of command, and cooperation.

Sanya Ojo's chapter is a conceptual investigation of the influence of contemporary music and music videos on some aspects of national security in Nigeria. Consequently, it highlights a causal connection between insecurity in Nigeria and the erosion of traditional ethos and culture by contemporary music and videos in the entertainment industry. Essentially, he argues that young and unemployed people who are impressionable and exposed to mischievous music and video contents transmitted through the entertainment industry and multimedia platforms tend to emulate and seek to re-enact the images and identities they have imbibed. In other words, the reproduction of identity, including criminal types, by young people can be presaged by the music and videos they consume. He recommended youth employment and moral reorientation programs among others to make them responsible citizens.

Bassey D. Ekpo and Richard Ayoola adopt the method of historical analysis in examining Nigeria's current situation after nearly sixty years of self-rule and practice of democracy as a multicultural nation-state, and they argue that the unmooring of Nigeria's security comes down to the sub-par implementation of the protection of individual and minority group rights enshrined in the various Nigerian constitutions—1963, 1979, and 1999. For example, they note that the provisions of the 1999 constitution in sections 14 (3 and 4), 14 (4), and 15 (2) (3c) and (4) of chapter 2 about respecting individual and group rights, religion and political intolerance, individual freedoms, and equality are shirked by leaders who in the course of operating the constitution find a way to deny some individuals and groups those rights. The injustice, they posited, has not only resulted in the weakening of the institutions of democracy and caused the retardation of Nigeria's political and economic growth, but also contributed to the ongoing ethnic agitations and insecurity by separatist groups. Ultimately, the dubious operationalisation of constitutional democracy is the source of Nigeria's insecurity. They conclude that if leaders or political actors course correct and pull back from advantaging their religious and socio-cultural groups, there is a chance the current adverse security situation will turn around.

For Shuaibu Nuhu, whereas conflict may be inevitable in any political space such as a state, ending it—through the military—when it

threatens the unity of the country is a suitable response. According to him, the involvement of the military is the state doing what it has to do to guarantee the safety of lives and properties and prevent the break-up of the state. Nuhu green-lights military involvement after historically and analytically tracing ethnic agitation in Nigeria back to the 1966 Niger Delta ethnic nationalist agitation led by Adaka Boro, and he follows it up by demonstrating the involvement of almost every ethnic nationality in one form of agitation or another. Finally, he reprises the military's conduct of internal security operations, including Operations Pulo Shield, Delta Safe, River Sweep, Tsare Teku, Crocodile Smile, and Python Dance 1-111. In conclusion, he notes that as Nigeria remains one country, the military role in stemming the tide of ethnic nationalism seems laudable. He outlines the countervailing challenges facing the military in this role and makes recommendations to address them.

The chapter by the trio of Promise M. Ntagu, Chibuike Chris Umeokafor, and Chukwuebuka Cornelius Aguiyi and the preceding chapter converge on one point, namely that the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) has to respond to national security challenges. Beyond this, the trio further added that the military should work in concert with other stakeholders in tackling security challenges. The basis for this is that no agency can successfully tackle security challenges alone. Thus, combating complex security challenges efficiently in Nigeria requires synergy between the military and other stakeholders who may have some expertise, talents, and dynamic capabilities and strengths unavailable in the military. Moreover, synergy is also crucial because it produces the kind of team that can flexibly respond to global security challenges that are way beyond the traditional state-based threats of the Cold War era. Contemporary global security threats include unconventional threats from non-state actors. Such threats are not only ambiguous but also quick to diffuse; additionally, they can arise from multiple sources and can be interrelated. Given this, they reiterate that tackling security challenges requires a coalition of the military and security agencies and stakeholders for it to be effective. After noting that the AFN and the security agencies are underperforming because they are overwhelmed and under-resourced, they recommend that more funding is necessary to increase their efficiency.

At the core of Obioma Onwuegbuchi's chapter is a discussion about the quandary of insecurity, internally displaced children, and the lack of sustainable development in Nigeria. Using primary and secondary sources, the author posits that insecurity is the cause of both the internal displacement of persons/children and the lack of sustainable development. The author's basic schema for this position is as follows: the insecurity

fomented by Boko Haram is responsible for the loss of lives, destruction of properties, and displacement of persons/children. Thus, by keeping the government busy trying to tackle these crises, the need for sustainable development goes unmet. The author's recommendations include the following: urging the government to strengthen the security system to protect people and properties, especially children; raising the bar of good governance; and educating children with pedagogical competencies that can aid sustainable development.

M. Jallo's chapter deals with the enduring insecurity in Nigeria's border communities, especially in Adamawa state. Put differently, it is a thematic examination of the criminal pattern of armed banditry in Nigeria's border communities that does the following: brings attention to the Adamawa border issues, delves into the plight of dwellers in the border communities, offers theoretical prisms for understanding armed banditry, highlights the causal factors of armed banditry in Nigeria, scrutinises the management of border-related crimes, and, finally, lays bare the pattern of armed banditry in Nigeria. To drive home the impact of the attacks by armed bandits, the author—with some sort of eyewitness insight—demonstrates how the repeated disruption of the socio-economic activities by bandits has devastated the border communities both materially and psychologically and has left huge ripple effects on all areas of life. The author notes, unfortunately, that armed banditry has further exacerbated the already bad security situation of Nigeria made worse by a long list of insecurity factors such as Boko Haram terrorism, farmer–herder clashes, insurrection of militant groups in the Niger Delta, and unending cases of kidnapping and hooliganism. Finally, the solution to the pattern of armed banditry in border communities offered by the author is joint-border management by Nigeria and its neighbours using smart border technologies.

Henry Yanet's chapter emphasises smart border management as a way to enhance Nigeria's security. According to Yanet, the core of national security is to protect a country's national interests—that is, territorial integrity, independence, and citizens' welfare. In this sense, smart border technologies must be adopted to not only ease the movement of goods, services, and people within a country and across borders but also to assure maximum security. Regarding security, he argued for the benefits of smart border technology, particularly in facilitating the prevention of threats or crimes that could enter a country through its borders, including drug dealing, human trafficking, smuggling goods, and terrorism. Similarly, the safe and secure movement of people, goods, and services in ways that prevent undesirable elements is achievable through automation. This is particularly the case, he argued, for a big country such as Nigeria that shares

extensive international borders with other countries—the border spans 4,047 kilometres of land and 853 kilometres (452 nautical miles) of maritime—and these borders are not only not clearly delineated but also largely unmanned in most sections. Consequently, he recommends that the traditional border managers such as the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), and Plant, Animal Quarantine Service (PAQS), National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), and Armed Forces of Nigeria need to install ground radar, cameras, and other technology to gather intelligence and integrate information from different sources to enhance national security. He exemplifies smart border management security in the United States and Egypt and urges Nigeria to emulate these countries to improve border security and enhance national security.

The theme of Nanji Umoh's chapter is the mental health of the specialists who take care of wounded soldiers. It recommends that the disaster and emergency preparedness strategies of the Nigerian military must not be limited only to soldiers who are primary victims; instead, it must also include caregivers who by virtue of directly or indirectly tending to the primary victims become vicarious or secondary victims. In other words, the effects of the experiences of the primary victims impinge on the socio-psychological stability of "specialist" and professional caregivers either directly as first responders or indirectly as second or third responders, depending on their responsibilities to the victims of war. Essentially, she stresses the need for holistic management for fighters (wounded soldiers) and those who help them fight for their lives and rehabilitation (health caregivers). Concisely, doing this will enhance the efficacy of the Nigerian military's contemporary warfare and national security strategies.

Caroline Obiageli's chapter shows concretely how a researcher can deploy a critical perspective to research security and bring attention to people's situations in a way that intentionally prompts them to confront and change their situations. In this context, Max Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School proposed the critical theory that highlights the ability of people to figure out and liberate themselves from the things that subjugate and suppress them. Similarly, this chapter shows that the security researcher can, through critical perspectives, identify security or insecurity conditions that people need to rescue themselves from and prompts them to do so. It is a contribution to the heuristic research method and knowledge generation processes.

Overall, this book is a tapestry of chapters hanging together in the larger sense of the term to address the critical perspectives necessary to deliver national security and strategy in Nigeria. Even as we write this

introduction in March 2022, people in Kaduna are hemmed in. The very recent attack at the Kaduna airport, the bombing of the Abuja–Kaduna train and railway, and the attack on the Kaduna–Abuja road indicate the pressing need to reorganise Nigeria’s national security. Ultimately, insecurity in one way or another is present in most if not all of Nigeria. Thus, this book is a timely attempt to answer what is now an age-old question: Whither Nigeria’s national security and strategy?

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CHAPTER TWO

INFORMATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD: THE MEDIA, INFORMATION MANAGERS, DEMOCRACY, AND NATIONAL STABILITY

CHIDO ONUMAH AND C. UCHE UGBOAJAH

Abstract

In this chapter, we explore the concept of information as a public good, being the theme for the 2021 World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD). Given the fact that there is a problem with freeloading, which raises the question of who pays for a public good necessary if society is to advance, how can a balance be struck between and among the key issues of providing information as a public good, ensuring the transparency of internet companies, and guaranteeing freedom of expression and the rights of citizens to freely access information in line with democratic tenets, while also enhancing national stability? In attempting to resolve this question, we deemed it proper to also highlight the somewhat uneasy relationship that exists between and among the media, democracy, and national stability drawing from the experience of the Nigerian media.

Introduction

We would like to start this chapter with a real-life story. About three months ago, a friend of ours narrated to us how one of his relatives living in one of the suburbs of Abuja went missing. The relative, an elderly man in his seventies, had recently been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. One fateful evening, his family who had been doing their best to look after him, suddenly discovered that the ill man was nowhere to be found. They searched the entire neighbourhood without finding any traces of the man. Knowing his amnesiac condition, they were quite disturbed and immediately raised a search team with the help of ever-cooperative neighbours.

By the morning of the following day, the man was still missing. Then the family decided to go to the police. As expected, the police said they could not do anything officially until after forty-eight hours had passed but were kind enough to advise the worried family to also in the interim visit nearby hospitals and mortuaries in case the worst had happened. When the searches of hospitals and morgues yielded no result, someone suggested to them to solicit the help of the media; after all, news of a missing person is a clear case of public interest, or so the family thought. Next, the family reached out to some radio and television stations within the metropolis with their story.

After listening to their story, the journalists they met directed them to the advertisement department. One after another, the media houses turned them down because they were unable to pay the bill charged for the story, as a news insert or public announcement. Rejected and dejected, the family had no other choice than to embrace the platform offered by new media or social media. Thus, several social media sites with all their imperfections and non-professional skills came in handy. And to cut a long story short, about two weeks later, the old man was found wandering around the borders of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja and Nasarawa state.

On hearing this story, something got us thinking that the journalists who turned down this human-interest story are not in themselves necessarily wicked even if we had expected them to do more. Their action must have been most predictably influenced by their work environment with a lack of regular salaries because of poor revenue.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the sectors on the downward slide globally was the media. The pandemic then made a bad situation worse. Those journalists may have been threatened time and again with retrenchment if the bad economic situation in their establishment continued. Some of them may have also been given a target for adverts to meet as well. So, although they knew full well that their services, as journalists, only makes sense in the context of serving the public good, their own existential needs got the better of them.

The above story clearly portrays the dilemma faced by journalists and information managers today in Nigeria and around the world in the discharge of their duties. Being first and foremost human beings with feelings, journalists or information managers recognise the need to promote the public good in their job of information gathering and dissemination. Yet, there is the danger of being out of work as nobody pays for the public good. So, how do we strike a balance between providing information as a public good by making the media more viable for journalists to practise their profession, ensuring the transparency of internet companies, and ensuring

freedom of expression and the rights of citizens to access information through enhanced media and information literacy in a democracy. This explains why the theme for this year's World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD) is information as a public good.¹

Thus, in this chapter, we shall discuss the role of the media and information managers in sustaining democracy and national stability within the overarching concept of information as a public good. We shall also pay particular attention to Nigeria, especially against the background of the challenges posed by new media and the government and the role of journalists and information providers in stabilising democracy.

Is information a public good?

The theory of the public good was postulated by renowned economist and Nobel Prize winner Paul Samuelson (1954).² It states that goods that are collectively consumed are “non-rival and non-excludable.” By being non-rival, it means that the goods do not dwindle in supply as more people consume them, while a public good is non-excludable when it is available to all citizens. Thus, public goods can be said to be commodities and services that benefit all members of society, but are often provided for free through public taxation. Examples of public goods include law enforcement, national defence, the rule of law, access to clean air and drinking water, and basic education. Following this line of thought, it is therefore safe to conclude, as UNESCO has done, that information—not just all manner of information but verifiable information in the form of news—should be promoted as a public good, if not for any other thing, for its epistemic value.

“In advocating the notion of ‘information as a public good,’ WPFDD 2021 highlights the important difference between information and other kinds of communications content such as disinformation, hate speech, entertainment and data. The aim is to draw attention to the special role of journalism and information managers in producing news as verified information in the public interest, and how this depends on a wider ecosystem which enables information as a public good,”³ according to UNESCO.

More importantly, the COVID-19 pandemic has created greater imperatives for accessing reliable information and facts through the work of journalists and information managers scattered all over the world; information

¹ “Information as Public Good: 30 Years of the Windhoek Declaration,” UNESCO World Press Freedom Day 2021 concept note.

² Paul Samuelson, “The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 36, no. 4 (November 1954): 387–89.

³ UNESCO, *op. cit.*