April, 2013

Democracy and National Security in Nigeria

Ali Nuhu Abubakar

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/ali_abubakar/1/
DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

BY

ALI NUHU ABUBAKAR

Mainika78@yahoo.com

APRIL, 2013

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

KANO STATE COLLEGE OF ARTS, SCIENCE AND REMEDIAL STUDIES, P.M.B

3145 AIRPORT ROAD, KANO – NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

National security is the podium of democracy and if democracy loses security imperatives, it has lost its core essence. Chai Anan, the Thai political scientist, in his analysis of the role of the state in promoting democracy opined that the most important role of the state is in reality to ensure security for itself and for the people. It therefore implies against sophisticated theoretical analysis obscured by the realists who conceived national security in power or military terms that in democratic rule, militarism cannot guarantee national security. A close look at Obasanjo regime 1999-2007, reveals that national security was conceived within a state-centric perspective. This perception is increasingly becoming more of an anachronism, along with growing internal opposition to the hegemonic statist perception of national security; hence, the need for a re-think. This paper contends that there is an organic relationship between democracy and national security and as such, national security cannot be conceived in military terms in a democratic rule. This paper is divided into 5 sections: 1 deals with introduction; 2 focus on conceptual clarification; 3 discuss the synergy between national security and democratic rule; 4 emphasize the imperative of rethinking national security problematic in a democratic rule; and the conclusion. The paper conclude that even though military strategy still remains a component of national security, the prospects for resolving the current national security crises thus lie in broadening the notion of security to include non-military considerations alongside more humane, equitable, and socially responsible practices by the state.
1.1 Introduction

Elections are critical aspects of the democratic framework for governing modern political societies. They serve as instrument of political choice, mobilization and accountability. In the context of liberal democracy that has become the most popular form of democracy in a unipolar world, elections are to facilitate the smooth transition from one civilian administration to the other and help in legitimizing sitting governments.

In a democratic system where elections are devoid of crisis, long term disputes or political violence, are amicably resolved. Such system enhances the prospect for political stability, peace, development and continuity in governance. But where elections are characterized by violence, thuggery, intimidation, rigging, ballot box snatching and stuffing and other forms of electoral malpractices, they bring to question the very essence of democracy and compromise the nation's security.

One of the principal functions of the modern state is that of protecting the territorial integrity of the state, lives and property of its citizenry and upliftment of the human condition. The promotion of human security has become the central focus of the new development paradigm because building of arms and ammunitions do not bring peace, security and political stability. Eradicating poverty, hunger, diseases through sustainable development programmes, hold the key to an enduring national security. Thus, a country that invests heavily on human security may not have to spend much money and efforts in fighting crimes like: kidnapping, human trafficking, bombing, student unrest, political assassination, etc.

The Nigerian experience with general elections has shown that the political elite have not fully come to terms with the referents of elections for democratic sustenance and national security. More often than not, the elite have failed to play by the rules of competitive electoral politics which prioritizes politics of tolerance, conflict and consensus, bargaining and compromise. They see elections as warfare, characterized by gangsterism and political disorder. Political parties which organize for elections are also, like armband of men and women going to war, where there must be victors and the vanquished. Elections have become warfare, where it is a sin to lose. This dominant pattern of elections and electioneering threatens to tear the nation apart and put its tenuous peace at great risks.

The 2011 general elections in Nigeria has come and gone but its aftermath threatens the very existence of the Nigerian state. The Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) has come out
openly to reject the results of the presidential elections which it alleged its candidate, retired General Buhari won. While, the case was in court, political jobbers and miscreants seized the opportunity to create a state of insecurity in the country through the spate of bombing and communal violence in several parts of the north. The political uncertainties in the country create avenues for aggrieved groups to revive their hitherto latent agitations for all manner of things; the most violent of them being the spate of bombing by the Boko Haram sect.

The security of the citizens is the primary duty of any government. National security is the podium of democracy and its values for the people. As such, there is no factor that provides meaning and legitimacy to democratic rule than security. It is the protective umbrella of all other sectors of the democratic system. It is also the pillar of political order, stability and development in all segments of societal values and aspirations. In strategic context, democracy and security are correlates because both are people-centered. The chief end of every democratic government is to provide an assured welfare and security of its people. The survival of democracy is therefore dependent, among other things, on the dynamics of national security. It is expedient to note that the synergy between security and democracy is inseparable to the extent that if democracy loses its security essence, it has lost its core values. Barry Buzan, (1983) posited that the concept of security binds together individual, states and the international system so closely that it demands to be treated in a holistic perspective.

The democratic method of arriving at acceptable political leaders is well expanded in Schumpeter (1942), as the Institutional arrangement for arriving at political, legislative and administrative decisions. It is a method by which the individual acquires the power to participate in decisions by means of a competitive struggle for the peoples vote.

It is instructive to note that under liberal democracy words like “competitive struggle” tend to be emphasized more than consensual approach to politics. Thus, Central to the survival of this democratic method is the imperative of playing by the rule of the game. It is the conformity with this stated imperative that allows for uninterrupted transfer of power from one administration to the other. Once a sitting government knows that it can be voted out of power within the framework of periodic elections, it strive to pursue the socio-economic and political interests of the electorates who may switch allegiance to opposition parties if such government fails to meet their expectations. Thus, legitimacy is seen as "the capacity of the political system to engender
and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for society” (Lipset, 1963) is central to the survival of liberal democracy. People develop attachment to and belief in the prevailing political system because they trust in its ability to meet their short and long term needs.

Political stability that this system spawns helps to promote development in the body polity. However, for many years, African States operated a misguided development paradigm which emphasized esoteric and aesthetic needs. This created stagnation, or stunted growth and brought poverty to many Africa countries. Following the failure of the pursuit of modernization as development, a new paradigm of development that prioritizes the people as its center piece, is being propagated, particularly in the global south. This model aims at promoting the welfare and well being of the citizenry. In this perspective to development, public policies are directed at solving challenges of hunger, disease, education, unemployment, environmental safety, medical care, etc.

In countries where appropriate development paradigm is in place and practiced, the citizenry enjoys high standard of living demonstrated by the willingness of government to provide the basic necessities of life in terms of jobs, portable water, electricity, affordable housing, foods, roads among others. Under these conditions, there could be national human security. Thus, security could mean different things at different times to different people.

Generally, security could be referred to as “a measure that ensures peaceful co-existence and development at large (Adebayo 2011). Where there is security, there is likely to be absence of fear, threat, anxiety, tension and apprehension over loss of life, liberty, property, goals and values, among others (Ibid). From the foregoing, it is clear that security is vital for development in any human collectivity. However, as part of the colonial legacies in Africa, security tends to assume the militarists approach either because the political system is inherently unstable or those in control of state powers want to be there “ad infinitium”. In either case, emphasis is on the building of arms and ammunitions to the detriment of the basic necessities of life for the citizenry.

Consequently, some of the World’s poorest people live in the continent of Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Even in peace time, much of public annual budgets still go to the purchase of State arms while education is poorly funded. Thus, in recent times, the concept of security has shifted
from the military angle to prioritize the provision of goods and services which make life more meaningful to the people and empower them to participate in the developmental processes. This is a more enduring aspect of national security where people go about their daily activities unhindered. The fragility of the state in Africa is partly due to this deficit in human security (Albert 2011). Therefore, it can be argued that approaching the question of security from a political/state or militaristic angle is detective. The more fundamental basis for security lies in freedom from poverty, disease, ignorance, joblessness, arbitrary power e.t.c (Ibeanu 1999).

More than ever before, the country’s security has come under threat. Indeed, the climate of fear pervades the country as politics of impunity pervade the polity. Never before has the country's security being so stretched in peace time. Yet, this threat to national security is not unconnected with injustices which dominate the body polity. Faulty development policies pursued since independence have left the people pauperized and decimated. Also, failure to play by the rules of the game of party politics brings the country close to the state of nature.

These are manifested in increasing poverty, diseases, unemployment, poor medical care, poor housing facilities, lack of portable water, epileptic power supply, lack of access to power and resources by minority groups and their exclusion from policy making (Onimode, 2007; Ake 2000; Ayeni 2010).

2.1 Democracy and New Development Paradigm

Election is part of the democratic framework in the society that if properly put to use, will produce socio-economic and political development. Credible elections put the right people in government, manage conflict effectively and allocate resources efficiently. But the nature and type of democracy necessary for development has been an issue in Africa. As part of the colonial project in Africa, liberal democracy was foisted on African political systems and societies in an ineffective manner that till date, is difficult for African States to adapt it to suit their pluralistic cultural and political values. These institution and structure together with their processes were uncritically integrated into the African political economy. For example, while western liberal democracy prioritizes individual rights, private property, liberty and so on, African cultural values emphasize communalism and collective security (Osaghae, 1999).

Also, the mal-integration of African states into the international capitalist order has seen African states playing subservient roles to the advanced capitalist countries. Within this contraption,
African states have lost any autochthonous means of addressing challenges of development that was forced down the throat of Africans in form of modernization and in contemporary times, globalization. The aesthetic values in western development paradigm see development as mere transition from “traditional” African ways of interaction to “modernity” conceived of as westernization. These development models are mainly concerned with stimulating economic growth in form of increase per capital income, import substitution industrialization, etc. while human or social security is given scout attention by African leaders.

The political correlate of these economic measures is liberal democracy which is regarded as the inevitable outcome of modernization. Like its economic correlate-capitalism, liberal democracy has helped to create political violence, religious strives and ethno communal cleavages in most countries in Africa. Yet, more than three decades of experimenting with liberal democracy in Nigeria, the expected gains of multiparty elections have failed to be registered in the lives of average Nigerians. Instead, crisis of underdevelopment still persists nay in greater dimensions. Multiparty elections which are supposed to be the cure for development and insecurity in the continent have actually exacerbated them.

In Nigeria, elections have always been hotly contested under party politics that is intemperate and violence rite-large. The 2011 general elections were no different as the two presidential candidates- Good luck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and General Muhammad Buhari Rtd of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) sloughed it out to the apex court in Nigeria, the Supreme Court. The court in its ruling in the petition filed by the CPC on the presidential elections, declared that President Good luck Jonathan and Vice president Namadi Sambo were validly elected. It noted that the petitioners were unable to prove their allegation of violation of the electoral law. As the lead judgment put it “it is trite law that he who asserts must prove. A person must not only assert but also prove allegations of non-compliance. It is only then that the burden will shift to the person whom allegations of non-compliance are made against…” (The Sun 29th December, 2011).

The political unrest and spate of insecurity which have invaded parts of the Northern geopolitical zone have their links to the disputed presidential elections in 2011. For the umpteenth time, it has shown that politics of tolerance and accommodation, bargaining and compromise are yet to be enthroned in the Fourth Republic politics. The aftermath of the general elections of 2011 continue to pose major threat to the socio-economic and political development of the
country. The Boko Haram insurgency has led to the loose of thousands of lives and properties. Also, the economy is threatened due to the insecurity in major flash points of the country. As the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria has rightly noted, “The current spate of bombings across the country by terrorist groups alludes to the fact that our business environment is becoming more and more threatened and therefore the need to urgently develop a framework that will enable us to effectively respond to any crisis and thus safeguarding lives and properties and ensuring stability and growth in our economic system” (The Punch 29th February, 2012).

All over the world, liberal democracy is prioritized because it is assumed to have the magic wand to effectively deal with inter and intra group conflicts arising from the democratic method. But the Nigerian experience with liberal democracy is not very pleasant. The people’s votes in most cases have refused to count. While ethno-religious conflict is rife in the polity, the economy remains on its knee with abject poverty as a recurring decimal among the people. The popular expectations, that democracy will resolve all these challenges have largely been unattained.

It would seem the behavioral pattern among the political and economic elites is not in consonance with the core democratic values which conduce for stability and development in the polity. Politics of give and take and respect for the unwritten rules of the game of politics are what makes for sustainable democracy.

The state managers continue to dish handout in form of funds to groups and nationalities making it too attractive for there to be consensual politics. In this context politics invariably becomes a zero-sum game or winner takes all. Politicians are apt to ignore constitutive rules in the political processes because emphasis is on the sharing of the national cake rather than how it is baked. Devolution of resources to state and local governments would appear to be a more productive way of bringing about development and efficient use of resources. But unless other forms of constitutional sanctions are evolved against abuse of power and resources of the state, the same behavioral pattern that has rendered national politics corrupt and unproductive will find expression at other levels.

Also, it would seem, the state is involved in too many things with little of them being done effectively. Over the years statist approach to development has led to the state chewing more than it can swallow; thus, leading to inefficiency and mal-development. Civil society has not been able to effectively take its pride of place in the scheme of things in the country. Perhaps,
due to the totalizing effects of state that intervenes everywhere. Civil society should take its place in the affairs of governance by creating alternative avenues for wealth creation and power in order to de-emphasize the salience of the state in the life of the people that partly accounts for mismanagement and corruption in the public domain.

2.2 Concept of National Security

The concept of security of a nation goes back to the cradle of nation-states themselves. Armies for domestic peace-keeping and maintaining national sovereignty have existed since the dawn of recorded history. Civil and national police forces have also existed for millennia. Intelligence agencies and secret services of governments stretch back to antiquity such as the Roman Empire. While the general concepts of keeping a nation secure are not new, the specific modern English term "national security" itself came into common parlance in the 20th Century. Methodologies and strategies to achieve and maintain the highest possible desired state of national security have been consistently developed over the modern period to this day. However, the concept of national security is very difficult to define because the root term, security, has remained a contested concept. In other words, it has no universally accepted definition due to its many-sidedness arising from ideology and time frame being addressed, as well as the locus of analysis.

More-so, the issue of national security is so critical to nations and national leaders that they are prepared to stake anything in defense of the nation, or to maintain its security. Hence Walter Lippmann observed that a nation is secured to the extent that it is not in a position to lose core values, life, property and liberty. National security also refers to the requirement to maintain the survival of the nation-state through the use of economic, military and political power and the exercise of diplomacy. President Olusegun Obasanjo, while presenting his grand strategy declared that the primary objective of national security shall be to strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria; to advance her interest and objectives; to contain instability; control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress and growth; improve the welfare and well-being and quality of life of the citizenry Obasanjo in (Attah, 2006).

In this work, we shall be adopting Gwarzo (1998) definition which sees national security as freedom from hunger, or from threat to a nation’s ability to protect and defend itself, promote its cherished values and interests, and enhance the well-being of its people. From the above
definition, it can be observed that national security is not restricted only to weapons and military preparedness but encompasses political, social and economic well-being of the people. As such, any threats to any of these constitute a threat to national security.

2.3 Election and Democracy

Election is central to the effective functioning of modern representative democracy. Since direct democracy has become almost impossible to practice on account of the large population in every modern political society, electing or selecting political leaders through periodic elections has become the norm. This is particularly so under liberal democracy. As Schumpeter (1942) puts it “democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them”. Since everybody cannot make such decisions at any given point in time, they have to select those to represent them.

An extended version of this argument on liberal democracy and election is put forward by Sandbrook in (Adejumobi, 2000) “political system characterized by regular and free election in which politicians organize into parties, compete to form the government by right of virtually all adult citizens to vote and by guarantee of a range of familiar political and civil rights”. It means that there is an organic link between democracy and elections. For this linkage to be productive, it has to meet certain essential conditions. These include: the people have to be empowered to make political choice without hindrance, and the political atmosphere under which this choice is made should be free from threat, intimidation and manipulation. Also, the practice of choosing political leaders should cohere with the cultural values of the people which should safeguard the exercise. In other words, elections must be compatible with democracy that is being practiced in a given country. For election to make meaning to a democratic system, it must go beyond a ritualistic exercise carried out periodically.

Elections are a complex set of activities with different variables that act and feed the other ... it involves the participation of the people in the act of electing their leaders and their own participation in governance. Elections are not necessarily about Election Day activities although it forms an important component. It encompasses activities before, during and after elections... it includes the liberation or otherwise of the political process in the country and the independence of adjudicating bodies of elections (Iyayi, 2005).
From the foregoing, it is clear that there are constitutive and regulative mechanisms and percepts of elections which should be taken in its entirety for there to be credible elections and democracy in a given political milieu. For Adejumobi (2000), these constitutive and regulatory aspects include: “the establishment of a competent, relatively autonomous and non-partisan electoral body to administer the conduct of elections, the existence of an impartial press and a non-partisan police force”.

These are constitutive and regulatory rules which should limit the struggle for power and facilitate healthy electoral competition. How these whole gamuts of electoral arrangements can be put into practice to produce security, socio-political and economic development is the subject of analysis in the next section.

2.4 Democratic Elections and National security

Credible elections are necessary to stem the tide of political decay and renewal in the country. This is because in the view of apologists of liberal democracy, once elections are gotten right, democracy is on its way to being consolidated and in consequence enduring peace and security will be instituted in the country. In essence, credible elections produce security, development and political stability.

Security could take different forms. There is human security, national security, and so on. National security implies the appropriation and deployment of state apparatus of coercive force to deal with situation of crisis, nationally or internationally. Human security involves protecting the citizenry from hunger, disease, poverty, unemployment, natural disasters, etc.

However, all these can only take place where there is peace and stability in the polity. Experience has shown that it is human security that presents the most effective instrument for national security and not the building of arms and weapons of warfare.

In Africa, years of economic exploitation, mal-development and bad governance have continued to fan the ember of conflicts and crises in the continent. From Togo to Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria to Kenya and Zimbabwe to Ivory Coast, general elections have been widely disputed. The violence they spawn comes from manmade barriers on the part of smooth electoral processes. Beyond constraints of funds, manpower and other logistics, obstacles to health electoral processes emanate from the inordinate ambition of the political elite to win elections at all cost. To achieve their goal, they manipulate the constitutive and regulative instruments for
credible electoral contest. All institutions and agencies of government are used by those in possession of state power and authority to remain in government. Because of the premium on power everything is mobilized to remain in power against the will of the electorates. Where the ballot box containing the preference of the governed, cannot bring about the transfer of political power from one party to another in a peaceful manner, then democracy (liberal or not) is in grave danger.

Empirical evidence has shown that in elections conducted to public offices, all contesting parties are involved in one form of electoral malpractices or other (Joseph, 1987; Osaghae, 1999 and Iwu, 2008). Where the opposing parties fail to win elections, they create one form of electoral crisis or the other. This includes: long litigation in court, political propaganda, use of militant groups, and mobilization of religious sentiments, among others. In more extreme cases, violent politics ensues such as: bombing, kidnapping, political assassination and youth restiveness.

More than ever before, the country’s security has come under threat. Indeed, the climate of fear pervades the country as politics of impunity pervade the polity. Never before has the country's security being so stretched in peace time. Yet, this threat to national security is not unconnected with injustices which dominate the body polity. Faulty development policies pursued since independence have left the people pauperized and decimated. Also, failure to play by the rules of the game of party politics brings the country close to the state of nature.

These are manifested in increasing poverty, diseases, unemployment, poor medical care, poor housing facilities, lack of portable water, epileptic power supply, lack of access to power and resources by minority groups and their exclusion from policy making (Onimode, 2007; Ake 2000; Ayeni,( 2010).

2.5 Concept of democracy

Democracy is today considered as the most desirable form of government and man’s best idea on earth for governance. However, it is a contested concept, which does not lend itself to any universally accepted definition due to ideological, cultural and historical conceptualizations that underpins it. According to Bernard Eric (1993) democracy is perhaps the most ‘promiscuous’ word in the world of public affairs. A term that can mean any thing to any one is in danger of loosing its real value or original meaning. Bernard C, (in Andrew,2002:67). However, democracy may be described as a system of government where the people exercise the governing
power either directly or indirectly through representative periodically elected by themselves (Appadorai, 1974:138). This definition implies that a state may be termed democratic if it provides institution for the expression and, in the final analysis, the supremacy of the popular will on basic questions of social direction and policy. Webster’s World Dictionary of the American languages defined democracy as government by the people, either directly or through elected representatives. This definition carries the import that democracy is based on the people rather than on the elites or the few. However, the simple notion of the rule by the people does not and will not get us very far unless we understand the meaning of the people as defined in the original Greek. The Greek originally viewed the people to mean the poor, disadvantaged, or the many. Nwabuzo in (Mbachu, 1997:62) also views democracy to be a political system in which the eligible people in the society participate actively, not only in determining the mind of the people that govern them, but also participate actively in shaping the policy output of the government. Within this context, the best ideology, system or philosophy means nothing if it does not bring about justice, fairplay and prosperity for all. This definition carries the import that democracy is based on the will of the people rather than on the whims of the elite or the few. Within this purview, democracy may be defined as political and economic empowerment of the majority of the ordinary people for effective participation in the decision that affects their lives, their individual and collective rights and the way in which their society is governed (Kwanashie ed 2003:307).

Whether it is a direct democracy of the Athenian model or a representative government, the fact remains that power rests with the people and it is the will of the people that plays a decisive role in the organization and working of the government. Democracy stands on the assumption that the government is not an end in itself but a means for the realization of the greatest good of the greatest number. Inherent in the assumption of democracy is that the government sets out to rule, not in the interest of any one group or alliance of groups, but in the common interest of all. Sabine In (Johari 2003: 413) posited that for practical purposes the liberal democratic state stands on the assumption that majority’s will should be taken as the will of all.

2.6 Synergy between National Security and Democratic Rule in Nigeria

The linkage between national security and democratic rule is that of mutual transmissibility of impacts and repercussions. Therefore, with prolonged years of military rule, it is expedient to
note that only a democratic framework can provide succor to Nigerians at this critical security
conjuncture, and create space necessary for the transformation of the state from the authoritarian
form experienced under the military rule to people-centered one. This will open up channels
hitherto blocked for dialogue, negotiation and peaceful settlement of conflict. Even though
democracy has several definitions and colorations based on varying values, experiences and
history of nations, the central issue in democracy is the people. Democracy offers the best
platform for resolving the national security questions. More fundamentally, the interest of the
people becomes the basis of security policy. Cyril (1997) observed that a democratic ethos is
better placed to deal with and negotiate better terms of equitable interactions than
authoritarianism or civilian dictatorship.

Therefore, probably the nexus between national security and democratic rule is like addressing
the fundamental question-National security, whose security? If democracy is centered on the
people and the people is said to mean the poor, disadvantaged, or the many, it therefore implies
that national security must be people-oriented. Furthermore, it is expedient to note that one of the
fundamentals of a democratic rule is constitution and constitutionalism; the three key obligatory
responsibilities the Nigerian constitution outlines for its government in terms of relationship with
the Nigerian people, the issue of security is most conspicuous. Thus, section 14:2b of the 1999
constitution states that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of
government” (Sonni, 2005:171). If we agree that security connotes freedom from danger or
anxiety, it is within this context that it must be viewed as the inalienable right of human beings
that must be guaranteed under democratic rule. The above implies that there is an organic
relationship between security and welfare. The security of a state is dependent on the level of
their social welfare but the inability of the Obasanjo government to fundamentally address the
issue of development in the critical sector has exacerbated social unrest and conflicts which
ultimately threatens national security.

A general assessment of the decade under review reveals that the political liberalism (Dunmoye,
2009) that accompanied the re-emergence of democratic rule since 1999 allowed people to vent
their pent up tension and disaffection with the existing social, political and economic order. This
consequently led to the proliferation of militant ethnic and religious movements collectively
referred to as militias; starting from Oodua Peoples’ Congress (OPC), Arewa Peoples’ Congress
(APC), Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and many other groups that often do not have specific label or designation. The factors responsible for the upsurge in the formation of these groups could be above all things but most importantly traced to the neglect or perceived neglect by government to attend to their social responsibilities to the people and nationalities that constitute the federation. The common attributes of all these groups is that they tend to be ethnically based and either employ militant methods in the pursuit of their goals or could readily resort to such methods in self defense. The activities of these groups posed considerable economic, social, human and political threats to democratic rule. More-so, the activities of these groups also posed threat to rule of law which is one of the fundamentals of democracy. For instance, section 6 of the public Act cap 382 laws of the federation 1990, outlaws the activities, of any groups which may threaten public order and peaceful coexistence among Nigeria’s multi ethnic population. A general look at the activities of the member of these ethnic and religious groups, not only of usurping the law enforcement functions of the police, but also fly, wear provocative uniforms, and openly brandish offensive weapons without any authorization. Their activities therefore seriously violate general laws that were made for ensuring due processes in law enforcement and criminal justice administration and for preserving public order and peace in the Nigerian society. Such grievous subversion of the rule of law can only provide an atmosphere for the eventual breakdown of law and in the country.

2.7 Assessment of national security under Obasanjo Democratic Rule (1999 -2007)

There is a general assumption especially within the realist paradigm that the world is anarchical in nature in which the use of force remains the ultimate means of guaranteeing security. The realist sticks to the classical postulation which places a lot of emphasis on military threats and concentrates on the various form of military response on the management of such threats. The cold war and even the post cold war sustained this militaristic perception. However, the end of the cold war also marked the beginning of a debate on the need to redefine and re-conceptualize national security to respond to new global challenges. This is because as (Nwolise,2008) observed, the world was deceived during the cold war into believing that security is all about high defense allocation, amassment of awesome weapon system and large military personnel.
The view of John Mroz (1991), Ian Bellany (1991), and Peter (1983), on national security are typical of the perceptions of the concept which propelled the practice and processes throughout the cold-war era. Luard (1988) argues that that a state level of security is measured largely on the basis of military capabilities such as the number of nuclear warheads, Missiles, Tanks, Men under arms military expenditure and others. These scholars have viewed security within the context of defense thereby relegating other important issues such as economy and welfare of the people. Most developing countries built their security doctrine around this approach and as such, a lot of their security problems still remain unsolved.

The cold war celebrated militarism in the practice of national security, ignoring all non-military variables, to the detriment of the real security of citizens and nations. The problems of security are dynamic and multidimensional. Any attempt to view these problems from a static and single perspective will therefore result to intellectual myopia, if not reductionism. There is therefore need to view it from holistic perspective. The task of re-thinking national security is in part necessitated by the need to broaden national security to encompass non-military threats, that is-broadening the notion of national security beyond militaristic and elitist perspective. Moreover, the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the humiliation of USA on September 11,2001 corroborated Nwolise’s observation that: “a country may have the best armed forces in terms of training and equipment, the most efficient Police Force, the most efficient Custom men, the most active Secret Service Agents, and best quality Prisons, but yet be the most insecure nation in the world, as a result of defense and security problems from within-bad government, alienated and suffering masses, ignorance, hunger, unemployment, or even activities of foreign residents or companies (Nwolise,1985).

Nigeria’s perception of security is a reflection of a realist paradigm of projecting its power within a state-centric system. This perception is increasingly becoming problematic. This is because a state-centric perception in a democratic rule is an anachronism, along with growing internal opposition to the hegemonic statist perspective of national security. Olukoshi (1992), Nweke (1988), and Imobighe1986, 1987and 1989) in (Cyril, 1997) argued that state and dominant class interest eclipse national security in Nigeria. Olukoshi for instance posited that the security thrust is directed toward the interest of the governing classes and their propertied allies, while most Nigerians are alienated from the security processes that ironically turn on them from
time to time. The consequence of this is that national security planners tend to strengthen the coercive apparatus of any government any time the nation is faced with internal security challenges neglecting non-coercive and social welfare approaches.

Official paradigm of national security in Nigeria especially under the president Obasanjo democratic rule was statist and a reflection of the skewed power relations in the country. This is more so in the face of economic social crises arising from the harsh consequences of the economic reforms of the administration. The core security essence of the state remained largely unchanged, in spite of its takeover by the dominant elite. For instance the Nigerian state between 1999 and 2007 seemed to consent to this military conception of national security. This is obvious from the super ordination of the military and consequent subordination of other vital aspects of the economy such as public health, education, agriculture, provision of essential services, etc. When you compare the budget allocation to national security and defense with other vital sectors mentioned above, the difference will justify where government priority lies. However, the real security threat in Nigeria is the problem of underdevelopment, poverty, political instability and social injustices. These threats cannot be reasonably confronted by military preparedness.

The crudest expression between security and the socio-economic and political structure is expressed by the cliché about the choice between the guns and butter. More butter for the populace rather than guns to defend their peace. Dwight Eisenhower in (Briggs, 1990:313) corroborated this when he said: No matter how much we spend for arms, there is no safety in arms alone. Our security is the total product of our economic, intellectual, moral and military strength. The emphasis here is that too much emphasis on military hardware does not necessarily determine national security. In Nigeria, the long years of military rule naturally concentrated on the military imperative and thereby neglecting the non-military option and this created a volatile atmosphere to peace and security. Cletus alluded that the concern of security in its military-strategic dimensions, particularly in terms of defending political independence and sovereignty, has pushed most third world countries, including Nigeria, towards military buildup. He further added that the failure to resolve their social, economic and political problems is one of the single factor that has led to their present security dilemma (Cletus2004:206). Murray and Viotti (1994) maintains that; the term security goes well beyond military consideration, security can be
understood both as a defense against external or internal threats as well as the overall socio-economic well-being of society and the individuals who comprise it.

Many security experts focus on the extent to which internal problems constitute a source of conflicts and tension. Thomas Homer-Dixon and Robert Kaplan in (Michael and David, 2005) have popularized the idea that more than anything else, poverty in developing countries is the biggest threat to all nations because of the damaging effect it has on the environment. Here, the primacy of the socio-economic factor is seen as fundamental to national security. The collapse of the former USSR and the humiliation of USA on September 11 is an indication that military approach cannot guarantee national security; hence, a non military option. The non-military option is essentially development-oriented philosophy. McNamara corroborating this assertion posited that security is development and without development, there can be no security. National security (Attah, 2006:14) observed will be endangered when the economy slumps, when the citizens can no longer maintain their accustomed standard of living, when employment opportunities are no longer available, and when the country is corrupt. The concept of national security must be expanded to include protection against all major threats to human survival and well-being, including threats posed by severe environmental degradation and massive human suffering. McNamara in (Nwolise, 2008) ex-raying the role of social, economic and technological forces in security calculus warned that “any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the background of acute food shortages, population explosion, low level of productivity and per capita income, low technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities, and chronic problem of unemployment, has a false sense of security.

A general look at national security threats during Obasanjo democratic rule 1999-2007 reveals that aside of being internally generated, there manifest in economic, political and social forms. For instance one of the fundamentals of democracy is popular participation and because of the complex and dynamic nature of contacts and interactions between the rulers and the ruled, its tenet of openness and popular participation has generated a lot of tension. Dunmoye (2009) noted that there are three important aspects of development that has organic relationship with security. These he mentioned are: raising people’s living standard-their incomes and consumption of food, medical services, education, shelter, etc, through relevant economic processes; creating condition that are conducive to the growth of people’s self esteem through
the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity; and, increasing people’s freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choices-social, economic and political. When placed side by side with the Obasanjo government, it is found wanting in meeting basic if not fundamental requirements. Another spotlight is the militant security threat as having the highest propensity to undermine the Nigerian democratic rule. Militancy almost took over government of Nigeria since 1999.

Re-thinking national security under the present democratic rule has become necessarily important because when you consider the nature, character and manifestation of threat to national security in the contemporary Nigerian state, there are internally generated. For instance a general look at the plethora of crises and security threat to the Nigerian state reveals that the real security threat to the Nigerian state is the problem of underdevelopment, poverty and political instability and social injustice. Talking about the consequences of poverty in Nigeria Sam Aluko (1995) noted that no Nigerian regardless of their social location is free of the consequences of poverty. Hence he alluded that the poor Nigerians can no longer sleep because they are hungry and the rich Nigerians can no longer sleep because the poor Nigerians are awake. To push this further, a hungry man is an angry man, an angry man is a violent man and a violent man destroys and destruction on its own is a security threat.

By implications therefore, we are all in perpetual state of insecurity. As such security cannot be reasonably and adequately confronted by military preparedness Booth (in Nwolise, 2008:9) observed that one of the themes of new thinking is the idea that security policy should have political accommodation as a primary and persistent aim. He further advocates for the emancipation of the individual. To him emancipation means freeing people from those constraints that stop them from carrying out what freely they would choose to do of which war, poverty, oppression and poor education are a few…it is emancipation, not power and order, in theory and practice that leads to stable security Booth (in Nwolise, 2008:9) Ali (2006) thinking along the same line posited that threats to national security can manifest in economic, political and social forms. McNamara (1968) again warns that coercive force alone cannot guarantee national security especially in situations of structural injustice and endemic poverty. He also added that internal upheaval all across the southern half of the planet this past decade has been related directly to the explosive tensions that poverty
spawns…poverty abroad leads to unrest, to violence and to the escalation of extremism and it does the same within our boarder (Nwolise, 2008:10). In the light of the above, this paper asserts that development is essential for security. McNamara noted that ignorance of the fact that development is essential to security among national leaders and policy makers has remained a problem. It is against this background that a rethink of national security is imperative for Africa and Nigeria in particular because the threats to the security of the nation neither emanates from military sources nor external forces, but from social, political, economic, environmental, and other non military sources within such as poverty, and social injustice. More-so, military or coercive force alone cannot guarantee national security but development has the power to neutralize the forces of insecurity and enhances national security.

2.8 Theoretical frame-work

There are several theories which might prove appropriate for a research of this nature, the structure-agency theory present us with a heuristic tool for interrogating the central issues of this study. The theory contends that agents such as politicians and state managers engage in politicking to get their interests promoted. But they have to operate within structure(s) that constraint or support their actions. For example, "actions of ministers and governments officers produce the structure that constrain junior civil servants and state functionaries, the effect of whose actions similarly constrain the rest of us" (Hay, 1988). This theory does indicate a unilinear determinism as the argument seems to suggest. While structure determines the actions of agents, agents also condition the structure in the process of carrying out their roles or simply to realize their parochial interests. This theory serves as the theoretical basis of the research.

CONCLUSION

This paper was informed by the need to bring to the fore the strategic dimension of national security to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It is therefore expedient to note that the organic unity of democratic rule and security is very imperative. What is often under emphasized hitherto is the place of security in a democratic rule. No democracy can be built on violence –ridden environment. Democracy loses its essence without security friendly environment because it is the
pillar of democracy. This paper concludes that even though the conception of security qua military has its strategic relevance, there is need for a new agenda to socio-economic dimension of national security. This is predicated on the fact that the nature, character and manifestations of crises and threats to security in contemporary Nigerian state are internally induced. Furthermore, as opposed to the narrow conception of security, national security should transcend safeguarding a state from external attack to the security of persons and properties include basic human needs. These human needs as Ntalaga in (Dunmoye, 2009:4) noted include minimum nutritional requirements for sustainable livelihood, basic education, and access to primary health care, clean water, decent housing and a healthy environment. The failure of Obasanjo government to meet these needs Dunmoye (2009) observed re-enforces poverty and exposes people to greater social deprivation and insecurity which ultimately threatens national security.

This paper also argued that in modern society especially in this 21st century, security is not entirely hardware, military force or even traditional military activity, even though it encompasses them; but development and without development there cannot be security. Security is no longer a matter of preventing or defending against war but about feeling safe from a variety of threats. Dunmoye (2009) noted that military might be able to ensure law and order (usually by force) nut cannot ensure legitimacy. It cannot force the citizens to cooperate with the government. As the former prime minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair asserted, security requires much more than hard power and sophisticated weapons. It also requires an appreciation for the complex ways in which our political, economic, and social institutions help make us feel secured. More-so, an individual who has not satisfied his or her basic needs like food, clothing, health care, housing, education and work can hardly be called secure-no matter how much weaponry the individual may have at his disposal. A stable democratic rule can ensure the attainment of:(i)to make people safe from violence and intimidation in their communities, homes, work and schools;(ii)to make property secure from theft and destruction;(iii)to ensure that everybody has access to system which dispense justice fairly, speedily and without discrimination. In the light of the above we can conclude by borrowing from Galtung in (Nzekwe, 2005) that security is the probability that a system can be sustained, a human system, a social system, a state system, a world system and a democratic rule. This paper therefore posits that the security of a country does not depend solely or primarily on the country’s military capacities but on the strength and reliability of the various interrelated linkages which could ensure and sustain democratic rule. There is therefore a need
for a re-think because borrowing from Ken Booth’s phrase of what he referred to as “the somewhat declining currency of military strength”, socio-economic development and human security should form the bedrock of national security because it is the security of the ordinary man and woman in a society especially in a democratic rule that translates into the security of the nation. Democracy cannot thrive in an atmosphere of instability and insecurity. It is only in a genuine democracy can citizens control or influence government decisions and actions. It is therefore, truism to say that “good democratic government is the only guarantee for stability”.

REFERENCES


McNamara (1968): The Essence of Security; Reflections in office, Hodder and Stoughton


Nnamdi, O (2006): Ethnic militias and national security dynamics, strategies and management


Nwolise, O. (2008): Fundamental importance of national security in a post civil war Democratic polity: Repositioning the Nigeria Contemporary Experience for 2020 and


Thomas, I (2002): Threat Assessment” lecture delivered at National War College
