THE ROLE OF NON – STATE ACTORS AS A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

DANIEL AONDOFA MAILUMO (PhD)
Department of Government and Public Administration
College of Advanced and Professional Studies, Makurdi
danaondofa@gmail.com
+234806 539 4007

Abstract

Violent conflicts have progressively threatened the protection of citizens in Nigeria for a long time now and it has turned out as a big challenge to national security, it affects the citizens, economy and institutions of national importance. This threat has continually posed security challenges to vulnerable populations including displacement, destitution, rape, mutilation, seizure and harassment of people. Being an essentially important element of governance, the threat by non – state actors becomes a key factor in Nigeria's quest for a peaceful state. The objective of this paper, therefore, is to examine the role, involvement, and contributions of non – state actors in the security architecture of Nigeria. The questions to address in the paper are; what is national security? How is national security threatened in Nigeria? What is the role of non – state actors in Nigeria's national security? What are the prospects and future trajectories? The paper used secondary sources of data for its analysis. Finally, the paper makes recommendations that would enhance the prospects for a more efficient and secure Nigeria.

Keywords: National Security; Threat; Non - State; Actors; Frustration.

Introduction

The changing world order has brought about changes in the nature of conflict and has therefore highlighted the rise in the number and power of non-state actors in world events. As the great English bard William Shakespeare wrote, 'all the world's a stage' and the world stage has many places upon it engaged in the great game of international affairs. One of the oldest and universally acknowledged actors on the modern world stage is the state. A state is a political unit that has sovereignty over an area of territory and the people within it (Grimsley, 2015) while non-state actors are not considered as major actors and their role in and impact on crisis dynamics has been marginalized. Actors in world politics, state and non-state actors alike according to Ryo Osiba (Kan, 2017) have three main features: (a) they should have autonomous capacity to determine their own purposes and interests; (b) they should also have the capability to mobilize human and material resources to achieve these purposes and interests; (c) their actions should be significant enough to influence the state-to-state relations or the behavior of other non-state actors in the global system (Kan, 2017).

To Papp (1997), a state is a geographically bounded entity governed by a central authority that has the ability to make laws, rules and decisions, and to enforce those laws, rules and decisions within its boundaries, this is to say that a state is a legal entity, recognized under international law as the fundamental decision-making unit of the international legal system, states determine their own policies and have sovereignty over its political unit. Since 1945 when there were fifty-one members of the United Nations, the number has almost quadrupled leading to about 193 now (Papp, 1997). These states are also different in size, human and natural resources, and political and economic systems but they share certain characteristics namely, sovereignty, territory, population and nationalism and are recognized by other states. Considering

the increasing role of non-state actors in world events, this paper seek to contribute to the literature on the changing influence of these players in Nigeria's crisis dynamics. To achieve this, the remaining sections of this paper discusses conceptual clarifications, the influence of non-state actors in national security, conditions for the existence and regulations of non-state actors and finally conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Clarifications.
The State
The State in the traditional/conventional sense is the major governing principle of international relations. At the turn of the twentieth century, the state had no rival, having pushed aside religion, land-owing aristocrats, and nobility. Rivalries between states and their alliances, however, had led inexorably to a precipice from which there will be no retreat; twice, in the twentieth century the world war plunged into global warfare. Then, when weapons of mass destruction imposed a distance between "great power" antagonists, countless regional and local conflicts were fought by proxies using the money, weapons, and ideologies of the most powerful. (Nelson, 1998).

Non-state Actors
Andrew Clapham in Zarei and Safari, 2017, defined the concept of non-state actors as any entity that is not actually a state, often used to refer to armed groups, terrorists, civil society, religious groups or corporations. Non-state actors are entities that participate or act in international relations as organizations with sufficient power to influence and cause a change, in spite not being state actors. Chaudhri, 2013, further avers that, a violent non-state actor (VNSA) is an organization that uses illegal violence (i.e. force not officially approved of by the state) to reach its goals. In the 21st century, their existence or emergence have become a persistent challenge to nation-states and are seen in various parts of the world intimidating businesses and engaging in a range of activities including laundering proceeds from corrupt politicians and other sundry means to defy and weaken state sovereignty. In most of the African countries, Central Asia and Afghanistan, war lords are major players in the political system and the economy. In Iraq, insurgents, terrorists, militants and criminal organizations operate in a common opportunity space, interjecting and overlapping in ways that make the restoration of a legitimate and effective state particularly difficult.

Non state actors have increased significantly in both numbers and importance, this is also because power has become more diffused and situation-dependent. This led the UN Security Council to resolve that, the states are required to refrain from providing any goods, services to or supporting non-state actors which develop, obtain, construct, transfer or use chemical weapons. This provision is made because of the dangers that non-state actors may pose in the context of war. In reference to this therefore, non-state actors do not possess official or government authorities' power and do not have institutional and financial relationships with states, implying also that they have not generally been recognized as traditional objects of international law but, instead, as potentially new subjects of it.

National Security
The term "security" is generally viewed from different perspectives by scholars. Ebeh (2015) holds that it is a state of being protected from danger or anxiety. Brennan (1961) holds that national security is the desire and capacity for self defence, while Ochoche (1998) holds that national security focuses on the amassment of military armament, personnel and expenditure. Policy makers believe that their own armaments are defensive while those of others are often seen as offensive. What makes the policies of others appear offensive is a matter of political judgment about the threat which is conditioned by a wide range of issues, including historical animosity, ideology, alliance and contemporary military policies (Baylis, Wirtz, Cohen & Gray, 2002). This is to say that when such threats arise, there is the danger of the outbreak of major arms race among countries which poses an overwhelming threat to considerable harm and suffering. Today, however, security involves much more than warding off external military attack but also touches on all spheres of human existence which must include economic and environmental resources which are used to

safeguarding national values. The security game in the post-cold war international system is, therefore, both similar to and different from the security game of earlier periods (Spanier & Wendzel, 1997).

Security threats remain a significant threat to global security and that other types of security threats are likely to arise in the years ahead, as at now the world faces an increased risk of ethnic, religious, sectarian conflicts, these do not only threaten global instability but can produce huge numbers of civilian casualties and force millions of people to flee their homelands (Klare, 1998). These threats involve not only conventional nation-states but also non-state actors who are the focus of this paper as threat to Nigeria's national security.

Influence of Non-State Actors on National Security

Non-state actors are increasingly the focus of analysis among scholars of international relations; since territoriality, the defining feature of modern state system has been steadily diminishing in relation to non-territorial, non-state actors. Terrorists groups hides among the multitudes in an urban environment to engage in sporadic violence with the hope of frightening its enemies into making concessions or surrendering (Spanier & Wendzel, 1997). While national liberation movement is a serious threat because it may defeat the government, terrorists constitutes a set of irritating pinpricks and are angry, militant groups anxious to publicize their cause, they are usually fanatical zealous Islamic extremist and they operate by hijackings, assassinations, kidnappings, attacks on important people and property. These acts of terror draw the world's attention to their demands and have compelled governments to take notice and even negotiate with them (Spanier & Wendzel, 1997).

Drug traffickers who carry on transnational business also warrant mention. The most notorious was the Medellin (Colombia) cartel which was the world's largest cocaine and terrorist organization (Spanier & Wendzel, 1997). It murdered presidential candidates, ministers, police officers, newspaper editors, drug informants, and hundreds of civilians through bombs and other terrorist means.

As a new class of actors in international relations, violent non state actors play a prominent, often destabilizing role in nearly every humanitarian and political crisis faced by the international community, many times they also provide an alternative to state governance and challenge the state's monopoly of violence. On occasions, VNSAs develop out of poor state governance especially when weak states are unable to create or maintain the loyalty and allegiance of their populations, individuals and groups typically revert to, or develop, alternative pattern of affiliations accusing the family, tribe, and clan to become the main reference points for political action often in opposition to the state. Based on this development, it is rather ironic that one of the most serious challenges confronting the current state systems comes from transnational movements and thoughts that claim the allegiance of individuals and groups.

There is a sense in which emerging threats in contemporary Nigeria are directly linked with the collapse of governance in the country. This took a turn where several terrorist groups have challenged Nigeria's national security, territoriality, sovereignty and unity, like the Niger Delta militant groups, Boko Haram and Fulani herders who constantly clash with farmers, displacing and destroying their farms. We shall however use the Niger Delta militant group as our case study here. The most prominent groups operational in the Niger Delta are the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteers Force (NDPVF) led by Alhaji Asari Dokubo, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Henry Okah, among others (Forarin & Oviasogie, 2015). The long years of abandonment, environmental degradation, coupled with lack of consideration of successive governments and exploitation by the oil companies produced and characterized by frustration, anger and aggression that manifested in constitutional and violent protest and conflicts in the Niger Delta region to press for fair allocation of the revenue from oil exploitation, ending of oil spills and gas flaring, compensation for the decades of ecocide, as well as the physical and infrastructural development of the region. However, the Nigerian government saw their protests as acts of sabotage to the revenue generation of the nation (Folarin & Oviasogie, 2014). Actually, these agitations started as peaceful protests by the host communities to multinational oil companies, they however degenerated into forceful agitations when the requests of the groups as regards development of the region were slow in coming. The

situation was also heightened by the massacre of nine Ogoni leaders led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, an environmental expert, in 1995 by the military government of Sani Abacha who ignored all calls from within and outside Nigeria to commute the death sentence (Mailumo, 2003).

The Boko Haram sect is arguably the most dreaded terrorist group to have emerged in Nigeria since 1960. The group emerged in 2002 but reemerged in 2009 and its leader, Mohammed Yusuf, was able to convince the poor and hopeless youths that they were products of long years of neglect by their ruling elites (Okpeh, 2017: 365). The group therefore emerged as a consequence of the corruption, frustration, and deprivation suffered by the majority of the unemployed youths, especially in the northern part of the country, same as earlier stated in the case of the Niger Delta militant group in the southern part of Nigeria. The group re-emerged in 2009, waging series of destructive attacks against security and non-security institutions, destroying lives and property in the process.

These groups were out to exert their influence on the state in decisions that concerned their existence in the region specifically on marginalization, poverty, unemployment, destruction of aquatic ecosystem, the alteration of the soil quality, air pollution and socio-economic disorganization and their agitations manifested in diverse ways as militancy, kidnapping, killings, bombing, hostage taking, demolition of oil and gas facilities, pipeline vandalization, illegal oil bunkering and so on. These issues were compounded by the sophistication of the weapons used which questioned the security of the Nigerian state as the militants launched massive attacks damaging facilities and staff of Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC), Chevron and TotalFinal elf, killed workers and naval officers, injured soldiers, attacked police stations and carried out a bomb attack on the Eagle Square, Abuja on October 1, 2010 during the fifty years anniversary of Nigeria's independence (Folarin & Oviasogie, 2014).

Conditions for the Existence and Regulations of Non-State Actors

One of the main reasons for not endowing non-state actors with legal personality in international law is that states would not want to share their powers and authorities with non-state actors for fear of legitimizing their unlawful actions and their use of violence (Nijman, 2010). This is also because the levels of distrust between the governments and non-state actors may simply be high and for this reason state outlines specific conditions for the existence and regulations of the activities of non-state actors as follows:

1. Agencies of the central state (including those directly involved in provision, such as national police, and state courts) as well as ministries and other state institutions involved in governance of security.
2. Local actors that are mandated by law and constitution to provide security. This is aimed at improving the delivery of security services for the people within legal means (Derks, 2012).

It is a clear fact that non-state actors no doubt are new players in international law because they lack legal responsibility. This led to proposals for their inclusion within the framework of international rule of law (IROL), a term itself not conclusively defined. However, non-state actors should be accorded legal personality so that they can and should be drawn adequately and effectively to legal account for any violations of human rights they might commit (Zarei & Safari, 2017).

In reality non-state actors have positive as well as negative functions. The negative role of non-state actors starts when governments, in particular, authoritarian regimes, are aware that the legal status of non-state actors in international law is not well established and as a result cannot be held responsible for their actions tend to co-opt them for use against individuals, oppositions groups and minorities. On other occasions, governments finance, train, procure and equip non-state actors as informal militias, these acts can become real threat to both national and international security.

In contemporary international relations, non state actors such as human rights advocacy organizations, perform important positive functions ranging from human rights education to the enforcement and monitoring of human rights standards. Sometimes they may have impact through the dissemination of information to the public which promote public awareness and transparency.

Also, the supervisory function of non-state actors cannot be overlooked. Their role in supervising the implementation of international norms and standards within their own area, sometimes, they use the

media to reveal the state violation of international legal norms, or they may report abuse of powers to relevant monitoring bodies in the domestic system or to relevant international supervisory bodies such as in the UN human rights arena.

Mishali-Ram (2009) outlined the following advantages and weaknesses of the actors in consideration of the underlying strength that serves a basis for power, these include:

1. Power type
2. Power resources
3. Diplomatic power
4. Institutional power

Power type: sovereign states fulfill multiple functions, dealing with all aspects of their citizens lives. Non-state actors, on the other hand, are usually focused on achieving specific goals for a distinct group, so that their functions are more limited. States indicates political support and influence in the domestic politics within which the non-state actors also operates and this explains why multiple functions indicate a high level of development, wherein the actor's capabilities and models of behavior are diverse. It is here assumed that the more varied the power type of an actor, the greater its power.

Power resources: Even the most powerful non-state actors have fewer capabilities than states. Human resources is the first critical resource of an actor. The other important resource for its operation is weaponry. Power resources refer therefore to the capabilities of the non-state in the areas of manpower and weaponry. The first refers to active members of the organization while the latter refers to the amount and quality of arms possessed by the actor. This is because the number of active members an organization has typically affects its possibilities to operate in promoting its objectives, then the amount and quality of weapons held by the actor is even more essential for its overall power. Here, the assumption is that the greater the actor's resources, in terms of manpower and weaponry, the greater its power.

Diplomatic power: When states gain independence they are recognized as sovereign state by other countries and international organizations. In such situations, they have exclusive rights to control the country, including the use of force. Conversely, non-state actors who are contending with sovereign states, rarely achieve formal recognition or the support of most countries in either their regional subsystem. Yet, legitimacy and recognition are vital conditions for any actor that operates in the international sphere. Most non-state actors make efforts to obtain this recognition and many succeed, they are usually expressed in active support through moral, political, or military and serves as the non-state actors' power to achieve its goals. The assumption is that the more powerful the supporting state, the greater the diplomatic power of the non-state actor.

Institutional power: While all states have governments that centralize control over their territory and population, non-state actors do not have such formal and obligatory frameworks to control their people. In this circumstance, legitimacy means that all states had a right to exist, and that the authority of the king within the country was both supreme and rightfully his. States could fight to rearrange their relative ranking. Indeed, in the case of sovereignty, internationally accepted viewpoint is that there is no authority higher than the state, and that states can pursue the objectives that they thought proper by whatever means they chose and do not have to accept any authority higher than their own (Papp, 1997). In this case, the indicator of power status is reflected on the levels of order, discipline and coordination within a country. The assumption is that the greater the level of an actor's institutionalization, the greater its power status.

Also, scholars have examined the role of non state actors in world affairs but have not classified the power resources held by these actors in a way that is comparable with measures of state power. Such measures should consider the unique characteristics of non state actor such as the absence of sovereignty, territory and major multitude military force on the one hand and the presence of irregular military forces with a fighting spirit, conducted by smaller and more disciplined institutions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper concludes that states are the dominant actors in world affairs and are characterized by sovereignty, territory, nationalism, while non-state actors are the major source of international turmoil. The behaviors of non-state actors is driven by the quest for power only to acquire human, territorial and other resources available to the actor including population size, defense budget and nuclear power and measures of overall state power. This is to say that any threat to the national security of any nation requires serious efforts towards maintaining the survival of the state's economy, diplomacy, good governance, power and for Nigeria's heterogeneous society, the challenge of state and non- state actors in managing their affairs and also sustaining their existence demand quite a lot in terms of resources and skills which are all hard to meet. this paper recommends for a system where social justice, love, creation of employment opportunities, transparency and accountability thrives. Patriotism should be the watchword of all Nigerians while leaders should concentrate more on service delivery to the people rather than accumulation of wealth for selfish ends. To this end, there is need for innovative programme as a crucial ingredient for both state and non state actors in Nigeria's national security. There must be capacity for reporting and accounting according to rules and regulations and ways for handling specific challenges without necessarily pushing aside their crucial input and views. Secondly, management of actors must take into account the need for managing and mitigating risks, and for developing adequate means of monitoring and reporting to domestic audiences, this will pave way for trustworthy and impartial partners. A capacity-building approach of training and equipping is also recommended. This helps provide for a proper behavior and investigative skills and sustainability. Lastly, it is also recommended that an appropriate mechanism to allocate and distribute revenues as a form of support that will increase these actors' ability to sustain themselves and as an economic opportunity to generate income to sustain their service delivery as a possible way of increasing effectiveness. In general, these strategies will allow governments to develop a more comprehensive state for national security development.

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