



NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE LAKE CHAD REGION: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS.

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Abstract

Nigeria's foreign policy in all its ramifications revolves around promotions and protection of the country's national security interest. It embraces not only the self-preservation of self-defence, but the protection and promotion of ultimate values such as individuals and human welfare. The quest for these goals encapsulates the thinking and activities of successive leaders in their struggle for relevance in the comity of nations. Insecurity continues to threaten civilians and livelihoods in the Lake Chad region where food insecurity and malnutrition continue to stand at critical levels and at alarming rate. Vulnerable people living in affected areas proceed to flee violence and insecure areas seeking refuge in host communities with scarce resources under strain conditions, accommodation in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) camps in congested atmosphere, reported outbreak of contagious diseases and occasional suicide bombings. The Lake Chad region rich in farming, fisheries livestock production, ground water recharge and most importantly human settlement have been disrupted by Boko Haram insurgency, climate change and other related problems. A region that serves as strategic corridor for national meat supply to Nigeria where a disruption or recession of the lake's water and its environment would have negative consequences on Nigeria foreign's policy and security challenges. The paper x-rays problems associated with the region such as insurgency, illegal importation of small arms and light weapons, porous borders, importation of contraband goods due to cross border trade, perceptions of our francophone neighbours, human trafficking, the global challenges of migration, refugee issues and depletion of the Lake Chad. The paper posits to proffer solution to the security challenges such as holistic approach, creates social and political environment infrastructures, jobs creation, security of the lake region. The paper makes use of secondary source to generate data while, it adopts human and environmental security theories to midwife the study.

Keywords: *Diplomacy, Displacement, Foreign Policy, Insurgency, National Interest.*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's Foreign Policy refers to the external relations pursued by various administration in Nigeria the same objectives (though with modifications) since independence in 1960 to date. It has to do with Nigeria's external activities that promote its interest as regards the international community (Okechuku, 2015:2) Nigeria's Foreign Policy takes its bearing from section 14(2) (b) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which declare, that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government" It also incorporates the objectives of Nigeria's Foreign Policy as stated below:

- a) Promotion and protection of the national interest
- b) Promotion of African integration and support for African unity
- c) Promotion of international co-operation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestation.
- d) Respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication; and
- e) Promotion of a just world-economic order (chapter II section 19 (a-e) of 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, FGN).

Stemming from the above is in the pursuit of these principles and objectives, Nigeria's Foreign Policy initiatives and actions have been defined by one form and constant variable i.e. the protection of the country's national and security interest. Other consistent variables over the years have been the prioritization of foreign policy initiation in the forms of concentric circles with Africa as the core and Nigeria's active role in multilateral diplomacy. The notion of Africa as the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy has been given intellectual definition in the theory of concentric circles. It placed Nigeria at the epi-centre area of the circle while the immediate neighbours West African sub region and Africa followed closely the rest of the world (Adeniyi, 2005:39).

The innermost circle represents Nigeria's own security, independence and prosperity which is centered on its immediate neighbours: Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and the Atlantic Ocean, the second circle revolves around Nigeria's relations with its West African neighbours: the third circle focuses on Continental African issues of peace, development, integration, and

democratization, while the fourth circle involves Nigeria's relations with the rest of the world, international organizations, institution or states interaction outside Africa (Arowolo, 2005:116-117).

The Lake Chad is one of the world's largest and most historical Lake located in the Sahel region of Africa (Latitude 12:30N to 14:30N and longitude 13:00E to 15:30B), which is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change, bordering North-Eastern Nigeria, North-Western Cameroon, South-Eastern Niger and South-Western Chad Republic. The lake was 25,000 km square in the 1940s, but has shrink in its dimensions over the years. (Bukar, 2000:1) Nigeria considered the Lake Chad as a strategic hub of Agricultural production and has since the 1970s established the Lake Chad Basin Development Authority to irrigate 165,000 Hecters of land to provide wheat and rice. The establishment of the Chad Basin Development Authority accompanied the influx of people into the lake area particularly during the great famine of the 1970s and 1980s. The Hausa speaking Northerners alongside Fulani pastoralists in addition to those engaged in the lucrative fishing business. The influx gradually increased the population of the area, and the recent estimate suggests about 28 million people living in the Nigerian side of the lake. These people through their occupation provide 40% of fish to Nigerian markets, 78% of livestock and about 10 million tons of assorted grains. These were the situation before the Boko Haram insurgency started its operations (Umara, 2014:156).



Figure 1: Map Showing Nigeria with Lake Chad Region.

Relating to the above, Lake Chad is the fourth largest in Africa after Lakes Victoria, Tanganyika and Nyassa. It shares boundaries with Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon, but its hydrographic basin extends to Algeria, Libya and Sudan. The Lake Chad Basin commission (LCBC) was established on May 22, 1964, by the Fort Lamy Convention and Statutes by the governments of Cameroon, Chad, Niger Republic and Nigeria. In 1994, the Central African Republic (CAR) was admitted as the fifth signatory. Sudan was equally admitted in July 2000, increasing the LCBC jurisdiction from 966, 955 to 1,035,000 square kilometers while Libya joined in 2010. The convention recognizes the sovereign right of each member states over basin water resources within its own territory, but forbids unilateral exploitation of Lake Chad water where such use distracts from the interest of other states. The convention also recognizes the right of member states to plan projects within the conventional basin in consultation with the LCBC. Its mandates encompass trans-boundary, water and land, economic integration, peace and security matters (Bande, 2010: 209).



Figure 2: Map Showing Lake Chad with surrounding countries that have access to it directly.

The issue affecting the Lake Chad Basin/region is one of the most severe humanitarian emergencies in the world, having displaced more than 2.2 million people, half of whom are children. Most are refugees but the number also includes internally-displaced people and returnees apart from those killed

already (Plan international, 2018:3) Militant Group had been fighting for years in North-East Nigeria, raiding across the borders into the region's Lake Chad and three other counters. Millions have been killed and hundred of thousands displaced (Caritas, 2018:2)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

DIPLOMACY

Diplomacy is the management of international relations by negotiations, or methods by which these relations are adjusted and managed. It is the application of intelligence and tactics to the conduct of official relations between and among governments of independent states. The purpose of diplomacy is to provide the machinery and the personnel by which foreign policy is executed. It is the medium which foreign policy seeks to attain its purpose by agreement rather than by war (Palmer and Perkins, 2007:84)

DISPLACEMENT PERSONS

Forced displacement or forced immigration is the coerced movement of a person or people away from their home or home region and it often connotes violent coercion. In some cases, the formed immigrant can also become a refuge, while a forced displacement is population transfer which is a coherent policy to move unwanted groups. The concept envelopes demographic movements like flight, evacuation, displacement and resettlement, while a forced migrant as any person who migrates to escape persecution, conflict repression, natural and human-made disasters, ecological degradation of other situations that endanger their lives, freedom or livelihood (wikipedia, 2019).

FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy is the overall orientation and policy intentions of a particular country towards another. It is the objective that a country seeks to achieve in her relations or dealing with other countries and the means of achieving that particular goals or objectives which are reflected in the interaction of nation states within the international system (Ademiran, 2007:331) Foreign policy denotes the authoritative action which governments take or are committed to take in order or either to preserve the desirable aspects of the international environment or alter its undesirable aspects. It also represents the range of actions taken by various sections of the government of a state in its relations with other bodies or states acting on international scene in order to advance the national interest of that particular state (Akinboye and Ottoh, 2007:116).

INSURGENCY

Insurgency is an organized rebellion aimed at overthrowing a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflicts. It is an internal threat that uses subversion and violence to reach political ends. It is viewed as a movement/political effort with a specific aim which sets it apart from both guerilla warfare and terrorism as they are both methods available to pursue the goals of the political movement (Ade, 2015:2) According to Metz and Millen (2004) cited in Ade (2015) insurgency:

Is simply a strategy of desperation in which those with no other options turn to protracted, asymmetric violence, psychological warfare, and political mobilization. In some methods, insurgents seek to attain their objectives, directly by wearing down the dominant power (Ade, 2015:3)

NATIONAL INTEREST

National interest of a country encompasses those values, goals, means and beliefs that can guarantee its self-dignity, preservation and its national security some of the variables of national interest can be in terms of political, economic, social and cultural awakening or economic development (Kolawole, 1997:275) National interest is the sum total of the objective and goals of nation-state. It is the basic motivation for foreign policy formulation and execution as a guide for policy makers (Eminue, 2013:68).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human and environmental security theories adopted to midwife and pilot the study. Human security theory according to its advocates, challenges the traditional state-centric view that the state is and should be the primary object, or referent of security. It is the means to that objective. Human security is the protection of individuals and communities from war and other forms of violence (Kerr, 2007:124)

The long philosophical and political human-centric tradition has only recently included a concept labelled 'human security' This has its origins in policy statements emanating from the United Nations in the mid-1990 and in particular the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 1994. This described human security as a condition where people are given relief from the traumas that besiege human development. It is to address economic, food, health, environment, personal, community and political security (UNDP, 1994:23) Writers / theorists and proponents of human Security theory include the following Dong (2007), Rafal (2003) Sharhrbanon (2004) Lylod (2000), Amartya, Murray, Kerr (2007), Mack (2004), Lodgaard

(2001), Hubert (2004), Sadako Ogata (2005) Stewart (2000), Paris Roland (2001) and others. Again, human security theory connotes freedom from fear and want, from violent threats against individuals such as death, physical and psychological abuse and abduction (Amalu, 2015:28)

The linkage of the theory to the study includes:

- i. As a diplomatic framing tool for setting normative standards and for demonstrating the connections between conflict and human development
- ii. Utility of the concept to support human security
- iii. It is connected to the principle of the responsibility to protect.
- iv. As human lives have been lost to the insecurity situation in the Lake Chad, due to the insurgents Boko-Haram and other act of terrorism and criminalism

However, despite its utility value, the theory has its own shortcomings which include:

- i. It challenges the role of the state and is considered as threats to states sovereignty as the sole provider of security;
- ii. It gives rise to a host of policy implications like arbitrariness, vagueness of the idea and the broadness of its epistemology of threats. As the UNDP'S reports and Canadian government's papers list of threats to human security, it includes everything from substance abuse to genocide, making it impossible to determine where policy attention is most required and priorities for action to be established;
- iii. Criticism is based on the vagueness and incoherence nature of this theory; and
- iv. It could be used to justify military interventions and may impose military solutions to problems of the welfare states and the role of international aid as double-edged sword (Singh, 2004:5)

The other theory for analysis is the Environmental security theory. It views ecological processes and natural resources as sources or catalysts of conflict, barriers or limits to human well-being or conversely, as the means to mitigate or resolve insecurity. Security over natural resources particularly energy and increasingly water seen in terms of territorial control treaty arrangement and trade agreement over production and conveyance of resources to demand locations (Scott and Thapa, 2015:2) The connections between environmental change and violent conflict have been a central and long-standing concern of environmental security studies. Early writing on the connections borrowed heavily from realist international relations theory and focused largely on

resources scarcity and conflict between states as environmental change can weaken the economic base that determines military capacity. It is the product of effort by environmental movement to raise the profile of environmental issues and contest the practices of national security such that environmental change may be a cause of violent conflict between and within countries and pose as threats to national security of other nations (Barnett, 2007:236) Proponents and theorists of environmental security theory include Scott (2015), Conca (1993) Dulby. (19992), Deuoney (1990), Doran. (1998), Dunlap. (1991), Renner (1987), Barnett (2007), Kingham (2006) Rogers. (1997), Gleick (1991), Watts (2001), Soroos (1994), and other have written extensively on the theory.

The linkage to the study lies on:

- i. The ways in which environmental change threatens the welfare of states (Lake Chad water shrinking in sizes)
- ii. The way in which it affects the welfare of individuals and community
- iii. People are environmentally insecure in all sorts of ways and for all sorts of reasons (insecurity, food crisis, climate change in the Lake Chad region)

Despite all these, the theory suffers defects due to the following reasons:

- i. Social determinant of insecurity, large-scale processes such as welfare corruption, trade dependency and economics liberalization affect people's sensitivity to environmental change and their capacities adapt to them
- ii. Past processes such as colonization and war shape present insecurities and ongoing processes such as climate change shape future insecurity.

ISSUES/CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY PROBLEMS IN THE LAKE CHAD REGION.

Insurgency of Boko-Haram

The emergency of Boko Haram a threat to Nigeria and other countries surrounding around Lake Chad area. The actions of the Jihadist movement have led to the disruption of communities putting populations at risk of food insecurity and creating urgent humanitarian needs (Galeazzi *et al*,2017:13). Its campaign is marked by human rights violations which have disrupted the entire spectrum of humanitarian activities in affected areas and have left civilians in a dire situation where the threat of violence malnutrition and starvation, lack of basic services and constant fear have become features of life (Comoli, 2017:9) Many have been killed, injured and displaced on the Boko-Haram crisis.

Human Trafficking

As Lake Chad region dwell in security challenges from Nigeria as a result of Boko-Haram insurgency, illicit human trafficking has taken the centre stage where it has become an enroute of Nigerians to North Africa and Europe and reversely, Non-Nigerians into the Nigerian territory which have posed serious security issues to the government. A transit route for illegal people to move in and out of Nigeria.

Lake Chad Basin Commission

It was established in 1964 to cater for the water management by the original four countries which came together for its formation (Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon) The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was created to tackle insurgency and related matters in the area which the Lake Chad Basin Commission has been unable to solve. According to the Executive Secretary of the commission cited in the Guardian (2018) that:

Since 2014, activities of insurgents prevented the commission from carrying out programmes, especially in the rural areas, while commending the effects of the Multinational Joint Task Force to stabilizing the region. Our major challenges were the non-payment of annual contributions by member-states as and when due, and security challenges coupled with the effect of climate change in the Lake Chad Basin (Guardian, 2018:1).

Furthermore, according to Ms Ahua (2019) that:

The UN High commission for Refugees has called for urgent protection and humanitarian solutions for over seven million displaced persons across the Lake Chad Basin Region and that animosity has heightened insecurity, it continued to face serious protection crisis, traumatized and going through insecurity terrorism, poverty and climate situations that have deteriorated (Premium Times, 28th January 2019)

Food Insecurity

It has significantly increased as a result of violence associated with armed groups destroying access to farming both as an income generation activity and for subsistence purposes which has exposed people of the Lake Chad region to hunger, begging, malnutrition. Livelihood and agricultural activities have been disrupted as markets have been closed contributing further to economic insecurity and food shortages (2018:3) The arrival of people fleeing the conflict area most of whom live in local communities rather than camps has put additional strain on limited food, shelter, land and other services. It has caused food insecurity for about five million as food crops destroyed.

Physical and Sexual Violence

It became issues due to the crisis after the Lake Chad region. Many women / girls have been raped and assaulted physically.

Poor Health and Water Shortages

There have been inadequate health related facilities and water shortage have been experiencing due to the crisis and the shrinking of the Lake due to the security challenges. According to Skretteberg (2018) that:

The conflict is brutal, and the civilian population are in need of both food and protection. Close to 11 million people have been depending on aid while 2.4 million people have been forced to flee their homes. In addition, there have been mass kidnapping of children, forced recruitment of children as child soldiers and other violations of human rights (Skretteberg 2018:3).

Illegal Importation of Goods, Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The volatility of the region has given rise to illegal importation of contraband goods across North-East Nigeria and the Lake Chad. It has tripled the volume of illegal imports of goods due to the security challenges. Light weapons and small arms have been massively imported into the region as well. According to United Nations conference on the illicit trade in small Arms and light weapons in all its aspects (2001) that:

Recognizing that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons to the displacement of civilians undermines respect for international position of humanitarian assistance to victims of armed conflict and fuels crime and terrorism (UN, 2001:7).

Climate Change

Due to climate change and over exploitation of its water resources Lake Chad is shrinking (Oyedele, 2017:1) Climate change is exacerbating smouldering conflict. At the same time the conflicts are preventing people from responding sensibly to climate change. It hampers sustainable development and peace-building processes. It has limited the availability of natural resources as access to these resources are being controlled by the conflict parties (Dietl, 2018:2).

Porous Borders and Francophone Neighbours

The porosity of Nigeria borders has made it possible for migration, illegal, activities, unwarranted influx of migrants from neighbouring nations to enter the country which can serve as a basis of determining the foreign policy direction of the state. It exacerbates the political and diplomatic consequences and impact

of such a policy in eradicating international terrorism, insurgency, criminality and smuggling. As Nigeria's shares borders with Chad, Niger and Cameroon which are francophone speaking countries, language barrier and language exchange pose a difficult task in borders policing as a result of difficult and different colonial heritages which appears cumbersome in border transactions (Adeola, 2015:2)

Bad Governance/Leadership

The standpoint of political leadership in Nigeria calls to question where quality of lives cannot be guaranteed. According to Nwolise (2013) that:

With crimes, conflict and intra-state wars, the sanctity of human life, as well as human ad people's right are violated daily in several nations of the continent, even by our governments. Apart from the area of peace and security, even in the areas of electrons and governance, elections are still rigged in the continent while the people are still excluded from participating effectively in governance, and in determining their leader (Nwolise, 2013:292)

Other security issues / challenges with Nigeria's foreign policy are the following:

- Varying cultures and historical traditions perceptions about Nigeira by her neighbours and internal dynamics
- Political fragility within Nigeria unstable economy
- Globalization and emerging trends in international relations
- Geographical and natural resources of Nigeria unassessed.
- Endemic and epidermic diseases across borders.
- Migration, refugees and human rights

Prospects / Recommendations and Conclusion

- i. Holistic approach to solve the security challenges (ii) To create social and political infrastructures to the troubled region (iii) Jobs creation (iv) Nigeria to ensure uninterrupted flow of water to the Lake, particularly to its own side which is at the downstream. (v) Nigeria to persuade member states using her economic leverage towards effective functioning of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. (vi) To prevent the proliferation of weapons (any kind) entering her borders. (vii) Security surveillance equipment be deployed her international borders. (viii) Adoption of conflict prevention (preventive diplomacy methods which focusses on the early detection of likely causes of conflict and to promote early involvement which can de-escalate conflict and hasten the

restoration of peace. (ix) Regional military efforts to solve bilateral and multilateral crisis (x) To restructure and strengthen its security and intelligence gathering architecture and to restore public trust in her security forces. (xi) Good governance, social justice, human rights and economic accountability (xii) Strategic partnership with big power. (USA, UK, France, Russia, China) (xiii) Economic trade and investment in the region. (xiv) Grazing ground or land ranches should be built in all states of the country for Fulani herdsmen who rear cattles (Obi, 2015:12). (xv) Re-evaluation of her foreign policy principles and objectives. (xvi) Re-assess her defence and security objectives. (xvii) Adoption of health, food and environmental security policy. (xviii) The Government should adopt the role and input of intelligence in national security. (xix) Consolidation of Democracy

Conclusion

Lake Chad region apart from its agricultural importance that bolstered linkage among the states of the federation and by extension countries surrounding Lake Chad it housed about 25 million Nigerians that largely depend on the Lake for socio economic activities. The complete disruption in the waters of Lake Chad has amounted to strategic consequences for the Nigeria's Foreign policy and the security challenges on the nation at large. Nigeria's strategic interest in the Lake Chad region is achieved on the geographical location of the country to the sub-region accentuated by socio-cultural and political economic realities as such contiguity created a lot of risks and opportunities that made the region of strategic importance to Nigeria.

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