



NATIONAL SECURITY AND NIGERIA'S STRATEGIC DEPTH IN THE REPUBLIC OF CHAD: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

From the contexts of the national security and strategic depth of Nigeria, the country is strategically located at the confluence of West and Central Africa. This dual geographical identity has been used by different Nigerian regimes to achieve regional and international balances. As for historical factor, Nigeria has a rich historical and cultural legacy due to the transnational dimension of its ancient empires and kingdoms. The foreign policy of Nigeria begins at its immediate borders, which is considers being of paramount importance to the country's overall national interest, its security, political and economic well-being and survival. The Republic of Chad is one of Nigeria's immediate neighbors that have a double standard impact on Nigerian national security and its strategic depth. But despite Nigeria's commitment to maintain cordial relations with her neighbours including Chad Republic, there are still issues of cross-border disputes, particularly around the Lake Chad Basin and armed incursions into Nigeria by Chadian bandits that are threatening the Nigeria's national security. This paper therefore looked into the security implications of Nigeria's contiguity with Chad Republic, and then proffered way forward. The paper concludes that; for Nigeria to address her security challenges in relations with Chad Republic, the country has to make sure that her national interests must supersede other external considerations.

Keywords: *National Security, Strategic Depth, Nigeria, Chad.*

Introduction

The issue of security is as old as mankind. Because it impinges on the survival of every human person or society, it has remained the central organizing principle of existence at individual, community, group and state levels. According to Wolfers (1979):

Security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to life, liberty, property and

core values and at the subjective level, security measures the absence of fear, anxiety, tension, or apprehension of being in danger of losing life, liberty, property and core values (Wolfers, 1979:150).

In view of this, security depicts a situation of absence of threat to physical survival of individual, community, group or a state. Without security, individual or group within a state cannot engage in productive activities and the state may also find it difficult to harness its human and material resources to achieve meaningful progress and promote the well-being of the citizens. In view of this, if an individual, community, group or state is under any form of threat, a state of insecurity exists.

National security is a term used by many, including statesmen, politicians, diplomats, policy elites, etc., to mobilise and rally the support of citizens in times of national need. The use of the term became popular after the Second World War, especially in the 1950s when social scientists, mostly in the United States of America, began to use it as analytical concept and major field of study focusing mainly on military might.

Like national security, the concept of “strategic depth” has gained momentum in global affairs in contemporary times. The concept became popular with the recent publication of a book titled *The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkey*, by the former Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmed Davutoglu. As explained, the strategic depth of any country is proportional to its national security. It is a geopolitical issue that naturally strengthens the defence capability of the country and reinforces its natural capacity to absorb a military aggression as well as dealing with the treaties and alliances with different friendly countries based on trade, economic, social, cultural, demographic, political and military relations. According to Davutoglu, in the post-Cold war order, a country’s significance and power on the world stage lies on its strategic depth. For a country to be a “central state” and leading actor in international relations, it must possess “geographical depth” – meaning an exceptional geopolitical location and “historical depth”, which means a rich cultural and historical background (Grigoriadis, 2010).

In reference to Nigeria from the contexts of the national security and strategic depth of Nigeria, the country is strategically located at the confluence of West and Central Africa. This dual geographical identity has been used by different Nigerian regimes to achieve regional and international balances. As for

historical factor, Nigeria has a rich historical and cultural legacy due to the transnational dimension of its ancient empires and kingdoms.

The Republic of Chad is one of Nigeria's immediate neighbors that have a double standard impact on Nigerian national security and its strategic depth. Nigeria and the Republic of Chad are colonial creations borne out of a series of negotiations, treaties, and conquests by Britain and France respectively, in the first decade of the 20th century. The two countries share a common border of the Lake-Chad Basin, which stretches to 85 Square kilometers. Both countries obtained their political independence from their respective colonial masters in 1960 and have since been exchanging diplomatic missions and entering into various bilateral relations that border on trade, culture, education, industry, and religion with a view to promoting their mutual national interests which are central to international relations. These were not achieved without many challenges.

Indeed, these two countries, Nigeria and Chad were closely bound to each other in relationship through economic, politics, trade; war on terrorism and religion fundamentalists, human and child trafficking, illegal immigration, etc. Several studies have been done on Nigeria/Chad relations but only few of these works attempted to address the security implications of Nigeria's contiguity with Chad Republic, which this paper attempts doing that.

Conceptualising National Security

In the words of the famous political scientist and historian, Lippman (1954), national security is the state at which "a nation is secured to the extent to which it is not in a danger of having to sacrifice its national core values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in case of war". The military-centric conception of national security approach to curtailing the threat of armed attack is obvious in Lipmann's definition. However, the tendency to pin national security to strictly military security or defence of the state against external aggressor is considered, reductionist. The new perspective of national security, particularly, in Africa and other Third World views it in broader perspective which accordingly encompasses multifaceted issues all of which relate to the whole gamut of human needs including non-military issues.

National security in this broad sense means freedom from or elimination of threat not only to the physical existence of state but also to the ability for self-protection and development and the improvement of the general well-being. In support of this position, Barney et.al, (1991) explains that "national security, properly understood includes not only military security against foreign

invasion, but also food security, economic security, environment security, domestic order, educational security, old age security, and national disaster security". Thus, there is a conventional and non-conventional conception of national security. The conventional conception is the strategic or military dimension from which the concept is originally defined and often discussed, while the non-conventional dimension is the non-military conception which includes various forms of security referred to by Barney et.al. In essence, national security is an important issue in contemporary human affairs and which continues to guide the policy options and direction of many states.

Theoretical Framework

The concepts of national security and strategic depth concur both in the context of this paper to the analysis of potential or actual threats posed by Chad to the national security of Nigeria as an immediate neighbour as well as the strategic calculation and response of towards the Chad's factor. The paper in order to explain this, adopts the "National Security Strategic Personality theory (NSSP)". This theory is aimed at revealing how the operationalisation of national security, against threats with agency, is different from state to state. The NSSP theory was developed by Mobolaji (2017), focusing on identifying Nigerian state behaviour towards its perceived malicious threats, from 1960 through 2014.

The NSSP theory is a result of an informed development of existing theoretical frameworks namely; Strategic Culture, and National Strategic Personality, into a coherent analytical tool. This framework utilises a constructivist ontology, to carefully extract viable elements (such as the state, security and referent objects) of the strategic culture and national strategic personality theoretical frameworks respectively. The NSSP framework then proceeds to reapply the extracted concepts, into an explanatory typology, so as to maximise their explanatory and predictive efficiency. The National Security Strategic Personality framework proposes that national security strategies of states, indeed share discernible similarities, but also possess distinct differences in character. This proposition is based on a systemic investigation into state behaviour against malicious threats, which identifies where state behaviour occurs, why such behaviour occurs, and how it occurs.

The framework then proposes that the similarities and differences which one observes amounts to unique strategic personalities that can be documented. The hypotheses put forward in this thesis ascertain that: Every State possesses a unique National Security Strategic Personality which guides state actions against its perceived malicious threats to its referent objects. The unique

National Security Strategic Personalities of states can be identified and adequately characterised by utilising the three elements of the National Security Strategic Personality Theoretical Framework. The three elements proposed to be of fundamental importance to understanding the personality of national security strategies, are: Orientation, the physical location which a state considers as being within its theatre of operations, within which one can observe state behaviour. Inflationary Containment, active and passive coercive means enacted by a state, which enables one to identify what referent objects the state prioritises. Compression, the strategic means which a state chooses to control or exterminate its perceived malicious threats. Orientation, Inflationary Containment and Compression are treated as independent variables which makes it possible to characterise the individual dimensions of a National Security Strategic Personality. Together, the characterised independent variables provides a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the National Security Strategic Personality as a whole, which is identified as a dependent variable.

The employment of the NSSP theory in this work is therefore aimed at presenting Chad as an agency in the consideration of potential threats to national security of Nigeria. Nigeria is surrounded by Francophone neighbours including Chad with whom she shares deep historical and cultural ties. It is from these neighbours too that unresolved border issues and major security threats emanate to inform the orientation as well as inflationary containment and strategic comprehension from which Nigeria's National Security Personality is analysed. Essentially, the application of NSSP theory in explaining the subject of Nigeria's relations with Chad will provide an insight into the country's response to threat to security threats and strategic depth in the immediate neighbourhood and entire West African region.

Methodological Perspective

In gathering data for this paper, the qualitative method of data collection was utilized, in which both primary and secondary data were used. While primary data was sourced through personal observation, secondary data were sourced through the existing literature such as book, journals, conference papers, among others.

Issues and Challenges of the Nigeria's Strategic Depth in the Republic of Chad

In his assessment of the challenges of the immediate neighbourhood in Nigeria's foreign policy, Akinterinwa (2012:25), remarked that since a country

being a fixed entity cannot choose its neighbours. The foreign policy of Nigeria must begin at its immediate borders which he considers to be of paramount importance to the country's overall national interest, its security, its political and economic well-being and survival. Since a country's immediate neighbours are also its first line of security, Akinterinwa therefore recommended that proper consideration must be given to them in Nigeria's foreign policy.

In line with the above, Chad copies a central position in what Akinterinwa expects of Nigeria's foreign policy. Akinterinwa (1987), identified some reasons why Chad is of primordial importance to Nigeria's foreign policy consideration. He felt that the persistence of the civil in Chad, and also that Chad as the theatre of indirect war between foreign powers constituted a grave danger to Nigeria. This is due to the fact that Nigeria considers the situation in Chad might be generalised, thereby affecting her security interests, etc., hence, perception of threat to her political stability. This, in one sense, helps to make Nigeria's African policy; and particularly her policy toward Chad more dynamic and important.

The second reason is the need for Nigeria to seek peace in Chad because of her policy of good neighbourliness and the common socio-cultural links between the two countries and that Nigeria's claim to black African leadership cannot be helped if Nigeria adopts a hostile policy. Moreover, there is a threat perception due to the landlocked nature of Chad, which required that Chad should be of interest to Nigeria better economic relations and development which Nigeria wants for Africa as a whole will not be helped, especially that Chad is a landlocked country. In view of this, peace in Chad cannot but be of interest to Nigeria. The opposition of Nigeria to the presence of foreign troops on African soil in general and, in general, and around her in particular is the third reason identified by Akinterinwa. This according to him is not for reasons of stability and security but also as a way of ending all forms of colonialism or neocolonialism. What is not contained in Akinterinwa's submission is the peace posture of Chad towards Nigeria and the disposition towards Nigeria.

In his analysis of problem-areas in Nigeria's relations with her neighbours including Chad, Ahmad (2012:156) stated that despite Nigeria's commitment to maintain cordial relations with her neighbours, the reality of the situation is that her neighbours continue to suspect Nigeria's motives sometimes they embark on actions that are detrimental to her national and security interests. According to Ahmad, an analysis of the threats posed to Nigeria and the implications inherent in the relationships will enhance the understanding of the volatile and the precarious condition and management of Nigeria's relations with her neighbours. In the case of the threats posed to Nigeria by Chad, Ahmad

noted that they are numerous, but manifested mainly “in the form of cross-border disputes, particularly around the Lake Chad Basin and armed incursions into Nigeria by Chadian bandits” (Ahmad, 2012).

In “Nigeria’s relations with her Neighbours”, Omede (2006), reveals the relations that are predicated on the historically ill-defined and improperly delimitation of boundaries in the West-African sub-region by the erstwhile European colonial masters. To him, the highly porous and easily permeable nature of these boundaries, coupled with the lack of a coordinated and coherent boundary policy by Nigeria and the governments of contiguous states’ accounts for the lukewarm and sometimes, frosty relations. According to him, “virtually all our neighbours enjoyed what can best be described as frosty relations with us. There was a tense situation between Chad, Cameroon, Benin and Nigeria... These tense situations were created out of the misconceived suspicion that Nigeria might succumb to the temptation to dominate her neighbours.” In reference to Chad, Omede’s view, the most persistent threat to Nigeria’s national security is the frequent border clashes with Chad and the continual internal religious and consequent ethnic military conflicts among various warring factions in Chad. The internationalization of the Chadian is also a threat to national security. He also explained how border porosity often aggravates criminal activities in the Sahel region. Border porosity between Nigeria and its neighbours, particularly Chad coupled with the lack of decisive defence policies are major factors which enhances external encroachments on Nigeria’s territorial integrity. In his assertion. Omede on “The Nigerian border appears to be the most vulnerable spot and the nation’s “Achilles heel” to Nigeria’s security”. By this, he argued that “because of the traditional Nigeria’s self-complacent attitude toward her security, based on the false premise that Nigeria is bordered by smaller and relatively weaker but friendly states which do not constitute any real threat to Nigeria’s national security”.

Furthermore, Ate (2000), agreed that since independence relationship between Nigeria and the immediate neighbours have been conflictual and essentially marked by mutual suspicion, distrust and outright alienation. He subsequently identified the relations as structurally defined by six basic sets of conditions which he outline as: Economic-commercial, history, ethno-cultural, geography, security-political, and institutions of cross-urban development. More specifically, Ate presented security-political condition of relations between Nigeria and neighbours where he outlined the Socio-Political implications of relations with neighbours. He identified: (1) Relationship with immediate neighbours as the pivot around which Nigeria’s core interest can be defined and protected; (2); That the immediate neighbourhood constitutes a sub-region

which Nigeria must treat as a natural base from, which to project and its national interests and regional influence; (3) The neglect of the border communities is a manifestation of calamity and failure of Nigeria's policy towards her border communities which if not addressed will intensify tension, breed greater disharmony, among the population of the region, disposing them of all forms of cross-border incursions, thus sustaining the boundary crisis and leaving unresolved the conflictual relationship among the immediate neighbours. These are issues that significantly affect the national security and strategic depth of Nigeria.

Adeola and Oluyomi (2012), examined the issue of a highly problematic and confrontational border relations between Nigeria and Chad Republic. According to them, Nigeria and Chad shares a porous and unreliable 75 kilometre border, all of which is on Lake Chad. Through the border, Nigeria's commitment to the Afrocentric policy and good neighbourliness was deployed through massive investment into the Chad Basin Development Authority (CBDA) in the basin on the Nigeria side. It was also a source of tension between the two countries as a result of irregular migration by Chadians and encroachment of the Nigerian territories by Chadian troops. From the tension generated over border issues, Adeola and Oluyemi drew lessons on the propensity for international migration to interact with other factors to foment violent conflict in three ways: (1) by providing resources that fuel internal conflicts; (2) by facilitating networks of organized crime; and (3) by serving as conduits for international terrorism. From the concerns and actions of Nigeria including militarization of the region are issues that reflect the national security and strategic depth of Nigeria in Chad.

The Way Forward

Having known that despite Nigeria's commitment to maintain cordial relations with her neighbours such as Chad, but there are still issues of cross-border disputes, particularly around the Lake Chad Basin and armed incursions into Nigeria by Chadian bandits, the country has to take certain strategic measures. For instance, Nigeria must intensify its both military and non-military strategies in containing all forms of security threats in its borders; especially in the Lake Chad Basin region. In his view on the issue of securing Nigerian borders with Chad and other contiguous states, Omede (2006) advised that, prompt measures should be taken, to delimit and demarcate the (Nigerian) boundary line, in order to prevent continuous conflicts over assumed violations of territorial integrity. In addition to the above, Nigeria must take into consideration that; the military preparedness of a nation requires a military establishment capable of supporting

the pursued foreign policy. With the denial of the United States to sell arms to Nigeria to fight the Boko Haram insurgency, it is a signal that in securing her borders, Nigeria should also develop and depend on her local Engineers for invention of military technologies that will assist her peace building keeping, and enforcement adventures in Africa. That was one of the mistakes that the country made by destroying the military technology of the Biafra during and after the civil war.

Nigeria must also realise that every nation; whether big or small, great or weak can constitute any form of threat. This holds to the fact that, Nigeria has the tradition of self-complacent attitude toward her security, based on the false premise that Nigeria is bordered by smaller and relatively weaker but friendly states which do not constitute any real threat to Nigeria's national security. But in reality, they do.

Another way forward is, it worthy of note that the principle of reciprocity remains the guiding principle in international trade and politics. Therefore, it is an unsustainable contradiction to provide financial and material assistance to nations that later show hostility to our interests and citizens. But in the case of Nigeria-Chad relations, Nigeria sees the need to seek peace in Chad because of her policy of good neighbourliness and the common socio-cultural links between the two countries, and being referred as the "Giant of Africa," won't want to adopt a hostile policy. But in international relations, principle of reciprocity is very important, and this is one of the guiding principles that Nigeria should adopt in her dealings with Chad Republic.

As much as diplomacy cannot be effective under the current context of security challenges, decay in the educational sector as well as weak economic base, yet Nigeria requires diplomacy and official ingenuity to address these challenges. Such diplomacy requires formidable specialized knowledge in many fields of intellectual endeavors with an overlay of generalized training in the diplomacy of the respective issues for any diplomat to make meaningful impact and sell the agenda of this country. In other words, Nigeria's diplomacy requires high caliber professionals to drive her contemporary diplomacy.

Finally, there is the need to link Nigeria's national interest in line with her foreign policy objectives. Nigeria's national interests should supersede other external considerations and remain imperatives. The focus should be on the gains or the advantages that country will derive as a nation in its foreign policy implementation.

Conclusion

The foreign policy of Nigeria begins at its immediate borders, which is considers being of paramount importance to the country's overall national

interest, its security, political and economic well-being and survival. But despite Nigeria's commitment to maintain cordial relations with her neighbours including Chad Republic, there are still issues of cross-border disputes, particularly around the Lake Chad Basin and armed incursions into Nigeria by Chadian bandits that are threatening the Nigeria's national security. Just like any other nation, national security is a Nigeria's core national interest.

This paper therefore looked into the security implications of Nigeria's contiguity with Chad Republic, and then proffered way forward. Based on this, the paper concludes that; for Nigeria to address her security challenges in relations with Chad Republic, the country has to make sure that her national interests must supersede other external considerations.

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