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## The Microcosm of Global Insecurity in Modern African Nations, an Example of Nigeria (2007 - 2011)

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*Abstract* - Africa has a disturbing notoriety for violent conflicts, civil wars, strife and political instability which has earned it the appellation of 'a continent at war against itself'. This has engendered insecurity, divided and pauperized societies. Various writers attribute this situation to the underdevelopment of Africa's political institutions; economic backwardness, ethnic and religious pluralities. Using the Marxian paradigm, I argue that these views are diversionary and smokescreen for strong global factors that engender insecurity in modern African nations. The world today has witnessed increase in divergent and antagonistic pluralisms, which are hinged upon global convergence around ideology and faith. These in turn are mere clothings for conflicting economic interests.



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# The Microcosm of Global Insecurity in Modern African Nations, an Example of Nigeria (2007 – 2011)

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## I. INTRODUCTION

IN security, divided and pauperized societies has been major obstacles to Nigeria's and indeed Africa's development. Insecurity in Africa has manifested in massive unemployment, poverty, disease, ethno-religious conflicts, armed robbery, violent ethnic conflicts, political thuggery etc.

Writers have made quixotic attempts at explaining the causes of insecurity in African Nations, many attribute these to the economic backwardness of Africa, others attribute the social crises to ethnic and religious pluralities of African countries.

I attempt to view the problem of insecurity in Nigeria from a perspective that seems to have been overlooked by many writers, I therefore opine that these views are mere smokescreens of fundamental factors that engendered insecurity in African countries. These factors are the inherent contradictions found in dependent capitalist countries and the contradictions caused by the 'umbilical cord' between African countries and the metropolitan cities of global capitalism.

We should not overlook the fact that Africa and other developing countries are attached to the headquarters of global capitalist economy through the unbalanced economic relationship, and through the adoption of the economic, fiscal, and political policies introduced or enforced from the global metropolitan countries of capitalism. This relationship started from the mercantilist stage of global capitalism.

Before I go into this, in this work, I shall attempt an analyses of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria

between 2007 and 2011. During this period, Nigeria experienced increase in destructive violent conflicts such as political conflicts, the Boko Haram religious/political bombings, the militants in the South-South, armed robbery in the South-West etc. Insecurity has weakened the fabrics of the Nigerian Nationhood.

Certain questions are germane to this discourse, 'How can we explain the existence of widespread insecurity and violence in modern African Nations? In other words what is the historical root of these phenomena in modern African nations? In what political economic or social context did this situation develop? And lastly, how can we address these notorious problems? I intend to provide answers to these questions in this paper. Before I go on it is necessary to define insecurity as I have used it in this work.

## II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Security may be put in simple terms as freedom from fear and want. Based on this we may talk of security of lives and property and security from poverty and disease. We may also view security as comprising three components viz: the food security, this is hinged on human existence; the national security and collective security. Insecurity is the direct opposite of security.

Food 'insecurity' or food crisis is one of the security issues that is central to national insecurity. It fuels the reserved army of national violent crises. The common adage 'a hungry man is an angry man' cannot be more adequate in describing the connection between food crisis and national crisis. Food crisis may be defined as lack of access to sufficient food, this can be chronic or transitory. When food crisis becomes chronic it means there is continuously insufficient diet which indicates inadequate production or acquisition of food for the generality of the citizens. While transitory food crisis is a temporary decline in household food supply. These results from instability in food production and food prices of even in the purchasing power of the generality of the citizens.

National security, involves the protection of lives, property, rights and dignity of the generality of the citizens. It also implies the protection of the national resources, territory sovereignty and the institutions of the country. In other words, national insecurity implies when

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there are threats to all these aspects of national life. Collective security encompasses the global threats to security of lives, resources, human rights, and dignity etc. or threats to global peace. This, concept since World War II has been advocated, attacked, defined and even criticized. More so, since collective action against threats to world peace may mean the collaboration of a few states on ad-hoc basis to deal with such challenges.

In this, we witness today the activities of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) around the globe. The question is in whose interests has NATO been present in different parts of the world? Whose security are they maintaining, and in whose interest, etc. The real issue is that capitalism at its imperialist stage through the colonial and neo-colonial structures and institutions internationalized the issue of national security. Therefore, for the capitalist metropolitan headquarters national security did not always coincide with the national boundaries because events occurring in another continent could threaten the national security at home. (the capitalist metropolitan cities). Thus we may understand the interest of the capitalist powers in wars in Syria, Libya, Bahrain etc. In the same vein, economically the greater integration of the metropolitan capitalist economies of the world, coupled with the intertwining of global market and financial institutions led to a situation whereby global capitalist system became vulnerable to global recession or economic instabilities which undermine economic securities even in the peripheral capitalist nations in Africa. The two World Wars (1914 – 1918 and 1939 – 1945), the Great Depression of 1929 – 1933; the ideological conflict between the global communist and capitalist system referred to as the cold war which engendered wars in Korean 1950 – 1953, Vietnam in 1959 – 1975 and many sponsored conflicts in Africa, Latin America and Asia and the Middle East for the best part of the 20th century and recently as from 2010, the debt crisis in Eurozone, which has been termed 'debocracy' and the subsequent 'occupy movement' in the capitalist metropolis of Europe and America. These are all historical evidences of the inherent conflicts in the capitalist system.

The balkanization of communist soviet union has led to series of national and international security challenges, especially the rise of what has been referred to as the 'unipolar world' or 'new world order' which invariably is American Military Adventurism or another form military subjugation of less developed countries, by the capitalist metropolitan nations. The national security implications of the current war in Asia, African and the middle east leaves no doubt that the less developed nations are under a new wave of unilateral breaches of national security.

### III. THE NIGERIAN EXAMPLE

The historical roots of insecurity in Nigeria cannot be divorced from the global trend. Infact, many

discourse on modern African nations should necessarily recognise its post coloniality. By this, I am referring to its historical connection to the growth and development of global capitalism, which at a stage led to the colonization of Africa. In other words any meaningful discourse of any historical phenomenon should be within the context of its political economy. Consequently I view the root cause of insecurity in modern African nations within the context of the global political economy of global capitalist economy. Hence I adopt the neo-Marxian paradigm in my contributions to the discourse on insecurity in modern African nations.

Neo-Marxian paradigm is a broad term that encompasses various twentieth century approaches that amends or extends Marxian and Marxist theory, often incorporating elements of other theoretical explanations from various writers, especially in sociology, criminology and psychology. Many prominent neo-Marxists such as Herbert Marcuse, were sociologists and psychologists .

Neo-Marxian theory as an idea of new left wing often emphasis the evils of global capitalism. It describes the opposition to the problems of inequalities and uneven development experienced in the Less Developed Countries within the context of the political economy of global capitalism. In the perspective of sociological studies (writings) neo-Marxian approach add Marx Weber's explanations of social inequality to Marxist philosophy. This is employed here to the discourse on the problem of the microcosm of global insecurity in modern African Nations.

### IV. INSECURITY UNDER COLONIAL RULE

The growth and development of the global capitalist economy led to the incorporation and supsumption of African economy under global capitalist system. The instrument of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, the so called legitimate trade saw global capitalism at its primitive accumulation stages. During this period, market expansion involved not only increase in global capitalist trade, but it was accompanied by violence, plunder, theft, robbery piracy and conquest of Africa and Asian countries. Thus at this stage of monopoly capitalism it necessitated the military subjugation, political domination, cultural alienation of the African continent all of which facilitated the plundering of the African economy under colonial subjugation for further development of the capitalist metropolitan headquarters in Europe and later in America.

Consequently, under colonial rule there were two distinct phenomena that are directly relevant to this discourse. "They are the creation of a state of insecurity, and the creation of uneven development" (Tijani, A. 2011:183). These are characteristics of capitalist system especially as found within the dependent capitalist nations therefore, we see that the foundation of insecurity as engendered by the political economy of capitalism took root from the mercantilist period (Slave

Trade) and laid under the colonial political economy. This reference made by (Nnoli 1978 : 63) on this pasteurizes the scene, he observes that:

Capitalism in general and the peripheral capitalism purveyed by colonial capitalism in particular contained an inherent tendency to marginalise people and areas and economic sectors not directly involved in the expanded reproduction of private capital through profit maximization.

The first colonial character which is the creation of uneven development globally as well as within national borders or within the colony, made urban centres that served as seats of colonial administration to have had more socio-economic infrastructure than the rural centres. At the regional level, development existed depending on the extent to which each region was integrated to the capitalist mercantile economy (Rodney, 1972 : 227). Thus for instance southern Sudan and Western Kenya had little that attracts colonial interests, they were thus neglected in terms of provision of roads, hospitals, schools, etc. In Nigeria, this phenomenon ignited the demand for creation of new regions, states and local governments especially after independence.

The second character of the colonial system was the creation of insecurity bearing in mind, our definition of insecurity as freedom from fear and want. The colonial state necessarily came into existence through violence and for the purpose of plundering the economy of the colony. In other words to pauperize, and poverize the colonial people. One of the main consequences of colonial rule was the creating a class of elite that stepped into the shoes of the colonial master, whose interests was also to acquire wealth at the expense of the governed. This situation was enhanced or made inevitable by the inherent colonial structures, policies and constitutions and by the pauperization of the independent states economy.

Thus apart from this class the economic structures had the umbilical cord of neo-colonial rule intact. The relationship between the two was that the former became local agents of international capitalist, those Marx called comprador Borgeoisie.

Therefore, we could safely say that insecurity in modern nations took root in the global capitalist system. Therefore when we talk of the manifestation of insecurity in modern African nations such as widespread deprivation, poverty, unemployment, disease and violent conflicts etc. we trace it to the dislocation of African systems and its relationship with the global capitalism.

## V. EXTERNAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

### a) *Food Crisis (Insecurity)*

Nigeria is a dependent capitalist country. It has all the features of economic backwardness. Poverty is an important factor in national insecurity. For instance disproportionate population of people in poverty implies

an insufficient utilization of national resources and the possibility of social unrest which may be due to unemployment, or underemployment. This creates or swells the population of what we call the Industrial Reverse Army IRA. In third world countries like Nigeria, it is this army that readily serve in the violent national crises. The 'occupy movement' in western countries is part of the features of poverty in such societies when the potentials of the poor are untapped or under developed or under utilized there is a high risk of frustration and national insecurity. It is in this regard that poverty leads to poor participation or even totally inhibits popular participation and apathy in policy formulation and procedure of election. The net result is poor governance, lack of direction and general instability.

Also because the potential of the poor are unengaged they find expression in form of retaliation against the state which they hold as been responsible for their deprivation. This may lead to drag trafficking armed robbery violent ethnic/religious conflicts kidnapping by ethnic militias etc.

When we consider our period of discourse, i.e. 2007 – 2011 in Nigeria, we need to look into the consequences of New Liberal Capitalist policies in engendering insecurity in Nigeria. In Nigeria, neo-liberalism stipulates the withdrawal of state from the provision of social services. Fundamentally, it advocates the disengagement of state from the management of public services. Nigeria has embraced this ideology, it consequently led to the policies of withdrawal such as privatization, commercialization, deregulation etc. With this, Nigeria entered the period of severe economic crisis coupled with the dearth of democratic values, manipulated democratic enterprise fraught with electoral malpractices; and the consequences of aggressive neo-liberal policies of commercialization and privatisation. These led to the manifestation of insecurity which include massive unemployment, poverty, disease, ethno-religious conflicts in various parts of country, high and rising rates of criminal activities, proliferation of ethnic militia, politically motivated violence, arson, thurggery, terrorist bombings high inflation rates and instability in the oil market. It also led to environmental insecurity such as decadent, decaying and neglected infrastructure such as roads, bridges, urban overcrowding etc.

Neo-liberalism should be viewed within the context of the new world order, uni-polar world or in other words the globalized world. There has been increase in divergence and antagonistic pluralities which converge around ideology and faith. This has divided the world into violent ideological and religious camps. It has been so violent that it has threatened global security.

These has manifested itself at the global level in the conflicts of which makes one to question the dividing line between terrorism and freedom fighting,

between anti-terrorist army and imperialist army; between foreign occupation and human rights supporters, between installation of puppet regime and democracy soldiers etc. All these crises are global manifestation of the global conflicts between faith and ideology. What then is this globalization. The globalized world is principally hinged on the globalisation of economy, (capitalism), Information and Communication Technology ICT these led to the attempt to globalise western model of democracy and 'human right. Hence western 'NATO' Army of Democracy are in essence soldiers of global capitalism, hence on the other hand, the religious 'fundamentalism' may not occur in a vacuum. It is within the context of the new world order or the globalized world. Otherwise why should al-Qaeda strike in the different parts of the world especially where there are American Economic interests, violence on both sides have polarised the world into conflict between ideology and faith.

In the same vein, when we consider, the organisation, methods, operation of the terrorist groups in Nigeria within this period, the Niger Delta militants, the Boko Haram, the Armed Robbers we find that in spite of the seeming ideological differences a common strong factor exist among them, i.e. the political economic interests.

## VI. EXTERNAL FORCES AND NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

In this paper, the term external forces refers to the 'United Nations Development partners, the international monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the World Trade Organization (W.T.O) They are among the numerous institutions that constitute the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which is a body of the United Nations that coordinates all the social and Economic Works of the United Nations (U.N.).

The IMF and IBRD also known as the World Bank were established at Briton Wood after the Second World War to help avoid economic disasters such as the Great Depression. These were organizations whose principles were based on classical liberal capitalist doctrines of Keynesian economics. John Maynard Kenes was a British economist and one of the closest economic advisors of Franklin Roosevelt.

The World Bank and IMF today have dominant economic activities in many countries of the world. The main preoccupation of the IMF was to stabilize foreign exchange rates while the IBRD was involved in the reconstruction of war devastations in Western Europe and long term economic development planning for less developed countries (Alkali, 1997). The World Trade Organization (WTO) was established in 1995, it succeeded the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade programme and the loan was designed to further

enslave the economy of the borrower and favour the designers.

The World Bank programmes started playing the role of facilitating the activities of the International (GATT) created in 1947. The WTO has been involved in promoting "free trade" agenda of the Trans-national Corporations. In other words ensuring the opening of national borders for the trade exploitation by the multinational companies headquarters in Europe and America. The common characteristic of the three institutions is that they dictate economic policies to less developed countries, rather than the other way round. It is within these context that we shall appraise the external factor in the security challenges in Nigeria.

The IMF, World Bank and WTO played roles that have devastating effects on the Nigerian Economy. They have in essence assisted the economic enslavement of Nigerian economy by the global capitalist metropolitan economy of Europe and America.

As early as 1955 the world bank had started involving in the Nigerian Economy. It took up the responsibility of a critical study of the Nigerian economy (Alkali, 1997).

In 1958 it gave its first credit facility of \$26.1 million to Nigeria to complete the railway line from Gombe to Maiduguri. This was the beginning of its involvement in the Nigerian political economy. Thence it financed projects mostly in areas of transport, sea ports, highways, telecommunications and electricity. Between 1958 and 1970 it financed a total of twelve projects amounting to some \$248.3 million (Alkali, 1997).

Between 1971 and 1980, the World Bank was involved in the funding of agricultural projects and rural development. It financed Cocoa production in Western Regions and between 1974 and 1077 it sponsored five agricultural development projects in Nigeria, i.e. Funtua, Gombe, Gausau, Lafia and Ayagba. In fact between 1958 and 1987, 66 projects loans were approved by the bank for Nigeria out of which 29 projects were for Agriculture which was values at \$1,591.8 million. The result generally was that it boosted agriculture impressively during this period (Alkali, 1997).

However, by 1980, World Bank began the introduction of non-project and quick disbursing structural Adjustment Loans (SAL) in its global activities. In September 1986, the Federal Government of Nigeria adopted the Structural Adjustment Programme officially (SAP). By November, 1986, it acquired the first SAP loan of \$452.0 million. In 1989 the second SAP loan of \$600 million was approved for Nigerian and it continued until Nigeria then became the 12th largest borrowers of the Bank in the World (Alkali, 1997). The acquisition of World Bank Loan and adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme in Nigeria became a turning point in the history of Nigerian Political Economy. The whole Corporations and Western Governments. It became

policy agents for the two. It was in that capacity that countries like Nigeria had no choice but to adopt the economic policies of a neo-colonial character.

The Structural Adjustment Programme basically include political and economic policy measures such as privatization, deregulation, Austerity Measures, devaluation of currency, massive reduction in social welfare programmes and state expenditure retrenchment of workers and wage freeze. It include also introduction of repressive laws curtailing political liberty (Mbu, 1992).

The consequences of the SAP Programme both economically and socially can be seen in terms of the insecurity it created in the country. The programme lacked human face such that at the Khortuum Conference organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, SAP was criticized seriously for not meeting urgent human needs' (Iyoha, 1992).

Since the 1980s, the living conditions of Nigerians has continuously deteriorated. The real incomes of most households declined sharply and the rate of underemployment worsened. World Bank reports that since the commencement of the SAP programme the living standard of the Nigerians masses fell drastically. The per capita income reduced from \$800 to less than \$400 in the 1990s (World Bank, 1994)

Thus it put the lives of Nigerians into serious food insecurity and it eroded genuine nationalist feelings leading many into their ethnic and religious shells, from which they started series of violence against the state, leading to National insecurity.

At the dawn of the present millennium, Nigeria entered a period of serious problem of socio-economic and political instability and insecurity. The harsh-economic policies enforced by the World Bank, IMF and WTO – the so-called International Development Partners have the effects of deepening poverty, aggravating food insecurity environmental destruction, neglect of social infrastructure and population dislocation and displacement. The purchasing power of Nigerian declined so much that most Nigerians live below poverty line.

Removal of subsidy from petroleum resources, health and education further pushed Nigerians into abject poverty. Debt servicing took priority over social services. Young people suffer under-employment and unemployment. Removal of subsidy from the Agricultural sector reduced the purchasing power of peasant farmers and their capacity utilization.

Before the SAP programme in 1980, Nigeria was among the middle income nations, but by the early 1990s Nigerian had joined the leading poorest and most corrupt nations in the World (Nwoko,1992). Although Nigeria ranked among the richest 50 countries in pre-early 1970s but by the turn of this millennium, she became one of the 25 poorest countries and the second most corrupt country in the World. (Igbuzor, 2006).

In terms of statistics that shows incidence of poverty, by 1980, using the rate of US\$1 per day it increased from 28.1% to 46.2% in 1985 and by 1996 it increased to 68.6%. While using US\$2 per day to measure the poverty level the percentage of people living below poverty line increased to about 93.4% (Igbuzor, 2006).

Poverty, instability, corruption, food insecurity, national insecurity therefore became consequences of the precarious and fragile economy and social conditions, which was engendered by decades of neglect, and exploitation by the so-called International Development Partners.

The Niger Delta where the major source of national income is been derived suffered untold ecological devastation, due to the exploration and exploitation of oil resources. This put the people of Niger Delta into precarious social health and economic conditions. Any efforts by the Government to cushion the effects could not succeed due to hyper corruption in higher places. It is in this context that we can historically understand the Niger Delta militancy and the birth of Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. MEND's method of bombing of government and oil companies installations clearly indicate their grievances.

But the insecurity caused by the Boko Haram bombing cannot be so simply understood. The sect which called itself Society for propagation of Islam and Holy War have been involved in series of bombings that seems to be indiscriminate, Muslims and non-Muslims were targeted. But the Christians Churches seems to attract their special focus of attack, thereby giving suggestions of a religions war.

Therefore when the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) views it as a religions war against the Nigerian Christians, (Nigerian Tribune 13, April, 2012) one cannot really challenge that view. However, other activities of the group becloud their real focus. They have not only been attacking government departments but also Muslims seems to be the largest victims of bombings in terms of number of deaths due to Boko Haram bombings.

Perhaps that was the reasons why Dr. Sunday Mbang former President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) told Nigerians that "Boko Haram is our suffering for North/South inequality" (Sunday Tribune April 15, 2012). While General Azazi the National Security Adviser of Nigeria held that Boko Haram saga is a baby of ruling Democratic Party's conflicts. A position which a spokesman of the Boko Haram affirmed (Sunday Sun, May 5, 2012).

The Nigerian President, Jonathan Goodluck also admits that 'Politics of bitterness is promoting Boko Haram' (Nigerian Tribune, 26th June, 2012).

Thus we may deduce that in spite of the seeming religious clothings the real reason behind the

indiscriminate bombings of Boko Haram group could be found within the political economic conflicts.

The United States of America asserts that it is due to the serious decline in the standard of living of Nigerian especially Northern Nigeria. Is more devastated by poverty and neglect (Nigerian Tribune April 19, 2012).

Consequently, we may argue that the Boko Haram saga as well as the militancy in the South cannot be divorced from the economic woes initiated by the economic hardship caused by the neo-colonial status of Nigeria. But the political and economic corruption of Nigeria's comprador Bongeorsive is definely part of the reason. Boko Haran saga has led to serious loss of lives, state of panic, loss of billions of Nara worth of property on daily basis and it has threatened the foundation of Nigeria statehood.

By and large, I have attempted to use neo-Marxian paradigm to explain the historical roots of global insecurity. I have traced it to the global capitalist economic system and its inherent contradictions.

And I have argued that human security as a people centred approach to Global security must recognise that lasting peace and social justice cannot be achieved unless people are protected from threats to their rights and basic needs. Among the human security threats are violence and abuse of human rights, corruption and bad governance, disasters and climate change, poverty and poor access to basic services.

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