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Environment And National Security In Nigeria

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Abstract

National security means so many things to many people. National security is not all about protecting the territorial boundaries of Nigeria or people against threat to lives or killings through the use of weapons only. Security has very many dimensions which to a large extent affects the security of people within a territory. There are environmental security, economic security that affects the people directly or indirectly. Environmental security social security space security, political security – all anchor on security and is the nucleus to other aspects of security since every activity of man takes place on the environment; if the environment is unsecured such other human activities for the well – being of the people would be counter – productive. That our environment has been variously been abused through pollution, degradation through unconventional agricultural methods, solid and hazardous waste disposal; non-military threats such as desertification, flooding and erosion. The paper recommends that there is need to protect the environment against degradation of any form: conventional farming methods be used where necessary. Besides environmental laws should be applied and the offenders punished as a deterrence to others. There is need for periodic seminars and conferences, bills and the use of town-criers to educate the populace on the need for environmental security for national security. The paper uses historical analysis as methodology.

Introduction

For about four decades ago, environmental issues and securing the world safe for mankind captured international attention at least since British Industrial Revolution and become one of the most important issues widely discussed in international fora. Environmental issues become necessary because of the fundamental changes occurring within the global system owing to changes in science and technology. These changes coupled with environmental challenges have brought a lot of problems to many homes, individuals and even nation-states. However, environmental issue in Nigeria was one of the most neglected issues of discussion not until the dumping of the toxic waste at Koko River Port in Delta State in 1988 by an Italian firm. This also bothers on man's security and environment.

Indeed, Nigeria's security issues have become a thorny issue since the end of the Nigeria civil war in 1970. Since then the threat to lives of Nigerians through armed robbery, kidnapping, militancy and of recent terrorism perpetuated by the Islamic Sect Boko-Haram and its destructive operation have suffocated the Nigerian State. But this too has to do purely with human security. Human security therefore should be viewed not necessarily on physical state but through other aspects of security – food, economic, but central to this paper is how environmental insecurity constitutes an aspect of national insecurity. Security is the nucleus in which other developmental elements anchor. Human and environmental securities are bedrock of national security. To understand the discussion and imperatives for national security there is need to explain the concepts for classification.

The Concept of Environment

The term environment has various meanings as there are people interested in seeking for knowledge in their various fields of human endeavour. Many see environment socially, others see it culturally and still others see it as physical or biological. Social environment, for instance, consists of the interaction of man and man, man and animals, man and other living and non-living things that assist in the existence and usefulness of man on this planet. Cultural environment has to do with the norms, values, ethics, mores of the people. The physical environment deals with man's interaction with various structures such as water, air, land, animals, and how one influences the other. In this context environment here refers to the physical environment that is sustained through interdependence. This interdependence is the foundation of our worldly environment, without it there would be no life (Robinson, 1972). According to Adejemiua (2007) he sees environment as life support surrounding it is all encompassing, comprising of all aspects of our planet earth and its surrounding to include air, land, the atmosphere, marine and wildlife, swamps, and other life-support resources. In a more precise term, life-support environment can be explained as that part of the earth that provides the physiological and physical necessities of life including food, other energy resources, minerals, nutrients, air, land and water. However, based on landscape designers classification, the environment while travelling either by air, water or land can be listed under three categories – fabricated (developed), domesticated (cultivated), natural (uncultivated) sites. The developed environment includes cities, industrial estate and transportation ways such as highways or streets, railways and airports. The cultivated environment includes agricultural lands, managed woodlands and forests, artificial fishponds, water dams or artificial lakes. Cultivated plants and

domestic animals dominate this environment, which is modified and managed so as to promote the production of food and fibre, hobby, recreation and other human needs (Adejemiua, 2007). In strict sense, natural environments are giving way to developed and cultivated environment.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO defined environment as the physical and social resources available to a given time in a given location for the satisfying of human needs and aspiration. The environment, therefore, comprises the land, water and other living and non-living resources. In totality, and environment represent the total surrounding biological, physical, chemical impacting on the life and activities of man in his day to day interaction with nature (Porter and Brown, 1991; Collins, 2007). Environment is the part of the planet that house both living and non-living things which man depends on his sustenance. The living thing include the plants, trees, animals which provide raw materials for production and consumption by man; while the non-living things consist of the air, water, roads and minerals which also afforded man the luxury of living and maintenance of his health.

Conceptualizing Security

The term security lacks a precise definition, of course, it is a word commonly use by all manner of persons to express the situation when life is lost in a manner that could have been prevented. Security is a state of mind not necessarily an objective state of being. It describes how people feel, not whether they are justified in feeling that way. It depends on the perceptions that people have of that environment. Imobighe (1985) perceives security as a feeling of being protected, and a feeling of freedom from danger, fear, anxiety, oppression and unwarranted violence. Therefore, national security is feeling of the people within the nation of being protected from fear, anxiety, violence, oppression, unwarranted restriction. National security means developing relatively stable patterns of economic development and political growth at home and abroad. National securities by extension encompass environmental security human security, economic security food security, social security – that without national security other aspects of security cannot function positively. According to Soroos 1997 in Collins, contemporary security studies, he put forward that security is the assurance people have that they will continue to enjoy those things that are most important to their survival and well-being. While McNamara, a one time US secretary of Defense during President John F. Kennedy administration and later president of the World Bank perceives security as development; security is not military force, though it may involve it; security is not traditional military activity; though it encompass it, security

is not military hardware, though it may include it, security is development and without development there can be no security (1968). Here McNamara looks at security because of the time-at the time he came out with this definition the world was enmeshed in cold war. Thus to him he thought of the measure that would be advantageous to human development especially the developing nations who had little or no business with the cold war palaver. McNamara of the time was looking of dependency, which the developing world such as Nigeria was running to both West and East for assistance. Without security such assistance cannot be reached by either of the sides in contest.

Concept of National Security

National security is variously being explained by experts and non-experts alike – to mean different things depending on ones views. However, that as it may, Nnoli (2005) sees it as a cherish value associated with the physical safety of individuals, groups or nation states, together with a similar safety of their other most cherished values. It denotes freedom from threats, anxiety or danger. Therefore, security in an objective sense can be measured by the absence of threat, anxiety or danger. However, security in a subjective sense, which can be measured by the absence of fear that threat, anxiety or danger will materialize. In other words, it is a value associated with confidence in physical safety and other most cherished values. No matter how much safety there is in objective terms, unless there is confidence that such safety exists or will exist, there is no security. Even when no safety exists in objectives terms but there is confidence that it exists, then there is likely to be security, at least in the short term. In this latter case one may speak of false security. One person security may be another person's insecurity. Okene and Olawale (2013) see National security as a country's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished interest, enhance the standard of living and well-being of its people, preserve the core values and by extension cater for the visitors. It means, protection and development should cover all aspects of the environment and by extension people. Tor (2013) sees National security as those threats that challenge the independence, sovereignty, cohesion and integrity, and effective functioning of nation-state and its society.

National security is the interplay which encompasses those attributes which lead to development and reduce threat on the population – reduction in pollution and degradation of environment, provision of basic necessities of life, protection of capital base of the economy.

Conceptualizing National Insecurity

National insecurity is caused by the failure of national government to address the special needs of its inhabitants. Such needs include hunger,

poverty, unemployment, inequality and injustice among other things. It is seen that hunger, poverty unemployment are interwoven and one aspect may be responsible for the manifestation of another. By implication hunger, poverty, unemployment is caused when certain aspects of the capital base of the economy are abused. Two of the most important capital bases of an economy often abused are land and water.

According to Collins (1981) and Nnoli (2006) national insecurity is not all about absence of threat, violence, killings or in short human security. It integrates other aspects of life such as food security, environmental security, economic security, social, cultural and space security. These other securities are for the utilization of man. Man's existence depends on environment. Without the environment human security would be meaningless. Without viable economic security, the essence of man would be totally unparallel to life. Social security has to do with interactions of people through exchanges in wealth, recreation etc, while space security has to do with the wind, water and other constituents of cosmology that has direct link with man. In this connection, poverty, poor health, unemployment, injustice and lack of adequate education which we shall see in the course of this discussion can destroy the bases of these securities. Natural occurrences such as flood, desertification, erosion are man's creation such as modern slavery (human trafficking) are some aspects that create national insecurity.

National insecurity is a condition in nations development where life is threatened as a result of lapses in governance which have adverse effect on youth employment, food security, health conditions of the people and in the long run breed violence – kidnapping, armed robbery, assassinations, ethno-religious crisis, or even civil war.

However, whichever way we see National Security, it has to do with people within the geographical region or sovereignty. Thus National insecurity occurs when the players within sovereignty are in danger – threat of hunger or violence, unemployment, or their means of sustenance are eroded without being adequately compensated whether those means are natural or man-made.

Land Degradation and National Security

Land degradation is the deterioration of the natural environment, including the atmosphere, bodies of water, etc sometimes directly caused by man or natural occurrences. One of such ways in which the environment deteriorates is through pollution. Thus pollution is the undesirable change in the physical, chemical or biological characteristics of our air, land, and water that may or will harmfully affects human life, or that of plants and animals.

Pollution may or will waste, or deteriorate our raw material, life-support and other vital resources (Adejemilua, 2007). Environmental pollution is any action that makes the environment unhealthy and hazardedly impure.

Nigeria environment is daily being polluted through various means by individuals and companies doing business. The degrees of pollution also differ depending on the function. However, in Nigeria today, the most noticeable aspect of environmental pollution comes from the economic activities of oil exploitation particularly in the Niger Delta, and perhaps few industries that are still operating in Lagos and other big cities. Major pollutions come from the activities of oil multinational companies such as Exxon-Mobil, Agip, Shell, Texaco that are doing business in Nigeria. In the process of drilling, transportation, storage of oil there usually occur oil spills, and gas flaring.

Oil spillage has been one of the ways in which Nigerian coastal waters are polluted. Evidence indicates that between 1960 and now Nigeria experienced over 5,100 oil spills, some agreed to be in the quantum of 4,900 spills, whatever mathematical ratio agreed upon as the number it is generally agreed that oil spilled into the waters and some deposited on land is more than 4,900 spills estimated at over 2.5 million barrels of crude oil, polluting over 1000 square kilometres of coastline – mangrove swamps, rivers and creeks. The impact of this spill is enormous – it destroys vegetation, fish ponds, farmlands. Discharging the affluent into water kills the aquatic lives. It should be known that the people of this region eke their living mostly through farming and fishing (Akpan, 2009; Emordi & Azelaman, 2009).

Other process in which water is polluted is the discharge of untreated industrial water into streams, rivers, lakes e.g. Kaduna River receives untreated water from National Fertilizer Company of Nigeria (NAFCON) and other companies. The river is unfit for man's use for a long time now. Most of the industrial giants in Nigeria do not treat their effluents before discharging them into Nigerian waters. Again, in Lagos for instance, all types of wastes including human and industrial wastes, used engine oil and other oily substances are dumped daily into the lagoon around for a Train Terminal, loco, Isale-Eko, Apapa industrial areas, Ebile metta and other areas in the metropolis.

In the same vein, gas flaring is real and a common phenomenon in the Niger Delta. Gas flaring continues day and night in most of the country's oil wells and Nigeria accounts for about 25 percent of the world gas flare. Currently, it is agreed that about 62 per cent of associated natural gas is still being flared, while about 38 per cent is being re-injected to enhance oil recovery and other economic purpose. The Niger Delta where gas is flared had

been lit day and night since these years of oil exploration. In this connection, gas flare results in acid rain which in turn ruined vegetation, farmlands and crops, the destruction of aquatic and wildlife species. The alternations in the environmental processes result in distortion and damage to natural balance of the ecosystem making the environment inhospitable for sustainable human habitation. Again, gas flaring has become a potent factor in roasting and baking the land thus making it unproductive. Besides, the surface and ground water sources are already polluted and seriously contaminated (Adejemilua, 2007; Akpan, 2009). All these occurrences are enough threats to human security and by extension constitute part of the National insecurity. The livelihoods of the people are in jeopardy – suffering from environmental threat, food insecurity, lack of access to safe drinking water and indeed general insecurity among other things.

Closely related are the issues Artisanal refining and its attendant effect on the environment. Although artisanal refining appears to many people a phenomenon that is rooted on militancy. History of artisanal refining is not a recent issue; it has been there for over three decades. It is dated to the era of Nigeria-Biafra civil war, Artisanal refining is the outcome of the people's frustration as a result of which the environment in which they sustained themselves have been degraded and become unsustainable. For instance for communities that depended on the traditional livelihoods of fishing and farming, the massive environmental damage means the dislocation of the local economy, leading to high level of poverty and destitution in these communities. This dislocation of the traditional economy gave rise to Niger Delta militancy that held the Nigerian nation to ransom for years until the political solution in the name 'amnesty' appeared. The effect of militancy was felt throughout the country. Millions of barrels of oil were spilled into rivers, creeks and the Atlantic Ocean. Billions of Naira worth of oil money was wasted. Many lives and property were lost, and the entire south-south and south-east were tensed and unsecured. Arms were imported and freely used by the militants under different commanders. Indeed, those years the militants held sway in the Niger Delta life was brutish and lacks the expected value of the 21st century. It was the height of insecurity apart from the civil war in Nigeria – militancy affected budgets, foreign and local investments, trade and indeed touched the heart of economic development and growth.

However, the important element apart from the killings, kidnapping and hostage taking and the general insecurity of lives and property, the environmental pollution by these artisanal refiners were enormous. The crude refining methods – produced gas flaring of a new dimension, the sludge from the products into the land and water also cause another havoc to the already

polluted environment. Though money and indeed gains were made from the sales of these products, the environment became more uninhabitable than before. The hydro-carbons discharged and other forms of air and materials weakened the environment than before.

Solid and Hazardous Waste Disposal

Sanitary land fill sites for disposing municipal solid waste and hazardous materials pollute both surface and underground water, primarily through leakage of leachate. However, it is estimated that Nigeria generates millions of tons of solid waste daily. For instance, according to Adekeye (2007), between 522,043 and 342,352 metric tons of solid waste are generated annually in Lagos and Rivers States. He continued to explain that solid waste increases as the population grows. Put differently, there is high correlation between population growth in cities and waste generation. It is common site to see household, cottage industrial waste dumped indiscriminately on our cities and towns, without recourse to its effects. Indeed, studies have shown that dumps are not environmentally friendly.

Apart from the contamination of soil, pollution of surface and underground water as earlier pointed, contamination of agricultural lands, lead alone has a poisoning effect. Improperly managed solid waste emits offensive odour, thus polluting the air and favour the breeding of rodents, mosquitoes and harmful reptiles. Dump-sites are homes to flies, fleas, mosquitoes, rats and other vectors which are responsible for disease such as malaria, filariasis, lassa fever, yellow fever. These are common sites in our towns and cities. Equally discovered is that malaria, diarrhea, intestinal worms and upper respiratory tract infections are prevalent in the communities around dump. These have negative impact on the productivity of individuals living and doing business in these environments.

Indeed, the works of Eddy, Odoemelem and Mbaba of the Department of Chemistry, Michael Okpara University, Umudike showed that solid waste harbours radioactivity properties like flammability, explosivity, corrosivity, toxicity and mutagenicity, antimetabolic properties like alltergicity and infectivity (Adekeye, 2007). These are connects, with environment and activities of man within it. And since it affects the development and growth of man it constitutes an aspect of National insecurity. A threat to man and by extension environment the home of man. Good health of individuals within a state promotes productivity which eventually advances economic growth. Production of harmful wastes into the environment are detrimental to the well-being of those who create wealth hence high reduction in wealth creation may lead to social problem and by extension conflict for resource control or accumulation.

Desertification

Between 1970s and early 1980s, the issue of desertification in the World's Savannah areas captured world attention than ever before. It was very prominent in the Savannah of South of Sahara Desert in which Nigeria is part. However, several studies have questioned both the definition of desertification and the calculations used to arrive at or derive statistics (Adejamilua, 2007). Indeed, be that as it may, desertification is the process where the quality of lands are reduced through negative human activities or sometime caused by nature. Desertification mostly affects the Savannah States of Northern Nigeria. The natural activities responsible for desertification among other things include short or inadequate rainfall, longer dry season, while man-made activities include over-cultivation, over-grazing, bush burning, deforestation and other processes to which environment is put negatively or in an improper use.

Meanwhile, it is of note that desertification is about ninety-five per cent man-made. The main cause of desertification is the felling of trees for fuel wood. About 90 per cent of the citizens in Northern Nigeria mainly the low group rely on fuel wood. Apart from searching for fuel wood which usually leads to felling down of trees, or searching for animals (games) for food, other activities that reduces the land is poor farming methods. The common farming method used is the slash and burn or what most scholars usually refer to as shifting cultivation. Well the actual shifting cultivation is a common practice in South America.

The common thing here is land rotation. Whatever name this common farming practice is called, the main issue is that the land is usually being opened through dealing, in this connection wind and water erosion prevails. Wind erosion is very common and more destructive in the Savannah than the water erosion. But often both act at various times and degrade the land. Other activities are those of the herdsmen, whose animal graze on the available vegetable and compound the problem, leading to forest retreat and a progressively low annual cropping. In Nigeria, the states highly prone to desertification include Zamfara, Kebbi, Katsina, Jigawa, Yobe, Sokoto, Bornu Bauchi, Gombe and Kano. In addition desert conditions are estimated to be advancing southwards at the rate of about 0.6km per annum. For the impact on the human activities and nature have placed on the Savannah environment, to reduce or rejuvenate the environment, it is estimated that it would cost Nigeria about US\$5, 110 million (N648,97 billion per annum) Akpan, 2009 Adejemilua, 2007).

Erosion

Erosion is an aspect of land degradation usually caused by man and sometimes by nature. Erosion is the removal of part of the land surface by wind, water, gravity, or ice. The ice factor is applicable to temperate, high mountains including tropical. Wind, water, gravity, ice are agents that transport the materials that were broken up by weathering. Erosion like desertification is about seventy-five per cent man-made. The careless manner in which man handles his environment for productive activities such as mining, quarrying and agriculture are responsible for erosion. For instance, mining is man's activity directly interferes with the landform especially when such mineral is located close to the land surface. This is typical of Jos Plateau, where tin and columbite and Kassirite, are produced. Kaolin in Nasarawa, or where gold is mined as in Ilesa in Osun State. Another form of land degradation emanates from quarrying, where stone or rock is being transported to several regions in Nigeria for building and other construction purposes. Okigwe escarpment, Akamkpa crush in Cross River State, Abakaliki in Ebonyi and Nasarawa and Plateau State. Umeuduji added that running wastes increase the sediment load of the rivers that drain the region coupled with the rapidly lowering of the topographic surface.

Indeed, erosion threat is well pronounced in some parts of Nigeria especially in the South-east: Udi, Onitsha, Oji River, Igboetiti, Nsukka, Ezeagu; in south-south - Uyo, Itu, Abak, Mbo, Oron Calabar, Port Harcourt etc; and North-central – Kogi (Lokoja) Benue etc. Whether it is sheet, rill or gully the damage is devastating. However, it is estimated that there are over 4,000 active gully erosion sites across the country with over 505 of them being located in south-east part of the country. The states highly affected by erosion in the South-east and South-south Nigeria are Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Cross River (Akpan, 2009). The prevailing condition is caused by mainly by the local people inability to embark or reduction on bush burning and large scale felling of trees. Besides, there is shortage of farmlands and the situation has driven them to over-cropping and the need for fuel wood. In addition, erosion has adversely social life. Thus, affects coupled with effect on social life, economic growth, and in some areas people have been displaced and by extension led to rural-urban migration which also results in social problems. Most violence, armed robbery, kidnapping, hostage taking for ransoms are some manifestation of rural-urban rift with lack of skill or even fixed abode in which one can eke a living. These groups of persons are security risk and contribute to national insecurity.

Flooding

Flooding is one phenomenon that is associated with environmental degradation and has been with man over centuries. It is seen as an occurrence when peak discharge exceeds channel capacity, and this may be brought about naturally by intense precipitation – in the tropical countries such as ours-rain. In the temperate regions it may be through ice or snow in addition to rainfall. Our flooding may occur as a discharge from river and stream network, discharge from dams or dam failure.

However, many scholars usually make classification – land flooding, coastal or marine flooding. Whatever classification flooding is as a result of excessive discharge of water where its route is blocked or cannot be accumulated in the channel or valley meant for it. Flooding is common in both rural and urban environments. Flooding is the most common environmental hazard in Nigeria, perhaps ranked next to desertification. Flood is often caused by the negative activities of man in the environment. The causes are many-building of houses along water channels in our urban environments or country-sides; improper environmental assessment in the construction of roads, bridges or dams, industries which, when it rains the water now finds itself in places it would not have been so; blocking of water channels such as gutters through the dumping of household rubbish (cars, left-over foods, undissolveabl or solid materials, celephene products among others) discharge from welding workshops, cottage industries.

History of environmental disastrous flooding is not very strange to many Nigerians. It has caused untold hardship to many families – either lost of lives, buildings, farm crops and animals, incapacitation on humans among other things. For instance in 1988 over 300,000 people were affected by flood in our rural and urban environments, in 1999 over 90,000 people were affected, in 2003 over 210,000 people were affected. In 2012 according to National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) about 11,500 persons were displaced by floods which ravaged parts of Jigawa and Kano States (Emmanuel, 2012). In Anambra State flood devastated over eight local government areas out of 21 with over 40 communities highly affected. The local government affected were Akwa North, Onitsha South, Ihiala, Anambra West, Ogbaru, Anambra East, Idemili South, Ayamelium (Onu, 2012). The two areas cited represent the numerous Nigerian environments that are affected yearly by this phenomenon. Indeed, looking at what constitutes national security, it is pertinent to say that flood with its attendant effect on our environment constitutes a 'big' threat to our survival as people and nation, hence a threat to national security.

Recommendation

Man is at the centre of environment-destruction, protection or management. The issue is that in this part of the world, Nigeria, the issue of environment – whether about pollution or any other form of degradation is taken casually. It is important every Nigerian should be made to have access to environmental education. Illiteracy and ignorance have been identified as a bane to achieving a sustainable society. Environmental education should be included in the curriculum of the Universal Basic Education for students in the secondary school. It should also be included for primary school curriculum it should be taught to students in general studies in the Universities, Colleges of Educations, Polytechnics and allied institutions. For the adults who are not able to attend school – the village town crier should be used to educate the people on the need for preservation of our environment. Churches, mosques and other recreational environments can serve for direct instructions on the need for a good environment. Bill-boards can also be a veritable area for information and instruction on environment.

Indeed, the poverty in the country should be addressed. It is a fact that poverty cannot be eradicated but can be reduced if the political will is there. This particular issue of poverty should be examined seriously, for primitive accumulation of wealth by a very insignificant population while majority are wallowing in poverty is negative and could breed violence and by extension does not allow for the growth of economies. Poverty is responsible to a large for the destruction of environment through deforestation for fuel wood, fodder for animals, and unconventional methods of farming. With the exhaustion of the soil or where the soil can no longer support good yield, it may push young people to crime. Ecological fund to states should be directly managed by the Federal Government, states usually mismanaged such funds.

Conclusion

National security is not all about threat to lives or border crisis or even by extension a case such as Ebola transmission or importation of HIV/AIDS into Nigeria. National security is all about maintaining good values which leads to proper human development that anchor on environment. Nigeria is purely an agricultural country where majority of the people are poor and living on land. It is through this land that the peasant farmers produce food for the populace. Continuous degradation of the environment would mean a deleterious stiffening of the land: in the long run may lead to food insecurity. Nation's inability to feed her population usually exposes the people to want which invariable may lead to violence or conflict. A good environment devoid of pollution adds values to human health. Healthy living within the population is

a plus to productivity which by extension is an index of human security. Productivity in an economy is an aspect of development: where there is development there is security or the opposite.

Land degradation may not be totally prevented, but could be minimized to some degree. Environmental management and control be left in the hands of experts. Experts should be allowed to bring their ingenuity and experience to bear on the planning, management and implementation of acceptable policies and practices to reshape the environment as part of the national security. We should adopt the Singaporean rules to environment. Environment should be kept tidy at all times, if one is caught degrading or dropping even a piece of paper on the road such an individual is immediately prosecuted. However, if we have less – degradable environment and without arms threat we may achieve National Security.

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