

The Security Challenges of Arms Proliferation in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This major objective of this paper was to assess security challenges posed by arms proliferation in Nasarawa state. In order to do this, I focused on two specific objectives: review conflict flag-points in the stated (the existence of insecurity); and assess the extent to which proliferation of arms exacerbated the situation. The paper relied on empirical works done within the state and elsewhere and located the sources of insecurity on conflicts associated with resources control, invasion and succession, all of which centered on land struggle. In what appears to become tension of opposite, arms become the raw material for prosecution of the conflicts; old scores are being settled, and the successes with which arms ensure is raising it utility awareness among society members that indeed “power flows from the barrel of the gun”. In the seemingly inability of the state to secure life and property of the citizens, many more people are acquiring arms. I explained the security challenges of these actions in the consequences that are confronting the state now and what may occur in the future. Since arms proliferation is man-made, I argued with evidence that the security challenges can be curbed. The recommendations included strengthening security institutions in the state to curb arms proliferation and confront crises and tensions, establish formal framework for awareness and conscientizations campaigns, incorporate civil societies into the campaign against arms proliferation, create network with neighbouring states, and strengthen the intelligence network of the Police for proactive policing, among others.

Key words: Arms proliferation, Conscientization, Invasion and succession, Nasarawa State, Security challenges.

Les Défis De Sécurité De La Prolifération Des Armes Légères Dans l'Etat De Nasarawa, Nigéria

Résumé:

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Le principal objectif de ce document était d'évaluer les défis de sécurité posés par la prolifération des armes légères dans l'Etat de Nasarawa. Pour ce faire, l'auteur s'est concentré sur deux objectifs spécifiques : conflit d'examen dans les drapeau a dit (l'existence d'insécurité) ; et d'évaluer la mesure dans laquelle la prolifération des armements ont exacerbé la situation. Le document s'est appuyée sur des travaux empiriques effectués au sein de l'état et ailleurs et situé à la sources d'insécurité sur les conflits liés au contrôle des ressources, l'invasion et de la relève, tous au combat. Dans ce qui semble être de la tension d'en face, les armes deviennent la matière première de la poursuite des conflits ; de vieux comptes sont réglés, et le succès avec lequel il collecte des armes est d'assurer la sensibilisation des membres de la société d'utilité qu'en effet "l'alimentation passe de le canon du fusil". Dans l'incapacité de l'état semble-t-il d'assurer la vie et la propriété des citoyens, beaucoup plus de personnes sont l'acquisition d'armes. L'auteur a expliqué les défis de sécurité de ces actions dans les conséquences que l'État devra faire face maintenant et dans l'avenir. Étant donné que la prolifération des armes légères est le fait des hommes, l'auteur a soutenu avec la preuve que les défis de sécurité peuvent être réduites. Les recommandations comprenaient le renforcement des institutions de sécurité dans l'Etat de freiner la prolifération des armes légères et les crises et les tensions, d'établir un cadre formel pour les campagnes de sensibilisation et d'conscientizations, intégrer la société civile dans la lutte contre la prolifération des armes légères, de créer des réseaux avec les États voisins, et de renforcer le réseau de renseignement de la police pour divulgation de la police, entre autres.

Mots clés: La Prolifération Des Armes Légères, l'Etat De Nasarawa, Conscientisation, Défis De Sécurité

Introduction

The need for security is not new to the human race. From time immemorial man has been confronted with security challenges within and without the environment he found himself. It was either man was facing insecurity from wild animals, hunger, diseases, poverty, or man inhumanity to man. Those challenges have not changed today, except in dimensions and the instrument of prosecution.

In the face of security challenges, survival has been uppermost such that man resorted to both spiritual and physical means to protect himself. In contemporary time, we have found the display of these in tall fences and barb wire around houses. Nigerian cities reveal families living in burglary proved houses with semblance to prison barricades. Many have paid spiritual master, some of lesser statues, and marabouts to protect them. No wonder therefore, political scientists told us that at the emergence of modern state, it was the consideration for security that influenced the conception of social contract; where everyone agreed to surrender his or her rights to a single Sovereign who in turn secured members of the state from man inhuman nature. Thomas Hobbes put it so eloquently and clear about those dark days, which he called the “state of nature”: where

human life was very short, brutish and nasty”. The need to stop these insecurities becomes necessary at the emergence of the modern civilization, especially, in the advent of democracy. This is because democracy promised to build upon the principle of Social Contract, especially on the guarantee of security of life and property. In Nigeria, democratic leaders are made to take oath on the National Constitution that they will “...strive to preserve the Fundamental objectives and Directive Principles of state policy....” The provisions of the Fundamental Objectives insist that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government” [Nigerian Constitution, 1999, S.14(b)]. It is also important to note that members of government at all level have sworn on the Constitution to discharge their functions including those prescribed as “fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy”, “without fear or favour”. How true these principles have been realized and the expectations achieved in Nigeria’s democracy are debatable issues.

Today, security challenges loomed large in Nigeria; and there are a plethora of complex security challenges. These are demonstrated by the several theatres of crises across the country. No state in the country is immune from security challenges, even if the causes and dimensions differ. From 2007 to date, Nigeria has consistently ranked low on the Global Peace Index, thus signifying worsening state of the nation in terms of peace and security. One of the major causes of insecurity is the unhindered access to arms by people who are not licensed and or authorized by law to use them. Arms have recently become instruments with which crimes of all persuasions are being committed in Nigeria. Nasarawa state is having her fair share of the arms’ marauders.

As a state rich in solid mineral, and with her proximity to Abuja, Nigeria’s federal capital, the state has witnessed influx of migrants in recent time. Besides playing host to solid mineral explorers, it is also becoming a dormitory town for the federal capital territory (FCT); a role similar to what Ogun state plays to Lagos, one of Nigeria’s mega-cities. As demonstrated empirically elsewhere, residents of dormitory town are of mixed character (Munck, 2013). Some stay here for lack of affordable accommodation in the FCT; and go to Abuja daily for genuine work and come back at the end of the working day, while others go to the FCT and elsewhere in the neighbourhood for less than genuine honest endeavours. The peripheral suburbs of the state, therefore, provide operational base for some criminal minded people, as well as hideouts for those who escape from the hot pursuits of security men from other places, far and near. In recent time Nasarawas state has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity: Kidnapping, armed robbery, assassination, burglary, rape, etc. Small arms in the hands conflicting ethnic groups and herdsmen have turned them into murderous gangs of criminals, who are doing more than self-protection, and are constituting grave threats to state security than can be imagined.

The first major objective of this paper, therefore, is to assess the security challenges facing Nasarawa state. The second objective is to explain the challenges to security caused by the proliferation of arms. The significance of the paper is located in identifying security flag-points that have attracted the employment of arms, and in so doing raise salient security concerns as well as security challenges that is contributing to the proliferation of arms; and may continue to

popularize the use of arms in the state, if not contained. In my analyses, I have looked at the different actors and the levels of action; the consequences on the security of the state; and offer suggestions on how to curb arms proliferation and checkmate insecurity.

In order to ensure clarity, I have structure this paper into themes. Other than this introduction are conceptual explanations. This is followed by the Nasarawa security discourse where security flag-points are identified and discussed. Thereafter, I discussed the challenges of arms proliferation and the immediate and remote consequences as well as factors that could encourage armed proliferation. The paper ends with how to curb security challenges posed by arms proliferation in the state.

Conceptual Explanations

Security: Security from what? Security for who?

The key starting point to understanding security is to view it as “stability and continuity of livelihood” (Walt, 1991). This is in line with the Copenhagen school, which views security not as a stand-alone phenomenon, but one with connections that exert positive multiplier effects. In this context, stability includes steady income, predictability of daily life, protection from crime, feeling safe, and freedom from psychological harm (Igbuzor, 2011). When explained from these variables, security encompasses an essential aspect of human development. It takes on three basic principles, viz, “freedom from fear, freedom from wants and freedom to live in dignity” (Nwadiolor, 2011). For instance, protection from crime enhances the feeling of safety, while freedom from psychological harm safeguard one from emotional stress, which is the outcome of assurances that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one’s community or neighbourhood and by people around (Bajpai, 2000). Security therefore refers not only to the absence of dangers, but also having cultural relations and identity and being free from subjective perception of potential dangers.

Attempt to clarify what security entails focuses on the components of security culture. At the level of the individual citizen (human), security is measured with regard to ones economic, food, environment or health situation, whereas at a governmental level (state), political, social and cultural aspects take precedence (Adebakin, 2012). Analyzing security from the view point of the citizen, Nwagboso, (2012) emphasized the act of being safe from harm or danger, the defense, protection and preservation of values, and the absence of threats to acquired values; whereas Adejumo (2011) observed that security is only realized when national laws are upheld, and internal security threats defended within the national territories. Taking these scholarly positions together, we can understand security from the objective point of view and defined it within the context of this paper as freedom from danger or threat, which exist when people live together in a certain environment. It suggests that without the individual (human) security, the national or state security cannot be attained. This definition draws support from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC, 2001, p.22) which provided an all embracing definition of the concept of security thus:

...an all-encompassing condition in which people and communities live in freedom, peace and safety, participate fully in the governance of their countries, enjoy the protection of fundamental rights, have access to resources and basic necessities of life, and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being. [...] the security of people and the security of the State are mutually reinforcing.

Security becomes possible when the state (government) is able to promote and cherish values and legitimate interests as well as enhance the welfare of her people. In this context security becomes people-centered, and thus places the individual at the center of analysis (Adebakin, 2012); to the extent that a broad range of conditions which threaten citizens' survival, livelihood and dignity, are identified and dealt with (Lieberz, 2015). These are possible through internal security system, where the Police and other security institutions are equipped and strengthened to detect, prevent and control violence and criminal activities in different communities, urban and rural. Since internal security ensures freedom of people from any criminal disturbances as well as the absence of criminal tendencies, it suggests that internal cohesion is realized through co-operative existence of the people. Ability to live in peace can enhance the achievement of legitimate aspiration of the people. This is the more reasons why internal security apparatuses of the state may be strengthened and re-strategized to rise to the challenges posed by insecurity threats with expediency and expertise.

Insecurity

The simplest definition of insecurity is the absence of security. It is a condition of fear or anxiety that stems from a real or imagined lack of protection, with or without concrete experience (Prezelj, 2015). A condition of insecurity suggests either lack of or inadequate freedom from danger (Idoko & Dasuma, 2014). Although such definition has much to do with physical insecurity, which is the most visible form of insecurity, it has implication for many other forms of insecurity including economic security and social security. In the analysis of Krause, (2004), insecurity comes from the sudden loss of guarantee of access to jobs, farmland, health care, social welfare, education, etc. It could be a violation of human rights, spread of conflicts, displacement, etc.

Arms proliferation

The concept of armed proliferation is already explained in the several works done by scholars and security experts on small arms and light weapons (Aver, Nnorom & Ilim, 2013; Osimen, Akintunde & Bamidele, 2015 ; Ikoh, 2016). But suffice it to say here that arms proliferation refers to a situation where there is abundance of small arms. It suggests an unhindered access to gun by members of the public or those not authorized to hold arms. In the definition

provided by the Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (UN document A/52/298, 27 August 1997), arms are defined to include both military style weapons and commercial firearms (handguns and long guns). A leading Nigerian Newspaper that cited the United Nations' report observed that about 350 million of the 500 million SALWs in West Africa are in Nigeria. The report traced the influx of weapons from the looting of military armouries after the fall of Ghadaffi regime in Libya and the Malian conflict. Beside the Libya-Mali connection is the outright importation of arms into the country. Between 2012 and 2016, the Nigerian Customs Services impounded several catchment of illegally imported arms and ammunitions from the United States and Europe into the country. Other than those imported and illegally smuggled into the country through the several porous borders, there are also others manufactured within the country. Recent findings revealed that Nigeria has the domestic capacity to manufacture small arms which are similar to the AK 47 and the requisite ammunition (Edeko, 2011). These arms are being used in armed robberies, inter-ethnic conflicts, militancy, kidnapping, political thuggery and assassination, murder, and terrorism. They are also being used to facilitate drug trafficking, smuggling and other related crimes.

The Nasarawa Security Discourse

It will be difficult to carry out a study on security challenges in Nasarawa without having a survey of her environment even with some historical context. Nasarawa State occupies a central position in the North central geo-political zone. Other than Plateau and Benue states which she shares origin, parts of her territory was donated to form the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja FCT), which constituted her western frontier today. The northern part of the state is bounded by Kaduna state, while Kogi and Benue states are in the south. The state has thirteen Local Government Areas, which include Akwanga, Awe, Doma, Karu, Keana, Keffi, Kokona, Laffia, Nasarawa, Nasarawa Eggon, Obi, Toto and Wamba. More than twenty three ethnic groups with indigenous languages are located in the state. At the last count, the major ethnic groups included the Gwandara, Alago, Eggon, Gbagi, Egbira, Migili, Kantana, Fulani, Hausa, Kanuri, Tiv, Afo, Gade, Nyankpa, Koro, Jukun, Mada, Ninzam, Buh, Basa, Agatu, Arum, Kulere. Other settler groups like the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa are also living in the state. Agriculture remains the mainstay of the state economy in addition to solid mineral.

The Hausa language serves as the lingual franca; and is widely spoken among the people. In spite of the commonness in language, the division among the people remains conspicuous even to distance observers. Where ethnicity is not used to manipulate issues, religious consideration is highlighted. In each of the thirteen Local Governments Areas, ethnic crises and misunderstanding thrive, and are largely pronounced in the hinterland where farmers and cattle herders live. While all the LGA are experiencing one form of conflict or the other, three discernable patterns of conflicts prosecution can be observed: a). Some ethnic groups have demonstrated a growing tendency to employ arms in their conflict; b). Others (those who reside in the urban centers and

outside the state) have resorted to sending armed trained men and or mercenaries to support their kids and kin in other LGAs; c) some ethnic groups have invited armed mercenaries to support them in their fight against other ethnic groups and offer them land afterward as compensation. This ugly development is breeding mistrust and fear among the people.

A catalogues of the nature of the crises and conflict experience are summarized in the table below. It shows existing seeds of discord, some which have already germinated into violent conflict, crime and the prevalence of insecurity among the people.

Nasarawa State and its 13 LGAs



Fig. 1: Map of Nasarawa State with 13 LGAs

Table A: Local government areas and conflict flag-points in Nasarawa state

S/N	Local Government Area	Sources of Conflict and tension
1	Akwanga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chieftaincy disputes. Land disputes
2	Awe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grazing reserves Problem at Benue border Problem at Taraba border Herdsmen and farmers crises at the Tunka forest area. Water is available here; and comfortable for pastoral farmers.
3	Doma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer-Cattle herders' problem Land crises at Ekye Development Area Tiv/Eggon farmers Vs. Fulani cattle herders
4	Karu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land hustlers, theft, robbery
5	Keana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keana is highly homogeneous but there is problem of youth cultism; restiveness; sub-culture of violent, Tiv in Kadregu and confrontation with fleeing Fulani from Benue. Cases of incessant reprisal attacks

6	Keffi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hibernating center and operation base for criminals (from Karu, Abuja & Akwanga) ▪ Drug activities
7	Kokona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle herders and farmers conflict around Agwada; • Land hustlers, • Invasion and succession-Fulani
8	Lafia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethnic conflicts: Alago, Eggon around Assakio; ▪ Land crises ▪ Settler/indigene issues ▪ Invasion and succession-Fulani
9	Nasarawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers-Herders crises around Agatu area • Armed robbery • Kidnapping
10	Nasarawa Eggon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mining, ▪ Struggle over land, ▪ Clashes due to mineral and exploration ▪ Ombatse crises ▪ Youth restiveness and emergence of subculture of violence
11	Obi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic crises • Land problem • Settler/indigeneship crises.
12	Toto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Robbery ▪ Kidnapping ▪ Cattle farmers conflict ▪ Ethnic crisis: Bassa/Ebira ▪ Chieftaincy dispute, ▪ Resource control over marbles
13	Wamba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle reserves • Farmers crises • Robbery • Fulani land grabbers • Invasion and succession

Source: Authors analysis of field survey

The scenario summarized in the Table above has implications on the security culture in the state. A Security culture is influenced by the perception of the people about their safety. The existence of conflicts and violence among the people is creating a staggering demand for small arms; more so, when others have been using arms to make blood-letting statement without being caught. The demand for arms is significantly associated with security perceptions (both internal and external threats). The other factors remain the price of arms and income level of the people. Where people considered that it is more cost effective to buy arms to prosecute a conflict than run away to a safety in other places, they may decide to pull fund together through contribution per head to acquire arms. The decision to buy is not a one off thing. If they decide to buy and use arms, they have to choose between violating the law of the country on arms prohibition and outsmarting the security agencies tasked with arms control and monitoring. Ofcourse bribery and corruption are endemic in the arms businesses (Gupta, De Mello, & Sharan, 2001; Golde, & Tishler, 2004) and in Nigeria too. Once arms are acquired, a sub-culture of violent is entrenched. The arms may be used principally to subdue opposing ethnic group member; they can be rented to others who need them for other aspect of criminality.

Available scholarly work has no consensus opinion on the causes of tension and conflicts in Nasarawa state. While some scholars blamed religious differences (Kukah, 1993, Egwu, 2001), others have tended to blame ethnic differences and political manipulations (Nathaniel, Agbese, Tahire & Isa, 2017). In a team research conducted by scholars from the Federal University, Lafia, in Obi LGA, their analysis of findings revealed a third cause of ethnic conflict, referred to as “invasion and succession”; and it appears to extend conflict beyond Obi LGA to other parts of the state (Ikoh, Anzaku, Uhembe, & Olaku (forth coming). Another cause of conflict that I found during my field survey is what I called “tension of opposite”. These two causes are explained below:

Tension of Opposites

When I look at the conflicts and tensions credited to ethnic differences and religion, it resembles a “tensions of opposite”. This is because the settlement pattern in each of the LGA, revealed that the different ethnic groups with different religious orientation had originally co-existed peacefully. The settlers that come later were received happily by the indigenes (Alubo, 2011); even when they know, they were different, ethnically (the opposite between). Their similarities as human created by God enticed them to each other. It was a case of “though tribes and tongue and even religion may differ, in brotherhood we co-exist”. For instance, in obi LGA, the Eggon, Alago, Kwandera, Tiv, Fulani, etc are found, and are said to have co-existed for a long time. This pattern of co-existing is also seen in other local government areas in the state. Each of the local government areas has different ethnic groups, which can locate their kin members in other local government areas. This suggests a mix migration pattern that was harmonious in the beginning. It also suggests a history of peaceful settlement of the different ethnic groups all over the state. The conflicts being experience today appears to be recent, and is a display of the “opposite” in the behaviour pattern and relationship of the people. Something happened that creates this tension, and we attribute this to the struggle for “resource control” (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). It is creating opportunity for the manipulation of the differences with serious consequences on security lives and property.

Invasion and Succession

Invasion and succession is an “ecological process by which migrants takes new resident in existing community and successfully establishes their dominance” by displacing the original inhabitants (McKenzie, 1971, p. 22). Invasion and succession crises in the North central geo-political zone tend to be self-induced. Two explanations have been offered. One is that ethnic differences between the “indigenes and the settler” had reached an extent where the “indigenes” thought that the Fulani could be more peaceful and harmonious neighbours than “belligerent settlers” they currently lived with. It order to displace them, it was necessary to invite the Fulani to join them to fight the settlers, in exchange for land. They Fulani later allowed their cattle herder groups to join them. The land they were originally given can no longer contain them and their cattle. They are either taking more land for settlement or for grazing.

The second explanation pointed to climate change and the desertification experience in the far north. The cattle herdsman who used to be seasonal migrants are no longer willing to go back as there is no promise of grazing field back home. The Benue valley has thus become a home, through outright encroachment and occupation after successfully displacing the original inhabitants. Militarization is common in a society after invasion (Wallace, 1979). A tangential argument to this is that the “grazing reserve” once provided for the Fulani herdsman no longer exist wholly as it used to be. Population explosion and development has caused some of the reserve lands to be used for farming and infrastructural development. The Fulani herdsman are laying claim to the reserves today not only to graze cattle, but also where to live because of desertification in the North. Land is therefore at the center of security challenges in the state.

In whatever ways we look at security challenges in the State, the major cause tends to be land; the sources for resource: who control which land and what portion. It may have connection with ethnic and religious manipulation, but the latter are secondary. Majority of the state indigenes are farmers, and those said to be settlers who are joining in the land struggle are also farmers. They either produce crops or animal through grazing the field. Both depend on the land; while the cattle herders look for land to graze, the farmers look for land to farm. Both depend on land for survival and to earn a living. Grazing on farms therefore is an invitation to conflicts. Beyond grazing and farming are the land-based mineral resources. Payment of compensation and on whose land minerals are found may become sources of conflict in the state.

The Challenges of Arms Proliferation and Consequence

In the struggle to control resources, conflict is inevitable. While those on invasion struggle to carve out a place for themselves in the green field, the indigenes struggle to prevent succession by the invaders. In violent conflict no weapon may be spared. The discussion of security challenges posed by arms proliferation in Nasarawa state can theoretically be located on the conflict theory. Several variance of the theory exist, but the main tenet remains that “conflicts are inherent in human relations, especially between people with differing interests and resources” (Anderson & Taylor, 2009, p. 42; Knapp, 1994). The proliferation of small arms is principally a consequence of conflicts at whatever levels and in whatever magnitude. The conflicting ethnic groups require arms for different reasons. As aggressor, arms are required to threaten and or to attack the opposing ethnic group(s). The opposing ethnic group(s) may require arms to protect themselves from the enemy. Armed robbers and Kidnappers require arms to threaten and intimidate their victims to part with valuables. They also require same arms to protect their loots and interests; and to continue the criminal enterprise. Thus Moa Testung argued that power flows from the barrel of the gun.

Ordinarily, power is seen as the ‘ability to do work’. But a deeper meaning of power exists in compelling someone to do what he or she would not willingly want to do. When Talcott Parson provided his analysis on the concept of power, he focused on the power having to do with the capacity of persons or collectivity “to get things done effectively in particular when the goals are obstructed by some kind of human assistance or oppositions (Talcott, 1963, p. 232). It is in

overcoming obstruction that power is demonstrated as force and or compulsion. In this context arms become agency where power is demonstrated. For many decades in Nigeria, coups and counter coup d'état have shown the power flows from the barrel of the guns. Arms or guns have been used to sustaining governments in control, or removing them for that matter. The understanding of what arms can do is not entirely new. Conflict therefore may not necessarily begin with arms, but it increases tremendously when arms are present, particularly in already volatile environments rife with hatred, poverty, mistrust or injustice (Knapp, 1994). When arms are used in the prosecution of conflicts, it sows seeds that have implications beyond the present.

The challenges of arms proliferation in Nasarawa state can therefore be assess from the consequences it entails:

Instability and insecurity

The immediate consequences of arms proliferation is outright instability and insecurity. The conflicts caused by arms proliferation have resulted to internal displacement of people; and the state is spending much money on emergency management. This has negative multiplier effects on infrastructural development and other socio-economic development plans of government. Many of the indigenes are farmers, and so farm produce and livestock production have dwindled over the years. Insecurity also has negative impact on foreign direct investment, and exploration on solid minerals which the state is known for. The fear of insecurity has both short and long term impact.

The impact of arms proliferation is also sending a wrong signal that the state can no longer protect her citizens against destruction of lives and property. Such signal does more than weakening the confidence of the citizens and non-citizens in the state; it also creates an environment of insecurity and uncertainty. When the state is considered to be absent in its duty, it can undermine trust that the citizens have in the fairness of public institutions, especially the Police, who are the first institutions in the criminal Justice System.

Multiplication of crises and sustainability of crises

Another immediate consequence is the multiplication of crises. This happens when violent crises prosecuted through the use of arms become intractable and difficult to curb due to insincerity of conflicting parties (Petersen, 2002). In this instance, the availability of small arms may prolong fighting and increase human and material loses. When this happens the opposing group may also want to take to arms to defend themselves. The crises may thus escalate as the willingness of conflicting parties to find negotiated solutions to their disagreements dwindle.

The emergence of sub-culture of violence

The emergence of sub-culture of violent is often difficult to prevent at the end of violent conflict. As Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967, p.158) found, violence is a product of conformity to a

pro-violent subculture that is in direct conflict with the dominant culture. The authors noted that the “overt use of force or violence, either in interpersonal relationships or in group interaction, is generally viewed as a reflection of basic values that stand apart from the dominant, central or parent culture”. The proliferation of violence therefore results from a tendency amongst the people to embrace values and norms that are more permissive of the use of arms in even situations that words of mouth could have enhanced settlement.

In embracing violent sub-culture, violent reactions to perceived threats to reputation become culturally prescribed, given that a failure to react defensively may result in life-threatening consequences. In this sense, violent values become a mechanism of social control, as members of the subculture resort to engage in violence for their own protection and survival. Subcultural offenders engage in violence frequently and guiltlessly, with or without provocation. Members tend to hide behind their narrow identities with the feeling of being protected by their ethnic or religious groups and the institutions and social networks which the groups provide. In this context there is some exclusiveness which promotes unsociability that makes members of the sub-culture to hold on to their ego identities and regard diversity as threatening.

The culture of drugs

Studies elsewhere have shown that drugs help to fuel violence and that homicide has significant relationship with the use of arms and drugs (Munck, 2013). Besides taking drugs to be high during criminal operation, firearms are used in the transportation of illegal drugs. Arms and illegal trade in drugs have a symbiotic relationship which has been shown in several studies (Ask, 2005), including the emergence of increasing violence in communities which harbor them (Cook, 1983).

Criminal gang formation

This may be a direct product of arms proliferation as well as a consequence. Criminal gang formation may be enhanced by proliferation of arms when a group of deviant decides to use the opportunity of availability of arms to form gang. Criminal gang can also be formed as a consequence of violent conflict, when people who were involved in the fighting decide to use same arms to commit other crimes like kidnappings, murders, tortures, harassments, hire assassinations, attacks, and destruction of homes, valuables, shops, commercial spaces, and places of worship, among other atrocities. Many people who are involved in ethnic warfare have formed criminal gangs after the resolution of conflict, thus continuing the conflict in another way (Ask, 2005).

Reservoir of mercenaries

This is a remote consequence of arms proliferation. The subculture violence once established is always difficult to erase. It does not only remain a way of life of the people, but also acceptable means of responding to issues. Youths who have been used to arms find it difficult to desist from it, especially where arms had become a utility factor in their lives (Fagbemi & Nwankwo, 2002). It is therefore possible for them to provide their services when needed elsewhere. Such youths with

arms and charms are found providing body guards for politicians during electioneering campaigns and elections, as well as killing for money in Nigeria (Ikoh, 2002).

Factors in Arms Proliferation and self- induced security challenges

The conceptual explanation of arms proliferation suggests that it is only the state that has monopoly of arms use. Since arms can be used for the destruction of lives and property, the state has the power to control arms' use, and by extension the number of arms in circulation. This is one function of the arms' control law. The neglect of arms control therefore has catastrophic consequences. Deterrence theory has argued that insecurity thrives when the state failed to dissuade gun trigger happy criminals from challenging the status quo. Several scholars back this up by citing instances where the state has knowingly and unknowingly encouraged the proliferation of arms and thus creating security challenges:

- a) Lack of a law enforcement and control that can trace, arrest and punish unlawful use of firearms (Anan, 2010).
- b) Systematic official denial of the existence of arms groups and arms violation by particular distinct group(s) in the state (Ginifer & Olawale, 2005).
- c) The use of political thugs with arms and ammunition during political party campaigns and elections (Charles & Ikoh, 2005).
- d) The politicization of violence; and grave statements by political leaders and prominent people that support the affirmation of the superiority of one ethnic group over the other (Egwu, 2001).
- e) Government support for the development and organization of militia groups thus encouraging non-state actors to use arms (Wallace, 1999; Edeko, 2011).
- f) When the state appears to have lost the capacity to protect her citizens, judging from the successes of several conflicts groups and the inability of the state to intervene effectively (Craft, & Smaldone, 2003). For instance in the neighbouring states of Benue and Plateau, we have seen documentation of collective atrocities (which can be regarded as crime against humanity) committed by Fulani herdsmen with no perpetrators being brought to book. When the citizens begin to feel that the state no longer protect them, and that there is no justice; the need for self-protection and the justification for acquisition of arms becomes more compelling
- g) Refusal by government to equip and strengthen the Police and other institutions in the criminal justice system to execute their constitutional approved function. The absence of the rule of law, the inability of the law enforcement institution to intervene and end conflicts, and the hesitation of security forces to interfere and combat the rise of militancy and insurgency create the impression that arms use by any group can be tolerated. After all other have done it and gone scot-free (Hazen & Horner, 2007; Ohanele, 2011).

Recommendations

There are several recommendations on how to mop up arms in circulation. Some of these recommendations are institutionally based. The United Nations, African Union, and the Economic community of West African State (ECOWAS Moratorium) on small arms implementation are available. However, the situation in Nasarawa requires a context based approach. The acquisition

of arms appears to be for different purposes; and the insecurity it generates have impacts within and without the state. Other ancillary factor like drug deserves attention in security discourse especially its nexus in arms use. Effective security in one state can result in crime displacement to another, and or the relocation of armouries. It is this thinking that influenced my recommendations.

i). Strengthening of the Security Institution to curb arms proliferation

The proposed amendment of the 1959 Nigerian Firearm Act and the Firearms Act CAP F28 LFN 2004 was designed to checkmate the proliferation of small arms. The proliferation is made possible by manufacturers, importers, marketers and users. It should be clear from the onset that they will not give up easily. It therefore requires training and properly equipping and strengthening security officers to fight against proliferation of arms. The attack and killing of 11 Nigerian soldiers including an officer at Kopa, Dagma and Gagaw villages of Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, while on a cordon and search operation to recover suspected cache of weapons and arrest their owners (Jimoh, 2016) suggests the kind of opposition that security officers may face.

ii). Strengthening of the Security Institution to confront crises and tensions

Enhancing capacities of the security institutions to confront crises and tensions and improve practices to address the impact of conflicts will require institutional synergy. While the Police on combat operations should be equipped to constitute deterrent monitoring system in communities involve in conflicts, the Intelligence and Monitoring Unit may be trained on how to identify and document warning signs and or triggers of conflicts, for the purpose of analysis for precautionary measure that can thwart eruption of violence. Here training and retraining is emphasized. The twenty first century world is changing and changing very fast; so also are criminal techniques and strategies.

iii). Establish formal framework for Awareness and Conscientizations

A Committee for awareness creation and conscientization is needed. The concern of the committee should be to create awareness of ethnic group members on the need to drop arms and embrace peace and in so doing will fully understand their security concern. Such understanding can help to advice government on security policies that can be used to achieve active participation of the citizens. Conscientization should involve two aspects: appeal to moral and the need to obey the law.

iv). Creating network with neighbouring states

Since neighbouring states are facing similar security challenging, there is need for shared security approach that can enables bringing together a broad range of policy instruments to address arms proliferation in a coordinated manner, even if differences remain with respect to its actual operationalization. At the heart of the “shared security approach” lies the conviction that security policies need to be both effective and considered legitimate in the eyes the citizens (the ethnic

group members) who are the ultimate beneficiaries. In domestic law enforcement, crackdowns in one state may lead to increased crime in neighbouring state (what criminologist referred to as crime displacement). Criminals can move freely across porous and un-policed borders. Only by states acting together can most of these security challenges be resolved.

v). Incorporate Civil Societies

The peace building efforts of Civil Societies can be tapped into by including them in the campaign against arms proliferation with specific objective to monitor and report non-state actors who are encouraging arms manufacturing, procurement, use and spreading of hate speech and inciting violence in the state.

vi). Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution Structures

In order to restore peace among ethnic group members and frustrate the purpose of arms build-up in the communities, it is necessary to develop and build informal dialogue, reconciliation, and conflict resolution structures. This is especially needed when the people are quarreling over land and other resources; and when the conflict has religious or ethnic reasons. Such reconciliation structures can strengthen the possibility of finding solutions that fit within the local cultures and reduce face-off that result in violence conflict.

vii). Strengthen the Intelligence Network of the Police for proactive policing

The major functions of the Police that are widely acknowledged by members of the public include crime prevention, detection and control. Effective delivery of services on these functions require being proactive. The intelligence that involve requires building a system of information gathering and sharing. Gathering information and analyzing them to identify reliability extent will not only help the Police to know where conflict is about to happen within the state, but also to know the causes, and how best to react. Other benefits may include:

- Having reliable knowledge to advise the state government on the best means to use to manage the crises.
- The Police will be in a better position to compare note with other security agencies, since availability of information on previous violent event can enable them to assess possible risks.
- Available data and its analysis can help to understand indicators of the reasons for the outbreak of violence, improve the ability to send alerts, and activate early warning mechanisms to counter it.

viii). Building a Risk Assessment

In addition to strengthening intelligence network through information, the police will need to develop a risk assessment map of Nasarawa state, and update it periodically for accurate information on existing ethnic groups in each of the LGA. Such mapping helps not only to create

data bases, geographic location, size and status of the groups, but also serve as resource in providing knowledge and likely sources of dispute among them.

vix). Developing a Socio-Demographic Survey of Nasarawa

We may have looked at security from the point of view of arms proliferation, but arms by themselves do not cause harm, but for the purposes that they are used for. Such purposes have reasons that ranged from political power, subduing opponents, self-defence, to earning a living. In order to understand the diverse population of Nasarawa state, the state government may need to carry out a socio-demographic survey of her people. The Ministry of Economic Development can conduct such survey. This will lead to a better understanding of the population based on identified clarification, needs, and the availability of jobless youth who can be easily lured into crime and ethnic armies.

Conclusion

The twenty first century appears to have greeted Nigeria with intense security challenges. Nasarawa state is having her fair share of the security challenges. This paper focused on security challenges posed by arms proliferation in the state. Nearly all the thirteen local government areas have one form of conflict or the other to contain with. In addition to conflicts caused by resource control, invasion and succession arising from outright attacks by migrant farmers have been reported. Crimes hitherto unheard of in the state like, kidnapping and assassination have become rampant. The inability of government to take prompt action to rein these ugly development and guarantee the safety and security of the citizen raised worry, fear and questions on 'how possible security can be achieved'. My analysis raised some optimism. This is because none of the security challenges that warrant gun use and the ones created by gun proliferation is natural. They are all man-made. The security institutions in the state can curb arm proliferation and checkmate other conflicts that make the employment of arms possible, if there are strengthen, equipped and motivated to perform their constitutional role.

Based on our analysis we recommended that security institutions be strengthening to curb arms proliferation, and confront crises and tensions. The establishment of formal framework for creation of awareness of arms proliferation and the implications of it on the peaceful co-existence were raised, as well as the conscientization of public members on the evil of arms proliferation. Other recommendations include creating network with neighbouring states to curb insecurity of arms proliferation, incorporating of Civic Societies into the war against arms proliferation, creating reconciliation and conflict resolution structures, strengthening the intelligence network of the Police for proactive policing, and building a risk assessment and developing a socio-demographic survey of Nasarawa state.

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