



Nigeria's National Security and the Challenges of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons

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Abstract

Regardless of how laudable the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of goods and persons seems, it creates a lacuna which has a propensity of national security crisis. This study examines Nigeria's National Security and the Challenges of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons. Primary and secondary sources of materials were utilized. This study established that insurgency in the north east, farmers/herders' clashes in the north central, militancy in the Niger Delta and other internal security crises in other parts of Nigeria have been fueled by the supply of arms and light weapons by bandits from neighboring countries. Kidnapping, armed robbery, human and drug trafficking and smuggling of food items and other contraband goods have also thrived in Nigeria as a result of activities of criminal elements from the West African sub-region. These are the challenges that are associated with the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons, thereby posing a threat to Nigeria's national security. This study therefore, strongly recommends that, the Nigerian government need not only review her migration Acts to curtail movement of certain goods and persons, but also, should conduct an anatomy of inter-agency integration among the border officials to address rampant cases of unhealthy interagency rivalry at the borders.

Keywords: Challenges, ECOWAS, Protocol, Regionalism, National and Security.

Introduction

The vision of contemporary international system is tending towards achieving a community of interdependent borderless states. It is a community in which cooperating states voluntarily relinquish a part of their sovereignty to a supranational body or institution which acts as an external government over them. Many states under one form of grouping or another are gradually evolving towards this goal through cooperation and collaboration.

However, according to Stein (1990), the choice of cooperation or collaboration is influenced by pre-existing economic and political exigencies. Again, the option of cooperation or conflict is driven by circumstance and choice which themselves are dependent upon several variables such as the nature of the international system, specific circumstances and criteria of policy decisions and national interest (Stein, 1990).



By virtue of historical circumstance, geographical and cultural affinity and existing economic exigencies, states are deepening relationships among themselves and are becoming increasingly interdependent. Countries with geographical and cultural affinity as well as varying degrees of development in socio-economic and political spheres team up in one form of regional arrangement or the other. One such cooperation is regional integration. In a broad sense, regional integration is a process of widening and deepening relationships amongst state actors. It is a global trend which has paved the way for removal of border and other trade restrictions among parties to the cooperation.

Regional integration can generally be seen from the perspective of nation-states within a territorial region, who voluntarily relinquish part of their sovereignty to an inter-governmental or supranational institution, in order to better their condition as a whole through cooperation.

Like the international system, economic and security considerations are at the heart of contemporary collaboration among states in Africa. This collaboration with other states is envisaged to create building blocks of harmonious relationship with their neighbors, which ultimately is expected to guarantee peace and security.

From the African context, regional integration can therefore be understood as a form of a movement; a movement for three main goals; become economically competitive, politically self-actualized and secured. It represents the desire for regional self-reliance arising from a perceived skewed politico-economic world order. This consideration led to the signing of the Economic Community of West African States- ECOWAS, treaty on 28 May 1975 (Amaleia, 2010).

The vision of the founding fathers was to integrate the region as an economic bloc with a single market that is driven by a common monetary and customs union. In their vision, this would provide more trading opportunities for citizens of member states, grow their economies and ultimately position the region as a formidable and competitive economic bloc on the international system. ECOWAS union was therefore borne out of the realization that the domestic markets of member states taken individually were, as a result of their smallness, far from being competitive in a world environment marked by the existence of large trading blocks.

The Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons was conceived as the pedestal for achieving an effective and efficient integration of states and peoples. Article 27 of the Protocol provided for free movement among member states. The treaty affirms the need for economic integration, and provides for inclusion of free flow of persons, goods and services by calling on the Member States to ensure gradual removal of all obstacles to free movement of persons, services and capital (Paragraph 1 of Article 27).

Consequently, all fiscal and monetary policies that hindered or restricted cross-border movement of citizens of member states were voluntarily relaxed. This led to the harmonization of economic and financial policies and the establishment of a common external tariff. It is envisaged that a monetary zone would be created to ultimately enhance the realization of the desired goals.

Free movement of people, goods and services is considered crucial to the attainment of full Economic Union. It is one of the pedestals for any regional cooperation to attain full economic union. Others include harmonization of monetary and fiscal policies leading to the establishment of a common customs union, a single market and so on. The focus of this study is to find the nexus between these conflicts and the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of





goods and persons. Given the interplay of security and economic growth to the development of any society, this study develops a broader approach to understanding and explaining the consequences these bear on each other in relation to the goals of the West African regional integration plan.

This research therefore is an attempt to analyze how ECOWAS Protocol on free movement has led to a large influx of both regular and irregular migrants from West African countries into Nigeria and how that has led to the present national insecurity that the nation is currently grappling with. In doing this, we begin with an evaluation of the security challenges associated with the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons and how best to tackle the security challenges that the implementation of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons have caused for Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

National Security

This study is in agreement with the definition of national security by Prabhakaran (as cited in Dan and Dauda, 2010). He defines national security as:

The measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any given time, by balancing all instruments of state policy through governance, that can be indexed by computation, empirically or otherwise, and is extendable to global security by variables external to it.

ECOWAS Protocol

In this study, ECOWAS Protocol on Free movement of goods and persons connotes a treaty that permits citizens of member countries of ECOWAS the right to move freely reside and transact business without any form of fear and molestation, either by reasons of tariff or non –tariff impediment to free trade. The idea behind the enactment of this protocol is to promote mutual trade for the development of the sub-region. However, criminals have availed themselves of this initiative to perpetrate their nefarious activities. These have a lot of implication for the security of Nigeria in particular and the sub-region in general.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Liberal Inter-governmentalism theory of regional integration. Liberal Inter-governmentalism is a response to earlier Functionalist and Neo-Functionalist theoretical approaches to integration. This theory was propounded by Hoffman (1966) and Moravcsik (1989).

At the most fundamental level, liberal inter-governmentalism rests on two basic assumptions about international politics. The first is that states are the critical actors in a context of international anarchy. That is, states seek to achieve goals primarily through intergovernmental negotiation and bargaining, rather than by a centralized authority making and enforcing political decisions (Moravcsik, 1993). Liberal Intergovernmentalism simply acknowledges a blunt empirical fact about contemporary institutions like the EU and ECOWAS: Member states are ‘masters of the treaty’ and continue to enjoy preeminent decision-making power and political legitimacy.

Despite the wide range of domestic factors involved in preference formation, and often in foreign policy-making itself, liberal inter-governmentalism treats the state as unitary. This is not because domestic pluralism does not matter. Rather, liberal inter-governmentalism





assumes that (at any given moment and in any given issue) varied views about state interests internally and varied actors that represent the state externally aggregate to relatively coherent preference functions and strategic calculations. According to liberal theories of International Relations, 'the foreign policy goals of national governments vary in response to shifting pressure from domestic social groups, whose preferences are aggregated through political institutions' (Moravcsik 1993, 481).

The second basic liberal inter-governmentalism assumption is that states are purposive and at least boundedly rational. Rationalism is an individualist or agency assumption: actors calculate the utility of alternative courses of action and choose the one that satisfies (or maximizes) their utility under the circumstances (Moravcsik 1995). Collective outcomes are explained as the result of the aggregation of and interaction among individual actions based on relatively (but never perfectly) efficient pursuit of these preferences – albeit subject to cognitive limitations, the presence or absence of information, uncertainty about the future, and the availability of reliable theories of cause and effect. Agreement to cooperate, or to establish international institutions, is explained as a collective outcome of interdependent (strategically) rational state choices realized through intergovernmental negotiation (Hoffman, 1966).

One way to restate the states-as-actors and bounded rationality assumptions is that decisions to cooperate internationally can be explained in a three-stage framework: states first define preferences, then bargain to substantive agreements, and finally create (or adjust) institutions to commit to and secure those outcomes in the face of future political uncertainty. According to Liberal Intergovernmentalism, each stage is distinct and each can be explained by a separate theory. Thus cooperation, or its failure, emerges only at the end of the multi-causal sequence (Moravcsik 1989, 1998).

The relevance of liberal inter-governmentalism could be seen in the formation of ECOWAS. The formation of ECOWAS is mainly hinged on the theoretical extrapolations of liberal inter-governmentalism. The highest governing authority of ECOWAS is the Authority of Heads of State and Government. The Authority determines the general policy outline for the community ratifies and gives directives. It harmonizes and coordinates economic, scientific, technical, cultural and social policies and also oversees the functioning of the community's institutions and follow-up on objectives. Consistent with the assumptions of inter-governmentalism, the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government has the powers to refer to the community court when a member is found to have failed to honour any of its obligations or acted in breach of its authority. The Authority also has the powers to give though advisory, opinion on any legal matters and also exercise other powers ascribed to it under the treaty.

As proponents of inter-governmentalism have noted, national governments have and are still the driving force of any integration process. The ECOWAS treaty empowers Authority of Heads of State and Government to take appropriate action when obligations are flouted. Besides, reference can also be made of Article 26 of the ECOWAS constitution which empowers any member state to take safeguard measures in the event of disturbances in the economy. "In the event of serious disturbances occurring in the economy of a member state, following application of the provisions of the chapter, the member-state concerned shall take the necessary safeguard measures" (Constitution of ECOWAS, 1975, p.3).





Nevertheless, though Nigeria enjoys good relations with its neighbours, the country bears the huge burden of insecurity that the gap in implementation of the protocol has created. It is in this regard that it behooves the Nigerian government, not only as Africa's economic and perhaps political super power as well as the principal driver of the ECOWAS framework, to institute a mechanism for a review of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons. It is in this that the panacea for Nigeria's porous border issues and its attendant myriads of security challenges can be found.

Nigeria's National Security and the Challenges of the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Goods and Persons

Border security has become a major security issue for all governments given increased and deepening trans-border crimes. International borders also form a major component by which a country defines her territorial sovereignty. Border security is a factor of border management and it constitutes a major way of addressing national security matters. Border security and the management of borders in ways that promote national security has generally been given low priority in Africa and Nigeria in particular compared to security provided for political elites and their assets in the national capitals and other urban areas far-removed from the borders, while national security strategies of the country are left to suffer (Tanchum, 2012).

The negligence of border security and poor border management in Nigeria has largely contributed to cross-border crimes. Nigeria border security issues are distinctive, when compared to the other countries of the world. Nigeria has land and maritime borders spanning over four thousand kilometers and four hundred and fifty nautical miles. Because of this fact, these borders are not adequately monitored, patrolled or controlled. In an interview with Frank Mba, Force Public Relations Officer, at the Force Police Headquarters, he said the ECOWAS Protocol provided the platform for increased traffic of persons to the borders thereby increasing the workload of border officials.

The Protocol increased the pressure on security agents because persons who ordinarily would have undergone certain strict documentation processes before approaching the border points now freely approach the border posts without the requirements of undergoing those kinds of strict documentation processes. The Protocol invariably therefore, increased the traffic in the direction of the borders and by so doing also increased the workload of persons charged with monitoring and policing our borders. While at the same time reducing the powers of control by minimizing the documentation and the strict regimentation of procedures at the borders. Unlike some other parts of the world where International borders have barriers either physical or electronic barriers, our international border don't have those kinds of barriers. Beyond the official entry points, the numerous bush parts, foot parts, water parts are very difficult to police whether by the Customs, the Immigration, or by the Police border patrols or other agencies like the NDLEA and other intelligent agencies. Because these areas are large, there are no electronic surveillance barriers, because these days you can monitor your borders electronically and any breach, any unlawful incursion will be detected from a central control room, we don't have such facilities. When these borders are foot parts in the thick forest or along the deserts or on water parts like we have along the Gulf of Guinea, you will certainly have some of these challenges coming up (Mba, 2019).



Corroborating the above position, Martin (2011) inferred that these borders have become transit points for smuggling and other illegal cross-border activities. In other words, most, if not all the borders in Nigeria are transnational crime zones. The challenge of national security in Nigeria has been compounded by the porous nature of Nigerian borders. When borders cease to function effectively, different forms of crimes prevail and the security of a state or region is put in serious jeopardy because borders constitute the most visible sign of the sovereignty of a state on its territory. Border management is therefore crucial to a state's involvement in the protection of its population against what it considers as threats ranging from migration, international terrorism, and multiform trafficking as in human beings, drug, raw materials or Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) (Jihan and Cédric, 2010).

Joseph Atta, Deputy Comptroller and public relations officer of Nigeria Customs, said;

Our experience has been that it is the implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol that have created a fertile ground for criminally minded individuals to take advantage of the porous border to infiltrate and create security and economic challenges for Nigeria (Atta, 2019).

While Oyedele (2019) said:

Basically, the Protocol talks about freedom of the citizens of the ECOWAS member states to enter into the state of any other member country with valid travelling documents and international health certificates. The philosophy behind the Protocol is to enhance interregional trade. Of course, there may be direct link between this porosity of border and the influx of irregular migrants in our country. But one can still believe that the protocol does not in any way encourage the influx of irregular migrants. If you look at it carefully, you will discover that most of the areas where we have high level of insecurity in Nigeria, are the region where we don't even have direct border with ECOWAS member states. Meaning that you cannot really link the crises we are facing in terms of porosity of borders with the protocol of Free Movement. In case of Chad and Cameroon where we have a lot of crises, Nigeria does not have the Protocol with those countries. We have with Benin; we have with Niger. Those are the two countries we have border with in West Africa. The Protocol encourages movement without stress, movement with valid travelling document (Oyedele, 2019).

Interestingly, Nigeria's border points especially in the North-east and North-west no longer perform their strategic functions but serve as channels for smuggling of all sorts of illicit materials into the country. The current security challenges in Nigeria where the nation's Northern borders with Niger and Chad witness the unrestrained incursion of armed bandits to terrorize innocent citizens in towns and villages on the Nigerian side of the border calls for the need to put in place a rather effective border control system (Makka, 1989). Key issues in border insecurity in Nigeria are: insurgency/terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking, smuggling of contrabands among others.



Under insurgency/Terrorism, most of the attacks in parts of the country especially in the Northern fringes of the country have been attributed to the porous and artificially demarcated boundaries. Because these boundaries especially those with Republic of Niger, Chad and Cameroun, are not adequately patrolled, irregular migrants or aliens take advantage of the open nature to enter the country to perpetrate their nefarious activities.

As Temisan noted in Management of Nigerian Borders, Nigeria shares border with Niger, Chad and Benin Republics spanning over four thousand kilometers (Dan and Dauda, 2010). Frank Mba (personal communication) posits that:

...The implementation of the Protocol is a challenge, the monitoring of the implementation is a challenge, the political will by the political leaders in the sub region to actually know the truth, see the truth and work to fix the truth is a challenge. Then the activities of some unscrupulous security agents both in Nigeria and in other ECOWAS countries are also part of the challenge but beyond this, the security agents also have got huge problems to deal with.

A case in point is Baki town in Borno state, where distortion in border demarcation between Nigeria and Cameroun, makes it easy for external forces to wander in and out of the country at will to commit crime. Boko Haram insurgents take advantage of this porosity to escape to neighboring countries during security crackdown to evade capture. As the attack on a police station in Taraba – a Nigerian state that shares border with Cameroun have also shown, whenever Nigerian security operatives launched counter attacks on the insurgents, they retreat to neighboring countries especially Niger and Chad, from where they re-group to launch reprisal attack. Tunji Oyedele (personal communication) of the ECOWAS National Units and desk officer of the Free Movement at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said gaps in implementation of protocol provided an avenue for criminal elements to take advantage of the porous borders and infiltrate Nigeria. He responded thus:

The Article 4 of the Protocol explains that the member state reserves the right to decide whom to admit and it was itemized when your movement is a threat to the internal security of member states, the border official of the member states may decide not to let you in. The Protocol has not been fully implemented so this gives opportunities to some irregular migrants to take advantage of the free movement to get into the country with the collaboration of the border officials.

Smuggling of arms across Nigeria-Benin borders has led to increase in incidents of armed robberies, kidnapping, rising waves of 109 scene of religious violence. According to reports five men including two students of the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria were arrested for trying to bring in weapons from neighboring Chad Republic. The men hid the rifles, ammunition and about \$32,000 underneath vegetables and dried fish in two cars (This Day, 2010). Marwa (personal communication) reiterated that Border closure is one of the best ways to tackle internal security challenges caused by free movement of people and goods. He recalled an incident in 1991 when he as a military governor of Borno state, unilaterally took a decisive decision to close the borders with neighboring country of Chad to check activities of rebels who infiltrated that northern eastern state robbing and killing people, thus, causing security challenges for the people of the state. According to Marwa he took the decision after





several failed attempts to get Chad to deal with the infiltration of bandits into northern Nigeria. In his words:

we had been trying to get that country to block its borders and deal with those bandits and not allow them to enter into Nigeria and cause mayhem and it was not working, so on my own I sealed the border.

Equally, there were reports of trafficked weapons concealed in car doors, packaged stock fish and other bagged foodstuff in a v-booth Mercedes Benz and a Peugeot 504 wagon taxi include over 50 different sets of ak-47 rifles, rocket launchers, assorted ammunitions, grenades, computer ware and 4,823,500 Naira cash. The weapons were heading for Jos, the epicenter of religious violence in Nigeria's "Middle Belt" where dozens of ethnic groups and hundreds of Christians and Muslims have died fighting (Tanchum, 2012).

There was also another case of an abandoned bus which contained a lot of gun in the engine compartment (Punch, 2010). Smuggling of arms across Nigeria-republic of Benin borders has led to increase in incidents of armed robberies, kidnapping, rising waves of ethnic militias and their attendant violent conflicts. Atta (personal communication) asserts that there is a nexus between increased insecurity in Nigeria and non-compliance with the provision of the ECOWAS Protocol by neighboring member countries:

Definitely, if you do not comply with the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of goods and persons, it means that things will find their way illegally into the country and those are things that could compromise our security. It also means that even the movement of persons instead of them to follow only the approved route according to the protocol and show the ECOWAS identity or biometric card, or your identity card that shows that you are a citizen of one country or the other and then you just go. It means that you can pass through creeks or bushes and enter and then some of these illegal migrants might be insurgents, kidnappers and some of them might even be the ones that just come in and commit crime and escape unnoticed.

On human trafficking, the trafficking of children for the purpose of prostitution and form of exploitative labor is a widespread issue in Nigeria. Foreign children trafficked to Nigeria come mainly from Benin and Togo (an estimated 96%, with 90% of that figure coming from Benin alone), Cote d'Ivoire and Niger. Children as young as five and six years trafficked from Benin have been found working in exploitive conditions in Nigeria mines in the Western part of the country. Trafficked girls are used for domestic services or street trading as well as commercial sexual exploitation while boys are generally forced to work on plantations or in commercial farming, construction, quarries and mines or engaged in petty crimes and drug trade (UNDOC, 2006). With respect to women trafficked to Europe for the purpose of sexual exploitation, an estimated 94% are from Edo State while the remaining are from Delta, Kano and Borno States (Dan and Dauda, 2010). Marwa reiterated the views supported by the above data that some residents of border communities in Nigeria take advantage of the provisions of ECOWAS Protocol to commit crime or smuggle goods and other items in and out of the country, thereby evading arrests. He cites land border areas in Katsina state where smugglers keep their illicit drugs in bulk on the other side of the borders



take what they intend to sell and just hop over to Nigeria and if they were caught or pursued they will run and hop over to the other side. And similar things do happen with human trafficking too. According to Marwa (personal communication);

... I shared a thought at the border that day, where I said that when I was governor of Borno state we had a similar situation not with drugs but with bandits and criminals. For instance, in Niger, working with the Binational Commission and even with ECOWAS, we now work with the neighboring states like Cameroun, Niger and Chad, we the governors had our own understanding that if somebody hops in and commits crime and hops back, they will take them and bring him back and we will make sure that he faces appropriate due process and so with them...but definitely these borders facilitate various criminal activities. Even as at now I believe the federal government closed the borders and it is yielding a lot of dividends because drug smuggling has reduced, smuggling of good has reduced.

For arms smuggling, over70% of about eight to ten million illegal weapons in West Africa is in Nigeria. The high rate of illegal procurement and use of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) in Nigeria is indexed by the intermittent seizure of SALWs by security and border control officers, the frequency of deployment of these arms in conflict and crime scenes, and the level of human casualty and material damage recorded in the aftermath of its use in the country (Bestma, 2007).

Corroborating the above point, Chairman of the presidential Advisory Committee on the elimination of drug abuse, Brigadier- General Buba Marwa (personal communication) noted that;

The crux of the matter is that it is a big problem for us...those that enter with the intent to commit. The herdsmen/Farmers clashes, the government has stated that for the most part, those are foreigners because the same Fulani people have been with us for a century in all parts of the country walking with their sticks, so who are these people who suddenly appear within these past few years, carrying guns, it is definitely people who migrate from outside and this can only happen with accessibility through the porous borders.

For instance, the quantity of arms surrendered during the disarmament and demobilization (DD) phase of the Amnesty programme for the Niger Delta militants in 2009 gave an idea of the quantum of SALWs proliferation in the country. The Amnesty initiative saw over 15000 militants surrender arms at the expiration of the DD phase of the Amnesty. Weapons recovered during the disarmament process included 2760 assorted guns, 287445 ammunitions of different calibre, 18 gun-boats, 763 dynamite sticks, 1090 dynamite caps, 3155 magazines and several other military accessories, such as dynamite cables, bulletproof jackets and jack-knives (Dan and Dauda, 2010).

Consequently, Frank Mba (personal communication) said;

Investigations we have conducted have clearly shown that lots of people, organized crimes syndicates take advantage of the ECOWAS Protocol on free movement of persons and goods to bring in weapons into this country. Of



course, these weapons are concealed either in specialized compartments of vehicles or they are concealed in parts of legitimate goods and then they are brought in. And this is basically because this Protocol has made it possible for them to move freely in and out of the country. I give you an example, there is an arm smuggling syndicate that was smashed by the operatives of the Nigerian police force. In the course of our investigation, we discovered that this particular syndicate gets their arm supply from as far as North Africa. They move these weapons through the Sahel region, passing through several ECOWAS countries before eventually getting into Nigeria. So, it is not just a Nigerian issue. These breaches occur not just at Nigerian borders but also along other borders within the sub-region and the negative impacts are felt also not just in Nigeria because these are trans-border criminals, these are international arm smuggling syndicates. If those arms for example are destined to get to Nigeria, if those arms get to Burkina Faso and they get a willing buyer who is ready to pay higher than what their target buyers in Nigeria will pay, they will certainly sell. If they get to Togo or Ghana and they stumble on a buyer who is ready to pay higher than what the target buyer in Nigeria or Niger or any other parts of the West African countries will pay, they will certainly sell and go back and look for something else.

Mba reiterates that there is strong evidence to support that proliferation of small arms and light weapons could be linked to activities of bandits and arms syndicate operating within the West African sub-region who find their ways into Nigeria through the porous borders. According to Mba (personal communication):

I give you an example, there is an arm smuggling syndicate that was smashed by the operatives of the Nigerian police force. In the course of our investigation, we discovered that this particular syndicate gets their arm supply from as far as North Africa. They move these weapons through the Sahel region, passing through several ECOWAS countries before eventually getting into Nigeria. So, it is not just a Nigerian issue. These breaches occur not just at Nigerian borders but also along other borders within the sub region and the negative impacts are felt also not just in Nigeria because these are trans-border criminals, these are international arm smuggling syndicates. So, it is not just arms, it is not just car thefts, we also have challenges that have to do with human trafficking. Young girls are trafficked from one part of ECOWAS countries to another and sometimes from one part of ECOWAS country into another and outside the sub region.

It is widely believed that militants only surrendered a small fraction of their arms, as most of them doubted the government's genuine commitment to the amnesty. The regular interception of illegal arms trafficking within and across the borders by security agencies also reveals the worrisome dimension that arms proliferation has recently assumed in the country (Bestman,2007).

Furthermore, drug trafficking has become a common phenomenon among West African countries like Nigeria, the Gambia, Ghana, Niger and Burkina Faso. The reason is not far-fetched. Profits from drugs and guns reportedly exceed that of human trafficking. The





United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime alarmingly revealed that the volume of cocaine transiting the West African region is roughly 50 tons annually (United Nations, 2008).

The commonly trafficked drugs include heroine, cannabis, cocaine and synthetic drugs. The drug menace became one of Nigeria's major security challenges right at the dawn of independence with discoveries of cannabis farms in the country, arrests of Nigerian cannabis traffickers abroad, and reports of psychological disorders suspected to be associated with the use of cannabis. However, in the early 1980s the problem of drug trafficking became a major issue for concern following alleged involvement of military personnel in heroin trafficking in Nigeria (Obot, 2004).

Nigeria as a major source of heroin and cocaine. Nigerian drug dealers use large numbers of small-scale smugglers, each carrying a tiny quantity of heroin, sometimes packed in condoms and then ingested into the stomach. The major routes of Nigerian traffickers are Ghana, Ivory Coast, (Cote D'Ivoire) Senegal and South Africa for heroin and cocaine destined for Europe and the United States (Sabrina, 1998). Nigeria and Senegal are the source of the greatest volumes of cocaine seized on commercial air flights (United Nations, 2008). Marwa (personal communication) opines that technology has a major role to play in effective border management and enhancement of internal security. This he said is in addition to the improvement in the living conditions of security agents. According to him:

Security agencies should be helped in the wildest sense, in terms of their motivation, welfare and living conditions; and their equipment that they need to carry out their jobs. You know that the soldier's equipment is very dear to him...that's the bottom line, security agents without their appropriate tools is like any other person, so the training and the tools and then the intelligence community should be given their needs; they have very important role to play in fishing out and I know they have their relationship with the neighboring communities, so they exchange information, and they are able to nip things in the bud based on intelligence...and they need some technology in the borders because of the wide expanse of the land.

The menace of drug trafficking in and out of the country had necessitated the enactment of several drug law and policies. Drug abuse has become prevalent in the country amid the daunting security challenges. The drugs come into the country as a result of the porous borders and poor security in the airports. According to official figures from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), 37% of Kano State's population are drug abusers and the state also has the highest number of people arrested for illicit drug trafficking (Ogene, 2013). Buba Marwa (personal communication) who is chairman of PACEDA said this is a major issue for Nigeria. He recounts his encounter with Nigerian border officials in one of the land border areas in Katsina state.

Right there one of the border officials explained how the smugglers will keep their items on the other side of the border, take what they will sell hop about two or three kilometers and hop over when they are pursued...definitely these borders precipitate various criminal activities. Recently in Nigeria, NDLEA officials working as drug peddling syndicate were arrested by Nigerian security operatives for implicating a young Nigerian girl in the trafficking of tramadol to Saudi Arabia. The outcry of the young girl who was already on the death row drew global attention and thorough investigations which led to the apprehension of





the culprits. Many Nigerians and non- Nigerians alike take advantage of the porous nature of the airports and land borders to perpetrate criminal activities which portray Nigeria in a bad light in the comity of nations (Ogene, 2013).

In terms of terrorism, Nigeria ranked number 3 among 20 most dangerous countries in the world in December 2018 and for the fourth consecutive time since 2015 according to Global Terrorism index ranking-GTI (Sahara Reporters, 2018).

Under smuggling of contrabands, (untaxed cigarettes and alcohol) is a common occurrence over most borders. Joseph Atta (personal communication) said;

On the security front, you only need to go to places like Zamfara in the north west and other states, the number of armed banditry, have drastically dropped, and this means that the partial border closure seems to have cut off or restricted the movement of weapons and they no longer have access to their supplies and their activities have kind of gone down.

The smuggling of contraband goods and undocumented aliens is usually done with the connivance of border personnel (customs & immigration). Auto theft in Nigeria, is also a serious matter mostly along Benin Republic, it is on a high side to the level that more than 100 vehicles mainly Land Cruisers, four-wheel drives, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota and BMWs are estimated to be stolen in Nigeria per month to neighboring countries. The criminals steal and smuggle these vehicles across the borders with Nigeria each month. This is done with the connivance of border communities who “hide the vehicles and provide information on the presence of local law enforcement patrols” for a fee of between 150-200 dollars and Naira as the case may be (Tanchum, 2012).

The above is corroborated by Frank Mba (personal communication):

Another area that is also of concern to us as security persons is smuggling. Beyond smuggling is also the issue of car theft. A lot of cars that are stolen in Nigeria are driven across the border and eventually brought back again. You can call that round-tripping of stolen vehicles. Cars that are stolen here are round tripped and brought back. Sometimes these cars have been reconfigured and then they are brought in as Tokunbos not necessarily because our borders are porous but because there is a Protocol in place that encourages or enables people to move in and out or across these borders freely...So there are challenges of arm trafficking, human trafficking, drugs, car thefts even illicit dealings on artifacts and even endangered animal species. Recently, I am sure you followed the story of a man in Victoria Island who held one of the wildcats in solitary confinement. That animal is an endangered species and that animal is treasured not just in West Africa but worldwide. That animal was moved from one country to another and then through the borders before it gets into Nigeria.

The challenges facing African states to manage their borders ranges from lack of adequate manpower, lack of technological capacity to corrupt officials. These challenges can be traced to internalization of colonial superstructure. All African states share artificial boundaries that were demarcated by the colonial masters basically for ease of their administration. In so doing the colonial masters disrupted the traditionally defined migration





patterns. To overcome the foregoing challenges associated with the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons, Mba (personal communication) asserts that;

We need to provide the Security Agencies manning our borders modern border control equipment. It is not at all times you need to be physically on ground at the border points. Today, you can electronically monitor your house in Ilorin with your smartphone, you can get alerts at any point in time anybody crosses any designated area that you don't want them to cross. Not only will you get an alert, this simple technology can actually take pictures for you. As soon as somebody is approaching that area around your home, you get the picture of the person instantly, live feed. You can at any point in time look around your house, check for any intrusion or incursion and deal with it and activate appropriate response. These things are also possible along our borders.

Oyedele (personal communication) submits that before any nation closes its borders, because Nigeria is a victim of this now it needs to follow the due process. It is to inform the ECOWAS commission who happens to be the regulatory body. They will quickly wade into the matter if it is possible for them to address the concerns raised before the border is closed. Their inability will now lead to eventual closure. They should allow the ECOWAS to play its role. This role should be properly itemized in the Protocol. Because the present Protocol just said that member states will inform the ECOWAS secretariat of the eventual closure or after the closure but the role played by ECOWAS as an international institution is not legally defined. Are they to sanction the other country on behalf of the victim or are they to close it by themselves? ECOWAS can even annul because we are all subject to the ECOWAS protocol now. Every member state is subject to the rules and regulations that are guiding ECOWAS. So, ECOWAS, have that power. ECOWAS can as well sanction the country if truly they have breached the Protocol. The function of ECOWAS needs to be clearly defined. Recently the Federal government has approved 6.5 Billion Naira to purchase patrol vehicles and other scientific materials to monitor the activities of our borders both governed and ungoverned areas, we have so many ungoverned areas along our border corridors. If this is fully implemented, the Nigerian border can be effectively managed.

Atta's response supports the above views expressed by Oyedele but only to the extent that borders are closed when national security of any member state is threatened. Atta (personal communication) says the first step would be to take a decisive action and shut the border. According to him the next step would be to engage neighboring communities on a bilateral level. He asserts that:

For instance, there is an ongoing tripartite meeting between Nigeria, Niger and Benin Republics to address the challenges of border management, to address the issues of movement of goods across our borders. Hopefully these discussions will lead us to the point where everyone knows what to do at its own end to ensure that goods and persons moving in and out of a country do so strictly according to extant laws, when that is done, national security will be guaranteed because a secured border is a secured nation. You don't leave your border open to all sorts of things and people and expect security. You don't





leave your borders open for all sorts of goods to come in and you expect prosperity, any nation that does not have food security, because by the way, when we talk about issues of national security, the components of national security include physical security, food security and economic security if you cannot feed yourself, it means you cannot be independent.

Conclusion

This study established that insurgency in the north east, farmers/herders' clashes in the north central, militancy in the Niger Delta and other internal security crises in other parts of Nigeria have been fueled by the supply of arms and light weapons by bandits from neighboring countries. Kidnapping, armed robbery, human and drug trafficking and smuggling of food items and other contraband goods have also thrived in Nigeria as a result of activities of criminal elements from the West African sub-region. This study further discovered the existence of inter-agency conflict especially among border officials and involvement of unscrupulous security agents in nefarious economic engagements.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study came out with the following recommendations.

- i. The Nigerian government should not only review her migration Acts to curtail movement of certain goods and persons but also, conduct an anatomy of inter-agency integration among the border officials to address rampant cases of unhealthy interagency rivalry at the borders. Border drills should be adopted as a temporary measure in times of threats to national security; border closure should be activated only if ECOWAS fails to address the concerns raised by any member state. This is because, the world is increasingly becoming interconnected and security crises in one country can spill over to other countries especially where open border policy is in effect.
- ii. The paper equally recommends that Nigerian government should pursue and strengthen bilateral cooperation with neighboring member countries and expand multi-national joint border patrols to all border states. More powers should be divulged to states and local governments in Nigeria to enable them effectively address the issues of poverty, infrastructure deficit and internal security challenges.

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