

National Security, Social Order and the Quest for Human Dignity in Nigeria: Some Ethical Considerations

PHILIP OGO UJOMU
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This essay examines the ethical factors embedded in the problem of national security in Nigeria. It argues that the foundation of Nigeria's national security needs to be redefined due to the visible failure of the hitherto restrictive military and economic approaches to national survival and development. The essay examines the connection between security issues and moral considerations by analyzing the moral and social values indispensable for the establishment of enduring national security in Nigeria. In short, the essay discusses the critical challenges confronting Nigeria in its quest for the establishment of enduring and genuine national security and sustainable development, both from a historical and conceptual point of view.

Keywords: ethics, national security

INTRODUCTION

Underlying the quest for national security in Nigeria is the issue of political morality, which focuses on the question of defining the relationship between the state and the various groups in the society. Political morality properly construed seeks to establish and sustain the essential conditions for the smooth functioning of the state and society. It is in this light that we identify the problem of the moral basis of Nigeria's security to be a vital imperative of national reconciliation, national survival and national development in the new millennium. Our examination of the moral foundations of national security is all the more significant when we examine the trend of events in the history of military and economic growth in Nigeria, especially under the erstwhile military regimes of Abacha and Babangida. Our essay is particularly concerned with showing the pattern of ethical degeneration that led to the systematic and institutionalised erosion of personal and collective peace, safety, stability and harmony within the Nigerian society.

Also, the need for an examination of the ethical basis of human social existence in Nigeria is further highlighted by president Obasanjo (1999: 8) who

in the October 1999 national day speech emphasized that there is a need to examine the moral foundations of all our actions and to continue to search for the conditions that will make Nigeria a just, free and wealthy society. Obasanjo's statement clearly implies that the country is yet to achieve the much desired level of ethical conduct and respect for human dignity that can ensure the maintenance of security, peace and order in the society.

Indeed, the history of Nigeria shows that the practice of genuine moral conduct and the guarantee of adequate personal and national security for all segments of the society has been an illusive and futile project. An examination of the spectrum of national life reveals the incidence of corruption in high and low places, conflicts and confusion in various communities and regions, greed and selfishness as the guiding principles of human social interaction, as well as a situation of pervasive lawlessness in the conduct of daily life (CDHR 2000: x-xi).

As a confirmation of the problem of national security in Nigeria the Nigerian Bar Association [NBA] has stated that there is increasing national decay and insecurity, which is seen in the regressing economy, unviable hospital facilities and health services, lack of good pipe borne water, transportation and fuel problems that have overwhelmed the society (Nwankpa 2000: 8). We may also add that the problem of national security is seen in the increasing situation of lawlessness, violence and criminality that have become endemic in the nation.

The evidence of the dismal state national security is seen in what Onyegbula (2000: 24) describes as the diminishing standard of living and the deteriorating social infrastructures and educational system. For instance, the roads, refineries, hospitals and schools have not been functioning at their optimum levels. More so, the existence of a poorly trained police force, has compelled the abdication of the security of lives and property of Nigerians to the ethnic militia groups and other dubious civil defense and vigilante associations. Together, these civil and institutional security agencies and groups participate in the institutionalized brutalization, extortion and repression of the people. Thus, our argument is that the erosion of both the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of the social order, has ensured that the establishment of genuine national security in the nation has not been adequately guaranteed.

More importantly, the earlier approaches, which have been adopted in the attempt to provide national security in Nigeria, have not been successful. Hence, there is a need to seek a new approach to the resolution of the problem of national security in Nigeria and a good point to start the discussion is to attempt a conceptual analysis of social order as a prelude to the examination of national security.

1. SOCIAL ORDER AND HUMAN DIGNITY: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

The problem of social order focuses on the search of community which raises fundamental questions about justice between men and how they can achieve cooperation for the common good in the society. It focuses on the need and procedures for balancing the conflicting interests among individuals and groups, as well as between individuals and the state. The concept of social order is important to human beings because it attempts to define the character of the social system as a scheme of social relations which defines the core political, economic and social roles, rights and duties of people in a society.

The social order aims at the common good by ensuring common justice, equity and fairness in the relationships between individuals. It presupposes that the good that a society aims at must be accomplished in such a way that it is useful for both the society itself and its members. (Brugger 1974: 62) The social order aims at achieving the dignity of man expressed in his self responsibility and personal freedom (Werhahn 1990: 28). According to Agrawal (1998: 150) a true moral value is one that upholds respect for human life and personal freedom. And the sum total of the moral values of a society is its image of humanity. The ultimate value is recognized as the sanctity of human life and derivatively, as the supreme worth of the individual person, or as the value of human life.

Expressing the idea more concretely, Bertsch et al (1991: 18) argue that human dignity presupposes that each human being is considered as an end in himself, and is not a mere instrument to enhance the values of some higher entity, for example a state or dictator. Human dignity exists in a nation when a society is democratic and power is dispersed or distributed among the competing groups in the nation. The aim of such distribution of power is to ensure that the policies and actions of the government can be influenced.

Also, to facilitate the respect for human dignity, there must be respect for the human rights, honor and identity of persons, so that individuals can enjoy relationships based on loyalty, friendship and community. Furthermore, human dignity presupposes that individuals can enjoy the income, goods, services, health, safety and comfort arising from their existence in the society (Bertsch et al, 1991: 16-17). It is clear that the inability of the Nigerian society to define the principles and conditions for the establishment and sustenance of social order and human dignity has generated the problem of national security.

2. NATIONAL SECURITY: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

National security is an important concern in the life of a person, group or nation. Brown (1982: 21) holds that the concern for the security of a nation is undoubtedly as old as the nation-state itself. In the context of the nation-state, the central feature in the quest for national security is the concern for the survival, peace and progress of individuals, groups and the society as a whole. National security has been construed in different ways, each of which emphasizes vital factors underlying the idea. However, it should be noted that each of these conceptions, highlight just one aspect of what actually is a more embracing idea. Brennan (1961: 22) holds that national security is the protection of national survival, while Ray (1987: 248-249) says that national security is to be understood in terms of the desire and capacity for self-defense. Goldstein (1999: 79) sees national security as closely connected to the preservation of the borders of a state and as mainly construed in terms of the power to maintain a government's sovereignty within its territory.

According to Hare (1973: 86-89), national security is to be construed as the confrontation of threats to peace in the society. The editors of the *Africa Research Bulletin* (2000: 13931-55) construe national security in terms of the avoidance of conflicts and confrontations, and the preservation of the lives of people in the society. They also see national security in terms of the capacity to achieve reconciliation among the diverse groups in the society. However, O'Brien (1995: 100) in explicating a somewhat different idea of national security, referred to as an inclusive approach to security, argues that security is construed as more than just safety from the violence of rival militaries. It is the absence of violence whether military economic or sexual. In fact, environmental issues count as security problems.

The concern for national security has led to the development of various approaches to the issue. There is the military, economic and human resource development approaches to national security. With regard to the military approach to national security, Ochoche (1998: 106) holds that national security focuses on the amassment of military armaments, personnel and expenditure. Galtung (1982: 76) argues that the military approach to security is justified on the basis that only a strong military force can deter attacks and threats of attacks, as well as provide the means of fighting undeterred attacks. However, it should be noted here that in the case of Nigeria, the vast size of the military has not resulted in a corresponding increase in the maintenance of traditional functions, which Heywood (1997: 360-363) rightly identifies as the maintenance of the security and territorial integrity of the state and society, the maintenance of domestic and civil order, and the provision of humanitarian services.

Contrary to popular and reasonable expectations, the military in Nigeria has been used for largely negative purposes involving the oppression, terrorization and repression of the citizens. Heywood (1997: 365) says that the military in Nigeria has been used for the purpose of suppressing popular involvement in

politics and civil liberties. It is also used to curtail the activities of unions, opposition groups and popular demonstrations and movements. In short, it is an instrument of censorship. This trend has been particularly prevalent under military regimes. Therefore, Heywood (1997: 370) concludes that rather than be the solution to Nigeria's national security, national development and national integration problems, the military has compounded and perpetuated them.

According to Ochoche (1998: 113) the military in Nigeria, as in many other African countries, has not been able to maintain domestic security, defend the national interest nor uphold the territorial integrity of the nation. The failure of the military in Nigeria to fulfil its constitutional role has ensured that the military has remained distracted and has failed to distinguish itself in the political realm of life into which it has intruded. It seems that one of the major reasons why the military in Nigeria has failed to effectively maintain national security is because they have mainly upheld regime and personal security. Ironically, the Nigerian military has not been able to perfect the art and craft of upholding regime security. We may recall the various national security problems that led to either the disgrace, death or exit of most military despots and dictators across Africa such as Babangida, Abacha, Mengistu, Mainassara, Koromah, Doe, Barre, Bokassa, Idi Amin, etc.

Thus, Luckham (1998: 12-13) holds that in a very fundamental sense national security is a public good and not the private property of the state nor of particular dominant interests. According to Luckham (1998: 13), there can exist a tension or contradiction between the manifest and latent functions of security. This is especially the case where the military is employed as an instrument of state coercion to oppress, exploit, extort and terrorize the citizenry. Central to the failure of the military approach to national security in Nigeria has been that situation in which, as Hutchful (1998: 601) says, the military has failed to achieve operational efficiency, institutional solidarity and stability. In our view, other crucial factors that led to the failure of the military were the inability to uphold the principles of truth, justice, respect for human life and compassion towards other human beings in the society.

3. NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: ILLUSIONS OF PERSONAL/ REGIME SECURITY AND INFRA-STRUCTURAL COLLAPSE

At several important levels the quest for national security has led to serious conflicts in the Nigerian state. Such conflicts have manifested themselves in the continual ethnic, political, religious and socio-economic crisis besetting the country. These problems are representations of the almost perennial and intractable problem of insecurity in Nigeria. The prolonged periods of military dictatorship with the attendant economic decay, corruption, abuse of human rights, depreciation of human dignity and general collapse of social infrastructures have ensured that there is a degeneration of the quality of life of

the Nigerian people. The problem of the establishment and sustenance of national security in Nigeria is seen mainly in the inability of the various governments and the state agencies that existed over the decades to ensure the adequate protection, defense, peace, survival, well-being and progress of the citizens, the state and the society at large.

One of the major reasons for this situation of insecurity and instability is that many of the previous regimes, especially the civilian regime of Shagari and the military regimes of Abacha and Babangida, had myopic, perverted and unviable ideas of national security. Detailed discussions on the political and economic activities of these regimes have been provided by scholars such as Diamond (1988; 1995). However, few scholars, if any, have actually presented the concrete security implications of these experiences. The national security thrust of these regimes focused on the maintenance of personal security and power, to the detriment of the long-term goals of national development and reconciliation.

These regimes were concerned with the looting of the national treasury and the mismanagement of the vast human and natural resources of this great nation. These corrupt and incompetent regimes were concerned with consolidating their positions, employing the instruments of ethnicity, religion and clientelism as the tools for dividing the various groups in the society, also engendering factionalism within the Nigerian military forces. Therefore, Luckham (1998: 13) holds that in most parts of Africa national security is ideologically constructed through the play of identities and differences within the state (internal security) as well as in relation to external threats.

To this effect, most security organizations construct their own cognitive state ethnic security maps identifying which groups can be trusted and which are marginal to the state and its ruling circles. In Nigeria the military, which appeared most constitutionally and professionally suited to fulfil the task of providing security, has played a particularly negative role in the maintenance of national security as a careful study of their contribution to the history of Nigeria has demonstrated. It is on this basis that Ujomu (2000a: 39) argues that Nigeria's quest for national security cannot be guaranteed by a large body of security forces, since much of the insecurity, conflicts and crisis that happened in the country from 1960 to 1999, were due to the very actions and omissions of these same security forces.

Hutchful (1998: 601) maintains that the fracturing of the military along ethnic, rank, ideological and generational lines has compromised the objectives of operational efficiency, institutional solidarity and stability of the military as an institution. Worse still, this situation has compounded the problem of national security in Nigeria, by allowing a pervasive trend towards misrepresenting the concept of security, and thereby, giving it a restricted meaning. It is this situation that gives rise to what Amuwo (2000: 2) refers to as the military's overriding concern for regime and personal security. This situation has led to the inefficient functioning of the military and has entrenched its use for certain unethical and

unconstitutional purposes such as coup d'etat, extra-judicial killings, human rights abuses, oppression, and the extortion and harassment of the citizens.

Over the years, according to Egwu (2000: 4), the security of the Nigerian nation-state was reduced to that of the ruler and his immediate supporters. The country's rulers failed in their attempts to maintain security within the Nigerian society due to their ill conceived notions of security. The security calculus of the Nigerian state failed because it did not include vital aspects of social and national development, such as the provision of basic social amenities. Thus, the Nigerian state could not meet the social, economic, or even the military conditions for national security. Let us cite a few examples to buttress our point.

Good evidence of insecurity in Nigeria is the manifest incapability and inefficiency of the police force with its failure to maintain law and order and provide security for the citizens. This lapse has created a vacuum that is being filled by auxiliary ethnic militia, vigilante groups and militant civil society vanguards. (Ujomu 2000b: 10-15; CDHR 2000: x). Luckham (1998: 589-592) attributes the failure of the military to ensure national security to their acts of social banditry, political involvement, corruption, ethnic manipulation and political indoctrination.

Moreover, incontrovertible and frightening evidence for the collapse of national security in Nigeria has been the inability of the nation's security forces, and even the members of the national government, to protect themselves and the citizens from the scourge of armed robbers, criminals, hoodlums, kidnapers, ethnic militia groups, assassins, etc. Indeed, there have been confirmed cases of the convoys of government officials coming under gun fire from snipers, robbers or assassins. To put it more directly, not only was the task of national security misconstrued and misdirected to imply the exclusive quest for regime security or the personal security of the rulers and their cronies, but even the attempt to maintain the personal security of the rulers could not be realized in the light of the havoc being continuously wreaked on the society by these groups in addition to invading rebel forces from neighboring countries to the north of Nigeria.

These problems are a clear indication that the erstwhile national governments have failed to consistently and committedly maintain the core social values and physical infrastructures necessary for establishing and sustaining national security, national survival and socio-political well-being. Some of these values needed in order to maintain the national security of the nation have been discussed in detail earlier. However, some examples of the infrastructure that has remained in a chronic or permanent state of disrepair, low performance and even stagnation, thus constituting a severe threat to the national security of the country, include the country's airports, sea ports, oil refineries, strategic inter-state highways, rail ways, bridges, etc.

Also, Nigeria has demonstrated that it lacks the fundamental requirements for national security, namely a major stockpile of abundant fuel and food, good roads and rail system, and other critical and strategic defense, civil or general purpose infrastructure. Such stockpiles of materials are basically intended to

serve as a means of rescuing the society in the event of a major disaster or crisis arising from either man-made or natural causes. It is enough to say here that the almost perennial problem of the scarcity of petroleum products in the country is an indication that there is little or no strategic reserve of these products. And there are also no clear methods or strategies put in place to distribute the products during emergencies.

Evidence of this point is seen in the fact that fuel supply across the country can be stalled or sabotaged by either industrial action by oil workers, the breakdown of any of the refineries, the activities of smugglers, and other minimal hindrances, which could easily be taken care of if the proper national security strategies were in place. This situation exists due to a lack of knowledge, skills and vision concerning the requirements of true national security. This is compounded by the fact that political manipulation and corruption have led to the misuse, embezzlement and misappropriation of the vital material and financial resources needed to provide the infrastructure for guaranteeing genuine security.

Hence, the core of the problem of national security in Nigeria is the conflict between the groups seeking to establish for themselves personal security or regime security, as opposed to those groups demanding the establishment of genuine national security, reconciliation and justice for all individuals and groups in the country. This crisis of national security in the nation can be seen in the political and economic difficulties arising from both the struggle for state power among the national elite, as well as in the distribution and management of the society's wealth and resources. It has been noted that the problem of national security in Nigeria has been aggravated by the situation of intolerance existing among the various ethno-cultural and religious groups in the country mainly due to elite manipulation and greater deprivation and frustration within the society. This situation has led to the engendering of mistrust and divisive tendencies in the society. Consequently, there has been an increase in communal and inter-tribal clashes and violence.

Ethnic militia have been co-opted and employed in the prosecution of these religious and ethnic clashes, thereby threatening the fragile peace and stability in the country (Ogunmodede, 2000: 7). Even in the year 2001, the picture of national decay and insecurity aptly painted by the officials of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) in December 2000 holds true. The economy is in a bad shape, air, sea and especially land transportation remain unsafe. (Nwankpa 2000: 5). As an example, the landing lights, beacons and strobes at the International airport in the Federal Capital, Abuja, stopped functioning just as the plane carrying the nation's president was about to land early in the year 2001.

4. ICONS, ETHICAL CONDUCT AND THE VITIATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA (1960 - 2000)

The problem of national security in Nigeria construed in historical perspective has always centered around the crisis arising from the nature of the relations between the various ethnic and interest groups in the country. The Africa Research bulletin (2000: 13947) holds that the conflict in Nigeria hinges on the tension, injustice and marginalisation created by the fact that while some segments of the country are carrying the burden that sustains the entire nation other segments are enjoying the paradise that has resulted from this inequality. This problem has been linked to the character of the state and the actions of the dominant interests of the ruling class.

According to Fatton (1992: 19) the state is the path or avenue by which the ruling class reconciles its divisions and policies. The existence of a ruling class implies necessarily the existence of a state whose role is to preserve and promote the social, political and economic structures of the ruling class dominance. Hence, in so far as the maintenance of national security remains a critical aspect of the activities of the state, it is also subject to the control and manipulation of the class that is in control of political power in the country.

Evidence reveals that there has always been a misconstruing of the meaning and idea of development in Nigeria. According to Caroline Ifeka (2000: 120) development in Nigeria is seen in terms of the creation of sub-national territories such as states. Hence, development is seen in terms of political processes, which people often believe will bring about socio-economic development in the affected areas. However, evidence shows that this is not always the case that political action leads to social, economic transformation of the conditions of life in an area. The socio-economic development, and hence the security of the various interests and segments of the Nigerian society, are hindered by social ills like corruption, poor planning, nepotism, tyranny and selfishness in the society.

The situation of Nigeria as a crisis of ethical conduct and national security between 1960 - 2000 has been manifested as widespread ethnic tension and hatred, religious conflicts, military, mutual mistrust, decay of social and physical infrastructures, endemic corruption and Kleptocracy, among other grievous problems. Fatton (1992: 22) holds that the situation has been such that the state has employed its repressive instruments, especially the army and the police, in order to regulate and regiment the political and socio-economic freedoms and space of the other subordinate groups in the society. Those who have controlled the state have used the brutality of the security forces and the silent violence of the law in order to browbeat and coerce the oppressed and subordinate classes into psychological insecurity, political submission and material extraction.

Hence, Nolutshungu (1996: vii-ix) portrays the picture of the security problem as a threat faced by all marginal people who have been unable to protect themselves from the violence unleashed on them by the state or other numerous forces within the society. The marginality of the ordinary people makes them highly vulnerable to various forms of insecurity. Many of these people are caught in the problems of failed or unfinished nation-state projects. Nolutshungu (1996: 19) insists that the identifying features of marginal populations, and the evidence of their insecurity, is the fact that these peoples are usually disadvantaged, exploited and oppressed and their lives are associated with hardship.

The first republic headed by Tafawa Balewa in 1960 gave room for deep ethnic hatred, economic profligacy, and most especially political misconduct and violence. This regime could not uphold the vital moral principles underlying the fair practice of political activities. The political crisis existing under this government assumed a national dimension, eventually giving rise to a coup d'état by Major Nzeogwu in 1966. This coup d'état constituted an intrusion in the development of Nigeria's political culture and paved the way for the emergence of the military as a negative factor in Nigeria's political development. Anyway, the immediate consequence of the coup was to further destroy the fragile ethical and social balance of the Nigerian State. This is because many of those political elites who were killed came from the northern region, hence breeding mistrust among the different ethnic groups in the society.

Even though the Nzeogwu coup failed and General Aguiyi Ironsi emerged as the head of state, his regime could not stem the breakdown in ethnic relations and social balance that had been initiated by previous regimes. Also, Ironsi's regime could not mitigate the decline of ethical political culture in the country. This was seen in the fact that the government could not stem the wave of political tension and ethnic violence that spread across the country. Hence, having failed to manage the volatile political tensions within the Nigerian society, Ironsi and a few other elites were killed in another coup d'état, which ushered in the regime of Yakubu Gowon.

Under the Gowon regime the crisis of social order and national security deepened and it was seen in the manifest inability of the various social groups and ruling elites to confront the nation's problems with maturity, humaneness and foresight. The inability of the different interests and groups in the society to reconcile and resolve their differences eventually led to the Nigerian civil war. The war, that lasted between 1967 - 1979, pitched the secessionist Biafran regime of Colonel Ojukwu against that of General Gowon. Many lives and significant property were destroyed in that war setting Nigeria back by decades.

After the war the Gowon regime moved to reconstruct the crisis ridden and vitiated Nigerian society. However, the vision of national reconciliation and reconstruction was eroded and lost by the Gowon regime. It resorted to the entrenchment of unethical practices, mainly the mismanagement of the nation's resources through corruption, lack of vision and imaginative planning. Given this situation, the Gowon regime became alienated from, and insensitive to the needs, hopes and problems of the diverse interest groups in the Nigerian society. Hence, there was another coup d'état that removed the Gowon regime from power.

With the exit of the Gowon regime, General Murtala took over in 1975 as Head of State and his regime sought to make rapid reforms in the society. Under Murtala there were apparent efforts to sanitize the society and to instill some modicum of ethical conduct in the citizens. However, Murtala was killed in an assassination and the assassins were all executed. After the death of Murtala, General Obasanjo emerged as the head of the regime, and he tried to execute the programmes of his predecessor. Obasanjo eventually handed over political power to the civilian regime of Shehu Shagari in 1979.

The Shagari regime was in many ways worse than even its military predecessors. It displayed a profound lack of understanding of the meaning of national security, social order and ethical conduct. Excessive corruption, financial impropriety, lack of vision, prodigality and degeneracy characterized the activities of Shagari and his cohorts in government at that time. Their display of a lack of managerial capacity and gross economic imprudence ensured the collapse of the political and socio-economic order between 1979 and 1983. Eventually, the dismal lack of vision, discipline and accountability of Shehu Shagari regime led to another coup d'état that ushered in the regime of Buhari and Idiagbon.

The Buhari-Idiagbon regime tried to enforce ethics and discipline into the populace by force and coercion. It presumed that moral integrity and responsibility could be instilled in the citizenry by corporal punishment. The regime was to a great degree oppressive and tyrannical. Hence, it was despised by a majority of the Nigerian populace. Its inclination towards rigidity and tyranny, coupled with the harsh economic conditions of life, which it inherited from the past regimes, proved to be sources of public disaffection. The actions of the regime made life unbearable for the majority of Nigerians hence, there was another coup d'état by General Babangida in 1985.

When the Babangida regime came to power, it diabolically pretended to be populist, accountable, humane and sincere. It released most of those held in detention by the past regime and sought to paint a rosy picture of the life that Nigerians should expect. Later on, the Babangida regime assumed a tyrannical, dubious, corrupt and oppressive character, which ensured that most of the ethical values and ideals necessary for a peaceful and productive social life were eroded. The regime institutionalized corruption through the widening of the

scope of its clientelistic practices, and the entrenchment of the 'settlement syndrome' or the arbitrary award of gratification to friends and foes alike.

In light of such practices, the regime fell into disfavor with the majority of Nigeria. This regime was also noted for its insincerity and deception. Babangida was notoriously called 'maradona', a term symbolizing his cunning, sly and treacherous propensities. He was also notorious for making pledges under oath on television, then failing to keep his promises. The regime was hardly able to keep any serious promise to hand over power to civilians via a transition to democracy.

The Babangida regime was shamefully removed from power when, despite the untold sufferings it had imposed on the people via its deceptive activities, the SAP programme and its tyrannical posture, it also went ahead to annul the June 12th, 1993 Presidential election. This annulment led to a total collapse of all semblance of national life. There was insecurity, fear and disorder in the nation. And the Babangida regime struggled with pro-democracy groups for the control of the citizen's consciousness and support.

This situation of virtual anarchy led to the emergence of the Interim National Government (ING) headed by Ernest Shonekan in 1993. This regime was politically inept, devoid of viable ideas and lacked the will power needed to restore security and peace in Nigeria. ING lacked the moral integrity, popular support and political competence to restore order and morality in the nation. By this time the social, political, economic and physical structures and systems in Nigeria had almost collapsed and Nigeria was on the brink of another war. This grave situation led to another coup d'état, which ushered in the regime of General Sani Abacha in 1993.

Under the Abacha regime, Nigeria degenerated to the a level of immorality, injustice, abuse of human rights and disregard for human dignity never before experienced in the history of the country. Many Nigerians were witnesses to unimaginable levels of corruption, perversions, bombings, assassinations, armed robbery, advance fee fraud, ethnic uprisings, tyranny and alienation never before experienced in the history of Nigeria as a nation-state. It should be noted that in 1993 alone, Nigeria was ruled by three different regimes all of which were incapable of dealing with the critical problems of ethical conduct and national security confronting the nation. By the time the regime of Abacha was established, Nigeria had arrived at its darkest moment, in which injustice, immorality and other forms of perversion, indignity and lawlessness had taken root in the society. Under Abacha tyranny and personal rule was the order of the day and Nigeria became the property of one man, his family and a band of sycophants. Later on in 1998, Abacha was to die under vague and shameful circumstances.

The sudden death of Abacha led to widespread jubilation among the populace, and it also increased the opposition to the prevailing tyranny, immorality and wickedness, which had hitherto enveloped the nation. Hence, the regime of Abubakar, which took over power in 1998, sought to re-establish

morality and ethical conduct, national security and social order in the Nigerian society. It tried to reform some parts of the social system and reconcile all oppressed and aggrieved groups. Although the Abubakar regime was also bedeviled by corruption, human rights abuses and other problem of proper ethical and humane conduct, it was able to plan a short transition to a civil rule programme. The Abubakar regime successfully handed over power to a democratically elected regime headed by Obasanjo in 1999. At the time the Obasanjo regime took control the economic, educational, military, political, and cultural realm of life in the country were in a state of total decadence and retrogression.

Even in the year 2001, there remains a deep crisis in the ethnic, political and religious realms of national existence. In fact, there has been an increase in ethnic and religious intolerance and violence posing a threat to Nigeria's national security. More importantly, these crises show clearly that Nigeria has not fully apprehended the issue of a genuine ethical foundation of social order and a holistic idea of development. In other words, Nigeria in the new millennium has not yet been able to clarify and tackle the critical questions of ethical conduct, national security and sustainable development. Hence, there is a need to analyze what exactly, if any, are the critical conditions of Nigeria's political, social cultural and economic survival in the new millennium.

5. ETHICS, NATIONAL SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: AN AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

According to Lodge (1995: 316) any discourse that tends to view security in predominantly military or defense terms, will pose a problem for the proper definition of the concept of security. With regard to our essay, we are interested in a national security that can help to achieve the type of social transformation required for stability and progress in Nigeria. Lodge (1995: 321) holds that central to the clarification of the imperative of security is the determination of the movement of people, goods and transport. Shea (1995: 364-365) holds that central to the maintenance of national security is the nation's ability to prevent tension from escalating into armed conflicts, maintaining an atmosphere of stability, preventing chaos and widespread violence, and ensuring the commitment to human rights.

Thus, Buzan (1983: 1011) holds that security as a concept must be understood in a broad sense, which will facilitate the demarcation of its boundaries, characteristics and conspicuous dangers. As Nolutshungu (1996: 3) argues we need to jettison, or if one may say, demystify the view that national security dictates a hush-hush discourse in which knowledge is mystified in a cult of technical expertise, and public information characterized by selective disclosure.

In the light of the numerous and complex problems bedeviling the society's quest for national security, there is a need to examine the ethical foundations of social order and national security. Adedeji (1999: 21) says that Nigeria today faces the great challenge of being restored into a just, humane and compassionate society. He emphasizes the need for the reconstruction, rehabilitation and recovery of the socio-economic and political realms of life. Central to the ethical redefinition of the conditions of life in Nigeria is the mitigation of the conflicts created by the problem of socio-economic inequality and poverty, which in turn have been aggravated by the attitudes of greed and self-interest that have guided the lives of most Nigerians. Anyaoku (2000: 32) says that the central challenge for realizing the ethical conditions necessary for national security lies in the capacity to appreciate and confront the task of managing the nation's pluralism, in order to establish and sustain a viable and prosperous country.

The task of harmonizing and reconciling the differences among the various groups in the society is all the more important due to reasons such as the prevailing communal crisis in some regions of the country, the problem of justice arising from the accusations of marginalisation and oppression made by some ethnic groups, and political interests within the nation. The prevailing problems of insecurity, instability, lack of social justice and continued impoverishment for the majority of the people have been central to the collapse of social solidarity and the death of community. Such a situation depicts the entrenchment of a non-human and non-caring society, in which the predominant values guiding personal and social existence have not been conducive to human survival and well-being.

Nolutshungu (1996: 14) agrees that the clarification of the issue of values is important in the question of national security. The maintenance of security implies the protection and preservation of certain values. It is the assurance against threats to core values as they affect the lives of persons and groups. For him, 'core values are those conditions that are generally necessary for the pursuit of most values'. It may be noted that the values required for the establishment of national security can only be articulated when we provide an ethical basis for human life. Ethics has been construed as a discipline that deals with moral questions, questions of fact about the meanings of moral words, for instance right and good, or about the nature of the concepts to which these things refer (Moore 1971: 1-3) Thus, ethics concerns itself with matters of good and bad, right and wrong, duty and obligation, and moral responsibility (Hospers 1973: 566-567). There is therefore a need to discuss how morality or moral principles facilitate the entrenchment of national security.

Morality refers to a system of attitudes, beliefs, principles and feelings regarding proper conduct. It provides ethical principles that safeguard the rights of the individual in the society, and points out to him his reciprocal duties and responsibilities. As such, morality is the observance of rules for the harmonious adjustment of the interests of the individual to those of others in society. It is

founded on the principle of impartiality, which demands the imaginative and sympathetic identification with the interests of others even at one's own expense (Wiredu 1995: 36-37).

Morality is necessary for national security because though all human beings have some concern for their personal interests, yet every one is not naturally inclined towards being concerned about the interests of others all of the time. Hence, morality is an important means of clarifying the relationships between men, and a medium of regulating human interpersonal behavior. It seeks to preserve social harmony by ensuring that moral codes discourage mistrust, injustice, aggression, dishonesty and greed.

Morality operates as a means of social control and prevention of harm among the members of a society. To achieve social regulation, morality provides rules and principles that separate good from bad in the society. The moral codes help to define human interaction and more so, to try to instill or cultivate in people specific traits of character or dispositions usually referred to as virtues. Morality serves as an outline of norms of behavior accepted and operative in a community. Such moral norms are rules, values and attitudes that ensure a certain level of friendliness, mutual aid and rules for resolving differences. It is by such means that morality facilitates the maintenance of security, protection and well being of all in the society.

Central to the efficacy of morality are principles and attitudes that incline people to behave with honesty, integrity, justice, kindness, consideration and trust. Such moral rules help people to realize their full personal and social development. By defining the roles and responsibilities of men, morality reveals the character of man as a being of intrinsic worth, who deserves respect and recognition as a free, self determining, and accountable person. The human person construed as a moral agent is a being deserving of respect and dignity. As a being deserving of respect, the human person must live with others in an atmosphere of justice, trust and tolerance. Justice requires that truth, fairness and equity should define the relations between men.

In fact, there cannot be morality, social order or national security without the establishment of a system or pattern of (social or distributive) justice. Only a scheme of social relations guided by justice, can facilitate the attainment of important human goals such as harmony, peace, survival, happiness and progress. According to the Nigerian Professional Security Association (NPSA) (2000: 18), the varied and encompassing nature of the security problems facing the Nigerian nation requires that more concerted efforts be made to ensure the safety of people, reorientating the different conflicting interests in the society and ensuring meaningful development in the country. It should be emphasized that there is a need for an institutionalized forum for the discussion of the various consequences of the cultural and ethnic differences existing among Nigerians.

In order to confront the increasingly complex and diverse challenges arising within the social, political and economic realms of national life, there is a need

to satisfy some critical requirements. There must be an entrenchment of the proper rules and systems of human personal and social interaction. Also, the values, structures and institutions of the Nigerian state must conform to the principles of justice, consideration and cooperation. Furthermore, the moral foundations of the Nigerian polity must provide rules for the harmonious and productive blending of the various conflicting interests of groups in the society toward attaining the common good. Hence, there must be some visibly humane, just and mutually acceptable rules of cooperation, coexistence and interaction among the various groups within the Nigerian Society.

Most importantly, this moral attitude must seek to make each interested party tolerant, respectful and sympathetic to the needs and demands of other sectors. This will ensure that security, peace, justice and freedom can be guaranteed for everyone in the nation. Of great importance to the establishment of this moral attitude is the conscious effort to educate, instill and cultivate in various individuals and groups certain virtues that can enhance the full social development and coexistence of human beings. Such virtues include truth, diligence, industry, foresight, tolerance and honesty.

The most important ethical condition for the survival and well being of the individuals and groups within the Nigerian society, is the respect for the dignity and worth of the human person as a being deserving recognition and humane treatment. People should be seen as beings imbued with moral responsibility, as rational, free and social entities. It is against the background of such ethical presuppositions that Nigeria can better realize the goal or objective of national security. It must be recalled that Nigeria's quest for national security cannot be attained through the mere consolidation of its military forces, because as we have seen, much of the insecurity, corruption, injustices and anarchy that have occurred in the nation between 1960 and 2000, were perpetrated directly by the security forces (coup d' etat, violence, dictatorship, oppression).

It should also be stated that mere economic growth or huge financial revenue cannot be the basis of Nigeria's national security, because, as we have seen, it took only the civilian regime of Shagari, which ruled between 1979 to 1983, to permanently destroy the vital economic resources and foundations of the Nigerian state. Hence, it is clear that only an ethical reorientation of persons and institutions can guarantee the establishment and sustenance of national security in Nigeria. Such an ethical restructuring must have as its primary goal the redefinition of the value systems, attitudes and beliefs of the human population, and the key social institutions and structures guiding national life.

Thus, the ethical rejuvenation of the Nigerian nation must affect every segment of the society, such as the leadership, education, industries, State agencies, commerce, economy, social services and infrastructures, political parties, professional unions etc. It is only by such means that Nigeria can finally move onto the path of sustainable development, which in concrete terms will translate into the mitigation of endemic corruption, oppression, injustice,

deception, greed, fraud, deprivation and dehumanization, as the hitherto prevailing rules of social existence.

In conclusion, Nigeria can only achieve enduring national security and development when it has adequately clarified the pressing problems of ethical conduct that have encompassed every realm of national life. It is clear that Nigeria cannot establish and maintain national security unless there is an improvement in the quality of performance in social and public life which is at promoting a sense of community, national integration and moral responsibility among the individuals and groups in the nation. Those strategies that will ensure national security must provide ways of raising the level of moral consciousness among the designers of public policy and social action. The ethical foundation of public policy aims at developing in individuals and groups, the deep understanding of the nature of ethical ideas and their place in national security and development.

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