

Intelligence Gathering and Challenges of Insecurity In Nigeria

By

Niyi Adegoke

Criminology and Security Studies Department,
National Open University of Nigeria

Abstract

The insecurity challenges in Nigeria such as ethno-religious conflict, communal clashes, Kidnapping, murder, cultism, militancy etc. have become daily occurrence and these have been compounded by the rising waves of terrorism since the return to democratic rule in 1999. The resultant effects of these, are loss of lives and properties of the citizens. The challenges of insecurity are traceable to lapse of intelligence gathering and its proper utilization. The paper adopts as its theoretical framework, the theory of structural functionalism to examine intelligence gathering and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. The secondary data method is adopted by use of police records, internet newspapers and academic journal for data collection. The paper argues that there is positive relationship between the effective intelligence gathering and the state of security. The paper recommends among others, the training and retraining of personnel of intelligence community to be able to meet up with current trend and changes in contemporary Nigeria.

Keywords: Security challenges, Intelligence gathering, Nigeria, Criminal activities, Security Agencies

Introduction

Unprecedented level of insecurity has pervaded Nigeria in the recent time. This has over time threatened the foundation of national security in which several huge of resources have gone into it to keep it at bay. Achumba, Igbomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2013) argued that huge allocation of the national budget has gone into security in Nigeria. Security challenges in Nigeria manifest in several dimensions and people have always been disturbed by series of crimes that they are not familiar with which spring up daily in the country. Phenson, Ojie, Esin and Atai (2014) explain that security lapses and challenges manifest on daily basis informs of youth restiveness, terrorism, and insurgent attacks, ransoms, political assassination, arson, murder, cult-related activities, mass protests, and so forth. Many of the aforementioned crimes and many others not mentioned are alien to Nigeria society. Specifically the crime of terrorism that has devastated the country, mostly the north-eastern part of the country is one of the contemporary security challenges ravaging the land. Several thousands of people have lost their lives and property to Boko Haram insurgency over the years. The perennial attacks on

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natural resources in the Niger Delta by Niger Delta militants which has now taken the form of kidnapping for ransom in which several unemployed youths now engaged in all parts of the country is another security challenge that the security sector is grappling with to unravel.

One of the major reasons for the escalation of criminal activities in the country is the neglects of basic or essential elements of security which is timely procurement of security intelligence (Phenson, Ojie, Esin and Atai, 2014). Phenson, et al (2014) further assert that prompt identification of threats to both internal and national security with its attendant pro-active security arrangement, threat assessment, statement of aims/ objectives or national security objectives and programs, planning to be in line with the objectives of national security, security liaison, and networking with other sister national security departments towards achieving the security objectives, effectively coordinating security and its activities under a centralized command structure, re-appraisal of the overall security objectives, functions and strategies in the light of new development of security measures, inadequate funding and many more cumulate together to create lapses in the security of the nation.

Looking specifically at the security intelligence or intelligence gathering which according to (Lownethal 2002) is the process by which specific types of information important to national security are requested, collected, analyzed, and provided to policy maker; the products of that process; the safeguarding of these processes and this information by counterintelligence activities; and the carrying out of operations as requested by lawful authorities. Before any law enforcement agency can begin to respond to criminal threats, it must first understand them. Law enforcement agencies are expected to understand and effectively operate in a complex social, political and organizational environment (Casey and Mitchell, 2007). Murray (2000) argued further that it is essential for law enforcement agencies to have an understanding of current environment to develop strategies and plans to meet the identified challenges. This can only be achieved through gathering of intelligence. Capacity must be built to collect, collate, analyze and disseminate information on criminal activities and various security challenges so as to afford the necessary law enforcement agents to operate effectively in combating such challenges.

Statement of the Problem

The challenges of insecurity in Nigeria are traceable to lapses in intelligence gathering and proper utilization of same. There are several challenges combating intelligence gathering among which are unwillingness of the public to share viable information with the security agencies. Lack of citizen's involvement in state security management and their reluctance in volunteering security information to law enforcement agencies remain part of the lapses in critical security elements application as discussed by Phenson, Ojie, Esin and Atai (2014).

The proper employment and accurate designation of tasks for the intelligence agencies to support security objectives remains a major challenge in the

confronting of insecurity in the country. The country has variety of intelligence agencies saddles with the responsibility of producing timely and accurate intelligence to confront the issues that threaten national security among which are the Department of State Service (DSS) also known as the State Security Service (SSS), the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the National Intelligence. These agencies and the duties will be discussed in details thereafter in the study. Hence, lack of analytical skills and others denigrate the value of intelligence product in security operation.

The inability of the government to rise promptly to intelligence information in their disposal to combat insecurity is another problem. Intelligence report on the abduction of the Chibok girls revealed that the then government under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan received intelligence report that Boko Haram terrorist group are planning to abduct school children in Maiduguri and carry them away in a costal bus across the border of Nigeria. However, the government did little or nothing to stop this unfortunate incident now the entire nation is plunged into woe of losing more than 200 school girls.

In conducting this research, the questions that are agitating the minds are: Is there a relationship between intelligence gathering and insecurity in Nigeria? Is citizen's unwillingness to share intelligence with the security agencies affecting security in the country? Is there relationship between the size of security agencies in gathering intelligence and insecurity? Hence, this paper made use of descriptive and analytical approach to critically examine the intelligence gathering and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. It made use of secondary source of data collection such as textbooks, journal papers, government reports.

The Concept of Intelligence Gathering

The word intelligence has various definitions, among the definitions are; "The capacity to acquire and apply knowledge." The American Heritage Dictionary (2000); "Intelligence is a very general mental capability that among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience"; the ability to learn facts and skills and apply them especially when this ability is highly developed". Intelligence is a most complex practical property of [mind](#), integrating numerous mental abilities, such as the capacities to [reason](#), solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend ideas and language, and learn (New World Encyclopedia)

Intelligence as Issue related to Internal Security

In this study, we shall focus on intelligence. It is defined as information that meets the stated, understood, needs of policy makers and has been collected, refined and narrowed to meet those needs. Nations require intelligence about their immediate environment and that of other nations. This is necessary because, in order to preserve their security, they need to keep track of internal and external threats

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(Lownethal, 2002). Intelligence gathering, as a critical tool of statecraft provides the necessary warning about imminent threats policy makers in order to protect a nation from being subjected to surprise military attacks. Intelligence as an organization is able to avert imminent threats to a country by providing timely, processed information to national security decision makers. Intelligence gathering (information), which is important to national security, is collected, analyzed and disseminated for use to support action (Lownethal 2002). In Nigeria, there is no link between the producers of intelligence and users of intelligence. The value of intelligence is in the eyes of its users, not its producers; intelligence is at its best when it is fully integrated with its users. Hence, effective collaboration between intelligence and security agencies is germane in order to provide quality national security. According to Nte 2013, Nigeria has had to grapple over the years with the challenge of inadequate intelligence sharing among its security and law enforcement agencies. Intelligence is necessary for nations, hence, the need for establishment and maintenance of national intelligence organizations among the agencies of the Federal Government of Nigeria which are shouldered with intelligence activities such as, Department of State Services (DSS) also known as SSS, Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the National Intelligence Community (NIC). Modern intelligence gathering relies essentially on both human efforts and electronic gadgets. It transcends mere stealing of someone's secret and it is operated strategically in a comprehensive environment and more often than not covertly (Nte, Eke, and Anele, 2010).

The word security is an elastic concept which attracts view opinions in different fields. It refers to safety from harm and danger which may constitute threat to human existence. Security is seen as all measure, precaution, actions and personnel put in place that ensure safety to lives and property and provide a peaceful atmosphere for citizens and Government to pursuit their legitimate activities without fear , threats or hindrances in a given country (Phenson, Ojie, Esin, and Atai, 2014). Many measures have been established and maintained in order to protect a state as inviolable from hostile acts or influences. In essence, security is also seen as a measure take by the government which guarantees the safety of lives and property of its citizens from internal and external influence. Security is a very important issue in the survival of any nation. Without adequate security of lives and property, the system will be rife with lawlessness, chaos, and eventual disintegration. This is why security is considered as dynamic condition, which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests.

Security need is the basis of the social contract between the people and the state, in which people willingly surrendered their rights to an organ (government) who oversees the survival of all. (Umana, 2018)

Insecurity is an opposite word for security. The re-occurring problematic nature of human insecurity is of concern to all. The capacity of State actors to deliver as a statutory policy to protect lives and property, maintain territorial integrity and other internal forms of security is becoming doubtful in the recent times as

Nigerians have remained unprotected and unsecured despite the huge monthly allocation to security votes and ever increasingly expenditure on security management in Nigeria (Phenson, Ojie, Esin, and Atai, 2014).

It implies that the presence or apprehension of danger to life and property and the presence of non-conducive atmosphere for the people to pursue their legitimate interest within the society. Beland 2005, defines insecurity as a state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection i.e. lack of inadequate freedom from danger.

Theoretical Framework- Structural Functionalism

Structural functional theory, often called functionalism has dominated sociology and other social sciences for the past fifty years. It owes much to August Comte, who pointed out the need to keep society unified when many traditions were breaking down. According to Emile Durkheim, society is similar to an organism, a system of action and interaction among its members, balanced, bounded and interrelated. Herbert Spencer in his own study compared society to the human body, which function interdependently to help the entire organism survive. These social structures work together to preserve society.

The structural-functional approach is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidary and stability. This approach looks for a structure's social functions, the consequences of any social pattern for the operation of society as a whole.

One of the crucial concepts of functionalism is that society is a system. First of all, the system is assumed to be balanced. Any upsetting forces are subjected to the basic stability of the other parts of the system. Second, as a system, society has boundaries. You can discriminate between the items that are in the system and those that are outside it. To keep the balanced, its boundaries must be maintained, or only slowly altered. Third, all the parts or elements in the social system are related and interconnected to each other.

Although structural functional theory attempts to explain social structures by describing their contributions to the well-being of whole system. It does not assume that only one structural form can fulfil a whole function.

The application of the theory of structural functionalism is suitable for analysis of intelligence gathering and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. It is observed that Intelligence occupies a central place and as a unique pillar which ensures the stability and smooth functioning of the government. The products of intelligence community obtained are distributed to different agencies.

Moreover, security system is made up of parts. These parts work for the benefit and smooth running of the whole system, hence when one part is affected, it's has consequences on the whole system. Intelligence gathering is a branch of security

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system in any society, it functions for the smooth running of the entire security system hence the dysfunction or non-function of intelligence gathering usually lead to inability to foresee imminent danger ahead that may lead to insecurity.

Impacts of Intelligence gathering on State of Security

Nigeria as a country has had too many of violent upheaval over the years, often resulting in enormous loss of lives and property and even posing threats to the nation's corporate existence. No doubt, the combined effect of these crises has been catastrophic on the nation's image and economy.

There is positive relationship between the effective intelligence gathering and state of security. Similarly, ineffective or inaccurate intelligence often produce insecurity. The impact of intelligence gathering and sharing is always felt in terms of provision of timely, reliable and effective information to assist the users (all law enforcement agencies) in carrying out their duties promptly. Unfortunately, the security challenges that the country has faced since the dawn of the twenty-first century especially since the uprising in the terrorist activities of the Boko Haram Sect since 2011 seem to give the impression that the intelligence community has gone to sleep. This is regrettable because the continuity of killings has been experienced in the recent past portends nothing possible but grave danger to the Nigeria nation-state (Oghi and Nnumen, 2014).

When intelligence gathering is properly deployed and harnessed, it enable the government to be able to forecast and appropriate enough resources to capture all angles of security needs equipment and both soft and hard can be stationed where appropriate to a good idea of planners of terror attack and contained such before execution.

With use of products of intelligence gathering threat to critical infrastructures can easily be assessed, guide and guard against. The raw information obtained on organized crime perpetrators will be studies and areas that of critical concern to the government will be taken care of.

Intelligence gathering gives a good ideas and direction in getting the trends in crimes and criminal acts. It affords the government the timely action of rejigging repositioning and creation of needful units to take of emerging trends as distilled from the information obtained from such.

Security Agencies and Intelligence Gathering in Nigeria

The State Secret Service and other national intelligence agencies in their collective capacity, remain as the main eyes protecting various essential blind spots in our society as they relate to the safety and wellbeing of our citizens, everyone and everything representing the government's interest. (Oshodi, 2016)

Yet the security and safety situation are at despair and depressing to the extent that in the face of hard-knock and fearless attacks from the violent Islamic sect, militants group, The security agencies have failed to pre-empt security breaches in Nigeria. In particular, the failure of the intelligence services to contain the recurring security breaches.

Effective counter insecurity prevention, protection, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts depend on timely, accurate and achievable information about who the enemies are, where and how they operate, the targets of the enemies into attack they use.

Terrorism, organized crime, ethnic-religious crisis, kidnapping, military arms smuggling are serious challenges confronting Nigeria. The Law enforcement agencies have an important sometimes central role in combating each of these threats.

Despite the challenges of intelligence gathering and inter agency synergy remain the best and greatest counter measure against terrorism as well as other security breaches and crisis situation (Privacy International, 2017). One of the problems identified as problem in intelligence gathering, is intelligence sharing, most of the intelligence gathered are not shared among the security agencies in Nigeria. Intelligence sharing arrangements cover an array of potential activity between governments including, inter alia, information sharing, operational cooperation, facilities and equipment hosting, training and capacity building, and technical and financial support (Privacy International, 2017). The purpose of sharing range from protecting people from violent threats, finding and apprehending suspects.

Unwillingness of the citizens to share information with the security agencies in Nigeria

Information sharing is different from intelligence gathering. Information are shared the same methods of distributing intelligence but it requires going through critical evaluation of the content and the sources that must pass the rigors of the intelligence cycle. The information gathered from the members of the public supposed to be raw materials for creating valuable and achievable intelligence but in Nigeria, situation is quite different because; members of the public are afraid of being indicted by law enforcement agencies especially the police; linking information to the criminal or suspect by the bad eggs in the agencies;

Generally speaking, the citizens should play very critical roles in generating intelligence but, they are unwilling to provide information to the law enforcement agencies. In Nigeria, citizens are not willing due to the following factors.

1. Loss of Confidence in the Government. The continuous mis-rule and economic deprivation of the people leading to the worsening social welfare made the people

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to keep away from having anything to do with government. People protect system that is responsible which cater for their needs. Lack of transparency and good service delivery on the part of government makes the citizens unwilling to cooperate in the area of information sharing.

2. Lack of Professionalism. It is not understatement to conclude that lots of officials do not even know and practice professional ethics. Sensitive information are messed up and exposed. The identities of those who volunteer to give information are sometimes exposed to crime gangs for pecuniary motives.

3. Corruption. It has affected virtually all sectors of the society. Sometimes when sensitive information is given about people or event but because of corruption and selfish reasons, these information are distorted and it is not useful for intelligence gathering.

4. Ethnic and Religious reasons. In Nigeria, many people have total allegiance to their religious leaders, so that they will refuse to give any relevant information concerning any criminal activities of their leaders or the group. Ethnicity and religious bigotry have worked negatively in the area of information between the citizens and law enforcement agencies. Citizens are more comfortable in holding information or even misleading the government officials even by planting fake information to cover up vital information just because its involve their tribe or religion.

Security Agencies and Intelligence Gathering

Channels of communication among agencies are significantly improved to allow better and faster exchange of information thereby fostering greater cooperation, particularly when focusing on criminal activities and other security breaches.

The lack of information sharing between the law enforcement and intelligence communities was highlighted as failure for the kidnapping of over 200 Chibok girls by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. According to Nte (2013) Nigeria has had to grapple over the years with the challenge of inadequate intelligence sharing among its security and law enforcement agencies. The non-effectiveness of the intelligence support of security operations in Nigeria are attributed to inadequate human and technical intelligence capabilities. The lack of real time intelligence and lack of analytical skills to predict incident accurately before, during and after they occur as well as intelligence as a product being unreliable during operations, are some of the issues that have created doubt in the quality of intelligence available.

Most of the security agencies operations are not timely to actions even when adequate and timely intelligence are provided as a matter of golden hour (i.e. the period between which an incident is reported and a quick response of action is taken). This is due to inherent problems associated with the security agencies in Nigeria.

According to Nte (2013), the challenges affecting the efficacy of the intelligence were the lack of real time intelligence, lack of analytical skills and absence of ICT. Other challenges are the lack of adequate funding, non-synergy in intelligence efforts and inadequate manpower.

CONCLUSION

Intelligence gathering is the product of the processed information by the agencies of the government which are provided for both policy makers and other law enforcement agencies. It is useful processed information for maintenance of security in any country. This is because it gives a good ideas and direction in getting the trend and pattern of criminal activities within a system. It is the duty of a government to provide for security of lives and properties of its citizens. It becomes important for state security service and other national intelligence agencies to protect various important blind spots as it relate to the safety and wellbeing of the citizen of the country.

Recommendations

The following are the Recommendations proffered by the paper
For efficiency to be attained in security operations, government should harness information from both the members of the public and the national intelligence communities and ensure timely, adequate and reliable sharing of intelligences among the law enforcement agencies.

Government should foster protected relationship between the public and law enforcement agencies, to remove the fear within them and ensure protection of information relating to their privacy

There should be training and retraining of personnel of intelligence community to be able to meet up with current trend and changes in the contemporary Nigerian environments for effective gathering of intelligence and ability to utilize it for productive law enforcement.

Timely and continuous funding of intelligence to ensure provision of adequate evaluated and analyzed information reliable and adequate enough to tackle current situation of insecurity

It is preponderant within the public security organization that staff welfare is a motivation of effective and reliable intelligence gathering, therefore, government should ensure that the remuneration of intelligence officers are moderately and timely taken care of

Government should approve relationship between her law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies of the international communities to ensure a counter intelligence for against external aggression and internal insurrection.

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Government should organize enlightenment and informative programs for public to know the importance of information sharing with government security agencies.

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