

# Globalization and Nigeria Border Security: Issues and Challenges.

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## Abstract

This paper examines the security challenges in Nigeria and its borders in the era of globalization. This has become necessary in view of the border incursions posing security threat at our national borders as well as their activities of the terrorist group known as Boko Haram in which lives and property are no longer secure. Examples are not far-fetched from bombing here and there in which many lives were lost, such as the United Nations building in Nigeria, the Chief Security office in Nigeria, Churches in the northern part of Nigeria and many more. These are the manifestations of security challenges in Nigeria. There are speculations that the groups must have found their way through our porous borders. The paper also examines the globalization process which calls for border to be increasingly open with little or no barriers, as the negative part of the globalization has brought about contrabands, criminals, illegal migrants and terrorist and the relevant efforts to develop measures to manage the security threats and other crimes associated with borders from destroying the integration process of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Therefore, the paper addresses the implications of globalization on national security and suggests for a new paradigm shift from traditional approaches to combat new security threats that comes with globalization as all efforts put in place to curb these incursions at the borders have not yielded a positive result. Beyond this, the paper contends that the insecurity at the border spread to the internal security of lives and property and the need to embark on more protective measures in order for borders as well as people therein to be adequately secured because openness without adequate controls tend to make crimes at the borders including terrorism to be successful. The study concludes that Nigeria borders are porous; hence the environment is not safe.

**Keywords:** National Security, Borders, Globalization, Boko Haram

## 1. Introduction

Border security has come to assume heightened importance in the world today as the rate of criminal activities have also increased in scale especially since the end of Cold War and in the wake of globalization. It has become easy for transitional crimes to be conducted such as the moving of money, people and goods across the world because of advancement in telecommunications, transportation and technology in general. The world has turned into a 'global village' with its own peculiarities as well as problems. Globalization has allowed criminals to move across the borders unhindered and even continue with illicit business with impunity as this affects the socio-economic development and security of lives and property. However, it should be noted that Nigeria is of no exception of this growing phenomenon, hence this brings about the increasingly need for security and protection at our borders. In any country of the world, developed and developing, security has been a major concern. Perhaps, it is the belief that social, economic and political developments are the function of peace and security. To this end, all governments take the issue of security as primary objectives. Nigeria has been battling with transnational crimes which pose a serious threat to national security ranging from drug trafficking, money laundering, illegal arms trafficking, smuggling of all kinds, (contraband, stolen cars, firearms) theft, Advance fee fraud known as 419, kidnapping and many more. These activities constitute a threat to global and national security as they affect the socio-economic development and tarnishing the image of the country as Nigeria is daily embarrassing base on financial scams and other related transborder crimes. Also, another challenge of insecurity of lives and property descends on Nigeria borders and the internal communities known as the Boko Haram. Boko Haram is the combination of Hausa and Arabic languages simply means 'western education is forbidden'. The group started as Islamic sect and later transformed into armed group as evident in killings and bombings in the northern part of Nigeria. Examples are not far-fetched from Christmas bombings at Saint Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla town near the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja killed 42 worshippers in 2011, the bombing of United Nations Building in Nigeria resulting in the death of so many people, suicide bombing of three churches in the northern Nigeria state of Kogi, killing 19 worshippers and many more (The News, 2012). There are speculations that these people were not only Nigerians but also from neighboring countries as they enter and smuggle their weapons through the borders. The following questions arise; is there enough security at our borders? What are the functions of the security operatives at the borders? Why do we still experience incursions at our national borders? These are the questions this paper seeks to address.

Furthermore, it is important to examine globalization in reference to these transitional crimes; the positive as well as the negative effects which has become a serious problem to the world. In spite of increasing number of insecurities, borders must remain open to the movement of people, goods and services, if they are to succeed and

openness without adequate control allows the possibility of threats such as transitional crimes and even terrorism to be successful (Eselebor 2008) as Nigeria is experiencing in recent times. It is against this backdrop that the study will examine the Nigeria border security in the globalization era, the challenges as well as the way forward. It is evident that Nigeria has a lot of security responsibilities at the borders as government facing insurgency readily get access to weapons and logistics in international market as insurgents cannot successfully operate without the active support of the neighboring governments as insurgents may have close relatives living across the border who provide arms and safe havens as this enhance cross border activities to be a national security threat for government. Incidentally, all efforts put in place by the government such as the establishment of institutional frameworks to curb this menace at the borders have not yielded positive results.

## **2. Conceptual Issues**

### **2.1 Security**

Reflecting to the background of this paper, security is very paramount at the border and also first assignment of any government as nothing could be done under insecurity of lives and property. If the borders are insecure, the social and economic development of such country will be a herculean task. Hence, poverty, diseases, hunger and fear will dominate the society. For instance, the increasing number of transnational crimes as well as the prevalent terrorist groups that pervaded the country disturbed the socio-economic and research efforts. The rationale for this paper is the reoccurring

security challenges at the borders that spread to the internal insecurity of lives and property. It is on this basis that security issues will be questioned in spite of the huge money and human resources expended on security, people still remain unprotected and apprehensive of the activities of the emerging terrorist group known as Boko Haram group and others such as increasing circulation of fake drugs, banditry, prohibited items in market and many more. All these call to question the security at our borders especially with the involvement of security agencies in our national borders. The Custom department will have to examine the conveyances of goods and services, the immigration will look into the movement of people while the armed forces are to defend the territorial integrity of the country. It is on this note that the following concepts will be analyzed- Security and Globalization for the purpose of this study and clarifications. However, the concept security has been subjected to various interpretations by scholars or analyst in International system and can also be divided into two; Traditional and non traditionalist school of thought. The former school favours the maintenance of the Cold War that is the ideological rivalry between the West and East which focus on the rolling back of communism and containing capitalism, as security is defined in military and state centric approaches while the non-traditionalist school on the other hand, broaden the meaning of security to include issues such as human, economic, environmental, social, feminists and other threats. This includes what possibly endanger the survival of the individual as well as the state. In common usage, security is the lack of threat, and the opposite is insecurity as recently witnessed in Nigeria with a particular reference to the national borders. According to Wolfer (1962) he posits that ‘Security rises and falls with the ability of a nation to deter an attack or defeat’. Berkowitz and Bock (1968) see it as ‘the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats. Ayoob (1997) reiterates ‘that which threatens or have the potential to bring down or weaken state structures, both territorial and institutional and governing regimes. It can be deduce from these definitions or conceptualizations that security are state centric which concerns itself mainly on military capability to deter external aggression and also favours the traditional meaning of security which is beyond the meaning in this paper. Security has much to do with our national borders, in a state of insecurity; threat can be regarded as flux. However, border areas have become one of the major sources of conflict in Africa over the years, such as neighbour assisted in attempt to overthrow President Eyadema of Togo in late 1986 that led to the souring of relations between Togo, Ghana and Burkina Faso. Likewise, the attempted overthrow of the Jerry Rawlings’s government in 1985 was blamed on Togo. In short, unfriendly neighbours could undermine the economic security of the state by encouraging or condoning smuggling at the border. Smuggling or illegal entry are important issues of current border management which could undermine the security of the state. It was on this basis that the former President of Nigeria, Mohammed Buhari put in place a Decree 20 stipulating death for those guilty of smuggling of dangerous drugs and petroleum products was introduced in 1985. Also, Walt (1991) argues that security may be defined as the study of threat, use and control of military force. It explores the conditions that make use of force on individuals, states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent and engage in war. Security is important and connected with the concept of border which requires protective measures to combat any activities that could endanger the lives and property as well as putting the integrity of the state (Nigeria) into question. Therefore, security should be given utmost importance and to link border security with that of national security because the proliferation of small arms and light weapons that brought about communal conflict in many countries can be linked to cross border arms trafficking. There has been a growing discontent with Nigeria lack of security at our borders as terrorists used this as a means of entering and other illegal activities at our national borders, this calls for more attention at

securing and management of our borders. Star and Most (1976), said that even if ‘‘a border does not necessarily cause either conflictual or cooperation, international integration existence (non existence) of border impinges on the range of possible policy options which are unavailable to the decision makers and biases them toward (and away from) interactions with other nations. This simply means that one of the main responsibilities of a state is the extent to which it controls its borders especially in the globalization era which has made it easy for criminals to move money, people and transact business across the globe because of technological innovations such as vast improvements in telecommunication, transportation, banking and even becomes difficult to track the criminals, states are more becoming weaker and boundaries are becoming increasingly porous. These activities constitute a major threat at global and national security as they really affect the socio-economic development of the country. Also, for the purpose of this study, it is imperative to examine the concept of globalization and its effects in international system. Ripsman and Paul (2010) cast a critical eye on the expansive claims of globalization theorists who argue that the decline of great power war and the rise of non-traditional security challenges such as terrorism, drug trafficking and environmental problems are now eroding the traditional national security of states as it poses the following questions: is globalization altering the way security policy is being conducted at the global level? Are states reducing military expenditure refocusing their attention on new transitional security threats and ceding authority to non-state actors and international organizations? However, examining the way states pursued security since the end of Cold War, the authors did not really see any difference than expected while some wealth realized from globalization has led some states to increase defense spending in their states. In this context, trans-border crimes such as terrorism, banditry, trafficking and other infractions at the borders are main concern for states with negative effects as globalized world now face serious challenges and threats. It should be understood that when nations are much more connected, it became a threat to international security. This brings about a need for re-conceptualization of security from the traditional perception to non-traditional to be able to address the new challenges brought by globalization in which a lot of people have died, injured and some also becomes the victims of these clandestine workers. Clark (1999) says ‘Globalization also needs to be understood as a number of changes within the state, and not simply as a range of external forces set against it and that the East/West divide was replaced by fragmentation versus globalization where globalization is viewed as good and fragmentation as evil. Both Guehenno and Clark were of the view that these two concepts are linked to each other and co-exist rather than in opposition.

The study emphasizes on the impact of globalization on national and international security, this is necessary in order to understand the more reason why security should be broadened as well as the failure of traditional security to recognize the new security threats that transcends beyond the national borders. Traditionally, security is seen in terms of military threat arising beyond borders as the ‘acquisition, deployment and the use of military force to achieve national goals. This paper views security beyond military approaches and external threats beyond armed armed conflicts, civil war and many others. According to Aydin (1970), he posits that the Cold War era focused on traditional security and in 1970’s and 1980’s the concern changed to trans-national crimes and 2005 the concern is energy, cyber and social security as well as terrorism have all broadened the meaning of security, As stated by Clark, the concept of security has been attributed to the effects of globalization while Cha believed that globalization widens the scope of security. Globalization means the transformation in, communication, information and economy as this brings about so many dangers in this contemporary time such as global warming, ozone depletion, acidic rain, and crimes such as financial scam, smuggling of contrabands, human trafficking, and Advance fee fraud known as 419, pornographies, impersonation and many more. Also, domestic issues such as poverty in African countries are becoming international issues. Nwolise (1985) postulates that

*a country may have the best armed forces in terms of training and equipment, the efficient custom men, the most active secret services agents and the best quality prisons, but yet be the most insecure nation in the world as a result of defense security problems with bad government alienated and suffering masses, ignorance, hunger, unemployment or even activities of foreign residents or companies.*

Also, Namara(1986) posits that

*any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security against the backdrop of acute food shortages, population explosion, low level productivity and per capita income, low technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities and chronic problems of unemployment has a false sense of security.*

From the above, it could be viewed that military approach is not enough to combat security but to also balance it with national development such as economic, political, social and many more in order to be truly secure, this is so because a country suffering from food shortages, crises, diseases, low per capita income, high level of unemployment will expose its subjects to any means of surviving including trans-national crimes and clandestine activities to make ends meet, thereby posing a serious threat to the country. Furthermore, we can see that border

security is related to national security which needs urgent attention in order for peace and security to be adequately sustained. The national border of state is very important to the survival of the state, it is on this note that border posts were constructed at borders not only to control and prevent smuggling but prevent irregular entry into the country. National security can be affected by uncontrolled flow of men across the borders as social problems are often generated in a country where there is serious flow of immigrants into that country. For instance, the war in Chad and the attempted military coup in Cameroon in 1984 have had some social consequences for Nigeria with national security implications. It has been observed by the Nigerian authorities that Nigeria and its neighbors are inseparable and therefore what affect one naturally spill over to the other. This was also affirmed by President Babangida, Nigeria's leader in his official visit to Niger in 1986. 'None of us in this sub-region can really benefit from the economic collapse of any country in the sub-region'. The national security of Nigeria is the security of its contagious neighbours, as this is demonstrated in the intensity of cross border smuggling activities which obtain in their daily interactions. Therefore, the paper contends for adequate security at our national borders and condemns the military approach as the only means of securing the state in the period of globalization as globalization comes with its own characteristics as well as challenges which requires a new trend.

### **3. Issues and Challenges in Nigeria Border Security**

The study discovered in details the challenges to border security as it could be observed that Nigeria lacks border protection and much importance has not been accorded to our national borders as evident in the vulnerabilities of threat pose at our national borders such as trans border activities and the prevalent terrorist attack that befall the country resulting in the unrestrained influx of migrants through the routes. The challenges are discussed below:

#### **3.1 Porosity of Borders**

The porous borders contributed and continue to encourage the cross border crimes and instability in the region. Also, promotes the increasing number of illegal trade such as smuggling of contra bands goods- adulterated drugs, stolen cars including cars that have exceeded the permissible age limit prescribed for use in Nigeria and other goods like shoes, poultry products and many more. The porous borders could also be explained in the use of dried tree, oil drums as well as rims of tyres to demarcate the national borders, this makes the border to be disorganized, poorly managed and in secured. This promotes the unrestrained influx of illegal migrants and cross border activities. However, there are indefinable corridors or regions that served as a route to these illegal migrants, thereby posing a serious threat to the country and the national borders. For instance, it has been discovered that Nigeria has 1497 irregular and 84 regular routes as movements were done through the illegal routes.( Nigeria Immigration Service). There are so many outlets for smuggling of various goods across the border.

#### **3.2 Corruption**

The corrupt practices of the security operatives at the borders pose a serious challenge to the border security. The corrupt and inept attitudes of border officials resulting in the numerous check points of bamboo suspended by oil drums also contributed negatively to the border security. It is important to note that these checkpoints are not meant to check passport by but to extort money from people. Hence, the criminals easily infiltrate the borders as smugglers bribe their way into the country. It also explains why we have many criminals involving in trans border activities and terrorists in the country as criminals move in arms and ammunition and thousands of innocent Nigerians have been killed and many more die in the hands of Islamic sects with the influx of weapons in the country as smugglers continue with their business without being punished.

#### **3.3 Inadequate Manpower and Logistic Support**

Another problem related to border security in Nigeria is the inadequate manpower or personnel which has a negative impact on the security of our national borders. It makes it difficult for the security operatives to adequately maim the national boundaries and effectively patrol these several corridors that lead to the country. The inadequate manpower does not allow for adequate patrolling of these illegal routes as criminals use the illegal routes as a means of entry into the country. Also the criminals sometimes outsmarted the security operatives at the borders due to inadequate personnel and logistics problems.

#### **3.4 Poorly patterned Borders**

Nigeria borders are artificial creation from colonialism which continues to pose a serious threat to the country. The demarcation of the borders were done by the colonial masters without considerations to the culture of the people as can be seen in the cultural ties of marriages, celebration of religious festivities, language and many more. It should be noted therefore, that boundary delimitation affects the cultural and ethnic homogeneity of the border communities to the extent that one cannot differentiate a Nigerian from Nigerrien due to culture and linguistics in which communities with homogenous culture and language are found at different sides of the borderline hence makes it difficult to put in place immigration laws when members can just change their identity when they feel like.



### **3.5 Institutional Framework**

ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of People, Goods and Services was established by the ECOWAS Member States in 1979. The main aim of this Protocol is to facilitate the free movement of people, goods and services within the West Africa without Visa; this simply means that any ECOWAS citizen who poses valid travelling document and International Health Certificate can transverse the entire region without a visa. Thereby, compelling all member states to abolish the use of visa in order to ease the movement of people in the region. However, in spite of the positive pronouncement of this protocol, it has its own negative effects. This protocol allows the movement of criminals to move across the border and also engage in cross border activities under the pretext of this protocol. It is important to note that; border has become a safe passage for people without identities as ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement has been abused to mean an entry without valid documents. The following factors pose a serious threat to the internal security of lives and property in the country, as the infractions at the border calls for enforcement of reforms of the border control system. While terrorists move from in and out of the country, smugglers of all kinds of contrabands continue with their business. For instance, the recent security challenges in Nigeria, there are speculations that these groups are also from neighboring countries, this would not have been possible if there were adequate security at our national borders. The borders are seen as means of smuggling of illegal weapons and all contrabands goods, even armed robbers usually escape through the boundaries after committing crimes in the country. All these tend to endanger the socio-economic development of the country as well as the political stability. Also, the integrity and the image of the country is now put to questioning as Nigerians face a lot of harassment and subject to all kinds of humiliation outside the country.

### **3.6 Lack of provision of Basic Amenities**

The lack of development by the government to provide basic social amenities in the rural areas as well as the border communities. This is another factor militating against good border security, when the people at the rural areas and the border communities are living in abject poverty and lack of basic infrastructure, this makes them to encourage cross border activities and also involve them in clandestine activities such as armed banditry, smuggling and many more. There is need for the government to develop the rural areas and the border communities.

### **3.7 Political Instability and Economic Crisis in Neighboring Countries**

Nigeria is the most populous as well as the richest in West Africa, in terms of economic, population preponderant, military capability, Nigeria dwarfs all these countries. This explains the more reason why crisis in neighboring countries such as political instability, famine and diseases split over to Nigeria as her proximate neighbors depend solely on Nigeria. This was also evident in Babangida's speech the former President of Nigeria, when he said that none can benefit in the economic collapse of any country in the sub-region. This simply means that Nigeria national security of Nigeria is the security of its immediate neighbors as this is demonstrated in both scope and intensity of cross border smuggling activities which obtain in their daily interaction. However, when Ghana was suffering from economic downturn in which many citizens of Ghana fled to Nigeria to make ends meet. Nigeria was badly affected that she had to send them back to their country due to these illegal aliens that invaded the country.

Furthermore, the factors enumerated above tend to pose a serious challenge to the country by spreading to the internal insecurity of lives and property and inform cross border activities one way or other. Also, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which is characterized by globalization, there is need for integration and cooperation if not we will lose out in the new global order. As globalization emerges, so is the challenges become more complex and requires a new approach. It is against this background that we cannot be dormant to the pursuit of security at our national borders in Nigeria or else the environment will continue to be hostile and insecure for the people therein.

## **4. Globalization and Challenge of Border Security.**

### **4.1 Implications for National Security.**

Here, it is important to trace the implications of globalization on national security. Goldstein (1991) view national security as closely connected to the preservation of the border of a state. He looks at the concept of security closely connected to the protection of the national border of a state, and seen as an important aspect of any political institution, in a state of insecurity, threat is regarded as flux. The emergence of globalization that come with new information and communication brings about new threat to national security and challenge the traditional approach to national security as being obsolete and inadequate to combat the new threats. The events of 9/11 also further moved meaningful security discourses both at the national and international levels away from conventional conceptions.

However, globalization has its own positive effects such as the revolution in transportation, communication and all spheres of life. Globalization makes the mode of communication easy and new innovations in the conduct of relations between and among countries of the world. Despite the positive effects, there are still some negative

consequences which continue to threaten the survival of state in international system. Trans national crime is a criminal activity that transcends beyond national borders as it has become easier for criminals to engage in these clandestine activities through globalization, money, goods and people can easily be moved across the national borders without restrictions and thereby, difficult to track down these criminals due to the advancement of technology. With all benefit that globalization has offered mankind, it becomes difficult if not impossible to overlook some of its negative consequences particularly in the area of crime. One of the consequences in the area of promoting transnational crimes which is a serious threat to the international system. Also, the emergence of computer and the internet facilities make it possible for these criminals to engage in cyber crimes as locally called 'yahoo yahoo or yahoo plus' in which they can easily tap into one's account and do away with all the money. Globalization also brings about moral decadence in youth of these days ranging from watching from pornographic films and all sort, thereby exposing them to sexual abuse which is inimical to the society. This therefore, requires a new trend of security approach as well as shifting from conventional security. These threats include the following:

-Smuggling of Contraband Goods such as firearms, Human trafficking including Child and Woman, Money laundering, Fraud/ Theft, Prostitution, Proliferation of Arms/ Nuclear Products, illegal Migrants, Hard Drug Trafficking such as cocaine, heroin and many more. All these pose a threat to Nigeria's national security and put the state at the risk of violence and crisis. These crimes not only pose security threat but also dent the image of the country in which citizens are subjected to harassment in abroad, deny the country of foreign investors and also fear to do business with the Nigeria. In this context terrorism, banditry and other incursions at the borders are main concern for states with its highly complicated characteristics as the global world is now faced with an immediate threat.

Furthermore, when states are much connected and interdependent, it becomes a threat to international security as this is a turning point for all states to redirect our security policy and create awareness of the increasing damages in which many innocent people have injured and killed. Globalization and trans border crimes are matters of growing concern not only for governments in the modern time, also dominating topics in the study of international relations due to the increasingly damages on states in international system. The advancement of technology is the cause of development and the spread of sophisticated arms, porous borders resulting in open nature of national borders, the increase in military hardware of terrorist and also the rate of crimes at the borders. Despite all efforts put in place both at the national and global levels to curb these Trans national crime, the incursions have remained on increase. The institutional framework put in place such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to check the activities of the hard drug trafficking is yet to stem these crimes. Indeed, these incursions continue to challenge the security and stability of the country resulting from deep ethnic, political, social and religious cleavages.

Also, the implication is the loss of revenue for the governments. Governments declare loss to these trades, as the trades are not known or reordered thereby; leading to underestimation of the contribution of trade in the sub-region and the trade also creates problems associated with national security. For instance, Nigeria has witnessed so many cases where trailer carrying bags of rice was later discovered carrying arms and ammunition in to the country which is dangerous to the security of the country. The influx of illegal migrants have also increased the rate of unemployment problems in Nigeria especially as private employers prefer to employ migrant workers who are ready to accept low wages and also criminal uprisings and riots in the country as these tend to promote fear and threat to the national security.

##### **5. Conclusion: The Imperative need of Border Security in Nigeria.**

The paper discovered in details the security challenges in the era of globalization in Nigeria. It also hinges on the improvements of border security because it is important and its protection is equate to national security. The challenges posed by trans-border activities are signs of substantial danger to the political, social and economic stability of states. The extent of these crimes committed lead to the widespread fear, violence and crisis; also undermine the security of the states. It is obvious that security in Nigeria and its borders seem to be porous. However, the defense and security arrangement of Nigeria has much to do with our borders. When borders cease to function effectively, different forms of crimes will befall the country and the security of the country will be challenged as Nigeria is experiencing in recent times. For instance, the terrorist groups that pervaded the country causing security challenges and political unrest. Therefore, it could be said that all is not well with our border security with the vulnerabilities of threats that befall the country. The following recommendations are made for effective border security in Nigeria and they are; first, training and retraining of the security personnel is important aspect of effective border security and also for them to discharge their duties effectively and efficiently. Second, is the effective patrol of the border and much attention should be given to our national borders. Third, is the provision of equipment, sophisticated military hardware including good vehicles for border patrol. Fourth, is the need to put in place legal framework that will see to the corrupt practices for punishing the

security operatives that engage in such act at our borders. There is need to think beyond the traditional approach to be able to meet with the future challenges especially in the era of globalization requires collective responsibility. Finally, is the high need for the Nigeria government to develop certain aspects of life such as infrastructure, economic, social, environmental and human needs in order for security in Nigeria as well as her borders to be adequately secured.

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