

The Porous Border on Nigeria Economics and Security Implications

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria borders have been said to have been too porous to have been allowing for the influx of arms and ammunitions as well as illegal and adulterated goods coming into the country without control. Relevant literatures were reviewed in other to come up with the writers' opinion on the topic. It was discovered that the porous borders have been affecting the security of the country, also, the porous border affects the country economically as illegal entry of goods denied country from collecting taxes while citizens are facing problems of buying adulterated goods. It therefore, recommend that: agencies responsible for policing our boarders be alive to their responsibility, they should always shun corruptions.

KEYWORDS

Nigeria border; economic; security

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria national security has been seriously threatening for years back and a lot of factors have been attributed to be the root cause of insecurity in Nigeria. The country is facing with a lot of security and economic problem which has been as a result of her borders not well policed

According to (Adewoyin, 2019), security of borders, no matter where it located is a way of protecting territorial integrity of a nation as borders are places where illegal arms and ammunition can easily come into country and which is a security threat to the country and where illegal goods come in to country and country losing revenue that comes in form of tax. The border problems been faced by Nigerian government could be traced to her colonial master.

Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro (2013) are of the opinion that arms and others weapons which are all over the place can be traced to porous borders and the results is the numerous activities of bandits as well as other insurgency such as Boko haram, Fulani helmsmen killing as well as rising activities of smugglers. The recent example is the killing of two people in Iseyin, Oyo State when smugglers and customs faced one another. Research shows that more than 70 percent of illegal weapon in African are in Nigeria. Also that illegal immigrants who are mostly young people are some of the perpetrators of violent crime in the country (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013)

It is obvious that porous borders are major contributing factor to easy acces to weapons been used by perpetrators of different crimes and insecurity in Nigeria. (Adewoyin, 2019). In the light of the above the study examines porous border and its implication on national security in Nigeria.

Border

Borders globally, are actually fundamental elements of human lives and at the same time elements of relations between individuals and society. From the time immemorial, ingredients of humanity have always been separated and also connected by a network of

borders at all territorial levels (Kolossof, 2012). Therefore, the realization that borders characterize complex social and territorial phenomena has definitely had a profound impact on the study of borders. Trans-border commerce between Nigeria and her neighbouring states usually remains mutually beneficial.

The concept of state border dictates the understanding of, and indeed the very condition for both local and international legal and political systems (Vaughan-Williams, 2009). Nationally, borders are significant to conventional notions of the limits of internal sovereignty and authority, as espoused in Max Webers definition of the state as a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory (Weber, 2012). Conventionally, borders are conceptualized to be international boundaries between nation states. Border can be natural in form of; sea, mountains, rivers, among others but they are in any case always artificial, or objects of consensus and agreements, conquests and peace treaties (Ramuntsindela, 2014).

O'Dowd (2003) defines borders to be places of economic and political opportunities for nations as well as for other interest groups, agencies, either legal or illegal. Borders are made known to serve two fundamental purposes which include; protection from external and internal threats and territorial determination while Zartman (2010) agrees that borders run across land but through people. However, on the map, borders appear as one dimensional line while on the ground they have several dimensions; and without mincing words, borderlands are boundaries in depth, space around a line, the place where state meets a society, and where no one ever feels at home (Simon, 1997). Also in the words of Caflisch (2006), the borders are broadly conceptualized as a way of identifying areas where state sovereignty usually exists, but Lee and North (2016) on the other way round, defines the concept of borders to symbolize a relatively static model of territorial demarcation which can be expressed physically, either through human-constructed border stones, walls, fences or through natural features like; as mountains ranges, rivers, and even trees.

Nigeria's land borders link the country with four different countries namely, the Republic of Benin in the southwest, Cameroon in the southeast, Chad in North-East, and Niger in the North West. These borders, like others dividing many African counties, have been referred to as artificial boundaries because they were arbitrarily drawn by the colonial powers in Africa often separating people of the same tradition and culture into different countries. Nigeria's economy stands perhaps as the largest in Africa, even surpassing South Africa. In West Africa, Nigeria's economy, sustained by it's over 200 million national populations, clearly stands as the strongest, prompting very robust business activities both at the land borders and between Nigeria and her different neighbours.

National Security

Security as a concept comes with different definitions. The meaning giving to nation security depends on the angle the definer or the scholar is looking at it from as well as the security challenges that nation is facing. It also involves with aspect the definer is looking at. Is it political, economy or social? Therefore, the paper is looking at the aspect of political security and economic security. National security in this wise can be define as the impediment to economy and polical growth of Nigeria. Security result from the fear that some factors are capable of undermine the achievement of projected aims and objective set up to measure achievement in economy, political and socio sector of a country.

Therefore, national security of any nation is a way of protecting uniqueness of the country. This can be in area of economy, political, culture as well as socio-economy. For instance, Federal Government of Nigeria barned rice importation in order to protect local production. Despite this, foreign rice still finds its way to Nigeria market because of porous

borders. Still on economy, the natural resources endowed Nigeria is being mined by illegal migrants. Zamfara government arrested some of them of recent, While, security agent arrested illegal miners all expatriates and entered Nigeria illegally. Politically, during the elections there is always allegation that aliens came to Nigeria to assist political parties. These aliens are illegal migrants and activities undermine sanctity of electoral process. They came in through porous borders. It happens in other sector, such as religion and so on.

According to Ronis (2011) national security concerns on how we view our world responsibilities. Therefore, national security is the pivot on which the prosperity, governance and the general welfare of the citizens of any country turns. In other words, security considerations are paramount to transform Nigeria into a country that is economically and politically stable. According to Ronis (2011), national security is the bedrock of nation's prosperity, peace, good governance and general welfare of the citizens. Therefore, security is the antidote for development of Nigeria.

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 importance that it deserves has not been accorded to it as evident in the vulnerabilities of threat pose at our national borders such as trans-border crimes and the prevalent terrorist attack that befall the country resulting in the unrestrained influx of migrants through the routes. The challenges include among others, illegal borders. Smugglers have created many illegal borders in all Nigeria boundaries with other countries. Many of these illegal boundaries are not motorable, hence difficult to police. The reason why we see many contraband goods in Nigeria markets.

Another challenge is inadequacy of personnel. Nigerian customs service which was formed in 1891 has eighteen thousand (18000) employees to carry its activities of not only manning all Nigeria borders including other administrative activities, this is grossly in adequate, this in no small measure affecting the service

Corruption and national security

Corruption has eaten deep into the service to the extent that before you can join customs you need to part with hundreds of thousand naira, therefore when you get there you will first look for the money you paid. There have been allegation of field officers getting good posting base on how much you paid and how much you promised to be delivering weekly. Once smugglers settle them they will enter freely.

Inadequate logistics and National Security

Nigerian customs service is facing serious inadequate logistics support. They lack equipment to police Nigeria borders. Many have lost their lives through confrontation with smugglers who always over power them with their superior equipments. There is argument that their bosses are responsible for some of these as money allocated for purchase of equipment most times embezzled

Porosity of Borders

Porosity of Nigeria border is a major issue that contributing to illegal influx of Nigerian markets with different contraband and smuggling goods. (Akinyemi, 2013) is of the opinion that many unmanned illegal borders contribute to this problem. He further stated that the country is losing a lot of resources through tax invasion by smugglers as well as compromising the sanctity of electoral processes, this as a result of illegal migrants. Research

shows that Nigeria has about 1500 irregular borders while only 84 official borders. Therefore, there are many routes for smuggling various goods.

Corruption

Corruption has been a serious problem affecting customs service in Nigeria. This has pointed out before is as a result of difficulties in getting the job. You can only be employed if you have god father or you are ready to part with hundreds of thousands of naira. The society also contribute to the corrupt practices of the officers as traders prefer negotiating with some customs officers on how to bring goods to the country rather than paying tax. Also the society see any custom officer as rich man and woman, hence they will go to any length to justify this. At the check point, it is alleged that only goods of those who failed to negotiate will be impounded and the money collected from this negotiation go as far as to the Controller General.

Manpower, Logistic Support and national security

Inadequate manpower is one of the challenges facing customs service. Has pointed out before, the service is having about eighteen thousand officers and men. This figure is grossly inadequate to man all the borders and patrol all illegal borders all over Nigeria boundaries with other countries. Logistics, such as patrol vehicles, bikes even protective items such as ammunitions are not adequate. Patrol vehicles cannot chase smugglers, because many are not functioning well. Many officers have lost their lives to superior weapons of the smugglers. This always discourage good performance and encourages influx of Nigerian markets with contrabands goods and arms and ammunition all over the country

Nigeria Borders and Colonial Influence

Nigeria colonial master, Britain created Customs service in 1891 for economic purpose when Nigeria has not been born or amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorate has not taking place. Peculiarity of each area was not consider while cultures of the people were not put into consideration. After amalgamation and boundary adjustment people of the same culture were separated and fall in different countries and in the same border areas. This make smuggling easy because many of those in the border areas are speaking the same language. They help one another to smuggle goods across borders. According to Nigeria President Mohammad Buhari, the bandits troubling Nigeria are from other countries. He described them to have the same look with Fulani in Nigeria.

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. Borders supposed to be develop by government to discourage citizens from aiding smuggling. Many of the towns in borders of Nigeria with other countries are nothing to write home about. They lack all social amenities. Road linking them with other towns are terribly bad. Okerete, a border town in Oyo State is not up to 100 kilometers to Saki. However, it takes not less than 4hours to get there if not in the raining season. Since they see themselves been abandoned patriotism in them is dead.

Political Instability and Economic Crisis in Neighboring Countries

Political instability in Africa always affects influx of foreigners who enter the country illegally. Nigeria the most populous country in Africa is the destination of citizens of country with unrest, President Ibrahim Babangida said in one of his speeches that Nigeria national security is the security of her immediate neighbours (Adewoyin, 2019), Instability in any

African country affects Nigeria. Nigeria the most populous African country is home to citizens of any African country with problems. The reason Ghanaian flooded Nigeria when they were having economic problems. In fact, Nigeria makes African as her center piece in her foreign policy.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research method adopted for this study is the use of secondary data. This is aimed at supporting the issue raised in the work and to access solid evidence in supporting the issue.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from literature reviewed shows that Nigeria borders are porous and this allows for smuggling activities. It also exposed the fact that there are many illegal borders that are more than legally recognized one in the country

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the study that, Nigerians are facing political and economy problems associated with porosity of her boarders.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

- Nigeria government needs to put more effort and resources both human and capital into the policing of its borders to reduce the dangerous cross border infiltrations that are affecting national security.
- Governments should emphasis merit in recruitment of customs officers instead of favoritism.
- Government should provide adequate logistics for the officers to work with in order to be able to face smugglers.

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