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Contemporary Security Challenges and Its Effects on Nigeria's Foreign Relations, 2015-2022

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Abstract: The nefarious activities of *Boko Haram* terrorists, armed bandits, herders-farmers clashes and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) among others have devastating effects on Nigeria's national security. Efforts by the federal government at curtailing their activities notwithstanding, these criminal elements have continued to operate with impunity; killing, maiming and raping of innocent citizens across the country. *Boko Haram* terrorists mostly operate in the North-East Region while armed herders violently attack sedentary crop farmers in the North-Central; the North-West and South-East Regions have been riddled by the activities of armed bandits and IPOB members respectively. Consequently, the security situation in the country is deteriorating with debilitating consequences on her foreign relations. Relying on exegesis of relevant secondary sources such as books, journals, newspapers and web-based materials among others; the paper posits that the nefarious activities of *Boko Haram* terrorists, armed bandits, IPOB members and violent herders among other criminal elements threatens Nigeria's national security, which by extension affects her foreign relations. The paper concludes that the country's security situation may further deteriorate as long as the government keeps politicizing insecurity in the country. The paper therefore recommends, among other things, that the government should stop politicizing insecurity and stand up to its primary responsibility of securing the lives and property of its citizens while at the same time delivering dividends of democracy in an atmosphere of good governance characterized by freedom, equity and justice.
Key words: Contemporary Effects, Foreign Relations, IPOB, Nigeria, Security Threats

Introduction

Nigeria is considered the giant of Africa basically because of her size in terms of human population, military strength and economic resource endowment. The country is rich in both human and material resources, making it the commercial nerve center of the African continent. This makes the country a major State player not only in Africa but also among the comity of nations at the international panorama. The strengths of the country have however been weakened by a myriad of security challenges bedeviling her in recent years. Almost all the geo-political zones of the country are faced with one security challenge or the other. While the North-East has been reduced to the den of *Boko Haram* terrorist group, the North-West has become the haven of all manner of armed bandits such as kidnappers, village/market raiders, armed robbers and cattle rustlers among others. The North-Central has degenerated into a theatre of violent confrontations between cattle herders and crop farmers over access to and use of ecological resources such as farming lands, grazing fields and water points. The South-East has become insecure as a result of the incessant agitations by a group called the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) among other ethic militias, which recently gave a "sit at home order" on Mondays as a form of civil disobedience. The South-West is also faced with security challenges such as kidnapping for ransom, nomadic terrorism, ritual killings and armed robbery among others. In fact, the failure of the Nigerian State to effectively manage the security challenge emanating from the nomadic activities of Fulani cattle herders has resulted to more security challenges in the Nigeria's South-West Region as activists such as Sunday Igboho among others had to take laws into their hands by prohibiting open grazing of cattle in all the forests in the Region. The oil rich South-South is not immune to security challenges as the Region has been characterized by agitations for resource control.

The internal security situations in Nigeria have adversely affected her image and status as a major contributor to peace keeping operations in the African Continent and the rest of the World. Nigeria, which hitherto used to be the giant of Africa, reputed for assisting other smaller countries such as Chad, Niger, Sierra-Leone and Liberia among others to manage their security challenges, now relies on the support of these countries to fight *Boko Haram* insurgency. The various security challenges facing the country seem to be overwhelming so much so that the country is now reduced to a "crippled giant" in the African Continent. The series of communal conflicts, herders-farmers' conflicts, terrorists attacks and the nefarious activities of armed bandits have continued to threaten the country's national security and corporate existence (Fadeyi & Muhammed 2019). The presence of insecurity in any environment constitutes threats to lives and property, hinders business activities and discourages local and foreign investors, all of which repress and reduce socio-economic development of a nation. In Nigeria, there has been increasing wave of security crisis in recent times which threaten the corporate existence of the country as one geographical entity (Owetan & Urhie, 2014)

Furthermore, the survival of a country as a viable entity depends largely on developing an effective grand strategy that directs the main elements of power towards the attainment of set objectives which include economy, technology, population, ideology, foreign policy and security as diplomacy fosters peaceful co-existence among States (Oladeji, 2012, p.403). The foreign policy which any country adopts is a reflection of her domestic policy. The internal security situation

is one of the components of the domestic policy as well as some aspects of the current internal security challenges especially towards determining if those that have had foreign policy consequences or not (Azazi, 2012, p.118). This implies that the internal security situation of a country directly or indirectly affects her foreign policy and her relationship with other countries in the international community

Against this backdrop therefore, this paper examines contemporary security challenges in Nigeria's fourth Republic between 2015 and 2022 and by implication its effects on her foreign relations within the period under review. The paper is divided into seven sections beginning with the introduction. Section two focuses on clarification of key concepts. In section three, the forms of security challenges in Nigeria are examined. Section four takes a look at the causes of security challenges in Nigeria. Section five addresses government's responses to security challenge in Nigeria. And in section six, the effects of security challenge on Nigeria's foreign relations is examined. Section seven concludes the paper and gives some useful policy recommendations as a panacea to the security crisis in the country.

Conceptual Clarifications

Security is perceived as referring to being secure and free from both fear of physical, psychological abuse, violence, persecution, or death and from want such as food, health and good job (Asmau & Abdulrasheed, 2020). Omede (2012) on his part sees security as a dynamic condition which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests. Also, security can be described as stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income), predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe), and

freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress) which results from the assurance or knowing that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one's community or neighbourhood and by people around (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). It also focuses on emotional and psychological sense of belonging to a social group which can offer one protection.

Furthermore, security is defined as the protection against all forms of harm whether physical, economic or psychological (Olabanji & Ese, 2014). Security is the state or condition of being free from danger or threat in the daily activities of human beings (Imam, 2014). Security represents a situation when an individual, group or community can move freely to carry out their daily activities without fear of danger, injury to the body or destruction of properties. Ensuring the security of lives and properties is the primary responsibility of the Government. It is because of this that Governments have established several security forces to ensure and maintain security within a country and even to respond to external aggressions and threats. It is, however, contended that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the ability to rise to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency and expertise. It demands safety from chronic threats and protection from harmful disruption (Igbuzor, 2011). Security embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence (Ogunleye, Adewale, Alese, & Ogunde, 2013).

Insecurity is lack of security or a situation of uncertainty when a person, group or community is at the stage of been subjected to or exposed to danger at a given location (Ladan, 2019). Insecurity can also be

defined as a situation when someone is not adequately guarded, protected or defended by the authorities that are supposed to provide security (Webster, 2019). Insecurity in which ever country it is experienced, constitutes serious threats to lives and property, hinders business activities and discourages both domestic and foreign investors, all of which retard a country's socio-economic development (Ewetan, 2014). Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Rabaro (2013) define insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being opened or subjected to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. Security crisis means a situation where a state and its citizens are overwhelmed by different forms of security challenges at the same time. For instance, Nigeria is overwhelmed by security crisis arising from armed banditry, kidnapping, *Boko Haram* insurgency, agitations as in the case of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and herders'-crop farmers' conflict among others.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on the Revisionist Theory of national security as its framework of analysis. The Revisionist Theory of national security arose in a dialectical opposition to the classical or traditional approach to national security. It was largely informed by the dynamics of the New World Order (NWO) and the corresponding security threats thereof. The theory is characterized by its people-centric focus, multi-disciplinary posture and radical stance (Usman, 2012) as different from the classical or traditional approach to national security that is characterized by

its State-centric focus, pro-military nature, prioritizing territorial integrity and regime security and the fact that it is reductionist and conservative. The theory is pioneered by scholars like MacNamara (1968) (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014).

The Revisionist conception of national security therefore views national security more comprehensively in terms of freedom from all forms of social, socio-economic, ecological, territorial, economic and sociopolitical vulnerabilities (Okoli, 2012). Specifically, the Revisionist Theory emphasizes the following dimensions of national security: physical security, community security, economic security, social security, food security, ecological security, regional security and livelihood security.

The above mentioned aspects of national security correspond to what is popularly known in the literature as the 'human security' paradigm. The 'human security' notion of national security was originally proposed by Dr. Mahud ul Haq in the 1994 United Nations Human Development Report. It emerged from the post-Cold War multi-disciplinary re-assessment of security in the light of the emerging global security exigencies and challenges (Usman, 2012). The Revisionist Theory does not repudiate the Classical conception of national security in its entirety. In fact, it seeks to make up its fundamental flaws and inadequacies. Thus, when the Revisionist understanding of national security is synthesized with that of the Classical Perspective, what results is a robust and comprehensive conception that presents the total picture of the subject matter.

Applied to the purpose of this paper, the Revisionist Theory enables us to come to terms with the strategic implications of contemporary security challenges in Nigeria on her foreign relations. In this regard, it could

be argued that any threat to people's lives and property constitutes a security challenge. Kidnapping, cattle rustling, armed robbery, village/market raids, terrorism, arms trafficking, drugs trafficking and human trafficking among others constitutes security challenge and by extension affects how the country relates with other countries in the international community.

4.0 Contemporary Security Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria is currently besieged by a myriad of security challenges so much so that the country, which has always been regarded as the giant of Africa, is now seeking assistance from smaller counties in the continent such as Chad and Niger among others, especially as it pertains to the issue of *Boko Haram* insurgency. Nigeria has now been reduced to what has come to be known as a "cripple giant"; it can bark but can no longer bite! Some of these security challenges threatening Nigeria include:

Boko Haram Insurgency

One of the security challenges facing Nigeria, especially the North-east region of the country, is the problem of *Boko Haram* insurgency. Insurgency is not a new phenomenon but became well-known following the September 11 bombing of the United States of America by *Al-Qaeda* terrorist group. These twin bombings were carried out on the World Trade Center (WTC) and the Pentagon. Other insurgent activities were orchestrated by similar groups such as *Al-Shabaab* of Somalia with concomitant devastating repercussion on the country's relations with other countries in the international community. In Nigeria, *Boko Haram* started as a small radical Islamic organization, which then enjoyed limited support from among the *Sufi* Islamic communities in the North eastern parts of Nigeria. The agenda of *Boko Haram* is

to ensure that Western education has no place in Nigeria, which explains why they have relations with other similar terrorist groups elsewhere. Aside being anti-western in posture, these groups carry out attacks on shopping malls, air ports, educational institutions, market places, Police barracks, army camps, immigration offices, Prisons, and worship centers among others. *Boko Haram* started its attacks domestically in Borno State of North-eastern Nigeria, but has now spread its tentacles to other States such Kano, Yobe, Adamawa, Bauchi and Abuja among others.

Armed Banditry

Another form of contemporary security challenge facing Nigeria which has become unbearable in the last decade is the issue of armed banditry. Armed banditry involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person with the intent to rob; rape or kill. Banditry manifests in four major dimensions, namely kidnapping, armed robbery, village raids and cattle rustling. Of these four dimensions, kidnapping and mass abduction of people, especially innocent and defenseless school students/pupils for ransom is gradually taking the lead as no day passes by without hearing on the radio or reading in the national dailies news of kidnap of innocent citizens in one part of the country or the other. By the end of 2009, police record revealed that a total of 2,148 people had been kidnapped in Nigeria based on reported incidences (Alemika, 2012, p.48). These figures have been more than tripled as recent studies tend to suggest (Okoli & Agada, 2014). Between July and October, 2021 alone armed bandits killed 213 persons while about 676 others were kidnapped across Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Katsina State. On the 28th of March, 2022, a train from

Kaduna to Abuja was attacked by 'unknown gunmen' leaving at least eight persons dead and several others sustaining different degrees of injuries while over a hundred others were kidnapped to 'unknown destinations'. In the same vein, 2 Catholic Priests attached to St. Patrick's Catholic church and two other boys were kidnapped at gunpoint in Gidan Maikambo in Kafur LGA of Katsina State on 25th May, 2022 (Ankeli, 2022).

Armed banditry started in Nigeria as a result of nearly forty years of unresolved conflicts between crop farmers and nomadic cattle herders that often wander on the high plains of Northern Nigeria particularly the North-West geo-political zone in such States as Zamfara. Armed banditry in Zamfara State started since around 2009 and increased in 2011 especially after the general elections (Anka, 2017). In fact, Zamfara State has been the epicenter of armed banditry in Nigeria in recent years, where most of the armed bandits' leaders were based and from Zamfara State forests they would move riding on motor cycles to other States such as Katsina, to operate and return to their forest dens (Farouq & Chukwu, 2020). Therefore, by the year 2010, armed banditry had started in Katsina State primarily in the seven Local Government Areas (LGAs) that shared boundary with Zamfara State namely Jibia, Batsari, Safana, Danmusa, Kankara, Faskari and Sabua (Ladan & Matawalli, 2020).

To address the security challenge occasioned by the activities of armed bandits, the Governor of the Katsina State initially granted amnesty to repentant armed bandits, but had to pull out of the programme when it was discovered that the armed bandits refused to stop the killings and destruction of people's property in the State as agreed. Other measures such as deployment of more security agents, shutting down of communication networks, non-negotiation with armed bandits, banning of the movement of motor circles (popularly called *Okada* in local parlance) and tricycles (popularly called *Keke NAPEP* in local parlance) by 6pm daily, shutting down of all illegal motor parks, and ban on the sale of fuel in jerry cans among others in the most affected LGAs in the State did not really yield the desired results as the nefarious activities of armed bandits continued unabated. The incessant and unpredictable attacks orchestrated by armed bandits on motorists and travelers on roads across cities, towns and LGAs in Nigeria's North-West, has made traveling look like a "suicide mission" for those that dare to travel.

Farmer-Herder Conflict

Nigeria's North-Central Region (especially States such as Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau) is not immune against security challenge as the zone has degenerated into a theatre of full blown war between indigenous settled crop farmers and nomadic cattle herders. The conflict, which is usually over ecological resources such as land and water points, has always been there; but seems to have escalated in the last decade as a result of stiff contestation over the shrinking vegetal resources occasioned by change in climatic conditions, expansion in both human and animal population, and increasing level of agricultural production (Ilevbare & Yusufu, 2021). Like the other security challenges examined above, the conflict between crop farmers and nomadic cattle herders seems to have defied all measures put in place to curtail it. Some scholars like Genyi (2019) among others have even argued that the conflict has been politicized by the Nigeria government especially since the inception of the Buhari administration in 2015. President Muhammadu Buhari, it has been argued, has a soft spot for the

nomadic cattle herders because they are his Fulani kinsmen, which explains why his government often blames attacks on crop farmers on immigrants who took advantage of the porosity of Nigeria's borders and illegally migrated into the country. Whether those attacking indigenous crop farmers are indigenous Fulani cattle herders or not, the fact remains that the Buhari administration has failed woefully to protect the lives and property of its people as contained in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) (Yusufu & Umoru, 2022). In fact, never in the history of this great nation, has insecurity been politicized as is the case with the Buhari administration.

Niger Delta Crisis

Also constituting a security threat to the Nigerian State is the Niger Delta crisis that has rocked the oil rich region of the country. The conflict started in the early 1960s due to tension between Foreign Oil Corporations (FOCs) and some Niger Delta minority ethnic groups such as the Ogoni and Ijaw people who felt they were being exploited (Osungade, 2008). Consequently, ethnic and political unrest continued in the region throughout the 1990s and persisted despite the enthronement of democracy in 1999. It should be noted however that, the competition for oil wealth in the region gave rise to agitations, violence, and subsequent extra-judicial killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine Ogoni by the Abacha regime (Ogbodo, 2010). The action by the Abacha administration was condemned not only by well meaning Nigerians, but also by the international community. As a result of this therefore, the international community expressed her anger by imposing several sanctions on Nigeria during that period. The inability of the government to address the major triggers of the agitation such as

environmental degradation, poverty, unemployment and lack of social amenities among others resulted in the proliferation different militia groups such as Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) founded by Ken Saro-Wiwa and Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) among others. The emergence of these groups was informed by the injustice against the Niger Delta region by the Federal government.

To address the agitations by the Niger Delta people, the government established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Ministry of Niger Delta (MND) among others. The establishment of these agencies notwithstanding, the crises still persisted. Socio-economic activities of the people were adversely affected and property worth millions of naira was destroyed. This led to the launching of a massive military crackdown on the militants in August 2008 (Amaizu, 2008). Rather than the measures put in place by the Federal government to address this security challenge, the reverse became the case as the situation led to kidnapping of foreign oil workers and residents in the region. To address the aggravating security challenge in the region, the administration of Late President Umaru Yar'Adua decided to unconditionally pardon and grant amnesty to the repentant militants, and were given two-month ultimatum to surrender all their weapons to the Federal government in exchange for training and rehabilitation (Rotimi, 2009). During the two-month period, the militants led their groups to surrender their weapons which included rocket-propelled grenades, guns, explosives and gunboats among other dangerous weapons of warfare. The Federal government's amnesty programme led to the reduction of militancy in the region, but then kidnapping and other petty crimes still continued and this spilled over into other

States in the South-East geo-political zone of the country (Effiom, 2016).

5.0 Sources of Security Challenge in Nigeria

Many factors have been blamed for the security challenges bedeviling the country today. Prominent among these factors is the issue of unemployment (Shalangwa, 2013; Nadama, 2019; Ladan, 2019). The countries' tertiary institutions keep graduating students en mass on a yearly basis without hope of where they would work after graduation. Nigeria's unemployment rate keeps rising on a daily basis and this has implications on national security of the country. Since there are no adequate jobs to go round, the teeming population of youth of the country has to make a living and this has made some of them to become cheap recruits as armed bandits, political thugs and fraudsters among other criminal elements. The rates of unemployment may further increase as farming activities are presently threatened by armed banditry, kidnapping and herders militancy (Ladan, 2019).

Another factor responsible for the security challenge facing the country is proliferation of arms and ammunition. Nigeria's borders are very porous and criminal elements such as arms traffickers have therefore taken advantage of this porosity to illegally import dangerous weapons of warfare into the country. The 2,000 miles of border that Nigeria shares with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon host almost 1,500 illegal or unmonitored crossing routes (Adejo, 2005). Today, it is not uncommon to see all manner of Small and Light Weapons (SALWs) in the hands of unauthorized individuals in the country. Citing Ogba (2005) Nzeako and Abdulsalam (2021, p. 166) disclosed that "The problems posed by arms smuggling are complex and multidimensional in character. They are entangled with other broad security and societal issues such as criminal activity and links to terrorism. It also has serious implications on human rights and humanitarian activities"

Also implicated as a factor responsible for the rising spate of security challenges in Nigeria; is the issue of politicization of insecurity. Never in the history of this country has insecurity been as politicized as we have now under the administration of Muhammadu Buhari. The South-South was grossly challenged by insecurity during the administration of Goodluck Jonathan and it is challenged by the same security issues up till date. Herders and crop farmers' conflict in Nigeria's North-Central zone has also been politicized which has made the conflict to linger till date (Yusufu & Umoru, 2022). This is particularly true as the government seems to be biased in the way and manner the conflict is managed (Genyi, 2019).

High rate of poverty is yet another factor responsible for rising level of insecurity in the country. Nigeria was once described as the poverty head quarter of the World. A study by Kabiru and Arshad, (2018) suggested that the prevalence of abject poverty in the rural areas of Nigeria's Northern Region made some people to work as informants or logistic suppliers to armed bandits operating from their hide-outs in the forests. According to Zakariya'u (2019) the rate of kidnapping for ransom is alarming in the North owing majorly to high rate of poverty. The more the poverty, the more the rate of crime will increase in both rural areas and urban centers. Abdulrashid, Saifullahi amd Amir (2018) revealed that rustling of cattle has deepened the vicious cycle of poverty in most rural communities in the Northern Region of the country.

Also responsible for the contemporary security challenge in Nigeria is the issue of high rates of illiteracy. There are so many youths who do not go to

school as well as so many out of school children in most States in the country, especially in the Northern Region as a result of poverty. Illiterate youths are very vulnerable and easily lured into criminal activities such as armed banditry, political thuggery, militancy and terrorism among others. Illiteracy among the youths also does not allow them to weight the risk of engaging in criminal activities that threatens the peace and security of the State (Ladan, 2019)

Limited security presence in most rural communities in the country is also responsible for the rising security challenge. The security personnel such as the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) are not in adequate supply in most parts of the country in order to combat the numerous criminal activities carried out by criminals and other criminal elements. Umar and Shittu, (2017) observed that while the country's population has increased progressively over the years, Police manpower has not improved to match it; to at least meet up the expected global standard for effective policing. This obvious dearth of security personnel made it practically impossible for the NPF to effectively control and curtail the ever rising wave of crimes and insecurity in the country (Umar & Shittu, 2017).

Effects of Security Challenge on Nigeria's Foreign Relations

Since 1960 when Nigeria gained her freedom from the British Colonial Power (BCP) in what came to be known as "Political Independence" the goal and objectives the country's Foreign Policy were designed to achieve have remained the same even in this era of globalization!. These objectives and goal as outlined and identified to include; the protection of the territorial integrity of the Nigerian State; the promotion of economic and social well being of Nigerians; the enhancement of Nigeria's image and status in the World at large; the promotion of unity as well as the total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Nigeria and Africa; the promotion of the rights of the black people and others under colonial domination; the promotion of international cooperation, conducive to the consolidation of World peace and security; mutual respect and friendship among all peoples among States; redressing the imbalance in the international power structures that has tended to frustrate the legitimate aspirations of developing countries; the promotion of World peace based on the principles of freedom, mutual respect and equality of all persons of the World (Gamawa, 2018, p.72). These have been the guiding principles of Nigeria's Foreign Policy (NFP).

The emergence of Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the President of Nigeria in 2015 after three unsuccessful attempts in 2003, 2007 and 2011 respectively was welcome by well meaning Nigerians as a new dawn in the government and politics of the country. Hopes were high so also were peoples' expectations as the much anticipated change had come! The burning issues that needed to be addressed at the time Buhari took the helm of affairs of the country included *Boko Haram* insurgency in Northeast, the Niger Delta militancy, the secessionists' threats by Independent People of Biafra (IPOB); increasing unemployment rates, poverty and poor infrastructure among other problems confronting Nigeria. It should be noted that Buhari's government placed the wiping out of *Boko Haram* terrorists and corruption as the main agenda of his administration. Few days after assuming the presidency, Buhari visited Niger Republic, Cameroon, Benin Republic, Chad, G-7 meeting in Berlin and the United States.

Buhari's main mission was to raise awareness and international co-operation against *Boko Haram* insurgency in Nigeria and the West African sub-region. President Buhari ordered the relocation of military command to Maiduguri-the Borno State capital. It was a courageous move to take the fight against terrorism right to the door steps of *Boko Haram* terrorists. Also, President Buhari championed the creation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which was composed of 8,700 standing army officers pulled from member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. The Multinational Joint Task Force has already attracted donations, military platforms and more shared intelligence. Buhari ordered the release of $21 million to facilitate the establishment of the MNJTF headquarters in N'Djamena. A further $79 million has been pledged by Buhari's administration (Vanguard, 2015). The MNJTF coupled with the Civilian Joint Task Force have yielded positive results in the fight against *Boko Haram* even though the terrorist group has not been totally wiped out of the country.

Furthermore, the Buhari administration made efforts to free the Chibok girls that were kidnapped by *Boko Haram* terrorists on April 14, 2014. Over 100 of these girls have so far been released by their abductors. The release of the kidnapped girls was done with the help of Swiss government, International Red Cross and the Nigerian government (Vanguard, 2017). Also, the emergent security threat occasioned by the activities of armed bandits in states like Zamfara and Katsina among others has also drawn the attention of the federal government. The anti-corruption crusade embarked upon by President Buhari has won him a lot of accolades both at home and abroad. To buttress this assertion, few days to the 2016 Anti-Corruption Summit held in London, in a video footage, the

Archbishop of Canterbury (Head of Anglican Communion), Justin Welby cautioned the former UK Prime Minister, David Cameron about his remarks that some countries such as Nigeria and Afghanistan are 'fantastically corrupt' (Independent, 2016). The 2016 Anti-Corruption Summit is considered by many observers as a step in the right direction towards combating corruption on a global scale. Buahri's zero tolerance against corruption is seen by many observers as a powerful tool that will restore the dignity of Nigeria as well as facilitate the inflow of massive Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Since 2015, the Buhari administration has kick started investigations and prosecution of high profile Nigerians such as former National Security Adviser, Col. Sambo Dasuki (retd) and former petroleum minister, Diezani Alison Madueke among other high profile personalities accused of corruption. The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, disclosed that about 3.4 trillion naira (cash and assets) was recovered during the first year of the Buhari administration (Thisday, 2016).

Also, President Buhari's administration has strengthened diplomatic ties with great powers such as China, United States of America (USA), Germany and France. The friendly gestures accorded the Buhari administration is been reflected in the fight against International terrorism, recovery of looted funds, accessibility to loans and deepening trade deals. Apart from using foreign relations to tackle *Boko Haram* insurgency, President Buhari played a key role as the chief mediator in solving the Constitutional impasse in Gambia, where President Yahaya Jammeh initially refused to give up power to a democratically elected President Adama Barrow, President Buhari was tasked by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to lead a negotiation with Jammeh in

order to concede power to Barrow. President Buhari resolved for a peaceful transition and the need to avoid violence which could lead to a civil war and a possible humanitarian disaster for the ECOWAS sub-region. The negotiation was fruitful, and former President Jammeh conceded power and stepped aside and Adama Barrow took over as President of Gambia on January 27, 2017.

On the whole the security challenges facing Nigeria as at present have gone a long way in negatively affecting her relations with other countries and their nationals in the international community. Both State and Non-State actors interested in coming into Nigeria to invest in the economy are most times scared of doing so because of insecurity. The situation has become so terrible that most people now prefer to travel either by air or train to avoid being kidnapped by armed bandits on the high-ways until recently when an international airport in Kaduna State was attacked as well as the dastardly attacks orchestrated by terrorists on a train on its way from Kaduna to Abuja on 28th March, 2022 leaving 8 persons dead and several others sustaining different degrees of injuries while many more were abducted by trigger-happy "unknown gunmen". The security situation has become so worrisome that people are sometimes kidnapped for ransom from the comfort of their homes at gunpoint. As at present, nobody is safe and nowhere is safe in the country! This scenario must have been responsive for the swift conclusion drawn by Yusufu and Ilevbare (2021) that Nigeria is gradually transforming into a failed State.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined contemporary security challenges in Nigeria and its effect on her foreign relations between 2015 when the Buhari government came into power and early 2022 when these challenges aggravated with devastating consequences. These security challenges constitute a threat not only to the peaceful co-existence of Nigeria- a multi-ethnic country, but also discourage foreign investments. The paper concludes that the country's security situation may further deteriorate as long as the government keeps politicizing insecurity in the country. The persistence of these security challenges overwhelms the nation's security system and in the end discourages Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and also ultimately deteriorate her relationship with others countries in the international community.

The paper therefore recommends that the government should stop politicizing insecurity and stand up to its primary responsibility of securing the lives and property of its citizens while at the same time delivering dividends of democracy in an atmosphere of good governance characterized by freedom, equity and justice. Also, government should adopt a two way approach to some of these crippling problems; dialogue and the use of force. Those agitating for secession in South East and resource control in the Niger Delta region should be engaged in thorough dialogue. However, the government should strengthen the security architecture in order to completely wipe out *Boko Haram i*nsurgency and armed bandits as well as find a lasting solution to the incessant resource conflicts between cattle herders and crop farmers in different farming communities across the country.

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