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**AN EXPOSITION OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA AND ITS IMPLICATION
FOR SUB- REGIONAL SECURITY**

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines an exposition of democratic governance in Nigeria and its implication for sub-regional security. The paper is written against the backdrop that democracy is considered as the most desirable form of government. Nigeria's importance to global security hinges on the fact that she is not only the most populous country in Africa, but also strategically located in a region (Gulf of Guinea). Nigeria has provided materials and other forms of support to the democratic processes in Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Niger among others. This work utilizes both primary and secondary data, while the regional security theory was used as our theoretical framework. The paper revealed that security challenges facing West Africa sub-region include: bad governance, unemployment, poverty, illicit proliferation of small, armed group, immature democracy, the paper found out that, within the West African sub-region, Nigeria has sought to manage the inter-state relations under the Framework of the ECOWAS and other bilateral arrangements with its immediate neighbors. In this connection, it has made the promotion of peace and security the primary consideration. The paper recommends among other things that leadership of African nations should be re-orientated on the need to see themselves as "servant leaders" and not as "rulers. Instead of being instrumental leaders, they should act as societal leaders. The paper concludes that there is a continuing need for the enhancement of the capacity of ECOWAS to inform and contribute to security in member states. There should be proactive efforts by ECOWAS to institute enabling mechanism for conflict prevention and peace-building across the region; increased transparency and accountability by regional leaders. There is a need to strengthen all institutions and processes that promote efficiency, accountability and transparency in the management of national resources across West Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

It is fundamental to states that Nigeria is one of the influential country in West Africa and Africa as a whole. The success of Nigeria's recent elections has raised its profile both internationally, regionally and sub-regional. Nigeria has now held five successive multiparty democratic elections and is enjoying the longest period of civilian rule since its independence. Democracy has a crucial role to play in a bid to restore peace and tranquility in West Africa sub-region. This is because it is during democracy that sanctity of life can be guaranteed. For instance, democracy promotes fundamental human rights, guarantees equality, ensures popular sovereignty, and rule of law. The aforementioned have been the problem of West Africa sub-region.

However, the freedom and rights that democracy was expected to provide, and which has been denied for a long time by prolonged years of authoritarian and repressive military dictatorship in West Africa sub-region is very important now. There is no doubt that West African current security challenges are predominantly governance-related or sometimes intra-state conflicts. The continent's ill-defined national borders remain a potent source of instability. In fact, more than half of all African countries have engaged in boundary-related conflicts and border dispute. Security threats could be of two kinds – the conventional security threats, which are associated with a foreign element or government and is usually responded to according to conventional practice and doctrine following laid down pattern Bassey (2011). The second typology of security threats have been defined as "new or emerging security threats" and are generally non-governmental, dynamic,

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random and driven by variety of causes and forces. The most obvious challenge to progress in regional integration is the high level of political instability in many West African countries. This is why peace and security efforts and conflict resolution have continued to dominate ECOWAS activities consuming time and resources. Another obstacle to the sub-regional integration efforts remain the low level of political will and enthusiasm among some leaders, particularly of the francophone states (Adebajo, 2004).

Nigeria's approach to sub-regional security has been largely influenced by the national role conceived for it in international relations by its leaders. This role conception has become the defining paradigm for foreign policy engagement. It is expedient to note that one of the fundamentals of a democratic rule is constitution and constitutionalism; and of the three key obligatory responsibilities the Nigerian constitution outlines for its government in terms of relationship with the Nigerian people, the issue of security is most conspicuous. Thus, section 14:2b of the 1999 constitution states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government" Abutudu (2005). Nigeria has remained resolute in her preference and support for democratic governance in West Africa sub-region, her participation in Sierra Leone and Liberia under the auspices of ECOMOG to restore democracy in those two countries. In addition, the Buhari led administration has appointed former President Olusegun Obasanjo to broker peace in Guinea Bissau political turmoil. In light of the above, Nigeria considers peace and security of West African sub-region as her primary responsibility.

It is expedient to note that the synergy between security and democracy is inseparable to the extent that if democracy loses its security essence, it has lost its core values. Barry Buzan (1991) posited that the concept of security binds together individual, states and the international system so closely that it demands to be treated in a holistic perspective. The quality of the governance of the security sector in the West Africa sub-region should be evaluated against the threats of insecurity facing the sub-region. These include piracy and maritime violence across the Gulf of Guinea, Islamist political violence across the Sahel, the activities of narco-traffickers from some Latin American countries, the proliferation and trafficking in small arms, and the large scale trafficking of persons, especially women and children. Nigeria's security, according to Ikenna (2013), is therefore inexorably linked to a more secure Africa, a continent that is peaceful and prosperous, a continent that is respected and courted, not just for its previous contributions to world civilisation but to the advancement of mankind in the 21st Century and beyond.

Thus, Nigeria could be appropriately considered a driver of security policy in West Africa. For instance, Adedeji (2010) argues Nigeria has structured defence system, the size, experience and logistic resources to serve as the core of an ECOWAS rapid deployment force in the sub-region. The role in this regard is quite broad, including conflict resolution through peace-keeping and peace support operations and mediation of political crises in the sub-region. However, considering all the problems facing West African states, there is a need to establish a security regime in the area if the sub-region and the component states are to develop. Previous

studies on Nigeria's role in sub-regional security focused exclusively on Nigeria's participation in peace keeping operations in the sub-region with less attention given to democratic dispensation. For example, there are extensive studies on the role Nigeria played in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It is against this background that this study attempts to explore the most important gap which is to unearth rather investigate the role of Nigeria's democracy in guaranteeing security in West Africa sub-region. Thus, the paper has been collapsed in to sections in such a way that we first undertook the introduction, followed by conceptual understanding, considered the theoretical framework, examine the role of Nigeria in regional security, considered straitening Nigeria democracy to enhance security in west African Sub-Region, look at the conclusion and finally cement the paper with recommendations.

Conceptual Epistemology

Democracy

Democracy has become the most fashionable form of governance in the world. In all societies of the world today, the issue is not which political system is appropriate but rather when will society become democratized or fully democratic. The democratization project is therefore, regarded as the age of civilization that every society should strive to attain rather than a political option among many others Osaghae (2010). Democracy has thus been recognized as the only moral and legitimate way through which a society can be administered. Ogundiya (2010) defines democracy to mean a political system in which the... most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote. In contemporary times, democracy has turned out to be a most cherished political system that has attained near global acclaim and admiration by leaders in our contemporary world. The reasons for this are varied.

First, democracy has gained acceptability as a form of government based on equity and justice. Secondly, democracy is greatly extolled for its emphasis on popular will which in itself, is a source of legitimacy to governments. It purports to uphold the rule of law as well as guarantee the preservation of human and peoples' rights. Democracy is also assumed to facilitate development since it integrates popular aspirations in public policies. Thus, Francis (2006) argues that democracy with its inbuilt principle of accountability, leads to responsible use of public resources and as such, high level of development. This view is shared by Ake (1996) who maintains that democracy is not only desirable in itself but because it can greatly facilitate development. Diamond and Morlino (1999) defined a set of indicators to assess the quality of democracy. They define "quality" democracy to be "one that provides its citizens a high degree of freedom, political equality and popular control over public policies and policy makers through the legitimate and lawful functioning of stable institutions. There are guiding principles of democracy. Such principles include those of justice, equity, freedom, liberty, accountability, openness and transparency in government. Indeed, effective democratic forms of governance rely on

public participation, accountability and transparency. In most countries today, it is these principles that are used as criteria for distinguishing between good and bad governments. In this regard, democracy not only prescribes how political power should be acquired but also what to do with it or how it should be exercised.

Governance

Governance encapsulates the proper management of state institutions and structures to enhance socio-economic and political transformation of society. It is expected that the state will practice and promote the core values of constitutionalism, respect for the rule of law and human rights, popular participation, accountability and transparency, and probity in the management of people and resources. The governance process consists the social bond existing between the government and the governed, and its capacity to enhance popular trust and galvanize popular participation in the political system is strong (Egwu, 2006; Adejumobi, 2004). It is important to stress that while the governance framework consolidates the values of liberal democracy, it nevertheless reinforces the neoliberal agenda of reducing the role of the state in socio-economic development (Adejumobi, 2004).

Concept of Security

Generally, security is seen as freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect or defend itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people, Held (1993). However, Heiner (2007) shows that in modernizing society, security means development. It is not military force, though it may involve it. Security is not traditional military activities, though it may encompass it, neither is it military hardware, though it may include it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security. This perspective emphasizes human security. It implies the maturation of the structures and processes that can engender and guarantee political space and sufficient conditions for the realization of personal, group and/or national aspirations. Security for a nation is its ability to feel secured against threats that could undermine its stability or threaten its survival (Ciro 1992). It is the basic requirement for survival as an independent nation-state in international politics. During the nuclear age, security policies focused on the physical survival of the state (Mark 1992). Security for a nation is its ability to feel secured against threats that could undermine its stability or threaten its survival (Ciro 1992). It is the basic requirement for survival as an independent nation-state in international politics. During the nuclear age, security policies focused on the physical survival of the state. It was assumed that security policies were anchored in rational assessments by knowledgeable analysts and that clearly defined threats could be identified and appropriate strategies developed to counter them.

According to Francis (2007:22) security is generally about the condition or feeling of safe from harm or danger, the defence, protection and preservation of core values and the absence of threat to acquire values. Abutudu (2005) notes that the traditional conception of security is generally structured around the state, the defence and preservation of its

sovereignty and territorial integrity. The key assumptions that figure out from this conception emplace first, states as unitary actors, the object to be secured is the nation state; second, threats to them stem from external military attacks; and third, other states are the primary if not the sole sources of these threats (Khosla (1992).

It must be emphasized that security is a relational phenomenon; as a result, one cannot understand the national security of any given state without understanding the international pattern of security interdependence in which it is embedded (Buzan (1999). In his analysis of regional security and how it affects the concept of security as a whole, Buzan offers several interesting and important concepts. The first is that of 'amity and enmity among states. In other words, relationship between states that can represent a spectrum from friendship or alliances to those marked by fear. According to Buzan, the concepts of amity and enmity cannot be attributed solely to the balance of power. The issues that can affect these feelings range from things such as ideology, territory, ethnic lines and historical precedent. This is important to understand as the concept of amity/enmity leads to the idea of what Buzan refers to as 'security complex' which is a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another.

The above takes into consideration a security complex that is at odds as well one that is unified under shared interest. The ideas of regional security and security complexes are important as every state can put its security in relation to at least one complex. For instance, Israel security is tied to Middle East and vice-versa. The same works for the daily security of the Palestinians which is dependent on the Israel politics of security. This brings to the fore the most important point about regional security: the fact that regional security is a part of the hierarchy of the security problem, sitting between domestic and global security cannot be left out of the puzzle. The consequences of not taking regional security into consideration could be disastrous for any state that chooses to do so. This is more reason why Nigeria is playing big brother role in Africa, particularly in West Africa sub-region.

Theoretical Explication

The Regional Security Complex Theory

In this work, we employ the regional security complex theory. This was developed at the Copenhagen School of security studies in the wake of the post-Cold war security environment. It emphasizes the territoriality of security whereby not only the state but also its immediate neighbours are concerned by its security (Mark, 2006). The Regional Security Complex Theory argues that despite the undeniable strong influence of world powers over weaker states, the security realm has a local level that cannot be overlooked. The central idea in RSCT is that, since most threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones, security interdependence is normally patterned into regionally based clusters: security complexes. Security complexes may well be extensively penetrated by the global powers, but their regional dynamics nonetheless have a substantial degree of autonomy from the patterns set by the

global powers. To paint a proper portrait of global security, one need to understand both of these levels independently, as well as the interaction between them. (Mark, 2006). The RSCT acknowledges that there is multiplicity of factors that may influence a security situation besides the influence of world powers. Buzan and Waever (1999) argue that there are three theoretical perspectives in the post-Cold War security order": the neorealist perspective that is state-centric and emphasize power polarity. The globalist one is rooted in globalisation understanding. Finally, the regionalist perspective posits that the regional level is the locus of conflict and cooperation" between states.

The RSCT provides an understanding of the West African sub regional security mechanism in response to the post-Cold War security environment (Igwe, 2010). The main advantage of the regionalist approach to security is the differentiation of levels of analysis that it allows. The approach permits the distinction between the global, the inter-regional and the regional levels and in so doing, provides due attention to each one of them in the ways it influences the security dynamic. The RSCT has the merits of emphasizing that despite the overwhelming influence of global powers, the regional level is not just an arbitrary and purely analytical" category but a real level of securitization/de-securitization (Hyden 2002), p. 198). The theory also delves on the broad understanding of security as more than just its military aspect.

Nigeria and Regional Security Policy

According to Eze (2010), security policy deals with the broad issues of the management of the multiple threats to the core and context-specific values in the international system. It is in this context that the national security policy of Nigeria provides the framework with which the calculation of instrumental responses (military, economic, social, health, etc.) to these multiple threats must proceed. Like most members of the UN, Nigeria subscribes to the ideals of "collective security" at the global, continental and sub-regional levels. Accordingly, Nigeria believes that West African security can only be guaranteed by policies of cooperation, economic integration and adoption of consensus Adebajo (2004). However, considering all the problems facing West African states, there is a need to establish a security regime in the area if the sub-region and the component states are to develop. Importantly, a hegemon is required to propel the security regime and Nigeria fits into that description Adejumbi (2010). Nigerian's ambition to be the leader of Africa has driven the idea to concentrate on the defence of the physical territory from external aggression or intervention in the nation's affairs and invariably implies huge investment in developing appropriate military capability. The consequence is the aggressive investment and modernization to improve the nation's military power including composition, equipment, leadership and doctrine. The main features of Nigeria's West African policy both from the African Centre-piece perspective and the Concentric Circle model and Beneficial Concentricism are as follows:

- Anti-colonialism, anti-apartheid and anti-racism;
- Cooperation with immediate neighbours;
- Cooperation with other ECOWAS states;

- Promotion of peace and security in the sub-region and across the world.

The 1999 Constitution, in Section 19, projects a dynamic foreign policy for Nigeria, through the promotion of economic development, integration and unity, peace and security in Africa and the world. Accordingly, Nigeria's involvement in West African security affairs and any role it might have played in the past few decades have been the result of strongly help opinion by its successive leaderships, generally a role about the nation's responsibility for Africa, and which the public has come to accept, even though with reservation over the years. This was the basis for Babangida's famous declaration in a 1985 speech, as quoted by Khosla (1992) that "Africa's problems and their solution, should constitute the premise of Nigeria's foreign policy.

Thus, Nigeria could be appropriately considered a driver of security policy in West Africa. As argued by Adedeji (2010), the loosely structured defence system, for which only Nigeria has the size, experience and logistic resources to serve as the core of an ECOWAS rapid deployment force. The role in this regard is quite broad, including conflict resolution through peace-keeping and peace support operations and mediation of political crises in the sub-region. However, the establishment of ECOWAS remains one of the greatest achievements of Nigerian diplomacy up till 1990 and has remained the embodiment of "Pax Nigeriana" Adebajo (2004). Equally significant is the fact that Nigeria's critical role in the establishment of ECOMOG and in ensuring its effectiveness during many interventions has become a good example and paradigm for other sub-regional organizations and regional leaders.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's role in sub-regional security is highly personalized, driven by the President rather than a well-articulated strategic vision. This is a phenomenon which started under the Babangida military regime and its policy on the Liberian conflict. The tendency still continued under the democratically elected regime of President Obasanjo, Yar Adua, Jonathan and the current serving president Buhari who put there personal stamp on foreign policy as well as on defence and security policy. Nigeria's leadership role in the sub-regional security policy could be seen through its peace-keeping and peace-support, peace-building and mediation activities; and through efforts aimed at curbing cross-border criminal activities, piracy; consolidation of democratic rule and support for economic development, and importantly, through the strategic security training it offers to the armed forces of many member states of ECOWAS.

The major conflicts which have occurred in West Africa in the last two decades or so in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, Burkina Faso were all caused by the rule of impunity, marginalization, abuse of human rights, widespread corruption and a host of other anti-democratic behaviour of the political leaderships all tending towards personalized autocratic rule which became a trigger for violence and ethnic favouritism that alienated and threatened certain groups in the process Adebajo (2004). The shift from a pure economic cooperation as willed by the ECOWAS founders in 1975 to the security cooperation prompted by the

Liberian crisis has been significant for the region. ECOWAS has become at the same time an economic and a security community Lewis (2011). Nigeria recognized that the key to sub-regional peace was the full flowering of democracy in West Africa. The link between democracy and security has been well established. To achieve this goal of a democratic West Africa, the nation, still struggling with its own democracy project has had to lend a hand to other ECOWAS states, providing electoral assistance and other requirements of democratic consolidation to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Niger and others.

The foregoing explains why Nigeria under the military dictatorship of Abacha, could invest so much in restoring democratic rule to Sierra Leone. Nigeria has been responding to the crises of democracy in West Africa. This is because Nigerian leaders saw the noble role the country was playing in ending conflict and war in the sub-region as a way of re-asserting its influence and showing its indispensability which it hoped might persuade the international community to end Nigeria's isolation.

According to Osaghae (2010), the strategy worked fairly well in order to show the international community, initially reluctant to get involved in the complex West African conflicts that, no matter how bad the situation was in Nigeria, its role in West Africa and Africa could not be ignored. For instance, in 1998, Nigerian troops removed the Major John Koroma led junta to return the democratically elected regime of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to power in Sierra Leone. It was Nigeria which proposed the motion on the ECOWAS Protocol on Unconstitutional Change of Government which was adopted in 2000 and eventually led to the resolution by ECOWAS to reject any unconstitutional change of government, which became a key part of the Protocol on Good Governance and more elaborately developed in the ECPF of 2008.

Nigeria's Security Role in West Africa Sub-Region Under Democratic Regime

At the first session of the ECOWAS standing mediation committee in Banjul from 7 -8 August 1990 it was resolved that a cease fire monitoring group should be established to create the necessary conditions for normal life to resume to the benefit of all Liberians. The MAD, which was adopted in 1981, did not however foresee the activation of the agreement in intra state role. Article 4 of the Protocol states that 'in a conflict between members states, the Authority of ECOWAS shall decide to send the Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC) to interpose between the troops engaged in the conflict'. This provision clearly concern inter-state conflicts. In fact, Article 18 (2) states that the "community force shall not intervene if the conflict remains purely internal since the essence of the Protocol is to provide for regional security and not to threaten the security of the region'. The proviso was a hangover of the obsession by the immediate post-independence African leaders for non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. It did not consider the spill-over effect of conflicts nor was it concerned with the not-too-precise demarcation between internal and external conflicts Huntington (1991). In the Liberian case, one of the parties that opposed the defacto government raised and trained its forces

from outside; was maintaining the troops from outside; and getting external support for the prosecution of the war Mark (2006).

Furthermore, National Patriotic Forces of Liberia drew its strength from one of the trans-border tribes and was indeed said to be in alliance with the Revolutionary United Forces of Sierra Leone, which it later went to assist in its own struggle against the government forces of that country. More-over, several nationalities were trapped by the war in Liberia and their safety was raising tension in many countries. In the light of these facts, it was easy for the protagonist of the intervention to justify their decision, just as the antagonist held on to the non-interference clause. At its inception, ECOMOG drew forces from only five out of sixteen member states. These are Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. Of the initial 6,000 man force, Nigeria contributed 3,500 and Ghana 2,000 with the others sending in token contingents. Apparently and in order to allay fears of Nigeria's domineering posture, the position of forces commander was ceded to Ghana, Guinea nominated the Deputy Commander and Nigeria filled the position of Chief of Staff. Later development compelled Nigeria not only to build up its force disproportionately to other contingents but also to take over the command in conformity with military tradition, where the largest contributor of combat forces provides the commander.

One main feature of ECOMOG was that rather than the community, it was the participating countries that were to meet the financial burden of the operations. The francophone countries were reluctant to bear the cost, which indeed explained why only Guinea and Mali later participated. Nigeria paid the price including the supreme sacrifice of her 480 troops to bring peace to troubled Liberia Osaghae (2010). The gesture was extended to Sierra Leone when in 1997 the democratically elected government of President Kabbah was overthrown by the Major Koromah led junta. The Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG was tasked to restore peace and democracy to that country. Again it took the sweat, blood and finances of Nigerians to create a basis of orderly governance in Sierra Leone, before the United Nations got cajoled by its Secretary General to at least relieve Nigeria of the financial burden. Even when ECOMOG gave way to the United Nations peacekeepers, four Nigerian battalions had to stay back and are still in Sierra Leone to carry on the yeoman's job of disarming the combatants.

At the expense of being termed immodest, let me assert that, till today, it takes the Nigerian contingent to garrison the various flash-points and that no disarmament takes place until the Nigerian soldiers are there. Participating in ECOMOG for Nigeria is a continuation of the country's Afrocentric foreign policy Lijphart (1999). Indeed, "Nigeria has pursued the creation of regional and sub-regional organizations as a means of pooling efforts and resources for the achievement of enduring political and economic goals. Nigeria rightly believes that West Africa's instability is a function of poverty and underdevelopment. But in solving what appear purely political and economic problems, the physical challenges also have to be addressed. Whenever Nigeria makes calculated political, social, economic and military gestures to individual states or groups of states in West Africa, she is ipso facto addressing

the security problems of the sub-region. Within the West African sub-region, Nigeria has sought to manage the inter-state relations under the framework of the ECOWAS and other bilateral arrangements with its immediate neighbours. In this connection, it has made the promotion of peace and security the primary consideration, based on the conviction that economic development and regional integration cannot be superimposed on an unstable region.

Nigeria's role in conflict prevention and resolution is not limited to the West African sub-region alone; it extends to other sub-regions of Africa. Nigeria's contribution to the liberation/independence of many African countries and to the end of apartheid in South Africa was widely acknowledged within and outside the continent. The country affirms that a threat to peace anywhere in Africa is a threat to peace everywhere on the continent." By extension, any African nation at war and in distress is also a threat to world peace and security. Nigeria holds the view that Africa cannot meet the challenges of poverty reduction and the elimination of diseases, unless there is peace and security in Africa; hence her commitment in resolving the conflict in Darfur, Sudan. Nigeria has played a prominent role in the West African sub-region through the commitment of its substantial military capacity, notably in supplying the leadership and the majority of troops for ECOMOG, the ECOWAS-sponsored peace keeping force in Liberia. That operation was viewed as success, with armed conflict halted and elections held.

Strengthening Nigeria's democracy to enhance security in West Africa sub-region?

Democracy is today considered as the most desirable form of government and man's best idea on earth for governance. Democracy provides a veritable platform for the entrenchment and consolidation of good governance through institutional arrangements citizens' participation. There are myriads of challenges facing Nigeria's democracy. Good governance becomes very fundamental and imperative when viewed against the backdrop of massive deterioration of government institutions, pervasive poverty and widespread unemployment, corruption, as well as the near total collapse of moral and ethical standards engendered by nearly three decades of military rule in the country, which saw governance capacity weakened at all levels Egwu (2006). Corruption, misappropriation of funds, high handedness remains a big challenge facing Nigeria's democracy. Money meant for developmental projects ended up in private pockets.

It is noteworthy that corruption impedes economic growth and erodes government credibility and the efficient functioning of state institutions. Corruption is often responsible for increased costs of goods and services, the funneling of scarce public resources to uneconomic high profile projects at the expense of the much needed projects such as schools, hospitals and roads, or the supply of potable water, diversion and misallocation of resources, conversion of public wealth to private and personal property, inflation, imbalanced economic development (FGDs). Nigeria democracy has been bedeviled with several challenges including electoral malpractices, political ineptitude and corruption, political thuggery, lack of transparency and accountability, political killings and

maiming, lack of core values of democracy such as freedom, equality, rule of law and popular sovereignty among others Ogundiya (2010).

In response to these challenges, governments in Nigeria made laws that will help in achieving effective governance through the fight against corruption and establishment of democratic governance. Perhaps, the greatest contemporary challenge to national security in Nigeria is the insurgency orchestrated by the sect called Boko Haram. In other words, the Boko Haram insurgents have become the most serious problem facing Nigeria today. The insurgents have pushed further the polarization of the fragile political unity and pushed up the existing suspicion and distrust between the north and south Igwe (2010). The sect active gnawing at the religious, ethnic and regional fault lines of Nigeria not only threatened the country's peace and unity, but holds serious transnational implications. It seems from all indications that the Boko Haram sect is winning the war despite the emergency rule declared by federal government. Hardly a day passes that the sect would not strike. The consequence of their strike always accomplished by scores of people dead. It is quite unfortunate that the faith of Chibok Secondary school girls adopted is yet to be known though the government of Mohammad Buhari is making ways to recover the girls by diplomatic tact.

Conclusion

This study has shown that Nigeria has been able to play a defining role in the security policy of West Africa because it possesses all the attributes of a regional leader (population, national endowment, financial resources and military capabilities), which put it ahead of other nations in the sub-region. Furthermore, it has provided leadership inside ECOWAS in critical situations. There is no doubt that democratic governance by the platform of participation, consultation, consensus building, minority rights, human rights, equity and justice, rule of law that it creates is a fertile base for growing national security. The citizens within democratic governance framework are involved, mobilized, contented, supportive, cooperative and compliant with laws and policy. These facilitate societal cohesion, national stability, national security and national development. The lack of Good Governance has been recognized as a major source of security challenges that ECOWAS states are being confronted with. Accordingly, while conventional security measures should continue to be improved upon, new frameworks ought to be developed to address the changing character of security challenges, particularly to human security. The civilian political leadership should also be more engaged strategically and meaningfully in the defence and security issues, while more serious efforts should be made towards improving inter-agency co-operation and co-ordination for success in a world increasingly challenged by insecurity.

Recommendations

Democracy whether liberal or African or modern includes fundamental recognition of popular sovereignty, equal opportunity for all, majority rule, representativeness, minority rights, right of choice between alternative programmes, popular consultation, consensus on fundamental issues and

more essentially periodic elections. The leadership of African nations should be re-orientated on the need to see themselves as “servant leaders” and not as “rulers. Instead of being instrumental leaders, they should act as societal leaders. To this end, the electoral process should be designed to discourage undesirable elements and people of questionable character from contesting elections, electioneering campaigns must not be based nor be predicated on the social/financial status or the ethnic affiliations of candidates. ECOWAS should establish institutional frameworks to ensure that member states adhere strictly to the guidelines for good governance as enshrined in its Protocol.

That is, there should be prompt and effective implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol to concretize respect for citizen’s right, foster human dignity and true democracy; and creation of dynamism with ECOWAS to institute and document a periodical filling/reports of the level of implementation of ratified treaties and convention by member states. There should be proactive efforts by ECOWAS to institute enabling mechanism for conflict prevention and peace-building across the region; increased transparency and accountability by regional leaders; and bottom-up approach to regional development through prioritized efforts towards grass root empowerment. ECOWAS should be more involved in the democratic processes of member-countries and political processes in the region should be carefully assessed by electoral bodies, civil society organizations and the ECOWAS Commission in a bid to ensure regional stability. There is a continuing need for the enhancement of the capacity of ECOWAS to inform and contribute to security in member states. This translates into an enhanced capacity for the implementation of the ECOWAS Mechanism.

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