

**BORDER, INSURGENCY AND NATIONAL SECURITY: A STUDY OF FULANI HERDSMEN
TRANSVERSING CHAD AND NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This paper examines the implications of the porousness of the Nigerian borders on national security. Despite the efforts of border security agencies in Nigeria to keep the borders safe, the country's borders are porous, allowing all sorts of cross-border criminal activities such as illegal migration, terrorism, and insurgency. Against this backdrop, this study examines the Fulani herdsmen and their attacks on some farming communities in Nigeria: Does the porosity of the Nigerian borders which give access to countless illegal migrants including herdsmen from Chad undermine Nigeria's national security? Relying on the fragile state approach as a theoretical guide, the study investigates the security challenges posed by trans-border activities of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria. Data were gathered from secondary sources and textual analysis was used in analysing data. The study finds that the spate of trans-border activities of the Fulani herdsmen like destruction of farm produce and killing of innocent indigenes is a threat to national security in Nigeria. Among others, the study recommends the need for effective border monitoring to prevent illegal immigrants from undermining Nigeria's security.

Keywords: Border, Insurgency, National Security, Herdsmen, Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria has more than half of the population that makes up West Africa; the inhabitants of West Africa are people of common history, traditions and customs that were separated by boundaries during the colonization of Africa and turned the former system to modern state system. For example, the Hausa and Fulani people are present in Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal and Mali; the Yoruba people can also be found in Nigeria, Togo and Benin Republic. Due to the recent high surge of trans-border crimes which have become a threat to the national security of Nigeria, it is important to look into what can be done to reduce the number of trans-border crimes and to secure the borders of the country thereby ensuring the national security of the country (Okeke, 2014).

National security, territorial integrity and sovereignty are topmost concerns of any nation and its citizens. Independent nations therefore have distinct and noticeably demarcated boundaries; they have independent governments and are legally capable of conducting international relations outside their own borders. One of the most important characteristics of an independent and sovereign nation is having boundaries i.e. borders. It can therefore be implied that the failure of an independent nation to secure its borders is equal to failure to protect its national security.

Mangold (1990:2) sees security as a pre-condition for an orderly existence of humans by citing Thomas Hobbes notion that states were found to defend the people "from the invasion of foreigners and the injuries of one to another, and thereby to secure them. Nwozor (2013) is of the opinion that Security is a condition where our most prized values and beliefs, our welfare and well-being as a nation and people are permanently protected.

According to the 1996 definition propagated by the National Defence College of India; National security is an appropriate and aggressive blend of political resilience and maturity, human resources, economic structure and capacity, technological competence, industrial base and availability of natural resources, and finally military might (National Defense College, 1996 cited in Ayodele, 2004; 3).

One of the major ways for a country to ensure national security is by having clear cut and secure borders. Borders can be seen as human practices that institute and characterize differences in space (Houtum, Kramsch & Zierhofer, 2005).

This study will be premised on a definition given to national security in Nigeria by Babangida (1982: 13) According to him, threat to security is anything that has the ability to undermine the security of our nation and also constitute danger to the sovereignty of the land, territorial integrity and its social, economic and political system.

Recently, Nigeria has experienced myriads of crisis and insecurity which has led to loss of lives and destruction of properties. Most of these crises have been attributed to insurgency in the country. Socioeconomic disparities, prejudice, exploitation, tribal bigotry and religious fanaticism make up some of the evils which have developed into fanatical movements demanding drastic change these can be called insurgencies. Insurgencies, and the terrorism that accompanies them, have become the order of the day therefore posing difficulties that threaten political and social stability. The danger when dealing with them is that if these insurgencies are incorrectly opposed by the State, they can develop into full terrorism.

In spite of the border security agencies in Nigeria, most times the borders of the country are defined as being porous because all kinds of criminals, illegal immigrants, insurgents and terrorist come into the country freely thereby increasing the rate of crimes in the country. Therefore, another aspect that is of concern in this study is determining if the free access into the country is responsible for the current issue that is being experienced with the Fulani herdsmen and if it is serious enough to affect the national security of the country. The study goes ahead to explore the implication of the Fulani herdsmen activities on the national security of Nigeria.

The threat facing Nigeria presently is neither from a military group with well-trained personnel nor the parties involved on a level playing ground, the threat to Nigeria is rather posed by a faceless set of insurgents. It is therefore clear that even when the territorial integrity of a state is preserved, insurgents can arise from within the state and this is a threat to the national security of the state.

Clashes between farmers and herdsmen have become a common part of economic livelihood in West Africa (Tonah, 2006). The recent attacks on people especially farmers by the Fulani herdsmen have been on a steady rise with recent attacks like the February 4th 2018 attack which happened in Song Local Government Area of Adamawa State, where 5 villages were completely burnt down and about 10 lives were lost (Umar, 2018). Focus is placed on this threat to national security because it is an ongoing phenomenon also the perpetrators seem to be undaunted and because the real reason behind their constant attacks is not very clear. Although many were of the opinion that it is farming, water and grazing land dispute, with the farmers accusing the herdsmen of destroying their crops and the other party accuses the farmers of trying to steal their cattle.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is rooted in the Fragile State Theory. The major proponents of this theory are Daniel Thurer and Patrick Show; According to Show (2007: 644-662) fragile state, refers to a state that is unsuccessful in fulfilling some sort of basic responsibility to its citizens as a sovereign government. To him, a failed state is:

A state whose social, political and economic institutions are unsuccessful i.e. the standard of living is low, poor moral standards and a generally depraved state. . The central government of such a state is so frail or all together useless that it has little or no real control over a lot of its territory including its borders. Due to the depraved nature of the state, it finds it hard to provide public utilities or services, decent jobs are therefore hard to find even by qualified candidates and this leads to widespread criminality and corruption in various institutions of the state. Finally, the state is confronted with cases of refugees and involuntary movement of populations and sharp economic decline.

The usefulness of the Fragile State framework in this study of National security as it concerns the Fulani herdsmen cannot be overemphasized. The incompetence of the country to contain the incessant threats to her national security by the Fulani herdsmen and the failure to use legitimate force to defend her citizens, her sovereignty and borders has put Nigeria in the condition of being a fragile state. It should be noted that

threat to lives and properties reverberates to all other aspects of human survival like the economy, health, psychological wellbeing etc. it is therefore safe to say that when a country is at the peak of insecurity, poverty will be multiplied as the means of livelihood of many will be abandoned to seek safe havens.

This study therefore analysis how the national security of Nigeria is undermined by the movement of the Fulani herdsmen and what steps can be taken to reverse the situation of Nigeria being a fragile state.

Causes of the Movements and Drivers of the Violence

Chad borders Nigeria in the Northeast. It is the fifth largest country in Africa in terms of land area and is therefore not a surprise that it was a choice area for the settlement of Fulani herdsmen since they need large expanse of land for their cattle to roam and graze. The different regions of the country have made it suitable for the rearing of cattle and camels over the years. However with a turn of events which started from the 20th century, like climate change which brought about desertification and drought, the cattle rearers have had to move for the purpose of locating more convenient areas to rear their livestock. There have therefore been mass movements by cattle rearers from Chad to neighboring countries, including Nigeria to seek better options for their cattle (Tenuche & Ifatimehin, 2009)

Looking back at the history of the Fulani cattle rearers, one would discover that for centuries, herders have reared their cattle across the Sahel and the South of the Sahara desert which includes Nigeria's far north. However, in the 20th centuries the herds had to begin to move farther down South due to drought. Famine was also being dealt with so more land was being put into use. It should be added here that the herders were also being attracted by the state of high security that was obtainable in the southern and central Nigeria and also the grasp they had when it came to controlling parasitic diseases (like trypanomiasis or sleeping sickness) which was dangerous to the cattle (Blench, 1994). The herders were also striving to escape payment of the cattle tax (Jangali) which was imposed on them by the British colonial government in the North (Blench, 1994) As cattle herds drifted towards the south, so did the conflicts also emerge between the herders and the farmers. One of the key drivers and behind this intensifying conflict are climatic changes (numerous famines and desertification); population growth which caused the loss of most northern grazing lands to the expansion of human settlements; technological (new livestock and farming practices) and economic changes; crimes like rural thieving and cattle rustling; political and racial conflict (deepened by the spread of unlawful weapons); and cultural changes (the breakdown of customary conflict control mechanisms). Finally, a dysfunctional legal administration that permits crime with impunity has stimulated both farmers and pastoralists to take matters into their own hands.

Border and the Fulani Herdsmen

The persistent cases of illegal movements of persons through the borders, some of whom are suspected to be Fulani herdsmen migrating from neighbouring countries especially Chad can be said to be as a result of the porous character of the country's borders. The porosity of the borders is partly caused by the ECOWAS protocol on free movement which gives those living in any ECOWAS member state the opportunity to move freely in all ECOWAS states. These movements however, are now a major source of concern in the country as serious cases of crimes and cases of insecurity can be traced to the easy entry of people into the country (Garuba, 2010). The movement of individuals is commonly untracked in most of the borders in the country and this has become quite worrisome in the light of the present security issues unfolding in Nigeria. This is especially a cause of concern in the northern part of the country because those that come in through the borders there i.e. Niger and Chad are majorly Hausa speaking people so it becomes difficult to keep track of them once they have successfully crossed the border (Garuba, 2010). The ease of access at the border also makes it quite easy for illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons (Ibrahim, 2015) which in turn makes it easy for the Fulani herdsmen especially those from other countries like Chad and Niger to gain cheap access to weapons (Hazen & Horner, 2007), Adebola (2008) also support the views of other scholars that the porous nature of the border has caused unwanted influx of migrants from neighboring countries and the combination of both the illegal migrants and the proliferation of weapons has worsened the security issues in Nigeria.

Fulani Herdsmen and Communal Conflicts

Herdsmen activities occur most in the middle-belt of Nigeria and especially in Benue state. The case of the Fulani herdsmen in Benue state has been the most disastrous in Nigeria as it has claimed many lives and

many properties have been destroyed by their activities. Local governments in Benue like Agatu, Guma, Gwer West, Makurdi, Kwande, Katsina-Ala and Loggo. The violence of the Fulani in Benue has claimed hundreds of lives since 2014 and the most recent clash left about 73 people dead (Abdulfatai, 2018). They have also sacked over 80 communities and families have been thrown out making them refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in camps in Makurdi. According to New Telegraph (2018) citing from an interview with an officer from Amnesty International, at least 168 persons have died at the hands of Fulani herdsmen in 2018 alone. Earlier in 2014, more than 200 people were killed with a strange poisonous substance that seemed like a bio-chemical weapon in the Shengev community in Gwer West Local Government Council of Benue State (Ugbechie 2016, Akevi 2014). In March 2016, more than 500 lives were lost when 10 communities in the Agatu Local Government Area were totally razed down by the Fulani herdsmen, the then Senate President David Mark is quoted to have said “Genocide against my people” (Ugbechie, 2016). The weapons used by the herdsmen are not always the regular ones like AK47s they sometimes use more sophisticated weapons like they used in 2014 so it is clear that this insurgents are combat ready. An instance of the Fulani herdsmen being combat ready was when they attacked the convoy of the former governor of Benue state Gabriel Suswan when he was returning from paying condolence visits to the victims in Tse-Akanyi village in Guma Local Government Area over the attacks by the same Fulani herdsmen (Durojaiye, 2014). The high casualty that is linked with these people have drawn the attention of Human Rights Watch and according to them, as at December 2014, the clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers in Benue state had caused the death of about 3000 people between 2010 and 2014 [Abrak 2015].

It is however not only in Benue State that the Fulani herdsmen are constituting a threat, Taraba state a state that shares border with Benue state is also being afflicted by the Fulani herdsmen

The southern part of Taraba state has experienced unprecedented and sudden influx of Fulani herdsmen in their communities and the relationship between the natives and the Fulani has been quite tense because of the unnecessary violence of the Fulani herdsmen which has caused countless deaths and destruction of properties making land owners run for their lives in search of safer havens. In 2014, the Wukari area of Taraba, witnessed a lot of horrific murders and terrible destruction of properties 77 people lost their lives during the crises (Ahima, 2014). Recently, in January this year, about 55 people were killed in Lau Local Government Area of Taraba State and over 200 homes were destroyed and people were rendered homeless. (Ihyongo, 2018)

Still in the Northern part of the country, Kaduna and Zamfara states are not left out in the abysmal activity of the Fulani herdsmen since 2014 till recently, there have been a number of killings in these states that have been traced to the Fulani herdsmen. In 2014, over 100 people were killed in Southern Kaduna and fingers were pointed at the Fulani herdsmen (Shiklam, 2014) However in January this year, No fewer than ten persons were killed on the 12th as Fulani herdsmen attacked two villages in the Birnin-Gwari Local Government of Kaduna State, and the killings have continued almost on a daily basis in kaduna (Iroanus, 2018).

The eastern part of the country has also experienced the gruesomeness and brutality of the Fulani herdsmen as it concerns communal conflicts. Between 2015 and 2016, the normal routine of the herdsmen leaving their cattle to destroy farmlands rendering both food crops and cash crops useless and refusing to take responsibility but instead becoming violent was repeated time and again in Enugu state. This led to various conflicts in the host communities and by extension a state of insecurity because the Fulani herdsmen are very well armed. A case for study is the Ezeagu Local Government Area of Enugu State which comprised of over 40 communities, the antagonism and violent activities of Fulani herdsmen succeeded in crushing agricultural and economic activities in the affected communities during the period of 2016 (Mamah, 2016). The superior arms brandished by the invading herdsmen scared off the local vigilante group. According to Vande-Acka (2014) some of those that have been captured by the herdsmen paint the picture of an aura of mystery around the herdsmen; these captured men were physically sturdy and well-armed community warriors. The Fulani herdsmen are known to survive the encounters at different communities they migrate to for purposes of pasturing their herds through carrying of pocket knives and sometimes charms.

There has not been any serious case of attacks by the Fulani herdsmen in the western part of Nigeria. Precautions are however being taken to keep the Fulani herdsmen orderly. In Ekiti state for example, the governor Ayodele Fayose has banned all activities of the herdsmen and in Osun state, the governor Rauf Aregbesola has also taken precautions by creating an association for the Fulani herdsmen and the farmers in the state and the two parties have reached an agreement not to overstep their boundaries and when there is a breach of agreement, the faulty party is compelled to pay for damages. Also any new Fulani herdsmen

entering the state will be taken to the head of the Fulani people in the state to register and become a part of the association of herdsmen/farmers or be forced to leave. (Daramola, 2018)

Implications of Fulani Herdsmen Attacks on Nigeria's National Security

Tens of thousands also have been displaced from their homes between January 2015 to February 2017, at least 62,000 people were rendered homeless in Kaduna, Benue and Plateau states; and since there are limited camps for IDPs, most seek shelter in other poor, rural communities, draining their previously scarce resources (Humanitarian Needs Assessment Organization, 2017: p13).

The help given to those affected by this issue is often less than that given to those affected by Boko Haram, so most of those that survive the attacks are left to rough it out themselves even though their means of livelihood must have been destroyed by the Fulani herdsmen. The impact on women and children is normally magnified because they are weaker and easier to terrorize and attack, even if the women are not attacked but they lose their husbands to this conflict, more often than not, the relatives of the husband drives the woman away from the farmland and takes it over so whether directly, or indirectly, the woman is always affected by this insurgents (Mercy Corps, 2015).

In the aspect of economy, the implications have also been enormous, according to a study carried out in 2015, it was discovered that the government of Nigeria loses about \$13.7 billion in income yearly because of herder-farmer clashes in Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa and Plateau states (Mercy Corps, 2015) it was also found that on average these four states Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa and Plateau state lose 47 per cent of their internally-generated incomes. In 2017 March, the governor of Benue state stressed that the herdsmen who he suspected to be coming from the northern borders of the country, Niger and Chad had cost his state N95 billion (about \$634 million then) between 2012 and 2014 (The Nation, 2017 n.p.)

Finally, another implication of the Fulani herdsmen attacks is that it is beginning to heighten the already existing inter-faith distrust being experienced in the country meanwhile it is not a religious scuffle as the Sultan of Sokoto, Mohammed Sa'ad Abubakar III, religious head of the Nigerian Muslims and a widely acclaimed Fulani, has continually stressed that Fulani herdsmen who execute people should be indicted as felons and even terror (Daily Trust, 2016). But many citizens are not convinced that it is not religion based because of the deep seated religious rivalry already evident in the country.

Conclusion

The security issue of Nigeria is now dire and in need of attention, insurgents and illegal immigrants are causing havoc in the country. Operation of the Fulani herdsmen most of whom are suspected to be illegal migrants is widespread and destructive and is therefore posing a great threat to the national security of Nigeria and the stability of the country. This study was therefore conducted to unveil the implications of the Fulani herdsmen activities on the national security of Nigeria. The cause of movement of the Fulani herdsmen is primarily natural and the cause of the conflict between them and indigenes of communities they settle or transverse is the destruction of farm lands, farm produce and the pollution of water by the cattle. The response of the herdsmen to confrontation after their cattle have destroyed properties is what spells insecurity as they respond by attacking the indigenes and in the process killing people, destroying properties and displacing people.

The implications of these activities are a threat to the security of Nigeria, because lives are not safe and loss of means of livelihood means a low standard of living for those affected and it affects the economy of the country. The psychological well-being of the citizens is also affected as they live in constant fear of attacks by Fulani herdsmen.

The study therefore makes recommendations and suggests solutions to the issue of national security which is confronting Nigeria.

Recommendations

The Federal Government should not only make promises to do something about the situation but should actually act by deploying federal security agencies in large numbers to those communities that depend largely on farming especially those that are attacked again and again by the Fulani herdsmen like the Southern Kaduna communities and Benue state. Early warning mechanisms should be put in place and also there should be provision of rapid response systems.

One of the most potent ways to stop these attacks is to curb the influx of illegal weapons into the country most especially automatic rifles by using organizations like National Task Force to watch the border. The federal whistle-blower program on illegal firearms should also be encouraged and information given by informants should be speedily dealt with and leads should be followed up. The government should also

ensure that the identities of the informants are protected to encourage people to report cases that have been noticed. State governments should not relent on efforts that have been put in place to curb illicit weapons in their various states.

The Federal Government's resolve to create grazing colonies around the country for cattle and their herdsmen should not be followed through as it is liable to create indigene settler conflicts around the country and present the country into further security issues. Instead, ranches can be built for the cattle and the herders. The government should respect the local sensitivities concerning cattle wanderings and open grazing, not only in the south but also in areas in the north-central zone where farming is the primarily source of income.

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Table 1: FULANI HERDSMEN: CATALOGUES OF ATTACKS IN NIGERIA FROM 2013-2018

STATES	YEAR, MONTH & DAY	NO OF LIVES LOST	NO OF BURNT HOUSES	SOURCES
Nasarawa	2013//18	16	08	The Vanguard
Benue	2013/06/02	28	66	Thisday Newspaper
Plateau	2013/06/03	03	22	The Punch
Plateau	2013/06/08	16	14	The Nigerian Tribunes
Nasarawa	2013/07/ 07	03	16	Flash newsniger.hotspot.com
Nasarawa	2013/08/ 01	16	37	News Byte
Benue	2013/08/01	16	24	News Byte
Plateau	2013/09/03	12	17	The Nigerian News word
Plateau	2014/06/08	08	11	The Nations
Benue	2016/04/20	19	07	The Sun
Enugu	2016/05/05	Over 100	14	The Vanguard
Imo	2016/05/06	12	06	The Premium Times
Benue	2016/05/23	76	44	Daily Post
Benue	2016/ 07/ 08	34	86	The Vanguard,
Benue	2017/01/24	15		Daily post
Benue	2017/03/02	10		The Vanguard
Benue	2017/03 - 2018/02	Over 130	Over 7 villages burnt	The Punch

Sources: Ikyase & Umara (2016), Nigerian Newspapers Online (2017-2018)