



AFRICAN STRATEGIC SURVEY

Vol. 1, Number 2, June 2018

**CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (CSDS)
AMBROSE ALLI UNIVERSITY
EKPOMA, EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

© Centre for Strategic and Development Studies (CSDS)

Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria

First published 2011

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Vol. 1, Number 2, June 2018

Printed by:

Folasmark Nig. Ent.

114 Forestry Road, By Eben Junction,

Benin City, Edo State.

Tel: 08023397874

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THE STATE OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: THE CHALLENGE FOR THE BUHARI ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

On the 29th May 2015, General Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in as the sixth Democratic elected President of Nigeria. The prospects are high for the Buhari-led administration to tackle several challenges that have stalled economic wealth, sustainable security and overall national development in Nigeria. These challenges include terrorism, violent conflicts, poverty, unemployment and corruption. For President Muhammadu to make a success of his confirmed intentions to bring the desire change that Nigeria needs, he must put in place the right policies, programmes and human resources. This situation is a source of concern among policy makers, scholars, international relations analyst. Owing to the poor state of security in the country, Nigeria is currently losing huge foreign investments. It remains the duty of government to provide an enabling environment for the populace to fulfil her potentials and the absence of this pose a threat in the polity of the country. The paper examines the challenge of National Security under the Buhari Administration and recommended solutions.

Keywords: National Security, Nigeria

Introduction

On March 28, 2015, Nigerians returned to the polls to elect a president for the fourth time since the 1999 democratic transition. Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-present) has lasted far longer than any previous attempt at civilian rule in this country of more than 175 million population encompassing an era of both remarkable and officially surpassed South Africa as the continent's largest economy and worrisome social conflict. After a hard-fought and competitive election, Muhammadu Buhari has become Nigeria's 4th democratically elected president. Observers from around the world have commended Nigeria for the smooth transition between rival political parties. Nigerians, neighbouring countries, and international actors alike are now expectantly watching to see how Nigeria manages the many challenges facing Africa's most populous country and largest economy. Despite its huge resource endowment, majority of its population wallow in abject poverty while unemployment and insecurity is on the increase. Its economic fortune has been dwindling due to a fall in the global price of crude oil. The result is that the country has been caught in-between affluence and affliction.

Writers on Nigeria's political evolution posit that bad leadership is a major factor why Nigeria has been abridged to a giant with clay feet. Against this background, many observers believe that a focused political leader is desperately needed to rescue Nigeria "from the depth of chronic indiscipline, disorder and decadence"(Lukman, 2015). This accounted for the goodwill that greeted the emergence of General Muhammadu Buhari as the sixth democratically elected President of Nigeria in May 2015. Buhari was seen as a leader with firm character, integrity and determination to turn Nigeria around. This article therefore reflects on the security challenges facing President Buhari-led administration. The article is divided into five sections dedicated respectively to Conceptualization, Reality of Nigeria's National Security Status, Security Challenges on the Buhari Administration, Conclusion and way forward.

Conceptualization

Given the tendency for concepts to elicit varying interpretations in discourses like this, Matters of conceptual clarification are apposite not peripheral. Accordingly, we will clarify our usage of the term security in this paper. National security literature and definitions of national security is copious and is still growing (Oche 2005; Okodolor, 2004; Imobighe 1998; Buzan; 1983 Matthew, 1989; Brown, 1977; and McNamara 1968). The proliferation of definitions of national security is essentially because the process of discursively 'securitising vulnerable referent objects (i.e. individual, nation-state or the global system) and defining particular risks, is therefore a political one (Weaver 1995), which usually depends on who is grappling with the subject. It is therefore common to see reference being made to human

security, national security, international security, state security, regime security, corporate security, among others. The conception of national security in this paper identifies with the revisionist thinking on the subject matter (Gambo, 2008; Onuoha, 2007), which sees national security from the point of view of human security. According to Onuoha (2007:4), human security entails:

Freedom from actual and potential threats to human life, safety and survival which may arise as a result of human actions or inactions, or from natural disaster such as flood, earthquake, famine, drought, disease and other non-man-made calamitous events resulting in death, human suffering and material damage.

National security is therefore understood in the context of this writing to mean the ability of the state to protect its citizenry from hunger, poverty, ignorance, disease, and all forms of defencelessness (Okoli, 2012). This entails protecting the citizens from all forms of social, political, ecological, territorial, as well as cosmic vulnerabilities. This conception of national security marks a radical departure from the orthodox perspective which conceives of national security merely from defence/military-centric point of view (Alkali, 2003). As relevant and fundamental as the concept of security is to human societies, it has not only defied any consensus but has created a "battleground of ideological contention". No matter the conception of security, an important point is that it underpins human existence. Thus, states define security within the context of their core values, interests, culture, prestige and socio-economic order. Transformations in the global arena have produced certain mutations in the conceptualisation of national security: the focus has moved from an emphasis on protecting and maintaining the state to a focus on the well-being of the people. Within this context, therefore, national security is equated with, and denotes, physical safety of individuals and groups and freedom from threats, anxiety or danger. This people-centric focus of contemporary national security presupposes that the state must facilitate unfettered access to, and enjoyment of, fundamental human rights by citizens. In other words, actions that tend to abbreviate or abridge fundamental human rights constitute insecurity. The task of maintaining national security is as much the responsibility of the government as it is of the citizens. For the state to play its role as an impartial restraining force and thus maintain the delicate balance that could trigger insecurity, it ought to be aloof and non-aligned in the resolution of recurrent conflicts of interest within the polity. What has happened in Nigeria is that the state immersed itself in the class struggle instead of rising above it, and thus became a target of aggression arising from feelings of deprivation. 70.82% of the total population in Nigeria live under extreme poverty (less than \$1 a day) and Nigeria is the 8.03% of the world's poor; the death rate is 13.48 deaths/1000 population; 51% of girls are out of school; the average life expectancy is less than 1000 live birth; under-five mortality rate of 138/1000 live births; maternal mortality rate of 840 deaths/100,000 live births; insignificant drugs; human development index is one the lowest in the world? This is in spite of the fact that Nigeria is a wealthy

nation, earning over \$400 billion of oil revenue alone over the years of our existence. In fact according to a New York Times report (2012) "Nigeria is the World's 6th Most Populous and expected to hit 300 million in 25 years at the rate of 2.553% growth.

What plans do we have for education, healthcare, food, employment, drinking water, housing, electricity, etc? Meanwhile a reporter from the NY Times made an observation of the living condition she saw somewhere in Lagos in which:

...a typical apartment block known as "face me, face you"... whole families squeeze into a 7-by-11-foot rooms along a narrow corridor. Up to 50 people share a kitchen, toilet and sink-though the pipes in the neighbourhood often no longer carry water...At... primary school, more than 100 students cram in most classrooms, two to a desk... As graduates pour out of high schools and universities, Nigeria's unemployment rate is nearly 50 percent for people in urban areas ages 15 to 24 driving crime and discontent... (The New York Times, 2012).

Governments all over the world, particularly those of developing countries, are increasingly recognising that threats to national interests/security are more likely to stem from internal than external sources. Such threats can assume different forms in different countries at different times. Against this background the question is how does one evaluate the state of national security in Nigeria under the Buhari administration? Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan examined human security in its broadest sense, which he said to embrace far more than the absence of violent conflicts, because, according to him it: ...encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and healthcare, and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth, and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear.... (Annan, 2000).

Reality of Nigeria's National Security Status

We must acknowledge the fact that it is the sole responsibility of a government to guarantee the security of its citizens, and also as a matter of fact it is this responsibility that gives any government its legitimacy. In the case of Nigeria, the responsibility to protect and guarantee security is clearly spelt out in Sec 14(2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution which states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government" (1999 Nigerian Constitution). This is the basis for the social contract in which we as citizens of Nigeria surrender some of our freedoms in addition to submitting ourselves to the authority relating to governance in order for us to enjoy the full protection of our remaining rights. These rights which include those of life; dignity of human persons; personal liberty; fair hearing; private and family life; freedom of thought, conscience and religion freedom of expression;

peaceful assembly and association; freedom of movement; and freedom from discrimination, are enshrined in sections 33 to 43 of our Constitution. These rights are fundamental to the social contract between government and the citizens, and failure to guarantee them by the former not only means a violation of the "agreement," but also a threat to the security of a nation. Thus, national security in Nigeria is an ensemble of two broad focal elements: human security and state security. It entails the preservation of the welfare and safety of Nigerians at home and abroad (human security) and the protection of the sovereignty of the country and the integrity of its assets (state security) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2006:2).

Insecurity is the greatest challenge the Buhari administration is facing at the moment. Since May 1999, Nigeria has witnessed a number of security challenges associated with militancy, kidnapping, armed robbery, political assassinations, armed proliferation, piracy and ethno-religious conflicts. However, the outbreak of Boko Haram uprising in July 2009 has created a new security challenge in the country. This has further complicated the situation. The consequent decline in internal security and reactions from the state raises important questions about the effectiveness of governance and security agencies in the country. It appears that the Nigeria government lacks the capacity and the political will to mount an effective response, as violent attacks by the sect have increased in frequency, reach and destructiveness, occurring almost on daily basis in the northern part of the country. In spite of the increasing deterioration of security, no effective counterstrategy and enabling legislations have been put in place by government to address the situation. The most visible responses to date have been a massive deployment of the security forces, which has further created a feeling of fear among the local population. The belief that the presence of security forces is sufficient to guarantee national security seems to be deeply rooted in the psychology of those saddled with national security decisions. Government is increasingly putting too much emphasis on the maintenance of physical security typified by the presence of military, police and intelligence agents, and paying little attention to human development issues which are essential for sustainable national security. In some cases, to demonstrate that government is capable of ensuring peace and security, military and police units are deployed to violent flashpoints. They use excessive force to arrest, detain and possibly even kill anyone who happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, thereby exacerbating a situation which they are meant to alleviate. The emphasis on physical security notwithstanding intelligence failure could be blamed for much of the threat to public security in Nigeria. The security challenges include the following:

Violent Conflicts and Crimes

The outbreak of violent conflict has become a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. It is estimated that Nigeria has "witnessed over 300 violent ethno-religious, communal and political conflicts of varying intensity and magnitude" (Osuji, 2013). For example, clashes between farmers and pastoralists have increased in frequency in

recent times, resulting in the death of about 3,732 persons between 1998 and 2014. The spate of violent crimes has become alarming. As shown in table 1, some 262 incidence of kidnapping, about 405 cases of armed robbery and 139 cases of cultism have been recorded in the last six months in Nigeria. These violent crimes have resulted in the death of 1,113 persons between January and June 2015.

Table 1

Month	Terrorism	Kidnapping	Armed Robbery	Inter – Communal Violence	Unlawful Possession of Firearms	Cultism
January	12	29	39	16	29	15
February	25	37	64	17	54	18
March	29	58	87	30	41	24
April	4	31	71	19	33	28
May	14	55	69	24	29	30
June	22	52	75	18	36	24
Total	106	262	405	124	222	139

Source: Arase, S (2015)

Gwamna (2010) is of the view that several theoretical presuppositions have been provided to explain ethnic and religious conflicts. Some of these include: the continuance of arbitrary colonial delineation of boundaries that did not take care of the ethnic peculiarities, the colonial policy of “divide and rule”, elite manipulation, struggles for scarce resources, poverty unemployment, struggles for violations of human rights, the military factor, effects of the World Bank and IMF induced economic policies such as the structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP), the collapse of traditional values and stresses related to urbanization.

Terrorism

The escalation of terrorist activities is the gravest security challenge facing Nigeria. Particularly worrisome is the activities of the Boko Haram, which seeks to impose Islamic law in Nigeria. Since stepping up its activities in 2009, the group has killed over 18,000 people and displaced about 1.5 million people (Hinshaw, 2015). Boko Haram seeks the establishment of an Islamic state in Nigeria. The Sharia law imposed by local authorities, beginning with Zamfara in January 2000 and covering 12 northern states by late 2002, may have promoted links between Boko Haram and

political leaders, but was considered by the group to have been corrupted (Kessler, 2013). President Buhari has vowed to eliminate Boko Haram. The extremist group has responded with a series of deadly suicide bombings and attacks on soft targets that have killed over 444 Nigerians in the first 39 days of Buhari's administration (Binniyat, 2015). Killings by the Boko Haram since 2009 is largely responsible for Nigeria's decline from 7th of 115 countries in 2012 to 4th of 121 countries in 2014 in the Global Terrorism Index (see Table 2).

Security, Peace and Governance Indicators	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Global Competitive Index (GCI)	99/133	127/139	127/142	115/144	120/148	127/144
Global Peace Index (GPI)	129/144	137/149	142/153	146/158	148/162	151/162
Corruption Perception Index (CPI)	130/180	134/178	143/182	139/174	144/175	136/174
Global Terrorism Index (GTI)	Nil	Nil	Nil	7/115	Nil	4/121
Human Development Index (HDI)	158/182	142/169	156/187	Nil	153/186	152/187

The loss of lives caused by terrorism has created an ambience of insecurity with overwhelming economic impact on Nigeria. In 2013 it was approximate that terrorism cost the Nigerian economy US\$28.48 billion. The ambience of insecurity has equally added to the poor performance of Nigeria in Global Competitive Index in recent times. Thus Nigeria plunged from 99th position of 133 countries surveyed in 2009, to 127th of 144 countries assessed in 2014 (See Table 2).

Poverty

Nigeria is a country of paradox with widespread poverty in the midst of plenty. Long years of military rule and poor policies combined with rent-seeking culture have left the country with high levels of poverty and low access to social services. Mooney et al (2000) reports that the World Bank sets a "poverty threshold" at one dollar a day to compare poverty in most developing world, labelling population groups with a per

capital income above one dollar as “non-poor”. UNICEF (2001) stated that poverty is a multi-faceted condition. It has dimensions, among them poor access to public services and infrastructure, unsanitary environmental surroundings, illiteracy and ignorance, poor health, insecurity, voicelessness and social exclusion, as well as low levels of household income and food security. UNICEF added that these features which are part of the social reality of the poor in Nigeria tend to be mutually reinforcing trapping the poor in a vicious circle. Nigeria is the largest oil producer in Africa and seventh largest in the world, yet it has the third largest number of poor people in the world after China and India (Centre for Democracy and Development, 2014:9). However, Nigeria was one of the richest 50 countries in the early 1970s but has since retrogressed to become one of the 25 poorest countries at the threshold of the 21st century (CDD, 2014). Statistics show that the incidence of poverty adopting the rate of US\$1 per day increased from 28.1 percent in 1980 to 46.3 percent in 1985 and declined to 42.7 percent in 1992 but increased again to 65.6 percent in 1996. The incidence increased to 69.2 percent in 1997 (CDD, 2014:12). The 2004 Report by the National Planning Commission indicates that poverty has decreased to 54.4 percent. But by 2010 the poverty rate had increased again to 69.1 percent. Poverty is serious economic challenges facing Nigeria. Both have maintained a rising trend over the years. Poverty rates remain high in Nigeria, particularly in rural areas. It is estimated that 110 million out of Nigeria's population of 170 million live in "extreme poverty". Of the 110 million Nigerians suffering from extreme poverty, majority are young people denied of employment opportunities.

According to the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) 2005 document, “poverty reductions are, therefore, the most difficult challenge facing Nigeria and its people and the greatest obstacle in pursuit of sustainable socio-economic and political development”. The abject and widespread poverty of Nigerians is systemic and entrenched. It reflects the imperatives of an amorphous capitalism because it is unproductive but typical in distribution of essential state resources. Government officials are advancing reasons why they cannot pay good wages in the manner that entrepreneur's reason in a capitalist setting. Heinecke (1988) observed that resources are not scarce in Nigeria, they are abundant but in the hand of too few people. The philosophy of welfarism shows that poverty and dependence are not necessarily evidence of personal failure. Quite apart from the physically disabled, workers who are underpaid, unemployed or intermittently employed are considered to be impoverished through no fault of theirs.

Unemployment

The rise in unemployment started ever since government stopped the establishment of new and strong institution that could drive the Nigerian economy forward. Even though the government worked very hard to bring in foreign investors to establish their concerns and invest in the Nigerian economy, and to create employment for Nigerians, the government has failed to maintain existing

infrastructure. The years of corruption, civil war, military rule and mismanagement have hindered the economic growth of the country. Nigeria is endowed with diverse and infinite resources, both human and material. However, years of negligence and adverse policies have led to under utilization of these resources. These resources have not been effectively utilized in order to yield maximum economic benefits. It is a major problem, both economically and socially. It has pauperized the populace with subsequent reduction in their purchasing power, reduced consumption, engendered lower production and economic growth has been hampered. It also has social consequences as it increases the rate of crime.

For Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010), the statistics from the Manpower Board and the Federal Bureau of Statistics showed that Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country. Also, 64 million of them are unemployed, while 1.6 million are under-employed. The 1990-2000 data on youth unemployment showed that the largest group of the unemployed is the secondary school graduates. Also, 40% of the unemployment rate is among urban youth aged 20 - 24 and 31% of the rate is among those aged 15-19. Also, two thirds of the urban unemployed are ranged from 15-24 years old. Moreover, the educated unemployed tended to be young males with few dependents. There are relatively few secondary school graduates and the lowered job expectations of primary-school graduates. The authors, however, admitted that there are no consistent trend of unemployment rates in Nigeria. An increase in one or two years is sometimes followed by a decline in the subsequent years.

According to National Bureau of Statistics (2009:238; 2010:2), the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2009 showed that the number of unemployed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000; 13.6% in 2001; 12.6% in 2002; 14.8% in 2003; 13.4% in 2004; 11.9% in 2005; 13.7% in 2006; 14.6% in 2007; 14.9% in 2008 and 19.7% in 2009. Specifically, as regards the age group, educational group and sex, data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics (2010:3) further showed that as at March 2009 in Nigeria, for persons between ages 15 and 24 years, 41.6% were unemployed. For persons between 25 and 44 years, 17% were unemployed. Also, those with primary education, 14.8% were unemployed and for those with only secondary education, 23.8% were unemployed. Furthermore, for those with post secondary education, 21.3% were unemployed. For those who never attended school and those with below primary education, 21.0% and 22.3% were unemployed respectively. As regards sex, data showed that males constituted 17.0% while females constituted 23.3%.

Within this context, Adejumobi (2011) remarked:

Graduate unemployment in Nigeria is over 50%, poverty rate of less than \$2 per day is over 70%, basic infrastructures have completely collapsed - electricity, water, good roads, etc, there is general insecurity, and an oil exporting country imports refined Petroleum for its local use so that oil buccaneers can live off the sweat of the people.

Nigeria runs perhaps the most expensive civilian government in the world - the National Assembly consumes significant percentage of the national budget; some past leaders, who were virtually broke before luck smiled on them with state power now own private jets that they travel in; and some others who have little or no knowledge about the oil industry now own oil wells, which they sell for raw cash. The picture is that of a jungle.”

As at first quarter of 2015, unemployment rate in Nigeria reached an all-time high of 24.20 percent. With a youth unemployment rate as high as 50%, these young Nigerians fell prey to recruitment for groups such as Boko Haram (Onuoha, 2014). The problem of unemployment in Nigeria results from inconsistent policies, misappropriation of funds for empowerment schemes and increasing de-industrialisation and collapse of small businesses due to poor power supply.

Corruption

Ogunleye (2010) pointed that The African Development Bank had its recently theme as “Fostering Good Governance in Africa”, the theme was motivated by the realization of the fact that good governance, in its political, social and economic dimensions, underlying sustainable human development and the reduction of poverty. Good political governance is recognized not only to be worthy as a goal in itself, but it is also believed to be essential for providing the foundation for good economic governance, which is central to the process of economic growth and development. However, the unfortunate situation is that governance in Nigeria has not been too close to what may be described as good. One major cause identified for this is corruption. Corruption is the most pressing governance and development challenge that Nigeria is confronted with today. It has debilitating and corrosive effects on progress, stability and development of the polity. It impedes economic growth by discouraging foreign investments, creates distortion in resource allocation and competitive markets, increases the cost of doing business and reduces the net value of public spending. It also reduces the quality of services and public infrastructure and the volume of tax revenues and encourages the misappropriation and misallocation of scarce resources. In the political realm, it undermines the rule of law, respect for human rights, accountability and transparency and weakens government institutions. This in turn erodes public legitimacy in government and compromises good governance. The social costs of corruption are also deleterious as it deepens income inequality, poverty and adversely affects good moral values in the society. According to UN Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon” we all know the heavy toll taken by corruption. More than a trillion dollars stolen or lost, every year money needed for the millennium development Goals”. It destroys the moral integrity and ethics of a society. It destroys those values that underpin the sensitivity of our common values. It has permeated

through public and private life in Nigeria, with degenerative effect on national value, institutions of governance and the rule of law.

Ribadu (2006) opined that, corruption is worse than terrorism because it is responsible for perpetual collapse of infrastructure and institutions in Nigeria. It is the cause of the endemic poverty and underdevelopment. When people in government embezzle funds, they have to bribe many unworthy people in the process, it has to placate and please many co-conspirators. The consequence of this is that the society feels the presence of money in the hands of the unworthy. Money flows from one thief to another crooked friend and then to terrorist's hands, guns are bought. Thugs are hired by the politicians and their friend's. Sometimes; terrorists are paid with these stolen funds. For instance, out of the \$60 billion being illegally siphoned out of Africa annually, Nigeria accounts for over 68% of the figure (The Punch, 2015). Consequently, Nigeria has consistently ranked low in Transparency International Corruption Perception Index over the years. Nigeria ranked 136 out of 174 surveyed countries in 2014, making it the 38th most corrupt nation.

Heavy Dependence on Oil

A major issue for the new administration of President Buhari is the over reliance on crude oil export. Since the 1970s, oil revenue has accounted for 80% of revenue and 95% of export earnings. Oil export has contributed substantially to the revenue base of Nigeria but has entrenched a mono-cultural economy. Regrettably, other critical sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing have not been given much consideration by successive administrations. The manufacturing sector's share of gross domestic product is under 4% while over 80% of manufactured goods in Nigeria are imported. Consequently, declining global oil prices have reduced the fiscal buffers of the Nigerian economy and constrained government's ability to meet its obligations, including paying salaries and debt repayment. Despite being Africa's top oil producer, Nigeria heavily subsidises imported petrol and kerosene for the bulk of its domestic demand. Its huge reliance on fuel import is due to an underperforming refining system. Fuel crisis in Nigeria significantly stifles economic activities with consequences for national development and security.

The Way Forward

For President Muhammadu Buhari to triumph in his confirmed intentions to bring the change that Nigeria needs, he must put in place the right policies, programmes and personnel. His effort should aim at achieving the following: President Buhari's government needs to further stimulate all segments of the Nigerian society as well as regional bodies and international community to deal with the Boko Haram threat. He needs to better furnish the military, police and security forces through a transparent and centralised procurement process to enhance their competence to deal with security challenges.

Economic diversification holds the key to the emergence of a robust economy that is capable of creating jobs and reducing poverty and unemployment. President

Buhari's administration needs to articulate and implement an economic blueprint for the diversification of the Nigerian economy, leveraging sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, tourism and ICT to boost productive activities and revenue generation.

There is the need to free up the entire downstream sector of the petroleum industry and strengthen efforts in encouraging private sector participation in the refining of petroleum products in Nigeria. Also, government's effort to encourage the establishment of modular refineries in the Niger Delta region will contribute to job creation, harnessing of home-grown capacity of petroleum refining and reduce the spate of pipeline vandalism.

The Buhari government should to take deliberate efforts to strengthen and reposition the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to robustly prosecute all cases of corruption. Competence should be adopted in appointment of persons to head the two anti-graft agencies to ensure diligent prosecution of corrupt officials, total recovery of looted funds and end the prowling of public treasury.

Conclusion

The Buhari administration also must cope with a period of implausibility for the country's finances. Declining global oil prices are only one part of the story. The United States, once Nigeria's single biggest oil buyer, has not purchased any of its petroleum in nearly a year, and a recommencement of this crucial trade is unlikely as long as the US domestic oil boom continues. All Progressive Congress (APC) must begin the process of preparing Nigeria for a post oil future, including the development of sustainable power generation within its own borders. Fuel shortages and the notoriously unreliable electricity grid have long been at the top of nearly every Nigerian's list of grievances, and the country's declining purchasing power in the global market will make it that much harder to continue to rely on imports in these sectors. Similarly, the falling currency means that Nigerian exports will become more affordable globally, but without a concerted effort to revive manufacturing and agriculture, the country cannot capitalize on this opportunity. Ultimately, though, the most important thing Buhari must do is to reach out to citizens of all religious, ethnic, and regional backgrounds.

Nigerians have long ranked near the bottom among Africans in their prioritization of national over ethnic and religious identities, and the March election of 2015 map shows how divided the country still is in many respects, the peaceful turnover is a chance to build a greater sense of national camaraderie around democratic institutions. This is a job for statesmen and states women of the highest calibre, and the Nigerian people can only hope the new administration is up to the challenge.

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