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Cultural Dimensions
of the National Security Problem

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Introduction

This essay examines the cultural dimensions of the national security problem. A cultural policy as an instrument of social engineering is crucial for national survival insofar as national security is, in a significant sense, defined by culture. A critical clarification of the material, institutional, and philosophical aspects of culture can help provide a more systematic analysis of the dynamic elements of culture(s) vis-à-vis national security. This cultural analysis situates the internal and external dimensions to nation security. No nation can achieve total security at all times, and coping with perceived threats to national security can be actualised through the adaptation of the elements of culture to ensure survival.

Every nation draws up strategies to prevent its potential and actual destabilisation. Such strategies are usually contained in a National Security programme. A cultural policy as an instrument of social engineering demands a notion of culture as a strategic instrument (Uchendu 1988: 18). Mazrui (1973) describes this cultural engineering process as the deliberate political effort to channel behaviour in the direction that will maximize national objectives. The vital linkage between culture and security at any level is better underscored by statements related to the nexus between culture and development. According to Odhiambo (2002: 2), 'the real problem of Africa comes from the inability of those in authority to make the right choice and firm commitment to cultural matters because they underestimate the value of culture in development'. We can infer from the above statement that the capacity of a nation to survive is entrenched in the cultural values prevailing at any point in time.

Conceptualisation of Culture and National Security

Culture and national security are interrelated. They sometimes display conflicting variations, which may arise from inconsistencies which we notice in our set of beliefs. Sometimes the challenge to our beliefs may come from outside (Bodunrin 1991: 93). Anthropologists in their study of culture have found that culture has an immense impact on human beings in any society because it helps man to adapt to his society and hence to increase the chances of survival. There are as many definitions of culture as there are diverse cultures across the globe, although these definitions tend to say the same thing. Castro-Gomez (2002: 26) holds that 'culture constitutes a sphere of moral, religious, political, philosophical and techno-logical values that permit man to "humanize" himself, i.e. escape the tyranny of the state of nature'. Uroh (1996: 11) is clear on the fact that 'culture is a product of a people's experience. It is the knowledge of doing things which people have acquired in their attempts to solve some socio-historical problems'. Also, accord-ing to Tylor, culture is 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (Tylor 1871: 1). Other scholars in their attempt at defining culture have reduced culture to mentalistic phenomena, to ideas or the like in the minds of men. Downs defines culture as a mental map that guides us in our relations with our surroundings and with other people (1971: 35). Hatch sees culture as 'the way of life of a people' (Hatch 1985: 178). However, having assessed the various definitions offered by scholars on culture, we can say that 'culture is the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economical, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organisation' (see Aig-Imoukhuede 1992: 171).

A crucial factor in the analysis of culture is social control, which helps to ensure conformity to societal norms for an ordered society. Linton (1936) ob-serves that every culture embodies three separate but related spheres, namely, universal, alternative and specialties. Uchendu (1988: 18) clarifies the idea of cul-tural universals, alternatives and specialties in the following way: cultural universals refer to those elements of a culture open to all and shared by every culture bearer. To be competent in a culture implies sharing in its cultural universals. Cultural alternatives are various institutions provided by a culture to satisfy a given cultural end; and cultural specialties are institutions for specialised training and knowledge whose membership may be voluntary or ascribed.

The analysis of the role of culture as the very texture of social contract theo-ries and of viable human organisations is closely tied to the thematic issues of national security affecting both the individual person and the community at large (Gbadegesin 1991: 162). This view tends to imply that the protection and devel-opment of a nation-state is culturally contextual.

However, it is important to note that no nation can achieve total security. According to Omatete (1972: 291), a nation may be considered secure if there is a high probability of the occurrence of its preferred national values. Tukur (1999: 19) defines values as the highest ethical standards and criteria through which individuals, groups and societies order their goals, determine their choice and judge their conduct as these pertain to fundamental aspects of life, be they in the sphere of personal or public affairs. The capacity to make judgments in interaction with the challenges of the human environment and society helps to formulate and institutionalise essential policies on culture.

On many issues, it is widely taken that the critical area for the solution of social and national problem is that of culture since culture contains the ultimate values which motivate human and national action in historical perspective. This view is corroborated further by the fact that, in securing the various compartments of culture, such as language, customs, norms, art, science, metaphysical belief, there is a concomitant security of the human social systems, which in turn creates a sort of individual and community alliance. Hence, the distinctive analysis of culture is historically necessary for any form of security and development. And given the fact that culture and security follow certain autonomous, as well as functionally dependent, dynamic trends regarding social and individual well-being; it is pertinent to analyse their two-tier operational functionalism either as 'culture of security' or as 'security of culture'.

In Search of a Theoretical Framework: The Culture of Security and the Security of Culture

Culture and security are dynamic social realities which involve continuity and change (Gbadegesin 1991: 173). Culture and security cannot be discussed outside of cultural values. Ackermann (1981: 447, 450) states that cultural values are 'ways of ordering and evaluating objects, experiences and behaviours manifesting themselves in all situations of choice. Cultural values are seen as a determining factor in the choice and impact of technology; on the other hand, technology is conceived as potentially transforming cultural values'. From the above, Ackermann (1981: 451) draws the vital conclusion that 'it is important to realize that cultural values and beliefs have a historically acquired force that is to some extent independent of the current social structure. As a result, they will be embodied in the projects of individuals and groups, contribute to the ordering of their priorities, and affect their strategies to achieve whatever goals they have set themselves'.

Regarding the cultural bounds of security, Castro-Gomez maintains that 'if through culture man slowly liberates himself from the chains imposed by nature, then cultural forms acquire ever increasing degrees of perfection to the extent that they permit the unfolding of spirit, that is, the exercise of human freedom' (2002: 26-27). In our struggle for national and human security in Africa at large,

we can agree with Nkrumah (1975: 58) that 'we on this African continent can enrich our knowledge and cultural heritage through our cooperative efforts and the pooling of our scientific and technical resources'. The goals of culture and security, which we have set before us, require a world order and peace charter derived from the diverse cultures.

The definitions of culture tend to stipulate a distinction between culture and security, either as a 'culture of security' or as a 'security of culture', which refers to the social and contractual orientation that ensures a people's well-being with a community. The 'security of culture' signifies all modalities by which a people's worldview and way of life are protected. For Castro-Gomez (2002: 26), the culture of security signifies all constitutive spheres of moral, religious, political, philosophical and technological values that permit man to 'humanise' himself. For Uroh (1996: 11), the culture of security in the context of our analysis is a product of a people's experience to enhance their well-being. This means that knowledge about the culture of security is based on the ways people have adopted or acquired it in their attempts to solve socio-historical problems.

To further build a conceptual framework for our essay, Odhiambo (2002) provides a three-tier analysis of culture of security, which is slightly different from that of Uchendu above. The three aspects are ideas, aesthetic forms and values. According to Odhiambo (2002:5), "the culture of security in a society consists of three distinct elements; ideas give rise to habits and beliefs, aesthetic forms reflect the artistic expression of a culture in its visual arts, the values are formed by the interaction between ideas and aesthetics norms of conduct" with a bid to enhance human well being. At this juncture it is imperative to examine how the culture of security is acquired and socialized by human beings in their society. These different aspects of culture can be challenged by internal and external forces. According to Cabral (1998: 261) the culture of security is an essential element of the history of a people, because it allows us to know how to resolve the nature and extent of the imbalances and conflicts (economic, political and social), which characterize the evolution of a society. A culture of security allows us to know the dynamic synthesis, which have been developed and established by social conscience to resolve these conflicts at each stage of its evolution, in the search for survival and progress. The culture of security means literally the protective mechanism, which obtains in the land, a community enterprise, a body of laws and morals along with their metaphysical foundations that guide and ensure peace and order within the community.

In this context, the culture of security can be seen as one of numerous distinct systems in which social theory and action are synthesised. This signifies that the culture of security, as a social system, is dependent on the system of the human personality and positioning. That is, the culture of security is a system abstracted from both protective actions and theories on social existential affairs. In other

words, the culture of security is a system of values, meanings or significance and symbols regarding the structure of social life (Halpern 1955: 235). Accordingly, the culture of security can thus be said to provide the perspective necessary to rethink the meaning of life, and the projection of such meanings from the prevalent circumstances of the present. Given this situation, the culture of security gives us the impetus to leap over obstacles that hamper human and social development and chart new pathways for future prospects. Furthermore, the proper clarification of the beneficial purpose of the culture of human and social security gives a clue as to how to bridge the gap between our means and our ends, and how to appropriate these means and ends for man's technological development and for the transformation of the individual and the state in society (M'Bow 1992: 13).

Irele (1991: 52) points out the general principle or ethos governing the security of culture, especially the ones by which culture survives or operates. In this context, the security of culture can be sustained in either a materialised or objectified, as well as an idealised or spiritualised, way. The 'object or material culture' of a people can be those items of culture that can be sustained by empirical verification and justification. This aspect of 'security of culture' is tangible and in fact can be seen, described, and sometimes even touched. And by virtue of its tangibility the characteristics of culture are in fact discernibly protected. Security of the tangible culture thus comprises material, institutional, philosophical and creative aspects, as contained in our cultural policy and practice.

The material security of culture has to do with artefacts in the broadest form (namely: tools, clothing, food, medicine, housing, etc., and institutional monuments such as the political, social, legal and economic structures erected to help to achieve material and spiritual objectives). Indeed, the sociological culture of security measures can be adequately and better substantiated by the nature of object or material culture, that is 'the way in which the society produces its means of existence and the way the individual members and groups within the society relate to each other and organize themselves within the society, as well as the general code and ideas that bind people together' (Irele 1991: 52).

Another perspective on the security of culture is that it can be idealised. This idealisation operates at the level of inner dispositions to reality or a metaphysical projection of such a reality. Although this is where the spirit of the people depicts the subjective aspect of culture, nevertheless it depicts aptly the transcendental reality of the African people. Gbadegesin (1991: 172-174) states that for some social and political theorists security of idealised culture consists mainly of diverse ideas as initiators of action, as if ideas have an independent ontological reality moving in the brains of human beings. This means that the Africans guard jealously the operations of their inner subjective dispositions. This is necessitated by the fact that the operation of an idea in the mind influences the external world

and stratifies it in definite and particular referential correspondence and behavioural dispositions.

Against the backdrop of communicating the spiritualised and objectified typologies of culture, the chief global method of the security of culture can be seen as a complex linguistic phenomenon, being constitutive of numerous elements of which the picture of the language of the culture is one. Because of the numerous constitutive elements of a culture, there is a hybrid of cultural overlap, which makes room for cultural interdependence. This consequently makes it also possible for people trying to preserve them to share many aspects of a culture, without a shared language. This is possible if there is lively participation in the activities, goals, aspirations, and the fate of a larger cultural community (Gyekye 1997: 44). The term security of culture is hereby used to refer to the totality of Africa's basic protective orientation in life (Dzobo 1992: 123). Security of culture in this perspective is an open-ended resource of social meanings upon which members of a community draw to mediate the contingencies of their everyday lives. As such the phrase denotes the preservation of the material and spiritual resources of a community's material and moral worlds.

The Juxtaposing of Culture with National Security

In juxtaposing culture with national security, it is understandable that culture as the totality of the way of life of a people has enormous security influence on the nation. This is because national security is the concern for the survival, peace and progress of individuals, groups and the society as a cultural whole. Hence, national security is a concept that cannot be easily comprehended without its application to social and cultural phenomena. McLaurin (1988: 6) corroborates this statement when he maintains that

> Security is a concept devoid of operational meaning in the absence of some identification of threats. Security against what? In all discussions of security from the personal to the international, there is an implicit or explicit determination of threat...

Owolabi (1998: 160) likewise states that the threat to cultural perceptions forms the core of the understanding of national security. Particular threats to cultural perceptions of national security can be assessed by the weakening of states and communities, their erosion and in some cases even their implosion as well as their incapacity to ensure public order and to fulfil other functions (Janusz and Vladimir 1995: 18). Wolfers (1962) observes that, objectively, security is 'an absence of threat to acquired values such as territorial sovereignty and independence, socio-economic interests and political traditions. Subjectively, it is the absence of fear that such values will be attacked' (1962: 279).

The threat to the existence and survival of a nation comes in two broad spheres; the internal and external threats. An external threat is an attempt originat-

ing from outside the nation either to destroy the nation or to force on it a line of action contrary to its interests. External threats usually result from conflict between a nation and another nation or even an international organisation. Internal threats are those unfavourable conditions which may result in conflict that threatens public order. These conditions may be due to social, political, economic, ideological, or ethnic reasons. Internal threats may also come about due to influence from outside a country, especially by organisations or groups which promote values antithetical to integration or cohesion in a country. The internalisation of such values may result in actions inimical to national security. For any nation to survive it must be properly positioned to combat any forms of the above-mentioned threats.

On the other hand a nation is considered secured and un-threatened if there is a high occurrence of its preferred values even though no nation has absolute security at all times (Omatete 1972: 291). However, within the context of unavoidable threats, a nation must put in place adequate measures to limit the possible adverse effects. Coping with perceived threats to a nation's security is actualised through the adaptation of the elements of culture to ensure survival. Such elements may be specialised institutions, for example, the military, police, etc., education, cultural institutions, the media, and so on.

Ethnicity, Ethnocentrism and Elitism: Institutional Problems in National and Communal Security

Ethnocentrism and elitism are cultural values that pose problems to visionary cultural leadership and national or communal security. This is because ethnic groups or elites may have internalised conflict and opposition with another group, thus resulting in violence and a threat to public order. In a pluralistic society such as Nigeria, where different cultural groups and values exist, it is imperative to promote values which will minimise tension, allow for tolerance and integration and the overall communal security of all and sundry. Unfortunately in Nigeria, culture has not been utilised as a strategic tool through education for the management of values which may threaten national security. The non-material aspects of our culture such as ideas, values and attitudes can therefore have an appreciable effect on the human body and organisation (Ferraro 1997: 22).

Nigeria's political scene since independence has always degenerated into acrimonious quarrels between factions of the ruling elite and diverse ethnocentric groups. For obvious reasons, the management of the political feuds proved to be a more arduous task than was the case in the pre-independence era. Traditional communities were typically delineated by kinship, and leadership in the society involved a struggle for power, position and people (Goody in Acharya 1981: 109- 111). To reap political advantage, various groups and parties entered into alliances, which depended on the mobilisation of ethnic and elitist loyalties.

Indeed, the Nigerian political legacy has, on this count, been described as tribal, or, to use the more congenial term, ethnic.

The integration of the social, economic and political rights of citizens, listed as democratic imperatives in the *Report of the Political Bureau* (1987), have been increasingly eroded. In Dube's opinion (1988: 507-8), at the root of ethnicity lies the fear of the erosion of cultural identity and group dominance. It can be argued that ethnic and cultural diversity 'has deleterious effects only when it occurs in the context of governments which are undemocratic and as such unaccountable to the broader public' (Collier and Gunning 1999: 9-10). To combat intra- and inter-societal discord, according to Dube (1988: 507), 'a diagnostic understanding of the pervasive phenomenon of ethnicity is essential'. Dube also argued that the salience and persistence of ethnic categories of identification and conflict are not just puzzling but equally disturbing to national integration, the more so because ethnic alliances cut across class-based identities and interests. This signifies that ethnic cleavages have a cultural content, interest- orientation, and political articulation. Cultural symbols - mostly drawn from tradition - are manipulated by ethnic groups for political mobilisation with a view to realising a set of goals and also gaining political power solely for their group.

Against this backdrop of ethnic symbolisation, the Nigerian social, political and economic spheres have been characterised by the following social symbolic indices due to ethnic politics:

(a) The lack of an even distribution of wealth and income due to ethnic bias;

(b) Mono-cultural and enclave economy;

(c) Insecurity of jobs, lives and property;

(d) High and increasing illiteracy rates;

(e) Un-conducive atmosphere for healthy political bargaining and compromise;

(f) Structural imbalances, corruption and increased per capita poverty.

Due to the above situations, which create a high wave of insecurity across the Nigerian state, the polity has become replete with ethno-religious crises and secessionist agitation. Lopsided structuring in the polity has occasioned the Ijaw crisis with Ilaje, Urhobo and Itshekiri and other minorities in the South-south. The rising national insecurity is equally witnessed in the Aguleri-Umuleri, Ife-Modakeke, Hausa-Ibo and Yoruba-Hausa ethnic clashes, where hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost. The perception of marginalisation of the South-south people by the Nigerian state is a factor that has reinvigorated the clamour for self-determination of these people, and where militia groups like Egbesu Boys, Massob, Bakassi Boys, Mosop, etc., have become a great threat to national security in Nigeria.

In another sense, the polarisation along ethnic lines has also affected security institutions like the army, police, etc. This has led to unprofessional attitudes such as the promotion of mediocrity. A case of this form of mediocrity is the promotion of officers and their assignment to strategic duties based on ethnic affiliations. Ethnic stratification and its economically adverse influence on the security agencies constitute another important factor in the inefficiency of these security institutions. The Nigerian economy suffers from the corruption of the political class who administer the nation. Within these leadership echelons, there has been the mismanagement of resources and the looting of the national treasury, which has further helped in entrenching crass materialism and a mass culture of poverty in Nigeria. The resultant effect of this sort of poverty syndrome in the larger populace is the high crime wave the country has been experiencing, particularly armed robbery. It can therefore be said that political and economic perversion and corruption have resulted in the insecurity of the various sectors of the nation, some of which adversely affect the provision of social services, industrialisation, the security sector development, etc. One glaring example is the transfer of public moneys to private accounts in foreign countries by the custodians of our leadership ladder. Such monies are used to fuel the economy of such nations, while our own nation is left to suffer from this gross misconduct.

The very first value of culture in the entrenchment of national security is the development of national personnel and institutions which are essential for true patriotism and national consciousness. The values of national security are thus quite incompatible with paying lip service to the issue of cultural development (Gbadegesin 1991: 184). A major hurdle to cross lies in constraining the unconstrained elite, which has over the years caused a divergence between African leaders and their own populations, the more so because the elites involved in bureaucratic corruption preserve their power, which serves only the interest of a group that comprises a fraction of the population (Ndulu and O' Connell 1999: 42, 53). A salient negative attribute is constituted by the social and cultural value systems, including attitudes towards thrift, profits, risks, education, and even the view of work (Hogendorn 1996: 64). For Goulet (1987: 172), there is great merit in prescribing that sound development ought to be grounded in traditional, indigenous and non-elite values.

We do not hold the view that elitism is an outright evil. This cannot be so, because no 'highly educated and well trained population is poor, but almost all populations with poor education and limited skills suffer from low income. Gross deficiencies in education and training may have the particularly bad result that they prevent workers and managers from absorbing the technologies that could increase growth' (Hogendorn 1996: 311-312). However, care must be taken in extolling the virtues of national integration. Non-indigenous and elitist criteria of leadership in many African nations should be harnessed to prevent hardened

autocracy and dictatorship (Collier and Gunning 1999: 3). To do this effectively, there is a need for an enlightenment which must (i) emphasise education; (ii) give greater weight to vocational and technical skills; and (iii) be in reasonable balance with manpower needs (Goody 1971 in Acharya 1981: 138).

The basic argument for the enlightenment imperative is that the intra-elite struggles for power have literally left the nation prostrate and rendered the coop-eration envisaged in the adopted Westminster model of democracy nugatory. The corruption of the political elites has further led to a lack of trust, which results in a lack of obedience to the law and thus the subversion of the system. The corruption of the political class has further entrenched in the citizenry the acceptance of the corrupt practice of having 'a piece of the national cake'. This has normalised corruption as the standard way of life and has equally led to the recent rating of Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. Hence, the cultural problem of national security is seen mainly in the failure of cultural institutions to control or change ideas and values which threaten national security. At the political level, it is seen in the idea of policing, military politics, ethnic politics, etc. At the level of belief, religious intolerance is the case due to religious pluralism. At the civil community level it is seen in the idea of non-cooperation or non-participation with the security agencies in communicating information nec-essary for the maintenance of order. At the transnational level, there is the legiti-misation of the culture of violence through the media, especially in films.

The high hopes nursed for development in an independent Nigeria have given way to despair. Rural neglect, the low premium on education, and corruption all combine in inter-locking vicious circles with ethnicity, poor economic manage-ment and undemocratic institutions to promote political instability. Poor political and economic management as fuelled by ethnocentrism and elitism have there-fore in many ways incapacitated visionary leadership. What this means is that ethnic visions, actions, thoughts, arguments, and prescriptions became dominant in national security concerns. And many times securing the nation's well-being in terms of political and economic thought and action may be interrupted if there is a discontinuity in ethnic hegemony. In this context, the significance of the pred-ecessor's originality and viability of ideas may not be appreciated by the succeed-ing leadership group. When Gbadegesin (1991: 174) opined that the historical, political, economic and environmental conditions of a society are the foundation from which cultural leadership and security stem, it can be deduced that the notion of shared lives, and shared purposes and interests is crucial to an adequate conception of communal security (Gyekye 1997: 42). But then the adequate con-ception of indigenous communal or national security faces yet another problem of self-sustenance not only by virtue of internal ethnocentric and elitist rancour, but also from the culture of dominance, fuelled globally by the residue of colo-nialism.

Colonialism, Neo-colonialism and the Problem of Cultural Basis for Security

The early years of colonial rule were characterised by a mixture of the brutal application of force and the founding of the infrastructure of a modern economic state. In their territorial expansion in the quest for commercial opportunities and minerals, the European chartered companies and concessionaires, in collaboration with their mother countries, fought bloody battles of subjugation. After the independence of many African nations, the industrial security concerns of the western nations have brought them back in the form of industrialisation in the quest for economic development of the host nation. In addition, African states were usually the accidents of colonial history, and frequently not congruent with any indigenous cultural and linguistic demarcations (Acharya 1981: 109, 111, 116).

This perspective on the problem of security raises the context of colonial experiences. In other words, security is vitiated by the legacy of mental colonisation, which subjects the African to indigenous cultural alienation. This motivates a negative perception of received traditional cultural knowledge and as such creates the problem of economic dependency on foreign cultural ideas and materials. In Gbadegesin's view (1991: 184), any form of colonialism is culturally rooted and profoundly devalues the culture of the dominated people. This is backed up by the assimilative and associative rationalisation that denies the existence of any distinctive culture to the colony. This rationale poses a problem for national security, especially the sheer equation of colonial domination with the cultural superiority of the coloniser. It is this assumption that suggests to the coloniser the burden of civilising the subjugated territories. According to Munkner (1998: 82), as a result of the western civilising paternalism, 'two or more layers of different value systems developed and were existing side by side, partly overlapping, rarely merging, creating insecurity and the feeling of injustice in the minds of those affected by the norms of a value system which they did not accept as theirs'.

Cabral (1998: 261) informs us that 'the value of culture as an element of resistance to foreign cultural domination lies in the fact that culture is the vigorous manifestation on the ideological or idealist plane of the physical and historical reality of the society that is dominated or to be dominated'. Essentially the effect of the assault of colonialism on culture was a kind of cultural tension and dislocation. These tensions and dislocations, according to Davidson (1991: 16), are manifested in the principles of colonial governance which assumed a form of autocratic limitless power. What this means in effect is that the role of such a dominant cultural development undermines the traditional institutions such as the extended family, patronage ties, ethnic cleavages and loyalties, group linkages, churches, religious sentiment and movement and historic authority. All of which

in turn had profound consequences on the foundation and future of black African cultural development and social security (Osia 1983: 37, 39).

All of the above show clearly that the problem of the appraisal of security and development, as conventionally understood, is far from being culturally neutral; it is a product of western ideas and value judgements, without which many of the impulses guiding it would be meaningless. The colonial experience brought about the embrace of western culture and the relegation of our traditional values to the background. This practice has continued in Nigeria even up to the present. Nigeria has been experimenting with Euro-American inspired concepts, ideas and institutions in the regulation and management of its public affairs. This new trend of colonialism entrenches a modality by which there is a failure to maximise all the cultural resources of the home nation. The total acceptance of western values has had other effects on our economy. It has created a culture of economic dependence on western nations. The resultant effect is that it has prevented the development that we so much yearn for. At the institutional security level, it has created a situation where we rely solely on western nations for the procurement of weapons. This is a very dangerous trend, which has far-reaching effects on the security of the nation. It has opened the way for the western nations to manipulate the management of our resources in a way that benefits them and not us. So many other dimensions to this particular problem exist but these few examples will suffice. The above overview explains why the African continent is still in search of a system which will enable it to develop effective integration mechanisms, responsive and efficient institutions, and a style of government which will facilitate the creation of a culturally oriented civil polity.

Fanon (1998: 306) stated that when there is a destruction of cultural values, social, political and even economic security techniques are undermined and mummified. Likewise, Osia (1983: 39) states that by undermining and often eliminating these traditional institutions, without any new ones created, development helped destroy the only agencies in many African nations that might have enabled them to make a genuine transition to modernity. The policies, attitudes, actions, and the efforts of westerners to promote development of their own orientation may have denied black African nations the possibility of real development, while at the same time destroying the indigenous and at one time viable institutions they are now trying, perhaps futilely, to resurrect. M'Bow (1992: 13) maintains that 'while it is true that Africa must rediscover the historical continuity of her cultures and establish the guidelines that inform her collective personality, she must at the same time strive to build a future based on progress and justice, equal to the aspirations of her peoples. Africa from now on, must work towards a form of modernization, which is truly hers. Taking her creative inspiration from the re-interpretation of the traditions of her past, she must seek renovation, freely assuming the responsibility for it and put to good use such rich cultural traditions

and social and moral values as will enable her to inspire progress without self-betrayal and achieve change without self-adulteration. What needs to be done is to revive the dynamic elements of her traditional heritage in the light of today's challenge. Our attitude must be both critical and forward-looking'.

A very important reason why uncritically borrowed western ideas have not been very successful is because non-universal values are seldom adequately transplanted from one cultural milieu to another. For any reform to be permanent and enduring, it must be passed on and rooted in the principles of the aboriginal institutions. The failure to recognise this point has vitiated the opportunity to tap into the resources available in our traditional cultural practices. For example, in the area of traditional medicine, a great deal of revenue could be generated for the country through the development of drugs from indigenous health knowledge. Canada claims that it makes US$32 billon per year through the development of drugs acquired from indigenous health knowledge in developing countries. Such developments are capable of generating huge revenues for the country and hence of making our economy, which is in shambles, stronger. This in turn, would create more jobs and reduce the poverty level.

The Social and Cultural Ramifications of Our Problems

The socio-cultural is the most critical dimension of the security problem faced by the country today. Culture represents the fountain spring of all policies employed by the government of a nation, be they political, social, economic, or educational. Strategies for the development of a nation hinge on the understanding of culture as the totality of the way of life of a people. In the case of Nigeria, there has been a widespread adoption of Euro-American models for the managing of the country. Unfortunately, this has not worked very well because the indigenous cultural foundations of the ethnic nations which constitute Nigeria have not been taken into consideration. Our leaders have imbibed the way the colonialists administered Nigeria in the pre-independence era as a national political culture. The motive for colonisation was the exploitation of resources. The political culture used to hold the nation together was coercion. This explains the reason why we have imbibed forceful means of managing our security, which is not working today. The police and the military were set up to repress protests by the people which threatened the stability of the colonial order. It is this culture that has been acquired in the post-independence era which has brought about the exploitative nature of the political class and a failure of social cohesion due to ethnicity, religious intolerance, militarisation of politics, economic deprivation, etc.

The political dimension of the problem is next in importance to the cultural dimension. The evolvement of a new culture dominated by western modes brought about a perverted orientation of the strategy by which a multi-cultural independent Nigeria could be administered. The method used by the colonialists

to administer the country was adopted by the nationalists who found themselves at the helm of affairs. Things, however, fell apart due to the exploitation of the resources of the nation, leading to the lack of economic security on the part of the people and a breakdown of law and order.

The economic dimension is the third important dimension of the security problem. The exploitation of the resources of the nation has brought about a breakdown in social service delivery, and entrenched poverty in the land leading to social and ethnic stratification. This has further worsened the security situation, which often manifests itself in disobedience to law and large-scale conflict claiming many lives and properties. An economic poverty perspective can be perceived in the activities of some multi-national industries which engage in exploitative conduct, often resulting in violent national insecurity. For example, after the discovery of crude oil, many multi-national companies came in to assist in the development of the oil sector. The exploration of oil led to the degradation of the environment which the host communities relied on for their livelihood. Also, the basic infrastructure and amenities such as hospitals, roads, schools, were not provided in many of these communities. How then do people survive when their means of existence have been threatened and there are no contingency plans to remedy the situation? One result has been widespread violence which has claimed many lives, including expatriates and security operatives. Since the various ethnic groups in the area are united against the multi-national companies, these companies often employ the strategy of divide-and-rule. This involves the supply of weapons to ethnic groups to fight each other in the quest to position such a group for monetary benefits from these multi-nationals. The wanton destruction of lives and properties in the Niger Delta area has been a major problem for Nigeria's security forces to control. Another dent to national security is the fact that from the Niger Delta area there has been an influx of light weapons into the wider Nigerian community. What this portends is that such weapons can be used for other criminal activities such as armed robbery, political assassination, etc.

Education as cultural transmission has been formatted in the manner it was bequeathed to us by the colonialists. Education has not functioned particularly well as an agent for the transmission of the values cherished by the state. It has failed in the inculcation of viable ethical education for the tolerance of others. Through an ethical education both formally and informally, it becomes possible to see the consequences of involving oneself in any conduct which can destabilise the state. Ethical education is a necessary means of ensuring national security. Questions about national security in Nigeria are the more significant due to the emergence and blossoming of a perverted idea of civil security. This is seen in the proliferation of vigilante groups and ethnic militias that have emerged to fill the gaps and inadequacies in the defence and security functions of the society. There is evidence of a negative civilian input in security matters. The unyielding

violence in the country has created a fertile substrate for the expansion of such groups. In some areas of the country, the actions of these groups have been institutionalised and legitimised. The so-called 'area boys' and 'Almajiri' are employed in the amplification of ethno-religious conflicts around the nation. Small bands of political thugs known as 'ecomog' are employed as personal security for political office holders, and are used for political violence. However, the dangerous aspect is that they have received some legitimacy and now form part of the regular entourage of political leaders. There has been a more dangerous trend in the proliferation of ethnic militia and other dubious non-conventional community security and defence outfits, which have been put to the service of wider political, regional and economic interests. The forms of violence produced by these ethnic militia groups surpass even the preceding unstable times. These militia groups retain the capability for violence and mayhem that are unrivalled in intensity. They are often capable of contending with the institutionalised violence of the military.

Police, Culture and the Security Crisis

The case of the military in Nigeria and most of the Third World countries is that of a hangover from colonial tutelage. Conventionally established to defend the cause of the nation internally and externally, the military institution in Nigeria was originally established by the colonialists to subjugate the local people in their quest for territorial expansion. Therefore, from its origin the military institution set itself against the same people they were supposed to protect. This anti-people character of the military institution in these Third World countries, especially Nigeria, is an aberration which subsequently carried over to the post-colonial military establishment. With the all these matters in mind, is it then a surprise to see Nigeria's national security threatened by the following factors under the military?

    (a) Separatist agitations leading to civil war and near ethnic cleansing;

    (b) Institutionalised corrupt practices due to the inequality in social welfare programmes;

    (c) Structural violence;

    (d) Sit-tight syndrome of the rulers;

    (e) High-handedness on the part of military rulers;

    (f) Security racketeering;

    (g) Human rights abuses;

    (h) Poverty.

These factors have bedevilled the Nigerian polity and rendered her national security planning prostrate. A heterogeneous society with over 254 ethnic groups, Nigeria since independence has suffered from one crisis to another, and there

appears to be no end to it. The military intervention in the country's body politic enthroned mediocrity, instability, corruption, poor management of the economy and a lack of commitment to national unity. Nigerian national security begs for cohesiveness as the polity is characterised by identity crisis, distribution crisis, penetration crisis, integration crisis and nation-building impasse. The civil war, which ravaged the country for thirty bitter months from 1967 to 1970, was an offshoot of the military's deplorable incursion into politics, as this drew the national security of the nation to the brink of collapse. Apart from the Bakassi debacle with Cameroon, Nigeria since independence has witnessed no external aggression. From the foregoing we can see how the military left their institutional function of combating threats to personal or human lives within the territorial limits of the Nigerian state, and allowed the country's national security to suffer the vicious circle of political violence.

For the military class the concept of national security is better seen and defended from the angle of their personal interest and not the national interest. The situation of national security is so bad in Nigeria that the death-squad type of killings by army undercover units is a popular trend. Some people earn their living form this security racket. For example, Brigadier-General Ibrahim Sabo (Rtd), the boss of the Directorate of Military Intelligence during the Abacha regime, noted in a press interview that during the Babangida and Abacha regimes there was continual intrigue. People would create a problem and then go and report to the system and thereafter ask for a specific amount of money to quell it. Those making money in the name of security would fake situations of insecurity and manufacture imaginary suspects. Similar points have been made by Albert (2005: 49-51). This situation clearly illustrates how the military use the excuse of security to minister to their personal needs and create security problems internally.

Every society has its methods of ensuring that people conform to the accepted norms and values, which ensure peace, security and stability. In countries with urban centres, the police act as the agent of social control. The word 'police' is derived from the Greek word 'Polis', meaning that part of a non-ecclesiastical administration having to do with the safety, health and order of state. According to Nigeria's constitution of 1989, under section 198 subsection 1, the police are supposed to accept the following responsibilities:

  (a) The prevention and detection of crime;

  (b) The protection of life and property;

  (c) The apprehension of offenders;

  (d) The preservation of law and order;

  (e) The due enforcement of laws and regulations with which they are directly charged;

(f) The performance of such military duties within and outside Nigeria as may be required of them by or under the authority of any act.

In Nigeria the police thus are the first line of defence in the maintenance of the internal security of the nation. However, the police have not lived up expectations as far as their duties to the citizenry are concerned. This is demonstrated by the high crime rate. Police operatives have become very corrupt and extort money from members of the public while discharging their duties. The employment of brutal and excessive force against members of the public has led to many extra-judicial killings, which has caused attitude of non-co-operation among the public with the police. This brutal conduct is a carry-over of the police from colonial times. The Nigerian police were moulded by the colonial powers with the aim of enforcing the laws of the British government and their means of enforcement were brutal and ruthless.

Public participation or co-operation with the police is a very important method of gathering intelligence on the activities of criminals in society. Negligence of this practice has prevented the utilisation of its useful elements for social challenges, for example, in the area of total health care delivery and greater empowerment of the community to complement the policing of the nation. The emergence of vigilante groups and their reliance on traditional cultural practices for their activities are illustrative of the relevance of traditional culture to contemporary security challenges in Nigeria. In fact, this strategy remains one of the cheapest methods of ensuring the safety of lives and property in the community. Cultural norms such as vigilance, diligence, cooperation, integrity, politeness, which characterise and guide group norms must therefore be integrated into any viable security institutions (Hartley 1999: 87). According to North (1989: 1321), security institutions are based on rules, enforcement and characteristics of such rules and norms of behaviour that structure repeated human interaction. In the case of Nigeria, members of the public have not been co-operating with the police in the area of information regarding criminal activities in their neighbourhood. One reason for this is that members of the public do not trust the police with information. This is due to cases of people who have given information and have been exposed by corrupt and undisciplined police officers to such criminals about whom information was provided. This unfortunately has often resulted in the killing of such informants.

At another level, many people do not understand what the concept of policing is about. The maintenance of law and order by security agencies is not just the responsibility of such agencies alone but also that of the members of the public. The mechanisms of social control in any society are a product of culture and imply that it is the responsibility of every citizen to partake in the maintenance of security. Where members of the public refuse to co-operate with law enforce-

ment agencies there are bound to be problems in maintaining law and order. The idea of policing connotes a kind of omnipresence, which cannot be achieved without public co-operation. In Nigeria this has resulted in a situation in which criminality is celebrated, and it has further contributed to lawlessness on the part of some citizens. This is one reason for the militia problem. The result of the prevalence of criminality is a society whose members do not feel secure. After all, the members of the public are always the ones most affected by a high crime wave, hence it is important that this attitude changes for a more effective policing of the nation.

Functions and Values of Creative Culture in the Security of Human and Technological Prospects

For Dzobo (1992: 123-130), the value of creative culture in the security of human and technological prospects subsists in the type of symbolised creative process of life. Thus, in his opinion, the drive to create is the basic and ultimate force behind all human behaviour; because the main aim of human creation is to realise a synthesis of being in all spheres of life. It is in this construct that the conception of creativity and the essence of true human prospects indicate the conception of man not just as a being who ruminates on life's experiences but also as a being who acts to change the world. This implies that man through free action employs basic empirical and innovative criteria in shaping his own history and destiny. Briskman (1980: 83-97) maintains, however, that the notion of creativity is permeated with evaluation. To adjudge a way of life as creative, bestows upon society the necessary standards and values that uplift human life. Existentialists also connect the possibility of human creativity, free and calculated, and not imposed freedom. This stems from the fact that man is creatively free precisely because only he can and must create himself. On the whole, cultural creativity is perceived as something which can be controlled, manipulated, engineered, or predicted. Gotesky and Breithaupt (1978: 23-25) state that the acceptability of a cultural creativity is used to characterise 'a person and the skill he possesses, a process and the new or better way it produces something, an activity and the occupation, vocation, or profession it elicits, a product and the ways it satisfies a long felt need, awakens strong feelings, alters living perspectives, recalls and revivifies the past; offers a total vision; etc., or all of these indiscriminately bundled together'.

The importance of securing human prospects in a cultural technological tradition is thus justified by the view that the value of technology is found in the representation it elicits which can be perceived by a subject as habitually worthy of desire. Some technological values are culturally significant because they signify or give concrete meaning to what is or has been rooted traditionally. Other technological values reflect bodies of knowledge which are normative; and as such

they prescribe or direct actions, which ought to be performed. Still other techno-logical values are aesthetically appreciative; they refer to what is worthy of being admired or contemplated with pleasure albeit old or new, past or present (Goulet 1987: 169). As M'Bow (1992: 14) opined, there can be no progress without grafting new knowledge onto the old. It follows then that technological knowl-edge is in itself a product of many inputs, in particular of traditional knowledge, skill and enterprise and their more modern paradigm of diffusion and applica-tion (Landes 1991: 69). It is true to an extent that much of early thinking on technological development did not accord a central place to culture either as a goal or as an instrumentality. However, there should be a re-channelling of cur-rents of thought that can be powerful in the twenty-first century to correct the continuing and obstructive persistence of the view that tradition would block substantial modernisation, as traditional values are incompatible with modernity (Dube 1988: 505). This is because culture cannot be dispensed with to promote technological growth, for it has critical functions, and modern technological de-velopment does not offer an adequate replacement for them (Dube 1988: 507).

Technological change is not an end or value in and of itself, but is rather an evaluation of the appreciation of it as a means to securing human well-being and to preserving human ideas and material innovations. To this end technological change was 'the result of deliberate effort to achieve a mechanical way of life ... The western European conceived of the machine because he wanted regularity, order, certainty, because he wished to reduce the movement of his fellows as well as the behaviour of the environment to a more definite, calculable basis' (Brozen 1952: 251). This means that one set of cultural values for which men strive is to improve the techniques needed to contribute to the attainment of freedom, human dignity, and democracy. This is why some scholars not only fear for the future of freedom and dignity but also fear that technological change is sweeping the world toward more wars and that these wars will be more destruc-tive as a result of the contribution of technology (Brozen 1952: 256-7).

Dube (1988: 508-11) maintains that culture or traditions cannot be treated as vestigial remains of an ancient past because they survive to the extent that they have definite technological functions. They contribute to a community's special sense of creativity and being. They also provide bases of social integration, and offer guidelines to innovative action during periods of uncertainty. Without re-placement by adequate functional analogues, one cannot contemplate disman-tling traditional structures because of their technological relevance as exemplars of bodies of knowledge. Decades have shown that development strategies that are not sensitive and responsive to the cultural fabric run the risk of encountering rough weather. This is all the more reason why cultural creativity is important but the over-mystification of it can result in concocted violation of historical facts.

For Dube, the politicisation of culture has its own inherent dangers, because it can be perverted and utilised to erode the core values and creative purposes of human and social security, such that its vulgarisation can be used to promote discord, conflict and violence. This means that any technological culture used to hamper the normal processes of heterogeneous cultural growth is in want of security. Culture has important aesthetic, psychic, creative and integrative techno-logical functions because most human security situations and goals lean on cul-tural definitions and valuations of the society's technological creation. Hence cul-ture cannot be ruled out from a meaningful consideration of human development (Dube 1988: 508).

For Goulet (1987: 166-176), traditional values play many roles in society; they bring identity, continuity and a sense of meaning to people. But not all traditions have a positive value for genuine development. This is where the humanising potential of technological values must be assessed with sensitivity and balance, especially in the ways that such technological cultures prove themselves useful to each new generation. Even in the context of ancient traditions, technological creativity is not to be received uncritically; rather each new generation should generate its own reasons for ratifying what its ancestors found to be valuable in such knowledge acquisition. And this means that the function and values of cul-ture must be technologically developed to improve the quality of life, such as values of authentic development even if it is in conflict with prevailing dominant traditional values. For Goulet (1987: 176), 'to design or build development on traditions and indigenous values is to espouse a philosophy of change founded on a basic trust in the ability of people, no matter how oppressed or impover-ished, to improve their lives, to understand the social forces that affect them, and eventually to harness these forces to processes of genuine human and societal development'.

Conclusion

A critical examination of the various cultural problems which threaten Nigeria's national security reveals that they are steeped in the cultural-ethical dimension. A lack of understanding of the far-reaching consequences of some of these cul-tural actions remains one important reason why it has been possible to subvert the Nigerian state. As a post-colonial African state and a developing nation for that matter, it is essential to develop a cultural transmission method through for-mal and informal education that will help create a greater awakening to the fun-damental problem of Nigeria, which is basically an ethical one. There is the need to create a vision of a Nigerian dream in which the various groups have roles to play, despite our differences. There is the need to unite the various groups through the stressing of those areas, within our cultures which are similar, as a way of putting an end to the issue of stratification in the society. Very importantly, there

is the need for an ethically based leadership. It is therefore necessary to enlighten Nigerians about the dangers of exposing ourselves to foreign cultural ideas, which can destabilise the country. This is necessitated by the fact that culture provides all sorts of nuances in communication and the amalgamation of the ethics of protective differences and communal solidarity necessary for national security.

There is the need to involve educational institutions in the security sector. The formal educational sector needs to be re-invented by incorporating critical ethical education directed at breaking ethnically bound values, religious barriers and so forth. It is necessary to promote and teach social ethics in order to raise the moral consciousness of citizens. The use of electronic media will also prove very useful in this effort because the wider population can be reached in this way. There is a need to involve the various Councils for Arts and Culture in states and at the Federal level. Such cultural administration establishments should be properly staffed with people trained in applied anthropological research methods. These cultural centres can assist in conducting research on the kinds of collective conduct in society which disturb peace and stability.

This work has emphasised the significance of a national cultural policy as an instrument of security and social engineering. This is crucial for national survival, insofar as national security is, in a significant sense, a product of culture. The critical clarification and interconnections of the material, institutional, and philosophical aspects of culture paved the way for a more systematic analysis of the dynamic elements of our culture(s) vis-à-vis national security. This cultural analysis situated the internal and external dimensions to national security.

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