



Shifting from State-Centric to Human-Based Security and Foreign Policy: A Conflict Management Technique in Nigeria?

Obinna Christian Ugwu¹, Jonas Ohabuenyi² , & Kelechi Elijah Nnamani² 

¹Department of Political Science, Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria

²Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study examined the efficacy of human-centered foreign and security policies in the management of insecurity in Nigeria. This highlights the limitations inherent to the dominant state-centric security mechanism in Nigeria. The study argues that the proliferation of traditional threats manifesting in the Boko Haram insurgency, Biafra separatist agitation, Niger Delta militancy, and Fulani herdsman uprising were attributed mainly to the government's disregard for socioeconomic gaps and political contexts that predispose people to aggressive behavior. Instead of addressing waves of insecurity, military operations complicate and widen their scope. The study, therefore, calls for a review of the existing security architecture and foreign policy objectives of the state in line with the principles of human security. Understanding the context of fueling and sustaining insecurity as well as evolving appropriate human-centric security and foreign policy measures are key to managing violent conflicts in Nigeria. Most importantly, appropriate constitutional provisions relating to human security should be strictly implemented, while professionals should be properly engaged in the task of developing and implementing foreign security policies in Nigeria.

Keywords

foreign policy; human security; security architecture; state-centric security; traditional threats

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INTRODUCTION

The multilateral engagements between scholars, states, and international institutions in the last two decades have spurred high-level advocacy for the mainstreaming of human security at the core of the security and foreign policy agendas of states in the present international system. This advocacy was necessitated by the evolution, exponential growth, dominance, and intensity of non-traditional threats, which have since displaced the initial interstate wars, previously contributing to the majority of deaths in the pre-Cold War era. For instance, while death tolls arising from interstate conflicts have diminished substantially from 31 percent in the 1980s to 19 percent in the 2000s (Dupuy & Rustad, 2018), human security-related fatalities have increased sharply over the last decade, representing at least 75 percent of global deaths in the millennium (Merz & Mack, 2012). Data from the Global Terrorism Index reveal that death tolls linked to terrorism and violent extremism progressed rapidly, from 11,133 in 2012 to 18,111 in 2013 and 32,756 in 2014 (Dattani et al., 2023; Institute for Economics & Peace, 2019). Similarly, cross-cutting evidence shows that in 2017 alone, diseases/epidemics and nutritional deficiencies contributed to more than 50 million and 50 thousand deaths respectively, across the globe (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2019a).

Indeed, these frightening scenarios have not only generated great humanitarian concern but have increasingly served as an albatross to the global development agenda. As such, it imposes a responsibility on states to review and restructure their security and foreign policies in line with the nature and demands of contemporary and emerging challenges. This adjustment has become imperative given the realization that deficits arising from underfunded agriculture, education, health, and critical infrastructure increase people's vulnerability to non-traditional threats, such as lack, want, abuse, diseases, forced migration, hunger, poverty, inequality, and attacks (Okolie et al., 2019). Evidently, the presence of these non-traditional threats often predisposes people to frustration and violent behavior and, in most cases, provides fertile ground for the proliferation of traditional threats to security, such as terrorism, ethnic and communal clashes, secessionist movements, and guerrilla warfare.

To comprehensively address the foregoing challenges posed by the limitations of state-centric security architecture, many states, including Canada, Norway, Japan, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden, have made substantial progress in reforming and integrating human security principles at the center of their external relations with other states. In 1998, Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo expressed a deep commitment to enthroning human security as an integral element of his diplomatic activities and security policies. According to him,

Humankind is under various types of threat. Environmental problems, such as global warming, are grave dangers not only for humans but also for future generations. In addition, transnational crimes such as illicit drugs and trafficking are increasing. Problems such as the exodus of refugees, violations of human rights, infectious diseases such as AIDS, terrorism, and anti-personnel landmines pose significant threats to all. Moreover, the problem of children experiencing armed conflict should never be overlooked. It is my deepest belief that human beings should be able to lead creative lives without threatening their survival or impairing their dignity (Edström, 2003).

Similarly, the Canadian Government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of International Affairs, has demonstrated a serious commitment to the pursuit of people-centered foreign policy and security reform. As part of these efforts, the government of Canada spearheaded the formation of the International Criminal Court with the mandate of protecting the vulnerable segment of the population, particularly in conflict-prone regions. Most importantly, the government has actively supported programs aimed at building capacity for conflict prevention; halting the proliferation of small arms; tackling corruption, drug trafficking, and international crime; and establishing concrete mechanisms that will protect the rights and welfare of vulnerable children and women (Moher, 2012). In the same vein, the Swiss government, through the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, has promoted poverty alleviation programs, good governance, peace building, and human rights protection of vulnerable persons as a basis for external interaction and transactions with other states (Trachsler, 2011).

Unfortunately, while the aforementioned states have made profound and robust progress in streamlining their foreign and security policies within the framework of human security, the Nigerian state is still inclined toward state-centric notions of security and foreign policy known to be incoherent, unspecific, outdated, and inconsistent with the domestic conditions and realities of the global system. At independence, the emergent Nigerian leadership, being conscious of the historical resentment between the three politically and ethnically polarized nationalities, pursued a defense-oriented policy that was more inclined to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state than the protection of the rights and dignity of citizens. Indeed, the state appropriated the majority of its resources to advance this objective at the national, continental, and international levels. At the continental level, Nigeria embraced a foreign policy thrust under a wider pan-African agenda through which it participated actively in the decolonialisation and defence of many African states, including Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Liberia, etc. (Sinclair, 1983). To boost its operational capacity in the defense of African states, Nigeria spearheaded the formation of the Organization of African Unity and Economic

Community of West African States, where it invested heavily in major peacekeeping operations.

As the Nigerian state prioritizes defense-based foreign policy over the welfare of the people, appropriate measures are yet to be implemented in response to growing domestic pressures and demands. Clearly, Nigeria's foreign policy has never been properly annexed to advance its economic development (Wachuku, 1961). Thus, despite possessing large quantities of crude oil and other valuable resources, Nigeria still ranks low in all spheres of life. At the socio-economic front, available records indicate that the maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births in Nigeria averages 1,100 while a thirteen year average (1999–2011) data on under-five mortality rate, per capita income, life expectancy, and unemployment rate stood at 84.79, 1,556.54, 48.95, and 7.6, respectively (Sede & Ohemeng, 2015). In its 2019 report, the UNDP categorized Nigeria among countries with a low human development index (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). According to the report, although Nigeria's HDI appreciated from 0.484 in 2010, 0.527 in 2015, 0.528 in 2016, 0.533 in 2017, and 0.534 in 2018, the country's average performance of 0.521 within the period under assessment was 158 of 189 countries. In addition, the World Economic Forum's 2016–17 Global Competitive Index classified Nigeria's infrastructure in 132 out of 138 countries (Bello-Schunemann & Porter, 2018). This significant deficit in basic and critical infrastructure remains a major obstacle to Nigeria's human and economic development. The Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index places Nigeria 146 out of 180 countries surveyed globally (Transparency International, 2020).

Undoubtedly, these ugly and terrifying socio-economic indicators have greatly worsened the living conditions of citizens, leading to frustrations and depression, aggravating social tensions, and incubating insecurity in the country. Recently, the spread of insecurity in Nigeria has progressively grown and acquired geopolitical identities. In the Niger Delta region, militancy and piracy dominate, whereas Fulani herdsmen carnage is prevalent in the north-central region. The Southeast and Southwest zones are battling with the incidences of cybercrime, ritual killings, kidnapping, and separatist movements. On the other hand, the North East is submerged by the Boko Haram insurgency, while the banditry enveloped the North West zone. The geographical dispersion of insecurity has made Nigeria one of the most insecure nations in the world (Bloom, 2022).

The implosion of these traditional threats has not only generated humanitarian crises, but also broadened the scope of insecurity in Nigeria. Therefore, this situation calls for a review of the Nigerian state's foreign and security policies. Although these issues have been raised to the forefront of discourse in the last decade, such efforts have relegated human security to the background. In this study, we examine the

potency of human-centered foreign and security policies as viable tools for the management of insecurity in Nigeria.

ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE LAST TWO DECADES

Scholarly analyses opine that a nation's foreign policy reflects the strategies, goals, and objectives it sets to achieve in its interactions with other states. It is a compendium of the national interests of a given state and strategies for realizing them. At all times, the contents and orientations of foreign policy are driven by the values of national interest. Although the concept of national interest is fraught with ambiguity and imprecision, scholars and policymakers have attempted to streamline the understanding of national interests within the framework of national security. In particular, the then President of Nigeria, General Babangida, conceives national interest in terms of national security interest, arguing that a nation's security has many ramifications at the core, which is the ultimate imperative that "the state should survive" and be able to protect internal (core) values from external threats (Akindede & Ate, 1986). The preceding argument was further substantiated by Nweke (1986), who noted that national interest is an embodiment of the sovereignty of the state, the inviolability of its territorial boundaries, and the right to individual and collective self-defense against internal and external threats. Moreover, Aluko (1981) identifies self-preservation, defense of the territorial integrity, and economic and social well-being of the people as the basic elements of Nigeria's national interest.

It is therefore deduced that national security is not just a critical aspect of national interest; both concepts are inextricably interwoven. As Okolie (Okolie, 2015) rightly noted, the idea of national interest lies within the ambit of national security. Similarly, Kumar (2019) observed that national security, whether approached in limited or broad spectra, forms a significant component of a country's national interest. Morgenthau equally attests that the national interest of a peace-loving nation can only be defined in terms of national security and that national security must be defined as the integrity of the national territory and its institutions (Morgenthau, 1948); hence, a nation's security policy, at least from a realist perspective, is essentially an expression of its national interest. This is because the national security policy of a country takes cognizance and reinforces a nation's values in order to appropriately prioritize threats and interests (DuMont, 2019). Ordinarily, these values are reflected entirely or indirectly through the formulation of goals, since the essence of a national security policy is to articulate a plan of action in support of those core values.

Nigeria's grand strategy since independence is rooted in state-centric realist persuasion and, as such, is designed to respond to threats capable of undermining the national interest of the state. The grand framework for Nigeria's national security is principally derived from Section 14(2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which states that the security and welfare of citizens should be the primary purpose of the state ([Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999](#)). Although Nigeria operated without a harmonized, unified, comprehensive, and definite national security policy, it was the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, which, in response to the growing level of insecurity in the Niger Delta region, developed and launched the country's initial grand strategy in 2000. The core of the grand strategy is the promotion of the inviolability of the Nigerian state and the protection of citizens from physical attacks. In addition, security policy prioritizes the defense of African unity, independence, and involvement in regional economic development and security cooperation ([Ate, 2012](#)).

However, given the increasing waves of insurgency, ethno-religious clashes, and organized crime in Nigeria, then President Goodluck Jonathan, through the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA), developed and published the Nigeria National Security Strategy in 2014 ([Office of the National Security Adviser, 2014](#)). This policy encompasses a comprehensive blueprint to address the challenges of Nigeria's strategic interests. While prioritizing elements of national power, the security strategy relies on sector-driven and specific-oriented frameworks, such as the National Defence Policy, National Counter Terrorism Strategy, National Policy on Public Safety, and National Cyber Security Strategy, to deal with the entire gamut of threats to national and physical security, development, peace, and the nation's interest at regional, continental, and intercontinental levels ([Bala & Ouédraogo, 2018](#)). Collectively, these strategies address core national security interests such as the safety of individuals, sovereignty and defense of territory, sub-regional security and economic cooperation, and promotion of peace, security, development, democracy, etc. At specific levels, they respond to a series of threats to national security, including terrorism, resurgence of separatist movements, illegal migration, cyber security, financial and border crimes, terrorism, transnational crimes, climate change-induced conflict, Fulani herdsmen crises, oil theft, kidnapping, ethno-religious skirmishes, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

As part of the framework, the Nigeria National Security Strategy commits to total reliance on an offensive approach or military operations to counter internal insurrections and external threats. Particularly in the management of the Niger Delta uprising, the state orchestrated acts of violence against indigenous protesters (whether operating at the individual or group level) whose grouse stemmed from many years of

destruction of means of livelihood due to oil exploitation. In 2009, a clash between the Joint Task Force, comprising personnel from the military, police, and paramilitary agencies, and the Niger Delta militants led to several deaths, destruction of several communities, and displacement of some 20,000 people (Ibaba, 2011). In addition, the intensification of the Boko Haram insurgency is mostly attributed to the extra-judicial killing of its pioneer leader, Mohammed Yusuf, and regular crackdowns on members since 2009. Similarly, the use of brutal force against the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra accounted for the death of at least 150 pro-Biafra protesters in 2016 (Amnesty International, 2016). At the international level, Nigeria has demonstrated its state-centric approach in managing protracted conflicts at the regional, continental, and global levels. The country deployed its military personnel for operations, such as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2010, the United Nations Organization Interim Security Force for Abyei in 2011, the United Nations Organization in the Republic of South Sudan in 2011, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali in 2013, and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (Chigozie & Ituma, 2015).

Nigeria's continual inclination toward a state-centric approach in resolving insecurity has been found to be flawed in many ways. Okolie et al. (2019) argue that some threats to national security, such as globalization, terrorism, climate change, and organized crimes, require a non-military response. Applying military force to security issues such as separatist movements, the Boko Haram insurgency, Niger Delta militancy, and ethno-regional uprising are reactive rather than proactive and preemptive. This is because the state-centric security measure focuses on addressing the problem after the crime, and the act of violence has been perpetrated. Viable and appropriate conflict resolution techniques, however, explore and prioritize the contexts generating untoward reactions and aggressive behavior from people. In the case of the Fulani Herdsmen-crop farmer conflict, indiscriminate migration arising from the ecological misfortunes in some parts of the North have been implicated, while growing political alienation and structural inequity account for the renewed separatist movements in Nigeria. On the other hand, deep socio-economic gaps (due to poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, etc.) have been the major cause of armed robbery, kidnapping, transnational, and organized crimes in Nigeria. Thus, understanding these contexts and deploying suitable counter-insecurity strategies is key to conflict resolution, although this is missing in the security agenda of the Nigerian state. Beyond this, military operations impose economic costs on states grappling with scarce resources, and most importantly, generate and deepen human security crises in Nigeria.

HUMAN SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF SPATE OF VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Nigeria's affluence is inversely proportional to poor socioeconomic indicators. It is a country richly endowed with vast material and human resources; yet it became the poverty headquarters of the world in 2018, having displaced India, the previous occupier (Kharas et al., 2018). Available data show that Nigeria's population living below extreme poverty levels grew progressively from 69 million in 2004 to a whopping figure of 91 million in 2018 (Sahara Reporters, 2019). The UNICEF infrastructure needs assessment indicates that lack of access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and other critical facilities account for Nigeria's high infant mortality, ranking ninth highest globally in 2017 (United Nations Children's Fund, 2017). At 52.1 years, Nigeria has among the lowest life expectancies worldwide, while the prevalence and outbreak of other deadly diseases have continually threatened the health conditions of citizens. Malaria and HIV/AIDS in Nigeria account for 300,000 and 150,000 deaths, respectively, while maternal mortality is the cause of 59,000 deaths per annum (Muhammad et al., 2017). In 2018, the Global Hunger Index scored Nigeria 31.1, an indication that the country is suffering from severe hunger due to food shortages (Olonade et al., 2019), and climate change-induced desert encroachment has been a major facilitator of indiscriminate migration and attendant violent conflicts in Nigeria.

While these poor socio-economic indicators in Nigeria have worsened the living conditions of citizens and amplified the scope of inequality in Nigeria, it has created an atmosphere of frustration, exclusion, and deprivation among the people. Indeed, several studies have shown that acting collectively or separately (frustration, deprivation, grievances, and exclusion) is a proximate condition for restiveness, insurgency, militancy, and the proliferation of crimes (Archibong, 2018; Arowosegbe, 2009; Gurr, 2000; International Crisis Group, 2018; Onapajo & Uzodike, 2012). On the other hand, while corruption and repressive state policies predispose people to violent behavior, the government's ineptitude and negligence in handling and managing these grievances often generate exclusion, frustration, and violent tendencies. An inspection of the origin of the Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani Herdsmen uprising, Niger Delta militancy, separatist agitations, kidnapping, cybercrime, and other forms of vices is often traceable to unresolved grievances arising from the government's ineptitude and inaction.

Generally, most of today's security challenges started with protests before degenerating into full-blown violent conflict. Niger Delta militancy was an upshot of the government's negligence of the oil-rich region, ravaged by environmental deterioration, poverty, and infrastructural deficit. As protests could not provide a solution to the demands of the inhabitants, they snowballed into militancy, leading to

the destruction of lives and property. On the other hand, the government's reluctance to mitigate the adverse effects of desert encroachment in some parts of the northern region has been the major precursor to the indiscriminate migration of Fulani Herdsmen in search of means of subsistence. The unregulated grazing of herds on farmland, apart from wreaking havoc on crops, land fertility, and aquatic lives, constantly provokes clashes between sedentary farmers and herdsmen with devastating consequences on human lives and sources of livelihood. Succinctly put, the shrinking of ecological space and resorts creates an atmosphere of eco-scarcity that raises the stake and puts over-emphasis on limited resources ([Laczko & Aghazarm, 2009](#)). The outcome was fierce competition and a desperate struggle for limited resources. In this circumstance, conflict not only becomes the final resort but also a matter of subsistence.

Similarly, the seemingly unequal gap between the poor and the rich, as well as the incapacity of the government to address this gap, has been implicated as one of the major causes and sustainers of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. In addition, the rising waves of separatist agitations manifesting in the Biafran and O'odua Movements are attributed to perceived injustices, marginalization, and oppression of some ethnic nationalities within the Nigerian state. Although this development has led to the loss of human lives and property, the burning of tires during protests contributes heavily to the depletion of ozone layers. Similarly, the seemingly unequal gap between the poor and the rich, as well as the incapacity of the government to address this gap, has been implicated as one of the major causes and sustainers of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Most importantly, the prevalence of kidnapping, armed robbery, and organized and transnational crimes have roots in the dysfunctional socio-economic conditions brought to bear on citizens.

These crises, as well as accompanying state-centric responses, have heightened human security concerns in Nigeria. In the last count, credible reports indicate that Boko Haram's violent extremism accounted for the killing of 37,000 people and displacement of over 2.5 million people in the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states ([Council on Foreign Relations, 2019](#); [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2019](#)). Due to heightened tensions in the affected areas, inhabitants (mostly large-scale farmers) are forced to flee their homes, communities, and farmlands. When the Boko Haram insurgents strike, farmlands, markets, and livelihood holdings are usually affected. Food production plummeted drastically, leading to food shortages, an increase in the prices of food commodities, and acute hunger. Available evidence shows that given the intensity of Boko Haram attacks, more than 5.2 million people in the North East region are stuck with acute food insecurity, while a total of 54,000 inhabitants are facing famine and malnutrition ([ReliefWeb, 2015](#)). The ([Council on Foreign Relations, 2019](#); [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(2019\)](#)) reported that malnutrition is the

direct cause of 45 percent of all deaths in Nigeria, especially in the northern region of Nigeria.

Beyond the dreadful implications for food security, cases of widespread human rights abuses and violations abound in Nigeria (OHCHR 2015). It ranges from the destruction of education and religious facilities, abduction of women and children, forced child recruitment, arbitrary detention of captives, violence against children, use of children and women for suicide bombing missions, to beheading of captives. Between 2009 and 2018, it was on record that Boko Haram insurgents masterminded the following: abduction of an estimated 1000 schoolchildren, including 276 Chibok and 110 Dapchi schoolgirls, use of 83 children for suicide bombing operations, killing at least 2,295 teachers, and destruction of more than 1,400 schools ([United Nations Children's Fund, 2018](#)). Similarly, military counterinsurgency operations according to reports have contributed to a series of human rights violations perpetrated by the Nigerian state. According to the Human Rights Watch ([2017](#)), a military airstrike killed an estimated 234 civilians, including nine aid workers, and injured 100 more in Rann, Borno State, in 2018. The carnage perpetrated by the Boko Haram insurgents and military responses have imposed the most severe humanitarian crises in the North East region of the country ([United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2019b](#)).

The protracted clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and sedentary farmers have recently assumed Nigeria's gravest challenge and deadliest conflict, contributing to the deaths of more citizens than those of the Boko Haram insurgency. Although frequent confrontations between the two groups according to reports have led to the deaths of more than 10,000 people in the last decade, nearly 4000 fatalities were recorded between 2017 and 2018 ([Ilo et al., 2019](#)). In 2018 alone, statistics show that the farmer–herder crises accounted for the deaths of an estimated 1,949 and displacement of more than 300,000 people ([Ilo et al., 2019](#)). Apart from human fatalities, the conflict has widened ethnic, regional, and religious polarization in the country, with some accusing the state of complicity in the conflict.

Moreover, the confrontation that each of the Biafran Separatist Movement and the Shia sect group occasionally has with the security forces of the Nigerian state produces unprecedented and undesirable outcomes for human security credentials in the country. For instance, members of the Indigenous People of Biafra have been subjected to unlawful arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings. Between 2015 and 2019, clashes involving the Biafran separatist movement and military officers were responsible for the deaths of 200 members of the former group ([Human Right Watch, 2017](#)). A peaceful demonstration on 29th and 30, 2016, turned bloody when the Nigerian military opened fire on members of the IPOB, leading to the death of at least 60 persons and over 70 injured ([Human Right Watch, 2017](#)). Members of the IPOB secessionist movement were

ambushed by the security forces at the family home of the group's leader in Afara-Ukwu, Abia. At the end, 150 deaths were recorded; an unspecified number of members were abducted, while the where-about of the group's leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, became unknown after the incident ([Callamard, 2019](#)). Likewise, members of the Shia sect, otherwise known as the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), numbering forty-two, were killed, while 115 were unjustly arrested by Nigerian security forces for protesting against the illegal detention of their leader, Sheik Zakzakky ([Amnesty International, 2016](#)).

Drawing from the foregoing, it is evident that the state-centric strategic culture of Nigeria has in the last two decades created untold human security crises, almost dragging the nation to the brink and threatening the consumption of its people. The implication of defining security and foreign policy from this narrow perspective is to isolate other non-military factors, such as climate change, terrorism, global economic crisis, infectious diseases, resource scarcity, underdevelopment, social inequality, and poverty, which directly threaten the security of a state. While these threats are apparent, birthing the Boko Haram insurgency, herders-crop farmers' conflict, ethno-religious clashes, banditry, armed robbery, and organized crimes, Nigeria's foreign policy is tilted towards exploring foreign-based military assistance in combating these security challenges. This provides the opportunity to generate context-based solutions to the current waves of insecurity in Nigeria over the last two decades.

INTEGRATING THE HUMAN SECURITY INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Nigeria's grand strategy and foreign policy objectives are state-centric, rooted in realist persuasion, and driven using the instrument of violence to deter internal insurrections and external attacks. State-centric security and foreign policies are fundamentally limited in several ways. First, they address security challenges peripherally by attacking the perpetrators instead of mirroring situational and contextual factors underpinning aggressive and reactionary behavior in people. Therefore, the implication is that these inappropriate strategies, instead of addressing the identified security challenges, complicate the already tense situation. Secondly, state-centric security and foreign policy approaches to security are prone to human rights abuses and repression since dissidence, protest, and dissension are perceived as threats capable of eroding the sovereignty and integrity of a state. Third, and most importantly, reliance on military force to manage conflicts is capital-intensive; it entails heavy public spending on the procurement of military hardware and maintenance of personnel at the expense of citizens' welfare.

In light of the foregoing, many states have responded to growing and expanded security concerns by reforming, redefining, and restructuring their security architectures and foreign policy objectives in line with the demands of human security. Norway and Canada have been pursuing a new foreign policy framework anchored on human security, whereas Japan has incorporated human security provisioning at the center of its relations with other countries (Alkire, 2003). Human-centered foreign policy deals with a set of state objectives that places individual rather than military capability at the core of its external relations with other states. It is a people-oriented foreign policy objective that offers a pragmatic approach to many of the underlying threats that confront individuals' daily lives. Strengthening human-centric efforts from the perspective of protecting the lives, livelihoods, and dignity of individual human beings and realizing the abundant potential inherent in each individual is the focal point of this framework (Akiyama, 2004), which includes drawing attention to a wide range of challenges interfacing between development, security, and human rights, and promoting an integrated, coordinated, and people-centric approach to peace, security, and development.

Overcoming the present security challenges (some transnational in nature) bedeviling the country, Nigeria is obliged to harmonize and streamline its foreign policy and grand strategy within the framework of human security. This objective should prioritize the needs, wants, and fears of citizens as well as the freedom of people from existential threats. It should further address sustainable peace by identifying the socio-economic and political contexts that generate grievances and predispose people to violent behavior. This strategy should be comprehensive, inclusive, coherent, and measured in seven key areas representing the different components of human development, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Dimensions and Indicators of Human Security

Dimensions of Human Security	Indicators
Food security	Physical and economic access to food; access to food supply
Environmental security	Prevention of water pollution, prevention of air pollution, prevention from deforestation, irrigated land conservation, prevention of natural hazards such as droughts, floods, cyclones, earthquakes
Economic security	Access to employment opportunities, credit facilities and other economic opportunities; freedom from poverty
Health security	Access to safe water, living in a safe environment, access to health services, access to safe and affordable family planning and basic support during pregnancy and delivery,

Dimensions of Human Security	Indicators
Personal security	prevention of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and to have basic knowledge to live a healthy life. Freedom from physical violence in all its forms, human trafficking, child labour
Political security	Protection of human rights and well-being of all people; protection of people against state repression such as freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of voting; abolishment of political detention, imprisonment, systematic ill treatment, and disappearance of detained persons, are also covered under political security.
Community security	Conservation of traditions and cultures, languages and commonly held values; abolishment of ethnic discrimination, prevention of ethnic conflicts, and protection of indigenous people.

Source: United Nations (2016).

A review of the foregoing indicators aptly shows that Sections 13–20 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has, whether covertly or overtly, recognized human security as the foundational basis of the fundamental objectives and directives principles of state policy. While Section 14 declares that the security and welfare of the people shall be the *raison d'être* of the Nigerian government, Section 16(2d) further maintains that the state shall provide suitable and adequate shelter, food, employment, sick benefits, reasonable minimum living wages, and caters to disabled citizens. To advance the political aspect of human security, Sections 17 (1&2a) affirm that the state's social order shall be founded on ideals of freedom, equality, and justice in a way that promotes citizens' equality of rights, obligations, and opportunities before the law. Further, Subsection 3 declares that the state shall direct its policy to ensure that all citizens, without discrimination on any group, have the opportunity to secure adequate means of livelihood, as well as adequate opportunities to secure suitable employment. On the other hand, Subsection 3 (c-d) notes that the health, safety, and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused through the provision of adequate health and other infrastructural facilities. In addition, Section 15(2) prohibits discrimination of citizens based on sex, religion, place of origin, status, ethnic or linguistic association, or ties in line with the community dimension of human security.

On 'educational objectives,' Section 18 of the constitution reiterates the government's readiness to direct its policy towards promoting science & technology and eradicating illiteracy through free, compulsory, and universal primary education, free secondary education, free university education, and free adult literacy program. Most importantly, the Constitution recognizes the preponderant role of the environment

in shaping the existence of people. Thus, Section 20 declares that the state should protect and improve the environment and safeguard the air, water, land, forest, and wildlife in Nigeria. Environmental protection is imperative because ecological misfortunes such as floods, water scarcity, pollution, climate change, desertification, and drought have the propensity to induce migration and provoke conflict. It is also based on the recognition that the realization of social, economic, and political rights of the people cannot be realized in an unfriendly environment. Therefore, the protection of land, water, air, and wildlife was accorded due importance.

However, despite these constitutional recognitions and encapsulations, growing evidence suggests that the Nigerian state is yet to rely on these sections to overhaul the country's security architecture and foreign policy objectives to meet human security demands. Thus, due to the increasing prevalence and resurgence of non-traditional threats in Nigeria, it behooves the country to restructure the security architecture and foreign policy direction to address the current development and security challenges, including poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, ethnic cleansing, Boko Haram Insurgency, herders-farmers conflict, separatist agitations, ethno-regional contestations, organized crimes, and social inequality. In doing so, the Nigerian government must prioritize qualitative education, job creation, poverty reduction, political freedom, rule of law, a healthy and sustainable environment, access to water and sanitation facilities, affordable housing, access to quality healthcare, inclusiveness, and greater economic opportunities for all citizens. Beyond this, human security-centered foreign policy, which focuses specifically on the pursuit of sustainable development, equal opportunities, freedom from wants, inclusive peace, justice, well-being, and dignity of all, is also key to the achievement of Agenda 2030 initiatives in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

This article analyzed Nigeria's foreign and security policies in the last two decades to understand their contents, outcomes, and possibly inherent weaknesses. The prevalence of security challenges that have, in no small measure, threatened the corporate existence of the Nigerian state and, ultimately, turned it into a theatre of war necessitated this study. The study noted that the state-centric approach to foreign and security policies has fundamentally diverted the government's attention from the needs, wants, and fears of people. As a result, deprivation, poverty, exclusion, inequality, resource scarcity, etc. have pervaded the Nigerian state, generating traditional threats, as seen in the Boko Haram insurgency, Niger Delta militancy, Fulani Herdsmen crises, armed robbery, kidnapping, organized and trans-border crimes, and separatist

agitations. Reliance on military operations has deepened and complicated security crises by exposing the state to untoward humanitarian crises and the destruction of property.

Therefore, this situation demands a context-based solution that requires preemption, identification, and management of situational factors that threaten security. This further necessitates the readjustment of Nigeria's security architecture and foreign policy objectives to correspond with the dictates of human security. It calls for the strict implementation of Sections 13–20 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the benefit of citizens. Beyond this, an institutional-based human security framework should be established to provide an effective coordination of Nigeria's external relations with other states. Most importantly, Nigeria's foreign policymaking and implementation machinery should be manned by experts in the art of diplomacy, negotiation, and dynamics of the global political economy, while relevant professional organizations such as the Nigerian Political Science Association, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, and Nigerian Institute of International Affairs should play key roles in the foreign policy process.

Author Contributions

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Informed consent was not required for this study.

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to institutional policies.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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