Issues in Domestic Security

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Abstract

Employing qualitative content analysis as its tool, this coursework considers as a major requirement has meticulously provided insight into issues in domestic security. Under the lens of the social contract theory as its theoretical framework that guided the inquiry or study, this paper argued that issues in domestic security come as states obligation to ensure the safety of its citizens and people. It has conceptualized domestic security as threats that are addressed not by traditional military means. As part of the clarifications, this study narrowed the concept of domestic security to internal security that predominantly cuts across cultures or societies. Essentially, the paper conceptualized issues in domestic security as the challenges impeding the measures and the fight against internal threats that varied across cultures.

With an emphasis on Liberia as the contextual background, this paper examined issues in Liberia domestic security. It concluded that the issues in Liberia internal security are not merely threats but a multiplicity of factors such as logistics (mobility, vehicles, accessories, equipment), scanty manpower, lack of professionalism, corruption, police brutality, among others impeding the mitigation, alleviation, detection, and prevention of security threats.

Keywords: *Domestic Security, Issues in Domestic Security, Internal Security, Social Contract Theory*

Introduction

Since the inauguration of the Peace of Westphalia in 1684, nations and states in their bid to provide security to protect their people and resources continue to face challenges despite concert efforts or development to repel, counter, and tackle security issues. For example, the growth of violent extremism and terrorism which have devastated the lives of people in West Africa and Sahel countries, especially in Nigeria, Cameroun in the Lake Chad Basin, Mali, Burkina Faso, etc. are notorious facts explaining issues of domestic security in these countries (Frimpong, 2020). In the Western hemisphere, precisely, in the United States of America or

the US, illegal drugs, cybercrime, gun violence, migration threats, etc. are some of the notorious facts explaining issues in the US domestic or homeland security.

In the UK, the enduring and significant cyber threats to its critical infrastructure present a clear picture of one of the main issues its domestic security faces (Hill, 2023).

China is also faced with telecom fraud as a serious problem as one of the main issues in their domestic security evidenced by the indictment of over 34,000 individuals for telecom fraud and more than 200,000 for related crimes, including aiding telecom fraud and concealing criminal proceeds (NPC Observer, 2023).

Despite the variance in the above nation states, Liberia is no exception to issues in domestic security. It continues to have its fair share.

Against this backdrop, this paper which is a coursework requirement takes a deeper look into issues in domestic security with an emphasis on the Liberian society as the contextual background. By doing so, this paper is structured into four parts or segments. The first that encapsulates the introduction, material, and method conceptualizes domestic security. This segment also distinguishes domestic security from national security. It treats domestic security as a subset or sub-component of national.

The second segment explores issues in domestic security. In other words, it explains what constitutes issues in domestic security. The third segment puts the paper into context. Precisely, it examines issues in Liberia's domestic security. Finally, the last segment concludes the paper.

Methodology and Materials

This paper or study adopts qualitative content analysis as its methodology for exploring the topic (Delve, n.d.). In this method, the researcher collects textual data from books, articles, web pages, and other sources. It is useful in providing a wealth of information about a particular topic or area of research (Griffing, 2023). The main essence of embarking on this method is not merely to repeat what has been articulated by other authors. But to help the researcher understand and provide interpretative analysis of the content necessary for replication and valid inferences. Sourced or collected from the internet through the Google Search Engine, the textual data are the materials equated to the literature review relevant to the topic under interrogation.

Contribution to Knowledge

Even though this assignment or paper is a coursework requirement. However, it contributes to knowledge in so many ways. First, it provides essential enlightenment about aspects and issues of Liberia's internal security worthy of citation, or reference in any research work. Second, it has intellectualized issues in domestic security. Finally, the paper may serve as guidance for further research to be carried out on the subject matter in areas that the paper did not cover or touch.

Theoretical Framework

In any academic research, the theoretical framework provides a lens that helps the researcher establish bodies of knowledge to provide a structure that guides the inquiry or study. As its theoretical framework, this study examines the social contract theory.

Social Contract Theory

Popularized by Thomas Hobbes in his historic but classic essay "Leviathan" in the 17th century, the theory argued that in a state of nature, without any governing authority, individuals would suffer a constant fear of violent death. To avoid this, they willingly enter into a social contract where they surrender certain freedoms to a sovereign ruler (government) in exchange for protection and security (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946). Another progenitor, John Locke emphasized the importance of individual rights and believed that the purpose of the social contract was to protect these rights. He argued that if a government failed to do so, individuals had the right to rebel and establish a new social contract (Main, 2023).

By interpretation, the social contract theory places the obligation upon the government or state as the contracting party to protect its citizens against security threats that also have human rights implications. This is why Locke in his emphasis reminded the state or government about the obvious consequences of reneging on the maintenance of domestic security. That is to say, as far as the contract or agreement is concerned, the citizens reserve the right to replace the government either through popular uprising, popular sovereignty, or through the ballot box.

Despite decades following the development and perhaps obvious demerits or shortcomings of the social contract theory, it has shaped modern political thought and continues to be relevant in discussions on governance and individual rights. The case of the infamous Arab Spring that started in Tunisia could validate the relevance of the social contract theory in contemporary society. Arguably, the failure of the respective governments in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Algeria, to protect the rights of their citizens is among the reasons that explained the popular uprising. The concept of security that also encapsulates human rights transcends crimes. It stretches its tentacles to poverty, unemployment, education, health, etc. All these cross-cutting issues have security implications that one way or the other contributed to the Arab Spring.

Conceptual Clarification

From a research perspective, especially in social sciences in general, many people understand concepts widely in different ways, and studies show that concepts are often ambiguous because of differences in how they are interpreted or explained in different contexts (Fischer, 1982). So, to avoid or move away from ambiguity and more importantly, narrow the discussion, conceptual clarity remains imperative.

Domestic Security

The meaning of domestic security has been a problematic issue since there is no consensus on an acceptable definition for it. Hence a concept is rather used to explain what it means depending on the standpoint of the interpreter.

According to the Report of the Controller and Auditor-General (2003), domestic security is defined as "preventing or defending against threats that are unconventional in approach (i.e. not by traditional military means) and are directed towards the interior of a state rather than its external forces." By this definition, it makes no flaw or error to narrow the concept to internal security. Meaning that it entails measures by the state to ensure safety against internal threats. These measures center around counterintelligence, counterterrorism, crime prevention, etc., Moreover, the definition that excludes the military also implies relevant security communities and perhaps other relevant line agencies saddled with the responsibilities of maintaining domestic security. Important in

the definition is "threats". From an internal security perspective, it includes any harm, danger, or counterproductive to what Prof. Paul D. Williams described in his famous book "Security Studies, an Introduction" as "Cherished Values" (Williams, 2008). Discerning the mind of Prof. Williams, cherished values are context-driven bordering on both internal and external security threats. They are what a given society places a premium on because of their pivotal functions germane to the legitimacy of the government saddled with the legal responsibility of maintaining domestic security. In the context of domestic security, cherished values encapsulate issues that threaten the lives of the people. Depending on the society, it could be crimes and any other things such as health outbreaks, epidemics, or sociopolitical stagnation that have security implications.

To articulate the threats to domestic security in other words, they may be targeted at either the state's citizens, or the organs and infrastructure of the state itself, and may range from petty crime, serious organized crime, political or industrial unrest, or even domestic terrorism. Arguably, foreign powers may also act as a threat to domestic security, by either committing or sponsoring terrorism or rebellion, without declaring war. For example, when the former US ambassador to Liberia, Michael McCarthy called upon Liberians to 'stand up to corruption, at the same time accusing the government of 'neglect' and 'contempt' for citizens (Arab News, 2023) following the sanction of some senior government officials by the US Treasury Department, the government conceptualized his assertion as a threat to internal security because of the propensity to incite popular uprising against the government (Dopoe, 2022).

Actors of Domestic Security

With closed reference to the theoretical framework that places the obligation of security on the shoulders of the government or state, it implies that in the theater of domestic security, the government is the prime actor that relies on statutory agencies to maintain domestic security. So, as a concept, domestic security actors represent an array of organizations or structures with different nomenclatures but convey the same core functions that traditionally exclude the military. These actors coordinate their core functions with relevant agencies to maintain domestic security. For example, in the US, the "Department of Homeland Security" is responsible for public security through customs, border, and immigration enforcement, emergency response to natural and manmade disasters, antiterrorism work, and cybersecurity (Homeland Security, 2012), in the UK, the "M15" that deals with threats inside the UK (Northcott, 2007). Also, the National Crime Agency protects the public from the most serious threats by disrupting and bringing to justice those serious and organized criminals who present the highest risk to the UK (Storm, 2020). In South Africa, is the "Domestic Branch of the State Security Agency" responsible for domestic and counterintelligence (Storm, 2020). In Russia, it is the "Federal Security Service" mandated for counterintelligence, internal and border security, counterterrorism, surveillance, and investigating some other types of serious crimes and federal law violations (Pringle, 2024). In Nigeria, it is the" State Security Service" responsible for protecting and defending the Federal Republic of Nigeria against domestic threats, or to detect and prevent crimes within Nigeria that may threaten the national security of Nigeria (National Security Agencies Act 1986 as cited by ABE, 2023). In Ghana, the Bureau of National Investigations oversees matters of counterintelligence

and internal security of Ghana (The Security and Intelligence Agencies Act (Act 526) 1996).

In Egypt, it is the National Security Agency also equated to Homeland Security that is extremely visible for counterintelligence, internal and border security, counterterrorism, and surveillance (El Deeb, 2014).

In China, the Ministry of Public Security is the principal Chinese police authority with other agencies under the State Council is responsible for the country's public security (The State Council, 2014).

In addition to the above examples, the police departments buttressed by other relevant line agencies are the first point of contact and the front liners for domestic security.

Issues in Domestic Security

As a continuation of the conceptual clarifications of domestic security, it behooves this paper to speak to the issues in domestic security. In the opinion of this paper, issues in domestic security could be conceptualized or defined as a multiplicity of factors related to security that require attention or discussion. They require attention or discussion simply because of the threats posed to domestic security. They are what societies are confronted or faced with. Arguably, these issues vary across cultures. They may include domestic terrorism, drug trafficking, drug abuse, crime, gun violence, cybercrime, high or growing waves of youth unemployment, health epidemics, etc. On the flip side of the same coin, issues in domestic security also encapsulate challenges impeding the prevention, defending, mitigation, or alleviation of looming threats that are unconventional in approach (i.e. not by traditional military means).

Not to make the conceptualization of issues in domestic security an abstract perception, examples are imperative to make the concept concrete, empirical, applicable, or practical. As mentioned in the introduction, the US despite ongoing debates and police reform is still facing gun violence, mass shootings police brutality causing deaths, and drug trafficking. 48,830 people died from gun-related injuries in the US in 2021, according to the latest data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (BBC News, 2023).

The deadliest mass shooting, in Las Vegas in 2017, killed more than 50 people and left 500 wounded. The vast majority of mass shootings, however, leave fewer than 10 people dead (BBC News, 2023). According to data collected by The Washington Post, police shot and killed at least 1,055 people nationwide last year, the most since the newspaper began tracking fatal shootings by officers in 2015. That is more than the 1,021 shootings in 2020 and the 999 in 2019 (Bunn, 2022).

In Uvalde, Texas twenty-one people were killed in a school shooting, the majority of whom were children (El-Bawab, 2022).

China is also faced with telecom fraud as a serious problem as one of the main issues in their domestic security evidenced by the indictment of over 34,000 individuals for telecom fraud and more than 200,000 for related crimes, including aiding telecom fraud and concealing criminal proceeds (NPC Observer, 2023).

Look at Nigeria. According to National Security Adviser Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, besides the prolonged occurrence of Boko Haram, kidnapping has replaced armed robbery in Nigeria because people no longer carry cash. A pastor of the Evangelical Church Winning

All, ECWA, was killed by his abductors after the criminals collected N1,000,000 ransom from his family. The Enugu State branch of the Nigeria Medical Association went on a strike over the kidnapped of 10 doctors in the state in the last two months (Vanguard, 2023).

The above examples of the issues associated with the three countries' (US, China, and Nigeria) domestic security explain not only their variances. Rather, the examples imply the inherent challenges standing in the way of mitigating, preventing, or alleviating the threats. In the US, it can be argued that logistics are not among the main challenges to gun control. Politics seems to be the obvious overriding challenge. The concept of gun politics in the US by two primary opposing ideologies concerning the private ownership of firearms explains it all (Spitzer, 2024).

In the case of China, despite significant wins against telecom fraud evidenced by a total of 31,000 telecom fraud suspects transferred to China from northern Myanmar including 63 key gang members and 1,531 individuals wanted for online crimes, there are still hurdles to overcome. Cross-border cooperation and prevention are keys to tackling emerging crimes (Zekun, 2024).

Nigeria's security issues present multiple challenges. Arguably, armed robbery and kidnapping are caused by multiple factors such as unemployment, insecurity, politics, abject poverty, corruption and fraud, political influence, joblessness, terrorism, lack of capital punishment by the government, the changing value system and quick-money syndrome (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2020).

Domestic Security -A Subset of National Security

If care is not taken, domestic security could be equated to national security because they appear synonymous. To avoid what could be termed as technical intellectual error, it behooves this paper to provide elucidation. In the opinion of the author of this paper, domestic security is a subset or subcomponent of national security. Traditionally narrowed to the protection of the state against military attack justified by the theory of realism, national security now occupies a critical umbrella concept in international relations justified by liberalism, and critical security studies. Its scope includes non-military dimensions, such as security from terrorism, minimization of crime, economic security, energy security, environmental security, food security, and cyber-security (Holmes, 2015). The current scope of national security now sees the concept as holistic. So, as a holistic concept, it incorporates domestic security. Inarguably, the actors in the theater of domestic security are essentially part of the community of national security. By this, it implies that domestic security contributes to the development of national security. In other words, any threat against domestic security may have implications for national security. For example, Obonyo (2021) opined that if not properly dealt with, the high unemployment levels among the youth pose a significant security threat to some countries in Africa's national security.

Liberia In Context

View as the crux of the paper, the above sub-caption puts Liberia in context as it relates to issues in domestic security.

As a concept, domestic security definition applies to Liberia context. It is equated to measures embarked upon by the government to detect and prevent threats that are unconventional in approach (i.e. not by traditional military means) and are directed towards the interior of a state rather than its external forces. In other words, this definition speaks to the threats confronting Liberia's internal security. These threats that do not require a

conventional approach are criminal activities ranging from armed robbery, the growing number of youths at-risk referred to as "Zogos" in Liberia parlance, the prevalence of drug abuse and trafficking, abject poverty, high rate of youth unemployment, etc. Among these threats, anecdotal evidence proves that "Zogos" is the biggest threat to Liberia's internal security. Interestingly, both the government and opposition politicians see the growing wave of "Zogos" across Liberia as a looming national security threat due to their vulnerability to being induced and manipulated by politicians with ulterior motives (Nebo, 2022). Next on the list of threats is armed robbery exacerbated by Abject poverty and a high rate of youth unemployment posing threats to internal security and by extension national security. Moreover, it is argued that the increase in crimes such as armed robbery, rape, and murder can be attributed to the country's deteriorating economy (Global Initiative Against Transnational Crime, 2023).

Actors of Domestic Security-Liberia

In the context of Liberia applicable to the theoretical framework, the actors in charge of domestic security or internal security are supervised by the Ministry of Justice under the Executive Branch of the government. These law enforcement agencies include the Liberia National Police considered as Liberia's premier law enforcement agency, Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency, Liberia Immigration Service, and Liberia National Fire Service. Line agencies include the Ministry of Health, National Disaster Management, and the National Security Agency. Among these actors, the Liberia National Police plays a pivotal role in maintaining internal security. They are the first front liner in the fight against criminal activities having implications for internal security. The Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency also helps to maintain internal security by fighting illicit drug trafficking and substance abuse. As it stands now in Liberia, illicit drug trafficking and substance abuse among the youth is a major security threat. This is evidenced by the recent declaration of drugs and substance abuse as a public health emergency by President Joseph N. Boakai (Johnson, 2024).

Besides the enforcement of the Alien and Nationality Law of Liberia, the Liberia Immigration Service also contributes to internal security by protecting the borders of Liberia against intruders coming with criminal intent to inflict upon the people of Liberia.

Under the joint security operation chaired by the Minister of Justice, the above mentioned law enforcement agencies coordinate their core functions to maintain internal security.

Issues in Liberia's Domestic Security

As opinionated by the author of this paper, issues in domestic security issues could be conceptualized or defined as a multiplicity of factors related to security that require attention or discussion. They require attention or discussion simply because of the threats posed to domestic security. So, in the context of Liberia, what are these issues that require attention? Arguably, the issues are not the threats. They are the multiplicity of factors impeding the mitigation, alleviation, detection, and prevention of the threats identified in this paper. These factors that cut across all the relevant actors or agencies concerned with domestic security include but are not limited to logistics (mobility, vehicles, accessories, equipment), scanty manpower, lack of professionalism, corruption, police brutality, and others. Take the case of the Liberia National Police, the lead agency for internal security. According to (Amakoh & Bloh, 2023) a growing number of Liberians report experiencing

insecurity in their neighborhoods and homes, and most say the government is doing a poor job of reducing crime. This security concern reflects one of the main challenges the Liberia National Police faces as it relates to manpower and logistics. Interestingly, the survey report indicates a significant lack of a sense of personal security among Liberians. It further highlights that more than six in 10 citizens (62%) say they felt unsafe while walking in their neighborhood at least once during the previous year, including 46% who report feeling unsafe "several times," many times," or "always" (Amakoh & Bloh, 2023). Moreover, the Liberia National Police (LNP) struggles to pay salaries on time, deploy officers in remote counties, and barely provide resources such as gas and cell phones to allow officers to perform their work coupled with vehicle fleet and facilities maintenance. (Amakoh & Bloh, 2023).

The Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency also presents the worst scenario, especially in the fight against drug trafficking and substance abuse. The agency has been trying to crack down on local drug dealers since the civil war ended but there are significant challenges due to logistical problems and extremely low manpower exacerbated by scanty budgetary allotment.

The porosity of border entry points attributed to Liberia Immigration Service's serious or acute manpower challenges coupled with a lack of relevant logistics combined with relaxed formal checks at well-manned border posts enable smuggling activities that include illegal single barrel homemade handguns and homemade double barrel guns allegedly from Guinea (Conciliation Resources, n.d.). These findings are mentioned to help paint some of the critical or alarming issues in Liberia's internal security.

Conclusion

As a course requirement, the main essence of this paper was to explain the extent to which the author understands the course "Issues in Domestic Security". Of course, all the arguments brought forth in this paper bear testimony to the author's understanding regarding the subject matter, especially in the Liberia context. From the entire analytical write-up, the following can be inferred.

As a concept, it is an inevitable phenomenon that characterizes all human societies regardless of their position in the international system or order. In other words, despite concrete measures to detect, repel, mitigate, or prevent, there are still issues of concern in domestic security. It is integral to human existence or survivability.

It is the legitimate responsibility of nation states. This simply means that the failure of the state to maintain domestic security justified by the social contract theory, threatens its legitimacy, existence, or continuity.

The issues facing Liberia's internal security are too daunting and as such have implications for its national security.

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