EARLY WARNING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

There is no shortage of adages about the merits of prevention. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Lawrence W (2009) simply put it "Prevention is the best medicine". Perhaps the unimpeachable logic of those aphorisms should suffice to move government and international organisation to develop robust capacities to prevent violent conflict and to deploy them strategically. This paper discusses the concepts of conflict prevention focusing on preventive measures. Symptoms of conflict early warning are also identified as well as the cost of late response to early warning. Advancing the conflict prevention agenda will require navigating a series of challenges, including the rapidly changing context in which prevention strategies are applied. The research went ahead to determine if preventive measures have an impact to prevent ongoing and escalation of conflict. A set of difficult political and institutional factors that militate against vigorous prevention action where also examine, as well as the changing role of Nigeria. Policy recommendations are offered to provide effective early warning system. To be effective, conflict prevention capacities will not necessarily require pronouncement, institution and new offices, but they will require focused attention, resources, and a process to spur action in response to warning signs.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a very fluid and ambiguous concept. The word conflict usually has negative connotation. People often think that conflict is a destructive and undesirable process to be avoided, contained and eliminated. In this sense, it is perceived as the opposite of co-operation, harmony, or peace. Yet, co-operation is the opposite of conflict, but a way of handling conflict.

Conflict is a multi-dimensional social process which is a common and essential feature of human existence. When expressed and handled constructively, conflict can act as a catalyst for personal, social and political change and transformation. A typical example is the usual strike by labour unions to demand for change in their working conditions, increase in salaries and allowance or change in terms and condition of their services.

When conflict is expressed in destructive sense, it fosters violence and damage that is familiar in wars; the activities of Boko Haram terrorists for instance, in the North East part of Nigeria, political turbulence in Egypt 2013 and Central African Republic 2014.

Therefore, conflict, including ethnic conflict, are unavoidable but can indeed be prevented. This requires that, necessary efforts should be made. Potential sources of conflict need to be identified and analysed with a view to their early resolution. Steps must be taken to forestall armed confrontation. If these preventive measures are superseded by a sharpening of the conflict, then an early warning must be given in time for more vigorous conflicts containment to take place.

Conflicts should be averted early on, if major arms conflict is to be avoided. Acting in a full-blown war is the costliest and most dangerous way of intervening and also the least likely to succeed. Activities of Boko Haram terrorist in Nigeria, Al Qaida terrorist group in Yemen, Mali, Somalia exemplify this trend. According to Peter W and Frida M (2003) if the potential for conflict prevention is to be improved, the sources of its successes and failure must be better understood.

The purpose of this article is as follows: First, to discuss the concepts of conflict prevention focusing on preventive measures and the review of methodology of scholars to give better understanding of the phrase, Conflict prevention. Second, identify potential symptoms of early warning with a view to their early resolution. Thirdly, access the cost of late response to early warning. Fourthly, to determine if preventive measures have an impact on dispute resolution or preventing ongoing conflicts from escalating further or spread across a larger

region, and policy recommendation for Nigerian leaders to provide effective early warning system for conflict resolution.

THE CONCEPTS OF CONFLICT PREVENTION/PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

Conflict prevention is normally a combination of early warning, preventive diplomacy, and preventive deployment. Together, these may be regarded as confidence-building measures in order to maintain peace and security in a specific area. Identification of a conflict by early warning allows more time for preventive diplomacy or military action.

The Leaque of Nations was established in the aftermath of the First World War to avoid further global conflicts but the organisation was never fully recognised and, consequently, failed to avert the Second World War. Thus the United Nations was established in the shadow of two global conflicts with the major purpose to prevent a repeat of the tragedies of wars.

Following the end of the Cold War, the combination of a growing number of complex conflicts and improved prospects for great power co-operation led to new interest in conflict prevention. In his 1992 report "***An Agenda for Peace***", United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, argued that one of the UNs central aims must be "to seek to identify at the earliest possible stage situations that could produce conflict, and try through diplomacy to remove sources of danger before violence result". The report defined preventive diplomacy as "action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur".

The term conflict prevention suggests different things to different people and there is no agreed upon meaning among scholars. According to Peter W and Frida M (2003) in Lund (1996) – preventive diplomacy is "actions taken in vulnerable places and times to avoid the threat or use of armed force and related form of coercion by states or groups to settle the political disputes that can arise from destabilising effects of economic, social, political and international change". Lund (2002) adds that conflict prevention includes "any structural or intersectory means to keep intrastate or interstate tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence and the use of armed force, to strengthen the capabilities of parties to possible violent conflicts for resolving their dispute peacefully, and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce those tensions and dispute".

The aim of preventive action is to prevent the emergence of violent conflict, prevent ongoing conflicts from spreading and prevent the re-emergence of violence. Boutros – Ghali

(1996) and Wallensteen (1998) agreed that preventive diplomacy is the use of diplomatic techniques to prevent disputes arising, escalating into armed conflict and preventing the armed conflict from spreading. These are just constructive actions undertaken to avoid the likely threat, use or diffusion of armed force by parties in a political dispute.

Effective early warning system can only be achieved if all variety of actors undertake a medium and long-term proactive operational or structural strategy intended to identify and create the enabling conditions for a stable and more predictable local and international security environment.

THE CONCEPTS OF EARLY WARNING

Symptoms need to be identified and cured in a timely manner to avoid the situation degenerating into a conflict. The whole idea of "*early warning*" should be reflected by the determination of local and international community to step into alert the state of its responsibilities as soon as information is received confirming violation of human rights in a specific context is on the rise. Given a typical example on United Nations activities to tackle armed conflicts, the whole process start with early warning to conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace building. These activities together with early warning system aim to monitor particular areas of potential conflict, and seek ways to act early enough to thwart potential conflict. Most of the African countries including the western world failed to recognized symptoms of early warning which would have been a perfect measure to resolve conflict.

Particularly, in Nigeria, from a certain perspective, emergencies are often the result of unresolved development of problems. Economic or social injustice generates poverty which can be a root cause for conflict. Nigeria is the only rich African country that houses large number of poor individuals. The major categories of people in Nigeria are in twofold, the rich and the poor. The absence of middle class in Nigeria is a sign of early warning which is already manifesting with the emergence of terrorism and high rate of robbery in the country.

Poverty creates conflicts over resources. It may also foster a breeding ground for political crises. Conflicts of ethnic and religious character witnessed in Africa, Europe and elsewhere, particularly in Nigeria are compounded by social revolts where old links are still maintained with external forces. The root causes have brought conflict and disaster to the entire country, devastating populations and scaring regions for generation.

If mechanisms to monitor, investigate and remedy situations of grievances or violations are supported by preventive actions to improve standards of living, they will guarantee education and freedom to live in peace which are crucial and deserve much more attention by the constituted authorities.

SYMPTOMS OF EARLY WARNING

According to Lawrence W (2009), "the historical patterns suggest that new wars will continue to erupt unabated if greater and smarter efforts are not made to prevent them". Nigeria is already swimming in a pool of crises in the North, East, South and West. The most dangerous of all is the suicide bombing techniques adopted by the Boko Haram terrorists. These factors including other several factors are pushing the country into a new period of significant dangers and state of anarchy. Below are some of the early warning symptoms that need urgent attention when they surface:

❖ *Illegal arms trafficking and gun running***:**

Illegal arms trafficking is an indication of security lapses at the border areas. This will result to acquisition and sales of arms to unauthorised holders. Nigeria borders with Chad Republic and Republic of Cameroon in the North. Due to the porous nature of border in these areas, illegal arms or weapons are procured into the country especially by terrorist. This is a sign of early warning i.e. when unauthorised persons are in position of arms, there will be misuse of arms which may result to violent conflict.

The use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) by terrorist groups to wreak havoc and inflict maximum terror on innocent citizens in the North is a potential threat that if not contained now, will have devastating effect on the whole country in the shortest possible time. Already, some bomb attacks have been successfully carried out, shifting the ground from the North East to North Central like the IED attack in a motor part in Nyanya, on 14 April 2014, Police Force Headquarters bombing and the bombing of the UN House all in Abuja. A similar attack hit Jos Plateau state on 20 May 2014. The attack records the highest casualty in the country with over 150 wounded and dead people.

Such incidents are not to be restricted to the North, as indicated by the fail IED attack on 12 March, 2014 along Shagamu-Ijebu Highway where fully-Laden fuel tanker which was rigged with detonating devices was intercepted by 81 division troops. The interception of 486 suspected terrorist members by Soldiers in Abia State on 15 June, 2014 foil an attempted unknown attack

by the group. Following the bomb scare in Living Faith Church (Winners Chapel), in Owerri on 15 June, 2014 by suspected terrorist, and many more heinous activities that are still on progress, it is assume that the situation is not an early warning again but the real fact on ground.

More so, a new strategy has been device in Pakistan where the Pakistan militants conceal Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Such methods include planting the IEDs inside a hollowed book often made to look like a copy of the Holy Book, shaping it to children bicycles or hiding it inside water surges. Some are hung on the branches or concealed in tooth paste tubes.

The recourse to new methods of concealing IEDs is aimed at deceiving security personnel and unsuspecting members of the public. For instance, if the Holy book is found lying on the ground, people tend to pick it up immediately out of respect. Also children's bicycles or toys rarely attract scrutiny operations. Meanwhile, the global and dynamic nature of tourism has show a predictable tendency of other terrorist groups adopting similar mode of operation. Thus, the likelihood of the Boko Haram terrorists and other groups copying Pakistan terrorist groups should not be rule out and should be an early warning in the country.

From the development in Pakistan, there is the need for member of the public, including security operatives to thoroughly screen such items. Also, the need for public enlightenment, especially children against picking objects from the ground, no matter how ordinary they may appear. Analysis of IEDs use for attack by terrorist reveal that the insurgents make use of readily available materials such as nails, plastic cans, fertilizers and gas cylinders, hence an effective strategy to prevent reoccurrence would have to include devising ingenious and assertive means to deny them access to these IED - making materials.

In light of the aforementioned, members of the public including security agencies can emplace all necessary measures to deny terrorist access to IED-making materials. Such measures are to include, taking note or observing the activities of gas cylinder dealer with the view to reporting to security agencies any dealer who supplies to suspicious people. This suggests that, devising such means will avert the intention of the terrorist to destabilised relative peace enjoy in the country.

❖ *Rise of unstable regime*:

According to Lawrence W (2009) empirical analysis indicates that the states that are most likely to experience armed conflicts are governed by regimes that are neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic, but of a mixed character found "anocratic". Nigeria is a state that nobody

can describe the system of government in practice. This situation posse challenge and is an indication of early warning which if not taken care of now may result to violent conflict. In a country where there is no strong opposition, there is likely to be an element of autocratic system of government, because the leading party takes decision and the decision stand unopposed whether it will benefit the masses or not.

The merger of about five political parties to form one single party was a welcome ideal, and this development provided the country with a strong opposition for check and balance of the majority party. The opposition party was successful when they intervene in the political crisis that was almost crippling the economic activities in River state. The mixed element of democratic and autocratic system of government presently in practice is likely to experience new outbreaks of societal wars.

❖ *Demographic pressure***:**

High infant mortality, rapid population change including massive and uncontrollable influx of refugee, high population density, youth bulge, food or water shortage, ethnic groups sharing land, and environmental pressures are likely cause of future conflict. For example, the flow of internally displace persons from North East to other part of the country is a potential source of future conflict with respect to resource sharing.

While a great deal of work has gone into understanding the science of demographic pressure and potential strategies for mitigation, relatively little attention has been paid to assisting vulnerable countries or states to enhance their adaptive capacities so that demographic pressure do not lead to conflicts.

❖ *Fraudulent recruitment to the Nigeria Security Agencies*:

Services to the country especially the Nigerian Security Agencies are voluntarily. However, recruitment into Nigerian Security Agencies is somewhat unimaginable. Imagine the catastrophe if an unqualified person is engage to audit a financial statement. That is how the situation will be if unqualified persons are recruited into the Security Agencies. And of course, Nigerian Security system is manned with many unqualified and unscrupulous elements.

For a country to survive and remain strong, qualified, able men and women willing to serve the nation need to be recruited, instead of engaging people who are brought into the system just to earn a living. The process of engaging personnel into the security agencies especially the

Armed Forces need to be revisit to support those that willingly volunteer to serve the nation, thereby preventing politicising the process.

❖ *Unemployment*:

Lack of employment opportunities gives room for sharp and severe economic distress, uneven economic development along ethnic lines. Lack of trade openness which is as a result of absence of potential market for domestic product creates room for unemployed youth to involve in criminal activities. It is believed that activities of some unscrupulous gangs like the Boko Haram terrorist, militias, fraudsters and kidnapper are as a result of economic depress. Members of this group who are unlucky to be arrested by security operative revealed ingenious means used to identify potential victims.

Members of this gangs use information obtained from improperly disposed or shredded bank tellers, way bills, invoices and receipts in selecting their victims. These documents often contain valuable information such as depositor's name, contact number, addresses and other details of the potential victim. The gangs also elicit information on their potential victims from untrained guards at residential areas. For this reason, there is a need to enhance personal and document security, especially in the area of proper disposal of documents both at the individual and official levels. Individuals that have cause to employ security guards and other domestic staff need to enlighten their domestic staff against unwanted disclosure of information to strangers.

❖ *Global economic turbulence*:

While poverty does not lead directly to conflict, history suggests that weak or negative economic growth raise the risk of conflict and that sharp economic shock in already fragile societies can trigger outbreak of conflict. Paul C (2007) state that a negative point of growth in a typical low-income country roughly equals an increase of one percentage point in that country's risk of civil war over the next five years. Edward Miguel et al (2004) found economic shocks to be especially dangerous: "A Negative growth shock of five percentage points increases the likelihood of conflict in the following year by over 12 percentage points. The current global recession, which has a lot of negative impact especially on second and third world countries therefore, raises serious concerns about potential violent conflict.

❖ *Imminent influx of beggars into other part of the country*:

Following the enactment and implementation of law prohibiting street begging in some Northern States of the country, there are indications that, some of the beggars may relocate to North Central States especially Plateau, Benue, Kogi state and FCT. The most recent of the states to outlaw street begging is Bauchi State which in late January, 2014 apprehended some street beggars for violating its law of street begging. This does not go down well with the beggars who have started relocating to other states.

Against the backdrop that the North Central is a gateway to other states in the Sothern part of the country, it is envisage that most of the beggars may relocate to Jos and Makurdi. This if allowed, could create ample cover for terrorist groups to conduct recce for their operations in the guise of begging. In addition, such beggars are ready tools in the hands of mischievous persons in event of crises.

In light of the above, and to prevent the unknown as the country is already fragile security wise, it is suggested that, the government of North Central states and other region in the country expedite action on law banning street begging, so that the dislodged beggars from other part of the country do not make any other state a safe haven. Therefore, the need to heighten security vigilance on the activities of beggars with a view to averting/frustrating, any attempt to use them to breach peace of any state.

❖ *Shifts in global power distribution*:

While interstate wars have been uncommon for many years, policy makers should not take a continuation of this trend for grounded. According to Lawrence W (2009) there are signs that should raise concern about the risk of violent conflicts that transcend individual states. First, major shifts in global power distribution have historically been dangerous periods, sometimes sparking great power conflicts, as was the case in the run-up to both World Wars. Second, in an increasingly interconnected world, the high degree of global inequality in wealth, freedom and effectiveness of governing institutions may generate significant tension.

A typical example of this situation in Nigeria is the revenue sharing formula. Oil is the major revenue of the country and many state had call for the review of the revenue sharing formula which if not taken care of urgently can lead to violent conflict. The possibility of intrastate conflict in Nigeria in this context is not negligible, whether triggered by non state actors with increasing capacity to wreak significant damage. These trends represent challenges to

weak and fragile state, which lack adequate legitimacy and/or effectiveness to govern their territories and populations.

To check for this situation, new initiatives to protect fragile state from the impact of economic shocks or to help the state adapt to new climate condition could dampen the resulting conflict risk. Urgent attention to the call of the review of revenue sharing formula as well as the designed and robust preventive strategies, thus, can insure against future dangers.

❖ *Gender based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse*:

According to Colonel Robert M (2012), the scope of gender based violence, gender discrimination and gender inequality is a potential threat to security. This encompasses direct threats such as rape (including rape as a weapon of war) physical abuse, and sexual slavery. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable during period of armed conflict due to the absence of males often leaving women as the head of the home with limited protection

When cases of rape are on the increase, it signifies that there is a future danger apart from direct threat such as HIV/AIDS infection, psychological damage, child abuse, forced prostitution and forced pregnancy. The excess of this criminal act are sign of dangers which preventive measures and strategy are needed urgently to take care of future damage. Other indicators of state at risk as suggested by Carnegie commission on preventing deadly conflict are:

- Lack of democratic practices (human right violations, criminalization, and de-legitimisation of the state).
- Regimes of short duration
- Ethnic composition of the ruling elite differing from that of the population at large.
- Deterioration or elimination of public services
- A legacy of vengeance seeking group vigilance
- Massive, chronic or sustained human flight
- Transfer of aggression.

Indicators of state at risk or early warning signals show that the true-lag between the first manifestation of organised protest and the onset of violent actions is a matter of years, with an average of about 10 years in liberal democracies. Clearly there is plenty of time for remedial action to be seriously undertaken. In Nigeria for example the call by other state to review the revenue sharing formula have taken a considerable length of time, the dreaded Boko Haram terrorist started with a considerable period before becoming the most challenging situation in the

country and the battle between the equality of university and polytechnic graduates is gradually shifting ground to a new dimension if not check, just to mention a few. Therefore, a call to Nigerian authority to strengthen norms and mobilise political support for preventing armed conflict, developing institutional capacities to deploy preventive strategies, and accruing knowledge about how to design and implement effective preventive strategies is necessary.

THE COST OF LATE RESPONSE TO EARLY WARNING

The costs of late response to early warning are devastating as nobody can estimate the outcome or result. During a three month in 1994 an estimated 500,000 – 800,000 and in some estimate possibly up to one million people were killed in the course of a genocidal civil war in Rwanda. Two years after the UN designated Rwanda a safe area, the Bosnian town of Srebrenica becomes the sight of the worst massacre of the Bosnian conflict.

The failure of the United Nation to establish fact and make possible early preventive mechanism resulted to the genocide in Rwanda. According to Lt. Gen. Romo D (2004), the failure by the United Nations to prevent, and subsequently, to stop the genocide in Rwanda was a failure by the United Nations system as a whole, the fundamental failure was the lack of resource and political commitment devoted to developments in Rwanda and to the United Nation presence there. This lack of political will affected the response by the sacrament and decision-making by the Security Council, but was also evident in the recurrent difficulties to get the necessary troops for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR).

Similarly, countries like Congo, Somalia, Mali, Pakistan, Central African Republic and Egypt had suffered terror attack as a result of failure to established and maintain early warning mechanism to avert terror activities. As a result the cost of late response to early warning in these countries cannot be estimated.

Back home in Nigeria, Boko Haram terrorist group started as a religious group. Because of the disagreement between the teaching of their leader Mohammed Yusuf and other Islamic scholars, they broke out to form their separate teaching. This particular group headed by Mohammed Yusuf was a violent group which was an early warning to the Nigerian authorities. The failure of Nigerian government to prevent them from carrying out their activities lead to the surprise the country is in today. In 2009, the group first lunched their attack on innocent civilians to execute their primary aim of formation. Presently their activities are the most challenging situation the country is facing. All is because of late response to their early warning signals.

The issue of corruption that has besieges all sectors of the Nigerian economy and government offices are due to failure of the preventive mechanism provided by the government. The judicial system that supposes to be the final decision-maker is weak as a result of delay in judgment.

Presently, early warning signals could be the rampant rape cases, land dispute, cattle rustling, gender discrimination and unfair utterance of our politicians. On 29 may 2014 a serving minister alleged that about 90 percent of protesters campaigning for the release of over 200 schoolgirls abducted from Chibok, Borno State, are members of the All Progressive Congress. He also added that 90 percent of all the insurgencies in the state are controlled by the same party. Such statements are capable of generating hit in the country.

Other early warning signals in the country are high rate of youth unemployment, high rate of pensioners especially where their benefit are delay, failure of the judiciary in deciding cases etc. It is clear that the opportunity to avert crises is by establishing early warning mechanism to take care of the emerging issues as they present them-self. Nigeria can only remain strong and united when issues are address as they emerge to prevent and resolve conflict.

ESTABLISHMENT OF EARLY WARNING MECHANISM

The need for maintenance of peace and security has called for the urgent development of a comprehensive and coordinated conflict early warning system or mechanism. In 1992 the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali realised the need for early warning and timely intervention to conflict and released a white paper title "***An Agenda for Peace***" focusing on preventive diplomacy, peace- making and peace keeping in order to increasing the UN's role to the international peace and security.

Nigeria needs an effective early warning system to cope with the insecurity that has besieges the country. Indeed, there is presently no country-wide coordinating mechanism to collect, assess, prioritize and integrate all of the early warning reporting from the source. Hence, the Nigerian challenge lies primarily in building a robust capacity to analyse multiply streams of information from both inside and outside the country.   The following enabling mechanisms are suggested for timely collection, and analysis of data to provide for an effective early warning system for conflict situations in Nigeria:

❖ *Preventive strategies*:

According to the Carnegie commissions on preventive deadly conflict, effective preventive strategies rest on three principles.

  ✓ Early reaction to signs of trouble which requires early detection and skill analysis of developing trends.

  ✓ A comprehensive, balanced approach to alleviate the pressures that trigger violent. An effective response requires a coordinated rang of political, economic, social, and military means. Note, military measures are supposed to be the last resort if all other measure failed.

  ✓ An extended effort to resolve the underlying root causes of violence.

This strategy has fall short of use in Nigeria, because early warning signals are not ever taking seriously. The emergence of Boko Haram terrorist exemplifies this trend. It could be recall that the leader of the group Mohammed Yusuf was arrested by security agencies several time but released. Therefore the intended purposes of forming the group later emerge in 2009 which is the most challenging situation in the country today. If this practice is put to use, early warning data will be directed to those Parties that could best utilize them for a specific situation to provide timely intervention to conflict signals.

❖ *Advocacy and communication*:

Since independence and particularly since 1999, Nigeria has achieved measurable success in peace and security in West Africa, given the legacy in Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, Mali, etc. Laudable and impressive as its track-record is, the country has not been able to sale its achievements to the wider public and within the international community because of the high level of internal security challenges experience today.

To correct this imbalance, the country need to develop an aggressive advocacy and communication strategy, including initiatives and activities in collaboration with the media. This will create opportunity for gathering information and data on early warning signals. Implementing this strategy will enable the country to sell it products and achievement to the wilder public including the international community.

❖ *Fact-finding mission*:

According to Alex P. Schmid (1998), fact-finding is an "attempt of an independent expert or research commission to get controversial facts straight in a dispute or conflict, often in the

context of political polarisation, suspicion and propaganda." The United Nations has early on realise this fact; in 1991 the UN General Assembly Unanimously adopted a declaration on UN Fact-Finding, which states "the Secretary-General should monitor the state of international peace and security regularly and systematically in order to provide early warning of disputes or situations which might threaten international peace and security". If such measures are taken, finding will be reported to an appropriate authority and/or public media for immediate action.

❖ *Plan of action, monitoring and evaluation*:

To establish an effective early warning system, a plan of action should be develop. The plan should be supported by performance indicators and a reporting plan. It should be collaborated in a logical framework that short detailed activities need to be carried out; the actors and target groups involved input expected outcomes and impacts.

The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation process should be assess in light of progress of all aspects of the country on a regular basis with a view to gauging impacts on conflict landscape in Nigeria and applying corrective, incremental or reinforcing measure, wherever and whenever necessary. The strategy can also cover procedures for the processing of signals from the military sphere and signals in the human dimension.

❖ *Risk assessment*:

Risk assessment and early warning are distinct but complementary activities. According to Gurr, (1996), early warning requires near-real-time assessment of events that, in a high risk environment, are likely to accelerate or trigger the rapid escalation of conflict. Similarly, Alex P. Schmid (1998) noted that risk assessments are based on the systematic analysis of remote and intermediate conditions.

From this point of view, uncontrollable utterances of our politicians need to be check as it is capable of creating tension in the country. The verbal battling of the ruling PDP and the opposition parties is an early Warning to the unknown. The practice of our politician blaming each other should be controlled by creating a problem solving approach to situation. This will provide an avenue for bringing the adversaries together to reflect on the causes of their conflict, and arrive at a common definition and joint solutions that satisfy the basic need of all sides. Thus, if conflict prevention and resolution is to be effective, interest must identify and it is these deeper interests which must be understood and addressed.

❖ *Management circle of early warning*:

The receipt or availability of information from various focal points alone does not constitute an early warning system. The conflict management division of Nigeria would need to receive data and information such as that generated by Gurr and Scarrit's **Minorities at Risk project**. Those responsible should be able to visit any conflict zone and communicate in person with parties directly involved to obtained first-hand information about the situation, such as the role of the various parties to the conflict, the nature of the tensions, recent developments and the potential consequences for peace and stability.

An effective establishment of early warning system will give room for other activities like: formation of the military standby force, resources mobilisation to finance early warning procedures, cooperation with development parties aiming at achieving financial and technical support from development parties, and risk reduction.

TOWARDS A PREVENTIVE ACTION

According to Lawrence W (2009) "beyond political support and adequate institutional capacity, effective conflict prevention requires Knowledge about whom, where and how to design and implement appropriately tailored strategies for each unique case". At the strategic level this means knowing when and where to invest limited conflict prevention resources based on the estimation of risks and potential for positive influence. Second, it requires knowledge about which tools in the conflict prevention to use in different situations and stages and in what combination. At the operational level, practitioners need to know how to use various conflict prevention tools to greatest effect.

Prof. Tom W and Dr. Tamara D (2008) suggest two active measures to conflict prevention:

✓ *Light prevention which aimed at preventing situations with a clear capacity for violence from degenerating into armed conflict*. Its practitioners do not necessary concern themselves with the root causes of the conflict, or with remedying the situation that led to the crisis. Examples of such action are diplomatic interventions, long-term missions and private mediation efforts.

A number of policy options are available for light prevention. They range from official diplomacy (mediation, conciliation, god offices, envoys, fact-finding, peace conferences, hot lines, conflict prevention centers) to non-official diplomacy (private mediation, peace

commissions, message-carrying and creation of back-channels, conflict resolution, problem-solving workshops, training, round-tables) to peace-making efforts by local actors (church-facilitated talks, debates between politicians, gross party discussion).

✓ ***Deep prevention in contrast, aims to address the root causes, including underlying conflicts of interest and relationships.*** Prof. Tom W and Dr. Tamara D. (2008) states that, at the international level, this may mean addressing recurrent issues and problems in the international system, or a particular international relationship which lies at the root of conflict. Within societies, it may mean engaging with issues of development, political culture and community relations.

In a case where the conflict has already emerge like Nigeria and the Boko Haram terrorist, the country can apply both positive and negative inducements in an effort to twist the aims of governments, strengthen moderate leaders and conteract the influence of extremist. This includes a range of political measures (mediation with muscle, attempts to influence the media, mobilization through regional and global organization), economic measures (sanctions, emergency, conditional offers of financial support) and military measures (aims embargoes, preventive peacekeeping, demilitarisation). Deep prevention (or, structural prevention) means building domestic, regional or strategic capacity to manage conflict.

In the Nigerian context, where the Boko Haram menace has become the most challenging issue in the country, there are possible responses to those situations in specific cases. In terms of the theory of early warning and conflict prevention, the indicators suggested above might call upon light preventors, including:

➢ Flexible and accommodating state actions and strategies

➢ Moderate "communal" actions and strategies on the part of the leaders of challenging groups and

➢ Mutually de-escalatory "built-in mechanism" of conflict management.

The core challenge for risk assessment/forecasting models and detailed conflict assessment methods is ensuring that these analyses are taken into consideration in targeting and designing a preventive strategy. Considering the state of insecurity in the country now, deep preventers are susceptible in tackling conflicts which are yet to become violent arms conflict. Such preventers are:

✓ Adequate political institutions and good governance

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- ✓ Cohesive social structures.
- ✓ Opportunities for groups to develop economically and culturally, and the presence of accepted legal or social norms capable of accommodating and peacefully transforming these formations.

An example where the international environments use the light and deep prevention is the case of Estonian. According to Prof. Tom W. & Dr. Tamara D. (2008) the Estonian outcome can be attributed to a combination of "*light*" and "*deep*" prevention. On the "light" side, the effective diplomatic interventions of Max Van der Stoel and others, combined with the moderate positions taken by Estonian present, de-escalated the citizenship crisis. At a deeper level, the membership of all the concerned parties in The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and their acceptance of OSCE standards on citizenship and minority right, created a legitimate framework for consultation and mediation. Both the Baltic States and the Russian Federation sought entry into European institutions. This gave European institution some weight in the conflict. Crucially, the West, the Baltic States and the Russian government were taken to avoid an armed conflict, but to be effective, this wish had to be translated into practical measures and bridge-building institutions in the Baltic States.

In this case powerful third parties transformed an asymmetric conflict by balancing the relationship between the parties, introducing a measure of restraint and facilitating negotiation. The intervention of the OSCE High commissioner was convenient, and created time and political space for political movement. At the end, compromise over the central citizenship issue allured the situation to be redefined in terms of access to economic opportunities instead of as an ethno-political struggle for control of the state.

MEETING CHALLENGES

The broad political support for conflict prevention provides a context for a determined leader to forge more substantial institutional capacities and make prevention a core strategic tenet. Lack of political will constitute challenge in prevention of conflict in Nigeria because some actors make conflict money making venture to enrich themselves.

The dangers and cost of waiting to respond once conflict erupts will provide continuing impetus for this kind of move. An example is the cost of preventing escalation of Boko Haram activities in the country. Success will require navigating a series of challenges, some emanating from new developments, others coming from enduring stubborn foils.

Multiple political challenges remain even when there is no major interest to weight against conflict prevention. The political system in Nigeria poses new challenges to conflict prevention strategies. By referring to the political environment of Nigeria as a complex system, they are marked by their unpredictability, lack of consistent cause-effect relationships, and paradoxically and sensitivity to small perturbations. Therefore policy makers and practioners alike may need to think differently about how to design and implement effective strategies to prevent violent conflict.

CHANGING ROLE OF NIGERIA

On top of these factors, the current political dynamics in Nigeria complicate investment in prevention, even while these dynamics underscore the case for its importance. To say that Nigeria resources are overstretched hardly begins to capture the current constraint. Commitments in Liberia, Sudan, Mali, and the broader internal security challenges include not only large number of troops, limiting the range of military actions that can be taken or plausibly threatened elsewhere, but also a significant proportion of Nigeria diplomatic attention and optional civilian assets.

These wars are likely to leave a long shadow of aversion of foreign entanglements, the financial crisis of 2008 to date and the poor long-term budget position of Nigeria will make it harder and harder to justify any spending that is not perceived to make a direct, tangible linkage to the security and well-being of Nigerian citizens. This may regime more creative thinking about how coalitions of states with overlapping but distinct interest and diverse capabilities as well as NGOs can work together most effectively to prevent future conflict.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

According to Lawrence W (2009) more than a decade ago, Bruce Gentleson wrote that preventing conflict was "possible, difficult, and necessary". Each of these points is even truer today than when Gentleson first agued them. Preventing conflict in Nigeria is possible because Nigerians are capable of achieving it and can do it practical as exercise by Adamawa Vigilantes who on 16 May 2014 attack and kill 70 terrorists. It's also difficult to prevent conflict in Nigeria because it is hard, not easy, it required much effort to fight especially terrorists, and it is necessary to prevent conflict because Nigerians deserve peace.

Being that conflict prevention is necessary for a sustainable development, the analysis in this article leads to several recommendations. Governments, international organisation, NGOs and members of the public should:

❖ *Develop new policy, strategies or activities that are people-centered:*

Using democracy as an example, development and all other humanitarian activities require the involvement of local people. Recognising the necessity of humanitarian-oriented activities or policy, the country should adopt people centered strategies involving the local population. This approach ensures that strategies or mechanism and similar activities are well anchored in the communities. It is paramount that the needs and interest of the people are identified and pursued in decision-making process. It is very important to note that the security agencies alone cannot succeed, but a collective cooperation of the citizens and the security men. However, good policy, strategies and people oriented activities are catalyst to a successful early warning system.

❖ *Preventive practice should involve the development and regularisation of new political strategies:*

According to Lawrence Woocher (2009) "Advocacy for conflict prevention too often relies on calls to our leader's better angels and seems to wish away the many reasons that they be reluctant to take preventive actions". Therefore actors at national, regional, and global levels need to think more realistically and more creatively about the politics of prevention.

This means accepting the fixed factors that militate against effective action, while looking for opportunities to reduce other impediments. For example, more systematic use of conflict assessments can nudge decision-makers toward more robust preventive strategies without altering their fundamental political motivations.

❖ *Developing new policy and strategy to block sources of funding to terrorist*:

The attention of the international community is being sorted here especially where the issue of terrorism is growing by day. The United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Jan Elliasson made it publicly the intension of UN to collaborate with organisation and member states to block funding of terrorist organisation during the 2014 African Union Conference of ministers in Abuja. He however noted that, the United Nations will not go to individual countries to control arms, noting that it is within the powers of the countries to fight terrorism domestically.

This means that Nigeria needs to do more in fighting arms trafficking and illegal position of arms. This can be done by developing policies and strategies to check on both internal and international means of fund to terrorist and possibly advancing means of blocking these sources of funding. Also, effort should be put in place to tighten security at border areas to prevent arms trafficking and illegal influx of migrant refugees and displace persons into the country.

❖ *Due process*:

The words "due process" suggests a concern with procedure, and that is how the Due Process Clause is usually understood. Due process is a legal term. It states that the government of a country has a duty to protect the people of the country and must respect each individual's legal rights, which they are entitled to under the law of the land. Due process can also be seen as the regular administration of law, according to which no citizens may be denied his or her legal right.

These concepts need to be revisit especially during investigation, and deciding court cases. It is believed that the procedure for arrest, investigation, and deciding court cases are not followed properly in Nigeria. Some times when arrest are made by other security agencies and handed over to Police, rumours have it that politician will go behind and lobby for the release of the culprit. This practice constitutes challenge on the security agencies especially when they see the culprit going about unpunished. The culprit also sees the security agency as an enemy. This crude habit needs to be addressed to allow the Law of the land to take its course on offenders, and to serve as a lesson to others, thereby providing preventive mechanism for early warning to be effective.

❖ *Monitor implementation of existing political commitments to conflict prevention*:

There is little utility today in debating whether preventing violent conflict should be on the international agenda. Clear commitments to prevention are on the books of leading government, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs. Reminding political leaders and working-level officials of these commitments, and highlighting gaps between promise and practice when they arise should promote accountability.

Other recommendation suggested by Lawrence Woocher are recalibrating the balance of policy attention given to conflict prevention, peacemaking, post conflict peace building and expanding the knowledge on conflict prevention to help develop effective strategies.

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It is true that preventing violent conflict is indeed difficult, and the challenges to advancing the prevention agenda are formidable, but they are not insurmountable. Consistent development of effective conflict prevention strategies is possible. The stakes demand that Nigerian actors in conjunction with international actors move determinedly toward the day when this possibility is a reality.

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