Effects of Armed Conflicts on The National Security of Post Conflicts States, A Case Study of Juba County in Central Equatorial State, South Sudan

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Abstract:

This paper assessed the nature of existing armed conflicts and their effect on security management, established the influence of the local and regional dynamics of conflicts on security management and finally examined the effect of the emerging security threats on security management strategies in Juba County, South Sudan. The study was guided by two theories; Conflict Transformation and National Security theories. The study used descriptive survey research design and Purposive sampling technique to enlist 210 respondents for this study. The main method of data collection was the interview. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data and reported in narrative form. The study established a dichotomy of existing armed conflicts; external and internal conflicts in Central Equatorial State, South Sudan that had serious implication on both Security Management and National security. The second objective established the influence of local and regional dynamics that affected security management that included; Interlocking political and tribal division aspects of conflict, the influence of insurgents and armed cross border militia groups; greed for livestock by political elites that saw them arm their tribal militia with modern guns and military hardware for ease of livestock theft, amongst others. The third objective established the effect of several emerging security threats on Security Management strategies in Juba County, which included migrant migration for domestic and international child soldiering recruitment in the context of the on-going civil war and also for soldiering elsewhere outside the country. This paper establishes a regional policy concern that South Sudan is largely unsafe, and by implication the whole region is unlikely to be safe. This calls for an immediate action by all security stakeholders, UN agencies, Non-State Actors, security pundits and think tanks to brainstorm and chart a way forward for South Sudan and the entire region.

Keywords: Armed conflicts, Security Management, National Security.

Introduction:

According to Williams (2016) the world has witnessed a number of civil wars since 1945 with an estimated number of casualties at around forty million and over sixty million people displaced. Further, the conflicts have continued to ravage many societies, leading to death and destruction,

the crumbling of weak states, local and international insecurity, and a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, instability, and aggression. This situation has contradicted the hope of many that the end of the cold war in 1989/90s would usher in an error of peace, economic prosperity, harmony and greater cooperation among the nations of the world and regions. These wars were conducted in different forms, and different levels of severity (Panic, 2005).

Observably this has been the unfortunate trend in developing countries. The rise of extremist groups such as al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and Al Qaeda has apparently compounded this problem. Besides, the international community has been grappling with ways to end violent conflicts though their comprehensive knowledge, policy, and practice for effective responses remain disjoined, hence, their misinformed interventions bearing limited effects Williams (2020). The result has been notable insecurity in countries such as Cambodia, El Salvador, Haiti, Bosnia, East Timor, amongst others. Arguably, since the end of the Cold War, the Horn of Africa (HOA) has also experienced a disproportionately large number of armed conflicts. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), there have been an estimated 630 state-based and non-state armed conflicts on the continent between 1990 and 2015 (Williams, 2016). Explanations for this glut of armed conflicts in Africa remain the subject of debates. Nevertheless, between the early 1990s and the late 2000s, Africa underwent a period of significant progress in reducing the number and intensity of armed conflicts. Further, Barbara and Walsh (2018) argued that since 2010, however, the continent has witnessed some disturbing upward conflict trends. Specifically, there have been significant reversals in the decline of state-based armed conflicts and deliberate campaigns of violence against civilians; religious and environmental factors have played increasingly significant roles in a wide range of armed conflicts; there has been a dramatic increase in the levels of popular protests across the continent; as well as an exponential rise in the use of improvised explosive device (IED) attacks and suicide bombings. International efforts to respond to some of these developments by deploying more robust and militarized forms of peace operations and interventions have met with at best only limited success (Barbara &Walsh, 2018).

The Republic of the Sudan as one of the HOA countries has had wars with itself since 1950s. The cause of the conflict may not differ to a large extent from those of other conflict in other nations of the HOA. At the eve of its independence from the British colonial rule in 1955, war broke out between the Arab North and the black people of the South, who felt marginalized by the minority Arab regime in Khartoum (Panic, 2005). These raged on for over fifteen years and ended in 1972 with a peace accord, famously known as the Addis Ababa Agreement. This civil war/conflict is related to security challenges in Sudan, before South Sudan got its independence, they were evidently rooted in racial, religious, cultural and political discrimination of the African majority in the country by a minority Arab clique who monopolized power in the country. It was for this reason the oppressed Africans in Southern Sudan took arms with the objective to seek freedom from domination and for recognition and realization of their distinct racial, cultural and religious identity, inclusivity and full equality in governance and the enjoyment of all rights as citizens.

Given the history of the new nation, South Sudan is now grappling with the legacy of the conflicts it has had experiencing which to a large extent is affecting the country's national security management strategies. National security strategy is a common language used for describing country's foreign relations and defense. It is the bedrock where advancement of essential national goals and purpose, which define a country starts. National Security strategy of any country must include reservation of the country's political identity, institutions, values and systems that foster financial wellbeing of its citizens while advancing regional order that support the important desires of that country and her friends (Berhanu, 2013). In

reality, a country's national security strategy means the utilization of national authority that is to say the use of the avenues present for the advancement of national goals. It is important to also know that it is used both in war and in peace. It is on this ground that the researcher tends to research about the emerging threats to national security management in Juba, South Sudan. The research examined the basic South Sudan's national security strategy in the last fifteen years, from 2005 as a regional government to the time of its independence in 2011 and to date.

Problem Analysis:

Despite her independence in 2011 South Sudan has continued to be embroiled in new and devastating armed conflicts mostly targeted on civilians, ethnic groups, and warring parties accused of war crimes against humanity. These conflicts have not only resulted in a major humanitarian crisis, but also caused mass displacements, and mass atrocities against South Sudanese citizens. These conflicts have continued unabated despite robust and militarized forms of peace operations and interventions by government forces. This current study was conceived because of protracted insecurity in South Sudan which is perceived by this study to be a threat to the country's National Security Management. Although there is a colossal amount of literature on the effects of conflicts in South Sudan, literature on its effects on National Security is scanty. This study therefore sought to fill this gap by showing that situations of continued armed conflicts, can be exploited by enemy forces to further destabilize government in addition to other ramifications against its citizens, hence the rationale for this study in Central equatorial state, Juba.

Methodology:

This paper used a descriptive survey research design. The design was appropriate because it uses investigative orientation to explain phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). This offers the researcher an advantage of focusing on specific description or suitable characteristics where attitudes and opinions of respondents towards a given phenomenon are being sought. The design involves an interaction initiated by the researcher for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information guided by specific research objectives. The design was used to profile the attitudes and opinions of the respondents into thematic situations using interviews in order to further analyse and explain the problem under the study. The study comprised of 210 respondents and 12 Key Informants who were purposefully selected to inform the study based on their knowledge and experience of security issues in South Sudan. Interview method was used to collect data from the K.Is (Silverman, 2001).

Results and Discussions:

Response Rate

The study sought to collect data from 198 main respondents and 12 K.I through interviews. The researcher reached 160 out of the 198 targeted main respondents and all K.Is. This is because some of the respondents were out on field operations. The respondents reached make a response rate of 80.8 % of the expected sample. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) the response rate of more than 70% is very good, 60% response rate is considered good while 50% of the response is considered adequate for analysis. Based on this recommendation the response rate of 80.8% was considered ideal for this research.

The Nature of Existing Armed Conflicts and their Effect on Security Management in Juba County, South Sudan

As Wessells (1998) and Ottaway and El-Sadany (2012) observed internationally and also in Africa, the study established a dichotomy of existing armed conflicts; external and internal conflicts in Central Equatorial State, South Sudan that had serious implication not only on Security Management but also on the National security of the country of South Sudan. Additionally, the research identified two sets of external conflicts; the first set of conflicts was largely economical, while the second set gravitates around control of

territories along the border between the North Sudan and South Sudan countries. According to a significant number (44%) of the main respondents these conflicts are due to Socio economic and political enmity between North Sudan and South Sudan over rich oil reserves in South Sudan and also the contested border region of Abyei. The revelation of inter-state rivalry between North and South Sudan in the findings above were said to be an eye opener to security pundits because of its propensity to potentially have future nuclear ramification resulting to security implication that would be detrimental to not only to the security management in Juba County, but of the entire national security. As a respondent stated,

"Internal conflicts that affect security Management in South in Central Equatorial State, South Sudan include; Inter-communal conflicts, Land grabbing related conflicts, Cattle Herd related conflicts, Interpersonal conflicts, Ethnic Conflicts, Civil wars pitting ethnic groups, Inter-tribal wars, and Revengeful killings. These Conflicts were exacerbated by increased child soldiers who sought for revenge for their decimated parents and significant others and availability of small arms that raised the levels of violence and otherwise unrelated segments of society directly into conflicts and endangered the safety and well-being of all in the community"

As found by Machel, (1996) and Wessells (1998) and also established in this study, internal conflicts were found to have a lot of implication that included; violations of human rights including the right to life where people lose their lives, displacement of large portions of populations, economic costs in cases of stolen or robbed livestock, the arming of societies and the cyclical nature of communal violence and general community decline. There were also perceptions of an underhand of North Sudan operatives in the internal conflicts mainly intended to weaken the South Sudan government even more, creating a vicious cycle of continued instability, so that it can reach and exploit its reach oil reserves.

The Influence of the Local and Regional Dynamics of Conflicts on Security Management in Juba County, South Sudan

This study also established the influence of several local and regional dynamics that affected security management as follows. As stated by the respondents includes

"Interlocking political and tribal divisions, rise of insurgents and armed cross border militia groups from the north, elites livestock greed and Militarization of governance"

Interlocking political and tribal divisions

According to this paper, tribal divisions and politics in South Sudan are inextricably intertwined. The main stimulus for the fighting is who gets what and how. This threatened to distract the country from state building and plunged it into internal turmoil, adding to the misery caused by renewed fighting with the North. Despite the nation comprising of 64 tribes, the Dinka who are the dominant tribe (with 40% of the population) and the Lou-Nuer (20% of the population) occupy 80% of the political positions, leaving the remaining 62 tribes bitter and disgruntled to share only 40% of the national cake. This finding agrees with findings by Stewart (2000) and Richards (1996) who argued that continued ethnic imbalance and generates more conflicts. When peoples' feelings of entrenched inequality, alienation and abuse of their human rights, such as a right to socioeconomic life encroach, more enmity may deepen.

The influence of insurgents and armed cross border militia groups from the north

As Keen (2012) and Ross (2004) argued, this study made several revelations that require radicalized thinking and thought; first, is the uncontrolled modern weapon proliferation into South Sudan that makes conflicts to be more intricate. Second, was the presence of armed members of the military who were not incorporated into South Sudan Military forces according to the agreed Juba Declaration of 2006. Third, were tribal Militia that stemmed from disgruntled tribes with a feeling of politically disenfranchised, trying to fight for their political

and economic inclusion. The implication here is that unless the military is sophisticated in skills, technology and hardware to control proliferated weapons into the country insecurity may never end. Secondly, though this is a policy area, easier way to peace may be to incorporate former military men into the country's defence force. Thirdly, though a policy area too, the disgruntled tribes with a feeling of politically disenfranchised and economically alienated may dissent and pose a national security threat especially if they join hands with terrorist camp to sink the ship if cessation from the rest of the country option fails.

Influence of elite's livestock greed.

According to this paper livestock, which signifies social position and status in South Sudan is almost adored by all including those from a ruling class. As argued by Avis (2019) livestock is used as a means of; payment, as wedding gifts, means to solve disagreements, and also a substitute for the banking system because it gives a consistent way of saving properties. Consequently, according to this study because of greed for material wealth and for political expediency, there is deliberate manipulation of political elites to exploit these ethnic divisions and rivalry for their own advantage. As a respondent stated,

"Political elites have encouraged the creation of ethnic armed groups such as the Nuer White army (Semi-official name for a militant organization formed by the Nuer people) and the Dinka Titweng, founded on traditional communal groups involved in cattle looting, and conflict on behalf of their community. Most of these tribal armed groups are armed with modern guns and other powerful weapons. These weapons make cattle rustling very effective, collecting huge cattle flocks by political and military elites to create their prestige and to develop groups of their patrons, financiers or champions. Accumulated cattle wealth would also be used in payment of supporters' bride wealth for purposes of guaranteeing loyalty".

Though this finding is more of a social cultural problem, it needs to be dealt with if the issue of insecurity is to be addressed with finality.

The influence of Militarization of governance

According to this paper there was a misstep during the governance transition in that, the military in South Sudan permeates all sectors of governance, as a political actor. As a respondent stated,

"The SPLM government did not make a transition from a liberation movement and government to a civilian regime with proper and functional state organs of governance"

As argued by De waal (2014) and Mamdani (2016) and supported by this study finding, the military dominate politics with civilian structures overlooked or non-existent. Consequently, the state lacks legitimate civilian structures of governance. State institutions such as the Judiciary and Executive are dominated by military, hence, the non-existent institutions of governance has created avenues for informal economy and rent seeking South Sudan. As argued by Mandami (2016) the legacy of war and ethnic manipulation by political elites using divide and rule tactics against other communities polarised and politically marginalized those who did not support armed liberation struggle. According to this study, this led to many militias operating independently of the state and occasionally challenging and contesting the state power through disgruntled politicians and former generals of the military. Under such circumstances, any effort to create peace and tranquillity was no longer tenable making security management appear as a puzzle.

Effect of the Emerging Security Threats on Security Management Strategies in Juba County, South Sudan

This research further established the effect of several emerging security threats on Security Management strategies in Juba County, South Sudan. According to this study's respondents,

"The effect of Smuggling of Migrants in East Africa, effect of Terrorism, effect of war economy,

and effect of ungoverned spaces had significant effects on Security management strategies in Juba County, South Sudan"

The effect of Smuggling of Migrants in East Africa and its effects on Security management strategies in Juba County, South Sudan.

As argued by Gemechu (2023) South Sudan inherited one of the weakest border and migration management regimes following its independence in 2011 that notably permits migrants most notably in form of human child trafficking. As a respondent stated,

"Most children are recruited for domestic child soldiering in the context of the on-going civil war and also for soldiering elsewhere outside the country"

Observably, whereas forced recruitment of children for purposes of participation in armed conflicts under child trafficking falls under the ambit of trafficking in persons, their effect on security management cannot be over understated. The biggest dilemma is what to do with them after the civil war is over. In the event that they are not incorporated into the country's army may be tantamount to further militarizing the communities. The other security dilemma to policy makers is surveillance of children recruited for soldiering outside the country when they return to the country.

Effect of Terrorism threats on Security management strategies in Juba County, South Sudan

As observed during the 69th Session of the United Nations general Assembly in New York in 2014 this study also found terrorist group activities as a Key informant stated,

"Generally in the East African Region, the people killing, maiming and displacing people in South Sudan are the Lords Resistant Army (LRA) and the SPLM-10. The SPLM-10 rebel movement has since Dec 2013 killed and maimed innocent civilians across the country, particularly in the towns of Bor, Malakai and Bentiu"

Though this study reveals the activities of a terrorist organization from the neighbouring country of Uganda, existence of a terrorist (SPLM-10) rebel movement by the people themselves should worry policy makers and the powers that be likely to have been caused by feelings of politics and economy hence resentment for war. This is because an all-inclusive state that satisfactorily answers the social and national question would significantly inspire people's hopes and aspirations for a better nation which is in this apparently context largely lacking.

Effect of war economy on Security Management strategies in Juba County, South Sudan

As argued by Collier (2015) also established in this paper, transnational criminal organized gangs engage in illegal trade and other clandestine economic activities across its national borders with some military leaders, leaders of armed groups and some civilians. As an interviewee stated,

"The actors of the war economy" engage in illegal activities such as poaching of; elephants, tiang, giraffe, and chimpanzee and other illegal activities such as illegal gold mining, illegal logging, and charcoal production across borders with DRC, Central Africa, North Sudan, the savannah and equatorial forests"

By implication, whereas this war economy creates a plethora of security problems in South Sudan this insatiable greed for material resources at the expense of the national security should be addressed.

Effect of ungoverned spaces on Security management strategies in Juba County, South Sudan

According to this research, South Sudan has so many ungoverned spaces under the control of militias with access to modern guns and other weapons that proliferated through the porous national borders to the extent that the government has no legitimate security agencies that guarantee security. This finding lends support to findings by Collier (2015) who argued that rebel groups operate within ungoverned spaces or areas with

extreme poverty levels. Besides, obsession of former military commanders, some leaders of security agencies and other influential business moguls with greed and control of natural resources in ungoverned spaces also remains a snare and a timed bomb against South Sudan national security and that of the entire region.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

This paper establishes a regional policy concern that depicts South Sudan state as largely unsafe and by implication, the whole region too. This calls for an immediate action by all security stakeholders, UN agencies, Non State Actors, Security practitioners and think tanks to brainstorm and chart a way forward for South Sudan and the entire region.

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