

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Intervention in National Security Emergency

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ABSTRACT

National security and computers enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. Indeed, the appearance of the digital computer even shaped the strategy of national security in the advanced country like United States, as more and more national security planning became dependent on computer-based models using techniques of systems analysis and operations research. Computer technology is still important to national security, perhaps of paramount importance. Without computers, modern arsenals, battle management and communications would be impossible. The future appears to belong to so-called "smart" weapons, complex systems of command and control, telecommunications, satellites, electronic surveillance and split-second information processing. This paper reviewed ICT relationship and national security, ways of combating national security with ICT. Finally, the paper offered some recommendations for Nigeria government, policymakers, and technology experts to consider and dangers lie ahead for the nation.

Keywords: information communication technology, security, surveillance, communication

Introduction

The term "Information and communication technologies "(ICTs) is defined as a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate and create, disseminate, store, and manage information (NITDA 2007). ICTs encompass a range of rapidly evolving technologies and they include telecommunication technologies (telephony, cable, satellite, TV and radio, computer-mediated conferencing, video conferencing) as well as digital technologies (computers, information networks (internet, World Wide Web, intranets and extranets) and software applications (Chisenga, 2006).

Security is a protection against threats to the bodily integrity and welfare (material and emotional) of people in a defined space from acts of violence, diverse biohazards and severe environmental degradation.

Sometimes ago, some Lagosians reported that some men of the underworld had gone back to business perceiving that the security operatives had left highways in the country for them to benefit from. The question then on the lips of every concerned stakeholder in the polity is: why should it be impossible for the security operatives to perform their duty of safety of lives and properties without mounting check points in a 21st century? Stakeholders in the ICT sector are also worried that the government in the land is not also taking the advantage of the level of the development in Nigeria's ICT to properly secure the country without much argument (Oluwaseun Ayantokun, 2010).

While looking at the security situation in the country and one could conclude that the country has a national security emergency on hand. It is a great concern, when the security operatives in the country still stick to the old way of doing their job when ICT has provided a better means. You don't need to mount a road block if you use technologies to do the job. All you need is motorised surveillance at critical points along the high ways. With technology, motorists do not need to open the boots of their vehicles before you discover something illicit in there.

Today, citizens go about their businesses with the sense of fear and apprehension, there is no day that passes without national media not carrying banner headlines of unabated criminal activities and insecurity at various parts of the country. Also, the spate of kidnappings and related heinous crimes perpetrated by unscrupulous and undesirable elements. There is a need for collaboration on the parts of the government and other stakeholders to be able to combat the menace.

Proffering solutions to national security in Nigeria through ICT

As the Nation continues to face rising national security challenges, it is critical to embrace a digital transformation process that will help in tackling the national security challenges and achieve an ambitious economic and social policy goal of a 21st Century Nation. The ability to harness Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) is increasing at the heart of

competitiveness and sustainable growth of every Nation. Deploying ICT in certain aspect of the National Transformation Agenda and the ICT Policy of the nation will play a vital role in combating the current national challenges. (NGF, 2012).

The approach to tackling insecurity in the country should be multi-dimensional. In the first place, security agencies need not worry so much if they could leverage on the power of ICT in executing national security operations.

Below are some areas where ICT could improve national security in Nigeria:

(i) **Financing:** With the deployment of ICT for national identity data capture and management, biometrics data capture and storage, password-restricted access to stored data for both local and remote access this will help in tracking, tracing and investigating suspected financial transactions, since we are now in cashless society, transactions will be forced to electronic platforms where suspicious cash movements can be identified and questioned. This would go a long way in curbing the financing of activities that constitute a threat to national security.

(ii) **Communication:** Intercepting communication between and within terror groups and enhancing interaction within security agencies can be achieved through the deployment of intrusion sensing or detection devices. To intercept criminal discussions and conversations of criminals prior to, during or after crimes, telecom operators and internet service providers can enable the retention of call data and catch word-specific internet and intranet content for a reasonably long period of time to aid criminal investigations when queried by appropriate software engineers.

A number of gadgets and technologies are used in communication and by exercising the role and ethics of those technologies will help in tagging and tracking information that is or was communicated using a certain devices. Also in ethics of IT, every electronic device developed has a unique identification number (IUID) that makes the device electronically traceable. These systems could be deployed positively for the interest of national security.

(iii) **Surveillance:** Village-wide, town-wide, city-wide, state-wide and nation-wide surveillance (video with bi-directional audio) with local or in-situ, distributed and central or national

storage or archiving with password-restricted access as well as with date-and-time-specific playback for criminal investigations and in the monitoring of data and traffic e.g., Phone calls and broadband internet traffic (emails, web traffic, instant messaging, etc.) are required to be available for unimpeded real-time monitoring by federal law enforcement agencies. So many forms and technologies can be used such as surveillance cameras, social network analysis, biometric surveillance, data mining and profiling, corporate surveillance, satellite imagery, RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) and Geolocation devices, electronic-monitored policing (e-Policing) these would also go a long way in curbing the incessant security breaches, especially in the escalation of kidnapping and other criminal vices as trade, checkmating proliferation of arms and crimes in general.

(vi) **Intelligence Gathering:** Using ICT tools to engage the public in acquiring information that has the potential to enhance national security. The internet, print and electronic media are useful in gathering useful information to assist in the nation security efforts. We can scan every piece of cargo, container, truck and vehicle that enters Nigeria at the seaports, airports and inland border posts to detect movement of arms, ammunitions and light weapons across the country; this would strengthen the efforts of the police and other security agencies. We can capture the number plates, biometrics of the driver as well as photographs and video clips of each port or border crossing into Nigeria by any cargo, container, truck, tanker or vehicle. Data could be captured on specific highways, roads, check-points, inland waterways, with content of cars, trucks, tankers, boats and ferries as the case may be, etc The scanned bulk material data, the image and video can be monitored in-situ as well as remotely. The same outputs can be stored locally and remotely. Stored data again can be accessed remotely on a password-restricted basis.

(v) **Coordination:** The use of cutting edge technology to centralize and coordinate all the nations data will act as a proactive and dynamic means of combating insecurity. A basic example is the development of central intelligence unit or counter terrorism unit with a robust, dynamic, vibrant and updated central database.

The database should be centralized containing every data and details of the nation, an example is converting the National Identification card into an electronic form also making all the

identification (drivers' license, Sim card registration, National ID etc.) into a single digital electronic form and uploaded on a central database. To actually make all these work well, there is the need to lay emphasis on SIM card registration. Also, every telephone number (mobile or fixed) in use in our country must be uniquely identified as belonging to a uniquely identified person in Nigeria. Let the operators register and keep the resultant databases of their subscribers.

(vi) **Identification:** Birth and death registration in addition to unifying various identification initiatives could play a significant role in national security especially when combined with DNA, facial recognition and finger printing technologies.

(vii) **Public Enlightenment:** Sensitization and advocacy on security enlightenment issues using ICTs will play significant role in tackling insecurity. An example is using social network to make public announcement.

(viii) **Emergency response:** In the deployment of ambulances and location of victims using technologies such as geolocation devices (radar and satellite).

Problems of insecurity to Nigeria

- (1) It brings rapid retardation of the national economic development by creation of fears in the minds of investors, thereby scaring away local and foreign direct investments.
- (2) It diminishes the good image and reputation of Nigeria in the comity of nations, especially against the backdrop of global war against terrorism.

Suggestions

From the Institute of the Software Practitioners of Nigeria (ISPON), the means of combating security challenges is viewed from a broader perspective. There is an urgent need to create a National Infrastructure Protection Plan; that developing an effective critical infrastructure protection and resiliency plan for the nation and work with the private sector to ensure those targets are protected against all hazards. Airline security should also be improved, redoubling Nigeria's efforts to adequately address the threats our nation continues to face from airplane-based terrorism. Also, we have to monitor our ports by making more efforts to develop technology that can detect radiation and work with the maritime transportation industry

to deploy this technology to maximize security without causing economic disruption.

We should also safeguard public transportation work to protect the public transportation systems while improving security at the borders by supporting the virtual and physical infrastructure and manpower necessary to secure our borders and keep our nation safe".

Recommendations

- (1) ICT sector has the wherewithal to enhance the efforts of security agencies in the country in halting the wheel of siege of the men of the underworld.
- (2) Navigation systems for tracking and location of criminal automobiles, to ease their interception and arrest, systems for detection and monitoring of footprints and fingerprints of criminals and criminal activities even after they have left the scenes should be made available.
- (3) The presence of personal identity management system for security purposes is paramount to the development of the nation, just as law on lawful interception, data retention systems on the networks and cyber security, would alleviate the challenges of the security forces in combating crimes in the country.
- (4) Security, like knowledge does not only have a military dimension but also a civil one, all the dimensions in a manner that assembles all the building blocks from all quarters at the least possible time and cost. Together, we need to examine current technologies that will help us tackle current challenges and institute the best ways not only of acquiring such technologies but also sharing them among the defence and security community.
- (5) The Ministry of Defence should support policy initiatives that can help the country benefit from a pool of ICT resources, information, knowledge, intelligence and technologies.

Conclusion

We are at a watershed in the history of our nation. When a nation is at a crossroads, it is time to break barriers and leap to higher grounds. The reason is because every nation is a bundle of talent, intellect and creativity. These inner resources are hardly exploited or harnessed to the full except there are challenges.

The current national challenges facing Nigeria in the area of security is a call for all stakeholders to task themselves to come up with novel solutions that bear testimony to their God-given capacity to meet the challenges of the time.

To solve the challenges, one of the areas the country should be looking up to is Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The modern society is a knowledge-based society driven by intelligence and information therefore, Nigeria's defence and national security sector cannot be different.

It is an indisputable fact that at critical times in the history of nations, national security challenges had given the world some of the best known technologies in the history of mankind, Nigeria should not be an exception. It is time for us to begin to exploit new ways of tackling our security challenges.

For Nigeria to overcome the present national security challenges, all stakeholders must

work together to evolve new ways of doing things and build capacity in modern information and communications technologies.

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Whatever your mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.

~ Napoleon Hill