

POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICS, GOVERNANCE AND STATECRAFT: CURRENT POSITION AND ROLES OF SECURITY GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria's democratic experience since 1999 has been shaped by the interplay of political parties, competitive politics, governance structures, and the practice of statecraft. Security governance, as both an enabler and a product of these processes, remains underdeveloped and often politicized. This paper examines the synergy, or lack thereof, between political governance and security governance, and assesses their dual roles in combating terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, violent attacks, and the broader insecurity that undermines political stability and the delivery of democracy dividends. It argues that weak institutional synergy, politicization of security institutions, and deficits in professionalization have undermined statecraft and exacerbated insecurity. Drawing on political science, public administration, and security studies, and on the Institute of Security Nigeria's body of work, the paper proposes institutional reforms to align political governance with professional security governance for sustainable peace and stability.

Keywords: Political parties, governance, statecraft, security governance, synergy, terrorism, insurgency, Nigeria, professionalization, civilian oversight

1. Introduction

The stability of any state depends on the ability of political actors to manage power through legitimate institutions while safeguarding the security of citizens and the state. In Nigeria, political parties and the politics they generate have historically influenced the structure, deployment, and accountability of security institutions. Since the return to civil rule in 1999, the country has experienced cycles of electoral competition, policy experimentation, and recurrent security crises including Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping for ransom, and communal violence.

Security governance refers to the structures, processes, and norms that regulate how security is provided, managed, and overseen. Political governance sets policy direction, allocates resources, and ensures oversight. When both function in synergy, they deliver security as a public good and create the conditions for political stability and the realization of democracy dividends. When they are misaligned, insecurity persists, political instability deepens, and citizens do not experience the benefits of democratic rule.

This paper integrates analysis from the author's published works on security, governance, and statecraft to examine the current state of that synergy, the dual roles of political and security architecture in addressing terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, and violent attacks, and to proffer evidence-based recommendations for reform.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Political Governance

Political governance refers to the exercise of authority by elected and appointed political actors through formal institutions to make policy, allocate resources, and manage public affairs. In Nigeria, it is mediated by political parties, the executive, legislature, and judiciary.

2.2 Security Governance

Security governance encompasses policy formulation, strategic planning, oversight, and accountability mechanisms for all actors involved in security provision, including state agencies, private security, regional bodies, and community structures. As argued in *_Contemporary Security Issues on Governance and Statecraft_* (2018), effective security governance requires alignment between policy intent and operational execution.

2.3 Synergy Between Political and Security Governance

Synergy exists when political direction sets clear policy objectives, provides resources, and ensures oversight, while security institutions execute operations professionally, independently of partisan interference, and are accountable to civilian authority. The absence of this synergy results in either over-politicization or operational drift.

2.4 Statecraft

Statecraft is the art of conducting state affairs to achieve national interests through diplomacy, economic policy, military power, and internal security management. *_Managing Strategic Security in Statecraft, Public Affairs and Foreign Relations_* (2019) emphasizes that coherent statecraft requires institutional memory and depoliticized security management.

3. Current Position: Synergy Between Political Governance and Security Governance in Nigeria

3.1 Areas of Formal Synergy

The 1999 Constitution and statutes such as the Police Act 2020 and Armed Forces Act provide for civilian control of security institutions. The National Security Council and state security councils exist to coordinate political and security actors. The National Assembly exercises oversight through appropriation and confirmation hearings. *_Managing Security In Public Institutions and Parliaments_* (2025) details the legal and procedural frameworks for securing public institutions and for legislative oversight of security operations.

3.2 Deficits in Practical Synergy

1. Politicization of Appointments: Key security leadership positions are often filled based on political loyalty rather than professional competence, undermining institutional memory and continuity.

2. Policy Inconsistency: Changes in political leadership frequently lead to abrupt shifts in security policy without regard to threat assessments, disrupting ongoing operations.

3. Weak Oversight Capacity: Legislators and civil society lack technical expertise and access to classified information, limiting effective oversight. *Managing Security In Public Institutions and Parliaments* (2025) identifies gaps in parliamentary security training and information management as key constraints.

4. Parallel Security Arrangements: Political actors at times mobilize informal groups during elections, blurring the line between party politics and legitimate security provision.

5. Fragmented Inter-Agency Coordination: The Nigerian Armed Forces, Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Services, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, regional security agencies, Lagos State Neighborhood Safety Agency, and vigilante groups operate with limited joint doctrine and command protocols.

4. Dual Roles in Combating Terrorism, Insurgency, Kidnapping, and Violent Attacks

4.1 Political Governance Role

Political governance provides the legal framework, resource allocation, and policy direction for counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. It shapes regional cooperation through ECOWAS and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and determines amnesty, deradicalization, and community engagement programmes. Political leadership also sets the tone for public communication, which affects citizen cooperation and resilience. *_Managing Strategic Security in Statecraft, Public Affairs and Foreign Relations_* (2019) outlines how foreign policy and internal security must be coordinated for effective counterterrorism.

4.2 Security Architecture Role

The security architecture executes kinetic and non-kinetic operations, intelligence gathering, border management, and protection of critical infrastructure. It includes the Nigerian Armed Forces, Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Services, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and specialized units for counterterrorism and anti-kidnapping. Regional security agencies and vetted community structures provide local intelligence and early warning. *_Security and Criminal Intelligence for Law Enforcement_* (2021) details the intelligence cycle and investigative processes required for effective counter-kidnapping and counterterrorism operations.

4.3 Gaps in Dual Role Execution

When political governance fails to provide consistent policy, timely funding, and legal clarity, security operations become reactive and fragmented. When security institutions lack professional standards and inter-agency coordination, operations suffer from duplication, poor intelligence fusion, and civil-military friction. The result is persistence of terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, and violent attacks, and failure to restore normalcy in affected regions.

5. Contribution to Good Governance, Peace, and Stability

Where synergy has functioned, such as in joint operations against insurgency in the North East and in community policing initiatives in Lagos State, there have been measurable improvements in threat containment and citizen cooperation. Professional training and standardized procedures have enhanced operational effectiveness and public trust. *_Security Operations, Crime Prevention and Good Governance: Pattern and Trends_* (2007) documents how structured crime prevention strategies improve governance outcomes.

However, these instances are isolated. The overall deficit in synergy has constrained the ability of political governance to deliver security as a public good, thereby weakening legitimacy and stability. The non-achievement of democracy dividends is evident in low investment, displacement, and erosion of public services in conflict-affected areas.

6. Contribution to Current Political Situation and Insecurity

6.1 Political Dimension

1. Erosion of Trust: Perceived use of security agencies for partisan purposes reduces public confidence in elections and democratic processes.
2. Weak Legislative Oversight: Inadequate scrutiny of security budgets and operations enables inefficiency and corruption. *Managing Security In Public Institutions and Parliaments (2025)* provides a framework for strengthening parliamentary security committees and information security protocols.
3. Policy Volatility: Lack of bipartisan consensus on security strategy creates gaps that non-state actors exploit.

6.2 Security Dimension

1. Operational Inefficiency: Fragmentation and lack of joint training reduce response times and increase casualties.
2. Skills Deficit: Absence of a national certification framework for security managers and professionals contributes to poor tactical and strategic decision-making.
3. Community Alienation: When community structures such as vigilante groups operate without standardized training and oversight, human rights violations occur, further alienating citizens.
4. Regional Spillover: Weak coordination with regional security agencies limits cross-border threat management.

Communal Conflict and Violence: Response, Resolution and Prevention (2009) identifies the failure to integrate community actors into formal conflict resolution mechanisms as a driver of protracted violence. *National Security, Social Coercion and Sustainable Development: Panacea to Conflict, Violence and Xenophobia (2008)* further argues that coercive approaches without development and legal safeguards exacerbate insecurity.

7. International Lessons and Comparative Practice

7.1 United Kingdom

The National Security Council coordinates policy, while operational command remains professional and depoliticized. Parliamentary oversight is supported by technical staff and security-cleared members.

7.2 South Africa

The Civilian Secretariat for Police Service provides independent policy and oversight. Professional standards are enforced through statutory bodies.

7.3 Ghana

The National Security Council Act provides structured threat assessment and inter-agency coordination, with academic institutions contributing to policy evaluation.

These models show that effective outcomes require clear separation of political direction from operational management, professional standards, and robust oversight.

8. Proposed Framework for Reform

8.1 Institutionalize Synergy Through a National Security Governance Council

Establish a statutory council under the Presidency with multi-party parliamentary representation, independent security experts, and civil society observers. Mandate: approve national security strategy, review threat assessments, monitor implementation, and publish an annual public report. The council should include representation from the Nigerian Armed Forces, Nigeria Police Force, regional security agencies, and Lagos State Neighborhood Safety Agency.

8.2 Professionalize Security Management and Leadership

Adopt a national framework for security manager certification aligned with ISO 18788 and ISO 18789. Appointments to senior security positions should require recognized professional certification and a minimum tenure of three years to ensure continuity. The Institute of Security Nigeria's diploma to master's pathway provides a ready model. Standard Performance Culture For Security Personnel and Organisations (2021) sets out the competency and performance benchmarks required for such certification.

8.3 Strengthen Legislative and Civilian Oversight

Create a Joint Committee on Security and Intelligence with security-cleared members and technical staff. Provide structured briefings, access to redacted performance data, and independent audit rights. Mandate capacity-building programmes for legislators and civil society on security oversight. Managing Security In Public Institutions and Parliaments (2025) offers practical guidance on securing parliamentary premises, protecting classified information, and conducting evidence-based oversight.

8.4 Depoliticize Operational Command

Define in law the boundary between political direction and operational command. Operational decisions must be made by professional commanders within policy parameters set by civilian authorities. Sanctions should apply for misuse of security agencies for partisan purposes. Ethical Standards And Behavioural Patterns in Law Enforcement (2022) provides a code of conduct and accountability framework applicable across security agencies.

8.5 Integrate Regional and Community Structures

Bring regional security agencies and vetted community groups into a unified coordination framework with standardized training, reporting, and accountability. Establish clear legal mandates and oversight mechanisms to prevent abuse.

8.6 Enhance Transparency and Public Engagement

Publish an annual National Security Governance Report detailing threats, policy responses, budget execution, and performance outcomes. Engage academia, including the Institute of Security Nigeria, in policy analysis and evaluation. Security Culture, Diplomacy and Communication Skills in International Relations (2008) highlights the role of strategic communication in building public trust.

9. The Role of the Institute of Security Nigeria

Since 1998, ISN has trained over 12,000 professionals through diploma to master's programmes in partnership with the University of Lagos, Federal University of Technology Akure, Tai Solarin Federal

University of Education, and Afe Babalola University. ISN faculty supervise internships, develop curricula, and provide consultancy to public and private entities.

ISN has produced more than 300 practice books and textbooks, organized 19 International Security Conferences, and publishes the peer-reviewed Security and Intelligence Studies Reviews in 12 volumes, alongside the ISN Bulletin and Occasional Papers. This ecosystem supports evidence-based policy development and professionalization of security governance.

10. Recommendations and Solutions to Current Political and Security Issues

1. Adopt a National Security Governance Act to codify the roles, responsibilities, and limits of political and security actors, ensuring synergy without compromising professional independence.
2. Implement Mandatory Professional Certification for all senior security managers in public, regional, and private sectors within five years, using the standards in Standard Performance Culture For Security Personnel and Organisations (2021).
3. Establish a Joint Operations and Training Command for inter-agency exercises, including the Armed Forces, police, regional agencies, and vetted community groups, to improve coordination and trust.
4. Create a Security Oversight Training Fund to build technical capacity in the National Assembly, state assemblies, and civil society organizations, drawing on the curriculum in Managing Security In Public Institutions and Parliaments (2025).
5. Introduce a Whistleblower Protection and Accountability Framework within security institutions, guided by the ethical framework in Ethical Standards And Behavioural Patterns in Law Enforcement (2022).
6. Institutionalize Bipartisan Security Policy Dialogue outside election cycles to build national consensus on threat management and resource allocation.
7. Standardize and Oversee Community Security Structures through a national registry, training curriculum, and legal framework to integrate them safely into the broader security architecture.
8. Align Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency Policy with Development Programmes to address root causes and ensure that security gains translate into democracy dividends for affected communities.

11. Expected Outcomes

1. Improved Policy Coherence: Security policy becomes evidence-based and less susceptible to electoral cycles.
2. Enhanced Professionalism: Standardized training and certification raise operational effectiveness across all agencies.
3. Stronger Oversight: Legislators and civil society exercise informed oversight.

4. Greater Public Trust: Transparent governance improves legitimacy of security institutions.

5. Sustainable Peace and Stability: Reduced politicization and improved coordination contribute to containment of terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, and violent attacks, and enable the delivery of democracy dividends.

12. Conclusion

Political governance and security governance in Nigeria currently operate with limited synergy, contributing to both governance deficits and persistent insecurity. The dual roles of political leadership and the security architecture are critical to combating terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, and violent attacks. Where professional standards and institutional coordination exist, outcomes improve. Where they are absent, political competition undermines statecraft and security fails to deliver peace and stability.

The proposed reforms align political direction with professional security execution, strengthen oversight, and integrate all legitimate security actors into a coherent framework. The Institute of Security Nigeria's publications and training programmes provide a practical foundation for this transition. Implementing these recommendations will enable Nigeria to manage its current political and security challenges and build a foundation for long-term stability and democratic consolidation.

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