

TERRORIST GROUP AND THEIR THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The end of the cold war elicited broad human rights concerns to the extent that they take centre stage not only in nation's foreign policies but also in world politics as a whole. the issue of terrorism has remained problematic to the international community as it has increasingly impacted negatively on nation's foreign policies. This peculiar act of criminality ranges from suicide bombing to kidnapping of individuals which has presently gained recognition in Nigeria. This paper added its voice to the disturbing rising incidence of terrorist groups and their catastrophic implications by examining terrorists' group and threat to National Security in Nigeria. The study employed the secondary method of data collection which includes books, journals, articles, reports, periodicals, monographs, newspapers, magazines and internet materials. The study argue that ideological difference, poverty and leadership failure are the major factors perpetuating the resurgence of terrorist groups in Nigeria. The fact that the vast majority of Nigerians are economically disadvantage, socially subordinate and politically vulnerable reinforces the nexus between terrorist groups and insecurity. Therefore, recommended strengthening government institutional capacity, the compelling need to have responsible governments that will be truly people oriented and with the political will to initiate and execute policies and programmes and the establishment of State Police in the thirty-six subregional units of Nigeria.

Keywords: Terrorism, National Security, Boko Haram, Nigerian State, Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

The term "Terrorism" is politically and emotionally charged and this greatly compounds the difficulty of providing a precise definition. The concept of terrorism may itself be very controversial as it is often used by state authorities to delegitimise political and other opponents, and politically legitimize the state own use of force against opponents. The word Terror comes from a Latin word Terror meaning to frighten. The terror cimbricus was a panic and state of emergency in Rome in response to the approach of the Cimbri tribe in 105BC. The Cimbri were a tribe from Northern Europe, who together with the Teutones and the Ambrones threatened the Roman Republic in the late 2nd century BC. The Jacobins lost power, the word terrorist or terrorism became a term of abuse (Nunberg, 2007). Although in modern term terrorism usually refers to the killing of innocent people by a private group in such a

way as to create a media spectacle (Lott 2007). This meaning can be traced back to Sergey Nachayve founder of the Russian terrorist group 'People's Retribution', who described himself as a terrorist in 1869 (Lott 2007).

Although terrorist can be criminal, but not all criminal activities are terrorism. There is a general perception or believe that the aggressive pursuit of national and international security objectives cannot be considered as terrorism. This is a fallacy because, states, in the pursuit of security objectives do indeed cause ingenious bodily harm, and in most cases their actions can lead to loss of innocent civilian lives. Groups such as Al Qaeda, HAMAS, Hezbollah, Boko Haram, militants in the Niger Delta and other non-State actors engage in terrorism in order to achieve certain political/personal objectives. There are differences among terrorist organizations' hence their diverse objectives. However, there is a common and familiar pattern on their modus operandi (kidnapping, maiming, and destruction of lives and property). Sometimes, these acts are committed in reaction to the behavior or pronouncement of a particular political authority or State, other times such heinous acts are either committed in self-defense or in reaction to the brutality of States or dully constituted authorities.

Not all groups that attempt to exert fear in the minds of a targeted population are terrorist groups (Brown, 2007). Some are Nationalist groups or freedom fighters like the; African National Congress (ANC), the Zimbabwe African Union Patriotic Front (ZANUPF) and the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB) were considered terrorist groups by the white regime of South Africa, the minority settlers-regime of Zimbabwe and the government of Nigeria. However, all groups were nationalist movements fighting for the freedom and political emancipation for the majority and indigenous population of their respective people. However, the new age of terrorism is different today because it is:

- i. Global, in the sense that with the death of distance borders no longer serve as barriers to terrorism.
- ii. Lethal, because now terrorism have shifted their tactics from theatrical violent act seeking to alarm as many as possible for the purpose of instilling fear in as many people as possible.
- iii. Waged by civilians without state sanction in ways and by means that erase the classic boundaries between terrorism and a declared war between States.
- iv. Reliant on the most advanced technology of modern civilization to destroy through those sophisticated technological means the modern civilization seen as posing a threat to the terrorist's sacred traditions.
- v. Orchestrated by transnational non-State organizations through global conspiratorial networks of terrorist cells located in many countries, involving unprecedented levels of communication and coordination.
- vi. Pursued by fanatic extremists to annihilate through maximal bloodshed rather than to persuade carrying out crimes against humanity by suicidal methods requiring the terrorists to sacrifice their own lives in acts that cannot be deterred or prevented through negotiated compromise.
- vii. Driven by the hatred of the target-by terrorist' desire to make the target suffer for what target is, what it does, and the value for which the target stands (Sageman, 2004).

These changes require a new compass to travel through the new global landscape. National Security on the other hand is the psychological freedom from fear of foreign aggression, capacity to resist external or internal threats to a country's physical survival or core values. It is of paramount priority on policy makers and the government to ensure its sustainability, since it can be threatened by activities of terrorist groups due to inability of the government to tackle basic social problems (Guttschuss, 2012).

In the history of Nigeria, terrorism dated back since 1952 when there were several killings in Kano powered by misconstrued and discredited politicians (Best, 2014). The same continued since independence where bitter and divisive politics have threatened to tear the country apart. Ethnic and regional conflicts led to a civil war in the late 1960s. The lack of stability in the polity continued with alternate military and democratic administrations, reaching a peak in the 90s. This period, particularly after the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election, witnessed an upsurge in incidence of arson, political hooliganism and assassinations, bomb explosions and destructive religious and ethnic clashes (Obasanjo, 2006). Underlying this instability were a number of factors which include: the plural (multi-ethnic) nature of the society, religious differences, lack of sustainable socio-economic development, corruption, lack of patriotism and nationalism and leadership problems. Therefore, the study examines terrorists' group and threat to National Security in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

TERRORISM

One of the challenges of examining terrorism is that there is no widely accepted definition. This is not just a problem of semantics. It has affected initiatives to establish treaties and other international efforts to combat terrorism (Rourke, 2007). "The simple fact that, terrorism means different things to different people". We couldn't find a common political ground on several issues- despite the fact that the entire world is preoccupied with international terrorism" (Rourke, 2007). Terrorism poses alarming kind of contemporary violence. The instruments of terror are varied and the motivations of terrorist diverse. Experts agreed that terrorism is the use or threat of violence, a method of combat or a strategy to achieve certain goals, that is aimed at inducing a state of fear in the victim, that is ruthless and does not conform to humanitarian norms, and that publicity is an essential factor in terrorist strategy' (Laqueur, 2006).

Golder and Williams (2004), observe that the lack of what constitutes terrorism points to its inescapably political nature, perhaps best encapsulated in the aphorism that 'one person' terrorism is another person's freedom fighter'. Terrorists are normally triggered by some of opposition, real or imagined which precedes the terror act that allows the perpetrators to rationalize their actions. While recognizing this lack of consensus, it is however, important to establish how the word is used here. Terrorism is 1. Violence; 2. Carried out by individuals, non-governmental organizations, or covert government agents or units; that 3. Specifically targets civilians, 4. Uses clandestine attack methods, such as car bombs and hijacked airliners; and 5. Attempt to influence politics. (Rourke, 2007). This definition stresses that terrorism focuses on harming innocent people in order to create fear by targeting civilians and facilities or systems (such as transportation) on which civilians rely upon. Basically the objective of terrorists is not just killing and wounding people and destroying physical material. The true

target is the emotions of those who see or read about the act of violence and become afraid or dispirited.

Various Scholars (Ogundele, 2008; Osaghae, 1995; Dagne, 2006; Scott, 2007; Cohen, 2008) have used rebels, insurgents, militants, terrorists, freedom fighters e.t.c. to describe the concept. The very diversity of views reflects the enormous variety of efforts to understand and describe the problem. This is why the scholars argue that in other regions of the world, including the Middle-East, they share different opinions regarding such groups. For instance, while the US has labeled the Lebanon-based Hezbollah, a pro-Syrian movement, reportedly funded by Iran, as a terrorist group, the European Union (EU) on the other hand, resists the pressure to outlaw Hezbollah a terrorist group (Cohen, 2008).

NATIONAL SECURITY

Wolfers (1952) described national security “as ambiguous symbol” Just as there is no generally acceptable definition of it as Ocheche and Bashir (1989) perceived it as a “rather vague and hazy concept which has not been sufficiently articulated and conceptualized”. However, Waltz (1979) Stresses the fact that the anarchical nature of international system makes it a matter of practical necessity for states to look out for their protection and survival in the system. He further describes the system as a self help system in which each State must take adequate and effective measures to provide for its own security largely conceived in terms of territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty proponents, this perspective argues that Nation-States compete for many of the same thing including self-preservation, National Identity, Sovereignty, status and wealth which are acutely scarce. It is therefore, the acute scarcity of this identified value in the preceding that provides strong motivation for Sovereign States to amass as much military power as they can. Security in these contexts, is largely perceived as a function of power demonstrated in awesome military capability.

The cold war era conceptualization of national security perceived in terms of the amassment of military armaments and personnel. Hence John Mroz defines national security as the “relative freedom from harmful threats” which was to be achieved by a state by the amassment of frightening war heads and thousands of soldiers. In contrast to the view above, Gurt, argues that, for a state to feel secure, it has to worry more about its immediate political and strategic environment, because the danger of possible threats or infringement on its independence and security, encompasses many non-military action as well (Gurt, 1985).

Therefore, this study submits that, the security of any social system is not necessarily a function of its military power alone, but essentially the aggregate of both military and non-military factors. This more encompassing definition which now accommodates social, economic, cultural, technology and political variables in the addition to its military variables, has swiftly substituted the much emphasis on military hardware as national security. Thus, the reality is that a country overshadowed with high rate of unemployment, political instability, poverty, hunger, disease, population exploitation, environmental degradation, cannot be secured.

Hence, Robert McNamara brilliantly asserts that:

Any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security against
the background of acute food shortages, population explosion, low

level of productive and per capita income, low technological development, inadequate and inefficient public utilities and chronic unemployment, has a false sense of security (McNamara, 1968).

He further observed that:

Security is development and without development there can be no security, a developing nation that does not, in fact, develop, simply cannot remain secured for the intractable reason that its own citizenry cannot shed its human nature (1968).

THE NIGERIAN STATE: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF TERROR

Apart from the changes in leadership structure, the post-colonial Nigerian state did not make any significant difference from the colonial state. The colonial political economy provided the material and the institutional foundation for the development of the post-colonial Nigeria. The transition from colonial to post-colonial economy and society led to changes in class relations with their attendant contradictions (Williams, 1976). The character of this contradiction is seen in its creation of the series of regional and ethnic platforms that continued to gain relevance and ascendancy even in the post-colonial period. Independence eliminated the colonial upper stratum of bourgeoisie, and produced a new ruling class with relatively weak economic base, which therefore gravitated towards the State in order to achieve economic power. Since wealth was largely associated with government office, politics centered on competition for positions and political activities were directed at accessing state power and the allocation of revenue and patronage connected to it, thus opening up the top jobs, and all attendant perquisites hitherto enjoyed by expatriate colonial administrators, to well-placed Nigerians (Graf, 1988).

These Nigerians who were groomed to think, behave and carry on the legacies of the colonial masters although they occupied big positions but they lack the wherewithal to drive the country politically and economically to success. Just as Fanon (1963) rightly observed; this members of the national bourgeoisie as are not creative and are intellectually unproductive. This made them to be unable to know how to put the economy in motion towards the human and material development. This is clearly captured in his view that "... The national middle class who took over power at the end of the colonial regime is an under-developed middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace..." (Fanon, 1963).

Another contributory factor was the expatriates' domination of the investment opportunities and sources of capital accumulation. This inhibited the accumulation and reinvestment of capital by the Nigerian investors who were not economically strong to compete with the foreign investors and Multinational Corporations. These inability to compete made the Nigerian investors to become mere intermediaries between the foreign entrepreneurs and the Nigerian State, or, were finally made to turn to the State as a source of capital. This results in an increased intervention of the State in investment and entrepreneurship, which in turn arrogates to the state and the members of the political class a huge advantage of monopoly over economic investments and highly profitable contracts. Given the fact of this increased state intervention, "politics has become the primary source of capital accumulation by Nigerians" (Gavin, 1977). This opportunistic access to, and accumulation of money raised some

opportunistic professionals and bureaucrats to have an advantage over the people and thus form the bourgeoisie class in the post-colonial Nigeria. Whose focus was and still in milking the country dry.

In a nutshell, the structure of the Nigerian economy reveals its precarious nature notwithstanding its position as the third largest economy on the continent after South Africa and Egypt. The most noted of the absurdities is the over-reliance of the economy and its fate on one sector (the oil industry) and on one commodity export (crude-oil). Hardly could anything be written about the political economy of Nigeria without reference to its history of oil production. Whether inspired by the poor socio-economic credential of the North, or a fundamentalist ideological religious group trained by al-Qaeda, or an instrument fabricated by some selfish political elites in protest of power shift from the North. The fact remains, a 'monster' is born. Who understands nothing less but a blood instruction to destroy its victims in order to communicate to the appropriate political authority?

Boko-Haram is an Islamic religious sect in the Northern Nigeria. Its emergence and activities are inspired by perverse spiritual claims that are hostile to western education and any interaction with the western society which they considered a sin. According to John Campbell, former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria said: "Boko-Haram is a way of thinking, they are a loosely organized grassroots insurrection against not only the Abuja government but the traditional muslim establishment as well".

The characteristics of the organizational operations of the Boko-Haram sects emanate with the defining features of a typical fundamentalists group. The political goal of Boko Haram is to create an Islamic nation in the 12 northern states of Nigeria, eventually spreading to the rest of the country. From its inception, Boko Haram viewed Nigeria as a state run by non-believers and made the government its main target—even when the country had a Muslim president. With Islamic nation in place and leadership, the economic will then be centered on the sharia concept of a Welfare State (Ajayi, 2013).

THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM GROUP ON NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

Terrorism has a large effect on economic activity: the capital stock (human and physical) of a country is often reduced as a result of terrorist attacks; it promotes increases in counter-terrorism expenditures, drawing resources from productive sectors for use in security; it has an adverse effect on specific industries such as tourism and it reduces the expected return to investment, that is, changes in the intensity of terrorism have an ambiguous effect on the overall investment position of the world (such as, investment over wealth) (Davis, 2012; Anyadike, 2013).

Terrorism may also portend large movements of capital across countries of the world. It is in such cases, corporate (International) Investors rate terrorism as one of the essential factors influencing foreign investment decisions. just like what mostly the Northern part of Nigeria is facing at the wake of the Boko-Haram attacks altering the budget for socio-economic development for security expenditure, crippling education and economic activities, with businesses relocating to the Southern or Eastern part of the country where their businesses are relatively secured from the threats of terrorist groups. For instance, about 60% of Nigerian businesses have relocated to Ghana which has stable supply of electricity. the amount of

foreign direct investment in the US prior and after the September 11 attacks provide some evidence of the open economy channel of terrorism (Bartolotta, 2012 & Akokegh, 2012).

In the year 2000, before the terrorist attacks, foreign direct investment inflows represented about 15.8 percent of the Gross Fixed Capital formation in the US. This figure decreased to only 1.5 percent in 2003, two years after the attack. The same is the case in Nigeria hitherto. Since the increase in proportion of kidnapping and Boko-Haram activities mostly in the Northern Nigeria, with spilled over effects on the North central States, the number of international investors coming to Nigeria has reduced drastically while some foreign companies who had been in Nigeria years before the terrorist activities began have relocated to other neighbouring countries such as Ghana and South Africa where they are sure to enjoy relative peace, security and supply of electricity (Cohen, 2008; Rotimi, 2008 & Thomson, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Leadership failure is arguably one of the major factors that provides extensive explanatory to the associated challenges of terrorism in Nigeria. The fact that the vast majority of Nigerians are economically disadvantaged, socially subordinated and politically vulnerable, reinforces the nexus between recurrent outbreaks of terrorist attacks and National security. To this end, a credible leadership that is capable of addressing the material condition of the vast majority of the citizenry is certainly the surest avenue to surmounting the challenges of incessant outbreaks of terrorist groups in Nigeria. There is thus the compelling need to have responsible governments that has the political will to initiate and execute government policies and programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study proposes the following as some of the workable and achievable measures towards curbing the problem of insurgency in Nigeria:

- i. Strengthen Government Institutional Capacity by Creating independent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, involving farmer groups, civil society organizations, and local communities to check elite capture and misuse of resources.
- ii. The pattern of governmental response to containing insurgency has not yielded the much-desired outcome. Governmental strategy has been more reactive to the rather than proactive. The establishment of State Police in the thirty-six (36) subregional units of Nigeria will go a long way in minimizing the threat of these armed groups.
- iii. The proliferation of small arms has significantly accounted for the incessant outbreaks of armed conflicts. The ease with which small arms and light weapons flow through our porous borders should be checked by concerned authority.

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