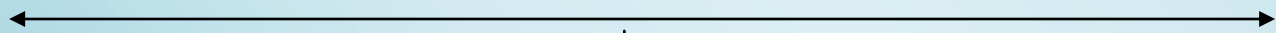


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TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY IN NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA: MAJOR CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

The concept of terrorism is as old as history; the global system has assumed a terrorist attacks in its variegated form which some sometimes satirizes a particular group of people, state or an individual as terrorists. The paper examines the nature of terrorism and insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria, and analyses the major factors that engender terrorism and insurgency in that part of the country. With the aid of its methodological instrument-using the historical descriptive, findings show that, major terrorist organizations or acts were perpetrated by states and governments or influence implicitly or explicitly the act of terror. The paper concludes that if actions or inactions of states are not always subjected to diplomatic, humanitarian and legalistic scrutiny, states will continue to institutionalize terrorism and continue to support or influence the act of terror around the world. The paper recommends absolute collective supervision of states, drastic measures under international law in dealing with the behavior of state actors as it relates to humanity.

Keywords: terrorism; insurgency; challenges; prospects; boko haram; state-terror

INTRODUCTION

Throughout human history man has been bedeviled with the evils of himself and that of others with different historical attachment, political interest and ideological affiliation. Albeit terrorism has been in existence since the creation of man, but contemporarily, it is axiomatic that human suffering are being gravitated by states and governments. This is discernible from the hitherto great war of 1914, the second world war which emanated from Nazi-Germany, imperial japan and fascist Italy.

The perpetual killing of innocent people in the Middle East as a result of Israeli occupation of Palestine, the soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1989 and gradual disunity among Arab governments are few examples of the driving forces that produced the envelope of terrorism of this century.

It is worth-mentioning the Irish republican army which fought for the liberation of Ireland from the United Kingdom, the Columbian FARC para-military organization, the, Turkish rebel fighters, Alshabab in Somalia, the Tuaregs in northern Mali and Boko Haram in North-eastern Nigeria. All these groups did not take arms just because they never wanted to leave in peace and see their children grow, but it is the irony. What is notable is that these groups were either created by the states or emerged as a reaction to the states' injustice and repression.

The act of terror of any kind and form is condemnable because it subdues terror by terror and exacerbates the spread of terrorism. State's failure, political factions, ethnic supremacy and lack of access to economic gains are some of the major factors that give rise to terrorist movements around the world. It should also be noted that, the concept of terrorism is a relative one, because "one man's terrorists is another man's freedom fighter". This is justifiable with Alqaeda, Hamas, the Tuaregs, Tamil tigers and many rebel groups across borders.

International terrorism grows under Huntingtonian notion of clash of civilization. The western culture and values are being defended by the United States, the Islamic cultural values defended by the Arab-Muslims and Saudi Arabia. Each side has been at war of dominance with the other. When the soviets invaded Afghanistan, the US supported the arbs and Mujahideento fight the war for the United States, which was under American policy of containment. The united states continue to support its ally-Israel against all Arabs and make sure it weakens every rising power in the region. Saddam was eliminated, sanctions on Iran, Saudi Arabia lured to be an ally. Which shows America winning in the clash.

It is significant to remember that the United States made regime change in Iraq, which attracted Alqaeda to rise against US invading forces. The US equipped the Shi'ites in Iraq to fight Sunni militants, which later resulted in the Iraqi civil war and weakened the Arab alliance in the Middle East. This also shows that the US is winning in clash of civilization.

CONCEPTUAL ELUCIDATION

Conceptual elucidation examines some conceptual clarifications for better understanding of some significant terms used in this paper. The two major concepts that have been difficult to define or interpret are (1) the concept of terrorism, and (2) the concept of insurgency.

Terrorism

The concept of terrorism as originally interpreted was meant to serve political purpose and executed within emotionally political attachment (Hoffman, 1998). The act of terror is also carried out by nationalists, government in power, political parties with radicalist and liberalist connotations, revolutionary movements and religious groups by exploiting fear in attaining their aimed goals (encyclopedia Britannica, 2015:3). The French first called it “*terrorisme*” while in Latin it was called “*terrere*”. The French viewed terrorism as an action carried out by the government especially the French government between 1793 and 1794, which literally means state terrorism. In Latin, the concept of terrorism was used to describe fear among people as caused by a particular body or institution (Kim, 2001; Geoffrey, 2001).

When terrorism was viewed originally as an act committed by the government, in recent interpretations of the concept it was upgraded to mean killing of innocent civilians or people for political purposes or to gain a political advantage (Robert, 2009). By definition of the concept, the global community especially the United Nations has not been able to come up with a generally agreed definition of the concept, but rather, different states, nations and Organizations have their ways of defining the concept (Hoffman, 1998). The difficulty of having one definition of terrorism by the international system was the disagreement among states as what constitutes the use of violence over “national liberation and self-determination” (Angus, 2002).

It was established that from 1994 the United Nations General Assembly has been adopting a particular definition of the concept of terrorism. This definition encompasses almost all avenues of provoking fear, by any individual or group with any justifiable reason, and see it as:

Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them (UN, 1994).

Insurgency

Insurgency is a concept that describes rebellion against the state. The insurgents fight the government for one reason or the other. It usually arises as a result of marginalization, unequal treatment, injustice, distribution of power and economic resources or even in the quest for self-determinism (Peter, 1964; Roberts and Timothy, 2009). An insurgency connotes a movement that is set to overthrow a particular government using subversions and arm conflicts (Morris, 2005).

THEORETICAL BACKING

John Locke provided his theoretical exposition about man in the state of nature in his *Second Treatise of Government* (1689). Locke believed that individuals in a state of nature would be bound morally, by the Law of Nature, not to harm each other in their lives or possession, but without government to defend them against those seeking to injure or enslave them, people would have no security in their rights and would live in fear. Locke argued that individuals would agree to form a state that would provide a "neutral judge", acting to protect the lives, liberty, and property of those who lived within it (Locke, 1997).

State Terrorism as a Driving Force to Group Terrorism

When Hoffman (1989) described the politics of terror and identified governments as major perpetrators of terrorism, he was philosophically right and practically correct in his assertion. States were contributive to global terrorism even prior to the great war of 1914. Most of the strongest terrorist organizations with relevant cells around the world today have been created by states and governments or emerged as a reactionary movement against state's injustice. It is also axiomatic the relationship between politics and terrorism, not because politics is terrorism, but because there is political motive in terrorism or terrorism in political motive (Geoffrey, 2001; Kim, 2001; Robert, 2009).

State Terrorism as a Cause to the Great War

Apart from extreme nationalism and military buildup in Europe in 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary alongside his wife in Sarajevo, was the major factor that precipitated the First World War, which instilled fear among people Europe and all over the world. This was perpetrated by the Black Hand, which was a secret military society in the kingdom of Serbia, financed by Serbian military intelligence (Gilfond, 1975).

The assassination has resulted in a disruption of peace in Europe and the outbreak of First World War, where Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary. Due to the level and number of alliances in Europe, Germany declared war on Russia and vice versa. France was also in alliance with Russia, so it declared war on Germany and later Britain, Belgium and Japan entered the war in favor of Russia (Sheriff, 2014).

The Emergence of ALQaeda as a Terrorist Organization

With the invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet forces in 1979, the United States deemed it imperative to fight Soviet imperial tendency in central Asia and Afghanistan. The US was not to fight the Soviet troops directly, but paid for arms, training and strategic support for militants to fight the Soviet troops. The Arab nations condemned the invasion and also provided funds for militant operations against the Soviets. Individual volunteers from Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations entered Afghanistan to fight a holy war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (Pear, 1988; Amstutz, 1986). This has led to the emergence of Al-Qaeda networks which the United States later antagonized.

Origin of Hezbollah

Hezbollah is a Shi'ite militia that is based in Lebanon. Their primary objective is to fight the state of Israel against the occupation of Palestine by Israel and protect Lebanon from any external attacks. Some of the major reasons that gave rise to the Shi'ite movement in Lebanon are that (1) there was persecution and identity crisis (2) structural imbalance (3) Monrite-sunni domination, and (4) Israeli invasion (Hamzeh, 2004:12).

The major factor among all is the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in what called "operation Litani" of 1978 and the subsequent Lebanon war of 1982. The major Israeli assertion was that, removal of PLO from Lebanon and distancing Syria from Lebanon would bring more peace to Lebanon and bring closer ties between Israel and Lebanon. This would also ensure a Christian dominated government in Lebanon (Hamzeh, 2004, 15). It was reported more than one thousand Shi'ites were killed by Israeli forces, and the subsequent invasion forced them to move into Beirut slums (Hamzeh, 2004). The above has given rise to the military wing of Hezbollah, which saw it imperative to fight against the occupation and defend themselves.

Al-Shabaab

When the Somali government collapsed in 1991, the Islamic courts came together to provide security, build schools and hospitals, and had the support of Somalians. It is also notable that about 99% of Somali people are Muslims. They extended their rule to Mogadishu and other strategic areas in Somalia, fought and captured some warlords. The American government later began to doubt the Islamic courts union and suspected it had links to al-Qaida. Ethiopian troops later attacked the Islamic courts together with forces of the transitional government. That paved a way for the inflow of jihadists into Somalia and after a clash between factions of the Islamic courts union. Al-Shabaab started fighting Ethiopian and AMISOM forces (Alisha, 2007; Lara, 1999)

The Taliban

The Taliban literarily known as students emerged in the 1990's, took power in 1994 and established Islamic emirate in 1996. They were recognized by the governments of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia (an American ally) and united Arab emirate. The United States invaded Afghanistan after the September 11th attacks on US soil and made a regime change that brought Ahmad Karzai to power. This has made the Taliban become an insurgent group that remained resilient in fighting the US forces and NATO coalition forces (Ibrahim, 2009).

Boko Haram

The Boko Haram as a sect emerged in 2002 with a new ideology which believes that western education is forbidden, but was not known or noticed, until with the leadership of Muhammad Yusuf who popularized the group in his preaching and organizing youths in Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, Adamawa and partially Kano state. The group has been peaceful in their preaching and activities, not until when members were attacked at a funeral procession. The attack killed and injured some of their members and expected that the government could say or do something, but nothing came from the government (Morgan, 2015).

Muhammad Yusuf wrote an open letter to the governor of Borno state, the inspector general of police and Mr. President, at that time, President Umaru Yar'adua. Despite the above efforts, nothing came from the government. The group therefore decided to take vengeance against the police. In 2009, they carried attacks on police stations and government facilities, which reported the death of many people in Borno state.

The uprising could have stopped there, but Muhammad Yusuf was “summarily executed” by the security operatives without trials. This has been condemned by human right campaigners, international organizations and governments. The killing of Muhammad Yusuf was the beginning of violence and mayhem in north-eastern Nigeria and other parts of the country (Morgan, 2015). The Boko Haram uprising has also caused the following damages to Nigeria and her neighbors (Rose, 2015; Glenn, 2014).

- (a) Massive prison breaks in 2010
- (b) Suicide bombings at police stations, UN building, Churches, mosques, moto parks, schools, markets and the police headquarter in Abuja.
- (c) Kidnapping of women, children and forcing men to joining the group
- (d) Assassinations of traditional rulers, religious leaders, politicians, government officials, serving and retired uniform men.
- (e) Attacks in neighboring countries, like Niger, Chad and Cameroon.
- (f) It has displaced more than 2.3 million people
- (g) It has killed more than 20,000 people since inception of violence in 2009.

Factors that Gave Rise to Boko Haram Insurgency

Many observers and scholars have attempted to provide some of the factors that contributed to the emergence of Boko Haram in North-eastern Nigeria (albeit these factors paved a room for the emergence of Boko Haram ideology, but did not influence the violence). The immediate cause to the violence was the assassination of Yusuf. Many of these factors are intertwined and many variegated (Sani, 2015):

1. Manipulation of religion
2. Disconnect between government and the governed
3. Prevalence of social and economic injustices
4. Global terror epidemic – terror contagion
5. Collapse of public education
6. Massive unemployment
7. Proliferation of arms and unguarded borders
8. Under-development of the North by previous administrations
9. Human right abuses and extra-judicial killings

10. Economic collapse of the North
11. Capitalism breeds terrorism
12. Lack of unity and ethnic crisis in the North
13. Distortion of religious realities

Major Challenges Posed By Boko Haram Insurgency

Emerging from the throes of terrorist attacks by the Boko Haram sect, Nigeria has suffered from divergent challenges. These challenges are not more than what the effect of war, conflict or insecurity could inflict on humanity and any socio-economic and political formations. Some of the major challenges faced by Nigeria are as follows:

- a. General fear and insecurity: Fear has been instilled in the minds of Nigerians which results in lack of trust among security operatives, civilians and even government officials. People feel insecure wherever they go and people fled their homes in fear of terrorist attacks.
- b. Educational breakdown: the insurgency has affected education especially in the north-eastern part of the country. Many schools have closed; children and parents have become refugees in Nigeria or outside Nigeria. The education of those children has been affected by the insurgency.
- c. Religious practice: the act of terror has hindered the practice of religion in the affected region. Churches and mosques were subjected to periodic attacks, for fear of terrorist attacks, people have abandoned places of worship.
- d. Economic activities lowered: the Baga market was burnt and some other relevant markets that were put under attacks, have made people leave Borno state. People have become beggars due to the loss of capital and fortunes.
- e. Foreign direct investment: foreign direct investment has been affected, as foreigners who invested in those areas of the insurgency left as a result of abduction and kidnapping. Those who were willing to come have changed their decision of coming.
- f. Administrative work and responsibility: civil servants who work under the federal and state government were also affected due to the insurgency. People were absent at work, those who go to offices close before time. Transfers were rejected, and some prefer to leave service to getting transferred to Maiduguri.

PROSPECTS

The current government has invested in the fight against terror which justifies the victory of Nigerian army over the Boko Haram insurgents. The prospect for insurgency-free Nigeria is to deal with issues that first breed terrorists in the country. Some of these prospects (way out) are as follows:

- a. Employment opportunities which, will in the long run stabilize the younger population and takes them off the streets.
- b. Massive funding of education to drastically provide more schools and encouragement to people in villages and remote areas to be educated, in order to learn about civility and to understand that killing of any kind is barbaric.
- c. Religious tolerance among Nigeria's divergent groups must be promoted.
- d. The government has to bring itself closer to the masses and truly administer justice and equality among people of different strata, tribe, religion and ethnic background.
- e. Religious activities especially preaching must continue to be monitored and preachers screened. This will avoid the emergence of an alien belief system and ideology that is not healthy for the survival of the society
- f. All national borders have to be fully guarded to prevent the proliferation of illicit weapons that promote local insurgency and other related crimes.
- g. Apart from employment, the government must support small and medium business owners. This will improve entrepreneurship and expand economic capability and fortunes of the nation.

CONCLUSION

Terrorism everywhere in the world cannot wither, so long there continues to be injustice on earth, promotion of inequality, state terrorism, favoritism against others, and lack of political and religious tolerance among people of the same and different nations.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to prevent terrorist cells expansionism and the breed of new ideologists particularly in the north-eastern Nigeria and the country in general, some fundamental issues need to be considered. Some of these issues are:

One, the state must respect all existing religions and allow for the practice of such religions as enshrined in the constitution, except if such religion serves as a threat to the survival of humanity.

Two, the state must also abstain from extra-judicial killings of any type of group, people or assembly in the country, without proper constitutional scrutiny. Whatever offence that is committed by an individual or group, allow the court to decide without applying summary execution of the culprit (s).

Three, the government must provide equitable distribution of resources to avoid uneven development which may result in an extremist agitation or nationalism.

Four, the government has to fight and alleviate poverty, as it is the worst form of violence.

Five, the international community must make humanitarian intervention against any regime or government that oppresses its own people. The same case as it happened in former Yugoslavia during the genocide against ethnic Albanians.

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