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INSURGENCY AND NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA: AN INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS

Abstract:

The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia designed a state system on the twin-principles of territoriality and sovereignty. Sovereignty accords the state unquestionable but legitimate control over the nation and polity, and gives it the latitude to preserve and protect its territorial domain from both internal and external threats. However, besides the fact that globalisation and the internationalisation of the globe have reduced the primacy of these dual principles, there have also been the problem of ideological and terrorist networks that have taken advantage of the instruments of globalization to emerge and threaten state sovereignty and its preservation. The security and sovereignty of the Nigerian State have been under threat as a result of the emergence and activities of insurgent groups, such as Boko Haram in the Northeast and other militant groups in other parts of the country. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, this paper examines the security challenges Nigeria faces from insurgency and the impact of this on national peace, security and sovereignty. The study shows that the frequency of insurgent attacks has resulted in collateral damage on the peace, stability, development and sovereignty of the state. It finds also that the federal government has not been decisive enough. This places urgent and decisive demands on the government to adopt new management strategies that will address and contain the insurgent and terrorist groups. It is recommended that the government at all levels should awake to its responsibilities, ensure

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adequate funding and training of the security agencies, as well as the fortification of the armed forces with sophisticated weapons that will effectively outmatch the firepower of the terrorists. Government must also ensure the tightening of the borders to check the influx of people into its territory.

Keywords:

Boko Haram, Insurgency, International Terrorism, National Security, Nigerian State

Introduction

The return to democracy in Nigeria in May, 1999 brought hopes of development and political stability to Nigeria. The last decade in Nigeria has experienced an increase in violent conflicts and criminality, which have tended to undermine those expectations. The violence and criminality have come in the form of armed robbery, kidnapping, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, human trafficking and militancy, among other acts of criminality that undermine national security. Internal security has been significantly undercut by violent activities of civilian-in-arms against the Nigerian State. These have included radicalized religious and regional youth groups, prominent among which are the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), O’Odua Peoples’ Congress (OPC), the Arewa People’s Congress (APC), Bakassi Boys, Egbesu Boys, the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and more recently, Boko Haram, Ansaru, ‘Kala-Kato’, and Ombatse, among others⁴.

The rise of these groups has had significant influence on the numbers of ethnic and religious conflicts Nigeria has witnessed. The exact number of ethno-religious conflicts that have occurred in the country is not known due to lack of adequate statistics and records on this subject-matter. However, Onuoha has averred that about 40% of ethno-religious crisis has occurred in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic⁵. There has particularly been an increase between 2012 and 2014 in the occurrences of terrorist attacks in the country with government’s insignificant success in curbing the menace. By this, the focus and scope of the discourse in this paper therefore, give the discourse contemporary relevance. It is against this background that the paper explores the phenomenon of terrorism/insurgency in Nigeria, its adverse impact on nationhood and security, and recommends new management strategies for the Nigerian government.

⁴ F. C. Onuoha, *The Audacity of the Boko Haram: Background, Analysis and Emerging Trend*, “Security Journal”, No. 25(2), 2012, pp. 134-151.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis

In this section, concepts central to the discourse, such as insurgency, terrorism, security and the state are briefly discussed.

Insurgency

Insurgency is an ambiguous concept. The United States Department of Defence (2007) defines it as organized movement that has the aim of overthrowing a constituted government through subversive means and armed conflict⁶. This definition suggests that insurgent groups employ unlawful means towards achieving an end, which could be political, religious, social or even ideological. The goal of insurgency is to confront and overthrow an existing government for the control of power, resources or for power sharing⁷.

Terrorism

According to Ekaterina, terrorism is a sort of violence that uses one-sided violent approach against civilians⁸. It also engages uneven violent confrontation against a stronger adversary, which could be a state or a group of states. Chomsky defines terrorism as “the use of coercive means aimed at populations in an effort to achieve political, religious or even other aims”⁹. The US State Department defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”¹⁰. The United Nations (1992) defines terrorism as “an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by semi- clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – In contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets”¹¹.

For Lesser, international terrorism can be referred to as an act in which terrorists cross national borders to perpetrate attacks within the territory of other states. The targets of attacks could be embassies, individuals, schools, government parastatals, security institutions, international organisations, et cetera. Terrorists could also hijack ships on the high sea and planes in the air. Therefore, terrorism is an act that aims at achieving social, political, religious,

⁶ P. Hellesen, *Counterinsurgency and its Implications for the Norwegian Special Operations Forces. A Thesis for the Naval Post Graduate School*, Monterey 2008, p. 14.

⁷ L. J. Siegel, *Criminology: Theories, Patterns and Typologies*, Belmont 2007, p. 328.

⁸ A. S. Ekaterina, *Terrorism in Asymmetrical Conflict: Ideological and Structural Aspects*, New York 2008.

⁹ N. Chomsky, *9-11*, New York 2001, s. 19.

¹⁰ A. Isyaku, *Terrorism: A New Challenge to Nigeria's Stability in the 21st Century*, “International Affairs and Global Strategy”, No. 12, 2013, pp. 17-18.

¹¹ L. J. Siegel, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

economic and even psychological goals through the use of coercive and intimidating acts outside the context of legitimate warfare activities that conveys some forms of messages to an audience¹².

Security

According to Francis, security is a state of being safe and the absence of fear, anxiety, danger, poverty and oppression. It is the preservation of core values and the absence of threats to these values¹³. Imobighe opines that security is the freedom from threats and a nation's capability to defend and develop itself, promote its values and lawful interest¹⁴. For Zabadi, security is a state in which people or things are not exposed to the dangers of physical or moral aggression, accident, theft or decline¹⁵. This view is associated with the survival of the state and the preservation of its citizens. In other words, the state has the responsibility of the use of force and power for the safety of its territory and its people.

Furthermore, there is the crucial need to define national security. Held gives a traditional meaning of national security. He describes national security as "the acquisition, deployment and use of military force to achieve national goals"¹⁶. Romm describes it as the lack of danger or risk to held standards, values and ideals and the absence of fear that such values will be attacked now or in the future¹⁷. Thus, national security is the preservation of the values a nation holds as it relates to the defence of its territory from human as well as non-human threats. The values also guide in the pursuit of its national interest in the international system.

State

The term state is derived from the Italian word "*lo stato*", a term coined by Niccolo Machiavelli to depict the social order that oversees and rules over a political entity or a country. According to Ekanem the "state is a permanent specialized organization of men armed with rules and means of coercion for maintaining order over a population in a defined territory over which this

¹² I. B. Lesser, *Countering the New Terrorism*, Santa Monica-Washington 1999, p. 6.

¹³ W. O. Alli, *The Changing Environment of Nigeria's Foreign Policy*, [in:] *Beyond 50 years of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: Issues, Challenges and prospects*, ed. C. E. Osita, Lagos 2010, p. 73.

¹⁴ T. A. Imobighe, *Doctrine for and Threats to Internal Security*, [in:] *Nigerian Defence Policy: Issues and Problems*, eds. A. E. Ekoko and M. A. Vogt, Lagos 1990, p. 224.

¹⁵ S. I. Zabadi, *Understanding Security and Security Sector Dynamics*, Baltimore 2005, p. 3.

¹⁶ D. Held, A. McGrew, *The End of the Old Order?*, "Review of International Studies", No. 24, 1998, p. 226.

¹⁷ J. J. Romm, *Defining National Security: The Non Military Aspect*, New York 1993.

organization exercises power”¹⁸. For Max Weber, the state is an essential political union that has a centralized government that maintains a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a certain territory¹⁹. Evident in these definitions are the characteristics of the state such as territorial authority, sovereignty, government, population, independence, the right to relate with other states and very importantly, the monopoly of the use of instruments of force.

The Character and Identity of the Nigerian State

Nigeria is a union of separate ethno-cultural units that occupied land terrains that were former British colonies. The Nigerian State is pluralistic in nature, that is, it is a multi-ethnic state or nation-state with over 300 groups, of diverse ethnic and religious identity. Every group is dissimilar to another based on the uniqueness of culture, language, religion and value system²⁰. These differences amongst the various social groupings have remained a major determinant of social relationships.

It is worthy of note to state that social relations between and amongst the various groups have been characterised by cooperation, aggression, discrimination, conflicts, mistrust and prejudice. Even though Nigeria’s motto is unity in diversity, yet from the beginning, the country has not been able to successfully accommodate the interests of all the divergent groups within its territory. There have been various insurgencies, rebellions and public revolts that seem to have been entrenched in the multicultural nature of the Nigerian State. Examples of public uprisings include the Tiv-Jukun/Fulani Conflict (2003), the Gwantu crisis (2001), political violence and unrest in Yorubaland in western Nigeria between 1960 and 1966, the Nigerian Civil War, the census crisis, the post presidential election crisis of 2011, the Maitatsine uprising in Kano in the 1980s, and the Yan Tatsine riots in the early 1980s. Other theatres of conflict included, Zango Kataf in Kaduna State in 1992, Zaria Shiites outbreak, Jos Mayhem, Kaduna religious riots, Maiduguri onslaughts, Kano violence of 1953, ethno-religious massacre in Kano, Kaduna

¹⁸ O. Ekanem, *The Dialectics of Underdevelopment and Instability in Africa*, “Calabar Journal of Politics and Administration”, No. 1(1), 2001, p. 55.

¹⁹ M. Shaw, *War and Genocide: Organized Killing in Modern Society*, Massachusetts 2003.

²⁰ E. O. Ojo, *A survey of ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria and its implications for democracy*, [in:] *Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria*, ed. E. O. Ojo, Ibadan 2006, pp. 368-378; M. A. O. Aluko, *Threats to Nationhood: The Nigerian experience*, “Journal of the Nigerian Anthropological and Sociological Association”, Vol. 1&2 (1), October 1998, pp. 78-84.

and Plateau in the wake of the adoption of a sharia judicial system, Nupe-Yoruba conflict in Kwara and the Boko Haram insurgency²¹.

Insurgency and National Security Challenges in Nigeria

As earlier mentioned, the phenomenon of ethnicity and religious intolerance have led to incessant recurrence of ethno-religious conflicts, which have birthed copious ethnic militias like the Bakassi Boys, O'dua People Congress (OPC), the Egbesu Boys; the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC); the Arewa People's Congress (APC), the Igbo People Congress (IPC) and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), amongst others²². The surfacing of these militia groups has made religious intolerance and fanaticism more violent and disturbing. The two most notorious terrorist groups that have challenged Nigeria's national security, territoriality, sovereignty and unity have been the Niger Delta militant group and Boko Haram.

Insurgency in the Niger Delta

Without any doubt, the Niger Delta region is blessed with numerous natural resources including crude oil. It accounts for over 80% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. Rather than these resources translating into wealth, it has translated into poverty, degraded environment and the region wallows in poverty. This contrast originates from the contaminated perception of politics as a platform of wealth accumulation²³. MNCs, rather than perform their corporate social responsibilities and contribute to the development of the region, have undermined the development of the region and caused massive environmental and economic degradation as oil spills from oil explorations polluted the waters meant for fishing and lands meant for farming. Gas flaring has also diminished agricultural productivity, thereby making the people

²¹ K. Tijani, *Future Dynamics of Good Neighbourliness or a Future Source of Threat: Nigeria and its Immediate Neighbours*, [in:] *Beyond 50 years of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: Issues, Challenges and Prospects*, C. E. Osita (ed.), Lagos 2010, pp. 187-220; A. E. Ojie, C. Ewhrudjakpor, *Ethnic Diversity and Public Policies in Nigeria*, "Antropologist", No. 11(1), 2009, pp. 7-14.

²² B. Salawu, *Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Causal Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies*, "European Journal of Social Sciences", No. 13(3), 2010, pp. 345-353.

²³ M. M. Duruji, F. O. Oviasogie, *State Failure, Terrorism and Global Security: An Appraisal of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Northern Nigeria*, "Journal of Sustainable Society", No. 2(1), 2013, pp. 20-30; B. Thom-Otuya, V. T. Eremie, *Amnesty to Niger-Delta militants: Challenges and opportunities for future peace missions*, "Sophia: An African Journal of Philosophy", No. 13, 2011.

occupationally displaced and developmentally impotent²⁴. The conditions and feelings of alienation from the long years of abandonment, environmental degradation, coupled with the massive unemployment, destruction of aquatic ecosystem, the alteration of the soil quality, air pollution, socio-economic disorganization, the inconsiderateness of successive governments and exploitation by the oil companies produced a capricious atmosphere in the 1990s, characterized by frustration, anger and aggression that manifested in unconstitutional and violent protests and conflicts in the region²⁵. The protests took different dynamic forms and phases.

The first phase was between the early and mid-1980s. According to Azigbo, the agitation actually began as peaceful protests by community development committees of a range of host communities to multinational oil companies²⁶. The period saw the adoption of legal actions against the oil companies by the communities affected by reckless oil explorations. The legal actions basically requested for compensations for the destroyed properties by the oil companies. The second phase of the protests saw the use of peaceful protests and the occupation of flow stations. The objectives of the protest was to get the oil companies to fulfil their promises of providing amenities in the communities and provide employments to the indigenes of the Niger Delta. Despite the peaceful nature of the protest and the legalities of the demands, the oil companies called the police and military to attack the protesters. Security operatives destroyed properties and killed civilians. Following this, peaceful protests however degenerated into forceful agitations from the mid-1990s till 1998 when the requests of the groups as regards the development of the region were slow in coming. The agitations were heightened by the massacre of the nine Ogoni leaders and Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 by the military dictatorship of General Sani Abacha, who had ignored all international and local entreaties and appeals to commute the death sentence of the environmentalists. By 1998,

²⁴ A. M. Adeyemo, *The Oil Industry, Extra-Ministerial Institutions and Sustainable Agricultural Development: A Case Study of Okrika LGA in Rivers State*, "Nigerian Journal of Oil and Politics", No. 2(1), 2002, pp. 60-78.

²⁵ N. Nwogwugwu, O. E. Alao, C. Egwuonwu, *Militancy and Insecurity in the Niger Delta: Impact on the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment to Nigeria*, "Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management", No. 2(1), 2012, pp. 23-37; S. Folarin, H. Okodua, *Petroleum, the Environment, and the Economics of Nationalism in the Niger Delta*, [in:] *Marginality and Crisis: Globalization and Identity in Contemporary Africa*, A. G. Adebayo, O. Adesina, R. O. Olaniyi (eds.), Lanham 2010, pp. 225-238; S. Joab-Peterside, *On the Militarisation of Nigeria's Niger Delta: The Genesis of Ethnic Militia in Rivers State*, "African Conflict Profile", No. 1(2), 2005, pp. 20-29; I. S. Ibaba, *Alienation and militancy in the Niger Delta: Hostage taking and the dilemma of the Nigerian state*, "African Journal on Conflict Resolution", Vol. 8, No. 2, 2008, pp. 11-34.

²⁶ O. Azigbo, *Paying Lip Service to Niger Delta Development*, "Vanguard", 18.02.2008, p. 18.

anarchy overwhelmed most of the Niger Delta region²⁷. The Niger Delta militants arose to take up arms against the government to fight for their rights. Militants forcefully occupied flow stations, seized tug boats and vessels belonging to the oil companies. They also kidnapped oil workers. Lastly, the fourth phase saw the demand for resource ownership and control²⁸. It is quite unfortunate that the government has for decades remained insensitive to the needs and demands of the oppressed people of the Niger Delta.

Well-known among the belligerent groups operational in the area were the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Alhaji Asari Dokubo, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Henry Okah, the Martyrs Brigade, the Niger Delta Vigilante force (NDVF) led by Ateke Tom and the Bush Boys, among others²⁹. The underlying issues of contention by the armed militant groups were the greater control of the oil resources in the Niger Delta region by the people, fair allocation of the revenue from oil exploitation, ending the oil spills and gas flaring, compensation for the decades of ecocide, as well as ensuring the physical and infrastructural development of the region. However, the Nigerian government saw their protests as acts of sabotage to the revenue generation of the nation³⁰.

The activities of the groups in the Niger Delta manifested in diverse ways such as militancy, kidnappings, killings, bombing, hostage taking, demolition of oil and gas facilities, pipeline vandalism and illegal oil bunkering³¹. The militants launched attacks on the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC), Chevron and Total Final Elf (IFE) staff and facilities. MEND killed oil workers at Chevron, Total Final Elf (IFE), damaged a rescue helicopter sent to rescue employees, killed naval officers, injured soldiers, attacked police stations like the Mini-Okoro Elenlewo, killed some officers on duty, attacked five-star hotels, and carried out a bomb attack on the Eagle Square, Abuja on October 1, 2010 during the fifty year anniversary of independence. Between 1999 and 2007, a total of 308 hostage incidents were recorded in the region³².

The sophistication of the weapons plus the dexterousness of their operations questioned the security apparatuses of the Nigerian State. Despite the seeming prevailing calmness of the region at the moment, as regards the

²⁷ S. Folarin, *Niger Delta: Environment, Ogoni Crisis and the State*, "The Constitution: Journal of Constitutional Development", Vol. 7, No. 1, March 2007, pp. 37-61.

²⁸ I. S. Ibaba, *op. cit.*

²⁹ E. J. C. Duru, *The Poverty of Crisis Management Strategies in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: A focus on the Amnesty Programme*, "African Research Review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal", Ethiopia, No. 6(2), 2012, pp. 162-170.

³⁰ I. O. Cyril, *Nigeria's Niger Delta: Understanding the Complex Drivers of Conflict*, "Africa Development", Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, 2009, pp. 103-128.

³¹ E. J. C. Duru, *op. cit.*

³² U. M. Ogbonnaya, U. K. Ehigiamusoe, *Niger Delta Militancy and Boko Haram Insurgency: National Security in Nigeria*, "Global Security Studies", No. 4(3), 2013, pp. 46-60.

issues of terrorism, the outstanding issues of resource control and allocation, poverty alleviation and environmental security remain potential sources of explosive situations. Incidentally, while the amnesty package, and rehabilitation of the Niger Delta militants were beginning to mitigate the situation in the country, the Boko Haram uprising began.

The Boko Haram Challenge

The Boko Haram issue started as an insignificant agitation of an Islamic sect with a strange commitment to non-conformist standards of social organization in Muslim-dominated Bauchi and Borno states. It began in Bauchi State on July 26, 2009 and since that time, the group has extended its activities to other Northern states as well as to other parts of Nigeria. Unlike the militants in the Niger Delta that were driven by purely economic goals, Boko Haram is driven by proclivity in religious conviction, political aspirations and social practice. Specifically, its ultimate goal is to make Nigeria an Islamic State and uphold only the laws set out in the Koran³³. This group believes Islam detests western civilisation and that western education is blasphemous. Literally, “Boko Haram” means ‘western education is a sin’ or “forbidden”.

Going by its alleged creation and sponsorship by a famous politician in Borno State in the early 2000s and its socio-religious outlook and agenda, Boko Haram is thus an Islamist insurgent group that arose from political, social and religious discontent within the Nigerian State³⁴. The recruits of the sect are mostly youths from the northern parts of Nigeria that are dissatisfied with the economic, political and social status quo. They include unemployed youth, stark illiterates, and refugees from neighbouring African countries. Thus, the sect exploits the social-economic negativities of the country to recruit and radicalize its members³⁵.

Eso observes that the push factor to recourse to terrorism in the bid to influence public policy is beyond sectarianism³⁶. He buttresses this by arguing that most of the attacks of the sect have been focused at the state, its institutions, and the civilian populations. It has launched attacks on military institutions such as military barracks, police stations (including the Force Headquarters in Abuja); it has also swooped on educational institutions at all levels, government establishments, places of worship (both churches and

³³ A. Walker, *What Is Boko Haram? United States Institute of Peace Special, Report 308*, June 2012, pp. 1-16.

³⁴ A. O. Adesoji, *Between Maitatsine and Boko Haram: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Response of the Nigerian State*, “Africa Australia”, No. 57(4), 2011, pp. 99-119.

³⁵ A. Nicoll, *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Growing New Headache*, “Strategic Comments”, No. 17(9), 201, pp. 1-3.

³⁶ H. Eso, *Boko Haram: The Enemy Within*, <www.kwenu.com/moe/2011/boko_haram_enemy_within.htm>, (30.01.2018).

mosques) and has assassinated key political figures, statesmen and religious leaders that oppose their philosophy. Their strategies have included kidnapping, targeted killings, assassinations, suicide bombings, bombings with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), VBIEDS, ambushes, and drive-by shooting.

The escalation of Boko Haram's terror began in 2009 after the extrajudicial killing of Yusuf the originator of Boko Haram sect. Violence and torture against the sect by the Nigerian security forces bred fear in the minds of the surviving members who fled to neighbouring countries such as Niger, Algeria, Mali, Chad and Somalia for reinforcement and support from external jihadist groups such as al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Harakat al-Shabaab al Mujahideen (Al-Shabaab), Taliban in Afghanistan, Ansaru in Algeria and AQIM splinter group, Hezbollah terrorist cell, AQIM in northwest Africa the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA), and Ansar al-Din in the region of northern Mali amongst others. From these groups, Boko Haram got trainings on kidnapping, suicide bombings, bomb making, the use of internet for propaganda and the use of IEDs and other explosives. From 2014, there was a shift in the sect's operations from unconventional guerrilla warfare tactics to the use of asymmetric assaults against agencies of government and civilians.

The internationalization of the sect from the same period also expanded its sources of funds and support for its activities. Boko Haram funds its escalating terror through illegal activities such as micro-financing the less privileged in northern Nigeria, external funding/sympathizers, bank robberies, extortion, and illicit trafficking of arms and drugs as well as kidnappings for ransom. Musa argues that the porous state of the borders in Yobe and Borno states have been used by Boko Haram to smuggle arms for its activities and increase its military hardware. The international benefactors and foreign supports are mostly from al Qaeda, al-Shabaab in Somalia and local al-Qaeda affiliates. One of the most notable supports from NGOs as at 2012 was from the UK-based Al-Muntada Trust Fund and several other organisations based in the Middle East. It is essential to establish that these illegal activities are often perpetuated through Nigeria's porous borders. The porosity of the Nigerian borders can be traced to colonial creations meant for the pursuit of its political and economic motives. These however have turned to national security threats today³⁷. The borders also helped the sect to facilitate the fluidity and movement of members of the group from one neighbouring country to another. One of the challenges in preventing the flow of illegal migrants across the borders is the lingual and culture compatibility as communities with cultural proximity and homogenous languages are found at different sides of the borderline. This makes them capable of changing their identity when they feel like. This also makes it

³⁷ F. C. Onuoha, *op. cit.*

difficult to put in place immigration laws and curb the use of mercenaries and the recruitment of foreign fighters by Boko Haram³⁸.

In their own analysis, Ogonnaya and Ehigiamusoe aver that the attack launched on the United Nations Office in Abuja in 2011 gave the militant group a face similar to that of the Al-Qaeda³⁹. Locally, the sect is referred to as the ‘Nigerian Taliban’ due to the gravity and tenacity of its operations. More importantly is the strong link the group has with other transnational extremist groups, including Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda. Crucial aspects of their relations with other transnational militant groups include training, funding, strategic knowledge on planning and tactical attacks and activities, ideological influence and human power resources⁴⁰.

While the Niger Delta militancy was a struggle for equity, that of Boko Haram has been a struggle for the control of the state and superiority over the security forces. Ogonnaya and Ehigiamusoe thus infer that what the two terrorist groups represent in terms of the global potential and feasibility for non-state actors as security challengers with destructive capabilities rivalling those of the state is alarming⁴¹. The tenacity of events between 2011 and 2014 reveals that the Nigerian State has not effectively equipped its security institutions with 21st century equipment and that it has not given its military personnel the requisite training for the much needed capacity to defend the country from internal insurrections and external threats. Furthermore, the government has not lived up to its responsibility in handling these challenges and ensuring security. Militancy in the Niger Delta and the rise of Boko Haram have thus facilitated and aggravated the irony of sectional indifference. During the heightened militancy in the Niger Delta, the North did not care much about the fate of the victims and not until the increasing terror of the Boko Haram in Nigeria did the rest of the country began to be worried about the amount of terror in the Northern part.

The mind-set of a united Nigeria and the need for unity in diversity are usually lost in the face of terror and oppression of a group. This attitude of sectarianism, coupled with the weak and slow response of the Nigerian government *abintio*, was what probably gave an impetus to the insurgency and its metamorphosis into a mainstream terrorist organization. The rest of Nigeria has however, come to realise that the terror group is indeed a threat to the security, sovereignty and stability of the Nigerian State and not just the North. Adibe captures the profundity of the challenge the Nigerian State faces when he argues that, the state: “is regarded as the enemy, not just by Boko Haram, but by several Nigerians and groups, each attacking it with as much ferocity as

³⁸ F. O. Olanrewaju, *Boko Haram terrorism and the crisis of internal displacement of women in Nigeria*, An unpublished doctoral thesis, 2018.

³⁹ U. M. Ogonnaya, U. K. Ehigiamusoe, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-60.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

Boko Haram's bombs, using whatever means they have at their disposal: politicians entrusted to protect our common patrimony steal the country blind, law enforcement officers see or hear no evil at a slight inducement, government workers drag their feet and refuse to give their best while revelling in moonlighting, organized labour, inducing university lecturers in public institutions go on indefinite strikes on a whim while journalists accept 'brown envelops' to turn truth on its head or become uncritical champions of a selected anti-Nigerian state identity. What all these groups have in common with Boko Haram is that they believe that the premise on which they act is justifiable and that the Nigerian state is unfair to them, if not an outright enemy"⁴².

The implications of Boko Haram's operations include the slowdown of the country's economic growth and development, worsened unemployment, food scarcity due to the inability of traders to transport food from the North to the South due to insecurity reasons, increase in fear and a false sense of security, recourse to self-help by people and citizens on most occasions such as the emergence of "Civilian JTF in Borno", loss of life and damage to properties, and so forth⁴³.

In the bid to address the menace of terrorism, the Federal Government engaged development partners, including the United States (US), the European Union (EU) and Israel, to step-up the war against terror. Nigeria also got proposals of assistance from Britain, Canada, China, France, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the UN, to assist in locating the over 234 abducted Chibok secondary school girls in Borno State. The US, France, Pakistan, and Britain have also offered to assist with counter-terrorism training⁴⁴. In addition, the US Department of Defence has recently provided funds to Nigeria for the development of a counterterrorism infantry unit⁴⁵.

Furthermore, in the light of the terrific violence and human rights violations by Boko Haram, various counter terrorism approaches have been adopted by the government in Nigeria's fight against terrorism. At first, the response of government to the Boko Haram issue was not prompt. As usual, the response was an attitude of dismissal. This was with the mind-set that the Boko Haram phenomenon was a phase in the nation's life that would pass away swiftly. However, rather than passing away, it degenerated into full blown national insecurity crisis. Efforts have afterwards been made by the government

⁴² U. O. Uzodike, B. Maiangwa, *Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria: Casual Factors and Central problematic*, "African Renaissance", No. 9(1), 2012, pp. 91-118.

⁴³ D. O. Alao, C. O. Atere, O. Alao, *Boko-Haram Insurgence in Nigeria*, "Singaporean Journal of Business Economics and Management Studies", No. 1(4), 2012, pp. 67-87.

⁴⁴ O. Ajayi, W. Igbintade, U. Ukpogon, R. Otokpa, *Insecurity: Nigeria to Buy Fighter Jets*, "National Mirror", 15.10.2014.

⁴⁵ United States Embassy in Nigeria, *Boko Haram and US Counterterrorism Assistance to Nigeria*, <www.nigeria.usembassy.gov/mobile/factsheet_05142014.html> (30.01.2018).

to resolve the crisis following the regeneration of the phenomenon. Some of the responses include dialogue and the declaration of the state of emergency. On 14 May 2013, the state of emergency was declared in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Also, the multinational joint task force of military personnel was assembled by the government to fight Boko Haram⁴⁶. The JTF succeeded in driving the sect out of the cities to remote villages which made it difficult for the government forces to overcome them. Other efforts include political negotiation with all stakeholders in the Boko Haram conflict, attempts by Jonathan's administration to establish a 26 member amnesty oriented body, the establishment of the committee on dialogue and peaceful resolution of security challenges in the north. This committee was made up of former and then current government officials, human rights activists and religious leaders who had the mandates of convincing Boko Haram fighters to lay down their arms within three months. This was not successful as Shekau stated that they were not offenders that should be forgiven and that the jihad would not end until Nigeria becomes an Islamic state under sharia law⁴⁷. However, the failure of both dialogue and amnesty led to the launching of full military offensives against the sect.

A security-only military approach which seemed to be the last resort has been the mostly adopted strategy. The effects have been contrary to democratic culture as human rights have been violated. It has also succeeded in strengthening the collective resolve of its members and further radicalized the sect. In addition, coercive approach have intensified opposition to government and deepened the vicious cycle of violence and terror. Examples supporting the argument that a security only approach intensifies violence against governments are, terrorism in Northern Ireland, Chechnya and Israel. The War against Terror by the Bush administration in the US intensified the global jihadist movements in terms of supplies of ammunition, recruitment of terrorists as well as jeopardized the cooperation in the fight against terrorism⁴⁸. Also, the extrajudicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf, the creator of the sect while in police custody and the arbitrary arrest and torture of members of the sect by security forces in 2009 exposed the sect to international collaborations, global sponsorship, adoption of violence and terror on the Nigerian people rather than on state institutions as they did before the death of Yusuf. In response to this, Abubakar Shekau, the second in command to Yusuf and the groups present leaders sent disturbing warnings in a video released in June 2010, stating: "do not think Jihad is over; rather Jihad has just begun"⁴⁹. This paper therefore argues that although terrorists should not be negotiated with, yet

⁴⁶ M. A. Sergie, T. Johnson, *US Council on Foreign Relations*, <<http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/boko-haram/p25739>> (30.01.2018).

⁴⁷ D. E. Agbibo, *Is Might Right? Boko Haram, the joint military Task Force and the global Jihad*, "Military and Strategic Studies", No. 5(3), 2014, pp. 53-72.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 61.

other conciliation methods that identify the causes and motivations of their struggles and grievances such as reducing poverty, unemployment, negotiation with state sponsors, implementing social reforms and promising change should be embraced. This is because a military deterrence will not be effective in winning against fighters who are determined to die in their struggle to convert the secular Nigerian state to an Islamic state.

Combating and Ending Insurgency/Terrorism in Nigeria

The regularity and enormity of the terror unleashed by insurgents in various parts of the country make it expedient for strategies and solutions to be formulated. First, there is the need to tow the path of countries in the industrialized world, particularly those who have gathered enough experience in the course of the fight against international terrorism, by building a potent Intelligence Gathering Infrastructure. In 2012, Nigeria had publicized plans for a new intelligence gathering centre that would be saddled with the responsibility of coordinating, improving and integrating intelligence gathering and sharing across security agencies and other aspects of government. Although this, if it eventually comes to fruition, will be helpful in curbing crime, it however has to be pursued side by side with sustainable infrastructure such as ICT and efficient power supply to back it. Lack of commitment, wrong prioritization of public policy and corruption may have slowed down the implementation of this promising plan. These have remained the major obstacles in the fight against terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria. Nevertheless, Nigeria should endeavour to improve its intelligence gathering technology.

Moreover, all insurgents and terrorists caught or who surrendered must be fully prosecuted and adequately punished, as a situation in which justice does not prevail and offenders are freed on grounds of amnesty or pardon will send the wrong signals to the society; these could even encourage more acts of terrorism or motivate more insurgent groups to emerge and strike at the state. One of the reasons it has taken so long to break Boko Haram, is not only because of the known sponsors who are sometimes shielded and walk free; it is also because many detained Boko Haram fighters and commanders disappear from detention facilities reportedly, by the aid of collaborators in government and the military. Such commanders return to the terrorist camps to fortify and lead their cells in the sustained fight against the state.

Another point that should be noted is that training complements modern equipment. Once the intelligence infrastructure and military hardware are provided, the training of military personnel in their effective and civilized or disciplined use is also required. Media reports have shown how low the morale of the troops has been with regards to the inferior weapons and poor training they go through. These have caused poor motivation and weak responses up to

the point of flight in the face of superior threat from the Boko Haram fighters⁵⁰. In line with the above, the armed forces should be empowered and trained with the ability for swift response to attacks. There have been incidents of the armed forces not coming to the aid of the victims during assaults by militants. A vivid instance was when students of the Federal Government College in Buni-Yadi in Yobe State were killed in an operation that lasted for four hours and none of the security forces came to their rescue.

In addition, selection into the security organizations should be entirely based on merit, mental and emotional strength of the individual applicants. Physical stability or strength should also be considered, given the vital role the armed forces play in securing the country from both external and internal hostility and threats. Due to the delicate nature of the armed forces, it is recommended that only proficient, zealous, enthusiastic, patriotic and dedicated applicants should be enlisted. According to Akande, the insurgents have higher morale than the Nigerian troops because they are more organized and have more sophisticated weapons⁵¹. One of the basic factors for high morale is moral and financial incentive. Soldiers are not well financially motivated which killed the spirit of the armed forces and culminated in strings of losses. They are placed on half salaries and are tried in a General Court Martial for every act. They are allegedly buried in mass graves. Sometimes, the superiors give them wrong orders that end up in disastrous offensives and lead to their ambush, as have been widely reported in the ongoing war on terror in Nigeria. Thus, the welfare of military personnel should be considered so that they can be dedicated to their job and not be vulnerable to corrupt practices.

Furthermore, rather than adopt a security-only military approach, the Nigerian government should wake up to its socio-economic responsibilities. Nigeria is ravaged by underdevelopment, unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, lack of basic social amenities, corruption, increased cost of living, high population growth and the incapacity of government to deal effectively with non-state actors/groups. These have instigated grievances against the system and created breeding ground for terrorism⁵². If these issues are squarely addressed, there is the possibility that terrorism will not be attractive to the future generation. Put differently, for the state to sustainably ensure peace and security, the state must endeavour to employ a blend of anti-corruption drives, poverty reduction strategies, military engagement and dialogue particularly in

⁵⁰ S. Folarin, *Still on the War on Terror*, "National Mirror", 17.08.2014.

⁵¹ B. Akande, *Nigeria On Auto Pilot, Let's Rally To Save her by Chief Bisi Akande*, <<http://apc.com.ng/index.php/media-center/latest-news/item/586-nigeria-on-auto-pilot-lets-rally-to-save-her-by-chief-bisi-akande>> (30.01.2018).

⁵² E. I. Onah, *The Nigerian state as an equilibrium of violence: An explanation of the BH insurgency in Northern Nigeria*, "African Journal on Conflict Resolution", No. 14(2), 2014, p. 63-80.

the troubled north-eastern geopolitical zone and other parts of Nigeria rather than adopt a security-only military approach.

Additionally, tightening the security at the borders becomes quite essential. Protecting the borders by ensuring a close monitoring of inflow and outflow of people will reduce the possibility of influx and outflow of foreigners with sinister motives. This will also help cut off terrorists' supply of arms that are transported through the borders with neighbouring countries.

Finally, the government at all levels needs to be more prudent in its management of information on terrorist groups and security matters. For instance, the government, through the media, announced that the location where the abducted Chibok girls were kept was known without first strategizing on how to rescue the girls. The leakage of the information did not do Nigeria any good. The girls were relocated by the terrorists and could not be rescued until a recent publicized truce between the government and the Boko Haram negotiators and the promise by the latter to release the girls in exchange for Boko Haram prisoners. The discretion in the management of information will thus help in tackling insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria.

Conclusion

From the numerous cases of terrorist attacks in Nigeria, it is obvious that insecurity beclouds the Nigerian State. The principle and myth of the state's monopoly of the use of force have been shattered by the by desperate terrorist and insurgent groups pursuing parallel goals to that of the state. While the capability of the Boko Haram group was limited to shootings and improvised explosives, the government did not realise the need to create order. Fortunately the intensification of terrorist attacks, the frequency of the attacks, the collateral damage to the country and the expanded scope of the activities of insurgents and terrorists have forced the government to acknowledge the dilapidated state of security in Nigeria and the urgency in recent times, to restore order before Nigeria becomes a failed state.

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