BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY AND NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NORTH-EAST OF NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

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Summary
This paper examined the security challenges posed to the nation by “violent non-state actor” such as Boko Haram. The paper predominantly relied on secondary data. We consciously blended and adopted the intractable conflict and instrumental theory of terrorism theories in our analysis. We argued that Boko Haram attacks in North-East of Nigeria defy resolutions and seem unending because they are intractable conflicts and that core attributes and responsibilities of the state such as territoriality and the protection of infrastructural facilities and lives have been challenged in the main by the resurgence of Boko Haram sects. Thus, we recommended among other things that the Nigerian state and those involved in national and international security policymaking should study and thoroughly understand the operational methodologies and instruments of these terrorist organizations and the threats from them.

INTRODUCTION
The history of conflicts and insecurity in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era, when antagonistic ruling classes were created along ethnic and religious lines. Nigeria is one of the most populous nations in Africa, with over 170,123,740 people and 375 ethnic groups (Otite, 1990). Its predominant religions are Christianity and Islam. After Nigeria gained her independence in 1960, she has witnessed series of security challenges which have led to the destruction of human lives and infrastructural facilities and constitute a major challenge to the unity of the country (Ogbonnaya, 2013).

In the wake of Nigeria’s return to democratic governance in May 1999; joy, hope and optimistic future were what every Nigerian looked forward to. This optimism was predicated on the fact that democracy would guarantee freedom, liberty and equity, and enhance security of lives and property. Regrettably this optimism seems to be a mirage. Nigeria’s return to democratic rule is threatened
by security disaster. Arguably, considerable progress has been achieved in the areas of freedom of speech and liberty, but series of resource based conflict (Niger Delta Militancy), ethno-religious crisis (Jos crisis), sectional conflicts (Oduduwa People’s Congress and Bakassi) and communal conflicts (Tiv and Fulani herdsmen in Benue and some North Central States) persisted. The climax of these security threats is the insurgence of a group called Boko Haram in the Northern Eastern Nigeria. Thus, a considerable effort to end the violence and build a sustainable peace seems far from realization.

The Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East continues to pose security challenges. These conflicts are not without cost to the Nigerian people: the disintegration, dispersion, instability, loss of lives and properties, discontinuing economic programmes and projects. The increase in the number of foreign direct investment that escapes the country cannot go without notice alongside the consequent unemployment; hunger; diseases; infrastructural decay; corruption and low income per capita that still pervade the economy. The group which opposes all forms of western lifestyle, particularly education focuses its attacks on schools, churches, markets, individuals and state institutions has rendered the North Eastern part of the country totally unsafe for carrying out economic activities. Human lives are lost almost on daily basis, schools are shut down and the major means of production have been brought to a halt.

The main aim of this study therefore is to assess the effect of insecurity in Nigeria with emphasis on the Boko Haram Insurgency in the North East and its implication on infrastructural facilities.

INSECURITY: CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATIONS

The concept of security and insecurity is a major concept found in the field of social sciences which stems from the literature of sociology, political science, social psychology etc. In the framework of political science, the concept of security according to Bar-Tal & Jacobson (1998) denotes a situation which provides national and international conditions favourable for the protection of a nation, state, and its citizens against existing and potential threats. In the contemporary political and scholarly discourse however, the concept of national security cuts across many disciplines covering military protection, surveillance, protection of national values and human rights. According to Romm (1993), a nation is said to be secured when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interest to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war. It has also been defined as the absence of threats to acquired values and the absence of fear that such values will be attacked. Implicitly therefore, national security is the ability of a nation to preserve its internal values from external threats.

Analysts have examined the problem of insecurity generally from various standpoints Ogbonnaya (2013) has pointed out different sources of insecurity, namely; insecurity as emotional response to sudden external threats from within; and insecurity from relatively constant threatening external situation; insecurity due to threat from within; and insecurity as a function of belief especially religious;etc.
Chiedu (2012) describes insecurity as the presence of fear and the absence of economic or physical protection for persons, buildings and organizations against destructions of threat like crime and attacks. The heightened insecurity in Nigeria has arguably fuelled the crime rate, leaving unpalatable consequences namely; the rates of terrorist bombings on state institutions and schools.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Almost all social science theories have been applied to explain Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the essence of theorizing is to explain in order to reach generalization, prediction and control. Despite these supposed explanations of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, efforts at controlling it appear disappointing as more Boko Haram attacks continue to erupt in different parts of the country with its consequent threat to national security. We shall blend the Intractable Conflict and Instrumental theory of terrorism theories to explain threat to national security posed by Boko Haram attacks.

Intractable conflicts are conflicts that defy every resolution attempts. The major proponent of this theory is Northrup (1989). He argued that intractable conflicts defy resolution even when the best techniques are applied. These conflicts are stubborn, protracted, destructive, resolution resistant, intransigent, grid locked, identity based, need based and complex. The possible agreement often requires giving up some very fundamental value of the group. Intractable conflicts are irreconcilable, and persistent. They are harmful yet parties are unable to extricate themselves either alone or with external help because the cost of getting out of it is more than staying in it. Onuoha, (2005) has used the theory to explain the Middle East conflicts.

Again, Instrumental theory of terrorism is associated with scholars such as Mickolus (1976), Betts (1982), and Crenshaw (1985). It is premised on the assertion that the act of terrorism is a deliberate choice by political actor and that the organisation, as a unit, acts to achieve collective values, which involve radical changes in political and social conditions. Here, terrorism is interpreted as a response to external stimuli, particularly government actions. The major thrust of this theory is that violence is intentional. Terrorism is a means to a political end. The theory also submits that non-state organizations using terrorism are assumed to act on the basis of calculation of the benefit or value to be gained from an action, the cost of the attempt and of its failure, the consequences of inaction, or the probability of success. According to Betts (1982), terrorist actions may occur for several reasons; the value sought for is overwhelmingly important; costs of trying are low; the status quo is intolerable; or the probability of succeeding (even at high cost) is high. Thus, terrorists may act out of anticipation of reward or out of desperation, in response to opportunity or to threat. This strategic perspective, according to Betts (1982), is a conceptual foundation for the analysis of surprise attacks. Thus, he concludes that terrorism is par excellence a strategy of surprise,
necessary for small groups who must thereby compensate for weakness in numbers and destructive capability.

From the foregoing explanation therefore, Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has continued and seems to defy resolution because they are intractable conflicts. These attacks are impelled by groups who believe the attacks are fundamental for their survival as a group. The human consciousness is shaped by the shared meanings that shape the worldviews of a people and the meanings they give to events and symbols. Reality is thus shaped less by truth than by conditioned learning and received tradition. The Boko Haram Islamic sect believes that politics in Northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims and thus seeks to wage a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, to create a “pure” Islamic state ruled by Sharia Law. Since August 2011 Boko Haram has planted bombs almost weekly in state institutions, public places or in churches in Nigeria’s north east region in particular and north in general. The group has also broadened its targets to include setting fire to schools. In March 2012, some twelve public schools in Maiduguri were burned down during the night, and as many as 10,000 pupils were forced out of education (Ogbonnaya, 2013).

**EMERGENCE OF BOKO HARAM**

Boko Haram is a religious Islamic sect that came into the limelight in 2002 when the presence of the radical Islamic sect was first reported in Kanama (Yobe state) and in Gwoza (Borno state). “Boko Haram,” which in the local Hausa language means “Western education is forbidden,” officially calls itself “JamaatulAlhuSunnahLiddawatiwal Jihad,” which means “people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s teachings and jihad” (Meehan and Speier 2011: 6). It flourished as a non-violent movement until Mohammed Yusuf assumed leadership of the sect in 2002, since then, the sect has metamorphosed into various names like the Muhajirun, Yusufiyyah, Nigerian Taliban, Boko Haram and Jama-atuAhlissunnahlidda-awatiwal jihad.

The philosophy of the sect is rooted in the practice of orthodox Islam. Orthodox Islam in their interpretation abhors western education and working in the civil service. Beyond religious explanations, Boko Haram could be arguably described as a “home-grown” terrorist group that romances with some desperate politicians in the North. It appears that the sect enjoys effective support from some well-to-do individuals, religious leaders, allies, admirers of their ideology and highly placed politicians in the North who claim to be Nigerians but are clandestinely working against the State. Lister (2012) observed that it is no longer a sect of Islamic fanatics but has the support of disgruntled politicians and their paid thugs. Furthermore, its ideological mission is quite clear, namely to overthrow the Nigerian state and impose strict Islamic Sharia law in the country. Members of the sect are motivated by the conviction that the Nigerian state is filled with social vices and corruption, thus “the best thing for a devout muslim was to migrate from the
morally bankrupt society to a secluded place and establish an ideal Islamic society devoid of political corruption and moral deprivation” (Jackson, 2013:51-52).

However, Yusuf, who was killed by government forces in 2009, instilled the group with extremist ideology, extolling a version of Islam where any interaction with Western society is considered a sin. “Boko Haram is a way of thinking,” says John Campbell, former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria. “They are a loosely organized grassroots insurrection against not only the Abuja government but the traditional Muslim establishment as well.” The group, which until recently had been known for attacking local government facilities, is now the subject of intense international scrutiny. Its attack on a major international institution (UN Building) in the capital has led many to believe that the group has larger ends in mind than just the domination of Nigeria. In June, the Nigerian State Security Service claimed members of Boko Haram were being trained in Afghanistan and Algeria by members of al-Qaida (Bartolotta, 2011).

THE EFFECT OF BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA’S NORTH EAST

The activities of the Boko Haram sects have left serious effect on Nigeria entirely. The preponderance of Boko Haram sects has constituted potent threats to national security and economy, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of state and citizens.

Adebayo(2013) opined that the activities of the sect have been very damaging both physically and psychologically. Furthermore its real leadership and financiers are largely unknown, and no one can predict where it’s going to strike next, as the sect does not pay attention to threats and setbacks, it gives them an aura of invincibility, giving the group clearer advantage over the government and the people.

It is no longer gainsaying that recent events in Nigeria have indicated an emerging security trends in the form of terrorism and terrorist group attacks. The dastardly terrorist activities of Boko Haram have manifested profoundly in the various bomb/gun attacks on police stations, army barracks, prisons, churches as well as some other public institutions and prominent personalities (Jackson, 2013).

According to President Jonathan Goodluck, “the emerging dimension of threat to national security that is rearing its ugly head in our nation must be confronted headlong and defeated. The spate of violent crimes in parts of the country including kidnapping, armed robbery, assassinations etc. are contemporary security challenges facing our nation” (Soriwei& Fidelis, 2010:1 cited in Chinwokwu, 2013). The President went on to say that the unfortunate act of terrorism that was unleashed on the nation on October 1, 2010 is another emerging threat by some unpatriotic and undemocratic elements in the country. He therefore called on the Nigerian Army to be ready to do all within its capability to partner with other security agencies to address the security challenges. Since the October 1, 2010 Abuja bomb blasts, Nigeria has been enmeshed in severe
internal security crisis occasioned by the emergence of an Islamic Fundamentalist Sect known as Boko Haram (Chinwokwu, 2013).

Thus, the greatest security challenge that faced President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration was the imposing impunity of terrorist activities of this Boko Haram Islamic fundamentalist based in Northern Nigeria. It is on record that between January 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011 Nigeria has witnessed over fifty cases of bomb blasts across the country with a casualty figure of over 800 people dead, scores injured, and millions of Naira worth of property destroyed. It was also revealed that there are foreign militias from Somalia, Chad, Sudan and other Islamic countries in Borno state and working for the destruction of Nigerian state (Ojo, 2010). Boko Haram affront on government has an underlying latent function which has made government to appear weak in tackling the menace. Table 1 below highlights the implications of Boko Haram attacks on the infrastructural facilities in the north east of Nigeria. The sects do not only target human lives but also destroy state institutions such as schools, police stations etc. frequent bombing and seriously weighted down infrastructural development in these areas, leaving it in a state of infrastructural decay.

Table 1: SELECTED CASES OF BOKO HARAM ATTACKS (STATE INSTITUTIONS AND MARKETS).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>CAUSALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>July 25, 2009</td>
<td>Boko Haram attacked a police station in Potiskum, Yobe State. The station was burnt to the ground by the sects.</td>
<td>Loss of Security facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>July 26, 2009</td>
<td>Boko Haram launches mass uprising in Bauchi, also started a five-day uprising that spread to Maiduguri and elsewhere.</td>
<td>Attack on a police station in Bauchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>February 6, 2012</td>
<td>Multiple bomb blasts in Gamboru Market, Borno State</td>
<td>Shops were set ablaze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 10, 2012</td>
<td>Boko Haram attacked a custom Building, Borno State</td>
<td>Custom facilities destroyed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The modus operandi of Boko Haram has defiled national security mechanism and the strategic dexterity with which they operate coupled with the sophisticated nature of their weapons have raised such questions as to the source of their military training and experience, weapon system and general logistics making some analysts to have them linked to other international terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda. Table 2 highlights the implications of Boko Haram attacks on public schools.

Table 1: SELECTED CASES OF BOKO HARAM ATTACKS (PUBLIC SCHOOLS)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>CAUSALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>July, 2009</td>
<td>Lamisula school, Damgari school and GonDamgari school, Maiduguri, Borno State.</td>
<td>Schools destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>October 10, 2012</td>
<td>University students residence, Mubi, Adamawa state</td>
<td>Residence destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>July 6, 2013</td>
<td>Government school, Mamudo, Yobe State</td>
<td>School destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>September 29, 2013</td>
<td>College of Agriculture, Yobe State</td>
<td>School destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>February 26, 2014</td>
<td>Federal Government College, Yobe State</td>
<td>School destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>April 14, 2014</td>
<td>Girl’s school, Chibok, Borno</td>
<td>School destroyed and 234 girls kidnapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>November 11, 2014</td>
<td>Government Technical college, Potiskum, Yobe State</td>
<td>School destroyed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ogbonnaya (2013) and Authors compilation

From the foregoing, the challenges posed by the Boko Haram in Nigeria are enormous. Ogbonnaya (2013) argued that the root causes of resort to violence and criminality in order to influence public policy is rather deep seated and beyond sectarian. This is because the attacks of the group have been targeted or directed at the state, its institutions, and the civilian populations.

DIMENSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF SECURITY CRISIS IN NIGERIA

In the discourse of security in Nigeria, some scholars have identified several causes of security crisis in Nigeria that pose grave consequences to national unity. Chief among them is ethno-religious conflicts that tend to have claimed many lives in Nigeria. Ethnic-religious is a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious and another of such group in a multiethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation (Salawu, 2010).
Since independence, Nigeria appears to have been bedeviled with ethno-religious conflicts. Over the past decades of her Nationhood, Nigeria has experienced a palpable intensification of religious polarization thus manifest in political mobilization, sectarian social movements, and increasing violence (Lewis 2002). Ethnic and religious affiliations determine who gets what in Nigeria; it is so central and seems to perpetuate discrimination. The return to civil rule in 1999 tends to have provided ample leverage for multiplicity of ethno-religious conflicts.

With 372 ethnic groups, belonging to several religious organisations, Nigeria since independence has remained a multi-ethnic nation state, which has been grappling and trying to cope with the problem of ethnicity and ethno-religious conflicts (Otite, 1990). Ethno-religious conflicts occurred in places like Shagamu (Ogun State), Lagos, Abia, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Ebonyi and Enugu State respectively (Onyishi, 2011). However, the inability of the Nigerian leaders to tackle development challenges, distribute state resources equitably and render good services to the people appear to be one of the causes of ethno-religious violence.

CONCLUSION

From all indications security is a big challenge in Nigeria and Boko Haram insurgency has compounded the existing threatening security situation in Nigeria. While it could be true that security is a major issue globally, Nigeria's security situation has over the years deteriorated owing to political desperation and government inability to deliver the needed dividend. To this end, there is need for government’s and stakeholders to explore alternative avenues (basically dialogue) rather than force to finding lasting solution to the security lapses and the menace of Boko Haram. This is because use of force approach appears to have been inflaming the crisis and diverting attention from the fundamental issues that nurture and propel the insurgence.

The era of “talk talk” without action should seize, let us now face the realities and match our words with action, bearing in mind that terrorism is real in Nigeria and knows no friend. Only genuine respect for the right of the people and enthronement of true justice, fairness and equity can fight terrorism in Nigeria. Government must accept the challenges despite all the odds threatening the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study makes the following recommendations:
1. There is the urgent need for a complete and total overhauling of the security institutions of the Nigerian state to meet the current security challenges confronting the state. This will entail adequate training, funding, and equipping of the security institutions;

2. Our borders with other sovereign states around us, especially those in Northern Nigeria should be further tightened and strengthened. Nigeria should sign bilateral agreement with the countries concerned for proper security at those borders;

3. The Nigerian state and those involved in national and international security policymaking should study and thoroughly understand the operational methodologies and instruments of these terrorist organizations and the threats from them.

REFERENCES


