TERRORISM AND COUNTER-TERRORISM IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: UNDERSTANDING THE EMERGING TRENDS

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Abstract
In recent years, terrorism has become one of the most dangerous threats to world order. It is so pervasive that no country on earth can claim immunity from its violent acts of bombing, shooting, armed robbery, kidnapping, hostage-taking and bank-robbery. The contemporary Nigeria society is engulfed by terrible acts of terrorism. The discourse of the argument put forward in this paper is that contemporary terrorism in Nigeria is a latent function of prolonged failure of the Nigerian State to deliver purposeful good governance, as a result, terrorists of various groups and camps unleash havoc on the Nigerian populace. This paper therefore provides an overview of the historical and cultural environment that has allowed the terrorist group(s) to flourish in Nigeria. It examines the strategy that the government has adopted and the challenges it faces to restore peace. While the paper recognizes that there are both religious and ethnic variables that influence these terrorist acts, official corruption and state neglect of the masses stands out as the most persuasive, compelling primary explanation for terrorism in Nigeria. The paper recommends that since modern terrorism has increasingly become sophisticated due to improved information and communication technology in terms of internet services and electronic banking techniques, there is urgent need to train and retrain our security personnel in these areas of socio-economic endeavours. It also proffers recommendations for enhancing the existing instruments and frameworks in the security services that would foster interagency cooperation in combating terrorism in Nigeria.

Introduction
Terrorism is globally becoming a household word as there is no nation that is completely absolved from its effect (Alao, Atere and Alao, 2012). It has become a frightening phenomenon and a concern for many governments and citizens around the world which draws our attention to the vulnerability of modern societies. Although terrorist tactics have been in use for a very long time, terrorists’ increasing use of sophisticated weaponry and the consequences in terms of
increased potential for mass casualties have led scholars in the social and political sciences to place high priority on understanding the “causes” of terrorism and the means by which it might be prevented (Isabelle, 2004). Incontrovertibly, terrorism in the world at large has risen to a sublime and the global community in a bid to stave-off this act which has constituted a threat to global peace and stability unanimously agreed to counter terrorism in all its forms and to also bring its perpetrators to justice.

Terrorism is an insidious act common and conducted daily over decades and has been responsible for the physical and or structural violence experienced by many people in Nigeria (Udama, 2013). Terrorism has suddenly become a serious challenge Nigeria has been grappling with. The contemporary Nigeria society is engulfed by terrible acts of Terrorism. Be it kidnapping by the Niger Delta Militants or bomb attacks by members of the Boko Haram sect. These acts of terrorism have seriously caused untold hardship to the Nigerian populace. The hemorrhagic acts of the Boko Haram and Niger Delta militants in Nigeria warrants an exhaustive discourse on terrorism and counter terrorism in Nigeria. For the Nigerian nation, the threat of the terrorist activities of Boko Haram has brought to the front-burner issues of core interests of national security in her foreign policy with her immediate neighbours (Ate, 2011). In recent times in Nigeria there had been several killings of innocent civilians by the Boko Haram sect most especially targeted killings of Police and Army security forces and bombing of police stations.

The insecurity situation has worsened since 2012 with the Nigerian government admitting that its security forces intercepted over 200 rocket launchers and rocket propelled grenades from terrorist gangs at the Nigeria borders with Chad and Niger Republic before June 2012. The new weapons which are explosive projectile arms deployed to attack targets from long ranges are expected to replace the Improvised Explosive Devices currently being used by the Islamic Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria, and it is believed by Nigeria’s security agencies that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, with the collaboration of terrorists in Iran, Yemen and Syria, that were supplying the weapons to the terrorists in Nigeria (Ogunseye, 2012). This paper is limited to the activities of Boko Haram as a terrorist group because of its current and emerging trends and the effects of the group activities on the security and the sustenance of Nigerian state. Apart from the introductory aspect, the paper is pigeon-hole into six compartments. The first section looks at terrorism as a concept, in other to have a clear understanding of the issue under consideration. In the second segment, the paper gives overview terrorism in Nigeria, while the trends and patterns of terrorism in Nigeria were examined in the third section. The fourth aspect of the paper looks at the antecedent of Boko Haram as a terrorist group in Nigeria. In the fifth section, the paper take a cursory look at the counter terrorism measures adopted by Nigeria government to curb the menace of terrorism, while the last section is the concluding aspect of the paper.

The Concept of Terrorism
From the etymological concept, the word terrorism comes from Latin and French words: terrere, and terrorisme, meaning “to frighten,” and “state rule by terror” respectively. There is no generally accepted medulla operandi of terrorists; also there exists no generally accepted
definition among terrorism experts. The English word “terrorism” was first recorded in English Dictionaries in 1798 as meaning “systematic use of terror as a policy”. The Oxford English Dictionary still records a definition of terrorism as “Government by intimidation carried out by the party in power in France between 1789-1794.

The controversial issue is that the vocabulary of terrorism has become the successor to that of anarchy and communism the catch-all label opprobrium, exploited accordingly by media and politicians. The difficulty in constructing definition which eliminates any just cause for terrorism is that history provides too many precedents of organizations and their leaders branded as terrorist but who eventually evolved into respected government. Worthy of note is also the age-long slogan which says that “a terrorist to one state is another state’s freedom fighter”. Indeed, this slogan has for a long time resulted into a nagging problem which has made the adoption of a universally accepted definition of terrorism impossible. Asides, it is also grossly misleading. It assesses the validity of the cause when terrorism is an act. One can have a perfectly beautiful cause and yet if one commits terrorist acts, it is terrorism regardless. As at now, there is no universally accepted definition of terrorism. In fact, none of the thirteen major multilateral conventions on terrorism defined terrorism. Thus, terrorism both as practiced and justified by terrorist themselves, is a tool used to achieve a specific outcome by using force or violence on one segment of society with the primary goal of causing fear in the larger society to make change in that society (Garrison, 2004).

Walter Laqueur, a renowned scholar of terrorism, contends that a comprehensive definition of terrorism … does not exist nor will it be found in the foreseeable future. Terrorism can be explain as the use, or threat, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety or fear including effects in a target group larger than immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political or religious demands of the perpetrators. The critical elements here are violent activities intended to create an atmosphere of fear in order to further an interest (Wardlaw (1982). According to Stepanova (2008), terrorism is the form of violence that most closely integrates one-sided violence against civilians with asymmetrical violent confrontation against a stronger opponent, be it a state or a group of states. In the same vein, Jenkin (1985) defines terrorism as the use or threatened use of force designed to bring about political changes. Adeyemo (2012) opined that the situation can be likened to genocide and defined it as the deliberate and systematic destruction in whole or in part, of an ethnic, racial, religious or national group. Also, Laqueur (1979) sees terrorism as the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted.

The search for value-free understanding of terrorism has made the UN viewpoint to face opposition from Islamic nations under the aegis of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), which in 2002, adopted an agreement in which the Islamic nations adopted the position that the concept of terrorism should indicate a dichotomy between violent activities to create fear, and legitimate struggle against foreign occupation, especially taking into consideration the armed struggle of the Palestinian people in the exercise of their inalienable right to establish their independent home state (Associated Press, 2002).
As noted by Okeke (2005) and Nacos, (2006), certain basic attributes of terrorism include the fact that it is driven by motives or objectives, which in the long-run are political despite the fact that the perpetrators may be guided by religious beliefs, even though the lines between politics and religion may be thin at the initial stages; the targets are largely civilians or non-combatants or members of certain religious or ethnic groups; actors are predominantly non-state actors but sometimes supported by state actors with interests to protect; and methodology is critically the use of violence such as shootings, suicide bombings, kidnappings and hostage taking in order to spread fear.

Some common features surface in all definitions. Terrorism involves aggression against non-combatants. It can be directed against civilians, government officials, politicians, companies, institutions, or infrastructure. Unlike aggression in war, the main targets are not military objects and the aim is not a military defeat of the enemy (Schmid, 1988). Terrorist acts alone do not accomplish the political goal of the terrorist. The political goal is accomplished if the action influences a target audience and changes the audience’s behaviour and opinions. It is necessary to distinguish between the actual targets of the violence and the targets of terror. The change in behaviour of the terror target group causes fear and undermines the sense of security of the terror target group, even though they not necessarily belong to the group targeted by the violence (Smith, 2004). Bearing in mind the above definitions one would be right to say that the world is presently riddled with many terrorist activities. There seems to be no day passed without graphic reports of terrorists destructive activities globally. Most countries of the world are daily designing strategies to curb the intrinsic menace of terrorism. Regardless of the problem associated with the definition, certain attributes of terrorism manifest in bombings, assassinations, armed assaults, kidnappings, hostage situations and hijackings.

Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) (2005) highlights four key elements of terrorism:

1) It is premeditated - planned in advance, rather than an impulsive act of rage.
2) It is political - not criminal, like the violence that groups such as the mafia use to get money, but designed to change the existing political order.
3) It is aimed at civilians - not at military targets or combat-ready troops.
4) It is carried out by sub-national groups—not by the army of a country.

There are various typologies of terrorism. Shultz (1978) divides terrorism into three generalized categories: Revolutionary Terrorism, Sub-revolutionary Terrorism and Repressive Terrorism. Revolutionary Terrorism is aimed at “bringing about political revolution”; Sub-revolutionary Terrorism “is employed for political motives other than revolution”. While Repressive Terrorism is government directed terror aimed at “restraining certain groups, individuals, or forms of behaviours deemed to be undesirable. Terrorisms in whatever categories they fall have received global condemnations over the years. The only problem is the fact that the perception of the concept varies among nations.

An Overview of Terrorism in Nigeria
In contemporary times, the world has witnessed a resurgence of terrorism. The activities of terrorists have tended to threaten global peace and induce fear in the minds of the people. It is no longer news to the global community that Nigeria is currently under the scourge of terrorism.
Since the start of the current democratic governance, the reality in many parts of the globe remains a poignant reminder since most of the factors that have triggered their upheaval resonate in Nigeria on a daily basis. That Nigeria is under the siege of terrorist is an accepted fact. Be that as it may, it is pertinent at this point to state that there are plethora of poignant and longstanding issues that has paved way for terrorist activities in Nigeria. Until these issues are dealt with, the type of terrorism which Nigerians have become exposed to, where the people bringing death and destruction are prepared to die as well, Nigeria will continue to struggle to contain terrorism.

The contemporary Nigeria has become a theatre of genocide, bloodshed and insecurity over the past three years due to the carnage activities of terrorist groups. Terrorists of various groups and camps unleash havoc on the Nigerian populace. Though these groups are numerous, the most noticeable and deadly are the Boko Haram sect and Niger Delta Militants. 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 distortion and deliberate manipulation of data about these acts of terrorism in contemporary Nigeria call for intellectual efforts to objectively discuss analyze and create a database on this orgy. This paper represents one of such efforts.

In Nigeria, the upsurge of terrorism engineered by Boko Haram poses grave security challenges to the nation and summons on the part of the law and security agencies a synergy of strategies to combat the situation. The terrorist acts of the Boko-Haram since 2009 have created a state of palpable fear in Nigeria and beyond, while the helpless posture of governments is worrisome. Nigeria currently faces security and developmental dilemma with the crucible of terrorism largely enveloped in the foreign policy perspective with neighbours (Akpomera, & Omoyibo, 2013). Nigeria is not a stranger to Islamic radicalism, having experienced the activities of the extremist Maitatsine sect movement that became violent in the early 1980s. The Yan Tatsine (followers of Maitatsine) was actually a quasi-muslim fringe group that preached Islamic doctrines that were contrary to the teachings of the orthodox Islamic and societal leadership. Muhammadu Marwa Maitatsine, the leader of the sect, was a Muslim scholar from Marwa town in Northern Cameroun who migrated to Kano in Nigeria (Danjibo, 2010).

The Boko Haram Islamic extremism had been a localized sect in Borno State, in the north-eastern zone of Nigeria since 2001 when its leader, 32-year old Mohammed Yusuf, started propagating radical views that were antagonistic and derogatory of orthodox Islamic practices, formal education and modern public institutions. The two key words of the movement translate thus: “Boko” in Hausa language means western or foreign, while “Haram” is an Arabic derivative meaning forbidden, which surmises its key ideology and philosophy that western education is a sin (Wikipedia, 2013).

The year 2009 was a watershed for Boko Haram, with violence erupting in July leading with destruction of the mosque headquarters of the sect leader by the Nigerian military. Yusuf was captured by the soldiers, handed over to the state police officers, but extra-judicially killed in police captivity. The consequent violent revolt by the Boko Haram sect members, now directed by the new leader, Abubakar Mohammed Shekau, led to over 3,500 people being internally displaced, 264 children orphaned, 392 women widowed, 28 policemen killed, several police stations razed, over 700 inmates, forcefully released, especially the sect members, from the
Bauchi Prisons and 109 killed in bomb explosions near the Mogadishu Barracks in Abuja (Onuoha, 2011). Since 2009, Boko Haram has crept into the front-burner of security, political and religious concerns in Nigeria. According to the United States Department’s Global Report on Terrorism (2011), Nigeria ranked 2nd with 593 deaths in 2011 from terrorist killings on the African continent, second to only the failed state of Somalia. On the global level, Nigeria was placed 5th in the ranking of casualties.

Since 2011, the crescendo of terrorism has heightened with the private home of Vice-President Namadi Sambo in Zaria, Kaduna State, firebombed and policemen killed, as well as Sokoto, the seat of the Sultan, the head of Nigerian Muslim faiths, rocked with several bombs, destroying police buildings (Akowe and Kolade, 2012). The erstwhile unpopular national phenomenon of suicide bombing have suddenly become dominant in the country, with several attacks on the elected political leaders and traditional rulers in the North – Eastern region of Nigeria; the nation’s capital, Abuja; the commercial city of Kano in North-western axis and formerly serene Plateau State in North – Central region. The international community grieved as suicide bombing rocked the United Nations Office Complex in Abuja, with fatalities on August 26, 2011; the national headquarters of the Nigeria Police Force on June 16, 2011; and St. Theresa’s Catholic Church, Madalla, Niger State, on Christmas Day killing innocent worshippers (Olalekan, 2012). These are aside from the spate of bombings of several other churches, public infrastructures and civilian gatherings in Kano, Kaduna, Okene, and other local government councils in the northern parts of the country (Akpomera, & Omoyibo, 2013).

Contemporary terrorism in Nigeria is a latent function of prolonged failure of the Nigerian State to deliver purposeful good governance. When the Federal, state and Local Governments steal all the money allocated for building schools, hospitals, industries, etc, the greater percentage of the citizenry especially the youths are denied good education, employment and good health. These youths are therefore affected socially, psychologically and economically. Frustrations, dejection and hopelessness remain a day to day occurrence in their lives (Adeyemi, 2012). Thus, the greatest security challenge facing President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration is the imposing impunity of terrorist activities of the Boko Haram an 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 and many people injured, talk-less of 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 (Ojo, 2011). Boko Haram affront of government has an underlying latent functions which has made government seem weak in tackling the menace.

**Trends and Patterns of Terrorism in Nigeria**

In recent times, there has been a growing concern over the increasing trends of violent crimes and terrorist activities especially the use of improvised explosive devices by criminal elements (Attoh, 2012). For keen observers and discerning minds, terrorism is predominant and is not a new trend in Nigeria, and is conducted by those that wield the power either legitimate or illegitimate at one time or the other and in different places. Acts of terrorism are being carried out at homes, in government and private offices, and on the roads either by government officials
or private individuals. Many terrorist acts go unnoticed and the victims suffer and endure in silence without the power to react (Udama, 2013). He stated further that the preponderance of terrorists’ activities in recent times especially in the northern part of the country does not mean that it is limited to that section of the country alone. Terrorism in Nigeria have come a long way and have been carried out by different individuals, groups, locations and at different times. While some people are the main target of the terrorists, some of the victims are not the main targets but to draw out attention of others.

It is pertinent to recall that forms of society and governments in the past differ from what they are today, when describing the history of terrorism and the use of terror through time. Terrorism which we consider as man’s inhumanity to man started many years ago or should we say it is as old as mankind (Adora, 2010). In the words of Madunagu (2005), there is no state in the world where terrorism is absent, or new. This implies that it is common around the world. With reference to African Continent every country in it has directly or indirectly experienced the activities of terrorists. Oyeniyi (2010) talking about terrorism in African states that terrorism has had a long history in Africa. From the Sherifian dynasty of the Alawites and Filaliin Morocco to the Regencies of Algeria, Tunisia and Libya under the effecte Suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey, the Berber-Arab population of North Africa experienced one form of terrorism after another, even before the colonial rule. The French invasion of Algeria in 1830, the establishment of French rule in Morocco in the 1900s and their occupation of Tunisia in 1880 wereall characterized by one terrorist acts after another (Asogwa et al, 2013).

In Nigeria, however, many incidences that could be described as terrorism were acts perpetrated by the state during the colonial days and during military autocratic rule. This could be described as intra-state terrorism or state terrorism. Few could be categorized as inter-state terrorism or international terrorism. Terrorism or its threat in Nigeria- state, intra-state, or international- is not only perceived but also real. It is real because all the factors that precipitate terrorism are patently present coupled with Nigeria’s recent romance with western world more especially, the United States of America. In essence, the closure of American and British Consular in July 2005 against the possible terrorist attack could not be thrown out with a wave of thought (Ogundiya and Amzat, 2008).In a report published by the United States Bureau of Consular Affairs, in March 2010, five improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were said to have been detonated in the Niger Delta region with one to three reported casualties. In September 2010, over 150 members of the Boko Haram extremist religious sect escaped from prison in North-east Bauchi and Borno States, some of whom are now believed to be participating in Boko Haram attacks in other parts of the country. In October, Boko Haram members attacked various Nigerian government security personnel and facilities, government officials, and authority figures in Bauchi and Borno States. On October 1, 2010, two car bombs detonated near Eagle Square in downtown Abuja during Independence Day celebrations, killing 14and wounding many others. In addition, on the eve of 2011, another car explosion occurred at the Army barrack, Abuja claiming about four lives and leaving about ten people seriously wounded (Attoh, 2012).

In recent times, Nigeria is experiencing a new wave of violence which is terrorism conducted in different forms, means and places. These includes bombing and killing of persons and targeting
certain persons and places such as worshiping centres, living homes, commercial buildings, telecommunication masts, government installations and infrastructure, kidnapping as well as depriving people of their legitimate entitlements. These terrorist activities are carried out by non-state actors and do not exclude politicians and government functionaries including security agency that ought to protect lives and properties (Udama, 2013). It can be argued that the environment in which Nigerians live and their experiences of governance practices could be contributory factors to the emergence of terrorism. It is this that gives groups the initiative to take on the Nigerian State because of its perception as unjust, demeaning to the citizen, without guarantees of individual safety and security and exploitative. There is a widespread disenchantment with the Nigerian State arising from its failure to meet its obligations to the people and the perception that State policies are implemented to advance private interests for personal accumulation.

The new trends of bombing portend danger, even thought was foreseeable, and avoidable. To him, in the history of terrorism, bombing is a grotesque weapon of resentment. And from the viewpoint of terrorists, it remains an effective strategy for invoking lawlessness and bringing any government to its knees. Unlike robbery and kidnapping, which are directed at individuals, and are intended to surgically extract money/material gains from victims, bombing is directed at a state, and it derives from spite, malice, vindictiveness, and is aimed at causing damage and mayhem (Ebun-Amu, 2010). The ability of government to deter, defeat and respond decisively to terrorist attacks is one of the most challenging priorities facing nations today. Nigeria is no exception to this situation as terrorism, a hitherto alien phenomenon in Nigeria, recently emerged as the leading national security issue, attracting many and varied comments in contemporary national discourse, terrorist attacks recorded in the country include drive-by-shootings, bombings, use of Improved Explosive Devices (IEDs) as well as suicide attacks. In response, a number of measures, both passive and active, have been instituted by government to defeat this threat.

The Antecedents of Boko Haram and Terrorism in Nigeria

Boko Haram can be understood as an Islamist insurgency that has risen from political and religious discontent within Nigeria (Adesoji, 2011; Onuoha, 2012). This extremist sect threatens the security, sovereignty and stability of Nigeria, particularly northern Nigeria, by a range of high profile attacks on the military, police, schools, political figures and other infrastructure (Nicoll, 2011). Boko Haram are a Nigerian militant Islamist sect which seeks political and religious reform within Nigeria specifically the adoption of Sharia law with beliefs based in the practise of Orthodox Islam (Bagaji et al, 2012).

Boko Haram is called Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad which in Arabic means “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad.” The group which is better known by its Hausa name ‘Boko Haram’ was a local radical Salafist group which transformed into a Salafist-jihadist terrorist organization after 2009. It is based in the northeast of Nigeria, in the areas predominated by the Kanuri people. Loosely translated from the local Hausa language, Boko Haram means, ‘Western education or civilization is forbidden.’ Put differently, ‘Western education or civilization is a sin.’ According to Ekwueme (2011), the group came into existence in the 1960s but only started to draw attention in 2002. Mohammed Yusuf became its
leader in the same year. In 2004, it moved to Kanamma, Yobe state where it set up a base called ‘Afghanistan’ from where it attacked nearby police stations, killing police officers."

Book Haram is a franchise of Al-Qaeda, which has been involved in funding and providing logistics to them. That is why they are so vicious in wreaking havoc in the country with impunity. He also noted that when the Seal an elite branch of the American Marines stormed the residence of the late Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden in Abotabab, Pakistan last year several documents were retrieved from his residence. Among them were letters between Osama Bin Laden and terrorists groups in Nigeria seeking support. In return, he promised them financial support, training and other assistance. He particularly linked them with Al-Qaeda cells in North Africa. Boko Harm’s audacity in carrying out terrorist attacks in Nigeria was encouraged by the death of their leader in the same manner the death of the leader of Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) Ken Sarowiwa did. The group emerged more bitter and aggressive, and daring. The death of their leader Yusuf Muhammad while in police detention in 2009 did not neutralised or dissolves the group but rather rejuvenated them. From time, the police have represented the boots and fist of the government and have been notorious in their injustice, violence and brutality attacks. Little wonder why the police have become one of their main targets as a war of revenge and attrition (Udama, 2013; Dele, 2012).

Boko Haram propagates that not only interaction with the Western World is forbidden, but it is also against the Muslim establishment and the government of Nigeria, the latter of which they accuse of political corruption and weak judicial structure. To sanitise this, they initially fought for the establishment of a Shari’a government in Borno State under the then Governor Ali Modu Sheriff, but after 2009, their aim was directed to the Islamization of the entire Nigeria. Boko Haram school of thought considers anything western as completely unislamic, and as such the basis for religious weakness. This Islamist extremist sect had its origin from Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State in the Northern region of Nigeria where it was formed in 2002 by one Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf who was allegedly killed on the 30th of July, 2009 by Nigeria security forces after being taken into custody. The group specifically enjoys popular supports in the predominantly Muslim northern states and regions of Nigeria. Such states include Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Katsina, Yobe and Borno. Most of its early attacks have been in the city of Maiduguri which is the Capital of Borno state. However, after 2009, they extended their attacks to virtually any part of Nigeria where they have the slightest opportunity, including the Nigerian Federal capital territory, Abuja. Additionally Boko Haram now boasts of about 540,000 members to which included militants from neighboring Chad, Niger and Cameroon.

Mohamed Yusuf was a charismatic preacher of violent extreme Islam. He was responsible for radicalisation of Boko Haram. In July 2009, he led a large-scale uprising in the member states of Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Katsina and Yobe. As a result of this revolt, 3 500 people had been displaced, 1 264 children orphaned and over 392 women widowed. In addition, 28 police officers, 5 prison warders and an undisclosed number of soldiers were killed. Furthermore, 48 buildings had been destroyed, including three primary schools, 12 churches and a magistrate’s court. In all, there were between 800 and 1 000 casualties and thousands of wounded, mainly supporters of Boko Haram. Muhammad Yusuf himself was captured and brutally killed in police custody. In September 2010, over 300 Boko Haram members attacked Bauchi prison and helped
over 700 inmates to escape, including sect members who had been detained since the July 2009 revolt (Theo and Soumia, 2012; Onuoha, 2011).

The issue of Boko Haram in Nigeria has become a threat to both internal and international security with ever-growing violence and attacks on security forces, civilians, churches, media houses as well as international bodies such as the United Nations. With the increased numbers of cadres, improved and sophisticated weaponry, suicide bombing and well-organised guerrilla tactics, Boko Haram’s challenge to the Nigerian state now also stretches across the entire 36 states of Nigeria, thus affecting its economic and social-political growth.

Since the rise of Boko Haram, the Islamic sect in spreading terror in the last three years, spreading clouds of fear across the country, and especially in many parts of the north where law and order has collapsed. Different murderous gangs roam the nooks and crannies of the cities, streets and villages day and night exploding bombs, shooting and killing innocent people. They set homes and business premises on fire, destroying places of worship, and attacking security agents and institutions. The process has promoted anarchy by causing confusion and widespread panic among people in Nigeria. Terrorism has already worsened the development space of the region as it has scared foreign and local investors alike and limited the earnings from tourism. Jos the capital of Plateau State that was once the pearl of tourism and a dream home for most people across Nigeria has become a shadow of itself. There is no doubt that wars, terrorism had led to political instability which in turn have a significant negative effect on the economies in which they take place (Udama, 2013).

Counter Terrorism Measures in Nigeria

Nigeria has had it fair share of terrorists aggression from 1999-2013, the in ability of the authority to rise to its feet in combating terrorism has placed the country in a dangerous position. The decision taken by authority is rather too slow to really challenge the scourge of domestic terrorism in the country. Likewise the government is also not sleeping in its effort to address the situation but rather it needed concerted effort for all meaningful and reasonable Nigerians to achieve its aim of reducing the threat of terrorism. But this situation is increasingly dangerous and is consuming much time, despite the fact that the Nigerian authorities have discovered and known the terrorists and their major sponsors within and outside Nigeria.

The government in Nigeria has, at different times, adopted different approaches to combat terrorism. Given the complexity of the security situation in Nigeria, blended with the economic, political and social strife, projects and programmes designed to counter terrorism should be build around community resilience against terrorism, enhance cooperation among law enforcement agencies and strengthening judicial institutions. Hence strategy and the importance of collective efforts to counter terrorism in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected Nigeria have become imperative (Omale, 2013). Historically, successive Nigerian governments have rolled out various policies against terrorism. For instance, the 1983 and 1987 terror incidents that started in Kafanchan and spread to Kaduna, Zaria, Funtua, Malumfashi, and Katsina, were addressed by the government, then under General Ibrahim Babangida, which tried to sever its roots.

The war against terrorism has been in the top agenda of the Nigerian government. The Nigerian government’s policy on terrorism reads: “Nigerian government … (is committed to) making the
country unattractive for global terrorism sponsors who are seeking to recruit willing folks to swell their ranks, the government declared a zero tolerance policy towards all forms of terrorism and terrorism acts. During the civilian administration of Chief Obasanjo, proactive measures are taken to fight back terrorism, for example the Odi and Zaki Biam response by the government is a clear indication of its willingness to fight terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria. But the present political leadership seems to lack the will to combat terrorism despite the presence of well effective intelligent networking and structures put in place to counter terrorism from all indication, has raises questions on the sincerity of the government in handling terrorism. Every month many innocents Nigerians have lost their lives through terrorist strikes. These unexpected events have made many Nigerians to have no confidence in the authority’s effort in the fight against terrorism. It is seemingly right for Nigerians to protest the government in ability to bring to an end to terrorism of the perpetual fear of being a possible target of terrorist attack (Isyaku, 2013).

Piqued by the activities of these associations and groups, President Obasanjo sought parliamentary approval on 10 April 2002 to outlaw certain armed groups and associations in Nigeria. Among other things, the Bill seeks to prohibits any group of persons, association of individuals or quasi-military group to retain, organize, train, or equip any person or group of persons for the purpose of enabling the group of persons or association of individuals to use or display physical force or coercion in order to promote any political objective or interest; ethnic or cultural interest; social, occupational or religious interest. A major criticism against the Bill deals with its ambiguous and unclear stance on parallel organizations usurping police functions or any armed organizations allegedly created to curb crime and criminality. The Bill is a good start to controlling and curbing ethnic and vigilante militarism in Nigeria, but it is, nevertheless, silent on which groups or associations qualify for proscription and which do not. The establishment and endorsement of vigilante groups by legal statutes on the one hand, and on the other a (federal) law calling for the proscription of these associations and groups create conflict for law enforcement and foster an environment where crime and terrorism can thrive.

The operation of the Boko-Haram initially was not given a serious attention by the Federal Government prior to 2009 as discussed in the preceding section in spite of various security reports. The reason was believed to have been premised on the assumption that Boko-Haram initially started as an Islamic organization whose teachings were the purification of Islam and it was not the only one with the same objective in the Northern axis of Nigeria. As from 2004, sect was increasingly becoming a source of concern for the government and the effort to tread softly was governed by the need not to turn the issue into religious or ethnic conflict (Alao et al, 2012). The inability of the government to monitor the conflict dynamics as to locate early warning signs to prevent outbreak of hostility was a serious issue not only in the instance of Boko-Haram but other conflicts that have threatened sustained peace in Nigeria.

Nigeria has also entered into pacts with foreign nations like -the United States of America, France, United Kingdom, Israel and other countries in the fight against terrorism. And these countries have offered to assist Nigerian government in the battle against terrorism especially Boko Haram criminalities. This has further strengthened government resolve in fighting terrorism. In the past US, Britain and Israel had assisted Nigeria in technical areas especially in
the area of investigation and forensic science. It has severally made overtures to Boko Haram with the view of reaching a dialogue and a truce by sending the former President General Olusegun Obasanjo to the group. But it failed. Continual efforts are still being pursued with the view of dialoguing with the sect for peace. It is being filtered into the air that with the destruction of the main operational base of the group in Borno State, they will have no option than to surrender to government forces. Government has also established Almajiri Schools in Northern States with the view of using it to educate the teeming illiterate youths in the zone and thereby reduce Boko Haram foot soldiers. However, in combating terrorism in Nigeria government is faced with critical dilemmas which seem to frustrate their efforts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no escaping the fact that terrorist attacks globally have almost exclusively been led and executed by young men. Nigeria with its ready pools of unemployed labour, exploitative politicians, radical clerics; population prone to violence and weakened national and community cohesions, offers competitive advantage for militant and terrorist organizations, criminal networks and evil political leaders alike. Hence this paper agrees with Adams (2012) that chronic violence like Boko Haram insurgencies and the Niger Delta militancy is provoked and reproduced by diverse factors, many of them mutually interactive. These include new patterns of social inequality; disjunctive processes of democratisation; criminal networks and other adverse effects of globalization; and the perverse effects of the mass media (Omale, 2013).

The paper has critically discussed terrorism and counter terrorism in Nigeria with special reference to the emergence of the Boko Haram sect as well as its debilitating effects. While noting the crippling effects of the group’s activities on Nigerians and foreigners residing in Nigeria, the paper urges the government to do everything possible to halt a re-emergence of Thomas Hobbes’ state of nature in Nigeria which Popoola (2001) says "no modern state could afford."

The indiscriminate destruction of lives and property through terrorist attacks makes it a necessity for urgent actions to be taken. The use of brute force has obviously proved insufficient to checkmate their activities, rather it makes them have more recruits. The account of Boko Haram activities before and after the government crack-down as well as the killing of their leader is instrumental in understanding and dealing with the new phase of the group characterised by more sophisticated strategy and weaponry. Obviously, the Nigerian government’s effort at defeating Boko Haram in 2009 was a complete fiasco which has rather metamorphosed into a source of strength and inspiration for the group, a situation which has also led to the deaths of thousands of civilians since 2009, with over 600 being killed in 2012 alone. The sect has now infiltrated the Nigerian government and the current Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan, also admitted that Boko Haram sympathisers are in his government and security agencies, hence making the scenario even more complex.

Terrorism is a phenomenon which must be condemned, resisted, fought and eliminated at all levels-local, regional, states, and national. Conditions necessary for wiping out terrorism must be cultivated and strengthened at all levels. There is the need to form and collaboration bilaterally or multilaterally with the neighbouring states to fight terrorism. Terrorist acts confronted by a state cannot be eliminated by the affected States alone. This is because of the international linkage of
the terrorist groups. It is, therefore, clear that all the nations must form a common front to fight terrorism. To put an end to this problem, Nigeria must first look inwardly and address all the social and political anomalies that has hitherto eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society. As a matter of fact, there will be no easy solution to the problem of terrorism but there are some things which need to start changing today in order for Nigeria to start getting a firmer grip on the wave of terrorism which threatens to drown the country. The fight against terrorism and other related emerging trends in the country demands a database. The database must be constantly updated in line with operational exigencies that may be required. Nigeria is one of the first countries in Africa to comply with all established and existing Conventions, Resolutions, Protocols and other laws regarding to the regulation and combating of international terrorism, combating of the financing of terrorism and anti-money laundering and other related criminal acts specified under those laws. Notwithstanding, the measures taken to be a compliant state among the comity of nations, Nigeria lacks the will to enforce and implement the laws so far approved or passed relating to acts of terrorism or financing of terrorism. Again, the level of illiteracy in Nigeria calls for an urgent attention. The woeful state of education and literacy in Nigeria can compete for tears with the greatest tragedies in the world. The Nigerian government has neglected the educational sector for years therefore making it impossible for so many to chart a positive course for their lives. The dearth of prospect has prompted so many youths into getting involved in terrorism. Most of the people who join terrorist groups such as Boko Haram are largely illiterates who do not have formal education. They become cheaply coerced into terrorism because they do not realize anything wrong in destroying the lives of other people. Assuming they had basic education, they would not be easily brainwashed. The Nigeria legislatures both at the National and State level have not taken time to look into the issue of education. They spend time discussing irrelevances instead of putting education as a priority on the agenda of their discourse. To solve the current problem of terrorism in Nigeria especially as it concerns Boko Haram, the focus of the government must shift from “victory syndrome” to total peace. And all hands must be on deck for the latter. Contrary to Boko Haram’s claim, Islam does not condone either rebellion or terrorism. And as a matter of fact, both are crimes warranting severe penalty. It will be a grave mistake to continue to proclaim Boko Haram a faceless body when some scores of its members are held in government’s detention. At least those members were arrested and detained for being members of the terrorist group. That is however based on the assumption that the group is still a single body that it was a couple of years ago. If dialoguing with a single group of Boko Haram was difficult in the past because of the amphibious nature of its terrorist activities, the presence of those detained among them has surely changed any claim of the group’s facelessness. People who are in detention cannot be said to be faceless. The concern here is much more about national security, through safety of lives and property than apportioning blames through religious sentiments (Abbas, 2013). For Nigeria to successfully tackle the menace of terrorism, there is need for the revitalization of Nigeria’s economy. A vibrant economy will create job opportunities for the youths and change their lives in the positive directions. Government at all levels should consider the survival and safety of the people as primary because when people are provided with the basic necessities of
life they will not be cajoled into joining any unlawful association. The government also has a serious role to play in poverty alleviation. There is a saying which goes thus “a hungry man in an angry man”. In a society where people cannot afford basic needs then they would be tempted to join the enemies of the state in fighting the government.

In order to combat the growing threat of Boko Haram, the Nigerian government, with the aid of the international community, must implement effective policies which will hamper the groups recruiting efforts. In addition, the Nigerian government must be encouraged to make much needed political measures such as fighting corruption, reducing poverty and improving human rights. Should these steps be taken, the main factors which have been attributed to Boko Haram’s survival will be eliminated; seriously curbing the group’s ambitions in the region. In order to fight Boko Haram, drastic political changes must be made by the Nigerian government to address government corruption and human rights. In turn, the international community should provide Nigerian military and police units with the training needed to effectively target terrorism. Considering how formidable terrorist have become, it is important that the Nigerian government invest in modern technology which would assist the security agencies in combating terrorism head-on. Various suggestions at curbing terrorism has being made in this paper but the truth still remains that the fight against terrorism in Nigeria is definitely going to be a gradual process which may not yield result immediately. However, the battle is more of an inward battle which is primarily self-induced.

References


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