

BOKO HARAM AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria has been be devilled by ethno-religious conflicts with devastating human and material losses since the return of democracy in 1999. But the Boko Haram uprising of July 2009 was significant in that it not only set a precedent, but also reinforced the attempts by Islamic conservative elements at imposing a variant of Islamic religious ideology on a secular Nigerian state. Whereas the religious sensitivity of Nigerians provided fertile ground for the breeding of the Boko Haram sect, the sect's blossoming was also aided by the prevailing economic dislocation in Nigerian society, the advent of party politics and politics of anxiety (and the associated desperation of politicians for political power), and the ambivalence of some vocal Islamic leaders, who, though they did not actively embark on insurrection, either did nothing to stop it from fomenting, or only feebly condemned it. These internal factors coupled with growing Islamic fundamentalism around the globe make a highly volatile Nigerian society prone to violence, as evidenced by the Boko Haram uprising. Given the approach of the Nigerian state to religious conflict, this violence may remain a recurring problem. This paper documents and analyses the Boko Haram uprising, as well as its links with the promotion of Islamic revivalism and the challenges it poses to the secularity of the Nigerian state and security agencies.

Key words: Islamic fundamentalism, Insecurity, Party politics, Security challenges and Secularity of the Nigerian state

Introduction

After decades of dictatorships, Nigeria saw its fourth ever democratically elected president take office in 1999. Today, the country's nascent democracy is being tested by rampant crime, a disaffected public, and an unprecedented campaign of terror.

In the south, civil unrest threatens safety and stability. To the east, gangs who kidnap expatriates for ransom lie in wait on the roads, in bars, and in town centers. And to the north, the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram is growing in both organization and brutality. The group has issued brazen challenges to the government and the ultimatum "leave or die" to Christians and those living in the northern region but belonging to ethnic or religious groups from the south. Confidence that the government can protect the people is at an all-time low. The security situation there is very fluid right now.

For the last two years, Nigeria was categorized as the 14th worst state out of 177 countries ranked by multiple factors in the Fund for Peace (FFP) Failed State Index. “The 2011 elections exacerbated north-south religious and ethnic tensions, leaving the state vulnerable to further internal conflict,” notes a 2011 FFP country profile for Nigeria.

Violence between the Christian and Muslim communities is not new. It has in the past resulted in the death and displacement of thousands in the Middle Belt region of Jos, Abuja Benue and Kogi. But it is currently more widespread with the resurgence of Boko Haram the number one threat to stability in Nigeria right now. According to the BBC, “Boko Haram promotes a version of Islam which makes it ‘haram,’ or forbidden, for Muslims to take part in any political or social activity associated with Western society. Recently, the group has resurged, staging more wide scale and sophisticated attacks.

Boko Haram first emerged in the early 2000s. It attacked government buildings and churches, making demands that the country reject any notion of Western culture. The Nigerian government fought back, killing hundreds of the sect’s members and, eventually, the head of the group.

That was thought to be the end of the Boko Haram threat. But its recent activities have shown that the group was only dormant, and rebuilding its capabilities so that it could return. Its bombings are now expected occurrences. Literally the concern in the north is when the next explosion is going to go off. The United Nations says Boko Haram’s links to al Qaeda are a concern.

Boko Haram’s reemergence comes amid great civil disenchantment with the current government of President Goodluck Jonathan and as the country’s fragile democracy struggles to develop. After the government canceled subsidies on oil in January, gas prices skyrocketed, causing workers across the country to strike in protest. Workers refused to work until the subsidies were reinstated. The strike ended on January 16, after Jonathan agreed to cut fuel prices by one third. Four days later, Boko Haram bombed several government buildings. In the attacks, 185 people died, according to reports from African media agencies (Oderemi, 2012: 5)

On January 25, five days after Boko Haram’s assault, Jonathan dismissed the country’s police chief and all of his deputies, blaming the police for failing to cap the violence. In addition, security forces raided known Boko Haram hideouts. But recent statements by Ade Adefuye, Nigeria’s ambassador to the United States, have downplayed the threat and spread of Boko Haram in an effort to attract investors.

The Action Congress of Nigeria, one of Nigeria’s leading political parties, has been quoted as saying that the new government is clueless on how to tackle Boko Haram, calling it an irony that the government deployed troops to quell protests by unarmed citizens during the oil protests but “could not checkmate those who are posing a real threat to national security, leaving them to run amok” (Kajo: 2012: 8).

While that could be dismissed as political squabbling from the opposition, government security forces have sometimes reportedly avoided areas they know Boko Haram to be operating in for fear of confronting the group, despite the recent show of raiding hideouts. That has given the group nearly unfettered mobility throughout the country’s Muslim northern states, (Radzinski, 2012: 5).

Both security companies and government agencies were caught off guard by the recent uptick in the level of violence, says Oyediran Babawale, a military veteran and security officer at Jagal Group, a Nigerian fuel company (Kajo, 2012). The essence of this paper is to explore the challenges the activities of Boko Haram poses to Nigeria security. To attain this objective, the first section of the paper discusses conceptual issues. The next part examines the origin and strategies employ by the sect. the third section discusses the causes that gave rise to the activities of Boko Haram. The final section offers recommendations and concludes the paper.

Clarification of Concept

Security generally is a crosscutting, and multi-dimensional concept which has, over the last century, been the subject of great debate. However, long before that, the history of mankind was interspersed by the frenzied search for the best way of ensuring the security of people, their property, their territories, their states and their institute among others. In all places and countries, security has been considered as a “first order value” worth preserving. The foreign withstanding, there is no consensus about or agreed general definition of security. This is not surprising because as a social phenomenon, it is always the case which hardly lends itself to common understanding because it is often approached from different perspectives.

Some security experts argued that the concept of security has always been associated with the safety and survival of the state and its citizens from harm or destruction or from dangerous threats. For some other, security measures the absence of treats to acquire values in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attached. Thus a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war (Maulaye, 2006: 17-18). Those conceptions generally hold that the state is the only institution on which primary responsibility and power for the safety of its territory and its people reposes (Zabadi, 2005:3). Therefore for some others, security consists of a functional and interdependent body of supervisory services and institutions.

Security is also a situation wherein a person or thing is not exposed to any form of danger or risk of physical or moral aggression, accident, theft or deterioration. Both security and peace are together.

The concept of “national security” is often misunderstood (Wolfer, 1962) and elusive (Carey, 2000). It is a strange phenomenon, a subjective “feeling”, and therefore relational and relatives, rather than an objective “thing” than can be seen and handled. You cannot touch security – you can only feel secure.

If security is something that can only be felt, it must be security from something (a threat of one sort or another). For the state, the most obvious threat is that posed by another state (a threat of invasion of control by another power leading to loss of independence). This is in a manifest in a military threat, or very significantly, in the perception of a threat. This offers an explanation of the fact that in the era of the cold war Great Britain did not feel threatened by the Russia.

National security defined in terms of national survival is an illusion. It is an illusion because it is an erroneous perception of the African reality. It is used by the milling elite as a fine transparent concept for deluding the populace into thinking that government policies in this regard represent actions designed actually to protect them from hunger, disease, injustice, and violation of human dignity and life. Thus, in Nigeria the concept ‘national security’ has given rise to two dangerous doctrines of illusionism and militarism which is self-defeating.

However, scholars are yet to agree on the definition of the term “national security”. This is not surprising because, the phenomenon of security is hardly precise. Yet two

fundamental perspectives have emerged in the attempt to defend national security. One perspective focuses on strategic definition and the other, on the non-strategic definition by laying emphasis on socio-economic factors. The strategic –“realist” perspective conceptualizes national security in terms of self-defense by amassing arms to deter aggression. This perspective sees conflict between men and states as being endemic. To a great or lesser degree, therefore, the international political system can be seen as anarchic, power and the struggle for power and the control of resources is central to this manner of thinking. In this environment, states will only be constrained by pacts, audiences, treaties and tenets of international law that they see as being in their own interests. Security in this context concentrates in the military, military values, strategies and capabilities and the survival of the state.

If security is focused on the survival of the state, then logically security has first call of the resources of the state. It is very noticeable that the first act of newly independent states is to create an armed force and that even in the poorest of states the military are well equipped and enjoy a high status in society. In this situation, to have a problem or issue labeled a “security issue” ensures that there is a flow of resources to solve the perceived threat or problem. Astute politicians, therefore, begin to promote essentially non-security issues as being matters of high security significance (Carey, 2000:57). According to Rourke and Boyer (2003):

From 1948 through 2002, for example, the world states spent about 1,300 times as much on their national military budgets (about \$ 38 trillion) as on UN peacekeeping operations (about \$29 billion). It just may be, then, the first secretary-general of the United Nations, Trygve Lie was onto something when he suggested, “wars occur because people prepare for conflict, rather than for peace.

The responsibility of the state to provide security for itself and its citizens allows the state to impose all manner of draconian measures on society (e.g. Conscription, Official Secret Acts). In defending the state, the state itself assures major power itself, including the possibility of reorganizing socio-economic fabrics if society, as happened in both the First and Second world wars. In time of overt conflict, the whole of domestic society and politics are dominated by the single issue of security. The military is the agency of the state designed to protect the people, its territory and their most cherished values from external attack. The military is, therefore, created and organized in such a way to provide this protection. Soldiers are trained to kill and be killed in pursuit of the national interest. In the absence of external enemies, the Soldiers have turned their deadly skills against their compatriots. As Nnoli (2006:10) posits:

One of the problems with these re-conceptualizations of national security is that they have not also re-conceptualized the military to conform to the new forms of security. Instead, the concept of peacekeeping is merely accreted to the orthodox concept of military. In Africa, this is not useful. The military, under the control of political leaders, still kill the people before a peacekeeping force is sent in from outside the country. Democracy has remained elusive. Vested interested in the present concept of the military on the part of both the military and the government, and the major powers whose national interests are significantly external in nature and who influence what concept prevail in the world community, have ensured that no fundamental changes have been advocated in the nature and functions of the military. Rigid and old thinking on the nature and functions of the military has produced the same effect.

In general, Braithwaite (1988:9) quoting the encyclopedia of the social sciences defines national security as “ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threat”. Also, Lipmann defines it by stating that “a nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interest to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war”. Morgenthau (1948) posits that national security and national interests are inter-related; where the former are seen in terms of power and therefore are the essence of politics. Imobigbe (1981) refers to it as the defense and survival of the state. The danger of looking at national security from this narrow angle according to Nweke (1988:1-2) is three-fold: First is the tendency to equate “defense” with “security” and to bestow undue responsibilities to the military as if the armed forces alone are the guardians of national security. This tendency in turn creates in the minds of the armed forces that it is only through them that security, stability and progress can be achieved. Second, national security has been used by civilian statesmen as political rhetorics or slogan for rallying the citizens in the face of perceived internal or external threats to the governments in power and for bolstering their local influence and political base (Adebayo, 1986:23).

Late President Yar’ Adua told a joint session of the National Assembly before which we placed the 2008 Appropriation Bill:

We intend to enhance the capacity and preparedness of our security services. We have therefore, proposed a total allocation of ₦444 billion (about 20%) for the military and the police. We are providing our security services with all requisite force enablers and multipliers, including arms and ammunitions, improved information and telecommunication equipment and facilities, riot control equipment, training and retraining and sundry logistics support (Oluwasegun and Anofi, 2007:2).

The most serious danger is the tendency to equate national security with the security of the state. The state in a capitalist state like Nigeria is an instrument for the preservation of capitalist socio-economic formation, which protects the interests of a privileged class vis-à-vis the rest of us (Ake 1984, 302).

Dyke (1966), concludes as follows: There is no doubt that national security embodies the sovereignty of the state, the inviolability of its territorial boundaries, and the right to individual and collective self-defense against internal and external threats. But the state is secure only when the aggregate of people organized under it has a consciousness of belonging to a common sovereign political community; enjoy equal political freedom, human rights, economic opportunities, and when the state itself is able to ensure independence in its development and foreign policy.

The non-strategic thesis thinks anew about security from armed aggression in the light of humankind’s failed effort to find it. This is because the strategic path has not brought us to a consistently secure place, it is only prudent to consider alternative, less – or avelled paths to security. These possible thesis including limiting or even abandoning our weapons altogether, creating international security force and standards of pacifism. According to Nnoli (2006:VII):

... a new concept of national security follows with a congruent new form of the military. National interest in Africa is defined as the creation and promotion of democracy, which goes beyond elections to policymaking and implementation through dialogue, reconciliation and consensus building. In order to defend this national security, the military must be organized along the lines of the principles of peacekeeping. It must be a military that is driven by the desire to emphasize early warning of violent conflict, separating the conflicting parties, reconciliation of these parties, the mediation of their disputes, and solution of their post-conflict relations and problems....

According to Al-Mashat (1985:14), national security is more than territorial defense and should focus on “the physical, social and psychological quality of life of a society and its members, both in the domestic setting and within the larger regional and global system”, Braithwaite (1988:9) adds: “it is submitted, therefore, that in the final analysis, the domestic, socio-economic and political environment of a sovereign state is the all-important and critical factor in national security considerations. Put succinctly, national security is positively correlated with the increase in the distributive capability and genuine democratization of a given state”. That is, “the tranquility and well-being of a society are pre-conditions for security” (Al-Mashat, 1985:XI). By well-being, I mean, the ability of the democratic state to provide its public with social, economic, and political conditions conducive to happiness and relative prosperity, which are some of the basic elements of national security. It is clear today that, the concentration of national security question on its strategic-military perspective alone breeds tension and resentment, leading to violent conflicts and civil wars and military coups, counter coups and state sponsored terrorism all over Africa.

Consequent upon the above theses in the definition of national security, there is a contention between national security and individual freedom. Therefore the problem of national security, its definition or analysis is fundamentally, about, how much of individual freedom should be sacrificed for national security and how much power is required to maintain the proper balance between order and fundamental human rights and civil liberties. In order words, in Africa, the conceptualization of national security in terms of external attack is largely irrelevant. It must be viewed from the point of view of democracy, how to create and consolidate democracy in Africa. In fact, there is general acceptance that national security must go beyond the narrow focus on external attack and the use of military to defeat it. Hence, one hears of human security, global security, environmental security and various other forms of security, which require other than the military to attain.

The main intellectual challenge to the accepted view of security came well before the formal end of the cold war. Buzan (1993) was a clear intellectual challenge but more subtly it exposed the limits of the strategic-military-traditional new of security and extended the debate about the nature of security. He added to the military aspects of security, the political, economic, societal and ecological aspects. In another respect he did not broaden, concentrating on the state as the main agency which can deliver security, although in doing so it was a necessary to work at what was happening within states and also at the systematic level. On this basis those military matters which had once dominated security studies were best thought of as only one part, which Buzan (1987) assigned to strategic studies (Freedman, 2003:258). Freedman (1998:53) view is that:

Once anything that generates anxiety or threatens the quality of life in some respect becomes labeled as a “security problem” the field risks losing all focus. Such an agenda as potentially rich, and is certainly inclusive, but it can also be off-puttingly vague. Inappropriate conclusions are likely to be reached of issues that are quite different in kind are squeezed into an unsuitable conceptual framework geared to military threats. The notion of economic security thus encourages a confrontational approach to trace policy, while that of “environmental security” has often served more to confuse than to clarify by encouraging a search for adversaries.

Waever (1995) captures this sort of problem through this helpful notion of “securitization”, which addresses the interesting question as to why some issues rather than others are considered to be problems of security. His point is that when issues are assigned this status they acquire extra significance, which can legitimize the mobilization of resources and the adoption of urgent and extra ordinary measures. He therefore, along with Buzan (1993), that the key question is what issues become “securitized” and how this takes place, and under what conditions can be “de-securitized”. Each of the political, economical, societal and ecological aspects identified ‘earlier by Buzan (1993) can then be considered in these terms. This provides a basis for explaining why the issue of “environmental security”, for example, has emerged but also why it is important to challenge this designation (Freedman, 2003:758-9).

Freedman (2003:760) concludes: Nor does a focus on force require neglect of the economic, social and political dimensions. These all shape security environments, helps defend what is to be defended and the factors which might generate threats. To make sense of Iraqi’s occupation of Kuwait in 1990 the importance of indebtedness and declining oil price must be understood. Oil helps explain – in part- Russia’s effort to hold on to Chechnya. Environmental abuse, the drug trade and people trafficking can all aggravate tension between states and create powerful grievances in a population. Violence in the Balkans has been influenced at every turn by cultural factors. The restriction comes in resisting attempts to distinguish security issues in these dimensions separate from those connected to armed force. It is unlikely that a conceptual framework devised with armed force in mind will suit these other dimensions, and if separate frameworks are required then there can be one.

However, contemporary definition of security, especially since the fall of the Berlin wall goes beyond the traditional context. It embraces new domains as varied as individual security, collective security and social, political, economic, legal, judicial, financial, food, health, environmental ad other aspects of security. It has even added a philosophical dimension, as Baron Montesquieu says: “security is tranquility of mind stemming from each one’s idea of his personal safety” (cited in Moulaye, 2006:19)

Boko Haram: Origin and Strategies

Boko Haram’s origins lie in a group of radical Islamist youth who worshipped at the Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque in Maiduguri a decade ago. In 2002, an offshoot of this youth group (not yet known as Boko Haram) declared the city and the Islamic establishment to be intolerably corrupt and irredeemable. The group declared it was embarking on *hijra* (a withdrawal along the lines of the Prophet Muhammad’s withdrawal from Mecca to Medina). It moved from Maiduguri to a village called Kanama, Yobe state, near the border with Niger, to set up a separatist community run on hard-line Islamic principles. Its leader, Mohammed Ali, espoused antistate ideology and called on other Muslims to join the group and return to a life under “true” Islamic law, with the aim of making a more perfect society away from the corrupt establishment. In December 2003, following a community dispute regarding

fishing rights in a local pond, the group got into a conflict with the police. Group members overpowered a squad of officers and took their weapons. This confrontation led to a siege of its mosque by the army that lasted into the New Year. The siege ended in a shootout in which most of the group's seventy members were killed, including Mohammed Ali (See Zartman and Faure, 2011).

The group had gained press attention in Nigeria, and interest from the U.S. Embassy, because of the catchy name locals had given it: the Nigerian Taliban. It also caught the attention of the Nigerian media because many of the group's members were the sons of wealthy and influential people in Nigeria's northern establishment. They were perhaps not all from the very highest circle of Nigerian society, but one was alleged to have been the son of then Yobe governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim. In a 2004 U.S. State Department cable, revealed by Wikileaks, the U.S. embassy in Abuja concluded the group did not present an international threat and likely had no links to international jihadist organizations (See Quinney and Coyne, 2011).

The few survivors of the "Nigerian Taliban" returned to Maiduguri, where they settled back with others from the youth group that had originated at the Ndimi mosque. The leader of this Maiduguri group, Mohammed Yusuf, then embarked on the process of establishing the group's own mosque in Maiduguri. This new mosque, named the Ibn Taimiyyah Masjid, was built on land to the north of the center of town, near the railway station, owned by Yusuf's father-in-law, Baba Fugu Mohammed. The group was apparently left alone by the authorities, and it expanded into other states, including Bauchi, Yobe, and Niger state. The group's neighbors in Maiduguri dubbed the group Boko Haram, which roughly translates as "Western education is forbidden" in Hausa (Paden, 2008).

Observers say the group constructed a "state within a state," with a cabinet, its own religious police, and a large farm. It attracted more and more people under its roof by offering welfare handouts, food, and shelter. Many of the people the group attracted were refugees from the wars over the border in Chad and jobless Nigerian youths. The source of the group's money at this stage of its existence is not clear. Members of the Borno religious establishment say that Yusuf received funds from Salafist contacts in Saudi Arabia following two hajj trips that Yusuf made during this time. Another possible source of funding during this period was donations from wealthy northern Nigerians. In 2006, a wealthy northern businessman was arrested by the State Security Services after a group of children alleged that they had been sent by the group to an al-Qaeda training camp in Mauritania. The businessman says his donations to the group were an innocent attempt to contribute *zakat*, an obligation of wealthy Muslims to give charitably.

On the eve of the 2007 presidential elections, Sheikh Ja'afar Mahmoud Adam, a prominent, popular cleric and regular preacher at the Ndimi mosque in Maiduguri, was assassinated as he was praying at the mosque he administered in Kano. The killing was a mystery for some time, but it is now acknowledged that it was carried out on the orders of Mohammed Yusuf. Sheikh Ja'afar had begun to criticize the group for its hard-line ideology, predicting a clash with the state. The killing is now seen by some as a key point in the development of Boko Haram, because there was no longer the possibility of turning Yusuf and his followers back to the mainstream of the northern Islamic establishment. Much bloodier events soon followed. In July 2009 the group came into conflict with the authorities in a strikingly similar way to the events of six years before. Traveling en masse to the funeral of a fellow member, the group was stopped by police traffic officers, who were enforcing a tightened restriction on motorcycle helmets, and an argument ensued. The circumstances are unclear, but a member of the group is reported to have fired on the police, injuring several

officers. The group then attacked police stations in Bauchi and Yobe, killing scores of police officers. Yusuf released several video sermons in which he explicitly threatened the state and the police with violence. They were circulated on DVD and gained a widespread audience.

These events led the Bauchi government to crack down on the group, arresting more than seven hundred members. In Maiduguri, the police surrounded the group's mosque, but members of the sect managed to break out and for three days they had the run of the town. They roamed the city acting independently, fighting police when they came across them and killing Muslim and Christian civilians indiscriminately.

The police eventually regained control of Maiduguri, and then embarked on a bloody purge of the group's members and anyone they suspected of being a Boko Haram supporter or sympathizer. Dozens of people were rounded up and executed without trial, including Yusuf's father-in-law. Mohammed Yusuf was arrested by the army and handed over to the police, who killed him within hours. Police officials denied that he had been executed, saying he had been shot while trying to escape. Videos clearly showing the execution of young boys and other alleged Boko Haram members by the police, including Buji Foi, a former commissioner for religious affairs in the state government, have been posted on YouTube. Those members of the group who were not killed or arrested fled, some say out of Nigeria. They entered another incarnation, that of famous Islamists on the run (Dudouet, 2010).

After these events, the police and the army began to take information from traditional rulers and imams in Maiduguri about people suspected to be members or sympathizers of Boko Haram. If these people had fled, their property was confiscated and parceled out to the traditional leaders to keep or give to their supporters. An unknown number of people were denounced at this time and later disappeared, presumed executed by the police. A local journalist in Maiduguri believes the number of people who have disappeared in this way could be more than one hundred. The police deny such accusations.

Little is known about where the members of Boko Haram who fled Maiduguri went during this 2009–10 period (See Zartman and Faure, 2011).

But the group's uprising undoubtedly brought its members to the attention of global jihadist movements and rebel groups based around the Sahel. Nigeria-based security sources told Reuters in January 2012 that they had tracked "several dozen" Nigerians to insurgent training camps in Algeria during this time. Sources told this author that this information was based on reports from human intelligence assets in such camps. The UN Security Council says that Boko Haram members received training in a Tuareg rebel camp in Mali. The foreign minister of Niger told reporters that Nigerians have been trained in rebel camps "across the Sahel region."

It is believed that the group's leadership, including Abubakar Shekau, Mohammed Yusuf's right-hand man, relocated to a hideout in northern Cameroon (Walker, 2012).

Sometime in mid-2010 Boko Haram returned to Maiduguri and started a campaign of assassinations. This campaign began with hit-and-run attacks against police checkpoints in Borno and Yobe. The group's favored method was to do so on a motorcycle, whereby the pillion rider would kill the police officers and seize their weapons. Gunmen also forced their way into the homes of local leaders who had cooperated with the police by naming Boko Haram members. The people who had taken over houses formerly belonging to escaped Boko Haram members were also killed if they refused to leave.

On Christmas Eve 2010 as many as half a dozen bombs were detonated near churches and a market in two districts of Jos, Plateau state, killing scores of

people. At the time it was not assumed to be a Boko Haram attack; it was thought to be a nasty twist to the long-standing ethno-political conflict there. Then, on New Year's Eve 2010 a bomb was detonated in a popular open-air fish restaurant and market inside the grounds of the Mogadishu barracks, just outside Abuja, killing ten. While it sits very close to a military barracks, the market was frequented mostly by civilians and was relatively loosely protected. Initially it was not certain that either bombing had been carried out by Boko Haram. There had been a bombing three months before at a ceremony in Abuja marking the fiftieth anniversary of the country's independence for which Boko Haram was not implicated. (A leader of the Niger Delta militant organization the Movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta [MEND], in custody in South Africa, faces charges of planning that attack.) (Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart, 2010).

But in early 2011 an FBI investigation concluded that the Mogadishu barracks bomb was constructed using the same techniques as devices in Jos, and suspicion fell on Boko Haram. These attacks showed the group was prepared to strike vulnerable spots and cause civilian casualties. It launched its bombing campaign in the already tense city of Jos, and it showed the authorities it was able to reach them in Abuja.

During the first few months of 2011, the group's targets for assassination operations in Maiduguri widened beyond the original focus of police and other authorities. In February 2011, for example, a pharmacist in Maiduguri—not believed to have had any previous connection to the group's treatment by the police—was murdered in a robbery neighbors attributed to Boko Haram. Cash and a large amount of medical supplies were taken from his shop. A senior member of the group who identified himself as "Abu Dujana" told this author in an interview that anyone whom the group declared an "enemy" would be killed, though he could not say what the pharmacist had done. Abu Dujana also reported that the group had not ruled out the use of suicide bombers in its attacks.

The group began to rob banks, cash-in-transit convoys, and successful businesses, not only in Maiduguri but also in Bauchi, where the group remains strong. The group claims it is permitted to do this by the Quran, as the money it takes is considered to be the "spoils of war." A source who has followed the group closely states that the group is thought to have made approximately 500 million naira (about \$3 million, or £2 million) from such robberies, but such claims are unverifiable (walker, 2012).

In June 2011 Boko Haram bombed the national police headquarters in Abuja. A car laden with explosives drove into the compound of Louis Edet House, a block of offices previously thought secure in Abuja's government zone, by following a convoy of senior officers through the gates. It is believed the driver aimed to put the car near the entrance stairway as the senior officers entered, but he was directed around the back of the building by guards, where the bomb detonated in the car park.

At the time it was questioned whether the bombing was meant to be a suicide attack, because it was possible that the bomber had been delayed in Abuja traffic, but in August 2011 remaining doubts were removed when a man drove a car into the UN compound in Abuja and detonated a massive bomb, killing twenty-three people and wounding scores more (Bekoe, 2011).

The attack launched Boko Haram onto world news and established it as a militant group with the technical, and doctrinal, capacity to produce suicide bombs. The organization released a martyrdom video made by the driver of the car.

Security intelligence analysts at Stratfor say building successful suicide weapons, like the ones used at the United Nations and at police headquarters, is very difficult. To perform two successful detonations is good evidence that there is a foreign hand involved in training Boko Haram, they say. The type of explosives the group uses are common in mining and construction, according to Reuters. There are plenty of sources of such explosives in northern Nigeria.

The way the group contacted the outside world also changed about this time. A journalist colleague in Nigeria says the group tightened its telephone discipline, collecting the numbers of journalists it wanted to contact, rather than having journalists call contacts they had made in the organization. A Boko Haram spokesman with the nom de guerre of “Abu Qaqa” began contacting journalists to claim attacks. The government later claimed that it had captured him, but Boko Haram says that another member had been captured and that Qaqa is still active. The purported leader of the group, Abubakar Shekau, Yusuf’s former right-hand man, also began to post videos to YouTube at this time.

Since August 2011 there have been almost weekly attacks by militants planting bombs in public or in churches in Nigeria’s northeast. The group has also broadened its targets, away from direct revenge attacks on the state to include other representations of authority. This expansion includes setting fire to schools and attacking newspaper offices. In March 2012, some twelve public schools in Maiduguri were burned down during the night, with as many as 10,000 pupils forced out of education. Three alleged members of Boko Haram were killed while trying to set light to a school, reports say. The group has told journalists that these attacks are in retaliation for the arrests of a number of Islamic teachers from traditional “Tsangaya” Quranic schools in Maiduguri. In the Tsangaya system of schools, clerics teach children to memorize the Quran. These schools, some with only a few children, some very large, operate not only in Nigeria but also across the whole of the Sahel. The children, known as Almajiris, come to the city from the countryside. Many beg during the day and give their money to the teacher, or *mallam*, who runs the school. The group also says that it is attacking the government school system in retaliation for what it says is the government’s attack on the Tsangaya system as a whole (Walker, 2012).

There has also been an increase in reports of people being beheaded in public by Boko Haram. It is believed that these might be internal purges of moderate members, or members in the group who have been arrested and can therefore no longer be trusted.

Big attacks have included bombings on Christmas Day 2011, when bombs were detonated in three states, Niger, Plateau, and Yobe, killing forty-five people. In January 2012 three groups of gunmen and suicide bombers coordinated attacks on three government buildings in Kano—the police headquarters, the office of the immigration service, and the State Security Service. More than two hundred people were killed.

The group has also continued its involvement in the long-standing conflict between indigenous groups and Hausa/Fulani “settlers” in Plateau state. Most of the violence in the area has not had a connection to Boko Haram, but in February 2012 a suicide car bomb was detonated at a Jos church. Days later, in March, another suicide bomb was detonated outside St. Finbar’s church in Rayfield, Jos, near the government house. Nineteen people have been killed so far in retaliatory tit-for-tat attacks immediately following those bombings.

More recently, there have been deadly bomb and gun attacks on the offices of *This Day* newspaper in Abuja and Kaduna, the Catholic chapel in Bayero University Kano, and a cattle market in Yobe. Dozens were killed in each attack.

The Causes and Problems of Boko Haram Question

One problem is that security expertise is limited in a country where this level of terrorism is a relatively new phenomenon. And training and resources for building that type of intelligence gathering capability is lacking.

Another problem was highlighted by Jonathan in a January 9 address. He noted that part of the difficulty in defeating Boko Haram is that the group has infiltrated both the government and the military. Another problem may be corruption. Close to 95 percent of the populace believe the government is corrupt, according to a Gallup survey released in January.

The U.S.-Nigeria Bi-National Commission, a working group focused on strengthening Nigeria's security, met at the end of January to discuss strategy. The United States has also pledged support in locating members of Boko Haram.

The *TELL* magazine visited a number of barracks across the country to gauge the temper of the military against the tense situation in the country. It discovered that the soldiers themselves appear to be worried about the insecurity and political situation in the country. Four categories of views were discernible. The lower ranks are really unhappy with the security situation in the country. They explained that they are the ones getting killed in the campaign of Boko Haram. They alleged that there is no motivation for the risks they take every day against Boko Haram. They claimed that each soldier on 24 hours special duty against the sect gets paid N500 a day as allowance, making a total of N3,500 weekly and paid at the end of every week. For N3,500 a week they want us to die for Nigeria, God forbid, said one soldier (Agbo and Suleiman,2012:52).

As the security situation worsens, military authorities are unhappy that no fewer than 33 out of 36 states of the federation have men of the Nigerian army complementing the police to protect the citizens. Muhammad Abubakar, a Major General and General Officer Commanding the Second Mechanised Division, Ibadan speaking in Osogbo at the launch of a new security outfit for Osun State recently, lamented the precarious security situation across the country involving kidnapping, terrorism, oil bunkering, ritual killings and other criminal activities, which he said made it impossible for the army to stay in the barracks. He said that, the task of security is the primary responsibility of the police but we cannot continue to pretend that we are safe and we cannot like this. Security has become worrisome in the entire nation.

According to a cross section of the lower ranks interviewed by *TELL*, lamented their emotions which could be summarized as disillusionment with democracy. They regretted that after voting massively for Jonathan he has not displayed enough leadership in the management of national security. They also felt that the upgrade of the military hardware for an anti-terrorism campaign envisaged by the over N929 billion budgetary allocations to security is too slow in coming and they are daily exposed to danger. But a security source said some of the military hardware cannot be picked up from the shelf, and therefore have to be ordered for, which takes time (Agbo and Suleiman,2012:52).

The middle level officers on the other hand, believe that they are better off under a democracy. Some explained that the era when a clique determined the career progression of an officer is gone. For the top level officers, they said they are satisfied with democracy but complained of certain indecisiveness on the part of the President.

In the event that the anger becomes apparent in the barracks are the politicians not giving soldiers an excuse to upstage democracy? That will be far fetched, as some military

officers insist that the country is now too complicated for a coup to succeed. Not only that, some Statesmen are said to be making efforts to ensure that matters do not degenerate to that level, so that the country would not become a laughing stock in the international community.

Bola Koleosho, a brigadier general and director, Army Public Relations, told the magazine last week that the army is being transformed positively under democracy and are happy to be subordinated under the civilian authority. He also confirmed the claim of the lower ranks that they are paid N500 a day as allowance. However, he explained that it is just pocket money and an addition to their salaries.

Outside the military the forceful also appears too complicated for a forceful takeover of government. Despite the security challenges, there appears no persuasive and legitimate reason for anybody to contemplate a military takeover, which appears to be what Boko Haram wants to precipitate. Communication is easier today but it could turn a double edged sword for coup plotters. Whatever form of communications they adopt, except telepathy, could be intercepted. The command structure has been diffused, and each officer has his sympathies.

Perhaps, that is why Dokubo says that in the event of a war there will be no Nigerian army. He is suggesting that should there be any violent change of government soldiers from the southern part of the country would rise against it. Another complexity that makes a coup unviable is the zone of origin saga. Will you remove Jonathan and put a northern military president? Will you remove him and install a South-south junior officer and retire everybody above him? This will lead to a blowout and confirm the feeling of he Nigeria delta that Boko Haram was dusted up to oppose Jonathan, said a retired military officer who did not want his name in print, recently (Agbo and Suleiman,212:52).

But it is hard to tell to what degree the government will accept that help. Among the comments made publicly by Ambassador Adefuye is that not all recent threats from Boko Haram have actually been Boko Haram. He has said that criminal groups have begun to commit acts of violence using the name. Moreover, he has said, "I want to assure you that our security services are very well equipped and are of sufficient competence to deal [with] and contain the dangers posed by Boko Haram (Ogunbuyi 2011:17).

Will the combination of a fragile government, continued civil unrest, and existing militias, combined with a stronger, more determined Boko Haram be the factor that tips Nigeria into destabilization? Experts say it's still too early to tell what the long-term effects of Nigeria's mix of threats might be. Many Nigerians do not see Nigeria collapsing in the near future. Nigeria is a fairly strong country, but if the situation goes unchecked, the potential for destabilization could rise (Agbo and Suleiman, 212:52).

Dialogue, enlightenment and sensitisation programmes have been preferred as veritable options for tackling insecurity in the country. The submission was made recently at the opening ceremony of a two-day conference organised by the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) in Abuja. Titled Culture, Peace and National Security: the Role of Traditional Rulers and Local Government Chairmen, the chairman of the event and former President Olusegun Obasanjo attributed the current security challenges confronting the country largely to ignorance, which causes mistrust among the people.

He also fingered unemployment, religious intolerance, ethnic rivalry as well as agitations for resource control as some of the monsters breeding hatred and conflict in the country. Studies have shown that a number of factors are responsible for violent conflicts in Nigeria. These include poverty, unemployment, religious intolerance, ethnic rivalry, growing

acculturation, resource control agitations and ignorance. "Most critical of these factors however is ignorance, which leads to suspicion and mistrust," (Odiadi, 2012: 52)

There is also the economic consideration. The Nigeria Delta insists it owns the oil that funds the national budget. And Dokubo has warned there will be no oil to export if anything happens to Jonathan. The ex-militants had demonstrated enough capacity to cripple Nigeria's oil production when they reduced crude oil production from 2.4 million barrels daily, mb/d at about 700,000 mb/d. That reality forced the federal government to resort to the Amnesty Programme. Today, oil production is over 2.6mb/d (Agbo and Suleiman,2012:55).

Obasanjo, who was represented by the National Secretary of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Prince Olagunsoye Oyinlola, stressed that the only viable way out of the ugly situation is dialogue and enlightenment programmes for youths, community leaders, village heads, religious leaders, local government chairmen, traditional rulers as well as politicians.

He added that erosion of cultural values due to increasing acculturation and negative external influences have also contributed largely to the spate of violent crimes and insecurity in the country.

Another critical factor worthy of mention is the breakdown of cultural values. Unfortunately, evasion of these values due to increasing acculturation and negative external influences, have also contributed largely to the spate of violent crises and general insecurity we have today (Binniyat 2012:5). Declaring the conference open, President Goodluck Jonathan, who was represented by the Special Adviser to the President on Special Duties, Sarah Pene, said traditional institutions and local government councils as agents of grass root mobilisation should view the present security problem as a wake-up call to their statutory responsibility. He, therefore, charged them to rise to their role as the chief security officers of their areas of jurisdiction.

In his welcome address, the Executive Secretary, National Institute of Cultural Orientation, Dr. Barclays Ayakoroma, blamed the current socio-political and economic woes experienced in the country on cultural disorientation. He said: In place of the cherished cultural values of fair-play, kindness, patriotism and communal living, our citizens have imbibed negative practices of dishonesty, stealing, disrespect, killings and other related crimes, which were alien to our culture (kajo, 2012: 5) Can the federal government restore security? What is responsible for all the sporadic bombings? Why has Jos remained a troubled spot? These are puzzles that seem to have no answers.

There is also the international community to consider. The global tide is against military governments. In Africa Nigeria has been at the head of resisting military takeover of civilian governments across the continent in Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Niger, Ivory Coast, Congo and other turbulent African countries. Nigeria had led African Union resistance of forceful change of government. In West Africa Nigeria has stabilized Economic Community of West African States. ECOWAS, as a democracy compliant such region. Nigeria has demonstrated sufficient leadership in Africa regarding the advancement of democracy and any military coup will be an aberration. Consequently, any military incursion into governance in Nigeria will be highly resisted by international stakeholders. Besides, any forceful change has the dangerous potential of working towards the prophecy of a possible break up of Nigeria by 2015.

Recommendations

As the Boko Haram onslaught against churches, and other targets continue, we deplore the increasing spate of attacks on Christian religious worshippers. This unconscionable aggression against Christian faithful is unacceptable in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria. The continuing attacks on Christians by this sect portend great danger to the corporate existence of Nigeria. The church bombings, which have become routine on Sundays, may plunge the nation into sectarian strife, if not quickly checked.

We call on President Goodluck Jonathan to rise to this security challenge by matching words with action. It is not enough to, after each dastardly attack; assure Nigerians that the government and the security agents are not on top of the situation at all. In fact, the government has failed in its primary function of assuring the security of lives and property of citizens in many parts of Northern Nigeria.

It is high time Jonathan wielded the stick and brought the festering insecurity in the North under control as the Presidents and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces. Let the President be reminded that all his plans to contain the insurgency, including the much-touted carrot and stick approach, have failed. His appeasement policy on the sect has not worked. Apart from refusing government's force peace overtures, the group has intensified its terror attacks on the states and churches.

Jonathan should take the bull by the horn and arrest the deteriorating security situation in the country, forthwith. Delay on his part will be dangerous. He should stop the blame game and get tracking. Let him get to the very root of the matter and deal with the problem decisively.

Furthermore, the president has identified some of the situations of government which the sect has allegedly infiltrated. He should swing into action by fishing out those involved and prosecute them. He should also get at the sponsors of the insurgent group since the government's partial state of emergency in some states in the north has failed to curtail violence in those areas, it will not be out of place if he invokes full state of emergency in some troubled states in the North as a way out of the current insecurity in the land. Former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, took a similar step during his administration, in Plateau and Ekiti States.

No doubt, the impoverishment of the North is traceable to the long history of insecurity in the region. This has escalated under Jonathan's Presidency. The insecurity has led to mass exodus of investors from the North. The Northern elites should also broker peace in the region. It is only in peace that the region will witness development.

Also, the Nigerian government needs to learn the terrorism-fighting lessons from 9-11. For example, they need to use intelligence to find and stop improvised explosive device (IED) attacks while plans are still aspirational, well before the IED is built. To stop a terror cell from developing and launching attacks, you need to go undercover and gather that information. That is the challenge for the Nigerian government at the moment. Companies need to employ more security professionals, and they should increase intelligence gathering, says Babawale. He also suggests more coordination between the government's security agents and private security in fighting Boko Haram (Kajo, 2012).

Although there is already some collaboration and information sharing between private security companies and government agencies in Nigeria, private security companies often feel like their hands are tied because it's difficult to protect clients without arousing government suspicion themselves. For example, if a private company uses dogs to detect explosives, the government may become suspicious because the authorities might raise an

eyebrow to how a private security company came by the funds for the sniffers as well as training for the handlers. However, if any private security company can convince the authorities of the funding and training, there should be no problem. Let the government and all the security agencies do all that is necessary to stop the continuing bloodletting in Northern Nigeria.

Conclusion

Boko Haram is an Islamic sect that believes politics in northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims. It wants to wage a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, to create a theocratic state ruled by Sharia law. Since August 2011 Boko Haram has planted bombs almost weekly in public or in churches in Nigeria's northeast. 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. Despite its successful attack on the UN compound in Abuja in August 2011, Boko Haram is not bent on attacking Western interests. There have been no further attacks on international interests since that time. Following the failed rescue of hostages Chris McManus and Franco Lamolinara in north-western state of Sokoto in March 2012, President Goodluck Jonathan played up the connections between the group and international terrorism. However, links between Boko Haram and the kidnapers are questionable. It is difficult to see how there can be meaningful dialogue between the government and the group. The group's cell-like structure is open for factions and splits, and there would be no guarantee that someone speaking for the group is speaking for all of the members. Tactics employed by government security agencies against Boko Haram have been consistently brutal and counterproductive. Their reliance on extrajudicial execution as a tactic in "dealing" with any problem in Nigeria not only created Boko Haram as it is known today, but also sustains it and gives it fuel to expand. The group will continue to attack softer targets in the northeast rather than international targets inside or outside Nigeria. It is also likely to become increasingly involved in the Jos crisis, where it will attack Christian indigenes of the north and try to push them out. Such a move would further threaten to destabilize the country's stability and unity. Now that the group has expanded beyond a small number of mosques, radical reforms in policing strategy are necessary if there is to be any progress in countering the group. Widespread radical reform of the police is also long overdue throughout Nigeria.

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