

BOKO HARAM CATASTROPHIC TERRORISM AND INSECURITY QUESTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper seeks to address the challenges Boko Haram sects is posing to our national security and even assess the probable ways through which their siege on the polity could be curtailed. After many years of military rule, the reintroductions of civilian rule in 1999 has coincided or seems to have spared the intensification of ethnic and religious militancy, characterized by acts of catastrophic terrorism, civil strife and mass protest. With the opening of the democratic space in 1999, various militia groups clinging to religion or other special interests have sprung up in Nigeria. In addition to their terrible humanitarian toll, the activities of Boko Haram and their conflict-prone relationship with security officials have been a constant menace to peace, security, stability and the territorial integrity of Nigeria. Upon this premise, it is crystal clear that the state of insecurity in the polity has assumed a frightening dimension. The government has a duty to restore security and maintain the country's unity. The President should seek out competent persons and if necessary, set up new security strategies to deal with the current attacks. He should deal with Boko Haram attacks as peculiar problems deserving of appropriate home grown remedy, without counting the physical presence of foreigners.

Key Words: Terrorism, Security Challenges, Violence.

Introduction

The catastrophic terrorism and the cycles of violence being unleashed on Nigerians by the fundamental group, Boko Haram has heightened fears among the populace and the international community that the hostility has gone beyond religious or political coloration. It has become a nation-wide concern in Nigeria in recent years. Almost everyday television broadcast, newspapers, magazines and internet websites run and re-run pictures of dramatic acts of violence carried out by this ferocious sect. It is often heard not to be scared when we see gruesome pictures of people killed or maimed by Boko Haram in office buildings, public buses or trains, and on the streets.

The Boko Haram and its sponsors claimed in the first instance that the government has failed them in diverse ways and would need to draw their attention to those areas through violence, the only language they can speak. The several bombs attacks in and around Maiduguri, the Sanni Abacha Barrack bombing and the United Nations building in Abuja are only few examples. The people affected by those bomb attacks have tribesmen, relatives and sympathizers. They also have people of the same faith but these people held their breath and only condemned the attacks.

The police and the soldiers could not stop the killings and the people were literally left on their own. No solution appeared in sight for this festering rot. As if the bloodletting and maiming were not enough, the evil blood hordes like the uncivilized desert dwellers, changed tactics and chose to fight the church instead of the government they purported to be fighting.

The federal government seems weak in maintaining law and order in Nigeria and lacks a viable strategy to curtail the Islamic sect from carrying out its atrocities. The fact remains that no one can spot a dark goat in darkness unless the person who slew it during the day. With at least 250 persons so far reported dead in the January 20, 2012 bomb attacks in Kano, indications are that the attempts to rein in the Islamic fundamentalists are inadequate or ineffectual, or both. According to reports, multiple explosive went off one after the other in Kano, in the usual manner of similar attacks by the members of Boko Haram sect in Maiduguri, Damaturu, Potismu, Gombe, Abuja and Madalla in Niger state. Nigeria seems to meet the criterion of a "failed state" such as Somalla, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Yemen, where terrorist groups are often able to operate freely, plan sophisticated attacks and stockpile weapons not because the government officials sponsor them but simply because they lack the political will to bring them to book.

It is axiomatic to posit that there is a large consensus of opinion that government must find a quick-fix solution to the problem, and then a lasting solution. The reason being that there is no way government will continue to spend the huge chunk of money it had been spending on security without providing security to Nigerians.

Concerns with Boko Haram catastrophic terrorism and related challenges have led to the proliferation of security management policies, laws and programmes, security management in turn has become an arena of cooperation and conflict, and hence an arena for social and political-economic interaction. As such, it is an arena if justice and injustice that cannot be separated from the larger context of

government and governance. Some Nigerians and groups have been so incensed with the rising insecurity in the polity that they are calling for Jonathan's resignation. There is also the belief that such calls will continue to rise until there is remarkable improvement in the maintenance of security in the land, as there is a rising impatience among the populace.

It is against this background this paper seeks to address the challenges Boko Haram is posing to our National Security and ways of curtailing their siege on the polity. Based on this premise, the first section of the paper addresses conceptual issues. The next explores the boko Haram menace and their implications on the nation's stability. The third section examines the way forward and concludes the paper

Conceptual Clarification

Terrorism is a concept that is fluid and a subject of contestations. It is tactic of desperation, which in most cases typifies the relative weakness in the power position of the perpetrators. The purpose of terrorism is to demoralize the target population and to use this to attract national government or any identifiable target to a conflict. Terrorist are willing to violate international norms much more than the states since they have no stake in the system (Goldstein, 2005).

Terrorism has become a very complex phenomenon due to the growing network of individuals, groups and states that are either directly involved in terrorist activities or indirectly by offering them logistic support, launching bases, training facilities, finance and so on. In view of the fact that effort by government to rid the society of terrorism through the use of amnesty programme, crusades, laws

and force have not yielded positive results. A gap therefore exists in the attempts put up on tackling the problems of terrorism in Nigeria.

Taking a cue from an extract of the address given at National Institute of Policy and Strategis Studies (NIPSS) in 2004 by Nigeria's erstwhile head of state, Abdulsalami Abubakar, one can clearly asserts that the greatest threat to the current civilian dispensation is insecurity. As he rightly observes, in addressing the challenge to the survival of democracy in Nigeria, it is pertinent to consider security issues and problems that have affected the attitude, Confidence and cooperation of all groups and segments that make up the Nigerian federation. The position of Abubakar seems echoed in the submission of Oyeboode (2011) in his piece on the imperative of insecurity. He declares, "it is self-evident that without security, hardly is anything possible". He nevertheless counsels that "security should go beyond law and order by encompassing meaningful existence for the generality of the populace". Putting it more succinctly, Ezeoha (2011) declares that "security means stability and continually of livelihood, predictability of relationships, feeling sate and belonging to a social group". In the same vein Oshodi (2011) argues that one sure way of tackling the insecurity situation in Nigeria is to accord the field of psychology a pride of place in policy formulation and implementation to promote national cohesion and integration.

Ogunyemi (2011) attempts to refocus issues of insecurity from the prehistoric times. He draws from Frantz Fanon's dimensions of violence to argue that explaining the emergent security problems in Nigeria must recognize the physical, structural and psychological violence unleashed on the people over the years by a tiny class of oppressive and manipulative rulers of the Nigerian state. While

agreeing with Oyeboode and others that security goes beyond maintaining law and order, it was emphasized that strength, wealth and security of our nation reside in expanding people's choices in every relevant way.

The quest for solutions that provides a sustainable future becomes more urgent as ever increasing evidence of Boko Haram catastrophic terrorism activities continue to be discovered. Concern for foreign investment protection is usually voiced by interest groups such as foreign investors, domestic investors, consumers, or community based organizations. Such groups will typically advocate for appropriate state responses to the experienced or imminent Boko Haram catastrophic terrorism challenges. Federal and state governments have responded with policies and programmes with limited security engagement and support.

According to Danjibo (2010), Boko Haram is the product of the "Maitatsine" doctrine or a broad of Islam zealots and fundamentalist introduced to northern Nigeria in 1945, and he argues that the Maitatsine or Boko Haram riots of 1980 and 2009 were linked to the failure of governance in Nigeria. Others, such as Ousman (2004) would explain Boko Haram as part of the resurgence of Islamic movement and militancy worldwide. In an article, "the potential of Islamist Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa", Ousman traces the problem of modern Islamic movements in Nigeria to the opening of democratic pluralism in 1999, which shifted the balance of power from Muslim military workers of the north to Christian civilian rule in the south.

Boko Haram, which was largely unknown when it emerged in 2002 in Maiduguri, a remote city in north eastern Nigeria, bordering Cameroon, surged to pre-

eminence in 2009 through some remarkable but deadly chain of events that occurred in Maiduguri. It all began on 25 July, 2009 with an all-night attack on Dutsen- Tanshi police in Bauchi state. The attack attracted one of the heaviest and ruthless security crackdowns in Nigerian history. The five-day stand-off between Boko Haram and security forces resulted in about 800 people killed and several hundreds were injured, as well as the capture and killing several Boko Haram militants including their founding leader, Mohammed Yusuf. The killing of Yusuf and attempts by security forces to obliterate Boko Haram marked a turning point in the Islamic sect history and transformed the group into one of Africa's most ferocious and deadliest catastrophic terrorist group.

In view of the above, one can posit that Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. The state exists fundamentally for the protection of lives and property and ensuring the well-being of the citizens. As such, state-based institutions and agencies have responsibility for the security of the citizens. However, certain institutions and agencies are specifically charged with the responsibility for the security of life and property. They include the police, state security agencies, the military, immigration, and prison services.

For the purpose of this paper, insecurity refers to the breach of security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, and economic and political that have contributed to recurring conflicts, which Nigeria has witnessed over the years resulting in wanton destruction and loss of lives and property.

Boko Haram: Operational Techniques and the Attacks

The Nigerian militant group Boko Haram conducted a series of bombing attacks and armed assaults in mostly the northern part of Nigeria. The group's official

name is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Liddas'awati Jihad, meaning "people committed to the propagation of the Prophets Teaching and Jihad". It earned its nickname from the teachings of its founder Mohammed Yusuf in the early 2000s; in the restive northern eastern city of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State (Adagba, Ugwu and Eme, 2012). Yusuf argued that Western education or boko', had brought nothing but poverty and suffering to the region and was therefore forbidden, or 'haram', in Islam. He began peacefully mostly preaching and quickly gained followership among disaffected young men in the northeast. But his anti establishment rhetoric and hints that Boko Haram was building an arsenal of weapons also caught the attention of authorities.

In 2009, the police clamped down on sect members who were ignoring a law requiring motorcyclists to wear helmets. That sparked a furious backlash. Police stations and government office in Borno were burned to the ground and hundreds spread across northern Nigeria.

The government and army reacted With force. Yusuf was captured and short dead in police Custody. Five days of fighting left some 800 people dead (Adagba, Ugwu and Eme, 2012). Boko Haram leaders still cite Yusuf 's death as one of the main factors driving the insurgency. The group remains fiercely anti government and anti authority and resentful of the decades of Corrupt, poor government that have impoverished its home region.

The conventional wisdom in intelligence circle is that Boko Haram has received cash, possibly large sum of euros paid to criminal "Jihadi" factions in the Sahel, from the al-Qaida affiliate al-Qaida in Maghieb. The latter group is fragmented but tenacious, and is also believed to have provided Boko Haram with training in

contemporary urban terrorism, particularly suicide attacks. However, the Nigerian group remains a local phenomenon that does not pose an international threat, British and other officials says.

The fact that it appears to be boasting of links with al-Qaida - which has suffered significant losses in recent years - does, however, indicate that the brand created by the late Osama bin Laden may remain more attractive and durable than some analysts have thought.

The groups operational planners do not appear to be as advanced as their bomb makers and recruiters. Though they have proved fairly successful in attacking soft targets, they have not had much success in their attacks against harder targets. For example, the attacker in the January 20 strike on the state security service office in Kano was shot and killed before he could approach the building. Likewise, security forces were able to repel the attackers in the January 22 attempted bank robbery in Tafawa Balewa (Lister 2012). All three January attacks also in Boko Haram's traditional central regions of Nigeria. These areas are both familiar and accessible to the group and it has strong support there. (It also has significant support in the area around Abuja). Joe Bavier, a writer who is a frequent visitor to the region, told CN that the

Federal government has completely lost control of the North- east, despite deploying thousands of troops and Establishing a Joint Task Force (JTF). Now, he says, "it looks like this insurgency has broken out of the north-east". And what's worrying, he says, is that there's not a whole lot of visible effort from the federal government to calm things down" (Lister, 2012).

Bavier, who is with the Pulitzer center on Crisis Reporting, says poverty has fed Boko Haram's ranks. It is no longer a sect of Islamic fanatics but has the support of disgruntled politicians and their paid things (Lister, 2012).

The group has to display any ability to project power outside its traditional operational area into less familiar and more hostile environments. Some ask whether Boko Haram is merely a political tool used by northern politicians to pressurize the Nigerian Federal government in much the same way politicians from the Niger Delta used militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta to ensure they believe in their fair share of Nigeria's oil revenue. While undoubtedly some northern politicians and Boko Haram exist, it would be simplistic to suggest such politicians completely control Boko Haram.

According to report in major newspapers recently, which was called from an online publication, 247 unreports.com, a senior official of Boko Haram allegedly granted an interview detailing how the sect had been on the payroll of a few governors of the North. The unnamed official had claimed that the stoppage of the financial support by the new government of Kano had warranted the massive bomb attacks on the state. "Most of them are paid monthly to leave their state alone", he was quoted to have said.

The two state governments specifically mentioned in the report (Kano and Bauchi) have however, denied the allegation. The spokesman of the Bauchi state governor described it as a "very strange allegation because, Isa Yuguda (the governor) cannot be involved in such.....we in Bauchi have been living in peace. We are not involved in that". His Kano counterpart spoke in the same vein.

The political settings of Boko Haram catastrophic terrorist activities during the past two years have been dispersed and complex, and for that reason they defy simple generalizations. The areas of operation of Boko Haram catastrophic terrorists during this period include few northern states e.g. Adamawa, Kano, Yobe, Jigawa, Borno, Taraba, Plateau etc. Their political/ideological motivations include nationalism, separatism, and both right and left-wing radical, revolutionary and Islamist beliefs. Many Boko Haram catastrophic terrorists sects have only local horizons, many others have international missions, and still others have a mix of both (Bamidele, 2012). No single political formula applies to this scene of great diversity though anti-education, anti-civilization, and anti-modernity themes are frequent and correspondingly, no simple political formula for dealing with them emerges. Infact, a recent exhaustive survey of counter-terrorist activities undertaken by the federal government includes "negotiation of national agreements, Joint Task Force military strikes against members of Boko Haram catastrophic terrorism, and the creation of decontamination teams, changes in immigration procedures, advances in surveillance, and an increase in the severity of penalties associated with Boko Haram catastrophic terrorists attack (Donahue, 2001).

The table below captures a litany of Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria from 2004 to 2012.

List of Massacres that have occurred in Northern Nigeria between 2004 and 2012

NAME	DATE	LOCATION	DEAT HS	REMARK

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Jos massacre	February 12, 2004	Jos	46	46 people killed in the attack
Yelwa Massacre	May 2, 2004	Jos	630	---
2010 Jos Massacre 2010	2010	Jos	992	Religious rioting; victims were mostly Christians killed by Muslims
2011 Abuja United Nations bombing	August 26, 2011	Abuja	21	73 injured, Boko Haram attacked a United nations Compound
2011 Damaturu	November 4, 2011	Damaturu	100-150	Islamic militants associated with Boko Haram attacked police stations, churches attacks and banks
December 2011 Nigeria	December 22-23, 2011	Maiduguri and Damaturu	68+	Islamic militants associated with Boko Haram clashed with

Clashes				security force
December 2011 Nigeria bombings	December 25, 2011	Madalla	45	73 Injured; Muslim militants bombed a catholic church during Christmas mass
January 5-6, 2012 Nigeria attacks	January 5-6, 2012	Mubi, Yola, Gombe, and Maidiguri	37+	Islamic terrorists attacked Churches and Christian Businesses; Boko Haram claimed responsibility
January 20, 2012 Nigeria attacks	January 20, 2012	Kano	185	Islamic terrorists attacked Churches and Christian Businesses; Boko Haram claimed responsibility
April 2012 Kaduna Massacre	April 8, 2012	Kaduna	38	Islamic terrorist bombed a church on Easter

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June 2012 Kaduna church bombing	June 17. 2012	Kaduna, Wusasa and Sabon Gari	12-19	80 injured; Islamic terrorists bombed three churches
Matse Village, Massacre	July 08, 2012	Matse Village, Jos	52	Gunmen Suspected to be Fulanis killed a senator, representing Plateau North, Dr. Gyang House of Assembly and the majority Leader representing Barkin Ladi Gynay Fulani and 50 others
Barkin Ladi & Riyom L.G Areas attack	July 07, 2012	Barkin Ladi and Riyom, Jos.	37	Dozens of people died in villages attacked by gunmen whose identities were yet to be clearly ascertained.

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Source: Tell Magazine - July, 23, 2012

Implication of Boko Haram Terrorism

One of the most dreaded fallouts of Boko Haram bombings and killing is the fear that the feeling of hatred it has do far fueled may ultimately endanger the polity and the nation. Already, thousands of non-indigenes in the North, especially Igbos, who have been the worst hit, are desperate to return to their homes states before they are killed. Soon, after the multiple explosions, the kano state chapters of Ohanoeze Ndigbo, the apex socio-cultural organization, in a press statement signed by the President, Hon. Tobias Micheal Idika, called on the governors of south each and south geo-political zones to come to the aid of the citizens stranded in Kano state.

Since that call for help, there has been divided opinion on what should be the response of both the affected non-indigenes still at the flash points and of their government. While some ate blaming the governors for dragging feet in saving stranded citizens, others are accusing the citizens for remaining where they do not feel secured.

Viewed from whatever angle, it is generally acknowledged that the ugly development has not only threatened the polity but also the very existence of the Nigerian nation.

After nearly a decade of violence, Nigeria's government still does not have an effective strategy for dismantling the group. The terrorist organization preys on

disillusioned Muslims of the north, who are fed up with corruption and have few economic opportunities. Unless this changes, the audacity of Boko Haram's attack on the UN headquarters will only be a prelude to future violence.

While Boko Haram was able to capitalize on Nigeria's widespread poverty, the lack of economic opportunities is not the only social ill in the country. According to a Human Rights Watch report, corruption in Nigeria has resulted in police abuse human rights violations, lack of health care and political violence. A 2009 report by Amnesty international accused the Nigerian Police Force of hundreds of extrajudicial disappearances and killings each year, all of which have gone uninvestigated. These disheartening factors of failed development combine to create a climate of desperation in Nigeria, especially potent in the North. Few people feel they can trust the state institutions, establishing the perfect recipe for the growth extremism.

The challenges facing Nigeria are serious, and the solutions are scarce. A local domestic terrorist group has now grown into something larger and much more dangerous. Nigeria must look within itself to fix its social, economic and political problems. Boko Haram is a symptom of alienation in Nigeria's north, something the US and the countries can do little to address. Extremism is bred in inequality and insufficient economic opportunity, and the government of Nigeria must deal with these problems to achieve peace and security within their country.

The Way Forward

The Jonathan government inherited the Boko Haram problem when it came into office in May, 2010. Since taking office, Jonathan has taken several steps to solve the problem, such as creating a special joint military task force to eliminate Boko

Haram, installing numerous closed circuit television throughout the federal capital territory where Abuja is located and tapping ambassador Usman Gaji Galtimari to head a committee with the specific goal of dealing with Boko Haram.

After carefully analyses of the challenges confronting the country today, there is a great concensus among analysts that tune country is currently in a state of siege, not by acts being perpetrated by Boko Haram, but also by other issues and developments. Those who hold this view have called on government to be very careful and tactful in dealing with these issues and developments in the country, so that things do not spiral out of control. They contended that so many issues tackled by government rather than assuage the hurt of Nigerian increased it, citing the fuel subsidy removal strike and protest which they claimed government mismanaged.

A cardinal responsibility of any government properly so-called is the control of the instruments of coercion and provision of security. With regard to the Boko Haram and the manace of criminal generally in many part of the polity, the government has not been able to proffer any effective solution. We have had more promises to arrest the situation than we have seen effective actions. We need to move to the stage where the government would do less talking and Nigerians would see more of action that indeed, the crime wave, including the terror attacks is falling.

In order to achieve this, there is need for Nigeria to modernize her security agencies with the help of advanced countries of the United States of America, European Union members and China. This effort will enhance the operational capabilities of the Nigeria security agencies by identifying avenues that would enable them respond appropriately to internal security challenges and other

threats. Prominent areas of collaboration may include training, intelligence sharing, modernization of the security services, logistics and other requirements.

Nigerian government must address Socio-economic deprivation and the severe wealth inequality among its people.

Today, ill-equipped and clearly confounded young soldiers are deployed all over the country to deal with civil policing duties that fall outside their charge. Worse still, they are too far and spread too thin by a military establishment that is constrained to deal with a wider terrain and spree activity, with corresponding increase in overall staff strength. There is also an embarrassing dearth of pre-emptive intelligence, leading to a constituent pattern of damage responses to national security.

In order to address these challenges, development of professional capacity, the building of trust and a crack team of equipment-led intelligence officers are critical for success.

Yet, one issue that has come up in the course of managing the current Boko Haram saga is the public display of incompetence apparently driven by an incoherent strategy, by security agencies

pretending to be searching for bombs in moving and stationing vehicles. Major highway and street corners are now taken over by check points, manned by sundry uniform personnel. In every case their task is simple; to stop all vehicles and search them for bombs. At least that is what they claim when motorists are stopped. But how many of them know what a contemporary bomb looks like when anything, from the head lamp of a car to the knob of the gear lever, could be a bomb?

As Eme (2009) rightly argued, this is 21st century. Technology works for the rest of the world in the matter of detecting, and even detonating bombs of all hues. The manual search, ever so incompetently done, is out of date, out of time with the efficiency needs of today's world, and totally limited in its ability to deal with the matter at hand.

At its current cross roads, Nigeria has gone beyond the present structure of the police and other security agencies, a complete overhaul of the security agencies should be undertaken. If president Goodluck Jonathan's appointment of the present Inspector General of Police Mohammed Abubakar is the beginning of cleaning process, the move should be consolidated. Strategies adopted in confronting the prevailing threats have not worked as they ought to. A linked understanding of the scope of problem in all too clear utterances of key government functionaries and security Chief give them out as helpless, as best, just as some of the pronouncements could aggravate the situation. The authorities can do with more strategies thinking.

In constructing a strategies agenda to tackle general security problems, the President should try wider consultation through leveraging political and establishments. The presidency does not seem to be reaching out enough for advice. It is not too late for him to quietly seek credible elders and leaders of the right who understand the problems on the ground, and deploy them appropriately.

It is perhaps time the federal government took bold steps towards streamlining the nation's security agencies and make them more attune to serious intelligency gathering. Without that, foreign direct investment, faith in Nigeria's democracy

and commitment to core national values will be permanently jeopardized by a state of insecurity. The time for the government to act is now.

Conclusion

It is not an overstatement that the state of insecurity has assumed a frightening dimension with recent occurrences in Nigeria. While it may be posited that insecurity is a global problem, what looks rather strange in our situation is the seeming inability of our government to tackle the challenge. The cliché of 'security threat has almost transformed to security collapse. Boko Haram and gun attacks on innocent Nigerians who are law-abiding have become almost a daily routine. No nation can attain meaningful level of growth and development if there is no security of lives and property of her citizens.

President Jonathan has a duty to restore security and maintain the country's unity. He should seek out competent persons and if necessary, set up new security strategies to deal with the current attacks. He should also exercise caution in dealing with foreign interests, to avoid being drawn into a terror orbit far greater than our present predicament. He should deal with the Boko Haram attacks as peculiar problems deserving of appropriate home grown remedy, without counting the physical presence of foreigners.

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