The Nigerian State, Security and Boko Haram (2010-2015): An Evaluation

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Abstract: Nigeria currently suffers a gangrene condition. Security deficits are merely emblematic or symptomatic of an unhealthy state. The crises of the Nigerian state are such that there is no consensus yet on the narrative. This paper identified the basis of the dilemma in the unresolved and unsettling issues constituting the National Question. With a reliance on secondary data backed by textual analysis, the implications of the complex interface between terrorism and security deficits in the Nigerian state were highlighted. The suggestions proffered are capable of addressing the maladies.

Keywords: Boko Haram; Evaluation; Nigerian State; Security; Terrorism

1. Introduction

The 21st century is exemplified by violence which is now the order of the day and is very much prevalent in human interactions. Terrorism is perceived and acknowledged as one of the greatest threats that confronts contemporary world. The security of any nation is tremendously imperative and it comprises the existence of peace, safety of lives and property. Given the circumstance where these are not assured, there will cease to exist any form of significant development. The activities of terrorists has posed a threat to the very existence and survival of states in various ramifications.

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This paper adopts a perspective which argues that it was the unresolved national question that snowballed into Boko Haramism in the Nigerian polity. Nigeria as a country has repeatedly been faced with issues of penetration, ethnic divisions and religious/sectarian bifurcations which also defines its fault-lines and plurality. These and other issues constituting the National Question in Nigeria which has remained unresolved led to the violent agitations and monster of terrorism in the name of Boko Haram.

Osabiya (2015) affirms that the national question involves the unresolved contradictions in the society that have continued to entrench Nigeria in a brutal circle of crises. It goes without saying that the sum total of conflict, unemployment, insecurity, and the subsequent emergence of Boko Haram is as a result of the failure of the Nigerian state to address the unanswered national questions.

Other Scholars have argued that poverty, unemployment and ignorance contribute significantly to the spread of the sect's activities in Northern Nigeria. Indeed, it is beyond all reasonable doubt that the current insurgency in the North is worsened by the high level of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy prevalent in Northern Nigeria. This reality is corroborated by Marxist proposition on religion's influence on man (Akinbi, 2015). Accordingly, when a young man is poor, illiterate and unemployed, he becomes a clean slate for any kind of brainwashing which is more potent when it comes from religion aided by culture. This is so because this category of people lacks the intellectual power to question logically or critique what they are told. Also, the activity component of the brainwashing given to them provides a quasi-equivalent of employment, thus they feel engaged in acting what they have been brainwashed on (Awoyemi, 2012, p. 24).

This study thus argues that if the emergence of Boko haram is to annihilate western education and its features for bringing underdevelopment in the region, then such argument is faulty as most of the gadgets, and technological devices used by this insurgent group are product of western education and discoveries. Boko haram's successive destructions, attacking and killing of innocent Nigerians would have been futile, if not for western educational/scientific discoveries.

2. Method and Structure of Paper

The paper adopts an ex-post facto research design. Essentially, being a qualitative study, data were collected largely from secondary sources. Data obtained were

textually analysed, leading to the conclusion and recommendations of the paper. The paper is segmented as follows: Abstract; Introduction; Method and structure of paper; Conceptual discourse which comprises the clarification of concepts such as security; national security; and terrorism. There is a section dealing with a review on the interface between terrorism, security and the Nigerian State. A final section is conclusion and recommendations of the paper.

3. Conceptual Discourse

The concepts of Security, National Security and Terrorism are presented and clarified in this section.

3.1. The Concept of Security

Attempts at conceptualising security have not yielded any consensus, largely because scholars, writers and practitioners have been influenced by their training, orientation and perspectives. In its common usage for instance, it denotes situation where a person or object is not exposed to any form of danger or risk of attack, accident or deterioration. Security practitioners submit that the concept is usually tied to the safety of citizens, ability of a nation-state to contain internal rebellion and external aggression (Zabadi, 2005). The latter part of this assertion takes the dimension of national security which introduces military might and capabilities to the understanding of the concept. In popular parlance, this is referred to as the traditional view of security.

Baldwin (1997, p. 13) sees security as "low probability damage to acquired values". His conceptualisation of security is encompassing as it does not border only on the presence and absence of threats, but also on the preservation of acquired values. This definition explains why values is what changes the nature of security threats that ranges from country to country; and how the various countries react to these threats.

In a related discourse, Imobighe in Oche (2001) averred that:

Security has to do with freedom from danger or with threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the wellbeing of its people. Thus, internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the cooperate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic

objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. Internal security also implies freedom from danger to life and prosperity. (Oche, 2001, pp. 76-77).

A much clearer definition of security has been given by Buzan (Stone, 2009, p. 1) thus: "…the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile." This definition appears exhaustive as it breaks down the nature of "value" and emphasised the maintenance of functional integrity against forces of change. This definition is also particularly peculiar as it emphasizes the perception that states reject all forms of terrorism because it tampers with their functional integrity through unacceptable forces of change.

In recent scholarship however, the concept of security has widened in scope and form. Nwolise (2012, p. 14) justifies this view as follows:

Security in contemporary usage has expanded horizontally and vertically. He posited that horizontally, security has gone beyond the military to encompass economic, political, environmental, social and other aspects. He stressed that vertically, security has gone beyond the state to incorporate and emphasise the individual, social groups, (ethnic, religious, professional), the state, and humanity at large. Thus, there is a dramatic shift in the concept of national security, to human security.

Hubert (2001, p. 3) argues from a human security dimension this way:

In essence, human security means safety for people from both violent and non-violent threats. It is a condition or state of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, their safety or even their lives... It is an alternative way of seeing the world, taking people as its point of reference, rather than focusing exclusively on the security of territory or governments.

From the above averments, it can be persuasively inferred that human security constitute a cardinal plank in the narrative and characterisation of security. Corroborating further, George and Hilal (2013, p. 51) opine that human security paradigm adds a new dimension to traditional security by emphasizing on the human being rather than the state. According to them, whereas traditional security is state-centric and concerned primarily with interstate security, the protection of borders and sovereignty, with human security "non-military/non-traditional threats to security have led to the broadening of the reference object of security to include individuals, non-state actors and sub-national groups." They concluded that this

paradigm shift has profound implications for not just inter-state relations in contemporary politics, but much more for regime survival.

3.2. The Concept of National Security

In the preceding section, tremendous allusions or references have been made to this concept, therefore, this section takes a very concise approach to the discussion of issues. In a terse sense, national security projects the conditions and requirements to maintain the survival of nation-state through the instrumentality of politico-economic and diplomatic power. Its beginning that is traceable to Post-World War II in the United States of America crystallised around military strength, but contemporary realities and global dynamics have deepened the meaning to embrace non-military, economic and environmental dimensions plus values held paramount by the nation or society (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013).

The logical consequence of the above averments is that national security is conceived as embracing economic, energy, environmental and political components of the concept. Security threats can originate and be perpetuated by entrepreneurs of violence which may comprise (but not limited to catalytic and flammable non-state actors, narcotic oligopolies, multi/transnational organisations and non-governmental organisations. To ensure national security therefore, it is essential to temporise threats to shared values through diplomacy, marshalling economic power to facilitate and assure cooperation, and using intelligence and counter terrorism strategies (Anyadike, 2013). These characterisation of national security presents a fairly detailed perspective and unconventional view of the concept.

It is also noteworthy that there is an inference that national security embodies state sovereignty, sanctity of territorial borders (against external aggression) and containing internal rebellion (Dyke, 1966). This view converges with that of Zabadi (2005) which operationalises the concept mainly from its conventional and traditional planks of military statecraft and superior power. It is plausible to argue further that the State must possess the resilience of ensuring independence in the development process, foreign policy orientation and practice in order to be construed as fulfilling part of the requisite conditions for national security. The views expressed below by Samai (1987) underscore and summarise the essence of discourse in this section thus:

Security is multidiamentional issue. The dimension and levels on which the concept and respective policies are based can be specified as political military, external and internal, social and economic. That is to say, a nation's security is encompassing of all necessary factors which bring security to a nation. Security is not limited to deter external attack as the other dimensions could be more dangerous (Samai, 1987, p. 6).

3.3. The Concept of Terrorism

From the etymological point, the word terrorism comes from Latin and French words: *terrere,* and *terrorism,* meaning "to frighten" and "state rule by terror" respectively (Oche & Dokunbo, 2001). It should be noted that, there is no unanimous definition of who a terrorist is, as there is no generally accepted definition of terrorism among scholars and experts in this field. Terrorism is an elusive concept that has been argued to mean different things. However, the arguments of different scholars may help form a basis to describe the concept of terrorism. Cooper (2001, p. 882), posits that defining terrorism is not an exercise in futility, although there may be differences in the definitions advanced by scholars, these definitions provide good stands through which reasonable progress can be made to determine pre-emptively what looks like terrorism in times to come. (Ibietan, Chidiozie & Ujara, 2014)

Best & Nocella (2004, p. 1), affirm that "all terrorism involves violence, but not all violence is terrorism" and they posited further that "… the institutional use of physical violence directed against innocent persons – human and/or inhuman animals – to advance the religious, ideological, political, or economic purposes of an individual, organisation, or state government" amount to terrorism. Their definition gives this research a decent outset as it helps to corroborate the fact that violence in this context is directed at innocent persons, but it might as well also include targeted persons who may not be exactly "innocent" in the sense of the word.

Al-Thagafi (2008, p. 3) views terrorism as "the use of either organised or random violence against innocent people in order to intimidate them for political reasons." This definition can be said to be narrow as it does not explain the nature of the perpetrators of these violent acts regarded under the concept of terrorism. Some scholars view terrorism from a different point, positing that sovereign states could also engage in acts of terrorism or become sponsors of terrorism and not just militants or civilians (Cline & Alexander, 1987, p. 215). A noteworthy

conceptualisation of terrorism given by the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism (Al-Thagafi, 2008, p. 4) goes thus:

Any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs in the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda and seeking to sow panic among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or seeking to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupying or seizing them, or seeking to jeopardize national resources.

The above averment is fairly detailed owing to the fact that it seemingly captures the overt nature, intent and mechanisms of terrorism. Compared to the foregoing definitions, the US Department of State (in Al-Thagafi, 2008, p. 4) captures it as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (Ibietan et al, 2014, p. 69)

Okeke (2005), opines that terrorism has become such a world-wide phenomenon that Cardinal Renato Martino, described terrorism as the 4th world war, and the 3rd world war being the cold war which ended with the demise of the former Soviet Union. He corroborated further that:

We have entered the fourth world war…I believe we are in the midst of another world war…and it involves absolutely everyone because we don't know what will happen when we leave a hotel, when we get on a bus, when we go to a coffee bar, war itself is sitting down right next to each and every one of us. (Okeke, 2005, p. 23).

The statement above implies that no nation is immune from acts of terrorism, it also concludes that no nation can guarantee absolute security for its citizens, without collaboration with the larger international community.

Terrorism can be engaged in by one person or more. The operational area of terrorism is the whole universe. Terrorism takes place in a guerrilla-like manner because it does not have any known battle field. Instruments of terrorism are generally light, not heavy. The major characteristics of terrorism are the element of surprise attack, intimidation and fear. Terrorists do not have any known identity. They do not operate like regular combatants. They appear like perfect gentlemen but with dangerous intentions. Their only strength is in the use of terror without notice, at any time, to attack and intimidate any physical or moral person in order to score a

political point. And what makes terrorism more problematic is the inability to articulate the catalytic agent that sustains it (Akinterinwa, 2010, p. 24).

4. Terrorism, Security Deficit and the Nigerian State: A Review

The emergence of Boko Haram in Nigeria has brought about the disappearance of peace and security of life. A nation is considered insecure when it cannot adequately ensure the protection of its citizens from any form of violence. One can therefore draw an inference that the relationship between terrorism and national security in Nigeria is very negative, as epitomized by the record of violent attacks perpetuated by Boko Haram from 2010-2015 with concomitant devastation in the national psyche.

It is evident from an earlier study conducted by Akinbi (2015, pp. 36-48) that three major attacks were traceable to Boko Haram insurgency in 2010. They are the Bauchi prison break which occurred on 7th September, 2010; bomb attack on Maiduguri Police Station on 7th October; Mogadishu Army Barracks Mammy market in Abuja on 31st December. Sixteen persons were reported dead, three injured, Police Station destroyed and 721 inmates freed from the Bauchi prison.

In 2011, five incidents were recorded thus: bomb explosion in Abuja and Bauchi on 29th May, failed Police Headquaters bombing in Abuja on 16th June; Damaturu attacks on 4th August; Insurgents and Nigerian Army Clashes in Maiduguri and Damaturu on 22nd and 23rd December; and on the 25th December, St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla was bombed. The casualty figure in these five major attacks was given as 281 dead.

The year 2012 also witnessed five dastardly insurgent acts as follows: Kano multiple bomb blasts occurred on 21st January; attack on a Christian Chapel in Bayero University, Kano during a Sunday Service on 29th April; a church was bombed in Kaduna on 17th June, while on 7th August, insurgents engaged worshippers in a Deeper Life Church in sporadic shootings. It was the turn of Christians in Maiduguri and Potiskum on 25th December to experience shootings during the Christmas service. A total of 266 persons lost their lives as documented by Akinbi (2015).

There was an upward surge to eleven tragic occurrences in 2013 as detailed thus: on 1st January, the Nigerian Army took the battle to Boko Haram (raiding their hide outs) and killed thirteen militants; on March 18, an outward bound Kano Luxury Bus was bombed in which sixty-five persons were feared dead; there was a massacre in

Baga (Borno State) on 16th April; on 6th July, shooting occurred in a Yobe State School. An attack was carried out on a mosque in Maiduguri on 12th August, while on 12th September, Boko Haram insurgents ambushed some soldiers and killed them. The Baga massacre; Yobe State School shootings, the Maiduguri Mosque attack and ambush laid on the Soldiers recorded a total casualty figure of 325 as dead. Between 12th and 18th September, the Nigerian Army executed an offensive on the Boko Haram sect, in which one hundred and fifty militants and sixteen soldiers died. On 19th September, further attacks by the Insurgents led to the death of sixteen persons in Borno State. Not less than fifty students died in the Guiba College massacre in Yobe state on 29th September. In October, two major raids inspired by the Federal Government on Damaturu and other enclaves of the militants resulted in 229 loss of lives that were mostly Boko Haram fighters.

The country witnessed unprecedented spate of unrest in 2014 resulting from terrorist attacks which totaled nineteen. Apart from the months of January, March, July and November which recorded one attack each, and seeming cease fire experienced in August, September and October, no other month had less than two attacks (as recorded in April and December). February had three attacks, May and June witnessed four respectively. In cumulative terms, no less than one thousand, nine hundred and twenty three persons died, while five hundred and fifty two people were kidnapped (Akinbi, 2015, pp. 37-38). Other details show that on 26th January, there were various attacks in parts of Northern Nigeria, while between February 15th and 25th, Yobe State recorded two incidents with one occurring in a Federal Government College. On 14th March, Giwa Military Barracks in Maiduguri was violated, and some Boko Haram detainees were released, but later recaptured and executed.

On 14th April, 2014, Abuja experienced a twin bombing and the next day, what turned out to be the celebrated kidnap of 276 Chibok School Girls occurred in Borno State. Abuja witnessed a car bombing on 1st May, there was the Gamboru-Ngala attack in Borno State on 5th May and on the 20th May, the Jos car bombings was recorded, a week later, the orgy of violence shifted to Buni Yadi in Yobe State. On 1st June, the location of bombing moved to Mubi in Adamawa State. There was the Gwoza massacre in Borno State on 2nd June. June 20th and 23rd to 25th witnessed the Borno State and Middle Belt attacks respectively. The Nigerian Military raided Boko Haram camps on 26th July and mowed down about one hundred militants. The only occurrence in November (28th) found expression in bombing and gun attacks in Kano. There was a record of kidnappings in Gumsuri, Borno State on 13th December,

while between 28th and 29th of December, there occurred a failed offensive by Boko Haram insurgents into Northern Cameroon.

The 2015 half-year narrative of insurgent disturbances with an extension to July 6th at a total of eighteen almost equaled the preceding year's record. It is also quite pathetic to note that the death toll at minimum of three thousand and ninety five persons, and the wounded at a conservative estimate of one hundred and seventeen persons present enormous human loss and unqualified cost to Nigeria (Eme & Ibietan, 2012). The taxonomy for these attacks shows seven as occurring in January; five in February; one in March; one in April; none in the month of May; two in June and two within the first week of July. The January episode commencing from 3rd to 7th; 9th; 12th; 18th; 25th; 29th and 31st oscillated from Baga massacre through refugees' flight from Baga; failed Boko Haram raid on Cameroon; attacks on villages in Northern Cameroon; Boko Haram offensive against Northern Armed Forces in Maiduguri; Nigerian Military Collaboration with Chadian Soldiers to recapture the border town of Michika due to fighting in Northern Cameroon on African Union initiatives.

The February 2015 account of terrorist activities started on the 1st with the raiding of Sambisa forest by West African Allied Forces (four countries), and on the 6th with Boko Haram raid on Bosso and Diffa towns, making it the first time that Niger as a country was attacked. On the 13th of February, Boko Haram insurgents crossed into Chad on four motor boats through the lake, while on 21st February, Baga town in Borno State was recaptured by the Nigerian Army, and on the 24th, the Chadian forces engaged Boko Haram rebels in a duel around the Gamboru area of Nigeria. The record for March shows that between 9th and 18th of the month, the Chadian and Nigerian Forces overran Boko Haram and retook Fatouri and Damasak towns in North-east, Nigeria. On 24th April, the Nigerian Military Forces ransacked Sambisa with an intent to dislodge the insurgents from their stronghold.

On 16th June 2015, the Boko Haram insurgents made an audacious advance into the Chadian Capital-N'Djamena to launch twin suicide bomb attacks on that country's Police Headquarters and Police Academy (Akinbi, 2015, p. 40), while on 22nd June, two female suicide bombers desecrated a mosque in Maiduguri, killing worshippers in the process. Between the 1st and 2nd July, 2015, multiple mosque massacres occurred in the North-eastern parts of Nigeria, killing scores and injuring tens of people as earlier documented in this discourse. On 6th July, the contested peace of

Jos town was again punctuated with a bomb attack in which more than two score of persons lost their lives.

The implication of security deficit induced by terrorism on the populace and Nigerian State can be gleaned from its reverberating effect and as decelerator of economic growth and development. Peace is an irreducible minimum requirement and platform for economic progress and transformation. The North-eastern part of the country has been reduced to ashes and a shadow of its previous situation occasioned by deteriorating unemployment and worsening food crises. It is arguable therefore, that Boko Haram insurgency has exacerbated the miseration and pauperisation of the citizenry, especially around the North-east geopolitical zone. This inference is predicated on the relative; absolute; and dollar per day poverty measures from the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics which put poverty rate on the above three indices at 71.5%; 61.9% and 62.8% respectively (Subair in Alao, Atere & Alao, 2012, pp. 8-10). It is also discernible that government spending on security has progressively escalated, with tendency towards kleptomania resulting from lack of transparency, poor accountability and floppy control system in public governance in Nigeria. This position is validated by the revelations emerging from the probe of alleged arm deals fraud levelled against Col. Sambo Dasuki (Retd) and other Politically Exposed Persons in the Nigerian public domain. Palpable fear and a feeling of insecurity as corollaries of insurgency conjoin to underscore the Nigeria's image question as highlighted by Ibietan, Chidozie and Ujara (2014).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper evaluated the security implications of Boko Haram activities from 2010 to 2015, and its effect on the Nigerian State. The contention of this paper is that the unresolved and unsettled National Question fed into and exacerbated the pervasive violent agitations, reaching the crescendo with Boko Haram terrorism. Extant literature (secondary data) anchored on textual analysis of data informs the position and conclusion of this paper. Facts emerging from the review of the complex relationship between terrorism and security deficits in the Nigerian State gave rise to the following suggestions:

1. The Nigerian State under its leading personnel/governing elites and political class must create and continuously foster a climate of open dialogue and communication among the disparate elements and plural segments of the Nigerian society. This will

imbue the country with the necessary sense of cohesion and integration, thus reducing acrimony, squabbles, tension, violent conflicts and ultimately terrorism, which is almost consuming the country.

2. The current governing elites at the centre should within the limits of available resources (internally and externally) spend its way to growth, through massive public works, infrastructure and social services. This has a multiplier effect on job creation for its teeming but constructively unemployed youths and economic boom in the public domain.

3. There is an urgent need for the initiation of bottom-top security approach anchored on local community intelligence. This approach to security makes every Nigerian, a security officer and will not only transcend the bounds of traditional security architecture, but complement it.

4. Continuous training and competitive welfare/motivational packages for the Nigerian military and institutions/officers of allied mandates are seriously advocated, in order to galvanise them for best services at all times.

5. Transparency, probity and accountability in public governance process are irreducible minimum requirements for good governance and sound economic performance for improved citizens' living conditions, and this is highly recommended.

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