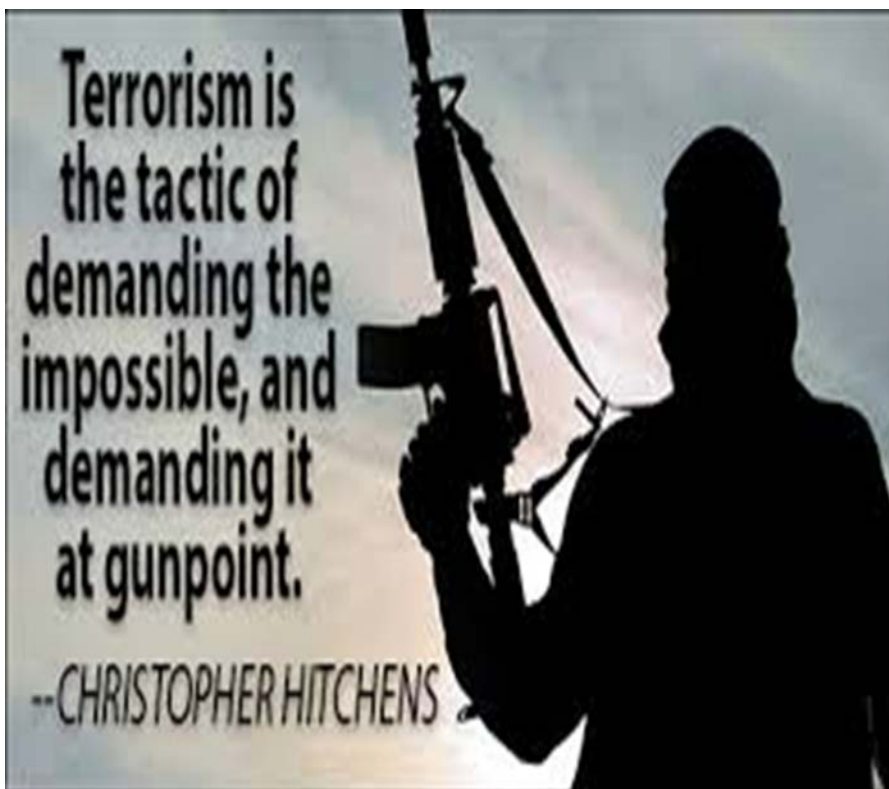


STEMMING THE TIDE OF TERRORISM IN NIGERIA: THE IMPERATIVES



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BY

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INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is not new to our world; it has always existed. From the acts of terrorism of the Jewish Zealots of the 1st Century against the Romans to Hitler's atrocities against the people. From the acts of terrorism that Ireland's IRA committed against the British Government to the act of Terrorism on the World Trade Centre. And coming closer home, from the various atrocities of armed robbers and other criminals to the terror and vandalism unleashed by the various ethnic militias as well as the restive Niger Delta militants and of course the vicious barbarism of Boko Haram Islamic extremists in Northern Nigeria. Terrorism has become a global threat to peace and security that should be fought by all peace loving people. Nigeria has had more than its fair share of the menace called terrorism. The activities of Boko Haram in recent years as well as the return of violent vandalism in the Niger Delta, not forgetting the resurrection of calls for the state of Biafra. These incidents paint a very ugly picture of Nigeria. And the situation calls for serious concern by all. I believe that it is in agreement with this line of thought that the Department of Sociology of the Covenant University has decided, to organize this Training Workshop.

The chosen theme for this workshop: **Modern Security Approaches Towards Arresting the Tide of Terrorism in Nigeria** is most apt at this point. It is also timely that we begin to look at how this trend can be stemmed, hence this presentation on **Stemming the Tide of Terrorism in Nigeria: The Imperatives**.

Since the return of Nigeria to democratic government in 1999, the country has been inundated by a series of problems bordering on instability and insurgency. The battle against these problems, particularly the activities of terrorist groups including rampant kidnappings, bombings and other political unrests have yielded very limited success.

Consequently, the aim of this presentation is **to critically explore the imperatives in stemming the tide of terrorism in Nigeria**. In order to achieve this, it is important to start by looking at the definition of the term 'Terrorism' and then the historical background of terrorism in Nigeria. Also, the challenges and causes will be discussed so as to arrive at the 'must dos' in stemming the tide of terrorism in Nigeria.

Definition of Terrorism

The Encarta Dictionary defines “terror” as intense or overwhelming fear. Therefore, to terrorize is to induce great fear. consequently, a terrorist is one who uses the weapon of terror to achieve his objective. It goes further to define terrorism as “violence or the threat of violence carried out for political purposes”¹. However, not all terrorist acts seek a political goal. As a concept, it is difficult to define the term Terrorism. This is because there is no universally accepted formal definition of the concept. This confusion extends to even official definitions by various agencies of the U.S. For example, the U.S. Code Title 22 Chapter 38, Section 2656f(d), the FBI, and the US Army Manual all give different definitions.

No wonder then that Bruce Hoffman, a scholar, noted that it is not only individual agencies within the same governmental apparatus that cannot agree on a single definition of terrorism. Experts and other long-established scholars in the field are equally incapable of reaching a consensus. Notwithstanding this confusion, Dr Freedom C Onuoha, in his paper “Terrorism: The Case of the Boko Haram in Nigeria”² conceptualized the term terrorism as **“the premeditated use or threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violent acts”**. This is a more comprehensive concept of the term. In any case, to conceptualize is to devise a mental construct, a picture in the brain that can be expressed in words eventually. Whether it resides in the mind or is revealed verbally, it is speculative, tentative, and usually malleable. Consequently, Onuogha’s definition is considered comprehensively adequate and therefore adopted in this presentation.

Characteristics of Terrorism.

However, some things are clear about terrorism: it is an unlawful act of violence, it intimidates governments or societies and its goal is usually the achievement of a political, religious or other ideological objectives.

TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

Origin

Terrorism does not develop overnight in any society but begins gradually as various factors within the society create room for it. In studying the origin of contemporary terrorism in Nigeria, two incidents readily come to mind. They are the killing of Dele Giwa, in 1986 using a letter bomb. This was followed, in October 1993, by the hijacking of a Nigeria Airways aircraft. Nigerians were shocked by these acts as terrorism at the time was still alien to Nigeria.

From these isolated cases, acts of terrorism have continued to grow over the years with increasing sophistication and brutality. Therefore, terrorism in Nigeria could be traced back decades before the commencement of the current security challenges. Therefore, in the search for what must be done to stem the tide of terrorism in Nigeria, it is important to look at their origin.

The Niger Delta

The Niger Delta consists of 9 States: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. These states are synonymous with oil producing areas in Nigeria. The people of the Niger Delta are generally engaged in farming and fishing. Oil was discovered in 1956 at Oloibiri. This attracted oil companies that started explorations and exploitations thus leading to the establishment of the NNPC (then NNOC). However, oil which constitutes a major source of earning for Nigeria has been a bag of mixed fortune and misfortune, of blessings and curses, depending on who is feeling what effect. For instance, Udeme Ekpo declared that **“For the country, it has been a huge fortune. It is the source of wealth, accounting for about 90 per cent of her foreign earnings....For the oil-bearing communities, oil has been more of a curse than a blessing due to deforestation as well as pollution of farmlands and aquatic life.”** Oil exploration comes with its attendant side effects including oil spills.

Oil Spills in the Niger Delta

In January 2008, Nigeria's National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency said it had found more than 1,150 oil spill sites abandoned by various oil companies in the Niger Delta. Between 2003 and 2007, Shell

alone admitted it had suffered well over 1,000 oil spills. To many people, the existence of oil in the Niger Delta has remained a curse because attempts by oil companies and government to provide palliatives for the harmful effects of the oil exploration have not solved fundamental problems of the people.

Palliative Measures.

As far back as 1957, the colonial British government set up the Willink Commission leading to the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board. The impact was not significant hence agitation started. This would be followed later by the establishment of other organs including the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Ministry of Niger Delta. Still the underlying poverty and unemployment did not abate. This explains the restiveness of the people and the subsequent emergence of militant groups. The restiveness come in the form of pipeline vandalism, disruption of the operations of oil companies, kidnappings and hostage taking. No wonder Martin Luther King observed that **“There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society, with a large segment of people in that society, who feel that they have no stake in it; who feel that they have nothing to lose. People who have a stake in their society protect that society; but when they don’t have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it”**

Presidential Amnesty Program.

Then came the Presidential Amnesty Programme which proved to be a success with violence and kidnappings decreasing sharply. Petroleum production and exports increased from about 700,000 barrels per day (bpd) in mid-2009 to between 2.2 and 2.4 million bpd in 2011. The program involved the disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration of the militants. However, the Programme is costly while chronic poverty and catastrophic oil pollution, which fuelled the earlier rebellions, remain largely unaddressed. Nevertheless, an uneasy calm prevailed as the leaders of some ethnic militias and militant groups got mouth-watering contracts for the protection of pipelines across the country. These leaders employed a lot of the restive youths who were not captured in the amnesty program.

Niger Delta Avengers.

However, at the inception of the current administration, those contracts were found to be rather outrageous and they were promptly terminated. Those youths once again became jobless, frustrated and more restive. The result may be the emergence of the Niger Delta Avengers. Although many are of the opinion that the Niger Delta Avengers is being manipulated by some corrupt Politicians who are afraid of the current onslaught on corruption. This could be true but it would mean that they are just taking advantage of the situation as usual. Had the underlying problem of unemployment been addressed, they would have been robbed of that opportunity. These are the background causes of the current situation in the Niger Delta that must be dealt with if the tide of terrorism is to be stemmed. The situation in the North-eastern part of Nigeria is however different in that it is being fuelled by religious extremism dating back to the Maitatsine uprising.

Maitatsine in Nigeria.

Going back to the 1980s, Mohammed Marwa, a Cameroonian, initiated what could be first Islamic terrorist group in Nigeria; the Maitatsine group. The group recruited, indoctrinated, armed, coordinated and funded some youths to visit terror on harmless Nigerians. Marwa had taken up the teachings of Dan Fodio after arriving Nigeria in 1945. His preaching was predicated on the belief that he himself was a prophet thus earning him the name Maitatsine. The group stood against Nigeria's corrupt secular government and its allies among the "moderate" religious establishment.

Marwa was forced into exile by the British colonial authorities when his teachings became unacceptable even though no violence was recorded then. He returned shortly after independence to continue the indoctrination process. His message was popular with the young, poor and unemployed in the slums of Kano. In his teachings, he preached against having excess money, and other things western in nature. He had no regard for either the emir or other Islamic teachers. His following swelled mainly by the almajiris and some middle class youths³. He incited his Yan Tatsine troops of armed loyalists to attack other religious figures and policemen. The military intervened and arrested him but he managed to get released. He always did.

However, on December 18, 1980, the violence and terror that ensued from the wild ideas of Mohammed Marwa got to its limit. Hordes of insurgents armed with all manner of primitive weapons went on rampage

going from house to house in Kano wreaking havoc. More of their members streamed into Kano. Then the onslaught shifted to churches, mosques and police stations. Their pattern of destruction was so brutal that in just a matter of days, over 4,100 Nigerians were dead⁴. Eventually, the military intervened and Mohammed Marwa was killed. Notwithstanding, the riots continued to spread to other cities of the North. Eventually, the group was subdued and it went underground.

The Nigerian Taliban

In early 2003, a group led by one Mohammed Ali advocated the implementation of a purer form of sharia law than was being practiced. To achieve their objective, they needed seclusion and moved to a remote village near the Nigerian border with Niger Republic. Its foundation members were relatively well to do Nigerians from Islamic families and unemployed university graduates. The group was described as being largely peaceful, devoting themselves to the interpretation of Islam. This led to clashes with the locals who referred to them as the Taliban. Conflicts arose resulting in clashes and division in the Islamic community. The police were invited as the Shi'ite Muslims in Potiskum were attacked on many occasions. In December of 2003, the police destroyed Taliban's camp and arrested several of its members. Their reaction was to arm the group thus leading to several confrontations with the police until they were finally subdued at Damaturu. In early 2004, the group moved to Borno state where the confrontations continued with the police. The Taliban members that survived these clashes joined Mohammed Yusuf's movement, which had started in Maiduguri, signaling the takeoff of Boko Haram (BH).

Boko Haram

As noted earlier, after the Maitatsine group was dislodged, the Nigerian Taliban easily emerged and took advantage of the poor conditions that were still prevalent in those areas to continue from where Maitatsine had stopped. It was just a matter of time for BH to capitalize on these same lapses to develop its own army of insurgents from the left over of the already indoctrinated and unemployed youths. For nearly a decade the group received very little attention, even when it intermittently launched loosely coordinated hit-and-run attacks on police posts in remote parts of

Borno and Yobe States. The group attracted worldwide attention in July 2009, when it staged a violent anti-government uprising that killed over 800 people. The five-day revolt ended only when its charismatic leader, Mohammed Yusuf, was captured. He subsequently died in police custody under what was widely believed to be extrajudicial killing.

Membership

BH draws its members mainly from disaffected youths, unemployed graduates, and former Almajiris, according to Agbo, these Almajiris live and study in appalling social and economic conditions. They are often cramped into makeshift homes with little or no food or drinking water, forcing them to roam the streets begging for alms. They are extremely vulnerable to religious extremism and financial inducement. The sect's membership also includes some wealthy, educated and influential people. For instance, it is alleged that Alhaji Buji Foyi, an ex-commissioner in Borno State; Kabiru Atiku, a former university lecturer; and Bunu Wakil, a very rich Borno-based contractor, are members of BH.⁵

Deductions

From the analysis of the Niger Delta crisis and the BH phenomenon, it can be deduced that the underlying factors responsible for the blooming of terrorism in Nigeria are lack of development, poverty, unemployment and frustration. In short lack of human security and development. Development in most states of the federation has been very low. This has paved the way for frustration and insecurity. As observed by Abdullahi, in his book "the Boko Haram Phenomenon and Terrorism in Nigeria"⁶, some communities have never had electricity or pipe borne water. To them, government does not exist. Consequently, the issue of sustainable development is one of the major imperative in stemming the tide of terrorism in Nigeria.

The “Must Dos”

Any effort to arrest the trend of terrorism in Nigeria must therefore start by addressing the underlying drivers of terrorism. They include: chronic poverty, pervasive corruption, unemployment, and socio-economic as well as political exclusion. This can be achieved by undertaking broad socio economic and political reforms. While it can be argued that poverty is not the only factor in radicalization, Komolafe notes that **“the tendency to produce suicide bombers is greater in a community defined by mass misery and joblessness than the one in which basic needs of food, education, health, housing and sanitation are met for the majority of the people”**.⁷ Hence, the Nigerian government must embark on effective poverty alleviation and human capital development programs to create jobs and alleviate poverty among its teeming youth. In short, the government must provide security and development for the citizenry.

Security and Development

As noted by Nwankwo, Anaere, Ayuba, Akinwumi and Olurode (eds) in their book *Towards Peace, Security and Sustainable Development in Africa*, for meaningful progress to occur, peace and security are vital to any sustainable development agenda⁸ Security and Development are 2 fundamental requirements for creating a conducive environment where individuals, groups and communities can flourish and realize their personal and collective dreams. Unfortunately, since independence, Nigeria has experimented with many development theories and strategies mostly resulting in minimal successes. These have led to frustration, discontent and anger which in turn are being exploited by disgruntled elements to fuel violent insurgency and instability.

The government must therefore do all in its to capacity to generate employment, especially for the youth, particularly young graduates. Unfortunately, for government effort to yield the desired result, corruption must be tackled.

War Against Corruption

The socio-economic woes of the country can be traced to the effects of prevalent corruption in the society. Therefore, corruption must be fought decisively. Widespread public corruption in Nigeria and Pervasive malfeasance, in the public sector, has provided a key referent around which terrorism sponsors can frame their ideology. Terrorists appeal to the impoverished, alienated and jobless. The Nigerian government therefore must demonstrate strong commitment in the fight against corruption. Therefore, the ongoing efforts of government to fight corruption must not only be sustained but fought with ruthless determination supported by all Nigerians.

Tighter Border Control

Nigeria must take steps to tighten control of its borders. Because some of those arrested for alleged involvement in BH activities had been identified as illegal immigrants. This is not surprising given that Nigeria's international borders are notoriously porous. A fact that has been confirmed by a onetime Minister of Interior, Abba Moro when he revealed that Nigeria has 84 regular borders and over 1,487 irregular routes to the country.⁹ The Nigeria Immigration Service, The Nigeria Customs Service and other relevant security agencies must rise to the occasion.

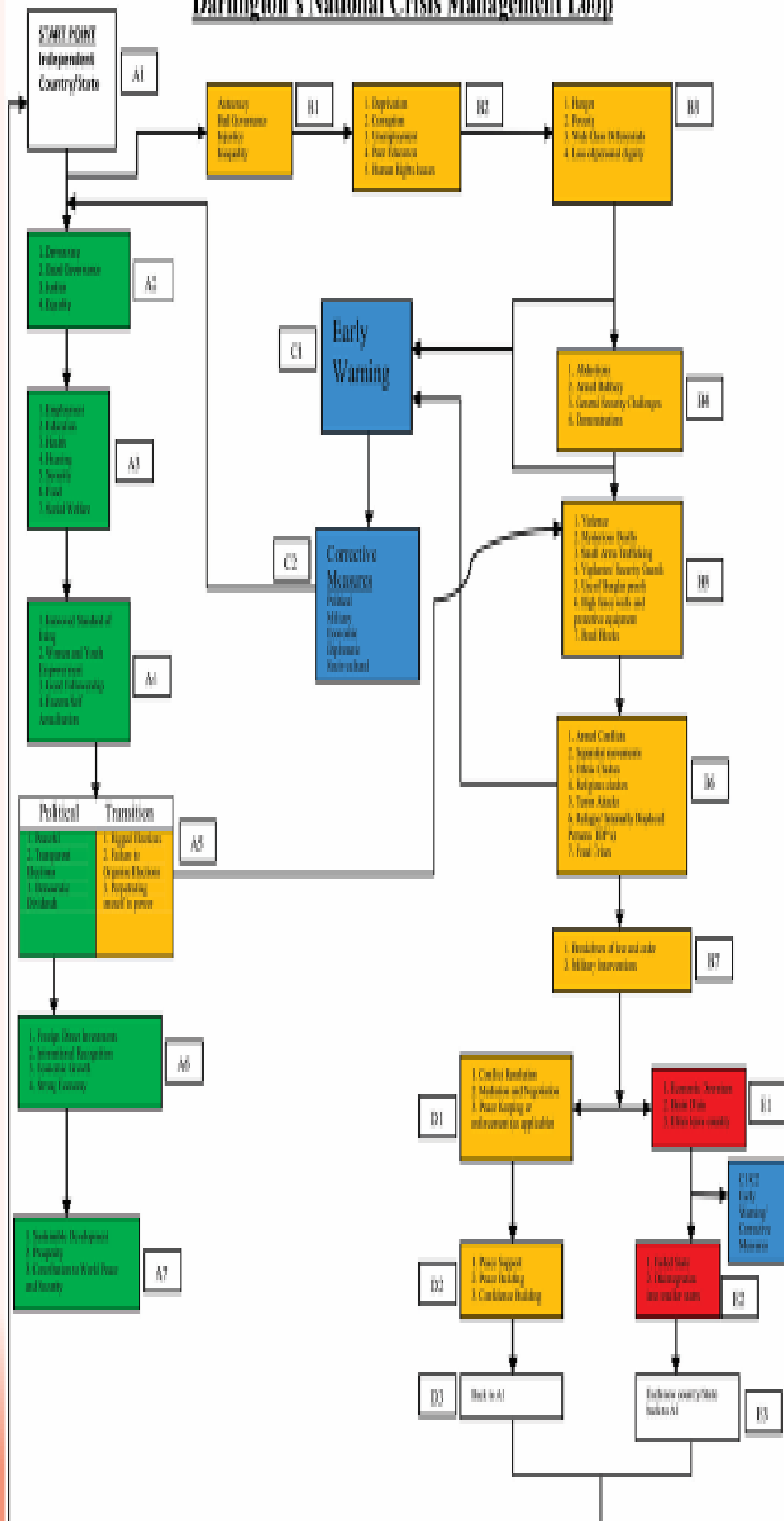
Capacity Building of Security Agencies

The government must intensify training in counterinsurgency (COIN) and Internal Security (IS) operations, not just for the Armed Forces, but also for all other security agencies. The training should place emphasis on special reconnaissance, close quarter combat, urban warfare, amphibious operation, demolition and explosive breaching, information management, tactical communication as well as civil/military-relations. Another area of emphasis must be on joint operations among all these agencies to promote synergy. Equally important is the provision of adequate equipment particularly for surveillance and electronic intelligence gathering, information processing and sharing. Interoperability must be given high priority while every effort must be made to discourage interagency rivalry.

Crackdown on Terrorist Sponsors

There is need to take concrete steps against those alleged to be providing support to terrorist groups. As the *Punch* rightly noted in one of its editorials, “much of the work of the security agencies is being undermined by divisive politics among the elite”.¹⁰ It is important for the Government to investigate and prosecute all those using BH and the Niger Delta Avengers to further their political interests. But in the long run, the most effective tool in stemming the tide of terrorism is good governance and effective crisis management. To aid in this, Darlington’s Crisis Management Loop can be used as a guide.

Darlington's National Crisis Management Loop



Darlington's Crisis Management Loop

Leaders at all levels cannot avoid making occasional mistakes and genuine errors of judgment. When this happens, the leader should be able to admit, identify and learn from such errors. It is often never too late to retrace a wrong step and begin to move in the desired direction. The Darlington's National Crisis Management Loop, shown on the screen, is a guide to managing crisis at different stages. Sometimes the mistakes are inherited from previous administrations.

Explanation of The Darlington's Loop

Depending on the nature of government, 2 major paths are immediately available. These are Paths A (green) or B (amber) respectively. Other paths are C, D and E for those that may deviate from their initial paths, either getting worse or heeding early warnings. Every government desirous of delivering the dividends of democracy should try to stay on the green path.

Path A1 to A7 (Green)

This path represents an ideal route for a democratic, and people oriented government. With good governance, justice and equity, the government will encounter little distractions and can therefore focus on creating employment, providing education, healthcare, housing, food and social welfare for the people. With these, security would be guaranteed. With security, development can take place. Standard of living can then improve creating a happier followership. However, as a democratic government, the tenure of the administration will eventually come to an end and elections held. Such election must be peaceful and transparent. Then the nation will continue to prosper. If however, during the political transition, the election is not transparent, the path changes from A to B. A lot of effort will be required to get back to Path A through either Path C or D.

Path B1 to B7

An undemocratic government can hardly ensure justice and equity hence bad governance. Series of human rights violations will develop and the country going through Path B2 to B6 will begin to encounter a breakdown of law and order, leading to increased civil unrest. The military will most likely get involved in quelling riots. As usual, human rights organizations will begin to cry foul. However, at this point, it is possible to heed the early warning and move back to Path A through

corrective measures on Path C or D. Alternatively, the only available option is the self-destructive Path E.

Path C1 to C2

A leader who realizes his mistake after taking Path B can rescue the situation by heeding the early warning signs and take corrective measures to return to Path A.

Path D1 to D3

Path D1 to D3 provides opportunity to adopt all necessary measures to restore the country to normalcy when disorder has already set in. Here conflict resolution/management mechanisms become handy.

Path E1 to E2

This Path is the ultimate nightmare heading towards total collapse and a failed state.

General Comments

With good governance, and remaining on Path A, it would be difficult for insurgents to find safe haven in such an environment as long as there are no ungoverned spaces and the citizens' welfare, security and other socio-economic needs are met. The youths will be gainfully employed and insurgents will find it difficult to recruit them.

Application of Stakeholders Analysis in Counter Insurgency, Conflicts or Crisis Management

To effectively resolve a conflict, a stakeholders' analysis is essential before embarking on measures to resolve conflicts. Otherwise, gaps that could lead to failure might be discovered late. This could be done in the short, medium and long terms as shown on the screen. The time factor for each term may vary for different situations depending on the stage of the conflict.

a. **Short Term Stakeholders' Analysis.** Here the analysis is focused on identifying those to deal with toward:

- (1). Significant reduction in the ability of insurgents to carry out attacks.
- (2). Destroy insurgent strongholds and enhance intelligence/surveillance.

- (3). Destroy insurgent command and control infrastructure.
- (4). Cut-off the insurgents' supply lines and sources of fund.
- (5). Protect soft targets and national infrastructure especially in areas of operation.

b. **Medium Term Stakeholders' Analysis.** Here the analysis is focused on the following:

- (1). Preventing the insurgents from regrouping.
- (2). Monitoring their movement, mass indoctrination, hate speeches or hate preaching.
- (3). Create security awareness and open channels of communication while requesting for citizen participation.
- (4). Prepare for negotiation, mediation, disarmament and peace building.

c. **Long Term Stakeholders' Analysis.** Here the analysis is focused on identifying those to deal with toward:

- (1). Continued peace-building efforts and ensure that IDPs and refugees are well catered for.
- (2). Embark on reconstruction.
- (3). Set up centers for de-radicalization.
- (4). Give priority to reintegration and welfare of citizens, justice and good governance.

CONCLUSION

The characteristics of terrorism are unlawful acts of violence, intimidation of governments or societies and usually the achievement of a political, religious or other ideological objectives. Terrorism in Nigeria could be traced back decades before the commencement of the current security challenges. The areas most affected are the Niger Delta and the North eastern parts of the country. Terrorism could be traced back in the Niger Delta to the discovery of oil and the harmful effects of oil exploration while in the North East it was fueled by religious fanaticism.

Therefore, terrorism in Nigeria dates decades before the current security challenges of BH and the Niger Delta Avengers.

The main drivers of terrorism in Nigeria are basically lack of development, poverty, unemployment and frustration. And attempts by government to provide palliatives have not yielded the desired result due to prevalence of corruption.

Any attempt to arrest the trend of terrorism in Nigeria must start by undertaking broad socio economic and political reforms. Also, the war on corruption must be intensified. Above all, the government must ensure good governance so as to create a hostile environment for terrorists to flourish. The problem at hand requires the participation of all. The government and the citizens alike.

Let me take my leave with the following quotation by that great son of Africa, Nelson Mandela.

“Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity. It is an act of justice. Like Slavery and Apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be that generation. Let your greatness blossom”.

END NOTES

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