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ABSTRACT

The use of terror as a ratio for resolving internal fundamental differences is not uncommon in neo-colonial societies. This is not saying that flashes of same are not recogn ised in the developed environment. The prevalence of this alternative appears as old as the political history of Nigeria. This work underscores the theoretical and historical basis of rebellion in Nigeria primarily focusing on the rise, fundamental philosophy and the vision of the Boko Haramists. The central thesis of this work is that Boko Haram activities have negative effects on Nigeria's external image and fundamentally, it exposes the nature and dynamics of Nigeria's security problems. The work contributes in part to the literature on this issue but significantly, it situates the problems within strategic logic which amplifies the degeneration of the problems and the incessant rebellion against the Nigerian State.

Keywords: Terror; Insecurity; Boko-Haram and External Image

1. INTRODUCTION

Insecurity and agitations which often results into rebellions by social groups and also by the different ethnic groups in Nigeria explains, in part, the unstable and precarious nature of the social neo-colonial edifice called Nigeria. The use of terror by the agitating groups is not new in Nigeria and scholars (Onigu, 2006 p-21: Subruan, 2009 p-34: Richard, 2000 p-54) have written extensively on religious and ethnic bases of terror and insecurity in Nigeria. Their works share similar focus and conclusion. They all historicise, situates discussions within internal configuration and constraints and offer solutions within the context of the control of force. This is a departure from these works because if situates the issues within the logic of rebellion and externalization of the problems. The transformation of the use of terror in both international and domestic politics have created new indices and categorizations that puzzle scholars of power politics. This is because of the nature and complexities of the obvious but unavoidable influences of globalization and the inter-continentalization of terror as the ultimate ratio of control and domination. So serious have been the incidences and consequences of terror incidental by conflicts of interests and other socio-economic, political and psychological variables. Socio-political violence occurs in many societies for many variables. These falls into two main categories. The first is primary violence and the other is secondary violence. The attack on the Nigerian State during the Nigerian Civil war was a classic case of primary violence .The aim was to change the fundamental character of a state which had failed in its primary duty, the protection of all citizens. The many coups d'etat and many other protests and resistance against public policies since 1966 constituted a secondary

type of political violence. The violence unleashed by Boko Haram against the educational policies and other religious allegations on the Nigerian state fall into this category.

Two major theories have been employed to study socio-political violence especially in Africa. By political violence, we mean, "all collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors including competing political groups as well as incumbents or its policies" (Gur, 1970: p-2). The first theory was "the parliament of instinct" It is rooted in pscho-analysis. It draws inspiration from the general behavioural theory of human aggression. If focuses on individual aggressive behavoiur. This theory is however extended to group behaviour or activities or responses to stressful or rejected political situations. The instinctive theory has roundly been discredited as obsolete but its importance and relevance lies in its analysis of group violence. The second theory is biocentric in character. It draws from the frustration-aggression hypothesis. Its central thesis is that political violence is triggered when a goal-directed response is felt to be obstructed either politically or through other obstacles. If the former explain the perceived basis of the group aggression, the latter amplifies its escalation.

The problem of theorizing here arises from the psychological evidence which suggests that man has the capacity to unleash violence but may not necessarily need aggression to send his message across the boundary of his thought. Thus the fundamental task here was a necessary theoretical elucidation and identification of the circumstances which makes a political community or group exercise their capacity for violence collectively. Ted Gurr in his classic "Why Men Rebel" (1970) advanced three causal sequences. These are; one, the development of the disconnect, secondly, the politicization of the disconnect and lastly, the actualization of the disconnect through violent action against political objects and actors. The present stage of the Boko Haram's crisis appears to be the third stage in Gurr's analysis.

This work however is not primarily concerned with the factors that propelled the emergence of Boko Haram. It basically concerned itself with the effect of the activities of this sect on Nigeria's external image. This work is divided into five parts. The first part is the introduction while the second part excavates the foundation of this sect. The third aspect deals with the nature of the responses offered by the Nigerian state. The fourth aspect examines the possible impact of the Boko Haram's menace on Nigeria's external image while the fifth aspect of this work is the conclusion.

2. NORTHERN PART OF NIGERIA AND THE RISE OF BOKO HARAM

Terror and insecurity are twin - causal menace that has continue to threaten the cooperate existence of Nigeria. The use of terror by rebellious groups have assumed different colourations not so much for what it worth, but for the convictions of the opposing beliefs exacerbated often by the nature of responses from a neo-colonial Nigerian State whose language of control and stability rests on the philosophy of terror and violence. This often prevents compromise and ultimately creates insecurity which often affects domestic peace and creates international acceptance. Nigeria has witnessed the activities of different social, religious and political sects threatening peace and security just as it is also witnessing the Boko Haram onslaught .Infact, history has shown that in Nigeria, no issue evokes more heated and frustrating debate and insecurity than the question of politics and religion (Agi, 1998 p-1). This partly explains why different social sects have used religious platform to unleash terror and create sense of insecurity in Nigeria. Fundamental social question have though been raised by the activities of the different social groups in Nigeria but the underpinning religious outlook appears to render the activities of the rebellious sects from the

Northern part of Nigeria rather notorious if not interesting as they often addresses the fundamentality of the secular pretension of the Nigerian State.

Prior to 1966, incidents of religious violence and other social and political protests were "territorially uncoordinated and haphazard in their occurrences. Subject to local leadership, with no direction from strategists outside, they were usually- short-lived, collapsing at the show of force, the release of emotional tension, or the removal of the grievances"(Coleman, 1986: 177 p-11). 1966 to 1979 reveals more complicated situations. It was a period characterized by the externalization of provocative teachings, organized killings, government violent responses, rivalry among sects and greater intolerance of other religious groups. 1986-1996 witnessed worrisome situations which marked the nationalization of religious crisis. The Northern region of Nigeria acquired notoriety for religion-related violence and gangsterism which rears its head over so often (Agi, p-68).

The frequency and bloody nature of the recurring nightmare of religious disturbances coupled with massive destruction of lives and property assumed unimaginable proportion. The 1980 Maitatsine uprising in Kano to its sponsored uprising in Maiduguri, Kaduna and Kano in 1992 and in Yola in 1994. 1986 Palm Sunday riot, 1987, Kanfanchan riot to 1995 Jama'atul Tajdid Quit Notice to non indigenes in Kano. 1996 muslim vs Christian clash in Kaduna and several other instances and examples explain more clearly nature and dimensions of religious crisis in Nigeria. The information in the advocacy of the sects addresses fundamental problems of nationhood, unity and peace in Nigeria.

Contemporary sects like Boko Haram have been linked to the terrorist sects like the al-Qaeda. This suspicion cannot be separated from the global reach of al-Qaeda and the resources at its disposal. The nature of the sophistication of the Boko Haram operations appears to have also encouraged this suaspicion. Although, it has been argued that Boko Haram is a terrorist organization with religious colouration (Tunde, 2012: p-14) but its rejection of western values especially the western education, raises the curious problems of the clash of civilizations. Although its modus operandi is 'terror' but the ideology that seems to be driving this movement like others is not without element of religiosity. Those who have argued that it is purely political with religious colouration (Thaltz, 2011 p-17) may also not be far from the truth but the problem has been what exactly it has to be called and why the tenet of this sect engendered so much violence, insecurity and greater use of terror?

It is to be noted that violent rejection of a social system does not become religious by the mere fact that it is referred to as such. However, it is common to attribute religious motives to situation that may well only be an expression of a purely secular and political standpoint (Scholz, 1959: p-70). What is theoretically valid is the transformation of socio-religious issues to the level of political agitation since such are indices to be processed by a system.

Thus the political dimension of religious conflicts of the basic demands of religious sects may be directed to the leadership of a state while other religious groups and innocent citizens become pawns for negotiation and attention. It may be argued that some of what conventional wisdom tags as religious violence in Nigeria may have nothing to do with religion, or at best, has only tangential relations with it. That is hardly the issue here but its theoretical validity with empirical examples appears obvious in the scrutiny of the reasons for religious conflicts. At this point, a question need be asked- What and Why Boko Haram?

Scholars and religious leaders in Nigeria as well government officials and those in the corridors of power in Nigeria expressed different opinions about this group. Boko Haram

> Is an instrument of terror and violence
> against the oppressed masses …it is anti-
> Islam, anti-people and ungodly. The
> Sponsors are in the government cabinent
> (chief missioner, Ansar-u-deen).

To Lakin Akintola,

> Boko Haram is not a Muslim group
> but a dissident organization being
> used by the ruling class.

Lateef Adegbite(2012: p-9) argues that

> Boko Haram is only doing what it
> is doing to get attention. I do not
> think they have any grievances
> against the Christians.

A Nigerian senator, Bukola Saraki considers the sect as a terrorist group (2012: p-3) while Itse Sagay views it as part of Nigeria's complex social problems enabled by irresponsible government and decayed social policies (2012 p-4).

Two strands of opinion emerge from the views above. The first is the postulation that Boko Haram is a terrorist network either being used a group of Nigeria's political class or for self seeking reasons directed against government. The second opinion sees the group as non Muslim sect while the third opinion considers Boko Haram as a reckless group unleashing terror on Nigerians. A critical reflection on the foundation and philosophy of this sect reveals more fundamental reasons for their activities and the effects of such on Nigeria's image.

Boko Haram is a militant Islamist group influenced by the Quranic phrase which says that "anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors". Boko is an Hausa language which means 'fake' while Haram is an Arabic word which means 'forbidden'. Thus, to this sect, the promotion of a version of Islam which considers it as haram or forbidden the contemporary Nigeria's political practice and all associated western civilization including education, social beliefs and practices deserves a jihad. This philosophy obviously explains the attacks on all symbols of western civilization in Nigeria. It also explains the political vision and desire of this group- the desire for Islamic Nigeria and the total enthronement of sharia rules and practices. This is the foundation of the problems!

We should note that since the emergence of the Sokoto Caliphate which ruled parts of what is now Northern Nigeria, Niger and Southern Cameroon (Bentley, 1977: p-112), there has been resistance among the area's Muslims to western education. The new wave climaxed the resistance in not only more sophisticated manner but rather, in a more violent way with vigorous political language.

Boko Haram official name is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad which means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad".

Its headquarters is located in the North-Eastern city Maiduguri in the Northern Nigeria. Boko Haram was formed by a charismatic Muslim cleric known as Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri. He set up a religious complex which included a mosque and an Islamic school. Many poor Muslim families from across Nigeria as well as neighboring countries enrolled their children at the school. The stage was set for the confrontation between the sect and the Nigerian state.

It is apparent the school becomes a primary recruiting which produces a ready mass of armed gangs united in opinion and vision relative to their desire. It is however important to point out this school produces two groups using the Boko Haram front to unleash terror. The poor group raised by the sect seems to have deep social and economic grievances against Nigeria (Tekhon, 2012: p-8) while the second group have clear religious vision). This they directed against the foundation of the politico-religious and economic practices of the Nigerian state. Boko Haram became a common platform.

In 2009, Boko Haram officially announced its presence through a spate of attacks on police stations and other government buildings in Maiduguri. These were considered as symbols of neo-colonial oppression and western culture in Nigeria. Most audacious attacks on churches, military barracks and the police headquarters were launched in 2011. In 2012, several other places have been attacked including more sophisticated attacks on religious homes. Foreign missions were also not left out. The U. N headquarters in Abuja was attacked. Boko Haram is increasingly becoming more sophisticated by the day.

3. THE RESPONSE OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

The rise of the destructive activities of Boko Haram got the responses of the Nigerian state. Like other violent activities of the militant groups in Nigeria, the responses were delayed for possible number of reasons. The social and political configuration of Nigeria, the lessons from the Niger Delta militant groups and the insincerity of the Nigeria's political class among others. Different Nigeria's social and political groups have demonstrated their displeasures about the ways Nigeria's state have responded to this menace.

The immediate response was the offer of amnesty to the members of the sect who voluntarily surrender and renounce membership of the group. This was perceived as deceitful by the group and no concrete gain has been recorded by this option. This option has been used in response to the activities of the militant groups in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. Military solution, less that of the Niger Delta dimension, has been tried but this option met the determined response of the sect who seems to be more evasive and well armed. Although, several of the group adherent have been killed but the responses of the group showed resilience and determination on the part of the sect.

The option of mediation has equally been tried. Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, a former president of the federal republic of Nigeria was in attendance. This meeting was brokered by Mr. Sanni Shehu. While the federal government demanded seizure of violence and surrendering of arms as prelude to peace and subsequent rehabilitation, Boko Haram demanded that: all their arrested leaders must be released, justice must be done to their slain members and leaders and the military must be withdrawn from Maiduguri and its vicinity. The mediatory option was stalled when the Boko Haram interlocutor was killed shortly after the meeting (The Nation, 2011 p-4). The sect withdrawn from the mediation and declared that it was a bait to destroy them and not to broker peace. Since then, it has been a no love lost situation. Killings, bombing and the threat to spread the crusade to other parts of the country were embarked upon by the sect. While the federal government continue to hunt for the sect, the sect continue to render the country unsafe. Today, all Nigeria's intelligence apparatuses and the security outfits have been chasing the sect. This seeming incapabilities of the Nigerian state and the lackadaisical approach to this menace appears to have grievous impact on Nigeria's external image.

4. NIGERIA'S EXTERNAL IMAGE

The Boko Haram crisis, though seen as internal problem, but it has serious impact on Nigeria's external image. Boko crisis and the propagation of its ideas have been linked with the Al-Qaeda, a militant armed network (The Times, 2011: p-2). Al-Qaeda is considered to be the greatest financier of the activities of the Boko Haram (The Guardian, 2011: p-2). Although no concrete proves have been advanced to substantiate this claim but however, the foundation, philosophy and the stock-in-trade of this sect have been pointed to as evidences. The possible relationship between the two sects renders Nigeria as a dangerous haven where terrorist activities strive.

The attacks on foreign missions in Nigeria, hijacking and bombing makes Nigeria look irresponsible and laughable among the committee of nations. It has appeared to the foreign countries that the sect is being accommodated by the state and the political class. The seeming irresponsible attitude of the ruling class and its inability to reach for the ultimate solution and credible but enduring options to resolve this crisis creates an unsafe picture of a country dreaded by the foreign investors and peace loving citizens of other countries. This really affected capital inflow into Nigeria between 2010-11 (Business Times, 2011 p-11). This is partly a picture of a failed state.

The United States of America has described Nigeria as unsafe. The attitudes of Nigeria's political class and the state must have partly been responsible for this conclusion. In response, The U.S warned its reduction of the U, S missions' staff strength in Nigeria. In fact, the congressional report released in November 2011 warned that Boko Haram was an "emerging threat" to the U. S and its interest in Nigeria. This is another image crisis.

The British state's response has been skeptical. (The Times, 2012 p-6). While no official condemnation was offered, it has not also failed to warn its citizens on Nigeria's insecurity. Nigerians on their part have demonstrated lack of confidence on the part of the ruling class. Saliu Lukman expressed that "Nigerian government must be sincere, open up and listen to Nigerians". (The Guardian, 2012: p-2). This was an advice but Chukwuemeka Ezeifa's position was rather more informing. He argued that "The stick must come out in a more determined way, the rule of the survival of Nigeria must be applied" (The Punch, 2012: p-2). The two positions agreed that the government could not rise up to the challenge of the crisis. This is a vote of no confidence on the Nigerian government. This underscores the irrelevance of the Nigerian state in this context and the incapability of the government on the other hand . it also amplifies the fears of the global community in general.

The Boko Haram sect invited Nigerian government and few statesmen to a dialogue recently and the sect also set the basis and the place of the dialogue. The message was laden with threats. "We are by this letter of invitation to our respected elders proving to government that we are not joking with the government, we are awaiting the response of those concerned" (The Punch, 2012: p-1). The situation reveals a picture of a battered, nurtured and a caged state.

This partly explains the current down-wards trend in the number of passengers to Nigeria from the western countries in the past six months (Aviation Watch, 27, 201 p-172).

The speech of the Canadian Prime Minister appears more captivating. "We cannot allow our citizens to be killed unwarrantedly. The global community must rise up to this challenge" (The Times, September 2012 p-7). The invitation to the global community to help Nigeria curtail the Boko Haram menace clearly explains global vote of no confidence on the Nigerian state ability to stop the manichean activities of this sect. This is another image crisis!

5. CONCLUSION

The Boko Haram sect and its violent and destructive activities is one of the previous experiences of Nigeria in religious fundamentalism. However, the nature and dimension and even the sophistication of this sect in terms of weaponry and the degree of the damages and terror unleashed by this sect makes it rather unique. This sect, an al-sunnah group, embraces variables terror as stock-in-trade. The group advances the frustrations inherent in the secular nature and structure of the Nigerian state as fundamental reasons for rebellion. Their activities appears emboldened, aside from the perceived external financial assistance and motivation, by the seeming acceptance of its creed by its adherents, the support from the estranged political class and elites and the manner the Nigerian state handled previous activities of the militant and religious groups in the past. The guerrilla tactics employed by the group partly makes it possible to carry out its activities almost unhindered. Not only has the activities of this group challenges the foundation of Nigeria, it has fundamentally exposes the incapability of Nigeria and its political class to respond positively to internal problems and to also create a safe place for both the foreign and national citizens. This is exactly the expression of the image crisis which this paper addresses.

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