

Domestic Terrorism and National Development in Nigeria: Unmasking the Real Terrorist

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Abstract

The paper examines domestic terrorism and national development in Nigeria, with a view to identify the real terrorists. The paper is of the opinion that the objective conditions prompted by the structural imbalance and the inequities in the Nigerian state led to domestic terrorism in Nigeria. These structural imbalance and inequities find expression in the oppressive, repressive and exploitative tendencies of the Nigerian state as demonstrated by the governing elites. The paper is also of the view that those who perpetrate the objective conditions are the real terrorist and should be treated as such. The paper relied on secondary sources of data. The paper adopted two theoretical frameworks. First is the Marxian political economy which explains the subject-matter within the purview of class antagonism and the primitive accumulation of state resources, opportunities and power by the elite class. Second, is the group theory which explains the plural nature of Nigerian society and the unhealthy competition among the component groups for state resources, opportunities and power. The major finding is that domestic terrorism is antithetical to national development. The paper recommends that the structural imbalance and inequities of the Nigerian state should be redressed and democratic values should be upheld in order to give the component groups a sense of belonging and achieve national development.

Keywords: Domestic Terrorism, National Development, Real Terrorist, Unmasking, Inequities

INTRODUCTION

It is the desire of every responsive and responsible government to create the enabling environment for development to thrive. Development which should be man-centred, places much premium on the freedom of the citizens to participate in the development process. This freedom of the citizens to participate in the development process must be insulated from fear, intimidation, oppression, subjugation, exploitation and injustice.

However, the seemingly unchallenged, virulent, prowling and predatory activities of terrorism appear to mystify this freedom necessary for development. Thus, terrorism which perpetrates terror, fear, intimidation, oppression, subjugation, exploitation and injustice is antithetical to development. It follows that the quest for national development will remain illusory in the face of terrorism.

In the recent past, Nigerian state has been entangled within the seamless web of domestic terrorism. Aside from the inter and intra ethnic conflicts, kidnapping, armed robbery, assassination, cultism, militancy and general insecurity, the devastating terrorist activities of the Boko Haram sect in the northern part of Nigeria leaves much to be desired. These domestic terrorist activities not only threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria as a plural society, but also undermines the development efforts of the Nigerian state.

The apparent socio-political and economic decadence can be better explained within the purview of the structural imbalance and inequities of the Nigerian state. The structural imbalance and inequities provide the objective conditions that promote domestic terrorism, and are reinforced by the behaviour of the actors of Nigerian state. It is against this backdrop that the paper examines the impact of domestic terrorism and national development in Nigeria, and it is the view of this paper that those who, in any capacity, create the objective conditions that engender domestic terrorism are the real terrorist.

The paper is therefore divided into six parts: first is the introductory section, the second is the conceptual clarification, followed by the explanation of the relevance of the theoretical framework. The fourth seeks to explain the role of the state vis-à-vis domestic terrorism and national development, fifth is on the impact of domestic terrorism on national development while sixth is on unmasking the real terrorist and the last is conclusion and recommendations.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Domestic Terrorism

Terrorism came to the fore as a result of the inordinate ambition of states to protect their national interest and influence foreign policies to their favour. The intimidating actions of the party in power in France during the revolution of 1789-1797 sparked off terrorism (Stern, 1999, see also Grosscup, 2006). The cold war era showcased the unbridled quest by state to hoist their ideological superiority all over the world. The ensued armament race not only unleashed terror but also diverted resources that would have been used for development into arms production.

The U.S army in a bid to terrorize Japan into submission dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and

Nagasaki (Stern, 1999). Furthermore, the United States may have contributed to terrorist violence by training and financing the Mujahedeen in Afghanistan war with Soviet Union in the 1980s. This produced thousands of highly trained Islamic militants who dispersed, taking with them an ideology of violence and revolution (Stern, 1999, see also Kuperwasser, 2009).

It follows that terrorism is akin to selfish interest, oppression, intimidation, subjugation and injustice. However, it should be noted that terrorism can also be as a result of a group's efforts to extricate itself from lethal clutches of arbitrary and dictatorial tendencies. For whichever reason, terrorism is aimed at noncombatants. Terrorists use violence for a dramatic purpose, usually to instill fear in the targeted population.

This deliberate evocation of dread is what sets terrorism apart from simple murder or assault (Stern, 1999, see also Yadav, 2009). Stern (1999), defines terrorism as an act or threat of violence against non combatants with the objective of exacting revenge, intimidating, or otherwise influencing an audience. This means that terrorism is a means to an end. Every terrorist attack is intended to influence a course of action to its favour.

In 1989, Yonah Alexander (as cited in Stern, 1999) defined "terrorism as a process of deliberate employment of psychological intimidation and physical violence by sovereign states and sub-national groups to attain strategic and political objectives in violation of law". Again, title 22 of the United States code (cited in Stern, 1999) defines terrorism as premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national or clandestine agents.

According to (Igwe 2005), "terrorism is a premeditated attack against non-belligerent targets, an activity aimed at intimidating the opponent either through covert, unconstitutional or unlawful warfare, or the use of illegal weapons or methods, sometimes in an undeclared and ill-defined war".

From the above definitions, it is obvious that terrorism employs violence and is directed against those who had no obvious connection to the terrorist's grievance. The terrorists have two targets-the instrumental target and the primary target. The instrumental target is made up of the non combatant upon which terror is unleashed while the primary target is the action point that is expected to produce the expected result. (Bartolotta, 2011).

In a way, terrorism is couched in defeatist ideology. The inability of the terrorist group to confront the primary group head on in a conventional warfare seems to be an expression of cowardice. While terrorism carried out across national boundaries can be referred to as international terrorism, domestic terrorism is violence that is perpetrated against people or property by their own citizens or permanent residents of a state in order to promote political, religious, or ideological objectives (Isyaku, 2015). Domestic terrorists have identical, or nearly so, means of militarily and ideologically carrying on their fight without necessarily having a centralized command structure regardless of whether the source of inspiration is domestic, foreign, or transnational. (Igwe, 2005).

According to the 2001 USA Patriot Act, domestic terrorism is defined as activities that (A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the U.S or of any state; (B) appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S (File:///C:/users/HP/downloadsdomesticterrorism).

By extension, domestic terrorism in Nigeria is the terror, violence, fear and intimidation unleashed on Nigerians by fellow Nigerians or residents in Nigeria. Terrorism, whether domestic or international, have their roots in the nature of the domestic policies of nations within which the gangs germinate and against which they supposedly act. (Igwe, 2005). Thus, the domestic terrorism in Nigeria is a reflection of the socio-political, religious and economic decay necessitated by the structural imbalance and inequities of the Nigerian state.

Just as we have instrumental targets, and primary targets, we also have instrumental terrorists and primary terrorists. The primary terrorists are the causative agents that provide the objective conditions that spur the instrumental terrorists to action. These primary terrorists are the real terrorists that give fillip to the instrumental terrorists. The instrumental terrorist are at the action point and may not ordinarily act without the primary terrorist.

The primary terrorists operate behind the scene and can be seen as political elites, religious leaders, ethnic militia leaders, ideological zealots, top military brass, and even greedy and self-centred community members and leaders. They are all primary terrorists because they create the objective conditions of injustice, exploitation, oppression, marginalization and subjugation. Thus, even in the communities, particularly in the Niger Delta Region, there is community terrorism-a situation whereby greedy and selfish community members in conspiracy with the state and Multinational Corporation hold their community members to ransom.

National Development

The need to improve the quality of life of people consistently forms the nucleus of development discourse. Thus,

development is the progressive and consistent transformation of the life of the people. Implicitly, development is a process that leads to an end. The transformation of the life of the people is, among others, mainly predicated on man's incremental mastery of nature (Igwe, 2005). Man applies his labour power on nature to derive value. The more he improves on his labour power, the more values he derives from nature for survival.

Rodney (1972) notes that development implies, at the individual level, increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. The gregarious nature of man, the emergence of private ownership of property and the improvement in the productive force have ostensibly led to the socialization of production and indeed development.

In the socialization of development, emphasis is placed on not just increased production, but most importantly, on how what is produced is distributed. If in a social formation there is increase in gross domestic product and what is produced (surplus values) is not fairly and equitably distributed as a result of faulty distributive mechanism, development becomes a mirage.

It should be noted that development is a process and man-centred. This means that man forms the fulcrum around which development revolves. Man, therefore should participate in the development process Ake in (Efemini 2000) notes that development is not a process that can be executed over and above the people. It is rather a process which must involve the people in order to effectively participate in the development process, the people therefore must be insulated from oppression, intimidation, exploitation, marginalization and injustice.

The Aristotelian teleology is consummated with the formation of state. The state through its government formulates and implements development policies and programmes. National development, therefore, is the effort made by the people through their government to improve their quality of life and ensure free and egalitarian society within the national boundary. According to Annang (2012), national development is seen as the sustainable improvement in both material and spiritual life of a nation, and which must be realizable in ways consistent with the protection of human dignity.

Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011 see also Jaja Nwanegbo, and Odigbo. 2013), see national development as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. Aside from the economic aspect of national development which is facilitated by production, industrialization and accumulation of savings, the political aspect places premium on the role of the state as a controlling institution (Annang, 2011).

It is obvious that the state and its institutions should have the appropriate mix of human and material resources and ensure that what is produced is fairly and equitably distributed. National development can be seen with the purview of development indices like reduction or outright eradication of poverty, improvement in literacy, health services, housing condition and political awareness of the people.

However, it should be noted that national development does not exist in a vacuum. It is hoisted on the strong pillars of rule of law and democracy in a political system. The political system should be orchestrated in such a way that it upholds the tenets of rule of law and democracy. Democracy not only at the level of institutional arrangement but more importantly, the internalization of democratic values, (Wonah, 2010). Democracy requires that the people participate in making decisions that affect their lives.

The participation of the people in the national development process underscores the people as change agents. Although these change agents can bring about positive or negative effects on national development depending on their level of civilization. It therefore, follows that what matters greatly in national development is the status and quality of life of the people. The need for improved human capacity building is being validated by the role of the people in national development.

There is therefore the need for the development of the human person. This view was corroborated by Martin Luther king Jr. when he said that:

the prosperity of a country depend not on the abundance of its revenue nor on the strength of its fortification, not on the beauty of its public building but it consist in the number of cultivated citizens, its men of character and enlightenment.

On the contrary, national development cannot take place when the people are oppressed, intimidated, exploited, marginalized and are not equipped with right skills for positive change.

The Relevance of the Theoretical Framework

Due to the multivariate nature of the subject matter and the need to thoroughly grasp its dynamics, two theoretical frameworks were adopted. First is the Marxian political economy. One of the basic assumptions of Marxian political economy is that events or phenomena cannot be understood in isolation. But they can be understood in their relationship with other events or phenomena taking into consideration the intervening variables (Ryndina, Chernikov, Khudokormov, 1980).

Marxian Political economy also assumes the class character of the society within the view point of the social relations of production. (Afanasyev, 1980). The appropriation of the surplus value by the capitalist has not

only entrenched exploitation and inequality but also prepares the ground for revolutionary pressure and conflict. Poverty and inequities promoted by the faulty distributive mechanism of state resources, opportunities and power are veritable sources of conflict.

Domestic terrorism is a conflict in another dimension in Nigeria. Second, is the group theory. One of the basic assumptions of group theory is the fact that society is made up of different groups that are competing to protect their interest within the limits of available state resources (Ray, 2003). Nigeria is a plural society. The inability of the various ethnic groups to have equal access to state resources, opportunities and power has led to conflict, particularly in the form of ethno-religious conflict and domestic terrorism.

The cases of militancy in the Niger Delta region, the Boko-Haram insurgency in the northern Nigeria and the general insecurity in the form of kidnapping, assassination, cultism and armed robbery are clear testimonies of the incompatibility of the 1914 'marriage of inconvenience'. (i.e the amalgamation of northern and southern protectorate to form Nigeria)

State and Terrorism in Nigeria

The gregarious nature of man and the need to harmonize the ever-conflicting interest of man in society has led to the emergence of state. In tandem with the Aristotelian teleology, the state is the highest form of development of society where individual potential can be achieved. In affirming the sacrosanct nature of state and its importance in ordering society, Hegel sees the state as "the march of God on earth" (Guaba, 1981:124).

It is evident that the state is a symbol of authority. The state not only commands the respect and obedience of the citizens, it also in turn performs some basic functions that can reinforce the respect and obedience of its citizens. The state is also a veritable means of regulating violence. It takes violence out of the hands of individuals and groups and places it under a single authority.

According to Max Weber's conception of state (cited in Okanya, 1999), the state holds the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence. Consequently, the state is the authority that exercises total power over the lives of citizens in terms of punishing violators of state laws and the right to organize national defence (Okanya, 1999).

However, in some cases, the state has misused the monopoly of legitimate use of violence. The arbitrary use of state power through its coercive apparatuses to oppress and subjugate the people not only questions the sanctity and the reification of the state but it is also a clear demonstration of state terrorism. It is not in doubt that state and their leaders can and do unleash terrorist violence against their own civilians. For example, Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against Iraqi kurds, Stalin did acts of random violence against soviet citizens, and the Guatemalan government also perpetrated acts of violence for nearly forty years against its own people (Stern, 1999).

States have also used terrorism as an instrument of war by deliberately attacking civilians in the hope of crushing energy morale (Stern, 1999). For instance, in late 1940 the British chiefs of staff determined that Germany's morale was more vulnerable than its industry, decided to bomb the centres of key German cities. It was estimated that these attacks killed 300, 000 Germans, most of them civilians, and seriously injured 780,000 (Stern, 1999). In Nigeria, the state has also indulged in terrorist acts.

The attacks of Odi community in Bayelsa State, Umuechem community in Rivers State, the Hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa. The list appears to be endless. The oppressive, repressive and exploitative tendencies of Nigerian state find expression in state terrorism, thereby reinforcing the already charged objective conditions that can lead to domestic terrorism. The objective conditions include poverty, unemployment, exploitation, injustice, inequities, illiteracy, religious bigotry, oppression, corruption and marginalization. As a corollary to these objective conditions is the alarming rate of general insecurity which manifest in domestic terrorism like the militancy in the Niger Delta Region and the Boko-Haram insurgency in the northern part of Nigeria.

Domestic Terrorism and National Development in Nigeria

It is a fact that the ultimate aim of any country or nation is to promote and sustain improved quality of life for the citizens. The achievement of this aim is the reaffirmation and strengthening of the social contract in which the state mobilizes resources for self and collective actualization of the people. The improved quality of life of the people in a nation finds expression in national development.

It should be reiterated that the people should participate in the national development process. The people can participate in the national development process if they are free from oppression, intimidation, fear and exploitation. It is axiomatic that no development can take place in an atmosphere of violence and general insecurity.

Domestic terrorism perpetrates violence, thereby intimidating and instilling fear into the people. The implication for national development is that lives and property are destroyed. The greatest asset of any nation is the people. Every development process starts and ends with people. If the people are wantonly killed in the name of domestic terrorism, then, there can be no development. No people, no development. In Nigeria, since July, 2009, when the Boko-Haram conflict escalated, at least 11,100 people have died (Allen, 2014). In 2012,

1,900 people died and between July, 2013 and June 2014, 7,000 people died in incidents related to the insurgency (Allen, 2014). The abduction of nearly 300 school girls from Chibok, Borno State in April, 2014 by the Boko-Haram insurgents is unfortunate. Nearly two years down the drain, nobody, not even the federal government of Nigeria knows the where about of the school girls. What a colossal loss?

In the Niger Delta region, the militants are involved in hostage taking, kidnapping for ransom, pipeline vandalization, oil theft, arson and ambush. It is recorded that more than five hundred oil workers, politicians, actors, children, and other important personalities have either been kidnapped or taken hostage. For instance, in January 2007, four foreign oil workers were abducted at a Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) location in Bayelsa State.

Again, in the early hours of Saturday, February 18, 2007, Ijaw youth launched series of coordinated and devastating commando-like attacks on specifically selected and strategically located oil facilities and installations in western Nigeria Delta (online research journals. Com/40pagg/arf/42.doc). The phobia of being attacked especially in cities like Kano, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Jalingo and Yola was responsible for the exodus of people from the north to other parts of the country. The effect is that economic activities are drastically reduced in such violent prone areas and such areas cannot contribute meaningfully to national development.

Another aspect is that the federal government of Nigeria, in a bid to curtail insurgency, militancy and general insecurity, allocated greater chunk of its budget estimates to defence. In 2014 budget, for instance, out of a total budget of N4,962 trillion, the allocation to the defence sector took the highest allocation because of the growing insecurity situation in the country. (Udo, 2014). The huge allocation to defence is some what diversionary as more resources or money that would have been invested in productive ventures that have multiplier effect are wantonly depleted. This, obviously, have debilitating and asphyxiating effects on the economy and by extension, national development. Perhaps more worrisome is the fact that money that was meant to procure arms to fight insurgency was shared among some governing elites and 'loyal politicians'. The Dasuki gate and arms procurement scandal is a pointer. It should be recalled that during the cold war era, resources that would have been channeled into development were diverted into arms building in order to win the then ideological war.

Unmasking the Real Terrorists

From the foregoing, it is evident that terrorism, whether international or domestic is distinct from other forms of violence because it unleashes terror, intimidates and instills fear on their non-combatant victims. The essence is to compel their target victims like the government to tow a particular line of action in their favour. Terrorism is propelled by the objective conditions subsisting in a given environment, thus, ecological factors can trigger off terrorist activities.

It is also apparent that there are two categories of terrorists-the instrumental terrorist, are those who carryout terrorist attack while the primary terrorists are those who, in whatever capacity, create the objective conditions that lead to terrorism. For instance, it is observed that Boko-Haram grew its rank taking advantage of widespread anger in the north over the country's wealth gap. In the north, 72 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, compared to only 27 percent in the south (Bartoloha, 2011).

The refusal of the federal government to allow the Niger Delta people control their resources and the degradation of their environment coupled with high rate of poverty led to militancy in the region. Thus, without the objective conditions, there may not be terrorism. The real terrorists are those who perpetrate the objective conditions that create the enabling environment for terrorism to thrive. The real terrorists include but not limited to governing elites, ethnic chauvinists, religious fanatics, community leaders, the state, Multinational Corporations. For instance, those who diverted and shared the money meant for the procurement of arms to fight the insurgents are the real terrorists and should be treated as such. It is obvious that most of the elites appropriate the resources meant for the development of their areas and leave a greater percentage of the people wallowing in seemingly abysmal poverty and underdevelopment.

Concluding Remark

It is obvious from the foregoing that terrorism unleashes terror on the victim and intimidate them, thereby, instilling fear into them with the sole purpose of changing or influencing a course of action to their favour. It is also a fact that terrorism, particularly domestic terrorism is a precipitate of the objective conditions promoted by the ecological factors of a particular environment. Due to the oppressive, repressive and exploitative nature of the Nigerian state, the objective conditions necessary for domestic terrorism have been created. The state through the governing elites and those who in one way or the other create the objective conditions for domestic terrorism to thrive are the real terrorists and should be treated as such. The real terrorists can also be found in communities where, they, in conspiracy with the state and Multinational Corporations are holding the communities hostage. This can be referred to as community terrorism.

The implication of domestic terrorism is that national development in an atmosphere characterized by

violence and general insecurity can not be achieved. In order to curb or eradicate domestic terrorism and achieve national development the inequities of the Nigerian state should be redressed and democratic values should be entrenched in order to give the different component groups a sense of belonging.

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