

Bokoharam Insurgency: A Challenge on Nigerian National Security

SUNDAY OWEN ABANG, PhD

Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract

The security challenges confronting the Nigerian state in this 21st century have defied any definite explanation both from the government and private angles. Ironically these challenges are internally generated. Expressions like militant, insurgent and terrorist became a manageable concept in line with the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria where attacks on people, property and government infrastructures are severe. The challenge is that some of these groups' aggressions have affected the peaceful co-existence of the society and the core value of the Nigerian state. This paper explores documentary analysis on the severity of attacks on the Nigerian state from the fourth republic with a key interest on the possibility of these attacks to lead to the balkanization of the country into different nations as suggested by viewers. Here we argue that it is mere politics that we need to re-examine the future of Nigerian state from the wrong perspective of our colonial master that panel-beat different nations into one country and accept to walk the country into recognizing the concept of national identity. Nigeria should move to achieve national consciousness and erase indigene claims from naked politicking practiced in the country that result to instability.

Introduction

The attacks by different insurgents and terrorist groups against the state has questioned the possible survival of the Nigerian federation, whether it would remain an entity or be broken up into respective states, like the squashed effort of the Biafra uprising in the 1967 to 1970. In the 1960's, the mindset of the Igbo ethnic group that opted for secession through their leader Lt Col O. Ojukwu was understood from the massive killing of the Ibos in the Northern part of Nigeria, and the exodus of the Ibos back home. Presently, each ethnic group still claims ownership in most issues of national concern- this is the bottom of Nigerian problem where there is no cooperation to move the country forward to acquire national consciousness to achieve national identity. The question is why attacks on the Nigerian state in the midst of programme to ameliorate nation's grievances? At this 21st century many political and social commentators did not hide their feelings by attributing the insecurity challenges to politics or economic but some are of the view that religious perspective should be added. Here we need to know if the Bokoharam mission is either political or religious. From the descriptive analysis, Bokoharam mission started in the fast North-East part of Nigeria and spread quickly to North Central, North-West and by prediction moving to other parts of the country. The locals in the Northern part of Nigeria wonder why Nigerian state and her security agencies cannot bring to an end this insurgency or terror committed against the innocent people.

Security of Nigeria people is paramount- the responsibility that government must not fail to ensure. Mangold (1990: 2) views security as a pre-condition of ordered human existence by citing Thomas Hobbes idea that states were found to defend the people "from the invasion of foreigners and the injuries of one to another, and thereby to secure them ..." Some commentators did not mince words when they raised the opinion that Security is a condition where our most cherished values and beliefs, welfare and well-being as a nation and people are lastingly protected. Nwozor (2013) views Nigeria's security management from the dimension of pro-realist orientation that deploys forces to combat attacks for the survival of the state. Nwozor pressed on that internationally and domestically the issue of security is on the front burner irrespective of the regime. If it is so, has Nigerian state achieve the apparatus of National security as observed in the advanced countries? The answer is no. Because of the centralization of Nigerian security apparatus which brought the rigidity observed in handling security matters- state governors who are suppose to be the chief security officers in their various states are more often helpless in security matters.

This paper is divided into five sections; introduction captured the views on insurgency and its impact on security. Section two examines various concepts as argued by scholars. Section three treats the historical antecedent and phases of attacks on the Nigerian state. Section four navigates the national security challenges in Nigeria within the limit of the fourth republic- political Bokoharam. Section five treats the domestic and foreign response to Bokoharam attacks in Nigeria. The last is conclusion.

Conceptual Clarification

One need to wonder the wanton killing of human beings by the enemies of the state and interpretations on how to categories the action of people who destroy properties and killing people as militant, insurgent and terrorist,

or freedom fighters. No matter the interpretations the word militant came from a Latin word “militare” which mean someone calls to serve as a soldier. In the past the militants were small group, but now they have constituted themselves to a large group that applies military tactics to achieve their goal in order to pursue their mission. Militants are associated with terrorism by their tactics. A person with charisma move the group and demand respect from his members. While insurgent is a group that is interested in controlling a particular area. Insurgent activities include guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and political mobilization to weaken government control of the state and also challenge their legitimacy.

Terror is a symbolic act designed to influence political behavior by the use of threat or violence (Thornton 1964:73). To Leiden and Schmitt (1968:30) terror can be conceptualized more broadly than this: it is the emanation of an atmosphere of fear and despair, generally accompanied by seemingly senseless and wanton threats to life and property, carried out in norm less ways to exercise power. Crozier (1960:159) says that “terrorism is a weapon of the weak”. It is the natural weapon of insurgents. Terror always has a variety of targets. Bokoharam tactics show clearly that there mission, statement, methods, approaches, styles and strategies patterns are in line with their ideology.

David Fromkin (1975) sees terrorism as violence used in order to create fear, in order that the fear, in turn, will lead somebody else-not the terrorist-to embark on different programme of action that will accomplish whatever it is that the terrorist really desires (cited in James F.Hoge Jr. & Gideon Rose 2005:72). Terrorism undermines safety and security, and the call for remedy is to buildup state security: with increase in military capability and intelligent to fight against the militants, insurgents and terrorists. Pogason (2013:17) explains that “terrorism now has a new face: a face characterized by mass suicide attacks and the use of lethal gas and weapon of mass destruction” (Guardian, July 4, 2013: 71). ‘Freedom fighter’ is a relative term where some rebels fight against an established government and accused them of being oppressive and illegitimate. Those who style themselves “freedom fighters” are referred to by their foes as ‘terrorists’. A terrorist, in this sense, is a person who is involved in an act of terrorism. The focus on these four concepts is to survey whether there are differences- actions taken by these four groupings, militant, insurgent, terrorist and freedom fighters affect state security and pose a bigger challenge to government. And the only alternative is for government to improve her security forces.

There is plethora of definition in the word security. Buzan (1983) tends to explain security from the stand point of state primary responsibility within the context of human security. For him, human security includes political, economic, social and environmental threats. Also, Nwolise (2009) made his contribution that security refers to the “condition of feeling happy and safe from danger and harm” (in Yagboyaju cited in Guardian July 2, 2014). Yagboyaju argued that a lot of emphasis is placed on the physical aspect of security. He explains that the totality of the thinking of security or feeling for safety by the citizens of a country will form the basis of the national security in that country. Booth (1994) sum up that human security is ultimately more important than that of state security. (Cited in Nwargbo & Odigbo 2013:2). Still on security, Imobighe is of the view that:

“Security has to do with freedom from danger or with threat to a nation ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people. This internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and cooperate existence of the nation and itself ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objections, as well as meet the legitimate aspiration of the people, internal security...” (Cited in Ogaba 2010: 35)

Babangida (1982:13) talking about Nigeria security says that threat to security is anything that can undermine the security of our nation and constitute danger to its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and its social, economic and political system. Threat analysis can only be rational within a clearly defined framework of the objective which nation wishes to pursue. Since the national objective of a state have dimensions that relate both to the internal environment of the state and the creation of a suitable international environment Vogt (1986:462-463) stresses that National security was conceived within the state- centric perspective. Gwarzo (1998) defined national security as freedom from higher or form of threat to a nations’ ability to protect and defend itself, promote its cherished values and interest and enhance the well-being of its people meaning that national security is not restricted only to weapons and military preparations but encompassing the well-being of the people as well as any threats to any of these constitute a threat to national security (Adu Jacob, 2009).

Harold Brown (1977) argued that National Security is the ability to preserve the nation’s physical and territory integrity to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to preserve its nature, institutions and governance from disruption from outside and to control its borders. National security has for centuries been tied to the concept of defense and security forces.

Vogt M.A (1982:1-2) maintained that national security objectives and policies are relevant only when examined within the context of threats. The military threat is easiest to identify and counter since such threats are direct, overt and place all parties on familiar grounds. Vogt argued further that a proper assessment of threat

entails: (I) an evaluation of the capabilities of the enemy (ii) the intention of the enemy and (iii) the vulnerability of the enemy. This assessment is always based on one's own interpretation of the impact which a set of factor will have on national security.

From the contributions of scholars cited above it is clear that the threat confronting the Nigerian state is not from conventional enemies with huge military capabilities but a faceless group of insurgents that call themselves Boko Haram. The Boko Haram threats and attacks is a huge concern to all the security agencies in Nigeria from the several and series of bombings and killings within the metropolis and some rural communities and national boundary- a threat to the overall national security of the country. Boko Haram attacks could be viewed from the economic, social and political factors impinging on a society as a unit. Bethwell Ogot (1972:202) raised a very germane question, "what then should the government do? (Emphasis added in the case of Boko Haram) They have tried perfection, when that failed they had tried bluff and blaster and when that failed too they resorted to precautionary military measure". This quote found relevance in the case of the Boko Haram. The average Nigerian citizen hasn't technical knowledge on the next instrument of weapon of mass destruction that the Boko Haram would apply because Nigerians are not allowed to walk around with guns as self defense unless when licensed by the security agencies of the state or the notion of what an explosion really is like first hand. The starting point for understanding explosive power is to understand how it is measured. In Nigeria the dailies have reported dynamite as bomb detonated. The chain reaction occurs so rapidly that observers cannot tell at what end of the line of planted sticks the detonation took place. The explosion from a few pounds of dynamite will blacken the sky with mud, rocks and other debris, sending everyone around scurrying for a cover (Forest L. Grieves 1977:111-112). This was observed in the Nigerian fifty years October 1, 2010 celebration bombing in Abuja which the acclaim perpetrator a Nigeria still facing trial in South Africa. The question is how do these dynamites found its way to these potential state enemies? Why is it everywhere that they can use it in the North-East, North-West, North Central, South-West, South-East, and South-South in the midst of police checkpoints all over the country? This paper views terrorism as the employment of weapon of psychological warfare for political ends.

Historical antecedent and phases of attacks on the Nigerian State

Domestic insurgencies perpetrated by Boko Haram in the Northern part of Nigeria have led to massive destruction, killing of innocent people in order to draw national and international attention as many observers view their actions from religion. Danjibo(2009) traced the history of "Islamic fundamentalism and Sectarian Violence" to Muhammed Marwa an Islamic scholar who lived in Kano, 1945. He stressed on that Marwa attracted followers by introducing the Almajiri system in order to help but later became an instrument of attack affecting the peaceful co-existence of people in the Kano. To him, Marwa was chased away by the Emir of Kano- this was the genesis of religious fanaticism that has caused havoc in the Northern part of Nigerian. That must have given rise to other religious crises in the northern part of Nigeria like the Maitatsine uprising, a radical group during the military regime that threatened the security of the Nigerian state. Their first attack was in Kano in December 1980 when Maitatsine group caused serious mayhem. Also, the areas that such attacks was heavy was Bullumkutu area in Borno, in 1982 Jimeta in Yola in Gongola state- now Adamawa state in 1984 led by Musa Makaniki, Gombe in April 1985, Kaduna in 20 October 1982, Zaria, Ilorin and Makurdi (cited in Danjibo 2009, Abimbola& Adesote 2012). There is hardly any part in the North without uprising- Tiv-Jukun case, Birom case, the southern Kaduna and other Muslim uprisings in the North from 1983- 2014. In the past, attacks in the northern part were linked to fanaticism but recently there is political coloration to all attacks now with allegation of recruitment centre on Almajiri or external people. Almajiri in the north suffer from abject poverty.

The Boko Haram sect attacks on the Nigerian people is very severe in three states(Adamawa, Yobe and Borno states) with minor attacks in other parts of the northern states like Gombe, Niger, Kogi and Abuja. Boko Haram tactics have defied government securities and understanding because of their mixture with the local people. Who is a Boko Haram member? The Boko Haram started as a political thug group before they metamorphosed to an insurgent group or "terrorist" group as referred by United State of America- a force that forbid western education. The moves to attack schools mean that they are against western education and to stop women education by kidnapping 219 girls from Chibok in Borno state. The kidnapped of secondary girls had drawn international sympathy on domestic terrorism in Nigeria. The delay in securing Chibok girls release, Balarabe Musa accused Federal government for politicizing the Chibok girls kidnap (Vanguard September 9, 2014) in the midst of United States, United Kingdom, France, and China military assistances to find the girls, but they have not yet be rescued. The Boko Haram in their continuous attacks, attack Nigeria military and para-military institutions both army barracks and police barracks searching for weapons or bullets, and at the same time trying to create fear on Nigeria military by testing their ability to stand a long fight. Presently, the Boko Haram group have seized five local towns - Bara in Yobe state, Banki and Bama in Borno state, Madagali and Gulak in Adamawa state in five days from September 2 to September 7, 2014 "killing hundred and leaving thousands of residents fleeing for safety as it continue its quest to establish a caliphate in the country" (Punch,

September 7, 2014). Bokoharam seized Mubi the second largest town in Adamawa state in October and renamed the town Madinatul- city of Islam and in control of Michika a trading centre in Adamawa not far from the Cameroon border (BBC News 5 November, 2014). They have perfected their strategy to attack churches and mosques to cancel the reading of their attacks from religion bias and change tactics from the hit and run to seizing towns. Looking at the recent seizure of towns in the northern part of Nigeria by Bokoharam, the seized communities fall under states that Federal government placed emergency order without removing the governor of the states. Nigeria military should adopt night fighting approach to counter Bokoharam.

The Bokoharam attacks raises question on the problem of Security in Nigeria and the impact on West African countries. Northedge F.S. (1976) maintains that security of the people is regarded as the supreme law, while defense and survival is the very core of external policy, which makes the search for security to become one of the key determinants of relationship among state. The threats of the Bokoharam became massive in the north eastern part of Nigeria as they strike and run toward the border area- an accusation that led to pointing finger on Nigerian neighbors within West Africa. The idea of Thomas Hobbe (1668) became relevant in this context that states - suffer from a particular acute sense of insecurity and adopt “the posture of Gladiators, having their weapons pointing and their eyes fixed on one another. The more closely one looks at it, the more questions one raises when it lead to the definition of National Security which in some cases can be viewed from National interest (Mangold 1990: 3). Facts remain that security, after all, is a condition rather than an end.

Selected Attacks on Nigerian State from 1980 - 2014

S/N	Name of the group	Place Attack	Year of Attack	Government Actions
1.	Bokoharam	15 dies, 100 injured in Kaduna	October 29 2012	State government of Katsina reaction
2.	Bokoharam	106 residents of Izge town in Gwoza local government in Borno state	February 24 2014	State government of Borno reaction
3.	Bokoharam	36 killed at Mafa town in Borno	March 4, 2014	State government of Borno reaction
4.	Bokoharam	4 killed in Potiskum, Yobe state	October 25 2012	State government of Yobe reaction
5	Bokoharam	53 killed in Chakawa in Adamawa	January 29 2014	State government of Adamawa reaction
6	Bokoharam	11 killed and 30 injured in Jaji, Kaduna	November 26, 2012	State government of Kaduna reaction
7	Bokoharam	5 killed in Jara local government council in Borno	November 22, 2012	State government of Borno reaction
8.	Bokoharam	100 killed in four katsina	March 14, 2014	State government of Katsina reaction
9	Bokoharam	Attack on Maduguri	April 14, 2013	State government of Borno reaction
10	Bokoharam	The terrorist were stopped by the Chadian soldier as they crossed the Chadian border, killed most of the terrorist	Aug 10, 2014 Doron Baga in Kukawa area near the border	Federal government troops reacted with the assistance of Chadian security agencies
11	Bokoharam	Attack on Maduguri	March 2009	State government of Borno reaction
12	Bokoharam	Attack on police station in Bauchi	April 1, 2011	Federal government troops reacted
13	Bokoharam	Attack on southerners in Nigeria resident in Mubi	January 5, 2012	Federal government troops reacted
14	Bokoharam	Attack on Army Barrack in Kaduna	February 8, 2012	Federal government troops reacted
15	Bokoharam	Attack in Jalingo	April 30, 2012	Federal government troops reacted
16	Bokoharam	Attack in Maiduguri	March, 2013	Federal government troops reacted
17	Bokoharam	Attack in Maiduguri	November, 2013	Federal government troops reacted
18	Bokoharam	Abduction of 100 boys	Aug 10, Doron Baga in Kukawa area near the border	Federal government troops reacted
19	Bokoharam	Maduguri	Sept 10,	Federal government troops reacted
20	Bokoharam	Attacks of Mubi	Oct 31, 2014, killing people	Federal government troops reacted
21	Bokoharam	Attacks on Postikum	Nov 10, 2014, killing 45 students and injuring 75 in a Secondary school.	Federal government troops reacted
22	Bokoharam	Attacks on Kontogora	Nov 11 killing 3 students in a college	Federal government troops reacted

Source: Punch, Guardian, Vanguard, The Nation Newspapers in Nigeria.

Political Bokoharam: A Threat to Nigerian State

Aziza once attributed Bokoharam insurgency to the zoning controversy particularly as regards to the post of the president. The Almajiris were readily available for use as insurgents, they have sent them for training in Somalia, Mauritania, and some went to Afghanistan (Guardian July 11, 2014:5). Some writers have maintained that this fact need to be investigated to find out the true position of it especially from hard words used by politicians that the state would be made ungovernable if their needs and desires are not given to them. Wole Soyinka (2014)

comment on insecurity is that “those who started the Boko Haram are a small group, what he called the” hardcore Northerners”. And that some of them are not politician, non civil servant. But they are the ones whose entire philosophy of co-existence is built around the mentality of “domination”. The Boko Haram are “eating up, not just government, but the state”. Nigeria is negatively viewed by international community as a land flowing with violence and blood. One wonders how many investments Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states in North-East part of Nigeria have attracted since the beginning of the insurgent campaign in the area. It has led to withdrawal of businesses, and this only yields further poverty in the area such poverty makes the land more fertile for recruitment into terrorist activities which will further worsen the security situation. The most fundamental function of every government is security of life.

Domestic and Foreign Actions against the Boko Haram Sect in Nigeria

The government had deployed military and non-military approaches to counter the insurgency after declaration of state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa State. (Guardian June 20, 2013). The attendant deployment of the military to these state to carry out emergency order, empowering them to take all necessary action within the ambit of their rules of engagement, to put an end to the impunity adopted by insurgents on innocent civilians. At this period, President Goodluck Jonathan officially designated Boko Haram together with Jama'atu Ansarul as terrorist groups. The order was issued pursuant to section 2 of the terrorism prevention Act, 2011, as amended, and gazette as the Terrorism (prevention) (proscription order) notice 2013. The declaration officially brings the activities of both groups within the purview of the Terrorism Prevention Act and any persons associated with the two groups can now be legally prosecuted and sentenced as specified by the Act.

Noteworthy penalties prescribed by the act, as detailed in order include a term of imprisonment of not less than 20 years for any person who knowingly in any manner, directly or indirectly solicits or renders support for the commission of an act of terrorism or to a terrorist group as spelt out in Section 5(1) of the Act. The Act defines support for an act of terrorism or to a terrorist group several means, dissemination of terrorist information and provision of material assistance to terrorists among others (cited in Guardian June 20, 2013:14). First, the proscription constitutes a direct negation of the Amnesty committee negotiating the possibility of amnesty for the Boko Haram group. Indeed, many Boko Haram suspects have been officially released for rehabilitation, supposedly upon the recommendation of the committee now negotiating with them (The Guardian June 20, 2013) proscription came when the country is politically heated against the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan by his political enemies. Initially the President had severally rejected suggestions of dialogue and amnesty for the Boko Haram sect with the argument that Boko Haram is faceless. Some group have argued that granting Boko Haram amnesty is an invitation to more terrorism and that the group don't have the monopoly of violence

In the midst of dialogue to resolve the insecurity problem in Nigeria melted by Boko Haram - Dassi Ahmed a medical doctor and a Muslim cleric cried out on the insincerity on the part of federal government for leaking detail of their meeting to the media. In the area of insincerity and newspaper publication of federal government meeting Abu Mohammed in Saudi Arabia accused the federal government that “we have heard about those who go about using our names in order to collect huge sums of money from government we are warning you” (Abu Qaga 2013). If the allegation have a point, it is wrong for such thing to happen since the Boko Haram sect are faceless individuals and how do you negotiate with the right group in the midst of fragmentation of the group.

As a panacea to peace, the Northern Governors forum on the 22 August 2012 suggested that amnesty should be granted to the Boko Haram sect and immediate release of all detainees against whom there is no established case of criminal involvement. Jonathan set up the amnesty committee on April, 2013 to look at the feasibility or otherwise of the programme, collate clamors arising from different interest groups who want the apex government clemency to members of the religion sects and recommend modalities for granting them pardon. The committee was made to work hand in hand with National Security Adviser to the President Col Dasuki. Amnesty to faceless individuals is unachievable because the cause of their action cannot be resolve by mere forgiveness but the willingness of the state to correct the imbalance between have and have-not. The fact remains that we all need to be vigilant and ready to report the movement of people without definite purpose-security is everybody business. This means that the state need to correct the huge unemployment rate that serve as an avenue for recruitment by rebranding the youth service scheme for continuing welfare scheme for graduates and create an enabling environment to resuscitate dead manufacturing companies to serve as employment avenue for secondary school leavers. As we reduce the unemployment figures we reduce insecurity in the country.

The United States of America also weighed on the side of pardon for Boko Haram “we think it is positive development, we will work with Nigerian government as it develops its own policy approach to counter violent extremism” (Newswatch April 22, 2013:14-16). To counter Boko Haram insurgency, notably the United States offer \$7million (about 1.1billion) for the capture of the leader of the sect, Abubakar Shekau, and the

official proscription of the Sect by the Nigeria government, declaring them as terrorist group. The proscription came barely a day after the US offer money for the arrest of the leader of the group. The severity of Boko Haram attacks had caused the Nigerian government to take a step to collaborate with her immediate neighbors as a necessary response to trans-border crimes and illegal movement of weapons. She entered into Trans-border Security Cooperation agreement with Cameroon and Joint Security Patrol agreement with Benin Republic as well as the Multi-National Joint task Force Agreement comprising Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad. This is also without prejudice to the existing collaborative platform with Niger, the country with the longest border stretch with Nigeria. Intelligent reports have continued to point the ways of Nigeria's neighbor as places of harboring cells linked with distant terrorist organizations (Guardian, January 6, 2013: 3). Akinterinwa (2014: 51) maintain that accusation that Boko Haram has operation bases in neighboring countries but they do not attack those countries. He explains further that if those countries are condoning their military and operational bases from which attack Nigerian people that raises question about the international responsibility of the neighboring countries (Guardian, March 1, 2014:51).

At 45th ordinary session of Heads of State and Government of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Accra, there was call for direct regional confrontation of the menace of insurgency in Nigeria. ECOWAS members assured the Nigerian Government of its "continued support and solidarity in combating the menace of terrorism. The wakeup call is that Nigeria should not be abandoned in the fight against terrorism as Nigeria since independence have spent over \$13billion on peace keeping effort in West Africa (Ogbogbo Obayuwana 2014). The Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria would by extension give birth to attacks in other West Africa countries and the entire region.

Government efforts to curb insurgency, SURE-P (subsidy re-investment& empowerment programme) policies should be monitored and well implemented, and Almajiri school programme should vigorously be pursued and enforced. Welfare package through NAPEP should touch the northern youths massively. The state needs to meet up with these suggestions for the survival and security of human beings.

Conclusion

We have explored the chances of Nigeria's survival as a nation in view of the numerous security challenges that confront the state presently. We have also pondered on possible redemptive measures and the most likely of various efforts to adopt to contain the insurgents. Nigeria was created as a territorial unit under the colonial powers. In the words of Myron Weiner (1966:643), "national integration is the process of bringing together culturally and socially discrete groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of a national identity" that should have begun in the colonial period and intensified after independence, has not been very successful in the case of Nigeria and this is at the root of the insurgency, militant and terrorism that the country is facing. It has also been argued that injustice resulted to the birth of insurgents and their nefarious activities. Efforts should be made and intensified to nip the activities of the insurgents in the bud to ensure peace, national security and development.

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