Eliminating Terrorism and Sustaining Democracy in Nigeria

Akinlade, M. T.
Ibitoye, M.O.
Political Science Department
College of Education, Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria
Email: orbitalcruzoe@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the concept and nature of democracy and terrorism. It also looks into the psychology, tactics and logic of terrorism. The characteristics of terrorist groups are examined with particular attention to their domestic variants like the Nigeria Boko Haram sect and their activities in recent times. This study delves into the relationship between religion and terrorism. The study examines the problems democracies face in countering terrorism which are complicated by the need to preserve individual freedoms while, also protecting national security. John Locks theory of consent is employed to illuminate the study. This study conclusively remarks that total restructuring of the federation is now more urgent than ever. Hence, the restructuring should entail fiscal federalism and greater regional autonomy in terms of Law and State Policing but the armed forces should continue to be a federal concern.
Keywords: *Terrorism, Democracy, Almajiri revolutionaries, fundamentalism, Boko Haram*

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism, which can be understood as an effort to oppose the status quo by inducing fear in the minds of the people through the widespread and published use of violence has become an everyday occurrence in our contemporary world. Terrorists seek to create a climate of chaos, anarchy and confusion in the belief that political instability will hasten the downfall of a government. Against this backdrop, they form groups that are close-knit, homogeneous, small and short-lived. It is obvious today that terrorists can pose serious challenges to nations facing political and economic problems.

It is essential to note that terrorists violate the laws but let it also be asked, are they criminals in the real sense of it? Are they guerillas or ordinary revolutionaries? An analytical trip to understudy the guerrillas or ordinary revolutionaries shows that all terrorists are revolutionaries but not all revolutionaries are terrorists, since terrorism is a kind of revolution that does seek to obtain political power but with primary aim to protect and combat the perceived injustices of the existing political order through random acts of violence. If the grievances for which terrorists seek redress were suddenly addressed or defused, would terrorism disappear? Totalitarian states are typically perpetrators, rather than targets of terrorism. Even strong authoritarian governments are rarely faced with terrorist threats. Societies most prone to terrorism are often those with weak states that have unstable political structures, government, security, party system and fragmented political culture, weak or permissive and quarrelsome democracies. But it is also good to note that

democratic societies are by nature vulnerable to terrorism and ill-suited to carry out sweeping and sustained counter terrorism programs. Democracy and terrorism are implacable enemies. Why? Because democracy depends for its existence on compromise, It also thrives on due process, adherence to the rule of law, constitutionality, tolerance and mutual trust. Where as terrorists are zealots who seek to radicalize society and destabilize the political system. The problem faced by the contemporary democratic states in countering terrorism are complicated by the need to preserve individual freedom, the rule of law, peace and order while also protecting national security. To a greater extent, this has made leaders in democratic societies more incapacitated and handicapped, trying to adhere to the dictates of the constitution and respect for the rule of law on one hand and trying to placate the malignant on the other hand may not eventually yield the expected result.

The American approach to counter terrorism established during the Bush (43) Administration focused on fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also on capacity building on the African continent primarily in nations such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and the Sudan. Al Qaeda operatives have long been suspected of gathering in the region. Around Muslim populations and proximity to the Middle East. Indeed, Osama bin Laden spent years living in Sudan before becoming an international fugitive. Factors like porous borders, relative poverty and weak state control made the Horn of Africa particularly important front in the global war on terrorism. The controversial introduction of AFRICOM in 2008 (which aim is to establish American military bases across the continent) was one manifestation of this attempt to handle an increasingly global threat.

From the 1997 bombing of American embassy in Nairobi to the spate of Boko Haram sect, multiple bombing, savage killings and wanton destruction of property in Damaturu, Yobe State, Niger, Abuja and Kano in January 2012, the recent attacks in some states in Northern Nigeria left a shell shocked nation and many viewers and commentators scratching their heads and searching for answer to the Boko haram menace. Despite its prevalence, terrorism has manifested in different ways in Africa. In some African and Arab countries, terrorism and its impact and reaches are limited and contained with national terrorists. In some others, terrorism is boundary blind. Transnationality and domesticity of terrorism have added important dimensions to terrorist groups, terrorist acts and the politics involved in combating it.

DEMOCRACY AND TERRORISM

The duo are clarified below. Democracy has a zillion of scholarly definition with each looked at from different and unique points of view. For instance, Thomas R Dye & Harmon Zeigler (2003) posit that, democratic thinking reflects the following ideas:

(i)   Popular participation in the decisions that shape the lives of individuals in the society.
(ii)   Government by majority rule, with recognition of the rights of minorities. These rights include the freedom of speech, press, assembly and petition and the freedom to dissent, to form opposition parties and to run for public office.
(iii)   A commitment to individual dignity and the preservation of the liberal values of life, liberty and property.

(iv)   A commitment to equal opportunity for all individuals to develop their capacities.

The view of Dahi (1956) is not strongly detached from the above as he observes that "democracy is a society in which ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders. The definition of Lincoln cited by Odukoya (1999) that it is "government of the people, by the people and for the people" is also on the promise of the supremacy of people's mandate, mean in the Mongethau cited by Ajayi (2004) sees it almost from the same point of view as those cited above when he says it is "a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or indirectly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves" taking a cue from this and for the purpose of this research, I view democracy as a form of government in which the people freely choose their representatives periodically in a free/fair election conducted in an atmosphere of peace and in which programmes, actions and policies of the government so formed are people-centred.

Terrorism, on the other hand, is the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion in the international community. However, terrorism has no universally agreed, legally binding criminal law definition. Common definitions of terrorism refer only to those violent acts which are intended to create fear, which are perpetrated for a religious, political or ideological goal, and deliberately target or disregard the safety of non combatants/ civilians. According to *Webster New World Dictionary,* terrorism is the use of force or threats to demoralize, intimidate and subjugate, especially, such use as the political weapon or policy. Terrorism has been defined in many ways, but most definitions take into account several factors including violence, the desire for publicity, political motive, and intimidation aimed at civilian populations. In the same vein, Tenkin (1985) defines terrorism as the use or threatened use of force designed to bring about political changes. Also, Laqueur (1979) sees terrorism as the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted.

The theoretical basis of this paper is located in the Lockean theory of consent which has as its substance the "representative democracy/government". The theory of content as Locke explaines is that societies are set up on the basis of social contract matters which government is created not by contract but by a trust involving on one hand the people who are both trustors and the beneficiaries and the legislature which serves as the trustees. Under this arrangement, the legislature is only relatively supreme among the organs of government and not the people. However, the people can remove the legislature when they find that it's contrary to the trust reposed in it. The theory of consent of John Locke has a main theme that government is a sort of agreement between the people and those that govern them. Therefore, the existence of government, its acceptability, legality and legitimacy hinges on the level of trust which people have in it. In this sense, terrorism perhaps is borne out of the lack of trust on the part of those in government. Terrorism is further exacerbated as a result of lack of judicious use of state resources, 'prebendalism' and among/other things engenders violence, unrest and anti-state terrorism.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF TERRORISM

History and records have revealed that there is a link between terrorism and religious fundamentalism. However, many terrorists are not religious bigots while few religious fundamentalists engage in acts of terrorism. Notwithstanding, terrorism appears to have its roots in regligion. Its orgin can be traced to three obscure religious sects, the names, of which have entered into education vernacular. The thugs, a Hindu sect that was finally destroyed in the nineteenth century after having operated for many centuries in India, were highway ambushers who secretly killed thousands of other Hindus, apparently out of a perverse sense of religious duty. The second which is traceable to an extremist Jewish group known as the Zealots. They killed outsiders and helped provoke rebellion against Pagon Rome in 66-73. And beginning in the eleventh century, a Shiite Muslim sect, the assassins, murdered outsider in a campaign to "purify" Islam.

Towards the end of the middle Ages and later during the reformation, violent sects arose within Christianity as well. Subsequently, contemporary revolutionary terrorism is usually traced to more secular roots, often to the French revolution or to the writings and deeds of nineteenth Century Russian anarchists. Scholars opine that contemporary terrorism sprouted, from the seeds planted in the late 1960s, the confluence of turbulent and unsettling events in the late 1960s included racial strife in the United States, an escalating conflict in Vienam, and the Arab-Israeli six days war of 1967. Flowing from these, the year 1968 showcased a glimpse of events to come. The assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. precipitated an outbreak of domestic violence in the United States by such groups as black panthers and the weather men. Also, the boarder - mien hot gang announced its presence in West Germany by touching a Frankfurt department store. Barely the same period, three Palestinian terrorists seized an Israeli, EI AI Airliner and forced its crew to fly the plane to Algeria, one of the first of many acts of air piracy.

It is good to note that the same year, Yasser Arafat, an advocate of armed struggle against Israeli, became the leader of the PLO. In any case, terrorism rose sharply in the 1970s and 1980s and became a serious threat to the world including, US in the 1990s, culminating in the 9/11 terrorist attacks. They became much, more encouraged following the successful bombing of US embassies in Beirut, Lebanon in 1983 and later in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania. Meanwhile, their determination was profited by the Afghan war. The Iranian revolution of 1979 which took US by surprise always with its attendant hostage of Americans boosted the morale of Arab volunteers and potential terrorists against the super powers. They thought they could make progress with little hindrance. The open invitation of US armies in 1988 to Saudi Arabia obviously to ensure the protection of the country against attack by ambitious Saddam Hussein of Iraq and the clear displeasure of the people to such move drew the interest of some youth into the camp of Osama Bin Laden whom the majority saw as the hero of Afghan war.

The intervention of US in Iraq-Kuwait war did not go down well with some people as they held the view that, Arab problems could be handled by Arabs of the same faith. Many contested, that, Arab governments have become stooges to the West especially the US, chiefly because of her military strength. Indeed, the Arab world has over the time

developed suspicion against anything that emanates from the West. To this extent, citizens thought it wise to come to the rescue of their beloved countries by undermining the security of their perceived enemies, so that they could yield to their demands i.e non-exploitation of developing countries. It was in a bid to getting security of lives and property undermined in their enemy countries through terrorist acts that, they master - minded the explosion of the parking garage of the world trade centre in New York, in February 1993, Oklahoma city Federal office building in 1995, Olympics in Atlanta in 1996, London subway in 2005 (Magstadt, 2009). In fact, terror attacks geometrically increased to the extent that the Risks International put the total number of terrorist incidents in 1985 at slightly more than 3,000, while the US government conservatively counted less than one-fort that number (Magstadt, 2009:510) the unending hostilities between Israel and Palestine on clean and Counterelian on the ownership of the land Israel is occupying especially the Gaza provides sizeable number of sympathizers to Al-Queda and its allies.

The continued and unprecedented impact of the Somali Al-Shabab group on their country as well as the near total destruction of Afganistan and later Iraq by US led NATO forces only made more sympathizers readily available for terrorist counsel. The Nigerian Yussufiha sect popularly called Boko Haram is a case in point. The group was founded by a self-proclaimed Nigeria spiritual leader Mohammed Yusuf (1970-2009) with aim of establishing a Sharia government in Borno State. The group has been existing since 2007 and at present has grown into a full blown terrorist group with indiscriminate attacks. Their violent impact is so widespread to the extent that a loud noise in Northern Nigeria could provoke an unimaginable disorder as people will run for their lives because of the fear that Boko haram may be at work. The large presence of armed forces on the streets of Northern states aptly attests to the level of insecurity in that part of the country, as cases of bomb blasts abound. Book Haram has attacked Borno, Niger, Plateau, Kano, Kaduna, Adamawa, Gombe, Yobe States at different times including the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, where army barracks, Police Headquarters and UN buildings were badly affected, by their activities. It is instructive to note that, the worst parts of Niger Delta militancy and Boko Haram sect became evident within the relatively new democratic arrangement of the country. The increasing terrorist acts in Nigeria's nascent democracy as against the military are with reference to Somalia and Sudan sensitize one to believing that, weak democracies are susceptible to terrorism.

PSYCHOLOGY, TACTICS AND LOGIC OF TERRORISM

The psychology of terrorists determine the tactics to be adopted in a bid to achieving their goals and forms the premise of their activities or logic. By psychology of terrorism, I mean their motivating factors and behaviours exhibited by them. Magstadt(2000) conjectures that Kidder points to oversimplification of issues, frustrations, orientations towards risk taking, self-righteousness, utopianism, social isolation, need to be noticed, and taste for blood as the common traits exhibited by members of terrorist groups. In fact, homogeneity of culture, the use of unsophisticated weapons and little training, for field workers are noticeable among terrorist groups in Nigeria. They also cry against injustice, from the

security officers, bad government and corrupt society to justify their actions. The views of Horgan cited by Grohon *(www.psycheetral.com/bloglaoruverse/2009/1)* lends credence to the above, when he opines that people who are more open to terrorist recruitment and radicalization tend to feel angry, alienated or disenfranchised. They belief that their current political involvement does not give them the power to effect real change, identify with perceived victims of the social injustice they are fighting, feel the need to take action rather than just talking about problem. Believing that engaging in violence against the state is not immoral. Have friends or families sympathetic to the cause.

Tactics imply the methods they adopt in recruiting members to their fold and how they carry-on with their activities including attacks. Basically and in the case of Nigeria, they recruit primarily, the people of their culture, people with whom they speak the same language, share the same norms, values and faith. Also, they focus more on the poor who are also the victims of social, political and economic injustices in the country. Due to their relatively poor status, they operate with locally made bombs, hijack vehicles from unsuspecting members of the public for their activities. Also, they work with a high degree of secrecy and intelligence gathering. They try to create fear to get the authorities submit to their proposals.

Logic of terrorism implies the relationship between preparation of the atmosphere for attack and the actual taking of advantage of the effects of attack. Though, the communists refer to this as 'armed propaganda' but whether the Nigerian terror groups have been able to pursue the logic of terrorism deserves brief attention as shown below. The Boko Haram sect to a very large extent has overtime properly prepared the ground for her attacks and they have successfully hit targets, which have often brought about immeasurable fear especially in Northern part of Nigeria, but they have failed considerably in taking advantage from such attacks. The attacks are not followed by propaganda which can provoke public sympathy for their cause. Hence, they end-up eliciting the hatred of the populace. Meanwhile, the Niger Delta militants have succeeded in attracting public sympathy as they made their position clear to those that care to know.

The inherited hatred for the North by the South further makes it a point of duty for Boko Haram to do more in terms of mobilization and systematic explanations, if they must obtain sympathy of the press and by extension the populace, especially, the Southerners. There exists, a positive relationship between the psychology, tactics and logic of terrorism as the motivating factors and Behaviour of the Zealots, form the basis of their methods of recruitment and action, as well as the preparation and actual attack but the failure to take advantage of the attacks on the emotions of the people make the people sympathize with the insensitive government of the country. The fact that, their actions become much more pronounced in our young democracy also confirms the fragility of democratic structures which are out to check such activities in the country.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The indiscriminate destruction of lives and property through terrorist attacks makes it a necessity for urgent actions to be taken. The use of brute force has obviously proved

insufficient to checkmate their activities, rather it makes them have more recruits and it is in view of this reality that the following are recommended for Nigeria:

(a)   The government must urgently provide free education and free meals at the primary and secondary schools, so as to attract the 'Almajiris' to schools, since they are readily available terror recruits in the North.

(b)   The government and well-to-do individuals need to establish as many as possible schools and set machinery in motion for the mobilization of people for Western education.

(c)   There should be sensitization of societies and citizens. For instance, in a country like Israel where terrorism is a constant threat and everyone is acutely aware of it, Officials claim that 80% of bombs in public places are disarmed because suspicious objects are usually noticed and reported on time.

(d)   Infrastructure, good roads, constant power supply, portable water etc, should be provided to allow investors to come and establish businesses in the country to provide employment opportunities.

(e)   There should be sensitization of the people to the sacredness of human life and how to value oneself and by extension others. A man without value for his life has no interest to protect and will see others as worthless. In sensitizing the people, they must be made to see a golden future. National Orientation Agency (NOA) and mass media should be well mobilized for this task.

(f)   Opinion leaders and well respected religious leaders must be made to speak on the true position of Islam on Jihad, its exact meaning, methods and the position of the religion on human life should be made known to all

(g)   The people should be made to know that, the government cares about them irrespective of their socio-political and economic status. Equal opportunities should be given to the people and the unreasonable violation of the people's rights by the security Officers/agents must be checked.

(h)   There should be a data bank for all citizens, that is accurate enough to monitor their progress especially economic and social status.

(i)   The government should always attend to the grief of the people by quickly inviting them for dialogue and making everyone see Nigeria as belonging to all. The present situation, where the poor see the elites as the chief beneficiaries of the country's wealth, especially to their own detriment is suicidal to the corporate and peaceful coexistence of the country.

(j)   The total restructuring of the federation is now more urgent than ever. The restructuring should entail fiscal federalism and greater regained autonomy in terms of mode of law and state policing but the armed force should continue to be a federal concern.

REFERENCES

Charles, W. and **Keyley, J. R.** (2007). *World Politics Trend & Transformation.* UK: Thomson & Wadsworth.

Clark, R. C. (1980). *Technological Terrorism*. Old Greenwich: C. T. Devin-Adair.

Combs, C. C. (1997). *Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century.* New Jerssey: Prentice Hall.

Cleur, S. (1981). *The terror Network: The secret war of international terrorism.* New York: Holt.

Kenneth, J. *et al* (2005). *The Challenge of Democracy.* New York. Houghton Muffin Co.

Laquer, W. (1979). Terrorism: A Penetrating Study of the Origins, Ideology and Sociology of Terrorism. New York: Little Brown.

Thomas, M. M. (2009). *Understanding Politics-ideas, Institutions and Issues.* Canada Wadsworth.

Jenkins, B. (1985). *Terrorism and Personal Protection-Essay by an Impressive Array of Experts.* Newton: MA Butterworth.

Rushworth, M. K. (1986). Unmasking terrorist. *Christian Science Monitors,* May13, pp 19

Cns. Miis edu/pubs/report/convert,htm

www.fpri.Org/research/terrorism

www.terrorism.com

www.homeland Security.org/bulletin/current