



Zealotry and Challenges of Security and Nation Building: The Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria

Kabir G. Inuwa Dukawa

Department of History and International Studies

Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education, Kumbotso Kano Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Nigeria has been challenged by zealotry and ethno – religious conflicts with annihilating human and material losses since the return of democracy in 1999. However, the Boko Haram uprising of July 2009, was more significant in that it not only set a precedent, but also reinforced the attempts by zealotry Islamic elements at imposing a variant of Islamic religious ideology on a secular Nigerian state. The action of this zealotry elements, poses serious challenges to Nigerian security and its nation building. Whereas, the religious sensitivity of Nigerians provided productive ground for the breeding of the Boko Haram sect, the sect's efflorescence could also be said to have been aided by the prevailing economic dislocation in the country vis-à-vis the introduction of party politics and politics of anxiety, the associated desperation of politicians for political power, and the ambivalence of some vocal Islamic leaders who, though they did not actively embark on mutiny, but either did little or nothing to occlude it from agitating, or only feebly condemned it. These internal factors coupled with growing Islamic fundamentalism around the globe made a highly volatile Nigerian society prone to violence, as evidenced by the Boko Haram uprising which in turn further poses challenges to national security and the nation - building. Given the approach of the country's religious conflict, this violence may remain a recurring problem which is why this paper analyses the Boko Haram terror, as well as its links with the promotion of Islamic revivalism and the challenges it poses to the peaceful co – existence of the Nigeria entity and nation – building.

Keywords: zealotry, national insecurity, nation building and Boko Haram sect.

INTRODUCTION:

After decades of dictatorships, Nigeria saw its fourth democratically elected president take office in 1999. Today, the country's nascent democracy is being tested by rampant crimes and unprecedented campaign of terror such as that in the south, civil unrest threatens safety and stability, to the East; gangs who kidnap expatriates and national for ransom lie in wait on the roads, in super – markets and major cities, and to the North, the Islamist zealotry group called Boko Haram is growing both in number and brutality posing brazen challenges to national security and nation building. A nation that is not secure cannot develop no matter the laudable development goals of such a nation. It is against this background that, this article examines the genesis of Boko Haram, the challenges it poses to national security and nation – building in an effort to discover the reasons behind their despicable activities against the society.

According to Alozieuwa (2012), the challenges poses by the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria is not only about the viciousness of either its terror campaigns, or the sect's avowed mission to impose Islamic law on the country, but about the confusion regarding the exact cause (s) of the violence. Many theories and conception that emerged to explain the problem have broadly revolved around socio-economic, political, and religious themes, all their



estimation does not explain the reason for such violence, brutality and cruelty in one's own country against his/her brothers.

It is in view of the above assertion, this paper seeks to unravel the genesis of Boko Haram and how it has constituted itself as a national security threat to the continual and harmonious co-existence of the component states that make up the Nigerian nation that remain the cardinal element to the nation – building, observation and conclusion.

CONCEPTUAL ILLUMINATION

Zealotry: The term in this report, simply refers to excessive intolerance of opposing public view, the term is viewed as the premeditated use or threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against un armed targets, property or infrastructure in a state, with an intimation to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the group behind such violent acts (stephens, 2004).

NATIOAN INSECURITY

In an effort to discuss the concept of national insecurity, it is imperative to briefly explain the term 'security' whose absence metamorphosis to insecurity. Even though, the term 'security' generally, is a cross cutting and multi – dimensional concept which has, over the last century, been the subject of great debate. However, long before that, the history of mankind was interspersed by the frenzied search for the best way of ensuring the security of the people, their properties, territories, states and institutions among others. Security according to McNammara (1968) in Mijah (2007) is not the traditional military activity though, it may encompass it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security. He is of the view that, 'security' can also be seen as freedom from risk or danger, doubt, anxiety, or fear. It is an appreciable level of confidence.

Oche (2001) view the term 'security' as the freedom from danger or threat to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest. And enhance the well-being of its people. Thus, security is the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and corporate existence of a nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values as well as freedom from danger to life and property. Thus, 'security' in all places and countries has been considered as 'first order value' worth preserving. However there afore mentioned notwithstanding, there is no consensus the on definition of the term.

'Insecurity' on the hand, as an antithesis of security refers to a condition that exists due to lack of effective measures put in place to protect individuals, information and property against hostile persons, influences and action. 'Insecurity' is simply a situation in which individuals in a given society cannot go about their daily activities as a result of threat to and harmful disruption of their lives and property. Belard (2005) viewed insecurity as the absence of protection from crime (state of unsafe) and lack of freedom from psychological harm (un protected from emotional stress) resulting from dearth of assurance that an individual is accepted, has opportunity and options to fulfill his/her own potentials including freedom from fear.



NATION – BUILDING

'Nation building' is a long and challenging political process, but one that leaders, together with the citizenry, must undertake with seriousness. Most nations have their unique circumstances and each one, throughout history, has built and developed itself around certain distinguishing core features as follows:

1. The conscious cultivation of a national identity, the sense of belonging, based on shared values, tradition, history and aspirations. National identity remain the foundation of social cohesion.
2. The establishment of institutions and laws of governance which formalise the relationship between the leaders and citizens, and their expectation of service delivery.
3. The participation of citizens in the governance process by choosing a system that serves them best, selecting/electing their leaders and playing an active role in decision making.
4. Then there is economic transformation – it is only right for the people to expect a qualitative improvement in their lives. Part of nation – building therefore, includes establishing the climate and mechanisms for economic development for the whole nation. It should be noted that, the process of nation – building can only be internally generated and led, it cannot be achieve from outside, however well meaning. Though, this does not mean that we can't learn from outside or that we do not appreciate support for our initiatives.

BOKO HARAM TERRORISM, INSECURITY AND CHALLENGES OF NATION – BUILDING

Boko Haram is a horrendous Islamic sect known as Jama'atul Ahalil Sunnah Lidda'awat Wal Jihad (group presumed to be committed to the propagation of the teaching of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (mechan and spaier, 2011). This radical islamist group, initially worshipped at the mosque of one Alhaji Muhammadu Ndimi in Maiduguri (Bornu state) a decade ago hence, in 2002, an offshoot of this youth group (not yet known as Boko Haram) declared the city and the Islamic establishment to be intolerably corrupt and irredeemable. The origin and founder of Boko Haram is shrouded in uncertainty. Some scholars traced the origin of the sect to 1995 with malam Lawan Abubakar as its founder. It was when Abubakar left for further studies in Saudi Arabia that the sect then known as sahaba that, one Muhammada Yusif who is regarded as a leader took over the affairs of the sect. others traced the sect founder to Shehu Sani, a civil right activist in northern Nigeria. A part from the above, numerous expositions on the orign and foundation of Boko Haram were discussed in the works of Adibe (2012) and Uzodike and Maingwa (2012). Their works also acknowledge Gusau (2009) version of the origin of Boko Haram which, traced the origin to an evangelical group formed by muslim students at the university of Maiduguri, who reportedly felt dissatisfied with western education (Uzodike and Maiangwa, 2012).

Muhammad Yusif, to whom the formation is now generally ascribed, according to competing narratives, only assumed leadership after Abubakar's depature and "indoctrinated the sect with his own teachings, which he claimed were nased on purity" (Adibe, 2012). Yusif's notion of 'purity' and teachings were inspired by the works of ibn. Taymiyya, (a 14th century legal scholar) who preached Islamic fundamentalism and is considered a 'major theorist' for radical groups in the middle east (William E.S 1987) after



whom Yusuf name his mosque in Maiduguri (the nation, may 23rd, 2012). But just as the sect itself may be less concerned with the origin than it is with the threat that the group now posed to society.

The obscurity surrounding its true origin perhaps informs why initially, the sect. had no specific name as its members attracted several descriptions where they operated based on the perception of the local population", (Osaghae, E. and Suberu, R. 2005) such names include Taliban and Yussufiyya. The sect soon became formally identified as Ahalul sunnah waljama'a wal-jihad [congregation of followers of the prophet involved in the call to islam and religious struggle] The name 'Boko Haram', which it is now commonly referred derives from the sect's anti – western posturing, literally meaning 'western education and civilization is sinfulness.'

In its early stages, the Boko Haram sect was widely known to have mobilized its membership from women and children, school drop – outs and unemployed university and tertiary institution graduates, most of who tore up their certificates, student members withdrew from schools and colleges. According to Falola, T. 2009, "these recruits were indoctrinated by Yussuf to believe their state of hopelessness was caused by government which imposed western education on them and failed to manage the resources of the country to their benefits". Although from the outset, the sect's mission was to impose the shariah codes on Nigeria, the leadership initially went – about its preaching peacefully, but not without attracting attention among other Islamic clerics who perceived the sect's preaching and interpretation of the Quran as a recipe for violence and an incidents of violence have earlier been recorded against the sect, (Nzodike and Miangwa, Ibid:98), serious concerns over its violent tendencies grew only after the sect's open confrontation with the government in July 2009, following the death of their leader Yussuf while in police custody, as well as his farther –in-law and the sect's financier, Ustaz Buji foi, and the incarceration it members by state authorities (Ibid:99).

Although as stated above that, yussuf allegedly drew inspiration from radical islamist, Ibn. Taymiyya he reportedly resisted some of the followers relentless advocate that "an Islamic state was realized through preaching and mobilization of the people to reject secularism, by way of taking up arms and fighting to conquer the unbelievers", yussuf was said to have been against any form of violence saying it was against the teaching of islam (ibid:101). It is therefore, yet uncertain whether the sect's current level of radicalization is a function of the death of its initial leaderships and subsequent clamp down by the state or the accession to its leadership of the taciturn psychopath, Abubarak Shekau, a Kanuri native of Bornu state, who once boasted "I enjoy killing any one that god commands me to kill – the way I enjoy killing fowls and rams", (B.B.C online june 22nd, 2012). Along with two other top leadership, Abubarak Adam Kamber and Khalid –Barnawi, shekau in June 2012, made the united states list of international terrorists (Alozieuwa, o.2012) as a result of their use of lethal weapons such as explosives and guns as well as machetes and dagger for the purpose of meting their mayhem to the Nigerian state which has drastically affected her economy adversely considering the high rate of loss of lives and properties thus, jeopardized the nation – binlding efforts.

As at this stage, there is no clear certainty as regard the financial sources of the zealotry Boko Haram group. However, according to some members of the Bornu religious



establishment, the group received funds from Salafist through Yussuf's contact in Saudi Arabia during his life time. While others opined that, the group sources of funding during that period was donations from wealthy northern Nigerians. (JEASD, 2013). As for instance in 2006, a wealthy northern Nigerian businessman was arrested by the state security operatives after a group of children alleged that, they had been sent by the sect to an al-Qaeda training camp in Mauritania. The businessman in his defence says his donations to the group were an innocent attempt to pay out Zakat an obligation required of wealthy Muslim (ibid).

Undoubtedly since 2009, Zealot Boko Haram action has constituted a serious security threat. The group continued to carry out attacks, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances and torture and other ill-treatment, which in most cases, led to death in custody (Langmang J. 2011) Boko Haram carried out at least 65 attacks causing 411 civilian deaths, and abducted at 173 people (ibid). According to the UN there remained at least 1.7 million internally displaced people (IDPS) in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, 39% lived in camps or similar settings and 61% in host communities. About 5.2 million people in the north east remained in urgent need of food assistance; 450,000 children under five years were in urgent need of nutrition (United Nations) these destructive activities of the Zealot group, a part from threatening the national security, it gravely counteract the nation – building efforts.

The Zealot terror campaign assumed an alarming dimension from 2010 till date. However, until 16th June 2011, the onslaught was restricted to the north east geo-political zone. The first attack outside the zone was the bombing of the Nigeria police headquarters in Abuja. This was followed by bombing of the United Nations House also in Abuja on August 26th, 2011 (Alojewu ibid). On Christmas Eve 2010, as many as half a dozen bombs were detonated near churches and a market in two districts of Jos, Plateau state, killing scores of innocent people. Then, on New Year Eve 2010, a bomb was detonated in a popular open-air fish restaurant and market inside the grounds of the Mogadishu barracks, just outside Abuja, killing ten people (Dudoute 2010),

During the first few months of 2011, the Zealot group's targets for assassination operations in Maiduguri widened beyond the original focus of police and other authorities. The group began to rob banks, cash in transit convoys and successful business, not only in Maiduguri but also in Bauchi, where the group remains strong (This Day, 2011). A source who has followed the group closely stated that, the group is thought to have made approximately five hundred million naira (N500 million) from such robberies, but such claims are unverifiable (Walker, 2012). Thus, since August 2011, there have been almost weekly attacks by Zealot militant group through either women and children suicide bombers or planting bombs in public places, churches and mosques. They also employed setting of fire on schools and attacking newspaper offices. In March 2012, some twelve public schools in Maiduguri were burned down during the night, forcing as many as 10,000 pupils out of education (ibid)

Accordingly, the Zealot Boko Haram had gained press attention in Nigeria and attracted attention from the international communities because of the catchy name locals had given it 'The Nigerian Taliban'.



On observation and conclusion thus, the discourse prove that Nigeria is confronted with the insecurity which in turned posed challenges to the Nigerian Nation building. The poor development status of Nigeria no doubt breeds atmosphere of frustrated expectations and foster widespread indignation on the part of those that are trapped in the vortex circle of object poverty. The condition of hopelessness is further aggravated by impotent poverty eradication programmers (empowerment) and conspiratorial neglect by the governments. In the face of this predicament, individuals and groups responded different, depending on situational factor and capacity. These response are crystallized and find expression in various shades of anit-social behaviors including armed-robbery, kidnapping and the Boko Haram insurgency among others.

The prevailing vicious onslaught of Boko Haram dire consequence for the national security and the nation building. The economic life of people is almost grounded to a halt. The group's debacle creates an unfavorable investment climate for both indigenious and foreign investors that would have propelled the economic fortune of the country. From the foregoing, it is evident that, with our enormous resources, nation building (sustainable development) remains elusive due to the menace of Boko Haram terrorism.

REFERENCES

- Alozieuwa, S.H.O (2012) contending Theories on Nigeria's Security challenge in the Era of Boko Haram insurgency. The peace and conflict Review. Volume 7, issue No-1 ISSN: 1659-3995. Available at: www.review.upeace.org/index.cfm?opcion=128. Retrieved 22 June, 2013.
- Mc Namara, R. The Essence of Security (New York: Harper Row, 1968) pp 55-58.
- Mijah, E National Security Crisis forecasting and management (Boulder: west view press, 2007) p.61
- Stephens, Tim' International criminal law and the response to international Terrorism' university of Newsouth wales law Journal 454,2004, (p.457).
- Oche, O, 'Democratization and the management of African security Nigeria Journal of international Affairs (2001)Vol. 13 No.1 PP 21-31.
- Belard, D. 'The political construction of collective insecurity: From moral panic to blame avoidance and organized responsibility. Center for European studies working paper, 2005.
- Mechan, P. and spaier, J (eds) 'Boko Haram: Threat to the U.S House of Representative Committee on home land security sub-committee on counter Terrorism and intelligence (2011).
- Adibe, J. 'Boko Haram: one sect, conflicting Narratives African Renaissance vol.9 No.9 (2012) PP 27-36.
- Uzodike, O. and Maiangwa, B ' Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria causal factors and central problematic. African Renaissance, vol.9 No.1 (2012) PP,41-49.
- William E.S 'Islam and ideology: Towards a typology' International journal of middle East, vol.19, No.3 (1987) PP.307-35.
- Osaghae, E. & suberv, R 'A history of identifies violence and stability in Nigeria' CRISE working paper No.16 Available at <http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk> retrieved 20/11/2012



- Falola, Toyin 'Violence in Nigeria: the crisis of religious politics and secular ideologies, New York: University of Rochester, 2009 PP. 17-19
- Abu, S. '(Anarchy in the land' Today's challenge vol.6 No.8 2011 Committee for the defenses of Human Right (CDHR) 1999, Annual report on human rights situation in Nigeria. (Lagos: CDHR publication, 2000. PP.X-Xi)
- Zakari, Y. 2006'Youth, conflict security and Development
- Aloejewea (ibid), 'Contending Theories on Nigeria's security challenge in the Era of Boko Haram insurgency' The peace and conflict review vol.7 issue No:1 2012- ISSN 1659-3995. Available at:
www.review.upeace.org/index.cfm-24&entrada128. retrieved 22nd December, 2012
- Journal of Economic and Sustainable Development (JEASD) vol.4, No.5, 2013 P.18.
- Dudovet, V. 'Mediating Peace with Proscribed Armed groups'' (special report , June 2010) Washington: UNO publication.
- Waller, A. ' what is Boko Haram?' Washington: UNO publication, 2012.
- This Day ' Boko Haram attacked 100 bank branches 10th December 2011 P.6.
- Oluwaseun, B. ' Boko Haram Catastrophic Terrorism': An Albatross to National peace, Security and sustainable Development in Nigeria. Journal of sustainable Development in Africa, Vol.14, No.1, pp. 32-44
- Lang mang, J. ' The upsurge of Religion Fundamentalism: A Critical Reflection in the light of the Boko Haram Phenomenon in Northern Nigeria in Best G.S (ed) Religion and Post Conflict Peace building in Northern Nigeria. (Ibadan: John Archers publishers Ltd, 2011). Pp.13-16
- UN adds Boko Haram to al-Queda sanctionlist'' the long war journal. Org retrieved 2011-06-15.