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Nigeria Intelligence Framework and the Challenges of Combating Terrorism

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ABSTRACT

The war against terrorism in Nigeria has been one that has been giving security agencies tough time. This is giving the seemingly inability of security agencies to gather and make use of appropriate intelligence to dismantle terrorists stronghold in the nation particularly in the north. This is why this paper examines the intelligence framework in order to understand the challenges of tackling terrorism in the country. The paper is guided by two specific objectives and research questions that were answered with literature. The Marxian political economy theory was used for the study. Historical research design was employed under qualitative research method to explain the event of terrorism and intelligence gathering to combat terrorism in the country. Secondary qualitative data was used throughout to account for the phenomena of intelligence gathering and the fight against terrorism in Nigeria. The study found out that the fight against terrorism suffered setbacks not because of lack of intelligence but the undermining of intelligence framework by a section of the political class to its advantage. The study recommends that the state must be active in its quest to gather the necessary intelligence from deliberately planted field agents and equipment in the bid to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group

Keywords: Intelligence, Framework, Challenges, Combating, Terrorism, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The challenges of insecurity in Nigeria are traceable to lapses in intelligence gathering and proper utilisation of same. There are several challenges combating intelligence gathering among which are willingness of the public to share viable information with the security agencies (Global Terrorist Index, 2017). Lack of citizen's involvement in state security management and their reluctance in volunteering security information to law enforcement agencies remain part of the lapses in critical security elements application as discussed by Phenson, Ojie, Esin and Atai (2014). The country has variety of intelligence agencies saddled with the responsibility of producing timely and accurate intelligence to confront the issues that threaten national security among which are the Department of State Service (DSS) also known as the State Security Service (SSS), the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the National Intelligence.

The terrorist activities in the country have been sustained despite all efforts put in by the government to bring an end to their heinous activities that constitute a threat to the sovereignty of the country. The increasing rate at which communities are sacked and over run in Nigeria is alarming, coupled with the merciless ways that lives of innocent ones are wasted. People are burdened on a daily basis with psychological and emotional trauma resulting from gory sights of lifeless and mutilated bodies of loved family members, close associates and colleagues littered on the streets, public squares and everywhere (Lauderdale & Oliverio, 2018). A stable economy cannot be guaranteed in the face of insecurity, and this affects the concept of nation building which is core to democracy.

The inability of the government to rise promptly to intelligence information in their disposal to combat insecurity is another problem. For instance, intelligence report on the abduction of the Chibok girls revealed that the then government under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan received intelligence report that Boko Haram terrorist group is planning to abduct school children in Maiduguri and carry them away in a costal bus across the border of Nigeria. The lack of analytical skills and others denigrate the value of intelligence product in security operation. Previous research in this area of study has focused on the effects of terrorism, rather than the effects of counterterrorist strategies, which may be the solution to tackling terrorism.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine Nigerian intelligence framework and the challenges of combating terrorism. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the relationship between intelligence gathering and insecurity in Nigeria

2. assess the role of government agencies in intelligence gathering and use in Nigeria

Research Questions

- 1) What is the relationship between intelligence gathering and insecurity in Nigeria?
- 2) What is the role of government agencies in intelligence gathering and use in Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualization

a) Intelligence

A cursory review of the literature indicates that intelligence has been conceptualised and presented by scholars and practitioners in diverse contexts. Gustavo (2005) observed that there is no universally acceptable definition of the concept of intelligence as most scholars look at the definition from different scope and perception. Powers (as cited in Randol, 2009) observed that one of the most meaningful purposes of intelligence is to predict where future security challenges may arise. Security intelligence may be defined as, "...the threat of major, politically motivated violence, or equal grievous harm to national security or the economy, inflicted within the nation's territorial limits by international terrorists, home grown terrorists, or spies of saboteurs employed or financed by foreign nations" (Posner as cited in Randol, 2009).

The United States Joint chief of staff (as cited in Duyan, 2012) conceptualised intelligence as Information and knowledge about an adversary obtained through observation, investigation, analysis, or understanding. According to CIA (as cited in Warner 1985) "intelligence is knowledge and foreknowledge of the world around us, the prelude to decision and action by policymakers." Hoffman (as cited in Oghi, 2014) sees intelligence as the "collection, evaluation, analysis, integration and interpretation of all available information which concerns areas of operations and potentially significant to planning." Intelligence, with regards to the military, could be strategic, tactical and counter intelligence. Intelligence in this context is a response to a specific question or issue, structured to provide a basis for action and presented to an individual or group empowered to act. It is worth noting that information is not intelligence, and gathering information is not carrying out competitive intelligence (Rudolph, Gilmont, Magee & Smith, 1991).

The Nature and Dynamic of Terrorism in Nigeria

Terrorism in Nigeria evolved with different dynamics, resulting from various motives, and began after Nigeria gained independence from colonial rule. Chinwoku (2012) traced the history and dynamics of terrorism in Nigeria through a socio-political lens and noted that, though terrorism began just as the nation turned seven, the effects of terrorism at that time cannot be compared with what is being experienced in present-day Nigeria. In his views, the various eras of political presence in Nigeria had their peculiar contributions to the evolution and development of terrorism, beginning with the era that heralded the Nigerian Civil War in 1967. Terrorism is an act that puts fear in civilians and is targeted at a government to forcefully make it take decisions outside its democratic considerations and policies by an individual or group of individuals (Chinwoku, 2012).

Following the various accounts of the political era and their contributions to terrorism in his definition of terrorism, Chinwoku implies that the first acts of terrorism in Nigeria were carried out by Nigerian soldiers of south eastern descent. These militants, known as the Biafra soldiers, were determined to forcefully break out from Nigeria and take control of their own territory, as seen in the cases of Boko Haram and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta; both groups have the same agenda of breaking out to form a caliphate and to control the wealth of the Niger Delta. Although it is classified as a civil war, it had all the trappings of terrorism and would be categorized as such today, as evident by the attempted repeat of the same incident by the Indigenous People of Biafra (Richard, 2016). Thousands of civilian lives were lost and human rights violations occurred, such as kidnapping, rape, and murder. Cases of indiscriminate assassinations, bombing, arson, human mutilation, and assaults were also recorded, with a death rate of approximately 2 million people (Blackpast, 2017). Chinwoku (2012) highlighted the various motives and motivations behind the acts of terrorism that have occurred in Nigeria.

Boko Haram became well known in 2006 when the Nigeria's Department of State Security began arresting, detaining, and prosecuting its members. The founder of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf was killed under controversial circumstances while in police detention which aggravated members of the sect. The result was reprisal attacks on the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters, the United Nations House, and St Theresa Catholic Church, all in Abuja, in 2011 (Mshelizza, 2011). The terrorist group's motives were identified to include religious extremism, resentment over the killing of their founder and other members, and poverty (Matfess, 2017). Most of the tactics of the Niger Delta militants, such as bombing locations with international interests and kidnapping for ransom and exchange of detained members, were adopted by Boko Haram. While describing the evolution, Chinwoku (2012) focused on the general motives of terrorism in Nigeria, which pointed clearly at dissatisfaction, social deprivation, neglect, greed, corruption, nepotism, and poverty. Based on the various terrorist groups that have emerged in Nigeria, one or more of these factors are marked as the motivation for their emergence except Boko Haram (Blanchard, 2016).

Contemporary discussions on Nigeria is almost inevitably replete with issues surrounding insecurity, militancy, insurgency, and terrorism, due to the linkages with economic, social, political and governance activities, with spiralling effects on regional and international relations (Adewumi, 2014). Since 1999, when the country returned to democratic rule, there has been an upsurge in terrorist activities in Nigeria with Boko Haram insurgency being at the forefront. The Boko Haram sect has become a threat to both internal and international security as their activities have now stretched beyond Nigeria to her neighbours. With consistent violent attacks on security forces, civilians, churches and mosques, farms, media houses, schools as well as international

bodies such as the United Nations in 2011, it has further compounded several challenges already faced by the nation particularly in the North east. The Boko Haram insurgency poses a threat to national security, "however, it should be noted that the concept of national security, in the post-cold war era, has gone beyond securing lives and properties of the people through the protection of territorial integrity of the state against threats of external aggressors (Adewumi, 2014), to encompass the protecting of citizens from the threats of diseases, hunger, unemployment, violation of human rights, displacements and shelter problems, conflict, political repression and environmental degradation, hence, human security. Boko Haram's violent activity which has intensified in recent times has largely undermined human security.

Military Intelligence and Nigeria's Security Challenges

Nigeria as a country has had too many of violent upheaval over the years, often resulting in enormous loss of lives and property and even posing threats to the nation's corporate existence. No doubt, the combined effect of these crises has been catastrophic on the nation's image and economy. There is positive relationship between the effective intelligence gathering and state of security. Similarly ineffective or inaccurate intelligence often produce insecurity. The impact of intelligence gathering and sharing is always felt in term of provision of timely, reliable and effective information to assist the users (all law enforcement agencies) in carrying out their duties promptly. Unfortunately, the security challenges that the country has faced since the dawn of the twenty-first century especially since the uprising in the terrorist activities of the Boko Haram Sect since 2011 seem to give impression that the intelligence community has gone to sleep. This is regrettable because the continuity of killings has been experienced in the recent past portends nothing possible but grave danger to the Nigeria nation-state (Oghi, 2014).

The state secret service and other national intelligence agencies in their collective capacity, remain as the main eyes protecting various essential blind spots in our society as they relate to the safety and wellbeing of our citizens (Oshodi, 2016). Yet the security and safety situation are at despair and depressing to the extent that in the face of hard-knock and fearless attacks from the violent Islamic sect, militants group. The security agencies have failed to pre-empt security breaches in Nigeria. In particular, the failure of the intelligence services to contain the recurring security breaches. Effective counter insecurity prevention, protection, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts depend on timely, accurate and achievable information about who the enemies are, where and how they operate, the targets of the enemies into attack they to use.

Terrorism, organised crime, ethnic-religious crisis, kidnapping, military, arms smuggling are serious challenges confronting Nigeria. Law enforcement has an important has an important sometimes central role in combating each of these threats.

Generally speaking, the citizens should play very critical roles in generating intelligence but most often they are unwilling to provide information to the law enforcement agencies. In Nigeria, citizens are not willing due to the following factors:

- Loss of Confidence in the Government: The continuous mis-rule and economic deprivation of the people leading to the worsening social
 welfare made the people to keep away from having anything to do with government. People protect system that is responsible which cater for
 their needs.
- Lack of Professionalism: It is not understatement to conclude that lots of officials do not even know and practice professional ethics. Sensitive
 information are messed up and exposed. The identities of those who volunteer to give information are sometimes exposed to crime gangs for
 pecuniary motives.
- Corruption. It has affected virtually all sectors of the society: Sometimes when sensitive information is given about people or event but because corruption and selfish reasons, these information are distorted and it is not useful for intelligence gathering.
- 4. **Ethnic and Religious reasons**: In Nigeria, many people have total allegiance to their religious leaders, so that they will refuse to give any relevant information concerning any criminal activities of their leaders or the group. Ethnicity and religious biogotry have worked negatively in the area of information between the citizens and law enforcement agencies.

Boko Haram Insurrection: An Evaluation of Intelligence Failure in Nigeria

The tactics of Boko Haram was a little bit different from other violent and insecurity groups until when the State Security began to keep arrested members of both sects together, between 2005 and 2010. The game changed afterwards and it became evident that the modern techniques used by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta in the South was replicated in the north. This made it more difficult for security agencies to contain Boko Haram, as the military were surprised by their new tactics which included kidnap of students and expatriates. The similarities in operation between both terrorist groups however, may imply that certain counterterrorism strategies that helped to reduce insurgency in the Niger Delta may also help to reduce insurgency in the north east, if properly executed by morally sound professional handlers that are concerned with the interest of the nation, rather than their selfish concerns.

In looking at the national security challenges resulting from insurgency, one can clearly say that all the challenges were caused by those in political offices, as well as military commanders who diverted funds for their selfish interests, rather that providing training and ideal equipment to cub terrorism at its infant stage, keeping it under control. The security challenges to citizens and foreign nationals have been allowed to spread beyond total control and will need strategic planning and implementation, going forward (Folarin & Oviasogie, 2015). Strategies to be applied in combating terrorism in Nigeria, according to Folarin and Oviasogie (2015), include suitable funding and training of the security agencies; strengthening of the armed forces with modern and efficient weapons that will effectively outmatch the weapons of the terrorists'; and tightening of the Nigerian borders to check the inflow of terrorist's into the country Felbab-Brown (2018) identified the gap the Nigerian military has in applying its strategy on counterterrorism. He argues that though the

military claims superiority over Boko Haram in terms of tactics and victory in the battle against insurgency, the military is not capable of handling the sect, or even holding onto locations that they managed to clear Boko Haram from.

One disturbing fact is that some strategies which originally should have been adopted by counter terrorists is being used successfully by the terrorist group. Rather than incorporating civilians into the fight against terrorism and gain relevant intelligence details that may assist the military, civilians are treated like suspects and are kept at a distance, by the military. Most likely, this is as a result of past experiences that have occurred when terrorists who appear to be innocent civilians infiltrate the ranks of the military, concealing and detonating explosives.

This has resulted in devastating effects which when looked at critically, one cannot fault the military for taking precaution. Boko Haram, however, frequently apply this tactic which has helped them gain valuable intelligence used to increase their victory in ambushing the military and civilians. They are recorded to have used civilians as agents of intelligence gathering at locations where they plan to attack and even have agents within the military, where they get precise information on troop's movement and strategies. Worst of all is the military's involvement in providing arms and ammunition for the sect. In 2014, Nigerian military officers were found guilty of this unthinkable crime (Wiener-Bronner, 2014). Though they were severely punished for this, it will not deter others from committing the same crime, as there must have been some form of benefits derived from this betrayal of their colleagues. With the low morale as well as the likelihood that some military personnel may share the ideologies of the sect, it is not out of place to assume that the military still have such characters within their ranks.

Felbab-Brown (2018) further argues that the huge number of casualties, especially of civilians in Nigeria, resulting from terrorism, should be credited to insurgents as well as the military. While insurgents attack locations to cause destruction, the military counter attack, unmindful of the safety of civilians around the vicinity. This has resulted in numerous deaths of civilians, by the military, and indicates that some of their strategies against terrorism may also increase the number of casualties, and will add to the victory of terrorists.

Another counterterrorist strategy that has worked against the Nigerian military involves human rights abuse where communal punishment is meted on an entire community that is suspected to harbor terrorists. The community is razed down in flames, and members of the community are physically abused by the military. This leaves civilians with no option but to flee from communities that are being approached by soldiers, in other to be saved from the wrought of the military (Ogundipe, 2018). In his summary, Felbab-Brown (2018) stated that the only way forward in eradicating terrorism in Nigeria was to dissuade the military and its militia anti- terrorism groups from being terrorists themselves. This statement is attributed to the actions of the military, taken, in extra-judicial killings of citizens suspected to be terrorists. Amnesty international had, at several times, voiced out on the issue of human rights violations by the Nigerian military as this action the military took as one of their strategies in stopping terrorism would only frighten civilians and keep them far away from terrorists as well as the military. This means that the contributions of members of the community in fighting terrorism is missing, and creates a gap in the counterterrorism process in Nigeria.

In the Nigerian context, gathering information to combat any form of insecurity has proven to be a significant challenge. Furthermore, acting on the few information tips provided has also proved difficult given the political economy of corruption, ethnicity and religious fanaticism in the country. All of these indices converge to contribute to intelligence failure when the fight against Boko Haram is taking into account. Salisu, Mohd and Adbullahi (2015), support this view when they argued that the challenge of gathering accurate and timely intelligence and security tips that could assist security organizations has been a significant clog in the wheel of progress with regard to the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency.

Theoretical Framework

The Marxist Political Economy (MPE) perspective is adopted here as the theoretical framework for this study. The theory known as the Marxist political economy was developed and nurtured by the German political economist, social thinker and revolutionist, Karl Marx, as an analytical strand of the conflict paradigm to understand the inner workings of society.

The whole theoretical architecture of the MPE rests on the basic assumption that there is a structural interface between the economic sub-system and the political sub-system in any society. However, this relationship happens in such a way that the economic sub-system defines the content and character of the political sub-system. As a result, Ryazanskaya (1993), is of the view that this established relationship between the economy and the polity becomes the unavoidable foundation upon which the overall values as well as culture and norms of any society rest.

This antagonistic relationship according to Karl Marx, is progressively replicated in all parts of society especially the political sub-system. This is perhaps why Iwarimie-Jaja and Raimi (2018) are of the opinion that Marxist political economy theory emphasizes the undercurrents of class relations and class struggle within the mode of production as the major determinant of other sub-systems in society. In other words, the antagonistic relationship between the two dominant classes specific to each historical epoch, is the social infrastructure that provides meaning to other sub-systems such as the polity, education, religion and so on. However, the relationship between these and the political structure is more deep-seated especially because of the strong alliance between the owners of the means of production and the ruling class in terms of using the instrumentality of the state and other sub-systems like religion to subjugate and exploit the poor masses.

This is perhaps why Ayodeji (2013) talks of the difference between state and individual terrorism. According to him, the ruling class and its allies always use state terrorism to protect its interest and make society unchanged and unchallenged, while the use of individual terrorism is usually synonymous with the sections of the lumpen class. In light of the above, Marxist political economy theory provides a clear understanding of the fact that insecurity is a product of the character of the exploitation associated with the economic sub-system and its extension with regard to the state as reflected in the political culture of any society. According to Amundsen (2010), the Marxist political economy approach provides a structural link between the

economy and the polity as well as how these two sub-systems in society interface with each other especially in the context of class relation and the inherent exploitation of one class by another.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design adopted for the study is the historical research design. The historical research design was adopted for the study because of its use in reconstructing the past systematically and objectively by collecting, evaluating, verifying, and synthesizing evidence to establish facts and reach defensible conclusions, often in relation to particular research questions raised. The study used a qualitative research method. The qualitative research method makes use of data that are in words which can be in written or unwritten form. The study in employing the qualitative research method made use of secondary data; data that are already in existence. Data collection for the study was obtained from secondary sources. When data are collected by someone else for a purpose other than the researcher's current project and has already undergone the statistical analysis, they are called secondary data. The study used qualitative method that involves the analysis and discussion of positive literature. The qualitative analytical method involves the discussion of the research questions based on literature that possibly provide answers to the questions raised.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that terrorist groups are able to maintain a sustained level of insurgency in the country because of the failure of the intelligence gathering system. However, this is not because there is no intelligence system at all, but that the current framework is strongly undermined by an adverse political economy structure where a section of the ruling class connive to reduce the potency of the intelligence system in order for them to maintain their hold on to power. In this regard, Boko Haram is a tool in the hands of some of the political office holders who provide economic or financial support to the group to keep them alive for their selfish interest without considering the ungodly damage that the terrorists are causing to the country.

RECOMMENDATION

- i. There is the need for the Nigerian Government to understand that the proper gathering and use of intelligence are the keys to a successful counterterrorism plan of action. The state must be active in its quest to gather the necessary intelligence from deliberately planted field agents and equipment in the bid to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group
- ii. There should be a deliberate attempt by the government to invest in the acquisition of modern intelligence gathering equipment and facilities to boost the country's intelligence gathering capacity. It is imperative that intelligence gathering, processing, analysis and dissemination as well as feedback must be increased and efficient if the war against Boko Haram is to be won.

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