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ABSTRACT

The scourge of terrorist activities arising from the deadly escapades of Islamic fundamentalists such as the terrorists in the al Qaeda network in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Taliban of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Al Shabab of Somalia, Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis of Sudan, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and, of recent, the Boko Haram sect operating in Northern Nigeria, has become a reality of our daily existence. The threat to international peace and security arising from the activities of these blood-thirsty criminal gangs and enemies of humanity is such that the survival of human civilization might well be in great jeopardy except and unless decisive action is taken by the international community to arrest the ugly phenomenon. This study x-rays the situation and recommends some measures designed to curb the menace confronting humanity. Also spotlighted is the insurgency by the Islamist Boko Haram fighters that have been rampaging some states of Northern Nigeria since 2002. The radical sect which seeks to establish an Islamic caliphate in states across Northern Nigeria and, in due course, the whole country, had been waging relentless violent insurgency attacks in the region, claiming thousands of innocent lives, abducting some victims, destroying properties, schools, churches, markets and security formations. In the last five years the federal government has also responded adequately and funded the security forces, not just the army. It is, however, feared that failure of intelligence contributed to the involvement of what looked like local rabble-rousers into a rampaging band of terrorists suspected to have links to al Qaeda and the international Jihadi networks. The researcher relied on secondary sources of data collection and reviewed extant literature on terrorism and global security as regards its background, ideology, recruitment, source of funding, supply of arms, incubation centres, and operational strategy. The study reveals that aside religion and politics, social injustice and economic imbalance between the developing countries and the rich and powerful nations are some of the causes of the grievances and frustrations that drive terrorism and international tension. The study then recommends, among other things, that social injustice and economic imbalance weighed against the developing countries of the world should be addressed by the rich nations, to be preceded by dialogue between radical Islamist nations and the advanced western powers. It also recommends that only a multi-dimensional approach among the nations of the international community can bring a lasting solution to the spread of terrorism and other forms of violent extremism.

Keywords: Terrorism, extremism, al Qaeda network, Boko Haram, security and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism, according to the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), is the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives [1]. Another writer defined terrorism as the systematic use of terror, often violent, especially as a means of coercion. The term also refers to those violent acts which are intended to create fear or terror and perpetrated for a

religious, political or ideological goal. It could deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants or civilians, and includes acts of unlawful violence and war. One of the characteristics of terrorism is the indiscriminate use of violence against non-combatants for the purpose of gaining publicity for a group, cause or individual [2]. It is practiced by both right-wing or left-wing political parties; nationalistic groups; religious extremists, revolutionaries and even ruling governments. Former United

Nations Secretary General, Koffi Annan once described terrorism as any deliberate attack on innocent civilians regardless of one's cause. Terrorists attack national symbols to show power and to attempt to shake the foundation of the country or society they are opposed to. This may negatively affect a government while increasing the prestige of the given terrorist organization and/or ideology behind a terrorist act. A good example is the September 11, 2001 United Airlines Flight 175 attack against the South Tower of the World Trade Centre in New York, United States as well as the Pentagon at the height of Osama bin Laden's global reign of terror. Israeli athletes were murdered at the Munich Olympic Games by terrorists believed to belong to the Yasser Arafat-led Palestine Liberation Organization. And so was the Entebbe (Uganda) incident involving the hijacking of an Air France jetliner with Israeli passengers on board by the same group during the reign of President Idi Amin [3]. The Lockerbie bombing of a Pan Am Airline Flight 103 that killed more than 270 passengers and crew drew the ire of the United States

It may be difficult to restrict the causes of terrorism to poverty, social deprivation, loss of cultural identity, political repression and dysfunction state; nevertheless, these factors constitute major and fundamental factors of terrorism and they are all characteristics of Africa as a continent. This suggests that Africa is a hotspot of international terrorism.

Boko Haram

It is trite to assert that not since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970 has there been a period in human history more turbulent than today in the country. More than ever before, and especially since 2009, the country has been at the receiving end of attacks from terrorists operating from not only within the country but from members of the international network of terrorist organizations that are determined to make the country one of their major bases in West Africa [5]. This is in addition to various forms of criminal activities perpetrated by the Niger Delta groups, the Middle Belt (Jos) ethnic/tribal killings, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom and Boko Haram which is considered a major terrorist threat affecting Nigeria and other countries and is believed to have direct links with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) across the Sahel region, the Al-Shabab of

against Muammer Ghadafi of Libya who was believed to have sponsored the hijacking and bombing of the aircraft. Only few months ago, terrorists struck at the United States' Embassy in Benghazi, Libya, killing the Ambassador and three of his officials. Terrorists exploits in Afghanistan and Pakistan where the Taliban group holds sway remain America's nightmare as their activities are chiefly targeted at America and the West. Recently, a teenage girl was shot by Pakistani Taliban for campaigning for girl child education. She was rushed to a London hospital where doctors are battling to save her life. She has just been recently discharged from the hospital [4]. It is reported that Africa plays host to most of the terrorist groups in the world due to the peculiar nature of the continent and the bombing of the American embassies in Nairobi Kenya and Dar es Salaam Tanzania by al-Qaeda group in 1998 marked the beginning of the introduction of terrorists' activities into Africa. In November 2002 the same group struck in Mombassa, a coastal city in Kenya. Observed Oladosu Mudasiru:

Somalia and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. One of the masterminds of the 25th December 2011 bombing of St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla, Niger State, which claimed several lives of worshippers, Kabiru Sokoto, revealed that his sect received N40 million sponsorship from an Algerian group known as Muslimiyama. Bombings had taken place in different countries across the globe, with perpetrators claiming links to the Al-Qaeda network [6]. The 2009 Christmas attempt by Umar Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian, to blow up a US jet in Detroit confirms fears of sinister terror links among groups in Yemen, Somalia and Nigeria. On Sunday 17th February, 2013, seven foreign workers of a Lebanese company based in Bauchi State, Setraco, were kidnapped and the company's security guard killed by an Al-Qaeda linked terrorist group which claimed responsibility for the

attack. The inspiration as well as the funding that the network provides has become a real source of concern to all countries and the consequences of its activities is felt in Nigeria through the activities of the fundamentalist group called Boko Haram [7]. Since the killing, in police custody in Maiduguri, of their leader, Mohammed Yusuf, the group has carried out various dastardly acts of terrorism in various parts of Northern Nigeria, attacking the nation's Police Headquarters at Abuja, the Abuja United Nations office, various churches, mosques, police and military installations, schools, markets, among other targets. Recently, the convoy of the Emir of Kano, Ado Bayero, was attacked and four persons killed while two of his sons were injured. The Emir himself was flown abroad for medical attention. It is even believed that some of the atrocities of Boko Haram are not reported to avoid inflaming the tense situation in the country [8]. Some of those arrested for various terrorists' related offences in the northern part of the country have been found to be non-Nigerians who sneak into the country to carry out their dastardly acts which have left thousands of people dead and property destroyed. According to reports, the Federal Government's intelligence arm is apparently aware of the infiltration of Nigeria by foreign Islamic fundamentalists. It was also reported that a renowned unidentified Islamic scholar and leader of a popular Islamic school believed to have escaped arrest in either troubled Sudan or the war-ravaged Afghanistan sought refuge in Nigeria allegedly hidden in Katsina for eight months by one Alhaji Musa. The report revealed that a faceless Islamic group was also recently indicted in connection with recruiting several students from Quaranic schools in Nigeria for terrorist training in Mauritania. Continuing, the report stated that the Boko Haram members behind most of the terrorists' attacks in the country are reported to have received weapons and training from the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb which has gained a foothold in Mali and is gradually spreading its influence to Mauritania and Niger [9]. It is for this reason that Nigeria wasted no time in deploying 1,200 troops to join forces with the French

troops fighting Malian rebels comprising the Tuareg tribe and Islamic insurgents as part of its contribution to the African-led International Support to Mali codenamed AFISMA to enforce peace in the West African country which had almost fallen to the al-Qaeda Islamist jihadist groups that seized almost half of the country. In its January 18, 2013 Editorial titled: "Today Mali, tomorrow Nigeria," The Times of London said: "for Al-Qaeda, the biggest prize would be the destabilization of Nigeria to the South East. Evidence abound that the insurgent group is determined to accomplish their goal and everything has to be done to stop them." Defending his decision to send Nigerian troops to Mali, President Jonathan said that Nigeria is facing daunting security challenges and given its proximity to the Sahel region, the Mali crisis, if not brought under control, may spill over to Nigeria and other West African countries with negative consequences on our collective security, political stability and development efforts. Said the President: "As a responsible member of the international community and given my recent experiences with insurgency and terrorist activities, especially in the northern part of the country, I felt compelled to urgently approve the deployment of Nigerian troops. The Nigerian Senate also supported the deployment and mandated its two standing committees to ensure that Nigerian troops were well equipped to carry out the roles they are to undertake in Mali [10]. Lending his support, the Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu noted that Nigeria cannot stand aloof as events in Mali have grave repercussions for Nigeria. Added Ekweremadu, "What is happening in Mali has great security implication for Nigeria. Like America we have to take the war to their homes. Nigeria should do this in the best interest of Nigeria; take the war to the home of the terrorists." On his part, the Senate President, David Mark, said the insurgents do not only want to take over Bamako; they want to spread their tentacles beyond Mali. The Chief of Nigeria's Air Staff, Air Marshal Alex Badey while addressing 66 Air officers joining the contingent had said that Nigeria had two targets which were to

eliminate the Islamist rebels and to ensure that they did not enter Nigeria. It will be recalled that on 19th January, 2013, two soldiers picked for deployment for the Mali campaign were killed in an explosion at Okene, Kogi State while five others were wounded as the improvised explosive device planted

Much as we have not been able to effectively contain the various conflicts in the country, we cannot afford not to be bothered about the situation in Mali. Undoubtedly, we are currently facing daunting security challenges as President Goodluck Jonathan admitted in his letter to the Senate to seek approval for the deployment. But true to his claim, our proximity to the Sahel region makes the regional intervention compelling to avoid a spill over to Nigeria and other West African countries with grave consequences on the security, political stability and development efforts. The deteriorating situation in the North of Mali, where the terrorists had taken the law into their own hands in total disregard for the government of the country, requires swift response and the time to act is now before we all get consumed by the actions of the lawless gang who don't have respect for human lives. Good enough, Nigeria is intervening in conjunction with other African countries based on the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council in response to Mali's request for international military force.

Sunday Punch of 3rd February, 2013 had reported that two Nigerian affiliates of the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb - Boko Haram and the Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina fi Biladis - Sudan are planning major reprisal to protest Nigeria's participation in Mali and had brought into the country terrorists that may be used to carry out attacks on government installations and in kidnapping high profile persons. There has been reported influx of foreign immigrants into Abuja since then for which the FCT Minister called on security agencies to be on red alert to effectively take precautionary measures against any unforeseen circumstances. He enjoined residents to be vigilant and report any suspicious movement to the security agents and

These allegations are in line with the long-held opinion of security operatives and keen watchers of the emergent situation that the Boko Haram was the creation of politicians, especially some governors who needed them to win elections, to intimidate opponents, score political points and extract relevance at the national level. These groups became larger, unwieldy and difficult to control by their sponsors. In fact, it had become an open secret that the former governors of Borno and Yobe states who held sway in the North East zone for eight years - 1999 - 2007, grand conspirators in the Boko Haram saga.

"Boko Haram has become a franchise that everyone can buy into. It's

on their route by suspected Boko Haram Islamists went off [1].

Earlier, the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. A. Onyeabor Ihejirika had confirmed that Mali trained militants were in the country and security agencies are working together to track them down. Stated Ihejirika:

called for continued collaboration and sharing of information with a view to ensuring synergy among all the security outfits in the territory [3]. It will also be recalled that in the wake of the 2009 crackdown on its members and its subsequent reemergence, the growing frequency and geographical range of attacks attributed to the sect have led some political and religious leaders in the north to the conclusion that the group has now expanded beyond its original religious composition to include not only Islamic militants but criminal elements and disgruntled politicians as well. A senior official of the sect said they had been on the payroll of a few governors in the North. Stated the Arabian Journal:

something like a Bermuda Triangle," declared current Borno State Governor,

Kashim Shettima. However, Governor Shettima has denied his government's collaboration with the group.

Condemning the sect's activities, the governor lamented:
How can a true Muslim explain, let alone profoundly justify the current unfortunate cold blooded murders and bombings in the name of Islam? Islam means peace and submission to the will of God and thus it should remain so in both theory and practice.

Also condemning the activities of the sect, Niger State Governor, Babangida Aliyu stated that "Islam is known to be a religion of peace and does not condone violence and crime in any form and Boko Haram doesn't represent Islam." The escalating activities of the sect has given rise to some individuals and groups calling for the President's resignation. The situation has been worsened by the allegation of complicity among high ranking security personnel, especially given the escape of a terror suspect, Kabiru Sokoto from custody and the fact that the President himself had admitted that the sect had infiltrated all facets of the country's polity, including his cabinet, the legislature as well as the judiciary. The fear of the dreaded sect was said to have forced President Jonathan to receive visiting British Prime Minister, Donald Cameron, in Lagos instead of Abuja. Some federal government ceremonies which normally take place at the Eagle square are known to have been moved to the inner recesses of Aso Rock Villa following threats from the sect. Observed an analyst: "Public functions are now held amidst tight security and the Nigerian government has failed to secure itself not to talk of

The Igbos resident in Kano are living with naked fear and apprehension. Though there are few of us who like to stay and defend ourselves, the majority of us, particularly, women and children, numbering over three million are jostling to leave the North (Kano), because unfolding events indicate that the North (Kano) is no longer safe for easterners... Ohaneze Ndigbo Kano, hereby calls on the governors of the Eastern states in the South-South to provide means of transportation with adequate security to evacuate our brethren who want to leave because human life is precious and should be protected as such.

Many Southerners have been forced to leave the affected states and relocate to safer states, especially the South, for fear of being killed by members of the Islamist sect, and governors of the North have bemoaned the effect of the situation on the economy of the North. It has been reported that the Kafin-Kwori market in Kano that used to make a daily

securing the "common man" as enshrined in section 14 (2c) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria [4]." One of the fallouts of the sect's activities in the northern part of the country is not only the socio-economic standstill that has enveloped the affected areas but the potential and obvious threat to the unity and corporate existence of the country as millions of non-indigenes in the area, especially Igbos and Christians who have been the worst hit are abandoning their investments and employment in the north to escape being killed by members of the sect. The insurgent group had earlier warned indigenes of the South of the country to leave the North, with a deadline to do so or face ugly consequences. Reacting to this threat and the various acts of atrocities by the group, especially those targeted against Southerners and Christians, the President, Kano State Chapter of Ohaneze Ndigbo, Hon. Tobias Michael Idika, in a press statement, called on the governors of South East and South South geopolitical zones to come to the aid of their citizens stranded in Kano State. Part of the statement read:

turnover of N255 million now makes a paltry N11 million as a result of the exit of many non indigenes. Also reacting to counter warnings from a group known as Ogbunigwe Ndigbo in the South East, many northerners hurriedly started fleeing the South East with their families, prompting the GOC 82 Division Nigerian Army, Major General Sunday Idoko, to

warn that the military was ready to counter any unrest in the area [6]. The President General of Ohaneze Ndigbo, Ambassador Ralph Uwaechue, while recalling the various bombing and killings targeted at Christians and Igbos said it was now clear that unpatriotic political and religious elements are bent on making our country ungovernable. Ibrahim Gambari, a former Nigerian Permanent Representative at the UN in a lecture at the University of Ibadan said, among other things, that Boko Haram represents a threat to national cohesion and development and has the capacity to turn Nigeria into Sudan and Dafur; and that there is no doubt that the sect and its sponsors are out to destroy the cord that ties the country together. True to Gambari's postulation, the Niger Delta militant group known as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), according to Daily Sun comment of Wednesday April, 24, 2013, signified its intention to commence bombing of mosques, hajj camps and other Islamic institutions in the country from May 31. The report quotes spokesman of MEND, Jomo Gbomo, as warning the nation, via an e-mailed statement that his group will also assassinate clerics that propagate doctrines of hatred and bomb large congregations of Islamic events in a campaign that has been code-named "Operation Barbarossa." The report states that should MEND make good these threats, there would be a dangerous expansion of the theater of terrorism in the country, with dire consequences for national security and unity. The paper advised MEND against the plan as they would be playing into the hands of Boko Haram which might like its campaign of violence to degenerate into a conflict between Christians and Muslims in the country [4]. Not too long ago members of the Oudua Peoples Congress (OPC), a pan-Yoruba militia group led by its founder and chairman, Dr. Frederick Fasehun, took to the streets of Lagos with gun-wielding youths calling on the dreaded Boko Haram to steer clear of the South West region. In an interview, Fasehun said his group was in no way threatened by the activities of the radical Islamic sect venturing into the South West, stressing that if it happens, the Oudua group would do the needful. The

activities of the dreaded group have also threatened the Federal Government's NYSC policy begun in 1973 to cement inter-ethnic, inter-tribal and inter-religious relationships among our teeming graduates as many of them have fallen victims of the group's insurgency in the north. Intending coppers now reject postings to flash points, especially the North East and North West States. It will be recalled that US intelligence analysts have predicted that Nigeria might go the way of the defunct USSR and disintegrate into at least four countries. The fear then was that the 2011 general elections might result in the prophesy falling through but the deteriorating security threats since the result of the presidential election was declared raised fresh fears that the prediction might come to pass latest by 2015. For it is not in doubt that the success of President Jonathan at the polls really riles some politicians from the North who have vowed to make Nigeria ungovernable. This prompted a commentator to lament that the security agencies appear unhelpful too, when he asked: "Have they been compromised or are they unwilling to step on some big toes like high rank retired generals, former heads of state or politicians with high security connections?" He believes that Boko Haram is a political masquerade with a religious face that may have successfully infiltrated the police and perhaps other security agencies and stressed the urgent need to expose this deadly masquerade and its sponsors and purge the police of the burden of compromised and incompetent officers and men. He concluded by asking if Jonathan could muster the political will to do the above at the risk of losing popularity in some religious camps; prompting Prof. Soyinka to state that "Boko Haram is thus clearly a case of the chickens coming home to roost, the harvest of surrender born of political cowardice and the cumulative derelictions of duty at the very apex of governance." The truth remains that if not nipped in the bud, the Boko Haram impasse could hasten the 2015 doomsday prophesy for Nigeria as other geopolitical zones are planning their response to the development. Unfortunately, the nation's leaders usually allow their religious faith to blur

their perception and appreciation of religious crisis thereby refusing to take decisive action on security reports. Under such leaders, especially those that profess the Muslim faith, suspects named in religious crises are treated with kid gloves while results of probe panels and judiciary inquiries are either swept under the carpets or shoddily implemented and later dumped. Their Christian counterparts fare no better possibly out of fear of hurting Muslim sentiments. Some Nigerians have called for dialogue with the dreaded sect in line with the 2008 dialogue between the federal government and Niger Delta militants. To this call the federal government had replied that it was willing to dialogue with the sect if the leaders are known, but it will not dialogue with a faceless group. However, some Nigerians have reacted angrily to federal government's acceptance of dialogue with the sect on the grounds that they are blood-letting criminals whose intentions are unknown. This group argue that the Niger Delta militancy is a clear case of injustice to the concerned region and, therefore, not in tandem with the Boko Haram insurgency. In response to the call for dialogue with the group, former president Obasanjo had in 2011 initiated dialogue with the group by visiting the family of the late leader of the sect, Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri where he was received by the father-in-law of the late sect's leader, Babakuru Fuggu. Fuggu was killed a few days after the former president's visit. In November 2012, the sect named another former head of state, Muhammadu Buhari and six others to mediate between them and the government but nothing came out of it as Buhari was advised by his supporters to reject the offer, perhaps for its obvious political connotations [5]. During the President's assessment visit to Borno and Yobe States, the two epicenters of Boko Haram insurgency, some Northern elders called for the withdrawal of troops from the two states, granting of unconditional amnesty to members of the insurgent group and dialogue with them and the provision of relief for displaced people. The President accepted dialogue but insisted that the troops would remain until normalcy returns to all the affected

areas. On granting of amnesty, he told his hosts in the two states that "you don't give amnesty to spirits; so far nobody seems to know who the Boko Harams are; what their grievances are, given the amorphous nature of their attacks. The best guess is that the Boko Harams have mopped into Al Qaeda franchise." In his reaction, the Borno State Governor, Kashim Shettima, urged the Federal Government to ignore the elders' call, insisting that the activities of Boko Haram were unjustifiable. Lamented the governor: "How can a true Muslim explain, let alone profoundly justify the current unfortunate cold-blooded murders and bombings in the name of Islam? Islam means peace and submission to the will of God and thus it should remain so in both theory and practice." At a stage, there appeared to be a change of heart by the group when their commander for Southern and Northern Borno, Muhammed Abdulazeez, in a statement on Monday 28th January, 2013, said that the sect has resolved to stop its violence after a dialogue with the government of Borno in Maiduguri, the epicenter of Boko Haram insurgency. He urged all its members to lay down their arms in honour of the declaration, stressing that the ceasefire had become necessary as a result of the hardship caused other Muslims and citizens of the North by the activities of the sect. He stated that security operatives were free to arrest anybody caught fomenting trouble after the perfection of the ceasefire deal [3]. On Tuesday 29th January, 2013, the federal government reacted to the ceasefire offer by saying that government would only take the peace overture seriously if Boko Haram could ensure that attacks of whatever form did not take place for 30 days from the date of the cease fire announcement. The federal government's position was made known by the Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral Ola Sa'ad Ibrahim, who said that security operatives would wait for the period to see if nobody was shot, nobody beheaded, no public place, security formation and place of worship bombed before taking the sect seriously. True to the Air Marshal's caution, recent events in the volatile areas has vindicated him as it was reported that nine health workers on immunization exercise against polio were murdered in

Kano State. Also in Potiskum, Yobe State, three North Korean doctors working on an exchange programme with the Yobe State Government were slaughtered in their apartments by unknown gunmen. Other terror incidents have equally been reported at Maiduguri, Jos and other areas less than two weeks after the ceasefire announcement, including the kidnapping of seven foreign workers and killing of a security man in Bauchi State on 17th February, 2013, confirming the rumour making the rounds that the sect has been factionalized, following disagreement over sharing of funds accruing to it from various local and foreign sponsors. A conservative estimate of those killed by the sect since 2009 is put at 4000. The figure includes those who lost their lives in reprisal attacks by security agencies [3]. Again, in a communiqué at the end of a recent meeting of Northern Leaders of Thought, Emirs and top politicians of Northern extraction in Kaduna, led by the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Abubakar Sa'ad, the group called for a general amnesty for members of the Boko Haram sect as a panacea for peace in the region and restoring the economic fortunes of the North. Subsequently, they met the President at the Aso Rock Villa with their request, and urged him to emulate the example of his predecessor, late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua who granted amnesty to Niger Delta militants in order to restore peace in the oil rich region. In his reaction, the President, on 17th April, 2013, announced the constitution of a 26-member Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North, under the chairmanship of Kabiru Saminu Turaki, to examine the amnesty request and advise him within two weeks on the desirability and workability of a possible amnesty for members of the sect. This represents a significant shift in the Jonathan administration's policy that the sect's rank and file must step out of the shadows and introduce themselves and voice their grievances. Although many Nigerians hailed the shift in the administration's position as a step in the right direction, a deluge of criticisms has also trailed the government's action. While some critics argue that the Sultan and other prominent Northerners who call for amnesty for the sect did not say

anything about the victims of mindless killings and destruction of property by the terrorists, not to talk of their bereaved families, others view government's response in setting up the committee as tantamount to capitulation. They (the critics) insist that those calling for amnesty for Boko Haram members should first prevail on them to lay down their arms and renounce violence before amnesty. They argue that the reference to amnesty for Niger Delta militants by the Yar'Adua administration was misplaced because the militants took up arms not for ethnic or religious cleansing as at times seems to be the case with Boko Haram but because of the devastation of their land by oil pollution and the total lack of development of the area by the nation which was living fat on the black gold drilled from their land. In other words, the Niger Delta militants, the critics argued, wanted a share of the booty for their region and in the absence of that, they chose to make the creeks ungovernable [3]. Also reacting to the activities of the sect and the federal government's response to the amnesty request, the Pan Ndigbo Foundation USA, Inc. (PFN-USA) under the leadership of Mr. Geoffrey Nzeadibe, issued a press release saying that Ndigbo under the auspices of his foundation condemn in the strongest terms the appeasement of the terrorist group, by the federal government. He said that the sect has terrorized innocent citizens, bombed and killed people worshipping in churches, destroyed public and private facilities and now they were being rewarded handsomely by the federal government thereby creating the apparent position of supporting or promoting terrorism in the country. Asked the group: "What is Nigeria getting for such handsome package to each and every member of that group and what did the innocent citizens of Nigeria do to provoke their terrorist acts in the first place? At what price is the Presidency willing to spend for the peace that is guaranteed by Boko Haram and at what price is the Presidency willing to pay the next Boko Haram? Pan Ndigbo Foundation-USA Inc. is strongly urging the President to reconsider and withdraw the offer of amnesty to Boko Haram." Critics of amnesty told federal

government to equally consider granting amnesty to armed robbers, kidnappers, assassins, pick-pockets and other classes of criminals that have held the nation to ransom for several years now and to also extend government's financial and other largesse to them as a way of placating them and tackling criminality in the country. Declared Okachikwu Dibia of Daily Sun newspaper of Tuesday May 14, 2013: "Granting amnesty the way it is being done in Nigeria would ultimately lead to amnesty for all Nigerians...." Dibia observed that the North has been unhappy with the granting of amnesty to the Niger Delta militants because it gave Niger Delta more access to Nigeria's funds than the other parts of the country. He concluded that applying amnesty to Boko Haram may not achieve the Islamisation of Nigeria as the sect desires just as Niger Delta had remained underdeveloped but just to enrich amnesty organizers. Others opposed to dialogue with the dreaded Islamist sect observed that it has not been able to articulate and advance the reasons for which it has been carrying out attacks. According to Adagba Okpaga et al of the Arabian Journal, "At one moment, it had claimed that it was fighting to entrench Sharia law in Nigeria, at other times it has claimed to be fighting against economic deprivations which western education has caused the country and yet at other times, it has claimed to have declared war on the President, his government and Christians." In his reaction during a recent workshop, the Niger State Governor, Babangida Aliyu, called on his brother governors to unmask members of the Boko Haram sect in their states to enable the Federal Government to dialogue with human beings and not ghosts [6]. Notwithstanding the criticisms trailing the amnesty question, the Federal Government on Wednesday 24th April, 2013 at Abuja, went ahead to inaugurate the 26-member panel to work out the modalities for the amnesty programme for members of the dreaded Islamist sect. A new twist was, however, added to

the Federal Government's acceptance of possible granting of amnesty to members of the sect as the leader of the sect, Abubakar Sheka, according to newspaper report, announced the sect's rejection of the offer of pardon from the government, insisting that it is the Nigerian government that should be asking for forgiveness from the terror group. Shekau said that his dreaded gang had not committed any wrong to deserve amnesty. True to his statement, the sect has intensified its indiscriminate killings and destruction of property, hitting army and police formations in Baga and Bama towns in the endemic states of Borno and Yobe; killing numerous police, army, SSS, civilians and prison personnel; releasing hundreds of prison inmates and torching police stations. Many of the insurgents too are alleged to have been killed and many innocent civilians caught in the crossfire between security operatives and the insurgents. As a beleaguered nation was still watching with bewilderment, Nasarawa Eggon in Nasarawa State of the North Central part of the country woke up to the horrifying incident of ambush and mindless massacre of no fewer than 50 mobile police operatives from the Akwanga-based 38 Squadron of the Police Mobile Force by a cultist group known as Ombatse cult. The operatives, many of whom were said to have been burnt beyond recognition, were on their way to dislodge members of the cult group who are alleged to have been terrorizing innocent people in the area and administering oath of allegiance to them. Many of the policemen are still reported to be missing and are feared to have been held by the cult group, while several operational vehicles belonging to the Police were burnt during the attack. It is believed that these latest incidents prompted the Tuesday May 14, 2013 Federal Government's declaration of state of emergency in the three North-Eastern states regarded as hot-bed of latest Islamist insurgency in Nigeria, namely Borno, Yobe and Adamawa [9].

METHODOLOGY

According to [8], the aim of methodology is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific enquiry but the process itself. Since the subject matter

of our study is an ongoing event and given the dreaded sect's propensity for unpredictability and capacity for wanton destruction of lives and property, the researcher adopted the qualitative

method of analysis, believing that at the end of hostilities (if ever there will be) a

comprehensive study will follow.

HYPOTHESIS

[8] defined hypothesis as “a tentative statement which is open to confirmation or rejection when expressed (subjected) to empirical verification. As an explanatory shortcut, hypothesis is a very fundamental aspect of any research endeavour because of its potential to predict a particular relationship between two or more variables in a testable form.”

In line with the above postulations, this researcher had to employ some hypothesis in order to give direction to the research work as follows:

1. Global terrorism is a veritable threat to mankind and civilization and Boko Haram is indisputably linked to other terrorist organizations outside Nigeria.
2. Boko Haram is not only a product of religious fundamentalism and extremism but also a result of high level politics and corrupt practices among the political elite.
3. Boko Haram sect represents a potential threat to the unity, indissolubility, socio-economic and political stability of Nigeria.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4Reliable data is a ‘sine qua non’ in every research endeavour in order to confer credibility on the subject under discourse. This work could not be an exception as the researcher had to adopt secondary sources such as textbooks, well researched journals, newspapers and magazines as well as the internet to elicit the necessary information

regarding the activities of the insurgents operating in the Northern part of the country. Electronic media were equally fully exploited to advantage in addition to the institutional libraries at ESUT and UNN as well as the Enugu State Library Board, all in an effort to enrich the research work.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher read extensively and quoted copiously from the different authors and commentators whose works were consulted and variously cited in this project. Going through volumes of these reports enabled the researcher to authenticate the veracity or otherwise of

the stories and to appreciate the precarious security situation in which the nation finds itself and its impact on the overall social and economic lives of the people of the country, especially in the affected areas.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The cycle of violence being unleashed on Nigerians by the fundamentalist sect called Boko Haram has been unprecedented and has heightened the fear that the hostility has gone beyond religion and politics. While it may be true that insecurity is a global problem, the main terrorist threat in Nigeria arises from the inability of government and the security agencies to effectively police the country’s borders with neighbouring African countries, thereby paving the way for illegal immigrants into the country, including religious fundamentalists from the Sahel region, notably Mali, Niger, Chad and even Cameroon. Also, the inability of government to stem the tide of poverty is central to the level of religious, ethnic and regional uprisings and insecurity being experienced in the country,

especially in the northern part. Furthermore, the debilitating effect of endemic corruption in the country is responsible for the pervasive poverty in the land. Decrying the underdevelopment of the North and eroding the legacies of Ahmadu Bello, the late Premier of Northern Nigeria in the First Republic, the former chairman of the Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, in a paper presented at a two-day summit of Northern Development Focus Initiative (NDFI), wondered what the Northern governors did with N8.3 trillion federal allocation that accrued to the region between 1999 and 2010. He accused both the legislature and the judiciary of aiding and abetting corrupt practices through their handling of corruption cases. It has been reported

that the North Eastern part of the country which remains the hot bed of radical Islamic fundamentalism and

religious intolerance has the highest rate of poverty in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

There has to be a due recognition of the fact that a fundamental link exists between national security, stability and sustainable development and these conditions can only be brought about by democratic practice and democratic institutions encompassing full respect for human rights, official accountability and popular participation. The fundamental principles should, therefore, include the ingredients of liberal democracy such as accountability, creating conditions for popular participation, a free and unfettered press, the sanctity of basic human rights, regular, free, unmanipulated and unrestricted elections and the adoption of policies and measures to ensure food security. In a recent statement, President Goodluck Jonathan debunked one of the insinuations making the rounds that poverty was responsible for the various crises ravaging the country, especially the Boko Haram insurgency in the North. The president argued that poverty has been in existence and as old as man itself. This researcher agrees that much as there is endemic poverty in the land, other extraneous factors that contribute to the prevailing insecurity in the country include, but not limited to, corruption, political struggle, inter and intra-religious acrimony, among others. It will be recalled that the President himself once lamented that Boko Haram had infiltrated government at the executive, legislative, judiciary and even security levels. Recently, the Commandant of the Army Command and Staff College at the Jaji cantonment, Major General Mohammed Isa, was accused of foreknowledge of the bomb blast of November last year in the cantonment in which 20 persons lost

their lives and many injured. Although General Isa denied the allegation, he was subsequently retired from the army, citing his age as reason. The incessant escape of some captured leaders and members of the Boko Haram sect such as Kabiru Sokoto from security custody lends credence to the President's assertion. A serving Senator (Ali Ndume) is currently facing trial over allegations of complicity in the affairs of the sect. According to a former boss of the EFCC, Malam Nuhu Ribadu, there are two things destroying Nigeria - insecurity and corruption. Ribadu stated that anybody who wants to transform Nigeria must confront those two things, as they would be the foundation upon which everything would happen... The PDP, he said, "has ruled Nigeria since 1999 and the only thing they brought to us are insecurity, suicide bombers, corruption at the highest level." The Federal Government should, therefore, endeavour to entrench good governance anchored on transparency, smooth transition, credible elections devoid of malpractices in the polity; overhaul the security agencies by sifting the bad eggs among them and showing them the way out, providing them with modern equipment to match those of the criminals and creating employment opportunities for the millions of able-bodied youths that are unemployed which constitute ready tools for criminal activities that threaten internal security. The need to control the influx of illegal immigrants from our porous international borders could hardly be overemphasized. These we should do or according to a security source, "it has come to the point we either act or see the country go down."

RECOMMENDATION

Considering the gravity of the security challenges facing the country not only from the dreaded Boko Haram but also from other insurgent groups such as kidnappers, armed robbers, ethnic militias, etc., the nation's security agencies have failed to impress many Nigerians that they are equal to the task.. On his part, President Jonathan is always busy sending condolences to the dead

and dying and issuing strongly worded statements promising to bring to book those instigating the killings in the affected states. Although, government always claims that it is on top of every security breach by criminal elements, there is obvious laxity in the areas of intelligence gathering, troop movement, arrest and trial of arrested terrorists. For long the Police have proved grossly

incompetent in this regard, necessitating the invitation of the army and other agencies. There is, therefore, the need for government to effect a complete overhaul of its security agencies, with assistance from sister counter-terrorism agencies in the advanced countries of Europe, America and Israel in the areas of training, intelligence gathering and sharing, provision and modernization of logistics. Government should reach out to countries with history of insurgency such as Turkey, Algeria, some European and Latin American countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, with a view to adopting new counter terrorism approach and changing its strategy against Boko Haram. Britain has already offered to help Nigeria combat terrorism at home. According to the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, insecurity in Nigeria could affect the British economy. It is on record that Nigeria is Britain's large trading partner. Religious fundamentalism, no matter from whatever religion, fosters instability, Governments must encourage the principle of separation of state and religion as enshrined in the constitution of the country. Religion must remain a personal affair. Large scale sponsorship of religious pilgrimages to holy lands by government constitutes unnecessary drain in the nation's treasury. Also, leaders of the major religious faiths in the country, especially those disposed to fundamentalism, should embark on the task of properly educating their adherents that killing others is no evidence of their piety. Terrorism cuts across boundaries, tribe or religion, hence Boko Haram terrorists are not easily identifiable. They go on bikes, cars, foot and dress in various shapes and forms. They make use of young alimajiris to perpetrate bomb attacks against their targets, usually the security agents. Ali Teshako, who is a member of the sect, once said that there was the suspicion that other unknown groups might be silently causing violence in some places and signing off as Boko Haram. He recalled that Yusuf in his preaching never advocated that they should rob banks or kill any person except there was a genuine reason for doing so. Therefore, rather than inter-agency rivalry among the security agencies, intelligence gathering and

sharing should be intensified by all of them. Successful terror attacks have been traced to failure of intelligence by security agencies. Government should endeavour to streamline the operations of the different security agencies to enable them work in synergy. A separate department of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency should be established within the framework of strategic security planning to train the operatives on proactive operations, counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency. Adequate funding of the security outfits is of utmost necessity. Cases of arrested terrorists should be handled with the desired dispatch in line with the provisions of the law and adequate punishment meted out to culprits to serve as deterrent to others. Government should, therefore, initiate, design and implement policy measures and strengthen institutions which adjudicate disputes, resolve conflicts and attenuate the possibility of violence. There is physical security such as provision of gadgets for security agents and social security such as empowering the people, especially the youths. It has been reported that a total of three trillion naira was spent on security alone in the country in the past three years. The security of citizens as individuals is one of the effective and efficient ways of ensuring the security of the state and government as well as providing conducive environment for economic development, so declared a social commentator, Femi Odekunle. National security demands that the government has to address socio-economic deprivation and severe wealth inequality in the country. The high level of frustration among the youth of the country due to widespread unemployment and lack of opportunities for advancement have been blamed for the restiveness in the country, especially in the north where there still exists 75% illiteracy level in some parts. Government should go the extra mile in ensuring the creation of an enabling environment for the youth to be gainfully engaged in one form of business or another as it is said that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. Again the high level of corrupt practices among the ruling class, attributable to the greedy drive to sustain a lifestyle of

extravagant spending, is a sad chapter in the country's governance. Unfortunately, existing laws on graft are old and weak. A social commentator and activist, Olisa Agbakoba, observed that the system has been overwhelmed

by the high level of corruption in the country. He attributed the helplessness of the nation's criminal justice system to the inadequacy of existing laws. Asked Bishop Kukah of Sokoto:

Will you go to the judiciary when you know quite well that you are not going to get justice?? The recent pension fund trial is a classical example. Unfortunately all the institutions set up to fight corruption, including the judiciary, have become arthritic and lacking the moral authority to fight corruption. If we think that it is these institutions that are going to fight corruption, I am sorry to say that it is not just going to work.

There is no doubt at all that extant laws against graft have not been effective in dealing with the menace, hence pliable anti-corruption agencies set up by government to check its preponderance have not lived up to expectations and have called for a review of these laws to include the establishment of a separate judicial tribunal for trying offenders. The necessary legal infrastructure or framework for speedy trial of corrupt officials should be instituted. A situation where someone who stole twenty-three billion naira is asked to refund seven hundred and fifty thousand naira and go to jail for six months is laughable. Those who loot our treasuries should be prosecuted and made to forfeit their loot to the last kobo, among other penalties. It is needless stating that corruption is responsible for the high level of under-development and poverty in the country, especially the North East. Criticizing the endemic corruption afflicting the country where the wealthy own numerous private jets in the midst of debilitating poverty among the populace, Nuhu Aliyu of the Daily Sun newspaper said: "The trajectory here is that it is both wicked and ungodly to own a private jet in a land where frustration is written in capital letters on virtually everyone's face." Echoed Eskor Toyo: "Concentrating riches, including billions of dollars, in a few hands that do not need it for basic comfort and happiness is sheer madness, especially

when at the same time millions are languishing in poverty, unemployment and misery. A society where this course is followed is simply inhuman, callous and irresponsible." Government officials profligacy and lifestyle of opulence should be checked, condemned and combated. Instead of stashing billions of naira in foreign banks, corrupt government officials should invest in physical and social infrastructure which would not be stolen but would result in multiplier effects for the prostrate local economy and provide jobs for the millions of jobless youths in the country roaming the streets and highways in search of non-existent jobs. In its comments and analysis, The Nation on Sunday stated: "...Only those with the least hope to live find comfort in mass murderous religious dogmas that Boko Haram sickeningly epitomizes....

Finally, the time has come for Nigerians to realize that security is the prime responsibility of everyone and not the security agents alone, for without information from the public, the security agents cannot perform magic. Security is for everyone and everyone should be vigilant and report suspicious movements to the appropriate quarters. On their part, the security agents should treat information from members of the public with utmost confidentiality, because the public feels insecure of giving out information to security agents for fear of repercussions of leakages.

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