



## The Nigerian State and Terrorism

Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of  
Political Science (NAJOPS).  
2012, Vol. 3(2)  
ISSN: 2992-5924  
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### Abstract

This paper interrogates the impact of the character of Nigerian state on the origin and escalation of terrorist activities in Nigeria. The menace posed by terrorists has generated great tension and anxiety across the globe, Nigeria not spared. In recent months Nigeria has lost unquantifiable property and thousands of lives as a result of the menace, yet threats and signals of imminent terrorist attacks are received daily. The paper adopted Marxist theory of post colonial state and argues that the inherent characteristics of Nigerian state account for the origin and escalation of terrorism in Nigeria. We relied essentially on secondary data generated through observation and adopted qualitative descriptive technique in analyzing them. We recommended inclusive and consultative governance as a panacea to the menace given its capacity to accommodate opposing views and interests.

**Keywords: Nigerian State, Terrorism, National Development.**

### Introduction

Contrary to the popular views held and expressed by many, security of lives and property top the basic necessities of man, followed by food, clothes and shelter. A wise man must go for safety amidst the threats of imminent death and starvation. Terrorism both at domestic and global level has recently posed serious threat to lives and property. In fact millions of lives and property put at trillions of dollars have been lost owing to various forms of terrorist acts across the globe (New York City partnership and Chamber of Commerce, 2002). The September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on United States World Trade

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Centre and pentagon, clearly demonstrated that terrorism can create unimaginable catastrophe and equally serve as a strategic weapon for the advancement of both domestic and international socio-economic and political courses. This has awoken consciousness and attention of world leaders and scholars towards the causes, impacts and remedies to the menace. In Nigeria, the menace has manifested in various forms ethno-religions killings, political assassinations, inter and intra communal clashes, kidnappings, bombings, oil bunkering and vandalization of government properties etc.

Terrorism has created hostile, dicey and unsafe polity for habitation and conduct of businesses, especially the attraction and retention of the so much desired Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), as companies are now relocating from Nigeria to neighbouring states like Ghana and South Africa. Equally movement of persons, goods and services has been highly restricted in Nigeria and South East in particular, consequently unleashing untold hardship to innocent citizens, who in the past conducted their lawful businesses unperturbed in the country.

At the political realm, the menace has engendered fear, anxiety and perplexity, especially as we are fast approaching 2011 general election. At the social front, it has poisoned and polluted social cohesion, thrust and interaction. Every one in Nigeria is either taken to be a terrorist or sponsor. This has created mistrust and mutual suspicion among Nigerians, especially the top political class. While enormous resources that would have been ploughed back into the economy are wasted in payment of ransoms to kidnappers, waging wars against other forms of terrorist acts and in beefing up security networks. At the diplomatic front, it has bastardized our image, just some months ago Nigeria was delisted from us terrorist nations list, following the attempted bombing of us plane by a Nigerian born terrorist and suicide bomber Abdulmutallab. The gross effects of the above incidents are socio-economic and political developmental retardations, which cannot be financially quantified or measured.

The character of Nigerian state is another phenomenon that calls for serious concern and attention. Nigerian state engenders and perpetuates poverty, alienation and despondency, whereas the nation is endowed with unquantifiable human and material resources to make for the comfort of all and sundry. The Nigerian state is characterized by low autonomy, absolutism, arbitrariness, weak moderating rules and absence of unity of powers.

Interestingly, this work is just part of the existing literature on state, character of Nigerian state and terrorism as scholars like Okolie (2001), Ibeanu (1998), Ake (1985), Lenin (1977), Lugard (1922), Oboh and Aisedion (2005), Ochie (2007), Laquer (1997), Young (2000), Banjo (1998), Clutter buck (1994), had treated the above subjects. However the impact of the character of Nigerian state on the origin and escalation of terrorism in Nigeria and the linkage between terrorism and good governance were obviously missing in the literature reviewed.

To guide our investigation, we posed the following questions

- a. Is the character of Nigerian state implicated on the origin and escalation of terrorism in Nigeria?
- b. Does positive relationship exist between terrorism and good governance?

***Drawing from the above, we proposed that-***

- a. Arbitrariness, absolutism and low autonomy exhibited by Nigerian state tend to account for the origin and escalation of terrorism in Nigeria.

- b. Terrorist acts properly channeled against the state may make governments accountable and responsive to needs of the citizenry.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives**

As a tradition in social sciences, conceptualization of state and terrorism will aid understanding and further give insights into the message this paper is about to convey. State as a concept has defied common conceptualization among scholars in social sciences and yet remains central in the study of social sciences and political science in particular. The Marxist political economy literature, including the work of Lenin, views the state as a product of society at certain state of development (Lenin; 1977:10). According to them is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself and has splint into irreconcilable antagonism, which it has found itself powerless to dispel. In order that these antagonisms between classes with differing economic interests might not consume the classes and society in a fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power seemingly standing above society that would mediate the conflict and keep it within bonds of order. Consequently this power, that therefore arose out of society but placing itself above it and alienating itself more and more from it is the state. To Ake (1985), the state is a specific modality of class domination in which class domination is autonomized. By autonomization is meant that the institutional mechanisms of domination are constituted in a way that they enjoy independence from the society, such that they appear, following Engel (1978), as an objective force standing alongside society. Ibeano (1998:7), following Maxiam tradition construed state as the totality of the materiality of political class domination in a society. However, Onuoha (1992), in his political economy approach to the explanation of state, remarked that a state is a specific modality for power relation in any society that has transcended communal means of production. State in essence is a mechanism, a pattern of power relation and domination in any society that has become property conscious. Thus the state is represented by government - the executive, legislature and judiciary, bureaucracies, ministries, agencies, institutions and the entire armed forces. These components of the state do not emerge with the society, rather they appear at certain stage in the development of the society. This stage is that period when the society in question became property and consequently class conscious. This usually led to the jettison of communality or what is referred as communal means of production, distribution and exchange.

Terrorism as a social science concept equally suffer lack of precise definition owing to various forms the phenomenon manifest and scholars idiosyncrasies and leanings towards the concept. However, the Merriam Webster Dictionary, defines terrorism as the systematic use of violence, terror and intimidation to achieve an end, while Black law Dictionary sees terrorism as the use of violence or threat of it, to intimidate or cause panic especially as a means of affecting political conduct. Terrorism can be construed to mean essentially the systematic use of terror or unpredictable violence against governments, publics or individuals to attain political objectives (Oche; 2007:7). Igwe (2002:439), conceptualized terrorism as a premeditated attack against non-belligerent targets, an activity aimed at intimidating the opponent either through covert, unconstitutional or unlawful warfare, or the use of illegal weapons and methods, sometimes in an undeclared and ill-defined war, with doubtful political objectives. For Oboh and Aisedion (2008:77), terrorism is a tactical employment of violence and intimidation to coerce a government or community into acceding to specific political demands. For the purpose of this work, we may operationally conceptualize terrorism as violent injurious acts targeted at victims with the aim of securing either material and non-material socio-economic or political ends.

In analyzing the impact of the character of Nigerian state on the origin and escalation of terrorism in Nigeria, we employed the Marxist theory of the post colonial state as our framework. This theory was developed by Karl Marx in his contribution to the analysis of the inherent characteristics of post-colonial, peripheral capitalist and developing states. And as a reaction to the western liberal theory of the state, which contends that the state is an independent force and a neutral observer that caters for the common interest of the community members.

In line with Marxian persuasion, a state is a product of society at a certain stage of development. It is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms - those classes with conflicting economic interests in the society, do not consume themselves in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society-that would mediate the conflicts and keep it within bounds of order and this power arises out of society but placing itself more and from, it is the state (Engles 1942:155). According to Marx, non-socialist states are instruments of class domination, exploitation, subjugation, oppression and a tool for primitive and private accumulation by the dominant class (Lenin, 1984:10, Engel, 1942:155 and Alavi, 1973:146). Therefore in non-socialist societies, the basic function of the state is to serve and protect the interest of the powerful and dominant class. This is because it inherited law autonomy, absolutism and arbitrariness from colonial state. He contended that post-colonial state is biased in favour of the dominant class, while its organs and institutions are over developed and intervene virtually in all spheres of life. Besides, the distribution of resources in post-colonial state is done arbitrarily in favour of the dominant class. He averred that the distribution of goods and services through welfare, taxation etc are mere tokenism, serving only to pacify the exploited classes from revolting against their exploiters. He submitted that the only option for the liberation of the oppressed is to overthrow such state. He concluded that human essence is defined historically and economic factors largely determine history.

It is on this platform that the incidence of terrorism in Nigeria could be explained. Nigerian state is arbitrary, absolute, over developed above all exhibits low autonomy. Besides, the absence of unity of powers, weak moderating rules and low legitimacy collectively make the state hobbessian in nature, where only the might survives. Thus, the state becomes over bearing, exploitative powerful and distributes resources in favour of the dominant class regardless of the deplorable condition of the majority masses. Thus terrorist acts become the logical step, given the failure of other measures initiated by the masses to secure concession and attention from the state. These acts stems from age long deprivation and associated frustration on the masses owing to state insensitivity, neglect and sheer partiality. Consequently, terrorism either political or criminal is an expression of dissatisfaction by the oppressed over the inability of the state to distribute resources impartially and accommodate the plight of our teeming unemployed youths in a land blessed with abundant mineral resources and wealth.

### **Origin and Escalation of Terrorism**

Terrorism is as old as human society itself. According to Oche (2007:11), terrorism dates back to the era of Roman Empire. The Roman leaders used diverse forms of terrorism to control domestic dissents and handle suspected enemies. In the same vein the Scari (Daggermen) equally displayed terrorist acts to oppose Roman domination of the land of Judea. In the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, Hashasheen, a terrorist cult in Northern Irag, also carried out the assassination of Muslin, and Christian leaders. Other terrorist groups that existed then included Indian Thugee cult (Tugs) and the southern slave nationalists, princip Gavrilo

that masterminded the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in 1914, the heir to the throne of Austria - Hungary, and his wife leading to the outbreak of the first world war. The last incident heralded the outset of terrorism in contemporary times, especially direct terrorism which is targeted at holders of power.

The first terrorism in Africa according to Oboh and Aisedion (2008:78), occurred on September 1970, where the popular front for the liberation of Palestine (PELP) hijacked four passenger planes. One of the planes forcefully landed in Cairo and the rest in Jordan. Between 1945 and 2001, terrorism spreaded across Africa and the rest of the globe like a harmattan wild fire. Notable among them was the rape of 20,000 German women by Soviet forces occupying Germany since then there have been series of terrorist acts on the states of France, Philippines, Saudi Arabia and the United States. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on US - the Pentagon and World Trade Centre, was the last stroke that broke the camel's back, in raising consciousness for and war against terrorism. Incidence of terrorism in African and Nigeria become pronounced during the invasion of Africa by Europeans in early 18th century. African resistance manifested in various terrorist acts against the invading European authority. In Kenya it took the form of gorilla warfare, incidents of abductions, kidnappings, assassinations, destruction of colonial establishments and other forms of economic sabotage became common. These activities were unleashed on Europeans by Africans in their bid to resist foreign domination. However owing to the superiority of Europeans fire power, they conquered and consequently ruled Africa. Although acts of terrorism abated following the stabilization of foreign rule, there were still instances of subtle resistance displayed by Africans following colonial maltreatment and Africans general disenchantment with foreign domination and subjugation. The end of second world war coupled with international condemnation of colonialism, majority of African countries gained independence in the middle of 19th century. Unfortunately the grant of independence to African countries with the attendant struggle for political and economic power among African leaders, terrorism assumed an automatic instrument for the advancement of political and related goals and courses. Ake (1981) succinctly remarked that post independent African states were enmeshed in political struggle to the extent that economic development was never given a thought by their leaders. Oche (2007:89-90), equally corroborated the assertion above, that post independent politics in Nigeria was characterized by political brigandage, thuggery, vandalism, arson, assassinations, violence, verbal attacks on personalities, as well as wipping of tribal and religious sentiments. According to him, these led to the declaration of state of emergency in the western region to stem the tide of political terror.

These unhealthy rivalry, competition and struggle for available political positions and resources engendered and perpetuated terrorism in Nigeria and other states in Africa. The series of hideous acts - intrigues, assassinations, economic sabotages etc that accompanied the struggle for power in post independent Nigeria consequently prepared fertile ground for military incursion into the nation's politics on 15th January, 1966. The January 15th 1966 coup d'etat and counter coup of July the same year were direct political terrorist acts aimed at not just affecting changes in governments but inflicting havoc on perceived ethnic and tribal opponents. The civil war (1967-1970), opened new vistas of terrorism in Nigeria and subsequently entrenched ethnic rivalry, suspicion and distrust in the body politic (Nnoli, 1980). Though the civil war ended in 1970, the war continued in other forms - terrorism against the state, perpetuated by dissatisfied Nigerians over Federal Government shoddy implementation of the 3RS policy - Restoration, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation. The spate of criminal activities that reverberated across the nation between 1970 and 1990 suffice as clear manifestation of the frustration of the civil war victims.

The hesitance by the military who held sway to power, to return the country to civilian democratic government, the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election, presumed to have been won by Mko Abiola, the military inflicted economic hardship, subversion of human rights and long neglect and deprivation meted on the Niger Deltans aggravated the spread and escalation of terrorism across the country, especially in Lagos, Abuja, Plateau, Kaduna, Rivers, Delta, Bayelsa, Abia states. The bombings, plane hijackings, assassinations, kidnappings, abductions, bank robberies, and restiveness in Niger Delta and ethno-religions killings that have become common occurrences in Nigeria since 1993 are clear manifestation of terrorism. Thus, is not over-statement to conclude that terrorism has taken a firm root in Nigeria with its attendant socio-economic and political consequences?

### **Forms and Causes of Terrorism**

A careful examination of the trends and development of terrorism in Nigeria will reveal that despite numerous means the menace manifest, terrorism takes two broad forms - political and criminal terrorism. It is pertinent to remark that terrorist acts emanating from socio-economic and political differences, struggles and injustices once directed against the state fall under political terrorism. The state here, is represented by the government, bureaucracies, agencies, establishments, armed forces and even personalities who may not necessarily be in state service but are beneficiaries or have benefited directly or indirectly from the state. The series of bombings across the nation, the hijacking of Nigerian Airways Airbus A310, in 1993 by movement for the Advancement of Democracy (MAD), following the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential election, high profile assassinations, the initial kidnapping of expatriate workers in Niger Delta Region, vandalization of oil and other public installations by militants and other sub-nationalists fighters, ethno-religious killings and Boko Haram Saga in the North are all instances of political terrorism. The aim and purpose of political terrorism is to wreck havoc and thus draw state attention to perceived injustices or course that needed redress.

There is no economic motive attached to political terrorism, although ransoms can be paid, the payment of such ransoms does not necessarily end political terrorism, neither is the ransom the original or intended goal pursued. Most often the ransom paid is ploughed back by the terrorist for procurement of more sophisticated weapons and other logistics for furtherance of their course. Besides, the affluent and highly connected are always the patrons and financiers of such terrorist networks. Investigation has revealed that top politicians and business moguls were behind most of the political terrorist acts cited above (Cole, 2009) in Nigeria.

Criminal terrorism on the other hand is an extension of criminal behaviour by other means. It involves the use of terror or threat of it to rob off innocent and unsuspecting public their valuables, under the guise of fighting a course. The aim of criminal terrorism is self-enrichment (primitive capital accumulation). Both the rich and poor indulge in the act. The list of criminal terrorism in Nigeria is endless. The spate of criminal activities witnessed in the county just after the civil war, oil bunkering in Niger Delta, bank robberies, inter and intra communal and ethnic clashes usually accompanied by massive looting of public and private property as witnessed mostly in the Northern part of the country and Lagos State suffice as evidences of criminal terrorism in Nigeria. Lately, the indiscriminate kidnappings, abductions, looting and destruction of innocent properties in the South Eastern part of the country, particularly in Aba also fall under criminal terrorism. Criminal terrorism is usually not linked to any course, it is rather criminal activities perpetrated by lazy and employed miscreants, often sponsored by greedy and selfish highly connected and wealthy Nigerians.

Political terrorism can broadly be attributed to grievances differences and injustices engendered by the prevailing socio-economic and political regimes and practices. Globally, acts of terrorism are induced by ethno-religious and nationalist struggle, chauvinism, hegemony, ideological and racial contests, leadership succession and legitimacy crises, leadership insensitivity, arbitrariness, corruption and uneven distribution of state resources, state induced poverty and unemployment amidst provocative display of affluence by the privileged few. While criminal terrorism like other social crimes on the other hand is traced to poverty, unemployment, greed and inordinate ambition for material possession.

### **The Character of Nigerian State and Terrorism**

Nigerian State is a historical phenomenon and could be traced to colonialism, which was the phenomenon that gave birth and structured it. It possesses a dynamic character anchored on the historical conditions of its emergence and development. Thus for one to appreciate the characteristics, the relevant historical conditions and specificities of the present Nigerian state must be understood first. Nigerian state is a product of colonialism which came about precisely at the later half of the 19th century, which could be attributed to the events that took place in the capitalist societies of Europe. These events were the concentration and centralization of production and capital to the extent that giant monopolies emerged as the singular most decisive elements in the economic sphere (Okolie, 2001).

According to him, the thrusts of British colonial policy were to keep the colonial people in political subjugation in away to facilitate easy exploitation of the material and human resources and to establish capitalism as the dominant mode of production. Consequently, state power was aimed at maintaining that pattern of economic life. The establishment of capitalist mode of production had certain implications for future development of the country. At independence there was no fundamental restructuring of the pattern of economic production, thus political domination was sustained. Okolie (2001), identified relatively low level of autonomy and over development of the state as basic features of post-colonial Nigerian state. These features are the fallouts of the characteristics of colonial state, which according to him was repressive, totalitarian and absolute. The above characteristics of post Nigerian state as enunciated by Okolie (2001) are not exhaustive; others include arbitrariness, weak moderating rules and absence of unity of powers. These features are central and decisive because they create and sustain the existing social relation of production and reproduction which are cardinal to the stability or otherwise of a given political system. The impacts of the above characteristics on the origin and escalation of terrorism in Nigeria remain enormous and shall form the plank of our subsequent analysis.

On the state arbitrariness, we must recall that following the departure of the British, the indigenous political class inherited and assumed the reins of state governance. They initiated polices, programmes and put in place necessary legislations that will take the emerging nation - state to the desired destination. The emerging ruling class hardly completed their first tenure when they got enmeshed in intense struggle for political succession which led to the abandonment of the political rules in preference to naked power and might. The will and aspirations of the electorate were thrown to the dust bin as the political class desperately struggled for political power in a bid to perpetuate themselves in office and hold sway their firm grip in the prevailing mode of production. They resorted to raising ethnic sentiments, religious prejudices and subverted the electoral power of the masses through unbridled electoral fraud and malpractices. The spate of electoral fraud and the restiveness it generated, including mid western crisis of 1954 was better imagined.

The political rules they put in place to guide the conduct of politics were never obeyed rather ballot boxes snatching, thuggery, arson, intimidation of political opponents became the order of the day. The delay in the appointment of prime minister - Alhaji Tafawa Balawa by president Nnamdi Azikiwe, suffice here as evidence of unhealthy political development in the era. Like their colonial mentors, subjugation and domination permeated into their thought process that they were insensitive to the dictates of public opinion and expectations. To Ake (2003), post independence politics was tensely constituted that development was never in the agenda of our leaders. This attitude of politicians cumulatively prepared the fertile ground for the military intervention of January 1966.

Regrettably the military regimes that succeeded the short lived republic did not help matters as the fledging democratic institutions and constitution were dismantled and suspended in place of arbitrary and autocratic rules. To stabilize their administration, the military junta marshaled out edicts and decrees and cowed the public into submission through the instrumentality of state coercive machinery. Mismanagement, arbitrary and uneven distribution of state resources became the prevailing order, whereas it were cited by the junta as among the reasons why they struck. Expectedly the military junta should be corrective and remedial in nature rather than falling into the same mistakes made by their civilian predecessors. Such arbitrarily allocated resources ended up in the pockets and private accounts of their crannies, ethnic and political affiliates at the detriment of the languishing majority. The regimes of IBB and Sani Abacha readily come to mind, as they were most notorious among the military regimes in arbitrariness and insensitivity in the management of public fund. Besides, the IBB regime despite imposing the unpopular structural Adjustment Programme and other draconian economic policies truncated the so much awaited transition to civil rule by the annulment of June 12,1993 presidential election, presumed to have been won by M.K.O Abiola. This singular act ignited and fanned the embers of ethnic suspicion and opened new vistas of terrorism that reverberated across the nation.

The involuntary exit of IBB from power launched the nation into another agonizing military dictatorship and autocracy that subverted human rights and incarcerated perceived political opponents. It was under Abacha regime that Nigeria assumed full pariah status. The shoddy handing of the rising agitation by the Niger Deltans for fair share of the resources being extracted from their home soil saw to the emergence of terrorism in the region that persisted up to this day. The two million man march organized by Sani Abacha for his succession bid availed Niger Deltans the opportunity of comparing the developmental pace in major cities in Nigeria. They came to shocking realization that Abuja symbolized a mini London, when compared to their environmentally uninhabitable states, despite that the resources used for the development of Abuja were extracted from there. However instead of exploring political solution to the looming crisis, Abacha Sani aggravated the situation by hanging Ken Saro Wiwa and nine others. Pro-democracy movements, the press, organized labour and other non governmental organizations equally got their fair share of state organized vendetta, repression and victimization. His security Adviser Hamza Mustapha became a symbol of repression and oppression and was dreaded by even members of the ruling junta.

In 1999 the state was thrown into another phase of arbitrariness and leadership insensitivity to the desires and aspiration of the populace as Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's administration was a mere continuation of military autocracy through civilian means. He was a lion in a sheep's apron. The deployment of soldiers to Udi, Bayelsa state on massacre mission, state sponsored press attacks, victimization of political opponents and arbitrary privatization and commercialization of state owned establishments regardless of



the lamentations of Nigerians, balkanization of organized labour, arbitrary increase of pump price of petroleum products were clear evidences of leadership arbitrariness and insensitivity. Despite the shuddy manner the state owned enterprises were privatized and commercialized, there was no adequate arrangement for the compensation and absorption of the affected workers as they were thrown into the already saturated labour market. While they waited endlessly for their severance and retirement or disengagement benefits, the ejected workers were left with no other option but to join already frustrated masses in waging war against the state. The most worrisome aspect of the privatization was that Obasanjo and his vice, Atiku Abubakar and their cronies bought virtually all the shares of the privatized enterprises and yet could not accommodate the plight of the masses affected by the privatization and commercialization exercise. Besides, the importation of essential commodities like cement, food stuff, petroleum products were arbitrarily allocated to their cronies, stooges and political affiliates. The likes of Dangote Aliko, Adenuga were synonymous with commodities importation in Nigeria. This undermined the forces of supply and demand to determine commodities prices and further deepened the hardship of the masses. The Marshall law that saw to the seizure of vessels of Ibeto cement over price differences with Aliko Dangote is still fresh in our memory as clear case of arbitrariness.

This was evident in the series of mass actions and restiveness witnessed across the state between 1999 and 2003. Sub-nationalist movements like Odua People's Congress, Arewa Consultative Forum, MASSOB, MEND etc emerged and wrecked havocs on the lives and property of the unsuspecting Nigerians under the guise of attracting state attention. The seed of current Jos, Plateau state crisis was sown within this period. Spirited efforts made to convince him to convene Sovereign National Conference that would have provided us a medium to vent out the bottled anger and redefine our national course were aborted,

With time, the agitations in the Niger Delta, region grew into intense restiveness - oil bunkering, kidnapping and vandalization of oil installations and equipment. The situation deteriorated that he was compelled to convene the pseudo sovereign national conference called Political Reform Conference in 2005.

Towards the end of his second tenure, Obasanjo initiated measures including sponsoring a bill for tenure elongation. It was at the point that Nigerians realized, he never meant well for the country. The National Assembly in its wisdom rose to the challenge and consequently killed the bill. His ambition having been scuttled, Obasanjo retaliated by persecuting opponents with Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and other anti graft agencies. However on 29 May, 2007, he foisted late President Musa Ya'radua on Nigerians through sham called general election. Regrettably, the seeds of discord, animosity, hostility and restiveness planted by his predecessor made governance an up hill task as the Niger Delta crisis almost paralyzed the economy. Economic activities in the region including oil production were halted which trickled down to the entire economy, as the state could not finance her annual budgets following shap drop in the expected oil revenue. Consequently the degenerated crises in the region compelled Yar' Adua to initiate the amnesty deal that expired on 1st October, 2009. Accepted that the deal brought momentary respite and relative calm in the region, but-kidnapping and other forms of criminal terrorism remain unabated particularly in the South Eastern part of the country. To stem the tide a number of security measures were taken which culminated in the removal and reshuffling of top security chiefs in the country including the then Inspector General of Police Ogbonna Onovo.

The arbitrary interpretation and application of section 144 and abuse of section 145 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, following the absence of Musa Yar' Adua on health ground was another glaring display of arbitrariness and leadership insensitivity. It took the intervention of well-meaning Nigerians and the National Assembly to restore normalcy in the polity.

The inherent low autonomy of Nigeria state makes mediation of inter and intra-class conflicts and competition, especially as concerns production and reproduction of social and material existence impossible. This is due to the appropriation of the state by the dominant class. Consequently, the state became a tool in their hands, to manipulate for the sole aim of accumulating greater part of its resources. The state by extension enrich the dominant class through contracts awards, appointments, privatization and commercialization exercise, waivers and import licenses for monopolistic importation of certain products and services. Whereas the masses are impoverished by such preferential practices. This biased disposition of the state creates cracks, divisions while resistance by the oppressed class leads to eruption of violence against the state, usually tagged terrorism. The class which now controls the state further through their privileged positions expand their economic base at the detriment of the languishing majority.

On absolutism, which relates to the interventionist and overdeveloped nature of state institutions, equally creates fertile ground for escalation of terrorism in Nigeria. Nigerian states intervenes and control virtually all aspect of our national life, including religion and culture. The unfortunate thing is that the state does not only intervene but takes side. Ake (1985) acknowledged this when he averred that peripheral capitalist state is interventionist, dependent, authoritarian and exploitative, features he ascribed to all capitalist states. To Ezirim and Mbah (2011), the peripheral capitalist state is all powerful, omnipotent, totalitarian and intervenes in all spheres of societal, life, especially the economy and election which have become important instrument for ascendancy to state power. These features were inherited from colonial state, which forcefully established capitalism amidst resistance from the conquered but restive populace. They opined that the intervention in the economy including the electoral process becomes attractive to this state in order to enable the class that control it advance their economic base. Thus, the struggle to ascend to state power becomes fierce where everything including assassination of perceived political opponents is deployed to achieve victory. This erodes legitimacy and makes our leaders dictatorial given that they did not emerge through the power of the votes of the electorates, who feel that their electoral power has been usurped. The post election violence, demonstrations, bombings, riots etc since independence are evidences of the alienation of the masses from the electoral process.

Low legitimacy, lack of unity of powers and weak moderating rules are other attributes of Nigerian state that account for the escalation of terrorism. The aggregate effect of low autonomy, absolutism and arbitrariness of Nigerian state is lack of faith in the state by the people. Given that the state lacks legitimacy, it relies largely on the use of force to securing compliances and implementation of her policies like her colonial forbearer. Thus the masses become the victims of despotism and totalitarianism (Abada and Albert 2011). The State exist as prebends parceled out to various sectional and individual interests, either as ethnic religious groups or god fathers. Given the above politics the medium through which the primitive capital accumulation is made possible becomes fiercely prebendal as ethnic and individual interests engage themselves in a total contest for increasing and extending their share of the powers of the state and the enormous economic advantage therefrom (Joseph, 1987:28). This engenders terrorism, the post election violence witnessed in April/May, 2011 in Nigeria suffice as a case study.

The rules put in place to guide the conduct of government business including politics and production process are never obeyed. The political class constantly modifies the rules to suit their changing interests and choices regardless of the impact such may have on the stability of the nation. A peep into frequent changes and amendments in the electoral laws suffice here as good example. The sudden abandonment of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDF) zoning principle was implicated on the spate of bombings that preceded PDP primaries in January 2011 (Ajayi, 2011). Besides, the existing laws do not emanate from the desires and expectations of the people, they were enacted to reflect the desires and interests of the powerful class against the oppressed. Even the grand norm, the constitution, from where other laws take root did not evolve organically. The masses did not take part in its enactment as it was hurriedly foisted on us by president Abdulsalami Abubakar regime. Thus the nagging national questions, the sources of agitations and restiveness could not be accommodated in it (Mbah, 2007:188). A country where the rulers and the influential disregard the laws is typical of a Hobbesian state of nature where the mighty and powerful prevail at the detriment of the weak.

Oboh and Aisedion (2008:75), argued that in most African states terrorism is state and government generated as a result of the insensitivity and incompetence of the regimes on the continent. Thus given the character of the political leadership in most African states, the targets of their security deployment becomes critics of their self-serving policies and those critics of government policies are branded as enemies and terrorists of the state. According to them, the implication of bad governance is general discontent which could easily lead to internal strife which eventually give rise to what governments regard as terrorism.

The implication of the foregoing analysis on the origin and escalation of terrorism in Nigeria remains enormous. It is logical that a country inhabited by citizens who have unequal access to power and other resources of the state breeds injustices, frustration and aggression towards their leaders and the few favoured by the regimes. Equity and justices demand that state resources should be shared through a widely accepted formula rather than discriminatory allocation. Thus incidence of terrorism emanate from age long neglect and disaffection over the manner in which the political class/Elite amass and loot public wealth at the detriment of the languishing majority. Terrorists may given security barriers unable to hit public office holders, state establishments and unprotected beneficiaries of the state become inescapable from terrorist attacks. This account for the vandalization and bombings of public utilities, police stations, oil installations, kidnapping of prominent Nigerians and expatriates in oil service, bank looting/robberies, incitement of mass riots, religious sect killing (Boko Haram Saga), Jos crises etc.

National Political Reform Conference convened by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2005, in place of the most desired Sovereign National Conference could not address the bottled up anger, grievances and agitations as the exercise was mere window dressing given the enormity and complexity of injustices in Nigeria. Thus it becomes logical to link the Niger Delta crises between 2005 and 2009 to the inability of the conference to address satisfactorily the demands placed before it. In the same vein the disagreement among the political class over the zoning of the presidency must have ignited the recent bombings and violence witnessed across the country before and after April presidential election. This is because the Northern politicians felt betrayed given the manner the zoning principle of Peoples Democratic Party was interpreted and applied.

### **Terrorism and National Development**

The impacts of terrorism on national development are unarguably enormous and overwhelmingly unimaginable. Terrorism is like a coin, it displays two faces as the effects on national development may be either positive or negative.

On the negative side, terrorism is destructive and retards socio-economic and political development of the affected entity. Both political and criminal terrorism had led to loss of lives and unquantifiable property. The series of bombings, kidnappings, armed robberies, ethno-religious crises, vandalization of public installations, oil bunkering and other forms of economic sabotage across the country speak volumes of the destructive nature of terrorism. The economic disincentives of terrorism can never be quantified. The kidnapping activities in the Niger Delta and South Eastern Nigeria have scared away potential investors and the most wanted Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Besides, the phenomenon has forced already existing businesses to relocating to neighbouring countries like Ghana, South Africa, Sierra Leone etc. The expected jobs and revenue are equally lost in the process. Thus the state and citizens grow poorer and hapless. Moreover, cost of production following extra expenditure on security by the investors becomes higher forcing consumers to pay through their noses to procuring goods and services. The economic wastes and losses following reinstallation of oil equipments blown up and oil bunkering add to the negative effects of terrorism. Moreover the political economy of fighting terrorism is enormous as resources that would have been ploughed back into the economy are spent in payment of ransoms and fortification of state security networks.

On the political scene, terrorism has heated up the polity and created unprecedented restiveness and tension. The recent bombings across the state and series of politically motivated killings are unhealthy given our quest to consolidate democracy in Nigeria. Besides, mass participation in elections and the entire political process are discouraged and undermined, given the hostile climate created by terrorists. The reality is that the next victims of terrorist acts are unknown, consequently the electorate develop apathy and abstain from public engagements. The euphoria and enthusiasm that are usually exhibited by new political entrants quickly die after risk assessment, while the masses are discouraged from voting paving way for the emergence of unpopular candidates who delight in violence.

Terrorism equally bastardizes the national and diplomatic image of a country. The endemic Jos crises, Boko Haram Saga and the attempted bombing of American plane by a Nigeran have attracted recently negative comments about Nigeria from international scene.

On the social front, the mutual tolerance and understanding that existed among Nigerians, religious and ethnic groups have been shattered, following irreconcilable ethno-religious crises. Mutual suspicion pervades the state as the perpetrators of these crimes are yet to be uncovered. Our places of worship have turn to terror targets while followers worship under intense fear and anxiety.

Conversely, terrorism, particularly political terrorism can equally promote good governance and by extension national development.

Political terrorism when properly channeled against the state-state institutions and agencies over perceived injustices can alter government policies and actions to the desired directions. Having established the fact that manifest characteristics of Nigerian state encompasses state arbitrariness, low level of autonomy, over development of state institutions, weak moderating rules and absence of unity of powers account for the origin and escalation of terrorism in Nigeria. Terrorist acts targeted against a state that possesses above features will likely produce good effects. The contention of this paper is that

terrorism does not only negatively affect the state but can positively impact on the performance and character of state. As noted by Karl Marx the end products of conflicts, agitations, disagreements and crises are peace, understanding and order. In the same vein terrorists acts against the state will make state institutions and occupants responsible and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the masses. Terrorist acts against the state over perceived injustices can serve as a tool to redirecting the mind of our leaders towards primitive capital accumulation at the expense of the impoverished citizenry. The irrepressible militant activities in the Niger Delta region which began after General Abacha's two million man march in Abuja and abated following president Musa Yar'Adua's amnesty deal speaks volumes on the capacity of terrorism to enthrone good governance and by extension national development. The amnesty deal is a clear acceptance of defeat and guilt by Federal Government, following age long neglect, deprivation and abandonment meted to Niger Deltans. The activities of the militants compelled Federal Government to establish ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, Niger Delta Development Commission and initiate developmental programmes including manpower development in the area. These gestures by Federal Government have contributed to the development of the region and the nation at large. Moreover, the relative calm and peace enjoyed in the region today has increased economic activities, particularly oil production which constitutes the greatest percentage of our national income.

Good governance is characterized by accountability, responsiveness and identification of leaders with the problems, needs and aspirations of the led. It provides the enabling environment for tapping the resources and talents of the citizens towards achieving the developmental goals of the state. Good governance creates the opportunity for citizens participation in policy initiation and implementation, thus through such medium their interests and aspirations are accommodated. In a democratic society the relevance of civil society organizations lies in their ability to sway public policy to favour the masses. But when such groups are alienated and policies foisted on them, strikes, demonstrations, riots and other subversive measures becomes the logical steps to be taken in addressing the perceived injustices. The incessant increment in the pump prices of petroleum products and the sharp practices that accompanied privatization programme in Nigeria under president Olusegun Obasanjo administration were greeted by strikes, demonstrations and riots by the masses, labour and other civil society organizations. Their actions forced government to alter their policies, reduce prices and revisited the privatization exercise under late President Umaro Musa Yar Adua. In the same manner, terrorist acts against the state, by any group whatsoever are equally aimed at attracting state attention and patronage. The degree of response by the affected state, often is determined by the genuiness and imperative of the course pursued by the group. The common denominator between influencing government policies and actions through terrorist acts and laid down rules is that both are aimed at redressing a perceived injustice. State targeted terrorist acts do not only possess the capacity of altering governmental policies and programmes but will equally fast track their implementation.

### **Combating Terrorism in Nigeria**

Although the paper argues that properly channeled terrorist acts can sway for the better government policies and programmes, by extension enhance national development, terrorism does not serve as legitimate means of advancing interests or seeking redress. It is a misnomer when placed on the screen of civility. It creates more damage than remedies, thus efforts made towards combating the menace will be appreciated.

The demand for sovereign national conference should be revisited by the present regime. As we argued earlier, the resurgence of militant activities in the Niger Delta region is not unconnected with the failure

of the National Political Reform Conference to address demands placed before it by the Niger Deltan delegates. A sovereign national conference, which draws membership and inputs from states, ethnic and religious groups will go along way addressing grievances and injustice bottled up by such groups. It will offer Nigerians the opportunity of airing their views on the manner and shape our federal structure should take. It will provide the platform for redefining the scope and powers of federal, state and local governments vis-a-vis the nature of relationship to exist among them. Federalism as a mechanism for managing ethno-religious and socio-cultural pluralism and diversity should be conceived as a process, subject to changes, modifications and appraisals to make it ever current and reflect the ever changing and dynamic political reality.

Social justices which entails giving individuals and groups fair treatment and equitable share of the benefits of society remains cardinal in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria. It is aimed at improving the wellbeing of the masses based on equitable enjoyment of social, political and economic rights. In this context, it involves equity and fairness in the distribution and allocation of state resources across sex, age, states, ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria. It holds the key to the entire wellbeing of the masses—affordable education, healthcare services, employment opportunities, security of lives and property and avails citizens on equal basis the services of the state (availability and accessibility to social amenities). It creates opportunities for self actualization, encourages political pluralism, religious tolerance, balancing of ethnic interests and social cohesion. Social justice creates and makes citizens feel the impact of belonging to political organization and expectedly will never wage war against a body they belong to. Above all, distribution of state resources should reflect the core principles of federalism while major contributors to the nation's wealth should be given a corresponding share.

The core tenets of rule of law should be strictly applied to the letter. Politicians should learn to abide and play by the rule of political game. Rule of law should take precedence over whims and caprices, while arbitrary alteration and application of existing laws should be resisted. The managers of state affairs should imbibe the culture of consultative representation and governance. Transparency, due process and accountability in governance should be promoted. State polices must be legitimized and driven from the needs and expectations of the governed. The inalienable rights of citizens, particularly right of expression should remain absolutely unfettered, as democracy strives better amidst criticisms from the opposition. This will pay way for ventilation of ideas, grievances rather than resort to arms and violence for the purpose of drawing attention and concession from the state.

The electoral system as the ultimate medium for ascendance to power should be made transparent, free, fair and credible to command the confidence of the electorates. The electorates must be involved and made to appreciate the essence of their electoral power in the selection of their leaders. Regime legitimacy is the driving force for mobilization of the citizenry and state resources. Such legitimacy takes root from the acceptability and recognition by the masses of the electoral process. Electoral process is recognized and acceptable when the masses are carried along in the formulation of electoral laws and when political game is dictated by the letters of such laws. The emergence of true leaders, whose regimes will reflect needs and aspirations of the masses can only be realizable through free, fair and credible elections.

The boundary of powers and roles of the state, religion and civil society should be clearly delineated; this will minimize state interference in virtually all aspects of citizen's life including religion. Ethnicity and

religions should be depolitized, as the politization of the two has been responsible for virtually all the crises in Nigeria (Nnoli 1986).

**Conclusion**

Terrorism both at the domestic and global level has undermined development given losses in lives, property, and resources committed in waging wars against it. States, particularly in Africa, should embrace the culture of consultative governance and fine tune their policies to reflect the yearnings and aspirations of the masses from where their authority was anchored. Development as a collective affair, cannot thrive when half of the population is bent on sabotaging state efforts, neither could it triumph in violent endemic society. This is because, the much needed, Foreign Direct Investment can only accrue to countries where peace reigns. The led equally should appreciate that recourse to violence in pursuit of interests has done more harm than good. Thus dialogue, constructive criticisms and other civilized measures should be explored. This will save the country lives, property and resources hitherto lost in terrorism and the war against it.

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