Abstract
This paper discusses Boko Haram Insurgency as a threat to Nigeria’s oneness. In 2009 a Jihadist group called Boko Haram started an armed rebellion against the government of Nigeria. The findings of this study reveal that the main aim of this group was to establish within the country an Islamic caliphate which would allow for the implementation of Sharia by overthrowing the government through an armed rebellion. In other words these insurgents were out to weaken, subvert and threaten the government of the day. They seek greater expansion and consolidation with a view to staking their claim for territorial control of a particular area that would serve as their base in line with their ideology. Terrorism destroys the main fabric of any nation because it weakens the country internally, thereby exposing her as an easy prey to external aggressors. In Nigeria, this insurgency enthrones poverty, lawlessness, confusion and tends to destroy the sense of orderliness. Boko Haram has multi-dimensional approaches to ensuring that radical Islamism and militancy are enthroned. This paper recommends that the solution to terrorism in Nigeria is linked with the issue of poverty and job creation which must be addressed properly by the government. This is because most perpetrators of this crime are jobless youths. The methodology used in this work is historic-descriptive which means that the schemes of the Boko Haram group were carefully studied and interpreted based on its multiple divisive consequences.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Insurgency, Threat, Nigeria, Oneness.

Introduction
Ethno-religious conflicts are endemic problems of Nigeria as a nation. Since the Maitatsine uprising in Kano in the 1980’s, Nigeria has witnessed several other crises, with each incident presenting its own peculiarity and sophistication. “This usually comes in the form of violent attacks on the masses which leave many killed and others maimed or seriously wounded. The recent ethno-religious conflicts by the Boko-Haram sect is not an exception”. (Chigbo 2012; 1). The Boko Haram phenomenon is one of the ethno-religious conflicts that set out to establish core Islamic values and practices. Many Nigerians have lost their lives since the inception of their revolution. This is because according to Chigbo (2012; 1) “their relentless and dastardly acts of violence targeted at civilian population rival in brutality that of the Visigoth and the Vandals that plundered Rome”.

They have made suicide bombing their trade mark and a terrorist weapon to achieve their aim. The country not only experiences violent destruction of property by this group but the willful and deliberate destruction of oneself and a targeted group in a bid to erroneously obey Allah the Creator. This particular development makes the Boko Haram phenomenon a peculiar one.

This menace of suicide bombing by this religious sect sends jitters down the spine. Man is reduced to mere object where the death of human beings is made into a weapon to achieve other ends. To this end Faruk (2012:2) opines that;

Suicide bombing is a willful attack that is meant to be carried out on a targeted group with the knowledge and self awareness that death is imminent not only for the targeted group but also for the agent of destruction who sacrifices himself or herself as tool of mass destruction.

The major objective of this kind of terrorism is to get the targeted audience and oneself blown up to death. Its own uniqueness is in the fact that if the terrorist does not kill himself, the attack is looked upon as
a failure. The pre-condition for the success of the terrorist attack lies in the death of the suicide bomber and many others. This evil cannot be attributed to insanity of course since one of the criteria for choosing to embark on the mission is first and foremost sanity. When one takes a closer look at the persons-involved in these activities, it shows that they suffer neither from despair nor mental disorder or derangement. In fact, the enthusiasm with which they long and volunteer themselves for such is what baffles one. They still consider their action pleasing to Allah in spite of the fact that they kill themselves and others in the activity

Ideologies of this Sect

In Hausa, the word “Boko” is used popularly to refer to the formal public or private educational system. In Nigeria, it is also used to refer to western secular education. In the classical Hausa language nevertheless, the word “Boko” literally means deceit or deception. “Haram” on the other hand has its etymology from the Arabic language. In Islam it means forbidden, prohibited or unacceptable. The “Boko Haram” members however do not call themselves by that name rather they consider themselves as Jama’atu Ahl as-Sunnah Lid-da’awah wal-Jihad, which in Arabic means “people committed to the propagation of the prophet Mohamed’s teachings on Jihad”. The term Boko-Haram is a coinage of the press and the residents of the northeastern city of Maiduguri, where the group has its headquarters. This is why according to Chothia (2012:2).

From the name they gave themselves, one understands that members of this group are not only interested in the eradication of the western system of education and establishment of Islamic system of education, but also seek as its political goal the creation of an Islamic state with the Islamic school or mosque being a recruiting ground for jihadists to fight the state.

Members of the Boko Haram sect as depicted by its name considers western education to be evil and must be wiped away. For them western education is one of the means through which the westerners corrupt their belief system and practices. In fact, it is the single major factor militating against the implementation of a complete Islamic system especially in Nigeria. What more, they jettison the idea of western education and consequently the idea of gainful employment. They believe that it is evil to be employed and paid wages as it is associated with western culture. The reason behind this view is not only that it is associated with western culture, but it is also believed that when one is working, one will hardly devote enough time to worship Allah. Hence these go against the original plan of the creator (Allah) who created human and spirit (Jinn) to worship him. As an alternative to white collar job, they encourage their members to uphold trading as occupation, as that rather conforms to the Sunnah. (Chiothia 20:2:2012).

(Sunnah is a book containing the teaching of Mohammed. This is believed to be part of the revelations he received from Allah which by tradition is passed on to the Islam).

For them therefore, the only alternative to western education is an educational system that is based on the teachings of the Qur’an and Sunnah as the earliest generations of Muslims (Salaf) understood it. Besides they have grievances regarding any aspect of life that is not in accordance with the interpretation of Sunnah or the Sharia – these include the political, social, economic and legal systems etc. In fact, they have resorted to terrorism and violence as the only means through which they could achieve their aim. Nevertheless, the question remains, can they achieve their aim through terrorism? Is there any justification for their act? It may be the Koran and the Hadith have something to say on this as they see it as the major source of this teachings.

Justification of their Action from Qur’an and Hadith

The two great sources of reference from which the life of Islam is drawn are the Qur’an and the Hadith. One is forced to review the teachings of these books, following the driving force that propels the Boko Haram with regard to their actions. This is with the view to creating a nexus between the two. From all indications the Qur’an appears actually to condemn voluntary death. Different pages of the Qur’an and the Hadith no doubt hold a negative attitude towards suicide or voluntary death. Nevertheless, one can decipher the justification of the activity of the Boko Haram from these great books when a closer look is
taken on them. These books actually, do not use demeaning or derogatory words for this; rather suicide is associated to Martyrdom (Fedayeen or Shahid). This is probably to avoid the stigma that is attached to such a word. This particular act from all indications is supported by Mohammed and he even assured them of earthly rewards in heaven, including food and sex. In the Qur’an (4:74) Allah said: “Let those who fight in the way of Allah who sell the life of this world for the other. Who so fighteth in the way of Allah, be the slain or be the victorious, on him we shall bestow vast rewards”. Thus if one is fighting for the cause of Allah and willingly submits oneself to voluntary death, he is assured of paradise. This is exemplified by the action of a young boy who after hearing Mohammed say that martyrdom leads to paradise under the shadows of the sword (Muslim 20:4681) pulled his sword and broke the sheath (indicating that he has no intention of returning) then flung himself into battle until he was killed (Caner 2002:18).

Another instance is that a portion of the Qur’an was read to the Jihadists at the battle of Uhud, to encourage them in the course they were about to undertake. These are the words of the Quran:

O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous penalty? That ye believe in Allah and his Messenger and that ye strive (your utmost) in the cause of Allah, with your property and your persons: That will be best for you, if ye but knew! He will forgive your sins, and admit you to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, and to beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the supreme achievement. (Caner 2008:14).

According to the Hadith again, a man asked Mohammed “which of men are the best?” Mohammed replied that, it is the man who is always ready for battle and flies into it “seeking death at places where it can be expected” (Muslim 20:4655). And it is believed that if one dies for the sake of Allah or in the cause of fighting an infidel that all his sins will be forgiven and he will gain paradise. The Hadith says; “that all the sins of a Shahid (Martyr) are forgiven except debt. (Muslim 20:4649). This is in line with the Qur’an which also says that:

Allah hath purchased of the believers their persons and their goods; for theirs (in return) in the garden (of paradise): they fight in his cause, and slay and are slain: a promise binding on him in truth, through the law, the gospel, and the Qur’an: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme (Caner 2008:17).

One can decipher thus from the different texts quoted from the Qur’an that the Boko Haram members are right when they call themselves “Jama’at Ahl a-Sunna Lid-Daw’ah Wal-Jihad”. Since that is the surest way to gain Allah’s paradise, they find perfect justification for their actions. No wonder therefore why they pursue it without consideration of their dignity as human beings.

Muslim Criticism of Boko Haram

The former Niger State governor Mu’azu Babangida Aliyu, has criticized the group saying” Islam is known to be a religion of peace and does not accept violence and crime in any form and Boko Haram does not represent Islam” (Jimmoh 2011:1). The Spiritual leader of Nigeria Muslims, the Sultan of Sokoto Sa’adu Abubakar, has called the sect “anti-Islamic” and “an embarrassment to Islam” (Oladeji 2011:1). Equally the Coalition of Muslim Clerics in Nigeria (CMCN) has called on the Boko Haram to disarm and embrace peace.

The Islamic Circle of North America, the Muslim Council of Britain, the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Council on American Islamic relations have all condemned the group.

Origin of the group Boko Haram

The Bornu Empire, before colonization and subsequent annexation into the British Empire, ruled the territory where Boko Haram is currently active. It was run according to the principles of the constitution of Medina since it was a sovereign Sultanate, with a majority Kanuri Muslim population. It was after the overthrow of the Kanem-Bornu Empire ruled by the Saifawa dynasty for over 2000 years that the Bornu Sultanate emerged. This is quite different from the Sokoto Caliphate of the Hausa/Fulani established in 1802 by the military conquest of Usman dan Fodio. “Both the Bornu Sultanate and Sokoto Caliphate came under
the control of the British in 1903. However, due to the activities of the early Christian missionaries who used Western education as a tool for evangelization, education was viewed with suspicion by the local population”. (Farouk, 2012:1) Among the Kanuri and other people of Northern Nigeria increased dissatisfaction gave rise to many fundamentalists. Muhamed Marwa also known as Maitatsine, who was at the height of his notoriety during the 1970’s and 1980’s was one of such most notorious fundamentalists.” He was sent into exile by the Nigerian authorities; as he refused to believe that Muhammad was a Prophet and so instigated riots in the country which resulted in the deaths of thousands of people. Some analysts view Boko Haram as an extension of the Johnson, Maitatsine riots. (Johnson 2012:11).

The Boko Haram group is said to have been operating under the name Shabbab in 1995, with Malam Lawal as the leader of this Muslim organization. Mohammed Yusuf took over the leadership of this group when Lawal left to continue his education. Yusuf’s leadership allegedly opened the group to popularity and political influence with the aim of establishing a sharia government in Borno State. Yusuf officially founded the group in 2002 in the city of Maiduguri. He established a religious complex that included a school and a mosque where many poor families from neighbouring countries and from Nigeria enrolled their children.

“The center had ulterior political goals and soon it was also working as a recruiting ground for future Jihadists to fight the state” (Chothia 2012:2). The group includes members who come from the neighboring Niger and Chad republic and speak only Arabic. The complex was relocated in 2004 to Yusuf’s home state of Yobe in the village of Kanamma near the border to Niger republic. According to Eric (2012:1); Yusuf successfully attracted followers from unemployed youths by speaking out against the police and political corruption. One of the people who spoke against the Boko Haram insurgency, Abdulkarim Mohammed also added that: violent uprisings in Nigeria are ultimately due to the fallout of frustration with corruption and the attendant social malaise of poverty and unemployment. (Eric 2012:2)

The Beginning of their violent escapades

During the first seven years of its existence, the group conducted its operations more or less peacefully. In 2009 the situation changed when the Nigerian government launched an investigation into the group’s activities, following reports that its members were arming themselves. Prior to that it was reported that government, repeatedly ignored warning about the increasing militant character of the organization. While in police custody the group’s founder and then leader Mohammed Yusuf was killed and a new leader emerged after, whose identity has not yet been known.

Re-emergence

The group carried out its first terrorist attack in Borno in January 2011, after the killing of four people. The violence since then has escalated in terms of intensity and frequency. In January 2012, a former deputy of Yusuf, Abubakar Shekau, appeared in a video posted on You-tube and took control of the group during the violence in 2009. By early 2012 the group was responsible for over 900 deaths. The group claimed to be responsible for the suicide bombings of three churches in the Northern Nigerian state of Kaduna, killing more than 50 people. In the Northern state of Kogi in June 2012 Boko Haram opened fire inside an evangelical Church during a service, killing 19 worshippers as the police reported.

Strategy and Recruitment

It was reported in March 2012 that Boko Haram had taken a strategy to simulate convoys of high profile Nigerians, to access target buildings that are secured with fortifications. Boko Haram has reportedly “triggered reprisal in all parts of the country” and reportedly attacked Christian worship centers, distracting authorities so that they can unleash attacks elsewhere. The group it was gathered uses the internet to propagate its activities and enhance its radicalization and circulation of extremist ideologies.” Boko Haram is reportedly planning to greatly increase its following in many states. Talk of Naija (2011 february11) reported that Boko Haram has been involved in a recruitment drive, and they are allegedly targeting Muslims between the ages of 17 and 30, and have also been recruiting freed prisoners through prison breaks.

Funding

Recently, arrested officials in February 2012 revealed that:
While the organization initially relied on donations from members, its links with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Aqim, opened it up to more funding from groups in Saudi Arabia and the UK: they went on to say that other sources of funding included the Al muntada Trust Fund and the Islamic World Society. (allafrica 2012:2).

Nigerian officials in the past have been criticized for being unable to trace much of the funding that Boko Haram has received. A spokesman Taiwo had stated that Governor Ibrahim Shekarae and Bauchi State Governor Isa Yuguda had paid them monthly. (Taiwo : 2011:3). Reports materialized in the press on 19 September 2012 that the group’s spokesperson, Abu Qaqa, had been killed in a battle with the Nigerian military personnel. The group however has not confirmed this to date. “The military has previously claimed to have arrested Abu Qaqa but this was denied by the Boko Haram, who said the wrong man had been detained. According to the joint military task force, they had stopped a car suspected to be transporting senior Boko Haram commanders in Kano” (africanews 2012:2). According to the joint military task force, a car suspected to be transporting senior Boko Harm commanders in Kano had been stopped by them. “A sources close to the military said one of the people in the car tried to escape and was shot, later died in hospital. The source said some of the people in the car informed the military that the person was Abu Qaqa. (Army pm news 2012:2). Analysts however noted that Abu Qaqa is an alias and therefore it will be difficult to establish his true identity.

Boko Haram and Nigerian’s Unity

The attainment of Nigeria’s independence on October 1, 1960 was certainly not obtained on a platter of gold. The colonial masters were not willing then to succumb to the pressure of self-rule, but it took the doggedness and the patriotic zeal of our founding fathers such as Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awalowo, Sir Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Herbert Macaulay and Ernest Ikoli among others, to achieve independence. It is sad to note however, that what is being witnessed in the country today negates the aspiration and the vision of those great patriots. The relentless killing and the upsurge of attack by the Boko Haram sect in the Northern region has not only threatened the unity, but as well the corporate existence of the nation, Nigeria. It has also diminished the status of Nigeria as a free nation. These harbingers of death and destruction in the North have brought anguish and fear to thousands of homes of innocent Nigerians. They have made many children orphans and many women widows. The once peaceful northern region has been turned into ‘Middle East’ of Nigeria, by this dreaded group; where bombing and killings have become a daily matter by the mindless killing of innocent Nigerians. The activities of these misguided and gullible individuals, if not nipped in the bud now will definitely tear the fabrics of our national unity. “Our Nation is on fire”. This conflagration must therefore be extinguished to avoid total destruction and anarchy.

For Nigeria to regain its peace and unity there must be love and understanding among its citizens. Government at all level has made it imperative because of the negative impacts of the Boko Haram insurgency to take proactive measure to check the upsurge of violence. Government on the other hand should endeavor to unmask the sponsors of this terrorist group, whether they operate outside or within the country. According to Nnadi (2012:3);

there is no doubt that majority of these youths/members are unemployed and do not have any reasonable means of livelihood, let alone buying bombs, which strongly suggested that some powerful forces are behind them. The onslaught in the north, if not properly checked, will lead to the total disintegration of this great nation as being predicted by the United States of America, that Nigeria will disintegrate…. Nigeria’s disintegration may likely drain African voice, thereby putting African continent in total disarray.

It is pertinent to note that despite our differences in religious and cultural affiliations our founding fathers, devoid of rancor, bickering and acrimony put themselves together to wrestle power from the colonial authority. How then now some groups, misapplied their energies and talents to cause mayhem and destroy the labour of our hero’s past which stood on one people, great nation? It is highly disheartening and unfortunate that churches, media houses and markets have become targets, a situation that has become
worrisome to every patriotic mind and well-meaning Nigerian. Another danger associated with this group now, is that of reprisal attack as witnessed on the 17th of June, 2012 in Kaduna where three churches were bombed simultaneously, leading to loss of several lives, according to Nnadi (2012:2);

If the activities of the Boko Haram continue unbarred and unchecked, it is obvious that “prospective investors wishing to invest in the country would definitely decline their interest because of insecurity, no matter the level of assurance given to them by the government. This will adversely affect the full realization of vision 2020…and its transformation agenda.

Because of the devastating effects of the Boko Haram activities, Nigerians from other parts of the country have become skeptical and mindful of going to the Northern region to work or transact business. Citing insecurity as an excuse, the uproar that characterized the postings of NYSC members from other regions to northern region, is worrisome and portends danger for the country.

The nefarious activities of the Boko Haram today have bastardised Nigerian’s image. Nigeria is now perceived as an insecure and unstable place for both human habitation and economic activities. The Boko Haram group and their sponsors should bear in mind that the continuous killings and bombing in the north will impoverish the people of the region more. Scaring away and maiming those who will contribute to the development of the region will cause a great disaster for the nation’s economy, with the north as the greatest casualty. Therefore the Boko Haram should sheath their sword, for the unity of this nation and give peace a chance. Meanwhile well meaning Nigerians and the government should, as a matter of urgency cooperate to safeguard the peace and unity of this nation. The peaceful co-existence of this nation remains sacrosanct and we cannot afford to compromise it.

Recommendation

The Boko Haram insurgency has become an endemic phenomenon in Nigeria. However, there are recommendations on how to end the insurgency, they include:
1. The National Intelligence Agency (NIA), The State Security Service (SSS) and The Nigeria Police Force should be strengthened by equipping them with advanced technological weapons to lunch attacks on the group. They should also be plugged into the international networks of intelligence gathering. With this the Boko Haram will quiver at their boots when they hear the name of any of these entities.
2. The government at all levels should as well see that we have steady power supply, without which no technology can effectively function.
3. The solution to terrorism in Nigeria is linked with the issue of poverty and job creation which must be addressed properly by the government. This is because most perpetrators of this crime are jobless youths.
4. The Boko Haram makes use of the ignorant and the uninformed. The government can start disrupting their access to these ignorant preys by educating the young children. More should therefore be invested in education by the government.
5. The President Jonathan’s administration inaugurated The Presidential Committee on Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the Northern Part of Nigeria to look into the Boko Haram phenomenon. For Nigerians to have confidence in them and feed them with the necessary information required, government has to first of all implement the findings from similar panels set in the past whose findings and recommendations have not seen the light of the day.
6. Nigerians especially the Christians should continue to pray against Boko Haram and for the support of its members and supporters.
7. All successive governments in Nigeria should be seen to fight Boko Haram and never should they use it to make or further political intrest.
8. All Boko Haramists should be made to face justice.
9. The idea of releasing Boko Haramists in prison in exchange of captured, abducted or kidnapped school girls or adults should be seen as furtherance of challenges for Nigerian people.
10. Nations and donors in support of Boko Haram terrorism should be sanctioned globally.

Conclusion

As a federal state, Nigeria is composed of hundreds of ethnic groups that are conscious of their ethnic origins. And Nigeria is equally divided along religious lines too. According to Okoye (2012:2). The
issues of ethnicity and diverse religions are centrifugal forces that pull countries’ apart, such federal states with cultural and religious differences as Czechoslovakia, USSR, Yugoslavia, Sudan, Ethiopia and others had split into many nations. Nigeria may follow their part if the Boko Haram activities are not checked.

The government claims to know those behind the bombings and their sponsors, yet there are no arrests of these sacred cows and there is no decisive prosecution to date. Rather our leaders go about smiling and felicitating with victims of the blast. (Leye 2012:1).

The last bombings in a decent country would have seen resignations, but not in Nigeria, even in the overwhelming facts of gross negligence and dereliction of duties. Therefore we have to be serious in order to curb these incessant killings. Irrespective of our religious, ideological or political differences we should unite in fighting this menace. We need to ensure improvement in the security situation in the country and hold our leaders accountable. Through this we can honour the memory of the victims of all the bombings in Nigeria.

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