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Bokoharam saga; implication for Nigerian economic development

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism in the 21st century globally, has taken a dangerous and alarming dimension which has a catastrophic consequences on the economy of the affected state if not contained. Boko Haram a terrorist Islamic group in Nigeria whose name translates to western education is sin or taboo has become a major security challenge to the Nigerian state. The terrorist activities of this group has negatively affected the Nigerian economic development, which has been stagnated before now by the presence of the military in seat of power coupled with a culture of corruption which has almost become synonymous to the Nigerian state. This research article was embarked on to ex-ray the Nigerian Boko Haram Saga and it's implication on Nigerian economic development. the study was subcategorized into introduction which established an over view of the theme, origin and background of Boko Haram, some of the Boko Haram Haram's record of attacks on Nigeria state and economy, Nigerian economic development (a review), sociol-economic cum political implication of Boko Haram terrorist activities in Nigeria, Nigerian government effort to curb Boko haram Menace, Recommendations and conclusion.

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Introduction

In the twenty-first century, terrorism is no longer a marginal and Localized problem for our governments, but has become a major security priority. Terrorism today is all invasive, everyday, throughout the world, bombs are set off for a thousand different reasons; it has also, however, dramatically changed from its past forms. As such, terrorism has emerged in multi faceted forms and dimensions which ranges from religious, state, revolutionary and Narcotic syndicates etc. the monster of terrorism is taking the world population into it's grip (pruthi:2002:1).

The first decade of the 21st century was dominated by terror and terrorist. No one man was responsible although the pre-eminent face was that of Osama bin laden. The global jihad of terror struck from New York to New Delhi. The centre of the storm was south Asia, and the epicenter of the storm Pakistan. India was often grounded zero. (India Times: 2011).

Nigeria was not an exception to this negative development as a terrorist group Jama' atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda' awaiti wal-Jihad, better known as Boko Haram Launched a devastating terrorist attacks on the Nigerian state from 2009 till date in a bid to overthrow Nigerian secular system of government and establish Sharia state in Nigeria.

The movement whose name in the Hausa Language, Boko Haram, translates as "Western education is sacrilege or sin," in 2011, was responsible for more than 450 killings in Nigeria (Wikipedia 2012).

Boko Haram as terrorist group adopt varying methods of attack like bombing, indiscriminate and sporadic gun attacks on innocent citizens and agents of the state, arson and more which has resulted to deaths of thousands of Nigerians and lost of property and valuables worth millions of naira. This has negatively affected the economy of the affected northern states and by extension hampered the economic development of Nigeria in general.

Origin and background of boko haram

The group was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in the city of Maiduguri with the aim of establishing a Sharia government in Borno state under former Governor Ali Modu Sheriff. He established a religions complex that included a mosque and Al-Majiri School where many poor families from across Nigeria and from neighboring countries enrolled their children, (Shehu 2012).

Prior to this time, Mohammed Yusuf was born in Girgir village of Yobe state. The Boko Haram group started as Sahaba group in 1995. The main leader of the Sahaba group then was one Abubakar Lawan who latter left to study in university of medina, when He left, the older cleric conceded the leadership to young Yusuf who was young and versatile. But immediately Yusuf took over, the doctrine of the sect changed and he abandoned the older cleric view and came up with extremist Boko Haram doctrine (Shehu 2012).

Mohammed Yusuf, because of his brilliancy was a favourite student of Sheik Jafar Mohammed, the highly influential and well known preacher who was shot dead in Kano by gun men while leading the dawn prayers in his mosque on the eve of 2007 Nigerian general elections. Yusuf latter fell out with his mentor Sheik Jafar, even before his death.

(Shehu 2012) stated that "available information indicates that the group emanating from an orthodox teaching slightly resembling that of Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The school of taught considers anything western as an aberration or completely Unislamic. The group view the western influence on Islamic society as the basis of the religion's weakness. Hence their declaration that western institution and westerners are infidel and as such must be avoided by Muslim".

The center had ulterior political goals and soon it was also working as recruitment ground for future Jihadis to fight the state. The group includes members who came from

neighbouring Chad and Niger Republics respectively and speak only Arabic Language (Wikipedia 2012). In 2004, the complex was relocated to Yobe State in the village Kamamma near Niger Republic.

According to Human Rights Watch researcher Eric Gruttschuss told IRIN News that Yusuf successfully attracted follower from unemployed youths "by speaking out against government policies and political corruption.

The groups conducted its operations more or less peacefully during the first seven years of existence but that changed in 2009 when the Nigerian government launched an investigation in to the groups activities following reports that its members were arming themselves. Prior to that, government reportedly repeatedly ignored warnings about the increasing militant character of the organization.

When the government came into action, several members of the group were arrested in Bauchi, sparking deadly clashes with Nigerian security forces which led to the deaths of an estimated 700 people. During the fighting with security forces, Boko Haram fighters reportedly used fuel laden motorcycles and bows with poison arrows to attack police stations. The group founder and then leader Mohammed Yusuf was arrested during this time but died in police custody.

Some of the boko haram's record of attacks on nigerian state and economy

Since the death of the Boko Haram leader Yusuf Mohammed in 2009, the violent acts of the terrorist group Boko Haram has increased in dimension, intensity and frequency. A chronicle of the attacks will suffice.

Nigerian economic development: review

Economic development of any state is the ability of government of that state to initiate deliberate positive economic policies and transform these policies into action that will improve the living standard of its citizen.

In his view, Rodney (1972:185) sees development both from the level of the individual and that of the society as a whole. At the level of the individual, development implied increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well being. On the level of the society, development can not be seen purely as an economic affair, but rather as an overall social process which is dependent upon the outcome of man's effort to deal with his natural environment.

Economic development generally refers to the sustained, concerted actions of policy makers and communities that promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific area (Wikipedia 2012).

Notwithstanding the diverse views of what economic development is, it has been observed that economic development cannot take place in an atmosphere of chaos and instability. For this reason, Akoma (2011) posit that we need to acknowledge the fact that Nigeria must be politically stable to achieve economic growth and sustainable development.

Fact and figures had show that Nigeria as a country, has initiated many economic policies in the past and present. These policies were aimed at improving the Nigerian economy and given better life to the citizens. But ironically, these policies which were adopted from other countries of the world were it transformed the economy of those nations were a different story in Nigeria because it recorded no significant success. This ugly situation owns to a lot of factors but most prominent is the problem of corruption and insecurity in Nigerian system.

For a better grasp of the state of Nigerian economy, let us have glance on the facts on the state of economy. In 1975 Nigeria was listed among the countries to be self sustained by the year 2000 but 37 years latter that dream is still elusive.

General performance of the Nigerian economy

In the Period of post independent, 1960-70, the gross Domestic Product (GDP) recorded 3.1 per-cent growth annually. During the oil boom era, roughly 1970-78, Quality Delivery in Price (QDP) grew positively by 6.2 percent annually a remarkable growth. However, in the 1980s, GDP has negative growth rates. In the period 1988-1997 which constitutes the period of structural adjustment and economic liberation, the QDP responded to economic adjustment policies and grew at positive rate of 4.0. In the years after independent, industry and manufacturing sector had positive growth rates except for the period 1980-1988 where industry and manufacturing grew negatively by -3.2 percent and -2.9 percent respectively. The growth of agriculture for the periods 1960-70 and 1970-78 was unsatisfactory. In the early 1980s, the agricultural sector suffered from low commodity prices while the oil boom contributed to the negative growth of agriculture. In the 1970s the boom in the oil sector lured labour away from the rural sector to urban centers. The contribution of agriculture to GDP which was 63 percent in 1960, declined to 34 percent in 1988, not because the industrial sector increased its share but due to neglect of the agricultural sector. It was therefore not surprising that by 1975, the economy not had become a net importer of basic food items. The apparent increase in industry and manufacturing from 1978 to 1988, was due to activities in the mining sub-sector, especially petroleum.

Capital formation in economy has not been satisfactory. Gross domestic investment as a percentage of GDP, which was 16.3 percent and 22.8 percent, the periods 1965-73 and 1973-80 respectively, decreased to almost 14 percent in 1980-88 and increased to 18.2 percent in 1991-98.

The economy never experienced double-digit inflation during the 1960s by 1976, however, the inflation rate stood at 23 percent. It decreased to 11.8 percent in 1979 and jumped to 41 percent and 72.8 percent in 1989 and 1995 respectively. By 1998, the inflation rate had, however reduced to 9.5 percent from 29.0 percent in 1996. unemployment rates averaged almost 5 places for the period 1976-1998.

However, the effort and policy of the Nigerian government has little or no impact of Nigerian economy, According to Nigerian national bureau of statistics (2011), the unemployment rate in 2011 stood at 10.9%, real GDP growth is 7.68%, life expectancy at birth 51-9.

Education index(expected and mean years of schooling 0.442. income: GNI per capita in PPP term) constant 2005 international & 2.069 multi dimensional poverty index (%) 0.310 Human development index rank 156 (NBS, 2012).

From the foregoing, Nigeria appears to be sucked into the vortex of interlocking vicious circles of import orient economy which have kept internal market in a low growth equilibrium trap with balance of trade deficits coupled with the devastating spiral effect of hydra headed corruption.

As gloomy as the situation might look, Nigeria with proper frame work, political will and sincerity could actually go back to the drawing board and change the history, for the country will achieve the millennium development goals MDGs and vision 20-20-20.

Socio-economic cum political implication of boko haram terrorist activities in Nigeria

The impact of the heinous activities of Boko Haram terrorism on the social economic and political structure of Nigerian is over-whelming and devastating. In his statement, the minister of information Mr. Labaran Maku while speaking to journalists in Abuja after the Federal Executive Council Meeting on February 9, 2012 said that the North is losing heavily due to the violence. When you destabilise Kano, which is the commercial nerve centre of the North, you are threatening the socio-economic well being of the North", he said "Kano is the economy of Chad, it is the economy of Niger Republic, and of northern Camerouns, so when you destabilize peace in Kano, you threaten the foundation of economic and social well-being of that region. It makes no sense to attack innocent people and destroy the North".

According to General Carter F Han the U.S Africa commander (AFRICOM) who stated in September 2011 that Boko Haram is considered to be a major potential terrorist threat affecting Nigeria and other countries and US Officials believe it is potentially allied with Al Qaeda. He went further to state that three African terrorist groups-Shabab of Somalia AL Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb across the Sahel region and Boko Haram "have very explicitly and publicly voiced an intent to target westerners, and the U.S Specifically" and that he was concerned with the voiced intent of the three organizations to more loosely collaborate and synchronizations their effort.

During the second edition 9 South South Economic summit held April 28 in Asaba Delta state, the two American nationalist who were scheduled to be the guest speakers to the event, Mike mullen, the 17th joint chief of staff and former major of new York Rudy Guillian were turned back by their embassy on their arrival in Lagos for onward journey to Asaba for security reasons (Punch online.com 2012).

Following the United Nations building bombing in Abuja on 26 August 2011 in which no fewer than 23 persons were confirmed dead on the spot and many more seriously injured, the United Nations gave directive to it's officials to suspend all official travel to Nigeria till further notice. This move is a major collateral damage to the country because the situation of outright insecurity and vulnerability scares and drives foreign investors.

Domestically, the loss incurred by Nigerians because of Boko Harams attacks can not be measured. Lives of innocent citizens which has ran into thousands and still counting, lost in these attacks are disheartening. The slain citizens are taken unawares by these attacks even though there is earlier ultimatum by Boko Haram to all southerners and Christians living in the Northern Nigeria to evacuate the Northern Region or face their onslaught. According to vanguard Nigeria online.com (2012) "A purported spokesman for Islamist group, Boko Haram, has issued an ultimatum to Christians in the country's north and threatened to confront troops after the president declared a state of emergency in hard hit areas. Albu Qada, who has spoken on behalf of the group, blamed for scores of attacks in numerous times in the past, said he was giving southerners living in the north a three day ultimatum to leave. Speaking in the Hausa language which is common through out the north, Qada said "we also wish to call on our fellow muslims to come back to the north because we have evidence that they would be attack." The Federal government in reaction to this told Nigerian people to stay where there are as the government will do everything necessary to protect their lives and properties. But sadly enough

the Boko Haram group had made good it's threats with the attacks of over whelming magnitude like the Christmas day bombing in Abuja and more.

Similarly, properties worth billions of Naira has been lost to these violence and citizens especially southerners has embark on mass exodus to the southern Nigeria as they feel that there lives and properties are no longer secure in this affected northern states. Besides, many businesses has closed shop, many schools either raised down by fire set by these terrorist groups or closed down intermittently by the authorities.

Consequently, they are fears that since the Nigerian Government through it's security agencies like police and other intelligent agencies has not been able to contain the activities of the group and the masses might get fed up and instead of addressing their grievances through the right channel might take to the streets. And of course, there may be smart players who might deem it fit to out gun and outman the government of the day.

Moreover, there is a strong speculation from intelligent report that Boko Haram is a political tool of some disgruntled northern politicians who lost election and resorted to discredit and dismantle the present southern extraction government and eventually wrestle power from them.

Nigerian government effort to curb the boko haram menace

Starting from the period of the Boko Haram Onslaught on Nigeria in 2009, the government has been trying to contain the activities of the group by the instrumentality of state security agencies like police, military and intelligence agencies. However, the maneuvering method of attack of this group has left the Nigerian government to appear to be incompetent on tackling this security challenge. The Nigerian government has been using methods and means within it's disposal to tackle Boko Haram insurgency. The method ranges from outright confrontation on Boko Haram hideout, bases, operation scence etc. even though that these measures usually yield result like arrest and sometimes death of Boko Haram member in exchange of fire, but these has not deterred the group from carrying out their attack. Moreover the whole story has taken a dangerous dimension in recent months stating from Oct. 2011 when the Islamic extremist started the use of bombs in their attack which later culminated to suicide bombing.

More worrisome is the fact that there is a fear that supporters, and sympathizers of this Islamic extremist are in the security agencies and government. This is why the president Dr. Goodluck Jonathan in an undenominational service, To mark the 2012 arm forces Remembrance day at the national Christian centre Abuja revealed that "the Federal Government couldn't contain the violent activities of Boko Haram because members of the sect have infiltrated all three arms of government including the armed forces, police and other security agencies". He went further to buttress that "I believe we will overcome our immediate challenges. The situation we have in our hand is even worse than the civil war that we fought. During the civil war, we knew and we could even predict where the enemy was coming from, you can even know the route they are coming from, you can even know what caliber of weapon they will use and so on. But the challenge we have today is more complicated" (BBC.online.Com 2012).

Proactive Security Measures

Most often than not, reports from intelligence agencies both domestic and international usually make the Nigerian security agencies to prepare in order to thwart the planned attacks of the

Islamic sect. on April 18, 2012, "The U.S Embassy has received information that Boko Haram may be planning attacks in Abuja Nigeria, against hotels frequently visited by westerners", (Reuter.online.com 2012) such intelligence report like this are usually used by Nigerian Security Agencies but Ironically, events have shown that in most cases it did not forestall the subsequent attack that latter became reality. In some cases the Nigerian government have tried to down play such information especially when it comes from foreign government and in such situations the consequences is usually devastating. With all these measure in place, the situation seems gloomy as none has yielded the required result.

Government Offers Olive Branch to Book Haram

The Federal Government of Nigerian speaking through the Vice President Namadi Sambo on Voice of America (VOA) Hausa service on 17 April 2012 has urged members of the Boko Haram sect to emulate leaders of militant group in the Niger Delta and avail themselves for dialogue with the authorities, so as to have peace in the country (Hassan Ibrahim 2012).

Prior to this, the President Goodluck Jonathan has on 26 Jan. 2012 challenge the Islamist Militant group. Book Haram to identify themselves and state their demands as basis for dialogue. He even went further to stress that, "see as a president of a country you will not preside over dead bodies. You will be a president of people who are alive so if they clearly identify themselves then there will be a base for dialogue". (BBC.online.Com 2012)

Ironically, instead of cashing in on the President magnanimous offer Boko Haram through, its message posted on you tube by the leader Abubaka Shekau Threatened the president by declaring "You Jonathan, cannot stop us; instead will devour you in the three months like you are boasting, " Shekau said in the video entitled "message to Goodluck Jonathan". He was flanked by four masked men holding rifles as he spoke. "We are proud soldiers of Allah; we will never give up as we fight the infidels. We will emerge as winners... we will finish you and end your government, "Shekau, said in Arabic and the Hausa Languages. (Vangaurd Ngr.online.com 2012).

The Nigerian Government through a bilateral and multilateral arrangement with the international community are putting finishing touches to high profile counter terrorism campaign against Boko Haram. President Barack Obama's office issued a statement that confirmed that U.S and Nigeria were cooperating at a senior level against the terrorist group. In his statement, General Carter Ham U.S African Commander AFRICOM Stated that "were looking for ways in which we can help in developing their counter terrorist capabilities, things such as non-lethal training and non lethal equipment to be more precise in the application of force" (Jim 2012)

Complementary to this, Nigeria's National Security Adviser, General Owoye Andrew Azazi has been working with other African Governments, European and Middle East Governments to build cooperation against Boko Haram.

The Nigerian Government has tried the carrot and stick approach and yet nothing seem to be working on the positive. However the Nigerian government has to take all means necessary to bring solution to the present insecurity challenges in the country to avoid the country from sliding into a state of anarchy which might eventually lead to disintegration of the country.

Recommendations

The present security challenges ravaging Nigeria is a multi faceted problem. It's solution can only be achieved through a multi dimensional approach.

Prosecution of Sponsors and Members

The government should develop the political will to expose and prosecute the high caliber individuals both within and outside the government who has been linked with the Islamist militant group. This will cut the life source of the terrorist group and serve as a deterrent to other negative minded individuals who might be nursing similar ambition in the future.

In his view U.S Ambassador to Nigeria Terence McCauley said :We believe the Nigerian Government needs to have a strategy which addresses these act of violence which reassures the Northern population that there is a plan to ensure their security. Security forces will target extremist and perpetrators of violence in a way that does not inflict civilian casualties of damage properties and violent human rights. It is incumbent upon government to react with a broad based strategy by addressing security as well as the questions of development and poverty which feed underlying grievances that can promote acts of violence" (Olukorede 2012).

Provision of Employments

Many people have forwarded arguments that the present security challenges in the country is as a result of unemployed. These schools of thought believe the unemployed youths usually called Al-majiri in the northern Nigeria are vulnerable tools in the hands of scrupulous politicians who easily buy them off to secure their selfish political agenda. The federal government should devise an employment oriented programme specifically for the youths not only in the northern Nigeria but also in the south where there are a large number of graduates roaming the street in search of job where there is none. This is a fundamental problem that the federal government must have to tackle.

Education

The federal government should embark on Re-orientation Campaign to change the attitude of northerners to western/formal education. Most parents in the north send their children to Arabic schools even when they have the option of sending their children to formal schools. These set of children spend years in this Al-majiri school and graduate without career employability potential. Some times they attend some of these Islamic school where they are taught radicalism and extremism. This campaign will dispose them positively towards western education which will guarantee the future of these young children.

Social Welfare

The Nigerian government should set up a national social welfare scheme that will take care of the aged, physically challenged, unemployed and the vulnerable in the society. This programme should have a national bearing since each state of the federation has these categories of people. This will ameliorate hardship and reduce poverty in the country.

Sincerity in Tackling Corruption

According to Agboti (2002;100) Political Corruption refers essentially to the Fraudulent conversion of public funds for private ends. It also includes all manner of inducements and bribes offered to public officers in order to gain favours from them or to influence their judgments over issue that affect the public or one's client. In Nigeria, the prevalence of corruption is

so endemic that an average Nigerians has given up hope for its elimination due to insincerity and lack of political will on the part of the government.

The Nigerian government should fight corruption with enough political will and sincerity, since corruption has been adjudged the major cause of Nigeria's underdevelopment. The Nigerian government should try through legislation and policy to strengthen the existing anti corruption agencies like Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offence Commission (ICPC) by giving them autonomy so that they will administer justice without fear or favour.

Social Justice for All

The Nigerian government should try and accommodate everybody in distribution of the national wealth. This they will do by making sure that every major and minority ethnic groups are put into consideration with fairness and equity when distributing the national wealth. The method of distorting facts and figure in order to give majority or minority advantage over others is against the principle of social justice and it breeds rivalry and antagonism in the nation. That is to say that the allegation of marginalization of some quarters is counter productive for national development and Nigerian government should fight this with all vehemency.

A Call for a Sovereign National Conference

Since every part of this country, specifically the six geopolitical zones are clamoring for one thing or the other. Some are clamoring for resource control, some state creation, some, revisit of the national income sharing formula while others are accusing the government of marginalization of their zone in polity and infrastructural development. It will be wise and reasonable for the government of the day to summon all and sundry of the Nigerian people so that they can table their grievances and search ways of readjustments so that the country will move forward to greater heights with common objective and unity in purpose.

Conclusion

The unjustified heinous activities of the Islamic sect Boko Haram in Nigeria seems to be a problem that has defied all solutions, however, irrespective of how gloomy the situation might look, the Nigerian government based on recommendations of this work can bring back peace and stability to the most populous black nation by applying the multi dimensional approach that were enumerated in this work.

The stability of Nigeria has direct implication to Africa and the globe in General based on the country's enviable position on the world economy.

Most importantly, Nigeria owns it as a duty to provide her citizens with improved living standard to make the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and (i.e the dream and vision of becoming one of the world 20 biggest economy by year 2020

become a reality so that this nation thus conceived can longer endure.

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Incidents of major violence by boko haram

Date	Incidents
July 2009	Hundreds of members killed when Maidugiri police stations were stormed. Police captured and killed sect leader. Mohammed Yusuf Bauchi Preason Break. Bombed Jos, Killing 80 people
7 th Sept 2010	
Dec. 2010	
Dec. 31 st 2010	Bombed Abuja barracks. Boko Haram frees 14 Prisoners during a jail break in Yola Adamawa state.
22 nd April 2011	Bomb attacks on Abuja police Head Quarters and United Nation's (UN) building.
Jun-Aug. 2011	
Nov. 2011	Boko Haram attacks Damaturu
Dec. 2011	Multiple bomb attacks on Christmas day kill dozens in Abuja and Jos Plateu State.
Jan 2012	Wave of violence across north east Nigeria. Kano bombings kill at least 180
16 th Feb 2012	Kogi Prison break, 199 prisoners released, one warder killed by Boko Haram.
26 th April 2012	Multiple bomb attacks on Nigerian Dailies. This day news paper Daily Times, Sun Offices in Abuja and Kaduna. Attacked a church at Bayero University Kano.
29 th April 2012	
3 RD May 2012	Boko Haram kill 60 in a raid on a cattle market at Potiskum Yobe state.
5 th May 2012	Boko haram Battle Nigerian Troops at a Wedding part in Maidugiri. 3 civilians killed.

(Source: BBC Online 2012)