

THE REIGN OF TERROR IN DEMOCRATIC NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF SOCIO-POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

C. C. OJUKWU

Department of General Studies
University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria
E-mail: chrisojukwu1@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The unprecedented rate and currency at which the act of terrorism is ravaging so many societies across the globe is alarming, shocking and worrisome. To be sure, Nigeria, in recent times has been marked as a terrorist zone as it records a high proportion of terrorist attacks such as political killing, assassination, hostage taking and abduction. The cause of this is largely attributed to the inefficiency of the national security. The paper, therefore, brings to focus some of the celebrated cases and finally advances ways to ameliorate the deplorable situation in the country.

Keywords: Terrorism, democracy, national security, foreign policy, national development

INTRODUCTION

'Man is a contradiction, a complex being and a unique animal. On the one side of him are hatred, depravity, wickedness, transgression and sin, on the other side, are kindness, compassion, love and humanness ... Man has two faces. One side of his shows his ingenuity ... his creative capacity and his capacity to be kind, compassionate, loving and to acknowledge and honour the truth. This is the divine aspect of man. The other face shows him using his ability, capability and ingenuity maliciously, selfishly, devilishly and oppressively. This is the satanic aspect of man' (Sunday Independence, May 28, 2006).

The view that human kind is evil by nature has a long tradition. If anything, it suggests that since our ancestors were instinctively violent beings, and since we evolved from them, we too must bear destructive im-

pulses in our genetic make up. As Hans Morgenthau (1973) opines, the imperfection in the world, namely, conflict, violence has its roots in forces that are inherent in human nature. That is, human nature is selfish, individualistic and naturally conflictive. In supporting this view, Thomas Hobbes argues that originally (in the state of nature) human life was characterized by conflict and violence, thus, life was rather solitary, poor, nasty and short. By then, the society was like a jungle, where there was no law, no religion, no morality and where everyone was free but everywhere in chains.

The present situation in which systematic strategies and tactics of terroristic violence are employed to achieve specific goals was no doubt anticipated by Aristotle, Polybus and Niccolo Machiavelli whose analysis portrayed a perspective employed in bringing about intended situations based largely on

political motives and calculations. Today, not only has modern science and technology expanded the reign and zones of terror, but the human condition and individual aspirations, as well as the nature and levels of global interactions have contributed maximally. This being the case, everyone and any nation is a potential target, be it a core or weak nation, it does not matter much to the actors.

As an observer puts it, 'in the hands of the modern terrorists, evil is distilled into a potent, living weapon' (TELL, Oct 1, 2001). We cannot fathom or imagine an age of science and technology where the lives of individuals and groups are abruptly terminated and buildings and property destroyed just in a flash of light by the bull headedness of terrorists. This, indeed, is one of our generation's challenges. The recent strikes in great nations like the United States and the United Kingdom in 2001 and 2005 respectively brings to the fore a future in which our societies are among the battle fields and our people among the targets.

Specifically, on 11 September, 2001, the U.S was bombed by a militant group of terrorists, a situation where four commercial airliners were hijacked. While two of them crashed in the World Trade Centre (WTC) in Manhattan New York, one into each of the tallest towers, the third crashed into the US Department of Defence Headquarters Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia, and the fourth crashed into a rival field in Somerset County Pennsylvania near Shanksville. As a result of this, a lot of lives were claimed, buildings damages to irreparable situation and the economy drastically twisted.

By the same token, on 7 July 2005, the

world also witnesses a similar incident of bomb attack that struck London's public transport system during the morning rush hours. Three of the bombs exploded within 50 seconds on three London underground trains while the fourth one exploded on a bus in Tavistock Square. Again, the bombings led to a severe day long disruption and dislocation of the city's transport and telecommunication infrastructure. As it were, dastardly act was arguably the deadliest single act of terrorism in the United Kingdom since 270 people died in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103.

Against this background, the thrust of the essay is in three folds: to examine terrorism in historical perspective, to examine the cause, nature and character of terrorist acts in Nigerian society, and to examine its socio-political, economic and psychological implications.

Terrorism in historical perspective

While interest in terrorism in many nations is largely event-driven, the concept has a very long and colourful history often punctuated by lively debates over the meaning of the term. The term 'terrorism' is subjective and notoriously difficult to define perhaps because of its pejorative nature. However, it is worth noting that the concept is not the only one in international relations subject to heated argument over its meaning. Central concepts in international relations often reflect deep disagreements in their precise definition. 'War' is a perfect example of a term that reflects many different meanings especially in the post-world war II era of limited wars, interventions, police actions, ethnic conflicts, civil insurgencies, undeclared skirmishes.

Likewise, the concept of 'sovereignty' is the

subject of regular diplomatic scuttles, with interpretations beyond the central elements of territory, population and use of force differing greatly. It nevertheless, remains the central standard of measure among state in the international system. These disagreements do not in any form diminish their importance and practical relevance to the international community. 'Terrorism' is, like these terms, subject to debate but grounded in certain fundamental concepts.

The phenomena of terrorism touch familiar issues and raise classic questions. To investigate terrorism is to study power in extremis, and, as it sometimes happens when extreme situations are probed for meaning and mechanism, the inquiry throws new light on the subject and reveals features that are ordinarily invisible in more tranquil conditions. As Water (1972) argues, terror is not confined to anomalous circumstances or exotic systems. It is potential in ordinary institutions as well as in unusual situations. Reigns of terror are not properly understood if they are conceived of exclusively as ephemeral states of crisis produced by adventitious events or as alien forms of control. Systems of terror usually defined as 'abnormal' by the conventions of western social and political thought may be generated under certain conditions of stress by 'normal' political processes.

Although most scholars have focused their studies on the concept as a form of struggle used by insurgent groups or a clandestine form of war between states, some also have applied it to other violent phenomena. Merari (1994) for instance, describes terrorism as the use of violence by subnational groups or clandestine state agents for obtaining political (including social and religious) goals especially when the violence is

intended to intimidate or otherwise affect the emotions, attitudes and behaviour of a target audience considerably larger than the actual victims. It is what Herbert Spencer called, the 'political bias' and revolutionary radicals conceived it as, 'defensive manoeuvre against counter revolutionary forces'.

Conventionally, the word terrorism connotes differing violent actions such as murder, assassination, kidnapping, abduction, essentially designed to make people afraid. In ordinary usage, however, the concept typifies any kind of extreme apprehension, the psychic state, extreme fear, anything that terrifies, no matter the cause. To Wilkinson (1974) as a type of unconventional warfare, terrorism is designed to weaken or supplant existing political landscapes through capitulation, acquiescence or radicalization as opposed to subversion or direct military action.

In practical terms, terrorism is a compulsive strategy of the relatively disadvantaged, the weak who seeks reversal of authority or opportunity by focusing the powerful to a state of importance. People are eliminated and structures demolished through terrorism in order to create fear and get some people to do things they would never do. In this case, the terrorist is indifferent to the immediate consequences of the act which is essentially to prove and play a role in the strategy of violence. As an efficacious use of force to achieve a desired policy end, terrorism is a theatrical warfare whose drama involves the terrorists who threatened or actually carried out some violent act, the person or group against whom the violent act has been threatened or carried out, and the authority due to be influenced or compelled to act.

In essence, terrorist attacks are usually characterized as indiscriminate targeting of civil-

ians or executed with disregard for human life. The actors mostly do not belong to any recognized armed forces or adhere to the laws of war and thus they are regarded as 'rogue actors'. Burke and his followers hold that if you scratch an ideologue you will find a terrorist. Yet those who are accused of being terrorists rarely identify themselves as such, instead, they typically use terms that refer to their ideological or ethnic struggle such as: separatist, freedom fighter, liberator, revolutionary, vigilante, military guerilla, rebel, jihadi, mujaheddin or Fedayeen. Perhaps, it is in the light of this, that it is argued that 'one man's terrorism is another man's fighter'.

Historically, the concept 'terrorism' dates back to the first organized human interactions. In other words, it is as old as human history. At minimum, it could be traced back to the period when Jewish Zealots used terrorism to resist the Romans by killing many Roman soldiers and destroying Roman property. It could also be traced to when Muslims used terrorism to fight each other (Shiites versus Sunni) and against the crusades. It was a period when terrorism and religion were viewed to be companions, and when the concept of suicide martyrdom, dying in the service of God, dying while killing the enemies of God (Allah) loomed large (Rapport 1984: 658-677).

Rapport also holds that the modern development of terrorism as a tool to achieve political and religious goals began during the French Revolution – the Reign of Terror (1793-1794). It is argued that the term was coined in 1795 (during the French Revolution) to refer to a policy systematically used to protect the new republic. In fact, modern era 'terrorism' began during the French Revolution as a positive concept

referring to the means whereby the nascent revolutionary state consolidated power and imposed order (Hoffman 1998). During this period, to bring down a government, and to gain independence. Then, the strategies employed to achieve the desired goals included, government sponsored terrorism, individual (selective) terrorism and cell operations. To be sure, Maximilien Robespierre of France introduced government sponsored terrorism in order to maintain power and suppress opposition to the government.

Since then, the concept has evolved through a series of phases and associated meanings. It is a dynamic concept, dependent to some degree on the political and historical context within which it has been employed, but consistent in its core elements. A distinguishing feature of modern terrorism has been the connection between sweeping political or ideological concepts and increasing levels of terrorist activity internationally. At this juncture, it is germane to briefly highlight one important ideological catalyst for modern terrorism: democratization.

In the nineteenth century, the unleashing of powerful concepts such as universal suffrage and popular empowerment raised the hopes of radical intellectuals throughout Europe and the western world, eventually resulting in the first kind of modern international terrorism, democratic uprisings against empires. In a recent article, David Rapport identifies waves of international terrorist activity, of which the actions inspired by attractive concepts of democratization represent the first wave. This type of modern terrorism was initially characterized by the activities of groups such as the Russian 'Narodnaya Volya' (People's will), and later the development of a series of movements throughout the United States and Europe, especially on

the territories of the former Ottoman Empire (Rapport 2001: 419-424).

Besides, the Russian anarchists (between 1890 and 1910) felt that killing of Czar, other kings and nobles of Europe would bring down governments, they introduced 'individual or selective terrorism'. This is the use of selective terror against an individual or group in order to punish the government of the day. It was selective because targets were selected based on their position within the governmental system. Again, during the Soviet Revolution in 1917, Lenin and Stalin, expanded the idea of government sponsored terrorism as a potent tool to maintain governmental control. These personalities systematically used the act of terrorism to intimidate and frighten the entire society. To them, both terror and fear were used as a motivational factor for governmental operations, public compliance with government policies.

Similarly, in 1966, Cuba hosted the Tri-continental conference which was sponsored by the Soviet Union. This conference marked the beginning of the internationalization of terrorism. Terrorist and 'liberation' group from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America began to work together and build alliances. The trend continued like that, in Germany, the Red Army Faction (German group) allied itself with Black September (Palestinian group); in France, Action Direct (French Group) allied with the Red Army Faction and Red Army Brigade (Italian group); in Japan, the Japanese Red Army allied with the popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Padelford *et al.* 1976: 11).

Suffice it to say that from 1980s or through the last decade of the twentieth century,

terrorist attacks became rampant. If anything, between 1979 and 1988, there were at least twelve incidents of terrorism directed at the U.S and her interests. These included, the hostages in 1979, the bombing of U.S embassies in Dar-es-Salam and Nairobi in 1998, the destructive bomb attacks on the New York City-based World Trade Centre in 1994; kidnapping of American citizens and the bombing of airlines. It follows also that terrorism inspired by the hopes and expectations of democratization emerged in the 1990s in the Balkans after the downfall of the former state of Yugoslavia as well as in such diverse locations as Kashmir, Chechnya, Aceh and Yinjiang.

Dimensions and causes of terrorism

There are various dimensions of terrorism, and prominent among these include: state-bound terrorism; non-state terrorism and terrorism across national boundaries. By 'state-bound terrorism', it meant terrorism by groups which are logistically or operationally aided by states. This is often executed by state agents surreptitiously or in a clandestine manner. State terrorism can as well assume different versions and intensities and these include, intimidation, coerced conversion, selective genocide. For instance, the genocidal activities the Nazi regime undertook against the Jewish population of Europe (1939-1945) and the Stalinist purge of the peasant class of Kulaks in Ukraine caused the death of millions of civilians. The truth is that the state is capable of perpetrating a policy of political violence by imprisoning or executing people because of their political opinions or religious cum racial background and yet get away with it for a long time. This is perhaps, because it commands and often monopolizes the resources required for carrying out such violence.

The 'non-state violence' is characterized mostly by individuals who have determined it is no longer worthwhile to try to accomplish political objectives within the law, a law which to them represents the power of an immoral and/or illegitimate regime or government. These individuals are contemptuous of the society's political institutions and practices (Slann 1998). Most often the factors responsible for the act are tied to relative deprivation with regard to either the allocation of some fundamental values, poverty or political frustration. It could also be due to religious intolerance or fanaticism. The result is instrumental (or goal-directed) violence resulting to terrorist's conviction that he must impose or inflict some damage on certain individuals or group of individuals. To be sure, it was reported that on February 18, 2006, three Americans namely, Makon Howkins, Coydy Oswald and Rospell and two Britons – John Hudspith and Shadety Senary were taken hostage by the Ijaw militant youths (Adeniran 1996: 10).

The third dimension of terrorism is 'terrorism across national boundaries'. This type of terrorism is one that has external connection, the act is mostly drawn on external factors. Whereas at the national (territorial) level the source of the violent act could be traced and some solutions sought (such as in cases of kidnapping, acid attacks), extra-territorial terrorism does not subject itself to such scrutiny and resolution. Hence, it is difficult to identify the actual source of some terror across national boundaries and, when identified, it is rather impossible to cope with it without the collaboration of other actors within the international system.

Terrorism across national boundaries indeed makes it difficult for nations to act independently or with absolute certainty of success in view of the fact that nation-states react differently to terror in accordance with their particular ideological orientations and the political situation within the existing international system. For instance, while at the national level the infliction of pain replaces articulation of shared values or the type of rationality produced by consensus politics, the act of terror across borders (at the international level) becomes an instrument to be used in securing compliance with goals and objectives that are in consonant with the values of the terrorists.

As a matter of fact, the actual and potential dimensions of terrorism suggest that it has a system as well as a process which interlock. Each takes off from point indicative, that is, from actual threat of violence to the act itself and the resultant effects. For instance, while Wilksinson (1974: 34) sees the process of terror as being sustained by systems of terror which may or may not embrace a whole society or community, Adeniran (1996: 4) sees it as a dependent variable within a complex of socio-psychological, economic and political interactions.

Causes of reign of terror

Beyond this, the causes of terrorist acts are varied: motivational, situational or individual psychological explanations. However, to really address the issue, that is, the cause of most terrorist activities in our societies, it is pertinent to examine some theories of social conflict such as realist, frustration-aggression, psycho-cultural conflict, human needs and systemic theories.

Realist theory or realism highlights inherency and traces the root of conflict to a flaw in

human nature which is perceived to be selfish and engaging in the pursuit of personalized self interest defined as power. The theory greatly justifies the militarization of international relations, arms race, and helps the emergence of other theories like deterrence theory, balance of terror (Ademola 2006: 45). The frustration-aggression theory which John Dollard and his research associated initially developed in 1939 and has been expanded and modified by scholars like Leonard Berkowitz (1962) and Aubrey Yates (1962) appears to be the most common explanation for violent behaviour stemming from inability to fulfill needs.

The central thesis of this theory is that where expectation does not meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront those they feel are responsible for frustrating their ambitions. This is also in line with the Ted Robert Gurr's (1979: 24) relative deprivation thesis which argues that, the greater the discrepancy, however marginal, between what is sought and what seem attainable, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result.

A striking demonstration of frustration-aggression theory is the prevailing crisis in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. After waiting and peacefully agitating for what the people of the region considered a fair share of the oil wealth that is exploited from their land, youths then take the law into their own hands by vandalizing oil pipelines, kidnapping oil workers for fat ransoms and generally creating problems for those they believe are responsible for their predicaments. This theory also gives credence to the proliferation of political thugs and 'Area Boys' in most cities in Nigeria.

Psycho-cultural conflict theory argue that

social conflicts or violence that take long to resolve become a possibility when some groups are discriminated against or deprived of satisfaction of their basic (material) and psychological (non-material) needs on the basis of their identity. As Ademola posits, conflicts that are caused by a crisis of identity are usually the most dangerous and most violent. Identity is an unshakable sense of self-worth which makes life meaningful and includes the feeling that one is physically, socially, psychologically and spiritually safe. According to Northrup (1989) events which threatens to remove the feelings of 'safety' that are tied to different forms of identity usually lead to defensive reactions aimed at avoiding such spiritual and/or physical exposures.

The views of human needs theory is similar to that of frustration/aggression and relative deprivation theory. Its major thesis is that all humans have basic human needs which they seek to fulfil, and that the denial and frustration of these needs by other groups or individuals could affect them immediately or later, thereby leading to conflict. 'Basic human needs' according to Rosati *et al.* (1990) comprise physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs and these for Bruton (1979) are vital ingredients that cannot easily be given up.

As regards systemic theories, it emphasizes that reason(s) for any social conflict lie in the social context within which it occurs. It seeks to explain the relationship between modernization and political disorder and views movements between different periods of economic and political history as containing large amounts of 'pull factors', tension and crisis that create conditions of internal conflict and instability. Lucian Pye, for instance, identifies, identify crisis, legitimacy

crisis, penetration crisis, participation crisis, integration crisis and distribution crisis as six key issues within modernization projects that generate conflicts in societies. The inability to manage the challenges that result from these produce the immediate factors that lead to negative developments within the system such as terrorist attacks of any form.

Apart from the aforementioned theories, there is also a religious dimension to the terrorists' acts. In the opinion of some people, Osama Bin Laden, the suspected mastermind of the assault on Washington and New York was only waging a Jihad against an America controlled by infidels. When Saddam Hussein bombed his own citizens, killed his sons-in-law, occupied Kuwait and threatened the holy shrines in Saudi Arabia, he claimed he was obeying the law of Allah. When the late president Assad of Syria turned the gun against his own citizens, he claimed too that Allah was his ally. The Maitatsine rioters of the eighties in Nigeria were also viewed from the vantage point of religion (TELL Magazine, Oct. 1, 2005).

Nature of terrorism in the Nigerian society

It has been strongly argued in different fora that the aggressive, forceful, brutal and animalistic nature of an average Nigerian largely took roots in the history of the long military rule in Nigeria, and partly hinged on the aftermath of the Nigerian civil war. From the moment the military took over power from the civilian in 1966, to the time of the civil war and by extension, to the period it handed over power back to the civilian in 1999, the civil-military relations was less cordial. While the civilians perceived the military as 'traitors' and 'destroyers', the military on its part viewed the civilians as

sheer 'blood people' who refused to appreciate the sacrifices of the military particularly during the civil war.

In view of this, any controversy or hot argument between any soldier and any civilian during the military rule particularly in the 1970s and 1980s often turned into merciless brutalization, victimization, looting, vandalism, committing arson, raping, and to a large extent illegal detention of the civilian. Here are some of the celebrated cases of the domestic terrorist acts perpetrated by the military against the civilians in the 1970s and 1980s.

Case 1: Armoured Brigade Enugu

In September 1977, it was reported that some innocent Nigerian citizens became victims of angry soldiers who resorted to jungle justice and display of terror because a soldier's wife was allegedly knocked down by a motorcyclist (Daily Times Sept. 28, 1977).

Case 2: Mazamara in Amuwo village along Badagry

On Tuesday 27 July 1977, it was widely reported that civilians were seriously intimidated and terrorized by some soldiers as a result of the death of an army corporal allegedly knocked down by one Volkswagen vehicle and many vehicles were reported to have been smashed and buildings around the scene of the incident looted.

Case 3: Yaba Bus Stop

In December 1986, some civilians who were in the same commuter bus with some soldiers were mercilessly beaten up because they (civilians) prevailed upon them to pay their bus fare which they (soldiers) refused to pay (The Punch Dec. 19, 1986 p.1).

Case 4: Lynching and Arson at Oshodi, Lagos

On 21 January, 1988, some irate soldiers committed same arson and lynching in retaliation of the death of a wife and child of a soldier allegedly hit by a vehicle. The driver of the vehicle in question was burnt in his vehicle while some other vehicles around the scene were set ablaze (National Concord, Feb. 4, 1988 p.3).

Similarly, between 1980s and 1998 the country again, began to witness one of the commonest kinds of terrorism – ‘nuclear bomb blast’. To be sure, on October 19, 1986, Dele Giwa, the founding editor-in-chief of Newswatch Magazine was murdered with a parcel bomb. In its February 5, 1995 (No. 6 edition) the Nigerian TELL magazine carried a terrific story titled, ‘Security jitters over bomb blasts’. Before then, under the banner ‘Fears over new wave terrorism’, The Guardian on Sunday of January 21, 1996 reported that ‘Terror was visibly inscribed on the faces of most residents of Kano and Kaduna last week following the terrorist bomb blast that rocked the two cities’.

Unfortunately, these incidents of terror in Nigeria occurred at a time the Russians were dealing with Chechen militants, hostage-taking and related violence, and the middle East was being rocked by some horrifying acts of terror. It was also within this period that late General Abacha displayed his overbearing, domineering, predatory, tyrannical and despotic character, all in an attempt to clamp down those in opposition to his institutionalizing himself in power. The truth is that Abacha through his men popularly known as ‘the Generals’ hatchet men (TELL, Magazine Jan 12, 1997, p.10) was able to terrorise and eliminate some

highly placed Nigerians who opposed to his dictatorial rule.

Again, the election annulment of 1993 provoked societal disharmony and the crisis heralded degrees of terrorism. During the post 1993 period, those opposed to military rule launched bomb blasts at the unveiling of the Family Support Programme in Ilorin, Kaduna-based Durbar Hotel, Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Lagos Naval Air Base and Bauchi Police Headquarters (Uwazie 1999).

As if that was not enough, the country in the wake of the Fourth Republic and/or Obasanjo’s administration began to experience yet another round of terrorist acts which arguably started with the emergence of ethnic militant groups such as the Oodua Peoples Congress, the Bakassi Boys, the Egbesu Boys, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and Niger Delta Volunteer Force.

The *raison d’être* for forming these groups is not necessarily to capture political power but to serve as social pressure groups that seek to influence the structure of the power in the country, and to call attention to the deteriorating material condition of political deprivation and perceived marginalization of their groups or social environment. They also to some extent challenge the unprecedented rise in crime and insecurity that are perceived by the majority of the Nigerian population as the main problem the society is facing in recent times. For instance, an observer argues that, lack of employment opportunities accounts mainly for why some youths resort to touting, harassment of people and extortion of money from helpless citizens. If government’s economic policies had provided

enough opportunities for these youths to be appropriately engaged, the country would not have had as many crisis and terrorist acts to manage (TELL Magazine, July 31, 2006, p.47).

Specifically, OPC has helped trumpet the voices of its instrumentalists and has made the Obasanjo administration since 1999 to make certain concessions to the Yoruba leaders and generally created a 'police society' in the south west. Some government officials also maintain close links with the OPC leadership, as the group always provides tight security at official and public functions even in the presence of government officials.

In a related manner, the 'Bakassi Boys' before it was expunged from the scene also constituted a lot of havoc especially in the south east. The point is that the era of Bakassi Boys was viewed as a new reign of terror with one form of violence substituted for another. The group's activities added a layer of fear and violence to a society already terrorized by brigands and decades of abuse by the security forces. It created a situation where violence became an acceptable part of daily life and has lost its capacity to shock. Beyond this, some state governments in the east used the group of achieve their political ends as they used it to intimidate their opponents (TELL Magazine, July 30, 2001, p.31; Newswatch, Sept 18, 2000, pp 10-13; The NEWS April 23, 2001, p.15).

There is no gainsaying the fact that since the return of Democratic government in Nigeria, May 1999, politics has to a great extent, become a game of violence, intolerance and killings and so far the roll call of assassination or politically motivated killing

in Nigeria has widened astronomically. Table 1 below shows list of some Nigerians who were victims of these terrorist acts in the past six years 2001-2006.

The foregoing raises a fundamental question: whither Nigeria, and what is the national security up to? To address this, it is instructive to make a few comments on national security in Nigeria.

National security in Nigeria

A major goal of any civilized society is to ensure that law and order is maintained, at least, by guaranteeing general security of the citizenry and ensuring public tranquility. However, the capability to provide security has always been an important element in the responsibilities of any leadership. And it goes without saying that if a state is not well secured, individuals in that state stand to be in great danger and such a state should not deserve the loyalty of its people. This occurs in part because the state is currently the most significant institution through which human kind organizes itself and through which it seeks to provide solutions to common problems, including that of protection from harm.

Security, in this context depicts freedom from physical danger, molestation of any type and the psychological condition of externally induced fear and anxiety. The concept suggests a right upon which the exercise of all other rights depends. Hence, lack of security makes right to life unattainable, makes freedom of expression a mirage and makes freedom of association a pipe dream. As Adejare (2004) contends, the primary goal of security in a democracy is to protect the life, liberties and property of every citizen and resident of the state. In a non-democratic setting, the goal of security is the

Table 1: List of some Nigerians who were victims of terrorist acts (2001-2006)

S/N	Name	Position	Date
1	Bola Ige	Former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice	Dec. 23, 2001
2	Odunayo Olagbaju	Member, Osun State House of Assembly	Dec. 19, 2001
3	Barnaba Igwe with his wife Amoka Igwe	NBA Chairman Onitsha branch	Sept. 1, 2001
4	Ade Awonusi	Not indicated	Jan. 2, 2001
5	Isiaka Mohammed	N.I	Sept. 24, 2002
6	Ahmed Pategi	PDP Chairman, Kwara State	Aug. 15, 2002
7	Victor Nwankwo	No indication	Aug. 29, 2002
8	Chimere Ikoku	Fmr. Vice-Chancellor, UNN	Oct. 20, 2002
9	Dele Arojo	PDP Gubernatorial Aspirant, Ogun State	Nov. 25, 2002
10	Ogbonnaya Uche	ANPP Senatorial aspirant, Orlu Senatorial District, Imo State	February 2003
11	Marshall Harry	Former National Vice-Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) South-South	March 5, 2003
12	Rasak Ibrahim	Frontline supporter of Mohammed Lawal, former Kwara State governor	March 20, 2003
13	Anthony Nwudo	ANPP member and Ebonyi state House of Assembly aspirant	March 21, 2003
14	Onyewuchi Emmanuel	ANPP Chieftain in Imo State	April 19, 2003
15	Toni Dimegwu	ANPP member in Imo State House of Assembly	April 19, 2003
16	Usman Pategi	Former PDP Chairman, Kwara State	2003
17	Theodore Agwatu	N.I	Feb. 2003
18	Ikenna Ibor	N.I	March 27, 2003
19	Ajibola Olanipekun	N.I	June 20, 2003
20	Aminasaori Dikibo	A prominent Niger-Delta politician	Feb. 6, 2004
21	Andrew Agom	Member, PDP Board of Trustees	March 3, 2004
22	Luke Shingaba	Chairmanship candidate, Kogi state	2004
23	Philip Olorunnipa	Electoral Officer, Kogi state	March 7, 2004
24	Hassan Olajoku	No indication	2005
25	Sunday Acte	N.I	Feb. 5, 2005
26	Alibi Olajokun	N.I	May 15, 2005
27	Patrick Origbu	N. I	June 3, 2005
28	Lateef Olaniyan (alias Lati Oshogbo)	N.I	July 16, 2005
29	Anthony Ozioko	N. I	July 27, 2005
30	Jesse Arukwu	Advanced Congress of Democrats gubernatorial aspirant, Plateau state	June 30, 2006
31	Funsho Williams	Lagos State PDP gubernatorial aspirant	July 27, 2006
32	Ayodele Daramola	PDP gubernatorial aspirant, Ekiti state	Aug. 14, 2006

Source: TELL (Magazine) Oct. 23, 2006, p.29; The NATION (Newspaper) Tuesday August 15, 2006, p.5; The NEWS (Magazine) March 17, 2003, p.25

'persecution' of the subjects, disguised as the preservation of law and order.

While Arnold Wolfers (1962) opines that security points to some degree of protection of values previously acquired, Walter Lippman (1943) holds that a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid war, and is able if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war.

The idea of national security according to Padelford *et al* (1976) implies reserving the national way of life, independence and territorial integrity of the state from within and outside interference, including, subversion, insurgency, espionage and sabotage. It is the most fundamental of all national interests and this is so that the nation can enjoy certain moral, cultural and material standards of its own choice and maintain its national position in world affairs.

In Nigeria, the Nigerian Police Force is saddled with the internal security of the state. This means protecting the life, liberties and property of all Nigerian citizens through apprehending violators of human rights. Hence, the dictum 'To serve and protect with integrity'. These statutory duties and functions of the Nigerian police are clearly defined under Section 4 of the Police Act Cap 359, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990. They include: i. the protection of life and property, ii. The prevention and detection of crime; iii. The apprehension of offenders; iv. The preservation of law and order; and v. The enforcement of all laws and regulations with which there are directly charged, as well as performance of such military duties within and without Nigeria as may be required of them.

The implication of all this is that the functions of the police force are crucial to the survival of any modern society. To understand and perhaps appreciate the dilemma of the police force, it is germane to note that total freedom is anarchy and total order is tyranny. It is therefore, the police who in principle, represents the collective interests of the community. It is the agency which holds the balance between anarchy and tyranny.

Regrettably, the conventional wisdom is that the institution is performing below expectation. This is to the extent that even the citizens they are meant to protect and defend no longer repose any confidence in it. In fact, many Nigerian citizens associate or equate the Nigerian Police Force today with the unknown terrorists in the society. If anything, it was largely because of the institution's inertia and unpredictable nature that the shoemakers in the Ariaria market, Aba, in Abia state organized and transformed themselves into a vigilant group popularly called 'Bakassi Boys'. It was also as a result of this, that the OPC changed its fundamental objective from seeking a self determination for the Yoruba people to crime-fighting activities.

We could recall what happened to Dr. Chris Ngige, the former Executive Governor of Anambra State on July 11, 2003, how he was abducted by some terrorists. The question is, in any real democracy, would a ranking police officer arrest a serving governor who has immunity without probable cause of an extreme crime?

The truth of the matter is that responding to any national crisis or violence by the security agency has been a very slow one, especially those violence that are complex, hydra-

headed and octopusian in nature and therefore, capable of ensnaring the agency. What happened in Anambra state in July 11, 2003 and the levity with which it was being treated at the highest level of government confirms one of the sorry paradoxes of our nation.

It is shocking that till date, the police and the intelligence agencies have not been able to break through in unraveling the killers of the above listed Nigerians. It is also amusing that the government (both federal and state) whose responsibility it is to safeguard the life and property of its citizens is not always serious in setting machineries in motion in search for the perpetrators of the heinous acts. What has become of the ritual act or routine of the government each time such an act is done is to make hollow or empty pronouncements that the killers must be caught and brought to book. The question is, how many of the killers have been caught by the security agency so far? We should call to mind that it is now over twenty (20) years Dele Giwa was murdered and the government is yet to find the killer. The same applies to late Bola Ige, the former Minister for Justice and Attorney General of the Federation who was killed in 2001. The insensitivity of the government over issues of this magnitude has made some of the families of the victims to lose hope for justice and resigned to fate.

Socio-economic, political and psychological implications of terrorist acts in Nigeria

The prevailing politics of precarious balancing in Nigeria particularly with regard to the ravaging rate of terrorist acts in recent times speaks volume and confirms Obiozor's (1994) assertion: 'Nigeria is a nation born in hope, promise and optimism but has lived

in anxiety and tension for most of its 46 years as a sovereign and independent nation'. A social critic also captures the Nigerian political setting as 'movement from silly season to killing session' (The NATION Newspaper, 2006). What this means is simply that in Nigeria, 'politics is warfare', where political brutality and killing is pervading the society. It is not about organizing society, defining common purpose and effectively realizing it. Rather, it is concerned with the acquisition of power by any means whatsoever and the exercise of that power in its rawest form: power to enrich self, to bring real or imagined opponents to heel and ruin, to make and unmake, to determine who comes in and who goes out, when and how.

The implication of this, however, especially at this time of democratic experimentation is that the political terrain will be left only for those with thick and tough skins, and die-hards to manage and control. In other words, the Nigerian politics is not meant for highly principled, forthright and patriotic individuals who are not ready to hurt a fly, let alone assassinate an opponent in order to occupy or retain any position. The truth is that when those who have what it takes to transform a society are frightened by some of these terrorist activities, such a society stands to lose tremendously. Life, it is said, is precious hence no right thinking being will like to risk it or sacrifice it (his life) for what is not worth sacrificing for.

This being the case, the country may likely experience low level of development in all its ramifications – social, economic and political. If anything, no foreign nation will like to invest in a crisis ridden or politically unstable nations such as Nigeria. The prevailing situation in the Niger-Delta region where hostage-taking has become the order of the

day, is a classical case. It is, indeed, a situation where the problems of the Niger-Delta militants have escalated into a spate of attacks at oil exploration facilities and the kidnapping of foreign expatriates and staff of oil companies, a situation which attracts negative international attention to Nigeria.

It is strictly as a result of this, that Olusegun Obasanjo ordered the military and the police to stop hostage-taking in the volatile oil-rich Niger Delta. His word: 'The Federal Government would spare no effort to ensure an immediate cessation of the spate of kidnapping and other forms of criminality that threatened economic activities in the region. We are going to be firm and say no to violence and hostage taking. Wherever we find hostage-takers now, we will hunt them down ... Nigeria is a signatory to international conventions which categorise hostage takers and their accomplices in non-international conflicts situations as terrorists to be hunted down wherever they go (The Nation Newspaper August 16, 2006, pp 1-2).

In similar vein, the scourge and reigns of terrorist attacks on unfortunate Nigerian citizens has increasingly led to sorrow, pains, phobia and psychological traumas particularly to the families of the victims. While, some, try to overcome it over time, many families find it extremely difficult to overcome perhaps for obvious reasons. For example, it may be pretty difficult for a young family like that of Mrs. Kehinde Daramola to easily forget the death of her husband, Dr. Ayodeji Daramola, who before death was the pillar of the family, and whose children are still tender and immature.

The situation is comparatively different from a setting where most of the members of a family of a victim have found their feet like that of the family of Engineer Funsho Williams. In the words of the bereaved family of Williams: 'our family is currently facing the biggest challenge of our lives, moving forward without his guidance, but we are only temporarily bent, not broken. Although it is difficult to see an end to the hurt and despair we are feeling now, we know we will pull through these difficult times and emerge stronger. Our memories and his legacy will live on forever (The Nation Newspaper August 11, 2006, p.26).

It is also lamentable to note that after twenty years Dele Giwa was killed, his family is yet to get over the psychological trauma as the mother laments that since her son (Giwa) was killed, the killers have not been officially identified or brought to book. In complementing this, Giwa's sister asserts: 'Anytime I think about it, I just wonder what a wicked nation this is, a country where truth is lacking ... may sorrow never depart from the house of those who killed him for they have brought sorrow to many families (Ibid p.29).

CONCLUSION

In concluding this paper, it is imperative to address one fundamental question: what is the way forward? From all indications, we feel that the prevailing situation requires some level of collective, aggressive and urgent action or reaction from governments and organizations. The fact that no one is safe even in the custody of the police who claim to be our friend is a serious matter. Whether they are assassinations, motivated killings or armed robberies, the truth is that too many unresolved deaths of leading political figures in the land create serious worries in the polity.

To arrest or confront this deplorable situation, however, there is need for the federal government to embark upon any programme that could go a long way to reforming or transforming the agencies responsible for internal security. For instance, the government should endeavour to reexamine the welfare package of the police force as well as its insurance policies. It is our belief that when the agency is taken care of by the government that be, the agency may in turn be in a better position to give in its best to the people. A hungry man, it is said, is an angry man. In fact, an average Nigerian police often appears unkept, malnourished and unattractive which could be enough to make him aggressive, brutal and oppressive.

Above all, the government of the day should pay attention to the burgeoning rate of unemployment in the country. As many youths who are graduates have no jobs, the tendency is that they may try to lay hands on certain things that might be unlawful or illegal in order to survive. 'An idle man, it is said, is the devil's workshop'. To ameliorate or eliminate this situation, we are thinking it will be appropriate if the government that be could evolve formidable programmes which many youths may be involved in. This to a large extent may occupy their time and possibly divert their attention from some of those heinous and criminal acts which they are often employed by strange forces to prosecute.

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