



CAGING THE HIPPOPOTAMUS: (IN) SECURITY AND NATIONAL UNITY IMBROGLIO IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Perpetual insecurity puts national unity in jeopardy and it has to be caged. Insecurity is like the waves that shake the mighty ocean. Conflicts, riots, terrorism, war occur due to the discords of interests, beliefs, and strain in needs. This paper seeks to investigate the incongruities that make up the issue of insecurity and how it affects the wholesomeness of Nigeria. It is indeed complicating because issues that turn out into violence have national horizon. This paper looks into the established measures aimed at ameliorating these issues. How functional have they been? Are those measures solid enough to deliver Nigeria from her quagmire? This paper further identifies that there is a causal-effect relationship between the insecurity and national unit. To effectively cage insecurities and promote unity in Nigeria, there is the need to ensure food security, job opportunities, high investment in education and technological advancement.

Keywords: *Development, Federalism, National Unity, Insecurity and Terrorism*

INTRODUCTION

There are over 5000 different ethnic groups in the world. Nigeria has over 250 recognized ethnic groups. People's interests,

values, and ideas are distinct in one way or the other. The order of life is that they have different ways to which they attend to things. The issues of insecurity and call for

national unity have been a concern for both rulers and the ruled alike. With open candor, insecurity is not a problem that is unique to Nigeria (Aluko, 2022). It has geographically spread across the globe. The United States, United Kingdom and many countries face the challenges of insecurity within their borders on a daily basis (Adejumo, 2011). Many young promising Nigerians have fled the country for safer climes because even money cannot protect the lives of citizens in the country (Aluko, 2020a). It is tiring to be identifying what these problems if all hands are not on deck to make conscious efforts towards curbing them.

The Nigerian government has tried everything from ‘force-for-force’, carrot-and-stick approach to diplomacy but the problem of insecurity and national integration seems to rise with greater monstrosity like the proverbial phoenix. (Imhonopi, 2013; Aluko, 2019a). The fact remains that the Nigerian leaders since independence to date have done their best in creating structures that should bring about unity and oneness in Nigeria. For instance, General Yakubu Gowon addressed the Nation after the Civil war victory on the 15th of January, 1970, that there is a need to preserve the territorial integrity and unity (National Integration) of Nigeria because as a country, peace would be maintained amongst our various communities and minimize the problem of re-integration. (Gowon, 1970). This extracted statement from Gowon’s speech following the armistice of the Nigeria Civil war (1966-1970), shows the commitment of his regime to the integration (unity) of the various

ethnic and ideological affiliations in Nigeria (Adebile, 2015).

In fact, the first ever approach during the colonial era towards national unity (integration) was to balkanize the nation into regions and backed it up with the Lyttleton constitution in 1954. (Onifade and Imnopopi, 2013). These scholars further highlighted the creation of states by succeeding head of states during the Military era as an avenue to strengthen the National unity. General Gowon resorted to the creation of more states in a bid to keep the country united which actually did to an extent because the balkanization of the country into states really secured some measure of autonomy for the minority groups. In the end, Between 1960 and 1966 (3 regions), 1963 (4 regions), 1967 (12 states), 1976 (19 states), 1987 (21 states), 1991 (30 states) and since 1996 (36 states).

Considering the National Youth Service Corps policy in 1973 by General Yakubu Gowon, National unity was the sole aim of initiating such policy. Young Nigerians were expected to understand other citizens living in other parts of Nigeria so that these young ones can proffer solutions to the challenges other Nigerians face when these youths assume leadership position. Other programs aimed at furthering National Unity include; Federal Character, movement of federal capital territory from Lagos to Abuja (a purported centralized location), introduction of the revenue derivation formula, the unifying national policy on Tertiary Education, establishment of unity schools, and introduction of a local government system were all measures taken to ascertain

that National Unity do not deteriorate neither does it fails. Nevertheless, the issue of Insecurity has rendered the efforts of the government unproductive. Fighting Boko Haram in the North-East, Fulani ethnic militias, banditary, Niger delta insurgency and facing rising levels of violence in different regions of the country, the government has nonetheless tried to implement a few measures. In 2019, President Muhammadu Buhari tried to create Rural Grazing Area (RUGA) settlements. His proposal was met with fierce criticism due to the underlining ethnic sentiments.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

(In)Security

Security is a very crucial aspect of human life. It entails the protection of human life, property and general wellbeing. Security has various dimensions but it can be divided into three. This includes the human security, national security and global security. The human security includes mental, psychological, social and health security among others. The national security includes the security of lives and properties of all and sundry living in a country at a particular point in time. Global security implies the sense of collective responsibility of making the world a habitable place by ensuring the general security of individuals living in each country.

Insecurity on the other hand is the condition of being subject to danger. It means to be in a vulnerable state. According to Adegbile, (2015), and Aluko, (2019b), Nigeria is currently confronted with myriads of

challenges which is rapidly stagnating the development and progress of her core productive and sensitive sectors. Insecurity has gone beyond disorganizing the domestic environment; it has succeeded in labeling Nigeria repulsively in the International community. Aluk, (2019c) further stated that insecurity is a state of chaos, violence, terrorism, war and other mishaps that results into restlessness over the environmental conditions surrounding an individual or a country at large. In other words, it is a state of jeopardising the sacrosanct of the three dimensions of security; human security, national security and global security at any point in time.

Insecurity is the antithesis of security and has attracted such common descriptors as want of safety, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection, and being unsafe and others. (Achumba, 2013). Several groups in Nigeria poised as security threat to the entire inhabitants in the country. Almost every region has its own insurgent to deal with. This range from the Fulani militia, bandits commonly called 'unknown gunmen', Kidnappers, Boko Haram sect, Niger delta militants, angry mob and all manners of other groups that pose a threat to the security state of the Nigerian polity.

National Unity

National unity entails the unification of all sectors, segments, and groups that are living in a country together so as to enjoy a harmonious relationship. It is also the blending together several non homogenous groups such as ethnic or nation states,

various religious groups and different races living together in a state so as to achieve a harmonious living. There are several factors that promote national unity, three prominent among them are; equitable distribution of national resources, equity in national recognition of the various entities in the daily governance and freedom of other group to develop at their own pace without other groups hindering them.

In Nigeria context, national unity is the acceptance of all Nigerians into the nationhood of Nigeria without emphasizing, size of the ethnic group, location or the religion prominent to any of the ethnic groups. It emphasizes the Nigerian dream, agenda and proponents. National Unity in Nigeria talks about being in one accord with all other ethnic and religious group. It is the concept of working for the betterment of the nation and ensuring equity and collaboration in the country and making sure every Nigerian sees himself or herself as a unique part of the nation. it is the detribalizing, depoliticizing and delimitating religious supremacy tendency so as to encourage harmonious relationship in a multiethnic and religious polarized country. There are several benefits of national unity. Two prominent resultant effect of national unity are the quick or prompt attaining of greater heights within the country and effect utility of the huge human resources to ensure that the country become a vibrant force in pursuing national development.

National Unity is the strength that binds and inspires the people of a country. National

Unity is being able to accept other ethnic groups as one people , irrespective of religion, status, culture and geographical location. ‘One Nigeria’ means being as one people and making sure everyone shares the true identity of one nation. It speaks of more of unity and letting people embrace others as part and parcel of Nigeria, without seeing them as inferior or superiors but as people who have the same fundamental rights under the law of the country (Aluko, 2020b). National Integration is the hallmark of unity and development in any polity. A multiethnic state requires potent integration mechanisms because multi-ethnicity is a potential political ‘time-bomb’ which may explode at any time leading into fragmentation and or balkanization of the political entire (Aluko and Usman, 2016).

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Violence and its variants such as terrorism, kidnapping, ethnic militia and banditry among others do not become operational overnight. They ‘grow up’ within a time space and certain conditions in the country of operations. The figure I show the Aluko cycle of terrorism and how terrorism becomes a hippopotamus that needs to be tamed in the country. The onset of terrorism is the initiation of the sense of ethnic separatism, ‘seclusionism’ and chauvinism. Also religious bigotry and superlative mindsets in relation with other religious groups serve as a catalyst to initiate terrorism in any society.

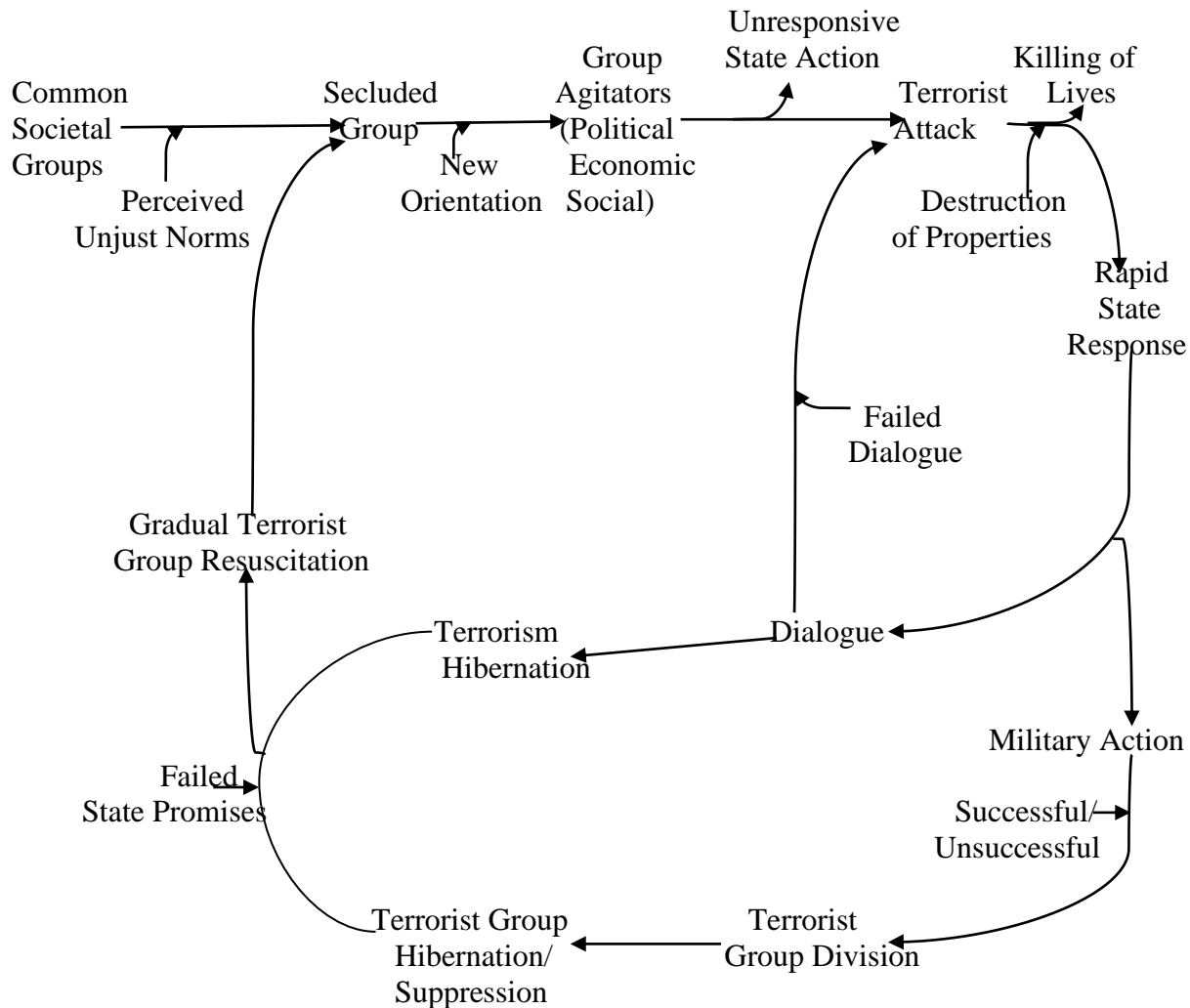


Figure I: Aluko Cycle of Terrorism (ACT)

Source: Aluko Opeyemi Idowu

The Aluko Cycle of Terrorism (ACT) is made up of three cycles and one combined continuum. These include the Peaceful Collusion Pathway (PCP), the Forceful Collusion Pathway (FCP) and the Amorphous Collusion Pathway (ACP). The Peaceful Collusion Pathway (PCP) is the segment of the whole Aluko Cycle of Terrorism (ACT) that has to do with the collusion of the state response mechanism

against the terrorist group in a peaceful coalition. This leads to dialogue among all the parties. This pathway initiated from the general onset (common societal groups) and leads to the Major Decider Stage (MDS)—which is the Rapid State Response (RSR) stage. From the decider stage, the peaceful dialogue route is followed which leads to the Temporary Termination Point (TTP)—that is the Terrorist Hibernation Point (THP).

The Forceful Collusion Pathway (FCP) is the segment of the whole ACT that deals with the collusion of the state response mechanism against the terrorist group in a forceful coalition. This leads to military action against the terrorist group(s). This pathway initiated from the general onset (common societal groups) and leads to the Major Decider Stage (MDS)—which is the Rapid State Response (RSR) stage. From the decider stage, the military action route is followed which leads to the Temporary Termination Point (TTP)—which is the Terrorist Hibernation Point (THP) or Terrorist Suppression Point (TSP).

The last cycle within the ACT is the Amorphous Collusion Pathway (ACP) that has to do with the failure of the state response mechanism against the terrorist group in a peaceful coalition. This leads to failed dialogue among all the parties. This pathway initiated from the general onset (common societal groups) and leads to the Major Decider Stage (MDS)—which is the Rapid State Response (RSR) stage. From the decider stage, the peaceful dialogue route which failed and leads back to Terrorist Attacks Stage (TAS)—reoccurrence of terrorism acts.

The Combined Continuum (CC) is followed from the eventual outcome which resulted to the Temporary Termination Point (TTP) from the Peaceful Collusion Pathway (PCP) – Terrorist Hibernation Point (THP) and Forceful Collusion Pathway (FCP) – Terrorist Suppression Point (TSP) respectively. The Combined Continuum (CC) is as a result of failed state promises reached at the Rapid State Response (RSR) stage. This in any case, leads to Gradual Terrorist Group Resuscitation and assumed the amoral mentality to the state at the Secluded Group Stage. At this stage the cycle of terrorism-ACT continues ad infinitum until the state ensures a morality and equity among all groups that constitute its entity. This implies that there must be a workable policy managerial model and implementation strategies in the state.

DIMENSIONS OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Imhonopi and Onifade, (2012), Ogunubi and Aluko (2020) and Aluko, (2021), affirmed that the insecurity challenge has assumed formidable dimensions forcing the country's political and economic managers and, the entire nation, to rue the loss of their loved ones, investments and absence of safety in most parts of the country. The number of violent crimes such as kidnappings, ritual killings, car jackings, suicide bombings, religious killings, politically-motivated

killing and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry, terrorism and others has increasingly become the regular signature that characterizes life in Nigeria since 1960 independence. A few of the dimensions of insecurity in Nigeria will be discussed. This include; Boko Haram terrorism, Fulani Herdsmen violence and Kidnapping in Nigeria.

Boko Haram

According to Olugbode (2010), the word 'Boko' is a Hausa word meaning 'Animist', 'Western', otherwise non-Islamic education; and the Arabic word 'Haram' figuratively means 'sin' or literally something 'forbidden'. The Boko Haram are terrorist group, controversial militant Islamist group that started in Nigeria but latter spread across West Africa especially in Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria. Since the emergence of this sect in 2002, human lives had been lost due to their attacks in thousands. The Vanguard Newspaper put the death toll at more than 12,000 with more than 8000 injured or maimed and more than two hundred thousands of other innocent citizens left Nigeria while more than 2.3million people were displaced (Vanguard, 2014). United Nation office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2021) revealed that over a decade of Boko Haram terror activities in Nigeria, over 30,000 people had been killed while over three million people displaced.

Several government installations had been vandalized by the terrorist group, education had been disrupted, international

organization's properties such as United Nation were bombarded and private properties were destroyed while Christian churches and religion members were part of their soft or primary target with the quest of establishing an Islamic Caliphate. It is more than 7 years since the 279 Chibok girls were abducted from a government secondary school in Northern Nigeria. As a result, more than 600 schools have been closed down due to unending attacks targeting students and learning institutions across the Northern Nigeria (Oyewole, 2020; Aluko, 2022).

Herdsmen Violence

Herder-farmer conflicts in Nigeria have mainly involved disputes over land resources between mostly Muslim Fulani herders and mostly Christian farmers across Nigeria but more devastating in the Middle Belt (North Central) since the return of democracy in 1999 (Aluko, 2017). While the conflict was underlying economic and environmental reasons, it also had religious and ethnic dimensions. Farmer-herder has killed more than 19,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands more. Insecurity and violence have led many populations to create self-defense forces such as the Amotekun in South West, Eastern Security Network and Community Volunteer Guards in the middle belt among other. Ethnic and tribal militias such as Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have resuscitated, which have engaged in further violence.

The majority of farmer-herder clashes have occurred between Fulani herdsmen and

Christian farmers, exacerbating ethno-religious hostilities. In June 2018, over 200 people were killed and 50 houses were burnt in clashes between farmers and Fulani cattle herders in Plateau State. According to Morning star news (2020), 32 Christians were murdered by Muslim Fulani Herdsmen (Aluko, 2022b). The political economy of the violence and the ethnic dimensions had made the conflict unabated. The political economy and ethnic dimension is the use of state machineries to protect the erring herdsmen destroying farms and human lives in the name of making the cattle to survive at all cost due to the monetary and nutritional value of the cattle. A herd of cattle is usually own by a rich (politically connect) man, that stored his wealth in form of herds of cattle. Therefore, state resources are implored to safeguard the aggressive herdsmen usually a Fulani man that trespassed at the expense of justice delivery for the victims.

IMPLICATIONS OF INSECURITY ON NATIONAL UNITY

A holy book (the Bible) affirmed that a city divided against it own self will not stand. As important and advantageous National Unity is, insecurity has the fortitude to dismantle it. From the foregoing, insecurity is caused by unprotected and misguided feelings of hurt. This small tongue sets the whole Nation on fire if it is not tamed. There can be the political, economic, and Social complications of insecurity are on the rise. Not only has the continued state of insecurity threatened the very fabric of national unity (Integration) in the country

and created the ecology of fear, disquiet and anxiety, it has meted a deadly blow and spectral bite to Industrial development. Insecurity breeds National Disunity. This in turn, stifles economic growth, stability and development. It constitutes treat to life and property. It hinders commercial activities, and discourages local and foreign investors (Aluko, 2019b).

Politically, national unity has been threatened because of constant attacks by the insurgents who harm the pedestrians who may have conceived good visions for the country. Constant cases of violence make the government disabled in their actions. The most devastating activity of these Insurgents is making life unbearable for the citizens who are to be protected by government. Therefore, they make governance a difficult thing to do. Every now and then, the issue of which ethnic group is suitable to rule the country comes up among civil debaters instead of the call for the best man or woman with vision for the advancement of the country. Political instability results from uncontrollable state of insecurity. If the government is unable to control and solve the problems of insecurity, it means that the government for the common have failed (Udoh, 2015; Aluko, 2021).

Economically, internal displacement of people and the crippling of economic activities in the worst-affected areas are discharged by pervasive insecurity. There is the virtual death of economic activities in the North-east due to the violent Boko Haram insurgency. In the same vein, Agricultural produce in Benue as well as

other north-central states of Nigeria have been deeply affected by the herdsmen-farmers clashes (Charles, 2020). There is decimation of consumer confidence, decrease in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and increase in poverty (Aluko, 2020b). Insecurity is responsible for Nigeria's unattractiveness for inward foreign investment alongside policy dysfunctions. There is increase in brain drain, perverse incentives, decline in productivity, and deepening corruption at all levels. Charles (2020) affirms that Insecurity affects the entire economy if something is not done to fix the menace.

Insecurity that arises from ethnic or tribal setting generates and leaves scars of ethnic prejudice, suspicion, distrust, hatred, and discrimination (Udoh, 2015). Disintegration have been sparked by the issue of insecurity in Nigeria. A former Head of State and President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo advocated for an urgent repositioning of Nigeria in such a way that will address the challenges of insecurity which could lead to the final disintegration of the country. He affirmed that the South west Governors advocacy for community police, restructuring and or creation of separate republics may not be effective if there is no political will to actualize the mandate.

As identified by Omede, (2011), the failure of security agencies such as the police, the military, state security services and paramilitary units to share intelligence information has been identified as one of the factors negating the quick apprehension of culprits. There, EIENigeria (2019), Aluko, (2020b) and Ogunubi and Aluko (2020)

reiterated that it is important to strengthen the weak security system in Nigerian. Factors such as corruption, inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment, poor welfare of security personnel and inadequate personnel advised.

CONCLUSION

Insecurity in Nigeria is a war that the government has failed to win given the time frame of the various internal insurrections and external aggressions. The Boko Haaram terrorism has snowballed into other variants such as Islamic State of West Africa Terrorism, Fulani militias kidnapping among others.

Conflict and terrorism cannot be effectively caged if some basis steps are not taken into consideration. The first of which is food availability and security while employment and job security are the second area. Change in the pattern and style of living, including travelling, innovation, science, technology, digitalization and artificial intelligence should be looked into so as to effectively curb the menace of terrorism in Nigeria.

Local content, raw materials, substitutes and diversification of the economy and enhancement of export commodities are major area that needs urgent attention for sustainable growth, development, peace and unity to be recorded in the country. (Expand this more...to make a paragraph...)

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