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THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE THREE R'S OF TERRORISM

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Introduction

- Terrorism is no longer a Western conundrum but it is now a global malaise.
- Globalisation (through diffused information and communication technologies, global media, rapid multi-modal transportation, access to financial resource globally, among others) has contributed to the global threat that terrorism has become.
- Knowledge of bomb making, guerrilla tactics and modern warfare are now accessible on the internet.
- Recruitment into terrorist groups is made easier in this century than in any other because of the existence of the internet and multiple social media platforms.
- Terrorism as Richardson (2007) observes is not a new phenomenon, or the primary preserve of Islam because there have been Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Atheist, and secular terrorists.



Conceptual Clarification

- Terrorism has been defined as “The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives” (Trosper, 2009).
- The United States Department of Defense defines it as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.”
- The African Union (AU) sees terrorism as “any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a state party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any member or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage” (Omotola, 2010).
- In sum, terrorism has often been an effective tactic for the weaker side in a conflict. As an asymmetric form of conflict, it confers coercive power with many of the advantages of military force at a fraction of the cost (Imhonopi & Urim, 2016)



Theories of Terrorism

- The following are some theories that throw more light on terrorist activities and the rise of terrorism in the modern society (Kasumu, 2015):

Islamic Fundamentalist Theory

- The Islamic Fundamentalist Theory is a theory that argues that some Islamists have taken it upon themselves to defend their faith, or territories or Islamic peoples from what is perceived as an encroachment.
- Most Islamist terrorist groups are intent on achieving a return to pristine Islamic way of life even in non-Muslim dominated countries.
- Islamic groups such as al-Qaida, the Islamic State, Al-Shabaab, Hezbollah, al-Qaida in the Maghreb (AQIM), Ansauru and the Boko Haram are examples of these terrorist groups.
- Factors such as religious bigotry, poverty, socio-political and economic marginalisation and a global islamisation agenda have been cited as factors inspiring and sustaining these groups.



The Political Feud Perspective

- This thesis is anchored in the argument that conflict, insecurity and terrorism is a result of the over-politicisation of social life as it is seen in Nigeria (Alozieuwa, 2012).
- The quest for power and all its benefits pushes groups within the state to struggle to capture the political sphere leading to conflict in the process (Ajayi & Nwogwugwu, 2014; Imhonopi, Urim & Kasumu, 2014; Olukoshi, 1993).



State Failure

- State failure has been identified as one strong reason for the increasing insecurity in most developing countries where terrorism has taken root.
- This is because fragile states create political and security environments that enhance the leverage of terrorists in their struggle to reach their political or religious goals in the state (Devlin-Foltz, & National Defense University, 2010).
- States such as Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and others have weak political and security situations that have helped the spread of terrorist groups in their midst.



Frustration-Aggression Thesis

- Another very important theory for the rise of terrorism is the frustration-aggression theory.
- The kernel of this theory is that when a group's shared grievances about marginalisation are combined with a strong sense of group identity, there is a tendency for the outburst of violent responses against the source of their marginalisation, real or imagined (Gurr, 1994). For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia.
- The link between marginalisation and frustration leading to aggression has been established in literature (Alozieuwa, 2012).



Asset to Liability Shift Theory

- This theory propounded by Cunningham (2003) is seen to underpin terrorist strategy. The theory canvasses that government views states, provinces and municipal within its jurisdiction as assets that must be defended against internal or external aggression.
- Thus, acts of terrorism will cost the government valuable lives and money in defending these assets against a sustained terrorist campaign, the like pursued by the Boko Haram insurgency.
- The theory opines that after a government has suffered significant losses, the asset suddenly becomes a liability not worth protecting anymore.
- Government now forfeits such assets in order to cut its losses, hence, terrorists could seize upon such an opportunity to destabilise such a country and make it 'ungovernable' as the Boko Haram has been trying to do in northeastern Nigeria.



The Human Needs/Socio-Economic Perspective

- This perspective blames poor or socio-economic conditions as triggers that fan the embers of terrorism in developing countries such as Nigeria.
- These conditions include unemployment, poverty, deteriorating standard of living, corruption, poor leadership, high insecurity situation, political instability, and others.



Conspiracy Theories

- This theory accuses two or more persons, a group, or an organisation of having caused or covered up, through secret planning and deliberate action, illegal or harmful events or situations.
- Internal factors could include local political or religious groups or both and external factors could include powerful western states like the United States, or their system of governance and liberal ideology considered corrupting.



Causes of Terrorism

- Richardson (2007) argues that terrorism is a lethal cocktail of a disaffected individual, an enabling community, and a legitimising ideology.

Causes of Terrorism – Cont'd

1. **Ethnicity, nationalism/separatism:** This is when an aggrieved group resorts to terrorist strategies to attain nationalist or separatist goals.
2. **Poverty and economic disadvantage, globalisation:** Asymmetry in the distribution of scarce resources and benefits within the state can push vulnerable groups to take up arms and unleash terror on an apathetic and complacent population and the establishment.
3. **Absence of representative and popular democracy** can push a minority group that feels it has to fight to escape its endangerment.
4. **An alienated elite** can manipulate some angry citizens into pursuing terrorist agenda to gain some political or economic milestones.
5. **Marginalisation of a group** can force its members to consider the terrorist option when dialogue or peaceful means fail.
6. **Religion** can trigger the rise of terrorist armies who may be seeking to conquer, expand and consolidate on their religious gains and territories.
7. **Other factors** are poor governance, corruption, lack of social and basic amenities, lack of security, weaknesses in democratic governance, a state's fragility, militarism, social exclusion, and religious bigotry (Charisma Magazine, 2011; Elombah, 2011; Ibegbu, 2009).



The Three R's of Terrorism

- The Three R's of Terrorism was mooted by Richardson (2007).
- **First R**
- **Revenge:** By this, Richardson argues that terrorist armies rise in nations because of the desire to exact revenge. Sometimes this is revenge for something they or their family suffered, often it is revenge for a wrong inflicted on the community with which they identify. Or, it could be an attempt to promote or protect their religion, beliefs, political, social, cultural or religious territories or objectives.
- While we may see terrorists as aggressors and ourselves as defenders, they also see us as aggressors and themselves as defenders.



The Three R's of Terrorism - B

- **Second R**
- **Renown:** Terrorist groups crave publicity for their cause and through it also instil fear in the populace. Terrorists seek both individual glory, and glory for the cause in an effort to redress the humiliation they perceived themselves as having suffered e.g. Al Shabaab, Al Suna. Examples of notable attacks on Nigerian soil by the Boko Haram Sect were:
 1. the bombing of the Nigerian Police Headquarters in Abuja in June 2011, through a vehicle-borne IED (VBIED);
 2. an attack of the UN building carried out by a suicide bomber in another VBIED in August 2011 in which the driver of the car ran into the UN compound in Abuja and detonated a massive bomb which killed twenty-three people and wounded scores more (Bekoe, 2011);
 3. the high-profile abduction of 276 schoolgirls from the Government Secondary School, in Chibok, Borno State, on the night of April 14, 2014, among others (Ushafa, 2015).

The Three R's of Terrorism - C

- **Third R**
- **Reaction:**
- Terrorists are action-oriented people. It is through action that they communicate to the world, what used to be called: “propaganda by deed.”
- Action demonstrates their existence and their strength. In taking action, they desire to elicit a reaction.
- Terrorists often have wildly optimistic expectations of the reactions their action will elicit: negotiation with the establishment, acceptance of their separatist demands, or ceding of territory to them, among others.

Functionality of the Three R's of Terrorism-A

- The revenge, renown and reaction thesis exactly captures the ideological propensity of terrorists, for example Boko Haram in Nigeria.
- **The First R – Revenge**
- Boko Haram, for instance, arose to revenge the extra-judicial killing of their founder and leader Mallam Yusuf.
- The sect also sought to revenge the killing of their members by the police and other security agencies.
- On a larger note, the sect extended their revenge to the police, the military institution, the political class and elite who were captured for ransom, churches and Christians, Muslims and mosques, and Western interests and symbols in Nigeria.



Functionality of the Three R's of Terrorism-B

- **The Second R – Renown**
- Boko Haram Sect in its strongest days sought and craved publicity to celebrate its attacks on targets in Nigeria and to further threaten the citizens of more attacks.
- It targeted both soft targets i.e. citizens and symbolic targets e.g. institutions such as Police Stations, Army Barracks, Churches and Mosques without considerations for collateral damages and rules of engagement .
- It attacked both national and international symbols.
- It also began to capture territories in Nigeria and to annex a few land areas from Nigeria's neighbours.
- It also paid Bay'at (allegiance) to the Islamic State.
- It did all these to increase its popularity and deepen its dread in the hearts of Nigerians and the international community.

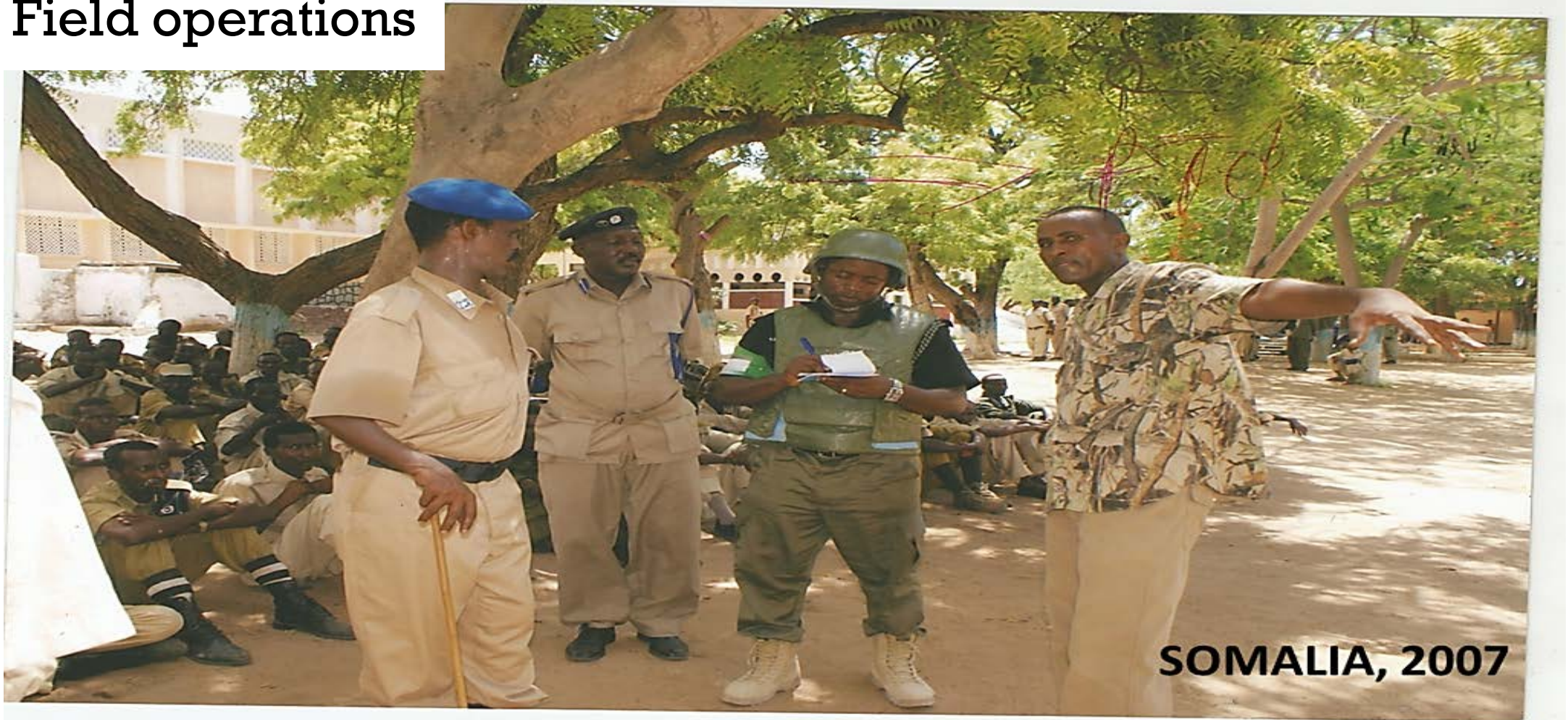
Functionality of the Three R's of Terrorism-C

- **The Third R – Reaction**
- At the height of their dominance, the Boko Haram Sect elicited the kind of reactions it wanted.
- The government was willing to negotiate with it.
- Security vote and budget went up (military procurement).
- The country's armed forces were perceived as being weak to handle the Sect, thereby sending panic to the Nigerian society.
- Schools, churches, mosques, businesses, police stations, local government secretariats, road networks, communities, and many border posts in the theatre of conflict were shut down.
- International partners to Nigeria became jittery of their interests and investments in the country.
- The whole world began to see the sect not only as a national menace but a global threat, forcing the UN, the United States and other Western nations to put a bounty on the capture of the top leadership of the Sect.



Insider's Perspective

- Field operations



Insider's Perspective

- Field operations



Insider's Perspective

- Field operations



Solving the Menace of Terrorism in Nigeria

1. There is need to drop the politics of elitism and practice what Guy Standing and others have called the Politics of Paradise, i.e. Politics with a human face (Imhonopi & Urim, 2015).
2. Leaders in the country must lead by example.
3. The government must address concerns regarding the marginalisation and pauperisation of certain segments in the society.
4. Like Prof Pat Utomi calls it, the time for Plebiscite or Referendum democracy has matured in Nigeria and in most developing societies. People must not be forced to stay together but must collectively agree to stay together (Punch, 2016).



Solving the Menace of Terrorism in Nigeria-B

5. Governance must be based on fairness, equity and participatory leadership.
6. Nigerian democracy must be founded on strong institutions, rule of law, constitutionalism, fiscal federalism and effective and visionary leadership.
7. Government must invest in Nigerians, prioritise human development indices such as health for all, education for all, employment for all and infrastructural development in all parts of the country.
8. A strong but apolitical security apparatus with access to modern fighting infrastructure, know-how and intelligence must be fostered and bolstered in Nigeria.
9. Multi-agency collaboration among security stakeholders.
10. Strengthening of our border agencies.
11. National security database.
12. Economic and financial intelligence (money laundering).



Conclusion

- The functionality of the three R's of terrorism is real and depicts the actual operations of terrorist groups all over the world.
- The revenge, renown and reaction instincts of terrorist gangs in developing countries including Nigeria can be neutralised by concerned governments when they put in place equitable and fair governance systems where everyone is equal and is treated fairly
- Nigeria has got its own fair share of terrorist worries to bear for some years now owing to the brutality of the Boko Haram fighters
- To win the fight against the Boko Haram sect, the country's leadership must carry the people along and engage its different constituent units, ensuring that each has its interests protected and fostered within the union
- Dialogue, a strong security infrastructure and a united front remain keys to defeating terrorism anywhere in the world.

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