



**Covenant University**

Raising a new Generation of Leaders

# **THREAT ASSESSMENT MODE IN MODERN TERRORISM**

**Jegade, Ajibade Ebenezer Ph.D.**

**PRESENTED AT THE TRAINING WORKSHOP ON MODERN SECURITY APPROACHES TOWARDS  
ARRESTING THE TIDE OF TERRORISM IN NIGERIA. VENUE: COVENANT UNIVERSITY, OTA.**

**DATE: 25-26 JULY 2016**

## **Introduction—Terrorism a difficult act to assess**

- Terrorism is as old as human race.
- Its subjective aspect extraordinarily complicates how affected societies understand and address it for 3 main reasons.
- “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter”
- Terrorism is mitigated by political consideration.
- There are also conflicting moral issues associated with terrorism.
- The fact still remains that terrorism represents a typology of violence irrespective of the limitations involved in capturing its right definition and true insurgent assessment. It encompasses intentional, malicious human motives and zest to destroy in order to achieve self-determined goals



## **The Dilemic of assessing threats of terrorism**

- Spate of violence in Iraq, Syria, and revengeful killings occurring between the communities and the police in America.
- In this wise, terrorism is specifically and most often assessed within the context of political definition of acts as either terror, violence, self-defence or justice.
- The most important way forward in the assessment of terrorism is to do a comprehensive examination of the intrinsic nature and quality of human acts and what act should be described as terror within the theatre of occurrence hence the need to make a detour to myriad of conceptions of what terrorism is. First, a recourse to law becomes desirable.



## **Threat Assessment mode in Modern Terrorism**

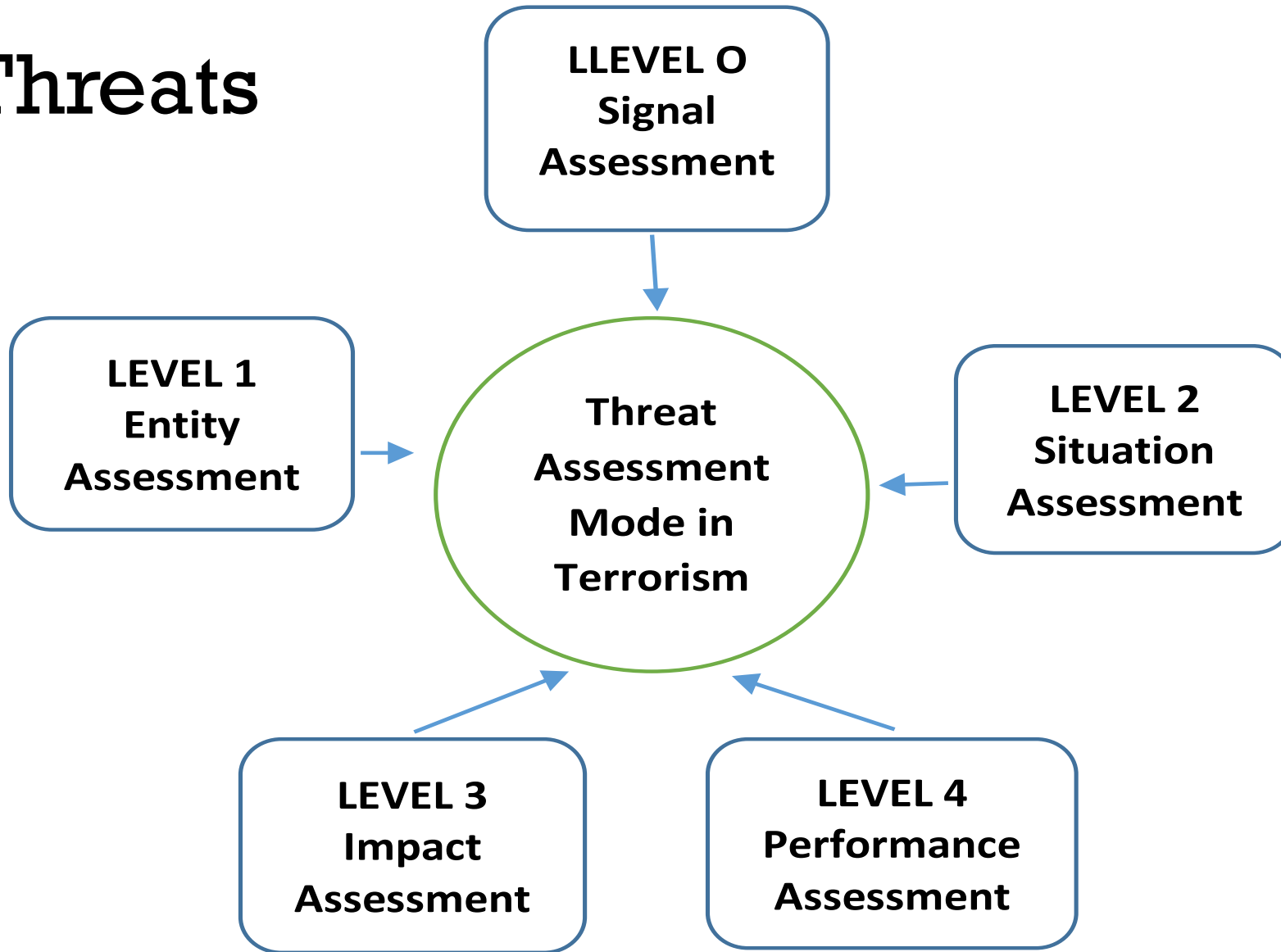
- **This involves establishing a systematic approach for predicting, detecting and characterizing threat activities relating to terrorism. It entail the consideration of overt and covert threat signals, actualize threat, uncertainty in threat capabilities, intents, and opportunities.**
- **There are certain modes required to track the trendy of terrorism in the global society. These are often called basic signals or risk factors of terrorist activity. In the assessment of terrorism, identification of the multiplicity of risk factors and how they interact to birth terrorism is quite essential. These can be discussed under five broad levels.**





# LEVELS OF THREAT ASSESSMENT MODE

Threats



## **Level 0 Threat: Signals/Indicators**

- In listing these indicators, one should not ignore the roles played by the socio-political factors serving as precipitants (covert factor) of terrorist behaviours.
- The initial existence of these precipitants is devoided of violence (the overt factor).
- Apart from the fact that many causative factors accounts for a full blown terrorist's activity, it is also important to note that terrorism follows some sequence in its execution and effects on the societal health. Some of these indicators for terrorist threat assessment is highlighted below.



# Marketing device

- the introduction or the actual use of violence to gain support for the dissidents is quite important at this first stage leading into a full blown terrorism. At this stage, efforts is made to arouse the “troops” the sympathizers or even the larger audience. Recruitment of disgruntled, poverty ridden or disillusioned section of the populace is perfected at this point. The painting of “you have nothing to lose and everything to gain” slogan rings high to the hearing of the perceived oppressed group thus instantiating in them to affiliate to the causes enumerated by the terrorists.



# Reaching out to the external audience

- Romaniuk (2010) disclosed that for more than a century, a defining characteristic of terrorist violence has been its international orientation. More and more terrorist groups are booking their slots in the global arena.
- In most cases at this stage, sentiments, half-truth half falsification are packaged and disseminated to would be external sympathizers who may possess capacity to wield some influence on the targeted government, society or section of the society.
- (Consider Ekwerenmadu's letter to the European community on his perceived probable death of democracy in Nigeria).





# Personalization of attack

- There is a strategic use of randomized bombing, shootings or attacks. This is conveying a single message “Anyone, anywhere at any time may be the target of the next attack. The conclusions in the hearts of those yet to be reached by terror becomes “it could have been me” or “our place may probably be the next target”
- Terrorists at this stage succeeds in instiling fear in the hearts of the populace and to make them feel vulnerable regardless of the statistical probability that a given individual will be affected.



## **Deliberate creation of frightened and fragmented groups**

- **The deliberate action of instilling chaos fosters division and balkanisation. In this, terrorist activity coverage expands as divergent opinions on what set of action to pursue to ends the spate of attacks becomes non-feasible in a short term. There is the existence of confused population, as many become overwhelmingly terrified. The next line of action then becomes elusive thus promoting inter-group conflict and government ineptitude.**



# **Fear and the propaganda of the deeds**

- Talking tough, issuing further threat messages and claiming responsibility for either actual or natural seemingly attacks.
- Application of violence to register grievances, discontent or perceived marginalization. Violence speak unequivocally to the audience of terror and it is adequately comprehended through facts on ground.
- Death and destruction that symbolize each terrorist attacks convey messages that are undeniable in coverage or impact.
- Terrorists and the media benefit maximally from the carnage.



# **Threat event prediction and characterization**

- The possibility of terrorist act occurring is significantly related to the manifest or visibility of any of the threat indicators occurring in society. It involves the likelihood of vulnerability occurring and the capability of affecting sufficient number of persons



# Indications and warnings

- Basic activities required of enforcement unit or threat analysts is the accuracy in determining the following:
- Likely nature of terrorism (subtle, that is difficult to notice; spontaneous, this may occur without prior warning or with the absence of visible indicators; and sporadic, terrorism of this type is acute and engages the eliminations of interval) or
- dimension of threat events (property or human lives prone or combined terrorism),
- knowing what the intentions of the terrorists are, their likely targets, capabilities and consequences of their operations





# Indications and warnings

- The where of terrorist activities is quite important (likely area of concentration of attacks and points of significant vulnerabilities and damages calling for early intervention. The where of terrorism will also consider the hideouts of terrorist cells or at best their tactical units or headquarters.
- The when of terrorism will enable terror analysts to determine the range of seasonal, terminal and occasional nature of terror attacks.
- The why of terrorism in most cases is political and partly religious. On the whole, no matter the character of terrorism and their ideological leanings, the overall intention is to gain political or economic advantages that are mostly undeserved.



# Indications and warnings

- Analysts should know and assess the how of terrorism—this will include the sophistication involved in terror perpetration vis-à-vis the nature of weapons and their deployments, likely accessibility to incendiary devices, bombs, chemical component and WMD.
- The accurate assessment of all the above predictive items will eventually empower terror analysts to calculate and detect early warning cues derivable from the major indicators of terrorism. Timely recognition of the indicators will help the analysts in determining the imminence of terror plans, attacks and probable consequences if allowed to occur.



## **Level 1: Threat entity detection and characterization**

- It is important to threat analysts to exhibit proactiveness in detecting and engaging the characterization of terror inducers. This will entail the engagement in the following activities among others:
- **Knowing the identities of the perpetrators of terrorism**—this can be done in so many ways. It may require keeping surveillance records of the antecedents of the affected suspected terrorist cells, CCTV monitoring at auspicious places, drone recording of the movement of suspected terrorists, reportings made available by fifth columnists or induced infiltrators, linking the axis of terror acts, concentration of their sympathizers etc.



## **Level 1: Threat entity detection and characterization**

- **Determining the attributes of the terrorists:** This may include real or assumptive mannerism of appearance, ethnicity, educational level, religious affiliation, ideological commitment, minority question, socio-economic status, suppressed population etc.
- **Composition or formation of terrorist groups:** Consideration must centre on determining the strength and formation of terrorist cells and analyst must focus on whether those affected are organic or loosed cells, gangs or anonymous groups, national, cross national or international in terms of spread.
- **Location, direction of attack and tracking of combatants:** Area of concentration, locations of suspected tactical commands, affiliated units, location of their supplies and possibly the location of their sponsors. Attempt must be made to track their route of supplies, reinforcements, affiliate terror groups, Direction of threat or probable attacks etc.



## **Level 1: Threat entity detection and characterization**

- **Activity capability of terrorist organization:** level of operationality, destructive potential, victimization effect in case of attacks and other forms of vulnerabilities inducible by the terror group. The number of machineries in their ranks and files, suspected technical staff, weaponry know-how, calibre and range of arms and armament, and capabilities to spring surprises etc.
- **Intent:** The intent of the terrorists will be determined to a large extent by ideological pursuit, magnitude of change envisaged, concession required and goals that are planned to be executed in case of success in overthrowing the existing order.





# Level 2: Vulnerability Assessment

- To combat terrorism, the analyst must be versatile in making accurate assessment of the vulnerabilities likely to affect own area of responsibility and interest. In making vulnerability assessment, the threat analyst must examine the following areas along other sources of threat:
- Real or potential terrorist nation, organization or individuals must be identified in advance in order to facilitate the concentration of efforts toward placing such on surveillance, conducting espionage on them through interception of the communication links and neutralizing their attacks.



# Level 2: Vulnerability Assessment

- Intended targets must be determined in advance and this may vary according to the philosophy of the terror group. Targets of terrorism may include vital national installations, seats of government, attacks on VIP's, other national embassies, religious outfits, crowded areas, industrial base, sources of energy supplies, educational institutions etc.
- Intended effects linkable to planned or successive terrorist attacks. This may range between the attacks on the economic base via causation of explosion of pipelines, disincentiveness to foreign investments, premeditated destruction of national economy; engaging political intention to discredit the existing power structure and occasioning acute insecurity to life and property; deliberate intention to cause psychological effects leading to fear among significant number of persons within the national population;
- Threat capability (explained above)



# Level 2: Vulnerability Assessment

---

- Force composition, coordination and tactics:

Analysis will cover the following areas:

- i. Tactical plans
- ii. Command goal intentions
- iii. Control resources—chains of command
- Operational strength and coverage
- Destructive potentials
- Victimization capability

# Level 3: Consequence assessment

- Apart from the fact that terrorism imposes qualitative cost on nations and other affected groups, concerted efforts should be made to accurately predict the probable cost of terrorist attack if it occurs. Assessment of **assumptive cost of terror** attack is required for the preparedness, planning and combating probable terrorist attacks. Besides, threat analyst must as a matter of fact possess calculative skills in determining and engaging the estimation of **real or probable cost** of destructive potentials of terrorists across a wide range of loses attributable to terrorist attacks. This will include the estimation of monetary implication of terrorist attacks, loss of man hour, destabilization cost, socio-psychological cost, cost relating to reactions by other nations, retaliatory effects of terrorist etc.



# Level 4: Performance Assessment

- The last form of assessment required from any seasoned threat analyst involves the estimation of the strength and weakness of own organization in combating professional, amateur or disorganized terrorist networks. The state of preparedness, logistics potentials and support, availability of trained personnels, technological power (detectors, surveillance equipment, etc.) and superiority of arms and armament is very important in the estimate of performance.





# Level 4: Performance Assessment

---

- Periodic review of own unit's performance major activities targeted at combating terrorism is fundamentally necessary. The use of resource managers with expertise in terror analysis and intervention and exploitation of intelligence from the available networks will help organizations immensely on their quest to arrest the insurgence of terrorism. Management will be essential in the following areas: individual resource, control, coordination of activities, goal attainment in both short and long term and systematic engagement of threats.

# Solving Terrorism

---

- Any attempt aimed at solving the act of terror will require the combination of efforts towards alleviating the risk factors, intervening the relationship between the factors and fortifying the targets of terrorism. Efforts should be made to curtail the spread of violent reaction to political issues.



**Covenant University**  
Raising a new Generation of Leaders

Thank you

Questions and clarifications

- 
- **Who is a terrorist?**
  - **Universities**
  - **Injustice**
  - **Tracking**

