

BOKO HARAM: THE BIRTH, GEOGRAPHY AND HYPOTHESES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUSTENANCE OF THE CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *There are many states on the northern border of Nigeria with Niger, Chad and Cameroon. And in these states, there are many ethnic groups. However, it is only the Kanuri enclave of Borno and Yobe states that produced the radical Islamic boko haram sect. It is the informed position of this paper that one of the reasons why the Kanuri gestated boko haram was largely due to the international territorial advantage they have. The reason is that the Kanuri is the only ethnic group in northern Nigeria that undistorted distribution into neighbouring countries of Chad, Cameroon and Niger, with the special feature of almost uninterrupted spread. Therefore, the paper argues that this geographical advantage certainly has a fundamental role in the ongoing conflict of the boko haram. It is also the submission of this paper that the version of Islam prevalent in the Kanuri enclave is predisposed to radicalism that boko haram prides with. It is common knowledge that since the conflict ensued, the Nigerian government has taken measures aimed at curtailing moments of attacks and frustrating the movement's ambition. This desire is yet a success. Therefore, the paper appraises the methodologies so far employed, identifying why they have not worked, and probably why they will never work for this conflict that has lasted for a decade now.*

KEYWORDS: Boko haram, conspiracy, ethnic identity, Kanuri, politics, religion,

INTRODUCTION

Boko haram has posed a serious security challenge, ever since it announced itself. To this extent, it has remained a major concern to researchers and policy makers both within and outside the boundaries of Nigeria; all with a view to understanding and solving the scaring security challenge it poses. The germane worry is that if the problem persists unabated, then providing the socio-economic and political development which Nigeria is desirous of, to join the league of developed nations will remain a distant unrealizable dream, especially in the North- East of the country.

This piece particularly tries to unearth why the Kanuri enclave of Borno and Yobe states is the birth place of Boko Haram. What is it about the Kanuri and their geographical location that favour the birth and spread of boko Haram? Ask in another related manner, why is it that Boko haram did

not originate, for instance in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto or any of the Hausa-Fulani dominated states but in the kanuri controlled states of Borno and Yobe? What are the hypotheses that support the conflagration of the conflict, despite attempts to quell it?

Conspiracy Theory

Doughlas and Sutton (2008) define conspiracy theory as “attempts to explain the ultimate cause of an event as a secret plot by a covert alliance of powerful individuals or organizations” (p.148). At heart of conspiracy theory is the idea that a group of people have plotted or are plotting to harm other people’s interest. Alozieuwa (2013) argues that in using the conspiracy theory in an attempt to explain the Boko Haram crisis can be marked into two broad categories: one focusing on machinations of internal actors, the other on external actors. Internal actors may include the disgruntled northern power elite who, having lost power, are bent on bringing down Nigeria under a southern leadership, as well as the Jonathan administration itself, which may be sponsoring the crisis in order to rally southern support behind his administration, and there is also the perception that Boko Haram may be a secret society controlled by some ‘invisible’ hands that seek to destroy the north ahead of 2015 so as to forestall or weaken its bid for the presidency at that time. External actors, on the other hand, may include powerful western states like the United States, or neighbouring African states envious of Nigeria’s progress and stability.

On the bond between conspiracy theory and distant events that influenced boko haram, Safizadah (2013) adds an attention-grabbing dimension. According to him in the 1710, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department dispatched 10 professional spies to Egypt, Iraq, Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, and Istanbul in order to examine ways to sow discord among the Muslims and to impose British hegemony on Islamic countries. One of those sent on this infamous mission was the famous British spy, Mr. Hempher who eventually befriended the 18th century Islamic theologian, Mohammad ibn Abd-Wahhab and helped him to found and form the Wahhabi movement in line with the wishes of the British’s Southern Department. It was Mr. Hempher who schooled the young Abd-Wahhab to encourage his followers to murder other Muslims or take them slaves and sell them in the markets, to loot their belongings, and to show disrespect to them in public and to prevent Muslims from performing the hajj, to rebel against the rule of Ottoman Empire, among others. Incidentally, it is same Abd-Wahhab who formed the Wahhabism sect that boko haram enjoys their ideological learning as the next section shows. From this account, one can deduce therefore that boko haram is a product of either direct or remote conspiracies of both pre-post colonial eras.

Briefs on Boko Haram: Name, Founder and Influence

Boko haram is a short hand name for *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Liddawati Wa- Jihad*, meaning people committed to the propagation of the prophets teaching and Jihad. This is the original name that this fundamentalist are known with but came to be christened as boko haram. The name is a combination of an Hausa (boko,) and Arabic (haram) words. It is hinted that “the word ‘boko’, derived from the English word ‘book’, refers specifically to western education and by extension western culture. It also has resonance with the word ‘boka’ which in Hausa and Kanuri languages means

a pagan sorcerer or soothsayer; therefore intimating that western education and culture is intrinsically un-Islamic” (Tanchum, 2012, P.76). The Arabic word ‘Haram’ simply means sin, forbidden or sacrilege. It is in this context that Pham submits that boko haram means western education (and such product that arises from it) is sacrilege (Pham, 20012, P.15). In a related development, Oftedal (2013) argues that “in classical Hausa language, ‘boko’ literally means “deception”, “deceit”. It is used to describe formal education system of the colonial period that was associated with Christian missionaries as seen as a disguise for evangelism and western beliefs” (p 5).

The Nigerian Yobe state born Mohammed Yusuf founded the group, which was at the start referred to as Yobe Taliban before its present name of boko haram, which became popular well after the death Mohammed Yusuf. Although “some senior military officer suggested that the group had existed in one form or another since 1995” (Onuoha, 2012, P.55), the group’s development in the narrative of 9/11 is located in activities of 2002/3. Neil (2003) recalls that it was particularly in 2003 that Al-Qa’ida leader, Osama bin-Laden, through an audiotape identified Nigeria as one of the six Muslim countries ripe for liberation. Thus, Mohammed Yusuf’s impel may not likely be unconnected with Osama’s crusade summon on Nigerian Muslims. A pointer to this is the incontrovertible fact that “the ideology of boko haram champions aggressive anti-system movement that articulates vehement opposition to the existing political (secular) status quo, the federal government, established (and perceived ineffectual) religious elites, modern oriented Muslim identity and many foreign-mainly western- influences” (Chalk, 2004, P.420) that permeates all spheres of life in Nigeria. And the violent opposition to established systems in Nigeria typifies the liberation intended by Osama bin Laden.

Oftedal (2013) makes no hesitance in admitting that *maitatsine* teachings are source of ideological inspiration for boko haram. Other likely ideological influence includes the 1979 Iranian radical Islamic revolution as well as the self-style guerrilla warfare strategy of Al-Qa’ida and Taliban. This inference is buttressed by Fwatshak (2010) when he asserts that externally, the group is influenced by Taliban ideology. In this connection, therefore, it is said that key members of the

Taliban, such as Aminu Tashen Ilimi were integrally involved in the founding and evolution of Boko haram. At the home front, Boko haram would have been influenced by *Jama'at Izalatbat Bida'a Walaqamat Sunna* (society of removal and reestablishment of Sunna) popularly known as *Izala*. Meanwhile, it needs to be pointed out that all these groups, particularly Boko haram and Al-Qaeda have radical Sunni Salafism and Wahhabism as motivating guides, both in operation and intent. Scripturally, the Qur'anic phrase: "anyone who is not governed by what Allah has not revealed is among the transgressors could have aided the boko haram sect in the formation and operations. From the foregoing, it follows, therefore, to assert that Boko haram is not *sui generis* of radical Islam and terrorism in Nigeria but a product of combined effect of long standing traditions of violent revolts, heralded by the Othman Danfodio's Jihad and the *Maitatsine* riot among others. The only difference boko haram has made, is that it is the only terror group that is not engaged solely in Islamic Puritanism but adamant in direct confrontation with state, with the aim of wresting power from it at all cost and to establish *azawad*.

It is interesting and informative that most literatures have consistently identified boko haram with the Kanuri. For instance, McGregor (2013) submits, and rightly so that Boko haram is based in the Northeast of Nigeria, in the areas predominated by the Kanuri people. In another source, it is said "that Boko haram is estimated to be 80% Kanuri" (Liolio, 2013, P.64). Tanchum (2012) is outright about boko haram and the Kanuri connection by saying "the organization itself maintains a depth of support in the greater Kanuri region" (p. 80). As further evidence, the group in its early days was nurtured and repositioned for the mission ahead in the remote village of Kannama, which is located deep within the Kanuri territory. These few examples are reasons enough not to disagree with the connection between the Kanuri and Boko haram. At this point, therefore, it will be proper to briefly examine who the Kanuri are.

The Kanuri

The Kanuri ethnic group is a transnational people. This is because they are found in Cameroon, Chad, Libya, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan. In Nigeria for instance, they are found in great numbers in the Border States of Borno and Yobe. Some are present in Bauchi and Kano states as well. Referred to as Beri-beri by the Hausa, the Kanuri are found in Zinder, Kaour and N'guingmi, all in the southeast areas of Niger. While in the Cameroon they are found in the northern part of the country and some populations of them in Western Chad. The reason why they are found in many



countries is because of their historical ties and/or assimilation of some other tribes.

An example of this historic fact include the Biyedat of Chad, Daza of Chad, Kanembu of Chad, Teda of Chad, Yerma Kanuri of Chad, Zaghawa of Chad, Teda of Libya, Zaghawa of Libya, Biyedat of Sudan among others. Tijani (2005) hints that the

Gemergu, Marghi, Mandara as well as some autochthonous groups were assimilated by the Kanuri (P.67), in Nigeria (Borno state), particularly during the flourishing days of the Kanem- Bornu Empire. However, some of the tribes in the spirit of the freedom that democracy offers are seeking self recognition and determination. Thus, they are no longer at home with the Kanuri identity. Certainly, the on-going boko haram conflict will make such tribes distance themselves all the more from the dominant Kanuri ethnic group enmeshed in the conflict.

Birth of Boko Haram in Kanuri Enclave: Likely Factors Responsible

The People and their Place: The inter-state and trans- border uninterrupted distribution of the Kanuri ethnic group across countries is out of the ordinary gain of note that remains essentially a conniving feature that is usable and indeed been used. It is indeed an exploitable resource. This is because such a wide distribution is effective providence that is been manipulated for intended gains. The benefits of this extensive spread include but not restricted to the following: One, it provides trans- border safe route within the ‘global’ Kanuri world. Two, the population could coordinate conveniently across borders any agenda of common interest. Three, the wide geographical spread provides a miniature international community with all benefits that accrue there-from. These gains are too strategic and luring for any terrorist group to ignore going into alliance with the Kanuri world. It is probably against this background that the Kanuri are for all intents and purposes the betrothed bride of the Boko haram terrorist sect. This statement is made without prejudice to some Kanuri persons who themselves take exceptions to the current security challenge in the area.

Today, the Trans-national ethnic network of the Kanuri, which Tanchum (2012) refers to as ‘greater Kanuri region’, covering the Northeast Nigeria, Northern Cameroon, Southeastern Niger, and Southwestern Chad constitute the extended base of activities of Boko haram . Thus, it can be said that “boko haram has perfectly revived the pre-colonial map of the Kanuri and their identity. It is therefore no surprise as hinted earlier that the Kanuri Chad region has provided the Boko haram with route to Sudan and from there to Al-Shabaab in Somalia” (Tanchum, 2012, p.76). Similarly, the Kanuri region in Niger provides Boko haram with a northern corridor to the Touareg region of Niger and adjacent Touareg regions of Mali, Southern Libya and Algeria.

Sect’s Affiliation and Disposition: Forest (2012) argues that “Islam in Nigeria and indeed throughout much of Africa is of Sufi tradition” (p.72). This Islamic sect is known for being moderate and relatively conservative. In fact, “the Sufis view themselves as Muslims who take seriously God’s call to preserve his presence both in the world and in the self... [and] stress inwardness over outwardness, contemplation over action, spiritual development over legalism and cultivation of the soul over social interaction” (Espisito, 1995, p.105. This group of Muslims is predominantly in the Sokoto Caliphate. This is because it is hinted that Sokoto Caliphate provided a verifying structure for the organization and leadership within the Sufi Muslim communities. Such

communities logically would rebuff Sunni radical Salafist- Wahhabism; the type that Boko haram cherishes and upholds. The reason has been that their ideological slant stands in direct opposition to the sufi's. This, therefore, makes Sokoto Caliphate unlikely and unconvinced domicile of boko haram. This explains why the sect did not originate there. The implication is that a place where boko haram finds unquestionable acceptability would have been a place where radical Islam is entertained and practiced. If this premise is anything to go by, then it is only sensible to conclude that Kanuri enclaves harbours the *potency* of radical Sunni Wahhabism in order to make real the terrorist *act* of boko haram. This therefore accounts for why the Kanuri enclave in Nigeria would be said to have gestated, given birth and nursed boko haram to what it is at the moment. And when judged against the time tested and honoured principle of *nemo dat quod non habet*- you cannot give what you don't have- one would agree that the people and the place took to indigenous Salafist- Wahhabism form of Islamic radicalism because they have a penchant that is of capacity and capability for it.

A little explanation about Salafist- Wahhabism at this juncture will not be a bad idea at all. In surmise form, Salafist-Wahhabism are two different epochal expression of violence, backed by Sunni's violent theological ideology. Salafist, is a coinage of Gilles Kepel, while Wahhabism represents the ideological teachings of a Sunni Islamic scholar, Mohammad ibn al- Wahhab. Both Salafism and Wahhabism are conk Sunni traditions that utterly reject *Jahiliyya* (barbarism and state of ignorance which existed prior to the coming of Islam). The Salafist- Wahhabism from all intent and purposes considers as anathema religious acts such as reverence of the person of the prophet and pious saints. In addition, it encourages burning of books containing traditional prayers, interpretations of law, and commentaries on the Qu'ran and the Hadith. What it means is that the Sunni salafist-Wahhabism advocate uncompromisingly strict adherence to the teaching of the Qu'ran and insistence on *azawad*.

Proponents of this ideology later included being against modernity, secularism and enlightenment as cardinal values. The group is considered extremist in the sense that they usually turn militant, declaring war against any one with viewpoint(s) contrary to theirs. Thus, declaring war against government is commonplace experience. This is exemplified by Boko haram's war against the Nigeria state.

History, Memory and Political Evolution: The 1904 amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates to form the Nigerian state did not take into account the willingness or otherwise of the people that made up the country to be part of it or not. As events unfolded in the new nation, it became clearer that some blocs the formed the nation felt they would have been better off if they were not part of the country. One of such blocs is the Kanuri of Northeast Nigeria. Their agitation for cessation within the very first decade of Nigeria's nationhood speaks volumes regarding this point. Narrating the attempts of separation by Borno movements, made up of largely Kanuri ethnic group, Kwanashie (2002) states that "as early as the 1960s, two Borno nationalist movements; the

Borno Youth Movement and the Borno State Union called for a separate country” (p.204). In his understanding and analysis of this event, Tanchum (2012) says that “the Kanuri cessation interest was only part of the broader anti-colonial struggle” (p.75). But he must have realized how wrong this position is. First, what sort of anti-colonial struggle when the nation had been granted independence and the colonial masters long gone? Second, even if the threat was at threshold of Nigeria’s independence, would threats of separation at that time, in any way, mean anything when almost everywhere, especially in the neighbourhood was under colonial rule? It would have just amounted to moving from one colonial master to another; probably from English to French speaking or vice versa, and nothing else.

One would rather say that the boko haram conflict clearly shows that the Kanuri did not perceive themselves faring better in the Nigerian state and therefore would rather exploit the possibility to joining the larger Kanuri identity (as been done by boko haram today) and in this context fight for a state. This decision would have been guided by history and memory. For instance, it is a historical fact and indeed in the memory of the Kanuri that of the 2,148 jobs created by northernization policy of Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna Sokoto in the 1950s through the sacking of southerners, only few Kanuri benefited. Barkindo (2013) captures it thus: Ahmadu Bello’s northernization policy meant to replace southerners in all the regional and provincial civil service with northerners had the north-east technically excluded (p.21), particularly the Kanuri. This is unlike the Hausa-Fulani or even the Christians of the middle belt whose educational credential and profile made them ‘necessary evil’.

In addition, the Kanuri are also aware that they were the least beneficiaries of the road construction and other infrastructures provided during the days of northern region. For records have it that development projects were mostly concentrated around the Sokoto Caliphate. Also, there was the political will to establish railway linking Kano with Sudan, Niger Republic and Algiers while the Borno emirate was left out. This predicament is compelling to make the Kanuri ask: staying in Nigeria is *cui bono*- is of whose benefit?

Even though the Jihad diminished the shine of the Kanuri in the Islamic religious arena, yet the people still believed firmly on the need to hold tenaciously to strict Islamic revival that purges western corrupting tendencies, as the last resort. Thus, the narrative of religion as means of recovering the lost image as presented by boko haram became too attractive to ignore among ordinary Kanuri folks. This explains why they took to it in droves.

The Poverty and Inequality Narrative: Northern Nigeria is generally divided into north-west, north- east and north- central. Of all, the north-east, from which boko haram originates, is reputed to be at the very rear and bottom of the human development index ladder. This is a fact that is commonplace and publicly acknowledged even by leaders of the region. For instance, governor Isa Yuguda of Bauchi is quoted to have said “for quite a long time the sub region has remained

one of the least developed, if not the least developed of the six geopolitical zones in the country in all spheres of human endeavor. The region ranks very low in all human development indices which include, among others, low enrollment in schools, high infant and maternal mortality and high level of poverty” (NISER, 2013, p.18) An aspect of Human development Index that is a significant challenge in the north- east is Human Poverty Index that concentrates on calculating deprivation in terms of longevity (survival rate), Knowledge (rate of illiteracy) and standard of living (access and services). The table tagged fig 1 highlights the challenge in graphic detail:

Fig.1:KEY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS BY GEOGRAPHICAL ZONE

Indicator	North-central	North-east	North-west	South-east	South-south	South-west
Population in millions : 2006 census	20.3	19.0	35.8	16.4	21.0	27.6
% on <\$1 a day	58.6	64.8	61.3	31.2	47.6	40.2
Children underweight for age under 5	19.6	33.1	42.9	8.5	8.0	19.1
Net primary enrolment rate	70.2	44.4	41.7	80.2	82.2	82.8
Net primary enrolment ration of female and male	1.1	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0
Under 5 mortality (per 1,000)	165.0	260.0	269.0	103.0	176.0	113.0
Fully immunized children of 12-13 month	8.4	250	6.2	20.5	25.6	29.9

Source: DFID’s Programme in Nigeria- Eight Report of Session 2008-9, Vol.2, P.86

From the data on Fig.1, it is clear that north east has the highest number of poverty and underweight children who are under 5. This has been a constant phenomenon over the years. For instance, four years to the 2008 report of DFID, Nigeria Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER) (2013) said that why the southeast zone recorded the lowest proportions of the poor, the northeast on the other hand had the highest percentage of the poor in the country.

Why poverty in the northeast is so notorious is because of high level of inequality in the region perpetrated by the ruling class and their associates. It is indeed frightening that the richest ten percent of the populace consume 38.2% of national income while the poorest ten percent consume only a meager 1.8%. This wide discrepancy has elicited odium from the poor towards the rich and the ruling class. Thus, when boko haram told the ordinary citizens that their plight is the handiwork of the ruling class, and that it can uproot and banish these master-minders to pave way for *azawad*, the message excited the oppressed poor of the Kanuri enclave. For this class of people, boko haram is a galvanizing force for their liberation. This belief is so strong that it does not permit posing pertinent questions like: Is this mass of the populace skilled for the global economic competitiveness of the 21st century? What form of functional education do they have? But unless and until such questions are addressed, boko haram will be likely accused of *Taqiyya* even if *azawad* is achieved

as the members will have neither skills nor functional education backed by universally acknowledged certification.

Sustaining the Conflict: Popular Theories

CORRUPTION: The response of the Nigerian Government to boko haram conflict has been military crackdown. The public is sharply divided on the merit or demerit of this strategy. However, this is not the concern of this paper, at least at the moment. The concern is to explain how corruption is frustrating the fight against boko haram. Suffice to say that corruption is one of the greatest challenges facing Nigeria. Unfortunately, it is affecting and effecting security as never before. This is particularly worrisome because it is certainly happening at the very wrong time; when boko haram is keeping the nation under siege in a manner that a corrupt security will only be an additional problem than solution.

Anonymous- sought- military- personnel who is on Joint Task Force in Damaturu, the Yobe state capital, revealed that of the #45,000 monthly cash allowance due to them, only #18,700 is usually given. He laments that even the amount is not paid as at when due. When asked why the under payment, he attributed it to the corruption of the high ranking officers. While this in itself is regrettable, the repercussion is even more dangerous and scary. The first implication is a begrudging JTF that thinks it is putting its life on line in confronting the militants, but the pecuniary boost that is to come their way is rather accruing to some armchair officer(s). The local slogan “monkey the work, baboon the chop” aptly captures this scenario. It is of truth that corruption spreads faster than cancer cells. Thus, the corruption of the high ranking officers has its resonance on the officers of JTF. For instance, a military source in Katsina state did not feign ignorance over the fact that JTF at check points could take bribe to allow arms and ammunitions to be moved from one point to another. In extreme cases, military or Para-military provide cover for the movement of arms to desired destinations. What it means is that with the funds at the disposal of Al-Qa’ida backed boko haram, they could disguise and move arms with relative ease. With this attitude, winning the war on terror is still a distant dream.

Although it is difficult by reason of classification to have access to the exact amount spent annually by the Military on insecurity in Nigeria, citizens interviewed on the streets of Abuja are all armed with the information that for the past three years of national budget, insecurity has always received the highest allocation of funds. Yet 98% of those interviewed say their no commiserate improvement of the nation’s security. A member of the Civil Society Organization who prefer anonymity for fear of arrest indicts that during the Junta days, the high and mighty in the military had money at their beck and core, accounting virtually for nothing. However, when the country returned to multi-party democracy in 1999, the political class took charge of the nation’s resource to the bewilderment of the military. And that the boko haram insecurity challenge is rather an

opportunity for the military to align their pockets with the funds meant for the prosecution of the war against boko haram in a manner reminiscent of when they held sway.

Another dimension of the corruption is the hint from a military retiree that the budget for the purchase of hardware equipment for the military has been transparently and judiciously used. The findings of a confidant and colleague around the Tongo- Cameroonian border in Adamawa state substantiate the accusation of lack of military equipment. He discovered at the border check point that, of the three members of JTF assigned to the volatile area, only about 15 rounds of live ammunitions was with them. They had neither communication gadget nor befitting wears to protect them against the harsh weather. Most disturbing (probably) is that they had AK 47 rifles that were purchased and marked as far back as 1983. Of what superior fire can these old rifles produced in comparison to modern sophisticated weapons that boko haram members parade? Thus one is compelled to say that there cannot be any better sign of ill-preparedness to fight the boko haram insurgency than this. Meanwhile, the cankerworm of the Dasukigate speaks volumes why this is the case.

IDENTITY SYMPATHY: Identity is a socially constructed affiliation. It is based on the idiosyncrasy of birth and experience. In Nigeria, most people pay loyalty and allegiance to the identity of tribe and/or religion than that of the nation. That explains why many Nigerians identify themselves first as people of given tribe (e.g. Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Tiv etc) or of a given religion (for instance Christian, Muslim and in some cases Votaries of African Indigenous Religion (AIR) before recognizing that they are Nigerians. It is this uncompromising membership priority to ethnic or faith identity that has made the question of common Nigerian identity a Herculean task; more fiddly than it should have ordinarily been. When, for instance tragedy strikes, the first spontaneous impulse is the ethnic and/or religious identities of the victims. If they happen to be of our faith and/or ethnic group, our emotions become uncontrollably eerie than when the Nigerian identity is involved. What it means is that the Nigerian identity comes second. The first is the pair of ethnic and religion.

This has played out in the boko haram conflict. A Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) in Shuwa, Adamawa state, who does not want his name in print regret that some persons in the military and para-military connive with boko haram insurgents based on faith identity. This is irrespective of the fact the security personnel themselves are not spared the vicious attacks of the insurgents. The escape of Kabiru Umar aka Kabiru Sokoto, who masterminded the attack on St. Theresa Madala from the prison in Kuje is suggestive of this charge. A recent action of transferring some Christian Igbo police officers from the eastern part of the country to northeast zone (predominantly Muslim) would imply that the authorities are avoiding the posting of persons whose energy and gusto in fighting the insurgents will be compromised by mere faith identity sympathy. This trend of events is suggestive that the Nigerian security personnel are stuck in the mud of primordial identity sentiments and still far from reaching the pinnacle of professional duty

to the nation devoid of religious and ethnic considerations. The worry is even that there seem to be a deliberate attempt to perpetrate the religious and ethnic bias in the military. If not, why would Ahmed be complaining of “disproportionate representation of Muslims in the SSS, the Police and the Armed Forces” [34] The complaint is not suggesting the violation of the Nigeria’s Quota System, but insinuating the deficit of Muslims in security outfits to prosecute Muslim’s agenda that is probably antithetical to that of the Nigerian state. If this continuous, most national assignment of the military will be approached with a leaking commitment along the fault lines of ethnicity and religion. No nation can dare this and survive.

POLITICAL STRATEGY: It has been hinted earlier that there are speculations that the boko haram conflict is the creation of some disgruntled northern political elites who were all out to upset the government of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. Their grudge is that his ascendancy to the presidency is a clear violation of PDP zoning formula that suggests the presidency be occupied by a northerner. Another dimension of the argument is that president Jonathan himself would have been responsible for the menace of boko haram as ploy to get the support of his fellow southerners against the north that is not allow him the conducive atmosphere to rule. Still another slant of the conspiracy theory goes that the insecurity challenges in the northeast was to be sustained so that President Jonathan under the existing situation could use the security personnel to manipulate 2015 presidential elections to his favour. But politics as defined as war without bloodshed. It therefore follows that no political ambition is worth the blood of innocent citizens. Hence, whoever is using the boko haram conflict to as a political weapon is of great disservice to humanity and the nation.

It is curious and therefore easy to query that why did the security situation that was meant to be political capital for President Jonathan failed in delivering the desired results, as he lost the 2015 election? Could it be that his opponent and then opposition leader, (now) President Muhammadu Buhari clandestinely snatch the advantage of the security situation from him as political capital? The obvious answer on the lips of many persons interviewed in Maiduguri Municipal Council is in the affirmative. Haven won the election and ascended the Nigeria’s presidency, it is undoubtedly clear that President Muhammadu Buhari is yet to completely crush the insurgents. Pundits are of the view that the seeming success recorded thus far can serve as political ploy to seek second term in office either for President Muhammadu Buhari directly or to gain favour for his party, the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC). In all these permutations, the boko haram violent conflict has been turned into a political strategy.

CONCLUSION

In the 100 years of Nigeria’s nationhood, two wars have been experienced that have external interference. The first, was the Biafran war, which incidentally was also ethnic based and had clandestine support from other countries. The second is the on-going boko haram conflict that is having a huge support base from outside the country. Like the Igbo Brifran war, the Kanuri

affiliated boko haram conflict has international ethnic base. In addition, Al-Qa'ida and other Islamic terrorist group have lent their support to boko haram. Therefore, this war will be more difficult to end than the Bifran. It also has the capacity to expose Nigeria's weakness in reading the complex map of terrorist organization in a multi-culture democratic era. Therefore correcting the noted gaps identified in this paper is an imperative if the nation must make a head way in checkmating the boko haram conflict.

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