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Inter-Agency Cooperation in Combating Terrorism in Nigeria: Enhancing Existing Instruments and Frameworks in the Security Services   *(Pp. 239-248)*

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Abstract
In recent times, terrorism has become one of the most dangerous threats to peace and order nationally and globally. It is so pervasive that no country on earth can claim immunity from its violent acts of bombing, shooting, armed robbery, kidnapping, hostage-taking and bank robbery. This paper examines this global human phenomenon through the analysis of its various definitions, its nature and consequences. Based on the analysis, the paper proffers a ten-point policy recommendation for enhancing the existing instruments and frameworks in the security services that would foster inter-agency cooperation in combating terrorism in Nigeria.

Introduction
In recent years, terrorism has become one of the most dangerous threats to world order. In its effects, and sometimes in its causes, terrorism is comparable to more traditional forms of war. It destabilizes governments, preys on innocent victims, and taps vast monetary and human resources. Yet unlike war, terrorism is covert. It is a non-conventional and an undeclared

warfare. It seeks to sway the masses by intimidation (Julian and Kornblum, 2003).

Although random acts of terrorism have occurred throughout history, modern terrorism began in the early nineteenth century, when it was used to promote various revolutionary movements throughout Europe (Heren, 2001). In the 1950s and 1960s, terrorism was used in revolutionary or liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, Middle East and Latin America.

According to Professor T.A. Imobighe (2006), even today, activities associated with terrorism still form part of the paramilitary instruments in the struggle against foreign occupation of various parts of the world such as Palestine, Chechnya and Kashmir. As a means of redressing perceived grievances, according to him, terrorism has spread to virtually all the regions of the world and has caused destruction to lives and properties in many countries in both developed and under-developed world. Even those countries whose homelands were adjudged to be relatively safe from acts of terrorism, like the United States of America before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack have had their facilities and citizens in other countries violated. The truth is that no country can claim immunity from terrorist attacks any longer. The Professor wrote in 2006.

Nigerians both at home and abroad witnessed the fulfilment of this prophesy on October 1, 2010 with the two bomb blasts that rocked Abuja during the 50th Independence Day celebrations. These terrorist attacks have generated a lot of tension and controversy in the Nigerian polity. They have also stimulated the need for inter-agency cooperation in combating terrorism in Nigeria irrespective of whether the terrorists are based within or outside the country. From the experiences of other countries that have witnessed terrorist attacks, it is evident that terrorist acts are not only deadly but also can occur at anytime, anywhere. Consequently, a collective, programmed and continuous approach is needed among the security units of Nigeria's military and paramilitary establishments to combat terrorism.

Conceptualization of terrorism
There is no universally accepted definition of terrorism due to the fact that the concept can be viewed essentially from three main perspectives, according to International Terrorism and Security Research (ITRS 2010). The first perspective is that of the participants in terrorism. They and their sympathizers believe they are fighting a just cause. For example, the phrase "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" is a view terrorists

themselves and their supporters would accept. Neither the terrorists themselves nor their supporters would view the terrorists as evil-doers, but rather they believe terrorists are legitimate combatants, fighting for what is right and sometimes with whatever means possible. The second perspective is that of the innocent victims, whose lives, families and occupations have been devastated by terrorist acts. They would invariably view terrorism as satanic with no regards for decency. The third perspective is that of the general public which is at best ambivalent due to the fact that they are not direct victims of terrorism. Some people would view terrorist acts as justified while others would condemn them outright. Consequently, the following definitions of terrorism in which there are no clear-cut universal agreement must be understood from these three perspectives.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, edited by A.S. Hornby (2006, p.1528), defines terrorism as "the use of violent action in order to achieve political aims or to force a government to act." By this definition, inter and intra-ethnic as well as inter and intra-religious violent conflicts over landownership and religious rituals respectively would not qualify as terrorism.

Wikipedia (2010, p.1) defines terrorism as "the systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion, but since no universally agreed, legally binding, criminal law definition currently exists, terrorism can therefore be defined as those violent acts which are intended to create fear (terror), are perpetrated for a religious, political or ideological goal, deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants (civilians), and are committed by non-governmental agencies." This definition does not take cognizance of the fact that state terrorism perpetrated by governmental agencies under the guise of counter terrorism has historically been more devastating to civilian populations globally than the non-state actors' terrorism.

The United States Department of Defence defines terrorism as "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuits of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological." Differently, the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force and 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." From a different view, the United States Department of State (Foreign Affairs) defines terrorism as a "premeditated politically

motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (ITSR, 2010:1). These three definitions from the United States governmental institutions or agencies have one common denominator: the incidence of terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon Defense Headquarters in Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001. Again, these definitions ignore state terrorism.

In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly defined terrorism as "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes which are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them" (UNGA, 1994). As usual, this definition is targeted at non-state actors.

Perhaps, the most detailed definition of terrorism comes from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism which has a long list of acts that constitute terrorism. These include:

- 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 number or group of persons or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage;
- Any act that is calculated or intended to intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do, or abstain from doing any act or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint or to act according to certain principles, or create general insurrection in a state; and
- The promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, and incitement, encouragement, or procurement of any person with the intent to commit any act referred to above (cited in Braimoh, 2006: 49).

Although detailed, this OAU definition is not comprehensive in the sense that, like the other definitions cited above, it excludes the violent acts of the state and its agencies that intimidate and kill civilian populations.

Thus, to balance the equation, we must now add state terrorism to our definition of terrorism. Terrorism can, therefore, be defined as the organized use or threat of unlawful violence by state agencies and non-state actors to intimidate civil populations in pursuit of goals that are generally political, economic, ideological, religious, racial, ethnic or philosophical. This paper, however, focuses on terrorism perpetrated by non-governmental groups and how state security agencies can prevent its occurrence in Nigeria.

The nature of non-state terrorism
Terrorism is a complex human phenomenon. Because of the underground nature of terrorist organisations, it is difficult to completely understand their methods of operation. Even the belief and specific goals of terrorist groups are often obscure, and their dogmas are frequently romanticized blends of older ideologies. They differ in their adherence to various forms of separatism, nationalism, fascism and anarchism. They are well-organised groups with robust financial and technological resources. Members of terrorist groups usually are engaged in bank robbery, forgery, kidnapping for ransom or hostage-taking and other illegal activities to bring in massive incomes. The incomes, in turn, finance complex and sophisticated strategies. Owing to their complex organisations and strict secrecy, they are able to establish vast underground networks that continue to flourish beyond the reach of national and international law.

The leaderships of terrorist organisations are usually well educated and young, with middle-class background. Their recruits are also from same or similar background. As individuals, terrorists want to change their social environment in line with their own beliefs. They believe that purity of motive justifies whatever methods are employed. In this detachment from reality, terrorists bring about their own dehumanization. They see themselves as catalysts, worthless in themselves, through which social change can be wrought (Hassel, 1997). This is the more reason they can engage themselves in suicide bombings.

Apart from dehumanizing themselves, terrorists also dehumanize their victims as pawns in the struggle for social justice and hence strip them of human rights and identity. All that the terrorists want is to punish society and force it to accept their demands. They prey on both known and unknown victims, regarding them as responsible for society's wrongs and therefore unworthy of compassion or remorse. In fact, the victims of most terrorist attacks are usually innocent people.

Those who suffer as a result of terrorists acts can be grouped in two groups. The first are random victims, people who find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. Bombings, hijackings and the spontaneous seizing of hostages victimize whoever happens to be available. Other members of society are intimidated by the very casualness of this type of terror and with the hope of the terrorists that those not affected would pressure their governments to meet the demands of the terrorists.

The other category of victims includes individuals who are singled out because of their prominence in the society. These victims, too, become dehumanized symbols. They include politicians, businesspeople, celebrities, sportspeople, notable scholars and journalists. Terrorists see these groups of people as responsible for the wrongs of society and who must be made to pay ransom either by their government or close relatives.

This discussion so far has focused on terrorism perpetrated by groups of individuals who operate outside of the state instrumentalities. Scholars have also identified another type of terrorism. It is called state terrorism which was mentioned earlier. Under the pretence of fostering political stability and social order, dictators (whether military or civilian) across the globe have been known to deploy the state's military and paramilitary forces to inflict violence on perceived dissident groups and individuals within or outside their territories. From Europe, and the Americas to Asia and Africa, use of violence to terrorize political opponents and maintain grip on power has been widespread. Government-backed death squads are rampant in some Third-World countries where opposition leaders disappear and are never seen again. Torture and imprisonment without just cause are also common tools of state terrorism (Coleman and Cressey, 1995). While the victims of other forms of terrorism may hope to be rescued by government, security or police forces, the victims of state terrorism have no such expectations.

The questions now arise: How combat ready are the Nigerian security services to deal with all these forms of terrorism? What instruments and frameworks do they have to combat terrorism? Because national defence and security issues and matters are highly classified, this writer may not be able to answer these questions directly. However, I will proffer some policy recommendations which I hope would assist security services in their onerous task of combating terrorism in Nigeria through cooperative efforts.

Policy recommendations
1. <u>Directorate of Counter Terrorism</u> – All the security operatives in the civil, military and paramilitary establishments of the Nigerian State should be organized into a single directorate headed by a director-general who will be responsible only to the Head of State and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces. This must be given a priority legislation by the National Assembly.

2. <u>Gun Control</u> – There is the need for stricter control and supervision of the purchase and importation of firearms into the country. The National Assembly is called upon to enact the necessary legislation.

3. <u>Proactive Defence Measures</u> – The Federal and State Government functionaries should be provided with sophisticated information-gathering equipment that would enable them to detect terrorist activities early and nip them in the bud.

4. <u>Personnel Training</u> – Since modern terrorism has increasingly become sophisticated due to improved information and communication technology in terms of internet services and electronic banking techniques, there is urgent need to train and retrain our security personnel in these areas of socio-economic endeavours.

5. <u>Conflict Management Techniques</u> – Terrorist attacks are manifestations of deep-seated conflicts in the society. The conflicts may be economic, political or socio-cultural. Understanding the nature of these conflicts and how to manage them to prevent violence is the surest way to combat terrorism. Consequently, security personnel must be knowledgeable in conflict management techniques such as bargaining, negotiation, conciliation, mediation and arbitration.

6. <u>Global Networking</u> – The Nigerian security agencies should be provided with the necessary facilities that would enable them to efficiently network among themselves and with similar agencies in other countries. This approach will assist in no small measure in the prevention and control of terrorism.

7. <u>Abolition of Terrorism</u> – Oftentimes, some forms of terrorism particularly those perpetrated outside the established system are reactions to perceived injustice, marginalization and oppression by

government functionaries. The National Assembly should enact legislation prohibiting all forms of terrorism, including state terrorism.

8. <u>Protection of Fundamental Human Rights</u> – Government functionaries, especially the security operatives should be encouraged to observe and enforce the fundamental human rights of the Nigerian citizenry as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution. Included in these rights are the freedoms of association, speech, expression, religion, etc.

9. <u>Intensification of War Against Corruption</u> – Massive embezzlement of public funds by state elite has conspicuously generated mass poverty, unemployment, hunger and disease among a significant proportion of our population. This condition is a fertile soil for terrorist activities. To this end, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Crimes Commission (ICPC), State Security Service (SSS), the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and other law enforcement agencies must wake up to the enormous challenges posed by official corruption in the country.

10. <u>Good Governance</u> – The Nigerian security agencies should closely monitor and assist the politicians (elected or appointed) to close or eliminate what Staurt E. Eizenstat, et. al. (2005:136) referred to as "three interrelated gaps in the structure of governance and public policies of a state" which are characteristic of most countries in the Third World. According to these scholars, to be viable a state must be able to close these "gaps" of which the first is the most important:

Security: This refers to the protection against internal and external threats, and preserving sovereignty over territory. If a government cannot ensure security, rebellious armed groups or criminal non-state actors may use violence to exploit this security gap.

Capacity: The most basic aspect of the capacity of a state is its ability to provide for its citizens the basic survival needs of water, electric power, food, and health, closely followed by education, communication and a working economic system. An inability of the state to provide these essential amenities could create a capacity

gap, which can lead to a loss of public confidence and trust in government and then perhaps to political upheaval and turmoil.

Legitimacy: Closing the legitimacy gap, according to Eizenstat and his associates, is more than an incantation of "democracy" and "elections," but the establishment of a government that is perceived to exist by the consent of the governed, has minimal corruption, and has working law enforcement and judicial systems that enforce human rights.

By being efficient in the discharge of their responsibilities, the Nigerian Security Services can indeed assist the government in closing or narrowing these three critical gaps of security, capacity and legitimacy in order to reduce the incidence of terrorist acts in the country.

Conclusion
It is evident from the foregoing that terrorism is a violent social phenomenon that can occur anytime and anywhere in the world. It involves bombing, shooting, bank robbery, kidnapping, hostage-taking and other violent activities that have resulted in the loss of lives and properties. The ten policy recommendations suggested in this paper if implemented by the state will enhance and reinforce the existing instruments and frameworks in the security services while providing the needed inter-agency cooperation in combating terrorism in Nigeria.

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