
Terrorism and International Politics in the 21st Century; the Way Forward

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Abstract

Terrorists activities in modern world are rampant, sporadic in nature, very threat and disastrous to the existence of man and his society. The increasing rate of these activities of the terrorists is strongly associated with the negative role of international politics, diplomacy and the western tactics and strategies of isolation, sanctions and conspiracy. But in any event the policy makers of the third world nations' in particular must be criticized of their failure to rise to the responsibility, alongside, failure to provide security to the lives and properties of their deluded masses, demand for the satisfaction of long term plans, political, economic, social and ideological interests. However, it is against this backdrop this study titled "Terrorism and International Politics in the 21st century; The way forward" is carried out to examine the genesis/causes, motives and effects of this subject matter of our write-ups. In this study many published and unpublished materials as well as informants were consulted. The interest of the study is to acquaint the students, general reading public and world at large with the prevalence of various uprising, terrorists' activities in various ramifications and the concerted efforts of the governments concerned to overcome the unfortunate state of affairs which is nasty and disastrous in nature. Further to the above, it highlights the nature, character and manifestations of insurgencies and has on the other hand draws into light that radical Islamic terrorism shares many characteristics with ethnic, economic and political violence and rightly observed that all forms of terrorists activities are Islamically illegal and contrary to the law of Islam, inhumane and irreligious movements because are not purely on religious foundations. To the study, terrorism is no more but a despicable crime, since one person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter and terrorists are enemies that are not easily traceable, with myriad of complex motivations, as individuals and as groups. Terrorism is mysterious phenomena, a form of political violence, a tactic, not a movement, which represents the final escalation in the process of political violence. It is an act that cannot exist, if other non-violent are those of reform and conflict resolution were available to the dissidents. At the tail end, the study proffers solution to the challenges confronting security to lives and properties in the 21st century.

Key Words: Terrorism, International, Politics, 21st, Century, Way, Forward.

1. Introduction

The focus of the study is to explore the nature, character and manifestations of insurgencies, fundamental motives of terrorists, principal causes and impact of terrorism on peoples, and their societies during the 21st century, with a view to suggesting the way forward consequent upon indepth research conducted. Further to the above, it is also in the interest of the study to acquaint the reading public, students and scholars with the prevalence of the uprisings, causes, motives and impact and as well as the strategies to be developed to counter the situations.

2. A Brief Historical Survey of the Genesis of Modern Form of Terrorism

Recent past studies conducted have shown that it was former President of the United States of America George Bush that declared a Global War on Terrorism (G-WOT) following the attack of September, 11, 2001 and the fact that America has had relatively little direct experience with terrorism. Since then the United States of America went on and launched invasion against Afghanistan and Iraq, increased spending for Homeland security and created “The Patriot Act, giving special powers to the US Government, which had as a result made some people to regard it as a clash of civilizations, i.e. a War on Islam, which in other words implies a modern day crusade.

In any case, it is worthy to note that one of the priorities associated with this subject matter of study is the examination of the causes and nature of political violence and terrorism, the elements of terrorist financing and counter terrorism strategy and tactics. However, this study strongly argues that radical Islamic terrorism shares many characteristics with ethnic, economic and political violence and it is not purely a movement based on religious foundations, that current counter terrorism activities tend to ignore the lessons learned from other protracted insurgencies and that over-reliance on military responses is counter-productive and will complicate and prolong an already difficult problem. In any event, it is interesting to note that Islamic Religion in particular does not go along with any sort of terrorists’ act and terrorism itself doesn’t have any relevance and direct bearing to Islam because Islam as a religion is all about peace, sympathy, stability, affectionate, mercy, and above all security to life and property.

3. Terrorism at International Level

Recent past studies conducted have demonstrated that it was consequent upon the tragedy of September, 11th, the most deadly terrorist attack ever witnessed in the U.S, and that was the attack which made the U.S to declare a War on terrorism. This resulted in making terrorism to become a source of pervasive fear and loathing across America. On September 12th, the nation awakened to a reality already known throughout much of the World and the first question Americans raised was “why do they hate us”? Very few of the Americans waited for the answers. Others considered it as a rhetorical question and still some waited for the government and media to provide them with answers. To some Americans, the first rule of war is to know your enemy. Terrorists are enemies that cannot simply be known. They have a myriad of complex motivations as individuals and as groups. In fact, few people could agree with the definition of terrorism. To some people terrorism is a despicable crime, for others, one person’s terrorist is another’s

freedom fighter. However, it is worthy to note that this series of issue briefings have been generated purposely in order to present some alternative view points, not to justify or condone terrorism (mandatory disclaimer), but to shed a light in respect of what motivates people to kill and die for a political reason and to suggest some different perspectives and the ways to overcome the problem of political violence.

In another related development, it should be understood that by the year 2001 the U.S. State Department had designated Twenty (22) Foreign Terrorist Organizations. By 2003, the list grew to Thirty six (36) organizations with dozens more groups listed as unofficial terrorist Organizations. Terrorism should not be regarded as a mysterious phenomena; it is a tactic, not a movement. Terrorism represents the final escalation in the process of political violence. Terrorism or less deadly forms of political violence would not exist if other non-violent methods of reform and conflict resolution were available to the dissidents.

4. The Term Terrorism; As a Concept

To the U.S. State Department, terrorism as contained in Title 22 of the United States code, section 2656F (d). Terrorism means premeditated politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine against usually intended to influence an audience. The term International Terrorism means an illegal and inhumane act involving citizens or the territory of more than one country. As for the “Terrorists groups” simply means any group practicing, or that has significant sub-groups that practice International terrorism”.

The category of non-combatant is interpreted to include civilians and military personnels who during the incident are found unarmed and or not on duty (a point of dispute). Attacks on military personnel, when a state of militancy hostilities does not exist at the state, such as bombings against U.S bases in the Persian Gulf, Europe, or elsewhere are also regarded ‘as terrorism. The U.S also recognizes that “Terrorist acts are part of a large phenomenon of politically inspired violence, and at times the line between the two can become difficult to draw”.

However, in view of the above one may agree that the definition of the concept of terrorism may lead others to raise more questions than it answers. Critical questions like this might be raised is airline hijacking or kidnapping violence? Is government building a non-combatant? If innocent civilians are casualties of violence directed against a legitimate target (collateral damage) is the act of terrorism or a tragic mistake? If violence against non-combatants is perpetrated by a state is that not terrorism? If not what it is? And why does it matter? Other related and fundamental questions that may lead one to properly understand the concepts of terrorism and terrorists include; How could one argue that for weak regimes lacking broad public support and legitimacy state terrorism can be seen as a tactic of the weak but the tactic of first resort? The last but not the least of the questions which is an applied in nature, states that, “*Terrorism in contemporary world and international politics is fast growing consequent upon the increasing rate of political, economic, social, religious and ideological interests*”.

The aforementioned questions raised may serve or be used for many purposes for a better understanding of the fundamental causes, motives and effects associated with the subject matter

of the study/writer-ups, and could to a large extent generate a research topic for subsequent studies to be carried out. Furthermore, our intellectual minds should be drawn to the understanding of the fact that applying the 'Terrorists' label to an organization immediately demonizes that group invalidators their objectives and disqualifies its followers from any voice in the political process. Ironically, such consequences reinforce the situation that motivated the group to resort to violence in the first instance. Many states assert that they will make no deals with or concessions to terrorists. It is a standard practice to also deny dissidents access to the public media and Airwaves to explain or advance their causes. Governments/Authorities that refuse to talk to or negotiate with terrorists for close opportunities for early resolution. Meanwhile, some countries have been considerably more willing to negotiate often paying ransoms, arranging prisoner releases or agreeing to other demands such as conditions.

5. Different Types of Terrorism

The current and common interest of terrorism largely centers on the violence perpetrated by some Muslim fundamentalists. By virtue of Islamic education and fear of Almighty Allah mostly ignorant and misguided and illegally conducting their activities contrary to Islamic Sharia/law, teaching action and tacit approval of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Terrorism has been used as a tactic for centuries and discovered to be more pervasive in the 1960's. After First and Second World Wars, Colonial Authorities redrew the maps in many parts of the world and eventually reduced their colonies. This brought about a rise in Nationalist Movements seeking self-determination or to replace rulers that had been imposed by the colonialists. Many of the resulting conflicts strategy and guerrilla tactics. Furthermore, until recently terrorism has been most closely associated with ethnic and minority groups struggles for independence and self-determination. The primary area of conflict could usually be defined as could the adversaries and their various aspirations. By 1990's a new form of International Terrorism emerged that appeared less rational, less focused, more International and more deadly Islamist terrorism, misunderstood and wrongly described by the western world.

In fact, many of the causes and motivations remain strikingly similar to what could be termed as "Traditional Modern Terrorism". What is different is the religious ideological foundation, the broad definition of adversaries, the evolution in terrorist tactics, and the desire and potential for devastating levels of destruction. Islamists appear willing to ignore taboos against killing innocents and able to rationalize their action by distorting Islamic teachings. The potential to use chemical, biological, nuclear radiological weapons of mass destruction has created a new level of terrorism that needs effective solutions and it is un-Islamic and never seen in Islamic Religion. Unfortunately, states have had relatively poor results deterring, containing or eliminating political violence. Those that have been successful have used extreme repressive measures that have threatened the rule of law, personal freedoms and human rights and Terrorism does not just occur. In a similar words, it could be regarded as an advanced stage of a failed political process that begins with inequalities and injustice, and moves from frustrated attempts at reform that breed fear and anger, to political confrontation that erupts in violence which can be exploited to rationalize the use of any form of violence against any target or motives. It seems

that solution to terrorism might be located from any stage of the evolving, or deteriorating political process. This suggests that one of the ways forward we must start by examining and understanding the historical context for modern conflicts to be resolved.

6. Modern Form of Terrorism

Certainly, in any case it is worthy to note that some of the reactions to terrorism play into the hands of the perpetrators and help for the attainment of goals and objectives. For instance, the fundamental goal of any opposition movement is publicity, denying access to media, or censoring news can force extremists to blast their way into the news. Prior to reacting to political violence, it is important to identify the dissidents' goals and objectives. The followings highlight a number of possible objectives not all of which may apply to any specific groups.

7. The Major Objectives of Terrorists

P.J. Shea argues that in any event it is not the ordinary people that cause a war, or generate a conflict but people of the government i.e. the policy makers because of their demand to satisfy their long term plans and interests. The followings are some of the terrorists' objectives to:-

- ✓ Attract public attention to the group's grievances.
- ✓ Encourage sympathy for their unfair, unjust situation and sympathy for the cause.
- ✓ Demonstrate the inability of the state to provide security.
- ✓ Demonstrate the illegitimacy of the state's institutions.
- ✓ Justify their fundamental motives.
- ✓ Polarize the public to simplify the debates and arguments.
- ✓ Coerce the public into pressuring the state into compromise solutions.
- ✓ Force the state into repressive reactions that serve to recruit new members and supporters.
- ✓ Demonstrate the economic consequences of the continued conflict.
- ✓ Attract International attention and encourage intervention.
- ✓ Provoke widespread civil uprising to change the government, or form a separate state, and
- ✓ To become popularly known and make a name in the political history of the affected nation or any part of the globe.

In view of the above main objectives of the terrorists raised, it can be argued that publicity is one of their objectives (dissidents). Brian Jenkins of the Rand Corp states that "*Terrorists don't want a lot of people dead, they want a lot of people watching*". To him terrorism is more but a form of political theatre. This could be true of National Liberation Movements but modern type of terrorists want a lot of people dead. In any case, it is interesting to note that terrorism has been regarded as a tactic of the weak. It is adopted by groups of dissenters who lack the resources to attack the state and its forces. In fact, it is purely a rebel force that has the capacity to attack and defeat the government's forces with the sole aim of achieving their goals as quickly as possible, such opportunities rarely if ever exist in strong states. The alternative is to wage a war of attrition, gradually wearing down the state's and public's resolve. Terrorists seek to instill a climate of fear

that erodes the public psyche and to impose escalating economic cost, draining the state's financial resources and the collective will.

However, studies have demonstrated that many of the objectives of the terrorists could be achieved without resorting to terrorism against innocent civilians. It is worthy to note that states recognize that their forces and facilities are the primary targets of political violence and they adopt security and enforce protection measures that deny insurgents the ability to strike at these targets. By hardening priority targets, state encourages insurgents to attack softer targets in the civil sector. When the insurgents comply, the inevitable consequence is civilian casualties whether intentional, or accidental. Insurgents have now become terrorists for perpetrating violence against non-combatant targets. Basically, because the targets may not have been non-combatants but such distinctions are rarely considered. Once dissidents have crossed the threshold to terrorism, the rules change the costs and risks escalate and the challenge to maintain and build public support increases. For dissidents, terrorism is the tactic of last resort, when all else has failed.

7. Terrorism in Contemporary World and International Politics; An Overview

Past studies conducted recently have drawn into light that the International Community has often indicated a kind of willingness to tolerate political violence against civilians perpetrated by states – state terrorism. Repressive states have been responsible for far greater terrorism than any so-called Terrorist Organization yet they are allowed to continue their participation in the World's Political and Economic Community. This study rightly observed that it is only in the most enduring and grievous cases does the International Community sanction or exclude a repressive state. In addition, countries and arms merchants sell arms provide military training and economic support to repressive, even terrorist requires seemingly, obvious to the fact that state repression breeds International Terrorism and that terrorists will target those who lend support to their adversaries. It is little wonder that terrorism has emerged as a major threat to world security and peace. In another related development, the study further identified that one aspect of political violence and terrorism that is rarely discussed in-depth are the economic effects, both positive and negative. The direct costs incurred to depend against and counter terrorism is enormous, worse still are the incurable social and human costs. But terrorism has its upside too, creating an economic boom for defense related industries and private constructors. Repairing and re-building such as Beirut, or London's Financial District and Lower Manhattan are a Windfall for those who make profit from the effects. Constructing Forts and Security Installations or erecting Berlin Style Peace Walls and Security Fences through Belfast, or around Israel's occupied territories, shift limited state funds from more socially useful services, but create business opportunity and profits. The un-attempted issue is that these expenditures generate a new constituency that benefits from continued violence. The beneficiaries can easily become influential if conflicted advocates of hardline policies that suit their business objectives.

8. The Major Findings of the Study Conducted on Terrorism In Modern World

The following are some of the immediate causes of our subject matter of study in most of the nooks and corners of our contemporary world among which include;

- ✓ Administrative weakness/poor governance.
- ✓ Inadequacy of well-trained and equipped military personnels to overcome unfortunate state of affairs.
- ✓ Marginalization of a clan, group of people or a region, continent or discrimination against a particular sect on religious ground.
- ✓ Deplorable economic conditions, mismanagement and improper utilization of national resources accordingly, above all poverty, hunger and starvation are very harmful and can cause terrorism.
- ✓ Improper allocation of authoritative values in respect of political power i.e. under the pretext of democratic rule.
- ✓ Selfishness interest of mankind and low level of religious education for Divine guidance.
- ✓ Massive production of university graduates and other category of school certificate holders without employment (unemployment opportunities).
- ✓ Entrepreneurship is not given much priority.
- ✓ Non-challant attitude of the policy makers to address the problems confronting the nation for an immediate action by the government, stakeholders, NGO,s and patriotic citizens.
- ✓ Political, economic, social and religious ambitions or interests of the highly advanced nations.
- ✓ Absence of altruism, and sincerity of purpose.
- ✓ International politics, diplomacy and conspiracy against a particular country and its people, culture and religious beliefs. i.e. haterate.
- ✓ Inequity, injustice as well as lack of transparency and human feelings.
- ✓ Indirect enslavement and exploitation of human and material resources for the betterment and advancement of the oppressors, this also brings about political unrest and acts of terrorism.

In a nutshell, it is interesting to be borne in the intellectual minds of both the students of the discipline and general reading public that the above sequentially itemized points were identified consequent upon the study conducted, i.e. research results. The study found a multitude number of fundamental causes of terrorism, motives/target of terrorists, role of International Politics and Diplomacy in the creation of conflict and terrorists' acts and as well as other related aspects.

9. The Way Forward; As Appropriate Measures to Overcome Terrorism

The study suggests that if the following measures accordingly applied terrorism could be overcome and the world will certainly usher in peace, unity, progress and stability.

- ✓ Proper moral upbringing and inculcation of morality aimed at making people to become morally sound, physically fit and mentally stable.
- ✓ People should be guided and counselled to become positively responsive and responsible

citizens of their given state.

- ✓ Equal distribution and allocation of national resources.
- ✓ Political stability/good governance.
- ✓ Efficient Economic Management of Resources and Resource Control should be maintained properly.
- ✓ Creation of relevant Mobilization and Enlightenment Commissions/Committees aimed at enlightening the general public the danger associated with terrorism and other related acts/i.e. unwanted behavior.
- ✓ Rule of equality, justice, fairness, accountability and transparency.
- ✓ Major World Banks, NGOs', World Powers, Religious Bodies, and other International Agencies should offer both moral and financial supports to combat terrorism.
- ✓ Effective security measures should be given a due consideration and proper attention.
- ✓ Illegal possession, purchase and use of weapons for destruction of life and properties should be overcome.
- ✓ Both the Policy Makers and Citizens of any given nation of this globe should unite together and rise for the attainment of the national goals and objectives of their countries. They should in addition be powerful, dynamic, just, altruistic and fair in dealing.
- ✓ Educational Curriculum of any given Academic World should offer priority to the study of Civic Education for the actualization of sense of belongings, unity, peace and national building project, patriotism and dedication for improvement in the field of International Security.
- ✓ The U.N, International Agencies, Countries of the World and their respective Policy Makers, NGO's (International Non-Governmental Organizations), should equally rise to the task ahead of them through the ensurance of social justice, harmony, International peace, security, progress, stability, brotherhood, and sisterhood of mankind irrespective of clan, race, nationality, religion and economic status. If the above points raised put into practice, there shall be a turning point in the History of contemporary period and world at large. In view of the above, it is also worthy to note that with the aforementioned in practice the re-establishment of a hitch-free, secured and egalitarian society might be possible.
- ✓ Equality, transparency, rule of law, sympathy, philanthropism, altruism, maintenance of goals, objectives and philosophies should have a special place.
- ✓ Human right, dignity, life and property should as well be given a priority, for the progress of peace, love, stability and betterment of the world in general.
- ✓ A challenge to Historians should in any case endeavor to wipe out sentiments, and falsifications in their historical write-ups and reconstruction so that contra-factuality and distortion may not have a place.

However, the essence of calling for priority to Civic-Education is that the study discovered that if general political and civic systems of education could be designed, implemented, and adopted for application it would definitely reach a level whereby people will witness how tyranny and oppression of the mind will be like a dew in the sunny. The purpose associated with

this is purely for the progress, well-being and betterment of the people and the world in general. This is a serious challenge of the 21st Century confronting Third World Nations' in particular and the globe in general due to the nature of low level of literacy, poverty and failure of the authorities to rise to the responsibility. Furthermore, the path to political sustainability, an upswing economic optimism in respect of GDP, with a particular reference to Nigeria to make it to become one of the top 20 Global Economies by the Year 2020, an Entrepreneurial mindset should be encouraged, Educational Development Against Crises and Illiteracy, the battle for Health care i.e. improvement in Health Care, building global relationship should as well be given priority. However, it is equally important to note that there are a lots to be done particularly in Nigeria in order to actualize the country's potential. The progress Nigeria made since independence October, 1960 is nothing short of remarkable, considering the fact that Nigeria has a population of over 170 Million People from hundreds of ethnic groups; this greatly demands Nigeria and its citizens to re-awaken for proper economic development.

In conclusion, the whole efforts herein largely centers on an attempt to examine the meanings of Terrorism, terrorists, genesis, its inception growth and impact of international politics and terrorism on the International Economic, Political, Social and Religious life of the Globe or the affected Nations. The study also strongly argues that the religion of Islam is a faith strongly associated with peace and stability and it is therefore safe to conclude that terrorism doesn't have any relevance or direct bearing to Islam. But it could be accepted that in any given religion of the world there must be a caliber of irresponsible, misguided and self-centered, people that cause or wage a war for the annihilation of human's society with the sole aim of satisfying their long term plans and personal interests contrary to the teaching of Islamic law. The study also points out that mere theorization cannot solve this problem rather than the fact that the International Communities must join hands to overcome it, developing fear of God at the back of minds, sincerity of purpose should have a place in an attempt to solve the problem for the world to usher in peace. Above all and the last but not the least, the study observes that modern International Politics and Diplomacy is being established under the pretext of some tactics of isolation and conspiracy, and with this in practice and in mind, outrageousness and terrorism must have a place in human's society and it would be difficult for terrorism and terrorists to disappear or be overcome.

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Informants;

	NAME	Date Of Birth	Date Of Interview and Place	Profession/Status
1-	Alpha Aminu	22 nd April, 1963	30 th /03/2019, Katsina.	Religious Leader
2-	Amara Kalu	20 th Jan. 1965	15 th /05/2019, Kaduna.	Church Pastor
3-	Nuhu Nomau	18 th Aug. 1968	16 th /06/2019, Kankara.	Church Pastor
4-	Mal. Usman Gombe	20 th Feb. 1962	17 th /05/2019, Misau, Gombe	Mosque Imam
5-	Sheikh Sabitu Nassarawo	10 th Jan. 1955	Gombe Metropolis.	Mosque Imam