

## The Nigerian Economy, Commerce and Terrorism: Any Hope for Nigeria's Citizens?

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**Abstract.** The effects of terrorism on economic growth and development have significance consequences on commercial activities and the security of the economy. The consequences of terrorism are disastrous for the people of a nation, both rich and poor. The normal social life gets totally disturbed and many innocent lives are lost. The productivity of people is miserably stalled as the commercial activities distorted and the prices of products surge, as well as the dream of living a life of happiness and peace is shattered. Economic and social development of the society cease to uncertain. In fact, terrorism not only weakens the established political authority but also brings about political instability. Hence, terrorism represents a challenge not just to the bases of civilized society, but also to the very foundations of the world order because it destroys the will of a civilized society to defend itself. As a matter of fact, terrorism is a war against civilization. Therefore, we recommended that Nigeria governments should intensify effort to enhance law enforcement agents to be more vigilance along borders, depriving the terrorists of their profits, concluding international agreements to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination in law enforcement and more importantly, political will and commitment. The paper suggests that all the Nigerians' citizens must form a common front to fight terrorism. Finally, for terrorism not to remain a menace, the people who are driven by fanaticism, paranoia and extremism should not be allowed to exist for poverty, strife, injustice and oppression to be eradicated.

**Keywords:** Terrorism, Security, Poverty, Commerce, Economic Growth and Development.

### 1. Introduction

Terrorism is a treat of use of violence by individuals or groups of individual to forcefully obtain a socio-economic and political objective via the intimidation of the citizens of a nation and communities. The estimated number of deaths victims from the terrorists attack worldwide rose from 3,329 in 2000 to 32,685 in 2014, according to a November, 2015 analysis by the Institute for Economics and Peace, U.S., the vast majority of lives lost to terrorists attacks in 2014 accounted for 78 percent took place in five nations where most terrorism activities occurred are: Iran, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria. However, more than half of incidents claimed were attributed to Boko Haram and Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL). Thus, Commercial activities in Nigeria have been seriously affected by physical violence (through terrorist attack) which has metamorphosed into crime with the proliferation of organized criminal networks and gangs (Boko Haram sects). This was due to the fact that the problems that led to the outbreak of the civil war remain unresolved, and that the gross social inequality was a primary factor (Olorode, 2012).

According to Arvind (2009), the term "terrorism" since the 1970s was directed to various phenomenon, starting from fearsome threats until today the world under UN has failed to come to an agreement about what is an acceptable definition for terrorism. It is still under debate despite attempts made by many experts. The effort to approach terrorism from a definitional perspective has thus become a never-ending effort, let alone conform the definition itself. So, many definitions of terrorism have been

attempted, but we are not going to analyse the diversities of terrorism definition. What we intend to opine here is that every person deliberately uses violence or threatens to use violence causing terror or wide fear against person or causing massive victims, by taking others' freedom or the loss of life, property of others, or causing damage and destruction against vital and/ or strategic installations or commerce or environment or public facility or international facility.

However, the perspective of motives of terrorist acts are recognized as follows: publicizing a statement through acts of ruthlessness, in that way, they make fast and massive publication; act of vengeance towards groups considered disadvantageous to them; serving as a catalyst for militarization or mass mobilization; spreading hatred and inter-communal conflict; announcing a certain group as the enemy and should be held responsible; victims are not the goal but a means to create "neural war"; create mass panic, damage public trust towards the government including security and law enforcement authorities. Whereas the justifications of terrorism taken on by terrorists including: justifying all means for the accomplishment of transcendental goals; extreme violence considered to be therapeutic, full of blessings and regenerative; the executor places himself/herself as part of history, where the act is a consequential element of history under the perspective of moral balance (a deserved treatment); the act of terrorism perceived as a minor crime; many among them even take this act insignificant in comparison to the enemy's posing threat that suppresses them structurally (Arvind, 2009).

President Goodluck Jonathan in his interview posited that "terrorist attack is aimed to destabilize the government". He said for instance, that "the terrorist group in Nigeria (Boko Haram) has no face and it would be impossible to negotiate with the sect because it is faceless. Government will not dialogue with a faceless group. I don't know what they want except to destabilize the country. The target of any terrorist group is to destabilize. It has been difficult to end the activities of the terrorist group (Boko Haram sect) because they change their tactics every day and their major aim is to destabilize the government". Part of the strategic plans of the terrorist group is to muzzle government, but the government of Nigeria should not stop for a moment due to terrorist attack. Since government must function, the terrorists and their sponsors cannot stop government from functioning and bring her to its knees. The government should change the face and structure of

its administration to combat what has been described as the varying strategies of the insurgent group.

During the terrorist attack, the rule of law and human rights crumble and people suffer terribly and the commercial as well as the socio-economic activities are disrupted. For developing countries like Nigeria, terrorism is fatal to their development planning because they can hardly withstand the violent assaults of terrorism; their longing for a better and brighter future goes up in smoke. Terrorism uses extreme physical violence to shock the targeted audience. As a matter of fact, the iron fist approach alone will not succeed except that the law enforcement agents maintain constant vigilance. Therefore, security is a global challenge; just like economic meltdown. Government should be on it, and should encourage third party dialogue as well as encourage those with access to them to dialogue with them. The terrorist group changes their tactics every day, so, in order to conform to the changing tactics of the terrorist insurgency, government should also change and continue to adjust until the security challenges are resolved.

The question of how effective is the public policy and strategy in addressing the issue of terrorism is dealt with in this paper? The research study assessed how terrorism poses threat on commercial and socio-economic activities in the economy as well as its efficacy in combating terrorism and building the long-term peace and sustainable national development. Also, the study investigated the impact of terrorism vis-à-vis peace, inequality, poverty and national development as well as the control strategies.

Furthermore, this study is divided into five sections. Following the introductory section, section two reviews the conceptual and theoretical framework as well as the background knowledge on the phenomenon of terrorism, peace, and national development. Section three examines the policy implications of terrorism on commerce and national development. While section four analyses the control strategies to combat terrorism. Finally, section five concludes the study and proffers recommendations for policy implication, as well as suggestions for future research.

## 2. The Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

Terrorism is as old as the civilization of mankind itself. It has existed in all ages in one form or the other which might be known as anarchists,

revolutionaries, fundamentalist or dissidents against the established authority or even ruling tyrants having no tolerance or dissent. However, terrorism was not as widespread phenomenon as it is today in the contemporary political system of the world and terrorism becomes a global phenomenon.

Moreover, terrorism is a global crime. It has become the predominant geopolitical theme. The affairs of the world are influenced in important areas by the terrorist agenda. The thinking of policy makers and law enforcers is shaped increasingly by the need to respond appropriately to the threat of terrorism. Terrorism represents a challenge not just to the bases of civilized society, but also to the very foundations of the world order. Terrorism activities threaten fundamental nations' law and order, human rights and it is the enemy of mankind. Terrorism, in one form or another, has been around for a long time, and there is no realistic prospect of its becoming extinct in the foreseeable future. All of those concerned with the effective combat of terrorism must be prepared for the long haul. There is no simple solution to terrorism. Terrorism is fuelled by various factors. These include the openness of free societies, the easy access to technologies by means of violence and a radical and global ideology of hatred. Conflicts in some countries particularly in the Middle East and Sub-Sahara Africa countries including Nigeria have inevitably formed a global issue and solidarity among terrorists. This global issue has become a unifying factor to share the sufferings and establish a sense of togetherness based on religious brotherhood among the believers to resist against the oppressor.

Terrorism will remain a menace as long as there are people who are driven by fanaticism, paranoia and extremism. So long as there exists in the world poverty, strife, injustice and oppression, conditions will exist which terrorists can turn to their advantage. No doubt that the campaign against terrorism is one that must be mounted at various levels, including political, economic, and humanitarian. The iron fist approach alone will not succeed. Terrorist will often have the advantage over the law enforcer in the sense that he/she is able to decide when and where he/she will strike, and how hard he/she will strike.

Law enforcement, on the other hand, has to maintain constant vigilance. That is not easy at a time when commercial airlines can be used as flying bombs, and when terrorist strategy is planned by internet, mobile phone, satellite and coded messages on websites. The development of computer science, satellite and mobile links have also affected the modernization of terrorist activities. This further facilitated by support of states/governments unfavorable to each other. An

element of international terrorism comes into the picture when specific persons of the nation are designed as targets by the members of another group outside that nation. It is, therefore, described as warfare without territory. It is warfare without neutrals and with few or no by standards. Another form of global terrorism is sponsored terrorism, which is operated from safe areas in another country, which are out of reach of the counter insurgency forces of the targeted country.

The threats we face from terrorism are constantly changing in all sorts of ways. Just when progress is being made against a terrorist group, splintering often occurs, and hardliners break away and form splinter groups committed to the campaign of violence. It is feared that weapons of mass destruction previously controlled by governments can now be purchased on the black market. It is said that not only the weapons but also the scientists with the knowledge of how to make them are available if the price is right. And finance may be the key. Terrorists, like more conventional criminals, need access to adequate funds in order to finance their activities. Weapons, communication systems and transport all come at a price, as does training.

In the word of Cline (1998), terrorism seeks power through violence, and money is a means to achieve the act. Terrorism needs access to international payment systems in order to finance and sustain its campaigns. Terrorists, like organized criminals, make active use of credit card fraud and cheque fraud. This is why vigorous identification checks regime must be exercised on potential customers by credit card companies. The loopholes are in the area of money laundering legislation that must be closed. Terrorism as it was defined a systematic use of violence or the threat of violence to achieve political, social or economic goals. Terrorism uses extreme physical violence to shock the targeted audience. The psychological impact generated in the mind of people as a natural corollary of that matters more to the terrorists than the physical attack on the victims.

### **3. The Policy Implications of Terrorism on Commerce and National Development**

Poor management of the socio-economic situations of the Nigerian economy and the commercial activities as well as other phenomena arise from ignorance and unsound educational policy or from deliberate policy options that are adopted preferentially. There cannot be any single cause of terrorism. Causes of terrorism may range from ethnical, religious, socio-economic and political conditions to theories based on the

personality and environment of the terrorist. Terrorism is motivated by a variety of inner drives ranging from financial gains to revenge, from fundamentalism to deprivation, political frustration, regional disparities, marginalization of sub-national groups, extremism, despair, injustice, discrimination, resentment against the existing regime, feeling of insignificance, intervention into personal freedom, weak government, separatism and oppression, poverty, inequality etc.

More so, terrorism produces harmful effects in several ways (Arvind, 2009). The consequences of terrorism are disastrous for all countries, both rich and poor, and their people. The normal social life gets totally disturbed and a large number of innocent lives go in vein. Fear and terror haunt everybody and the productivity of people is miserably stalled. Everything may come to a halt and the dream of living a life of happiness and peace is shattered. Economic and social development of the society cease to uncertain. Terrorism breaks down the social, economic, political and legal structures of the affected countries and the entire process of development stops. Socio-cultural mosaic goes to rack and ruin, and the economy of the country suddenly becomes a shamble. The rule of law and human rights crumble and people suffer terribly. Moreover, terrorism not only weakens the established political authority but also brings about political instability. In this situation the maintenance of the rule of law and human rights become almost impossible.

Furthermore, terrorism idealizes violence, does away with morality, distorts politics, promotes totalitarianism, subverts progress, and destroys the apparatus of freedom in democratic societies. In fact, it destroys the will of a civilized society to defend itself. It appears that everything the mankind strives for collapses like a house of cards. As a matter of fact, terrorism is war against civilization. Today, terrorism poses a great threat not just to human life, human rights, dignity and democratic values but to very existence of a civilized life. If the present trend continues, human civilization itself will be a casualty. That is why Jerusalem Conference on International Terrorism held in 1979 declared that 'terrorism is a serious and growing threat to the people of all states which live under the rule of law, that it is no longer a national problem, but a global one; that it cannot be constrained, and eliminated, except by concerted international action; and that the case for such action is overwhelming and urgent' (Jonathan Institute, 1979).

The national and international dimension of terrorism constitutes two facets of the same social phenomenon which infringes upon the interest of all states, not only as an assault against their public order and institutions that protect the liberty and security of their citizens but, also as a serious danger to peaceful international relations and cooperation, which is clearly understood as encompassing human rights and values as well as the principles of equal rights and self-determination of people. So, it is that the transnational character of contemporary terrorist events has prompted international efforts to suppress terrors at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels.

#### 4. Control Strategies to Combat Terrorism

The Secretary-General of UN fully embraces a broad vision of collective security. The threats to peace and security in the 21st century include not just international war and conflict, but also terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and civil violence. They also include poverty, deadly infectious disease and environmental degradation, since these can have equally catastrophic consequences. All of these threats can cause death or lessen life chances on a large scale. All of them can undermine States as the basic unit of the international system.

In this age of increasing globalization and interdependence, the control strategies seem to include intensifying law enforcement, more vigilance along borders, depriving the terrorists of their profits, assisting poor countries with their efforts at strict law enforcement by way of providing training to their law enforcement officers, providing necessary technology, harmonizing laws, sharing information, concluding international agreements to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination in law enforcement and more importantly, political will and commitment. Also, the profits generated by terrorists far exceed those that legitimate business enterprises could make. The incentive for terrorists, whether local or transnational, is profit. If terrorists syndicate can be deprived of their profits, they will cease their activities - altogether. It will therefore be worthwhile to examine and explore the ways and means of depriving them of their profits. The most effective way to do this is confiscation of the proceeds of such illegal activity by judicial means or with sufficient safeguards, by administrative means. A sine qua non in this direction is effective mutual legal assistance in the investigation and prosecution. It has been found that certainty of detection and effective and

expeditious disposal of cases is a deterrent to would be terrorists.

At present extradition procedures take a long time. Simplified extradition procedures will go a long way in expeditious disposal of cases. The international community responded to the phenomenal growth of terrorism by organizing convention. For instance, The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime signed Convention in year 2000. This is an indication of the enormity of the problem transnational crime poses to the world. Success of the struggle against transnational organized crime lies in the answers to the six points set out above. The most significant step in the direction of the prevention of transnational organized crime and terrorist attack is the adoption of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It has obligated States to act despite constraints of bank secrecy and also to extend co-operation in confiscating and seizing of assets obtained through corruption and transferred to different jurisdictions. The following four protocols add muscle to the convention, namely: protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children; protocol against the smuggling of migrants; protocol against trafficking in firearms; and protocol against corruption.

Combating terrorism at regional level is becoming effective and popular. The external support is often found in every operation of terrorist acts in any part of the world whether in the context of inter-connection between a group and its rival group, a group and its enemy state, or a state and its unfriendly state. It is here that regional cooperation can be an effective instrument for the suppression to terrorism. In Europe, besides their individual national legal and institutional measures, a historic convention known as the "European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, 1977" was signed and ratified. "South Asia Countries also recognized the importance of combating terrorism at regional level and consequently, signed a Convention titled the "Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, 1987" and ratified it. Similarly, in view of the complexity and problems of terrorism some bilateral and multilateral agreements between groups of countries have also been concluded. And many countries have extradition treaties between them. In view of this, West Africa regional convention can also be organised in this direction to combat terrorism.

At the international level, response and cooperation against international terrorism has been invoked many a time and a variety of measures and counter-measures have been designed for checking the

menace of terrorism. Concerned by the increase of terrorist acts, the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 established a 35-member ad hoc Committee on International Terrorism, and in 1977 asked it to study the underlying causes of terrorism and recommend ways to combat terrorism. In 1979, the Assembly stressed the importance of International cooperation for dealing with the acts of international terrorism. Adopting the report of the Committee, it condemned all acts of international terrorism that endangered or took human lives or jeopardized fundamental freedoms. In 1994, the General Assembly adopted a Declaration on Measures to eliminate international terrorism, which condemned all acts and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever and whomever they were committed. States were urged to take measures at the national and international levels to eliminate international and national terrorism.

Important international Conventions on terrorism are the Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (Tokyo, 1963), the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (The Hague, 1970); the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Act against the Safety of Civil Aviation (Montreal, 1971); the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including diplomatic Agents (New York, 1973); the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (Vienna, 1980); the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation (Montreal, 1988); the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf (Rome, 1988) and the Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (Montreal, 1991). The UN General Assembly also adopted the Convention against the Taking of Hostages in 1979 and the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel in 1994, and International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings in 1997.

Despite all these Conventions adopted and ratified, declarations made, and resolutions passed against international terrorism within the UN system outside, terrorism has become a ubiquitous phenomenon in the contemporary international affairs, and continues to grow. Every state is supposed to refrain from organizing, instigating assisting or participating in acts of civil strife on terrorist acts in another state or involved in organized activities within its territory directed towards the commission of such acts as well

as prosecuting and punishing the perpetrators of terrorist acts. A concerted action has to be initiated and sustained by all States whether they are affected or not in collaboration and co-operation with each other with strong determination and will to root out terrorism altogether from the world.

Of course, mutual agreement at the national, regional and international levels have consolidated and strengthened co-operation between the countries in the fight against terrorism. Hard line policies against terrorism adopted by some countries have achieved success in this regard. But, it seems that combating of terrorist activities in a significant proportion will be possible only if terrorism is condemned and fought universally, unequivocally and effectively, by all the countries in the world.

### **5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

The threats to peace and security in the 21st century include not just international war and conflict, but terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and civil violence. They also include poverty, deadly infectious disease and environmental degradation, since these can have equally catastrophic consequences. All of these threats can cause death or lessen life chances on a large scale. All of them can undermine States as the basic unit of the international system. Terrorism has no respect for national boundaries, and the problem-taking place in any part of the world today will sure enough to become the problem of all tomorrow. Terrorism is a monster like Frankenstein's creation that is too horrible and dangerous. It is even a threat to those countries that create or promote it. Therefore, terrorism is a phenomenon which must be condemned, fought, resisted, controlled and, eventually, eliminated at all levels-national, regional and international. Conditions necessary for wiping out terrorism must, accordingly, be cultivated and strengthened nationally, regionally and internationally, and unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally.

Terrorist acts confronted by a state cannot be eliminated by the affected States alone because of the international linkage of the terrorist groups. It is, therefore, clear that all the nations must form a common front to fight terrorism. If the much needed spirit of international cooperation in the required degree is not properly established, the world would become a dangerous place to live. It is for this reason that one nation's peace and security will be determined by the success of all nations' response to any kind of terrorism particularly for international

terrorism. Collective security today depends on accepting that the threats each region of the world perceives as most urgent are in fact equally so for all. These are not theoretical issues, but ones of deadly urgency. The United Nations must be transformed into the effective instrument for preventing terrorism that it was always meant to be, by acting on several key policy and institutional priorities: Preventing catastrophic terrorism: States should commit to a comprehensive anti-terrorism strategy based on five pillars: dissuading people from resorting to terrorism or supporting it; denying terrorists access to funds and materials; deterring States from sponsoring terrorism; developing State capacity to defeat terrorism; and defending human rights.

In the Millennium Declaration, Member States said they would spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. And over the last six decades, an impressive treaty-based normative framework has been advanced. But without implementation, these declarations ring hollow. Without action, promises are meaningless. Therefore, the normative framework that has been so impressively advanced over the last six decades must be strengthened. Even more important, concrete steps are required to reduce selective application, arbitrary enforcement and reach without consequence. The world must move from an era of legislation to implementation. It is for the world community to decide whether this moment of uncertainty presages wider terrorism, deepening inequality and the erosion of the rule of law, or is used to renew institutions for peace, prosperity and human rights. Now is the time to act. The annex to the report lists specific items for consideration by Heads of State and Government. Action on them is possible. It is within reach. From pragmatic beginnings could emerge a visionary change of direction for the world? Thus, the paper establishes that terrorism is a systematic use of violence or the threat of violence to achieve political, social or economic goals. Available information reveals that Nigeria is one of the countries experiencing terrorists attack and this if not well addressed can lead to the economic retrogressive where many nations are roaming in peace and harmony. The paper also suggests that terrorism is a serious and growing threat to the people of all states which live under the rule of law, that it is no longer a national problem, but a global one; that it cannot be constrained, and eliminated, except by concerted international action; and that the case for such action is overwhelming and urgent.

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