INSURGENCY AND NIGERIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY: THE PARADOX OF POLITICS

ABDULRAHMAN ADAMU
Department of Political Science,
Federal University, Gusau, Nigeria
abduladamu6@gmail.com
+2348039190666, +2349025380107

&

MUHAMMAD ABDULLAHI
Department of Political Science,
Federal University, Gusau, Nigeria
ramatbabs@gmail.com

Abstract
For about a decade now, Nigeria is bedeviled with insurgency cum insecurity. This challenge has greatly put Nigeria in a security dilemma with the leviathan task to curb the insurgency towards ensuring national security of the country. While the onus is on the state to end the insurgency, there have been accusations and counter accusations from different quarters of Nigeria and beyond that the unending insurgency in the country is as a result of the politicization of the menace by the political class. It is worrisome to note that successive governments have made concerted efforts to end the lingering problematic of insurgency in Nigeria unfortunately, the scourge has persisted. Thus, this paper is set to provide an analysis of government's approach towards tackling the myriad of insurgency that is threatening the country's national security. Based on the data collected from the secondary sources, the paper reveals that there is a moot link between politics and insurgency in Nigeria. It further reveals that there is also absence of political will on the side of those in authority to bring the perpetrators of insurgency and their accomplices to justice. The paper concludes that until the political elite demonstrate unflinching political will to curb insurgency from all ramifications, the menace would continue to threaten Nigeria's national security. It recommends among other things that equipping the Nigeria military with modern might, inter-agency cooperation, intelligence gathering, dissemination, as well as investing in human capital development particularly in the north eastern Nigeria are the alternative strategies to end insurgency in the country.

*Keywords***:** Insurgency, Security, National Security, Politics

INTRODUCTION

Security is one of the fundamental things men longs for. This is justified by the leviathan analysis of the social contract of John Locke which saw the formation of the state as a result of men wanted security and protection of their lives and property. Suffice to say that when the people are secured, the attainment of man's desires become possible and achievable.

However, this maximum security of lives and property has not been achieved in Nigeria over the years as a result of the activities of various insurgent groups. It is a common knowledge that different groups have emerged in the country over the years with different ideologies and objectives to rebel against the existing governmental structures, the actions that had led to wanton destruction of lives and property of individuals, government facilities and investments such as schools, hospitals, the vandalization of oil pipeline and electric cables and a host of others in almost all parts of the country.

It is fundamental to note that the insurgency phenomenon has been categorized into state and non-state terrorist groups. The non-state actors (terrorist groups) as they are known, occasionally conduct their

activities with a view to express certain dissatisfaction with the ways and manners which the society is governed and in most cases hope to use such expression to bring about changes which will also allow them impose their kind of ideology in the society (Maiangwa, 2014:4). Most of the terrorist attacks centered on either to free their fellow terrorists in detention, demanding ransom over something, kidnapping and criminality.

Thus, insurgency has been one of the regular features of the Nigerian state. It attained its full nomenclature and rationality in 2009 when the Boko-Haram insurgency escalated and later gained tremendous political attention especially in the North Eastern part of Nigeria and from both home and abroad. Thousands of people have been killed and property worth millions of dollars has been destroyed since 2009 when BH first appeared (Okoro, 2014). The birth of the Nigerian fourth republic has witnessed the rise of various militia groups with diverse interests and philosophies. The evolution of these groups has resulted to numerous ethno-religious conflicts and violence in Nigeria. The inability of government to curb insurgency has called to seriously question the influence of the political class and the unending manipulation of the phenomenon for certain political gains.

It is against this background that this paper seeks to examine the politicization of insurgency in Nigeria by the political elite and to see how government's efforts and approaches of tackling the scourge had achieved result or not.

Conceptual Clarification

Insurgency: the concept of insurgency means different things to different people especially in the social science discipline. That is to say that, like other concepts in the social sciences, insurgency has no universal definition. But for the purpose of this study, some scholarly definitions will be given prominence. According to Siegel (2007:328), the goal of insurgency is to confront and overthrow an existing government for the control of power, resources or for power sharing. From this definition, it can be seen that the goal of insurgency in a state is to unlawfully checkmate the existing governmental structures, to have full political power control, resource control or sharing the existing power with the application of various tactics to achieve these goals. Insurgency is a radical rebellion against the state or government which is unlawful. As cited in Hellesen, (2008:14), the United States Department of Defence (2007) defines insurgency as an organized movement that has the aim of overthrowing a constituted government through subversive means and arm conflict. Muzan (2014) makes great analysis about terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria where he avers thus;

> *Whether the Nigerian experience can be reduced to a type that may be an interesting subject, but for purposes of this article, the primary concern is the threat of insurgency. Insurgency is one objective of organized terrorism, just as terrorism is one of several strategies of insurgency. Both terrorism and insurgency may be used by states in their internal and foreign policy operations. Terrorism and terrorist tactics constitute part of the strategies and tactics of insurgency. The operational tactics are essentially those of guerilla warfare. The objective is to intimidate, frustrate and raise the feeling of uncertainty, imminent danger and the loss of hope, so as to cripple or limit all aspects of human activity and normal livelihoods.*

Security: security is the state of safety from danger, destruction and harm. Francis (2005:22) observed that security is a state of being safe and the absence of fear, anxiety, danger, poverty and oppression. Security is also a state of peace and harmony, freedom from threats and intimidations. As cited in Ali, (2010:73), security is the preservation of core values and the absence of threats to these values. In fact, security is freedom from threats to a nation's capability to defend and develop itself, promote its values and lawful interest (Imobighe, 1999:224).

National Security: the traditional definition of national security involves the use of state military and other military related agencies to achieve state goal. Security is the acquisition, deployment and use of military force to achieve national goals (Held and McGrew, 1998). From this ancient conception of national security, three things are to be grabbed, first, the ability to acquire, second, the ability to deploy and third, the ability to use the military is very important when providing national security. Absence of any of these three

jeopardizes national security. National security can also mean preservation of national value that is in one way or the other related to a nation territorial defense from both external and internal aggression. On the other hand, insecurity is the contrast of security. It is the other side of security.

Terrorism: Although terrorism is not easily defined, it may be said to be the use of force, usually violent, as a means of coercing a target population to submit to the will of the terrorists (Muzan, 2014). The United Nations (UN) document describes it as any 'act which is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act'. Okoro, (2014) observed that terrorism is a particular species of political violence involving a threat of violence against non-combatants or property in order to gain political, ideological, or religious goal through fear and intimidation.

Theoretical Framework

There are a number of theoretical explanations that explain or discuss insurgency and insecurity on a general note. But for the purpose of this study, elite theory will be more appropriate due to the fact that it explains the role of the state, elite and the civil society in the management of insurgency. The elite theory is deep-rooted in classical Sociology especially that of Webber (2005), (1922), Pareto (1935), Mosca (1939), and Michels (2009)(1915) cited in (Lopez, 2013:1; Aruwa, 2018:27). These scholars are regarded as the founding fathers of elite theory usually called the classical elite theorists. The elite theory is categorized into two viz: the classical and the contemporary elite theory. The classical and contemporary elite theorists share the ambition of explaining state outcomes through elite behavior (Lopez, 2013).

Elite theory claimed that both democracy (as the government of the people) and socialism (as a classless regime) are impossible outcomes because society is necessarily elite driven. In their views, elite could only be substituted by another set of elites, (see Pareto's, 1935 law of elite circulation), (see Mosca's 1939, notion of political class and (see Michael's 2009 (1915), iron law of oligarchy (Aruwa, 2018).

In the opinion of Onuoha and Ufomba, (2017), the elite theory is anchored on three main tenets. These are;

I. In every society power and influence is not distributed equally. This unequal distribution therefore, creates two classes. There is the dominant class which is the class that has more power and influence. The society making the rules through which it governed, and there is the receptive class of the ruled.

II. The elites are an organized class that is internally homogeneous, self-conscious, self-perpetuating and drawn from the very exclusive segment of the society.

III. The elites are essentially autonomous and self-preservation, (Aruwa, 2018:28)

The contemporary elite theorists, which includes; Domhoff Hunter, Put many, and Burnharm rallied round on the effectiveness with which economic elites are able to influence political outcomes and determine the future of the rest of the society. Societal power is embedded in key economic corporations and political institutions... and no matter what the situation portends they (elite) determine the economic and political fate of the rest of society through their influences on the policy - making organs of government (Odubajo and Bamidele, 2014).

The Nigerian Experience of Insurgency

The political entity call Nigeria attained its political independence from Britain on October 1st 1960 and became a republican nation in 1963. However, the country has experienced different levels of socio-economic and political changes .More than ever before in the history of Nigeria, the scourge of terrorism poses great challenges to the Nigerian state (Muzan, 2014) with the emergence of various insurgent groups. It is on record that the country first experienced the manifestation of insurgency immediately after the declaration of the Niger Delta region. According to Salawu, (2010), the phenomenon of ethnicity and religious intolerance had led to incessant recurrence of ethno-religious conflicts which have birthed copious ethnic militias like the Bakasi boys, O'dua People's Congress (OPC), The Egbesu Boys; the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), The Arewa People's Congress (APC), the Igbo People Congress (IPC) and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), among others. Thus, in the political life of Nigeria, there are two notorious insurgent groups that have emerged over the years. This is the Niger Delta militant in the South-South and the Boko-Haram insurgency in the North particularly the North-East. Since

2009, terrorist attacks in the form of bombings of religious houses, public institutions like schools, hospitals, local government secretariats, military barracks, police stations and other targeted areas has been on the increase and at an alarming rate (Muzan, 2014). In light of the above however, activities of two prominent groups were given prominence in this analysis-the Niger-Delta militant and the Boko Haram insurgency.

Niger Delta Insurgency
One of the first known insurgency or militia attempt in Nigeria may be ascribed to the movement to liberate the Niger Delta people spur by late Major Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro who hailed from the Ijaw ethnic group in the Niger Delta region and at the time of his rebellion, he was a student at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Boro's concern and complaint was against the exploitation of the oil and gas resources of the Niger Delta by both the federal and regional governments of Nigeria in total disregard of the citizens of the area which led to the form the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), armed military group with 150 of his kinsmen. As of then, he strongly believed that the people of the Niger Delta deserved a more equitable share of the wealth which is gotten from oil. By 23 February, 1966 the group (NDVF) declared the Niger Delta Republic. But the republic did not last long and was crushed by the federal government of Nigeria with the aid of the Armed Forces. Boro and his followers were charged, tried and imprisoned for treason. Beginning from this period, the problematic of militancy has being lingering in Nigeria till date. This makes Muzan to opine that;

> *"From this episode of Nigerian history, we can identify a number of issues that continue to this day. First, the Niger Delta issue is not forgotten. It continues to be on the front burner in matters of security, insurgency and, indeed, the continued existence of Nigeria. Second, a resurgence of the threat of insurgency will likely re-emerge, either as a response to similar threats elsewhere in Nigeria or where there is a lapse in the policy thrust to remedy the imbalances which caused the insurgency in the first place. This is the background to the emergence of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Third, it is noteworthy that the causative factors in this insurgency are still very much visible in the entire Niger Delta region, namely, extreme poverty in the midst of extreme affluence, degradation of the human living environment to the levels requiring concerted humanitarian intervention, discriminatory public policies resulting in political alienation of the human population, unsustainable extractive economies and finally, the absence of environmental remediation policies and activities. All these and maybe more are likely to fuel discontent and exacerbate future conflicts and insurgent tendencies"* (Muza, 2014).

There is no gainsaying that the activities of the Niger Delta militant had created a lot of setbacks socio-economically to the region in particular and the country at large. The activities of the group in the Niger Delta had manifested in different ways such as militancy, kidnapping, bombing, hostage, demolition of oil and gas facilities, pipeline vandalization, illegal oil bunkering (Duru, 2012). The militants launched attacks on oil companies killing oil workers, naval officers, injured soldiers, raided police stations and killed some officers on duty (Ogbonnaya and Ehigiamusoe, 2013).

Boko-Haram Insurgency
Until 2009, the northern part of Nigerian was not known for terrorism before the advent of the deadly Boko Haram insurgency. Although, the Book-Haram insurgents started in Nigeria like a less important issue and was not taken seriously by both the federal government and the governors of the North Eastern states. The movement began in Bauchi state on July 26, 2009 and later spread to other parts of the Northern states of the country. The most disturbing monster that has been causing upheaval in the north is Boko Haram whose characteristics are that of insurgency. According to Muzan, (2014) The rise of the Boko Haram (which literally mean 'Western education is sinful') has brought about heightened tension, anxiety and a sense of insecurity hitherto unknown in any part of Nigeria except the Niger Delta region. In one of the encounters of the group between the security forces and the group in 2008 led to the killing of four of their members. This further spur the mind of the group and on 26 July, 2009, they began to launch retaliatory attacks on

government institutions; schools, prison yards, police stations, offices and other places of worship like the churches and mosques in Borno, Kaduna, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe states and others.

The role government and the politicization in Combating Insurgency in Nigeria
It is fundamental to note that different governments at different times in Nigeria had made frantic attempts to curtail the menace of insurgents through the inauguration of various committees such as Amnesty Programmes in the Niger-Delta and a committee to dialogue with the Boko Haram insurgency on behalf of the federal and state governments. However, these efforts by the governments had been adjudged as very weak and lacks political will to bring to an end and cushion the effects of the quagmires. It is worrisome to note that billions of dollars have been invested in the security architecture of Nigeria yet the country suffers from incessant attacks from these disgruntled elements in the society who are hell bent on distorting the peaceful co-existence which indicates that the roles being played by the various governments to bring the menace to end are ineffective and inefficient. This scenario made Maiangwa, (2014:117) to aver that the escalation of Boko-Haram attacks on the Nigerian state is traced to poor counter terrorism measure by the government and the sensational media reportage. While Joseph (2013) submitted that despite successive attempts by Nigerian government to address the cancer worm through public policy alternatives such as regional and state mechanism, federal character principle, inter alia, the security problem still remains a thorny issue in the country and has taken a staggering dimension (cited in Tracy and Kelly, 2017).

From the above views however, it can be argued that the inability of Nigerian state to effectively combat insurgency lies with the politicization of the menace. The way and manner in which issues surrounding the insurgency are being handled in Nigeria had called to question the role of government in combating crimes in the country. There is absolute lack of political will from the political class to bring the phenomenon of insurgency to a halt which shows that there is no effective policy alternative to checkmate crimes against humanity in Nigeria, and even when they exist, there is always the problem of proper implementation due to the fact that the incidences are beneficial to the political class especially, religious and traditional leaders. Ake cited in Joseph (2013) identified four characters of the Nigerian state that disabled it from effective response to the security issues. These are the coercive nature of the state because it has been an exploitative state. Secondly, the Nigerian state is quite indifferent to social welfare. Thirdly, the state has an image of hostile coercive forces as a result of its colonial origin as exacerbated by its post-colonial abuses and fourthly, it lacks autonomy. From the foregoing characters however, it is obvious that the first category fits into our analysis which characterizes the kind of Nigerian society. It is a society where the wealth of the state is controlled by few individuals especially the political class who play the role of policy and decision makers as well as policy implementators in the society. The above position is corroborated by Adesoji (2011) who opined that going by its alleged creation and sponsorship by a famous politician in Borno state in the early 2000s and its socio-religious outlook and agenda, Boko-Hara insurgent group arose from political…discontent within the Northern state. Huge resources have been spent in equipping the military while some of the funds had been mismanaged and looted by politicians. It has become a common practice in Nigeria that the political class now uses the insurgency to campaign for political positions as there are those who are hell bent on using it to frustrate existing government which has further compounded the problem in Nigeria.

Conclusion
From the analysis of this study, it has been revealed that the growing menace of insurgency cum insecurity in Nigeria has put the country in a dilemma on what to do to bring to an end the scourge. It can also be submitted that with the rapid escalation and the complex nature of insurgency in Nigeria, the country is in a grave danger and on the verge of becoming a failed state and if adequate measure is not taken, it can lead the nation to disintegration. The lingering problematic of the phenomenon signals the gross lack of political will on the sides of those charged with the responsibility of combating it and in the face of this, the country will continue to suffer from insecurity and its challenges. There is also the problem of the fragmentation of ethnicity which has in no small way complicated the issue of fighting insurgency in Nigeria. This indicates

that most of the insurgent groups in Nigeria have political backing owing to the fact that they emanate from one ethnic group or the other. For instance, the Niger Delta militia emanated from the South-South region, the deadly Boko-Haram insurgency from the North-East, the ongoing Fulani headsmen attack particularly in the North-Central and a host of others. It is thus, pertinent to note that the failure of government to device a strong policy and mechanism to deal with the various insurgent groups decisively and bring perpetrators of crimes to book has greatly contributed to the lingering insurgency in Nigeria.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made.

(a) Government should devise a holistic approach towards combating insurgency and insecurity in Nigeria. By this it mean, government should look at solving other problems that are related to factors contributing to insurgency. Such factors include poverty, unemployment, equitable distribution of resources etc.

(b) There is urgent and every need for government to equip the Nigerian military with sophisticated modern gadgets and kits to combat insurgency and radical measures should be taken through training and retraining of the military personnel and other mother security agencies. This is to enable them have the knowledge and access to modern technology in the fight against insurgency.

(c) For the fight against insurgency to succeed in Nigeria, the government must do everything possible within the ambit of the law to bring to justice perpetrators of insurgency in particular and crimes against humanity in general. Capital punishment should be spelt out for anyone found guilty of such crimes irrespective of class, religion and ethnicity. Public execution of perpetrators should be stressed by the government so as to deter others from indulging in such crimes.

(d) Politicization of the Nigerian army and other security agencies in decision making process in fighting insurgency should be completely discouraged to avoid selective justice. Corruption of any kind should be avoided if the fight against insurgency in Nigeria must succeed. This is because there have been allegations and counter allegations on the diversion of funds meant for the fight against insurgency into personal use by the political class who are charged with the responsibilities of managing the welfare of the security agents.

References

Adesoji, A.O. (2011). Between Maitatsine and boko-haram: Islamic foundamentalism and the respose of the Nigerian state. Africa Australia, 57(4), 99-119.

Aruwa, S. H. (2018). Youth and Political Violence in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of the 2011 and 2015 General Elections In Zamfara State. A Project Submitted to the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Federal University, Gusau. October 2018.

Duru, E.J.C. (2012). The poverty of crisis management strategies in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria: a focus on the amnesty programme. African research review: an international multidisciplinary journal, Ethiopia, 6(2):162-170.

Held, D. and McGrew, A. (1998).The end of the old order? Review of international studies, 24: 219-243

Hellesen, P. (2008). Counterinsurgency and its implications for the Norwegian special operations forces.A thesis for the naval post graduate school, Monterey, California. June, 2008.

Imobighe, T.A (1990). "doctrine for and threats to internal security". In A.E Ekoko and M.A Vogt (Eds) Nigerian defence policy: issues and problems. Lagos; malthouse press.

Joseph, O. N. (2013). Democracy, Terrorism and the Paradox of Insecurity Vortex in Nigeria.

Lopez, M. (2013)."Elite Theory".Sociopedia. Isa

Maiangwa, S. J. (2014). The Concept of Terrorism in Africa.Pyla-mark Publishers, Kaduna Nigeria.

Michels, R. (2009) (1915), Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchy Oligarchical Tendencies of Democracy. New Brunswick, NJ: transaction publisher.

Mosca, G. (1939). "The Ruling Class". London: McGraw Hill Books Company.

Muzan, A. O (2014).Insurgency in Nigeria: Addressing the causes as part of the solution. African Human Rights Law Journal.Vol. 1 [2014] AHRLJ 13.

Odubajo, T and Bamidele, A. (2014). "The Elite Factor in Nigeria's Political - Power Dynamics". *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences.*Volume. 3 Number 1. Pp 121-139. ISSN 2210-4624

Ogbonnaya, U.M and Ehigiamusoe, U.K (2013). Niger Delta Militancy and Boko-Haram Insurgency: National Security in Nigeria. *Global Security Studies, Summer,* 4(3): 46-60.

Okoro, E. R. (2014). Terrorism And The Governance Crisis: The Boko-Haram Experience In Nigeria. *African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes.* 7 july. 2014.

Onuoha, B. C and Ufomba, H. U. (2017). "Ethnicity and Electoral Violence in Africa: An Elite Theory Perspective". *International Journal of Social Sciences.*Volume 3 Issue 3.Pp 206-223 ISSN 2454-5899

Pareto, Virginia. (1935). The Mind and Society. London: Jonathan Cape Limited.

Salawu, B (2010). Ethno-religious conflicts in nigeria: causal analysis and proposals for new management strategies. European journal of social sciences, 13(3): 345-353.

Seiyefa, E. (2016). Organized violence; A Manifestation of Elite Political Culture: A Case Study of Boko-Haram. Coventry University

Siegel, L. J (2007), Criminology: Theories, Pattern and Typologies. 11th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Tracy, B. E. O and Kelly, A.I (2017), Socio-economic Security and Democratic Participation in Nigeria.*International Journal of Education and Development*.Vol. 5, No. 9.Pp 58-65, October, 2017.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, Keynote Address, Closing Plenary of the International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security, 'A Global Strategy for Fighting Terrorism' Madrid, Spain, 10 March 2005.