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STATE FAILURE, TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY IN THE WEST AFRICAN SAHEL

Ogirai John Chrysestom Ph.D
Department Of History and International Studies.
Ajayi Crowther University Oyo.
P.M.B. 1066 Oyo, Oyo State
Tel. +2348075547733
Email: john.ogirai@gmail.com

Abstract
States in the International system are expected to deliver certain essential services, education, healthcare, provision of high levels of security and the creation of a conductive environment for the growth of such states. The paper reveals that, factors responsible for state failure include the following: corruption, lack of rule of law, spate of violence and anarchy. The paper argues that failed states do pose a serious security threat as they are associated with the spread of terrorism and insurgency because such states act as keyboards, sanctuaries or safe havens for various insurgent and terrorist networks. The paper also revealed that, failed states provide opportunities for terrorist and insurgent groups to organize, train, generate revenue and set up logistic and communication networks. The paper holds that failed states in the Sahel provides terrorists and insurgent groups with a large pool of recruits as there are many disaffected and alienated citizens who uphold political violence as an accepted norm. The paper explored the fact that failed states normally create a political vacuum which terrorist and insurgent groups usually exploit by providing economic assistance and personal security to the citizens in return for protection which enables them to widen their base. The paper concluded that the relationship between failed states, terrorism and insurgency revolves around the fact that, failed states are easier for terrorists and insurgent groups to penetrate and thereby perpetrate their unpatriotic acts.

Keywords *Failed state, Terrorism, Insurgency, Safe haven, Sahels*

Introduction

The Sahel region runs from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east covering an area of 3,053,200 kilometers. It is a transitional zone between the arid north and the tropical green forest that borders the Atlantic Ocean, with a population of about 50 million inhabitants. The Sahel covers parts of southern Algeria, Niger, Chad, Burkina Fasso, northern Mali, northern Cameroon and northern areas of northern Nigeria[1].

Islam is the major religion of the inhabitants of the Sahel. The major tribes in the Sahel are: the Tuareg, Fulani, Malinke, Bambara, Songhai Fulbe, Mossi, Hausa, Wolof and others.The climate in the Sahel is very hot and most of the area is covered by the sahara desert.All the countries in the Sahel suffer from the effects of climate change and there is scarcity of water resources and pasture[2]. The pitfalls of climate change constitute a big challenge to the Sahel region.

The Sahel region has been affected by severe drought which has led to desertification, water scarcity and exacerbated inequalities namely access to food, water, pasture and human migration across the Sahel. The effects of climate change have over the years disrupted the normal functioning of the ecosystem that interacts with humans by affecting ecological resources for survival[3]. The effects of climate change have led to increased competition over scarce resources that have triggered conflicts, violence and even armed confrontations.

Conceptual and Theoretical Discourse

There is still no single globally accepted definition of terrorism, which makes fully

understanding the concept extremely complex. Over the last decade there has been approximately more than a hundred definitions of terrorism used around the world. Terrorism is especially designed to instill fear within and thereby intimidate a wider target audience. Terrorism is also designed to create power where there is none or to consolidate power where there is very little[4].

Insurgence is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. Terrorism is one of the major tools used by insurgents to achieve their aims and objectives. Most insurgencies usually commence as a resistance movement, the aim is to disrupt civil order, stability and to resist a legally established government and to take over power and control economic resources from the group that has power[5] This paper will adopt the economic theory, which links terrorism with economic underperformance and marginalization. This theory was propounded by Ted R. Gurr, who offers a systematic analysis of the relationship between political violence and economic marginalization[6] Gurr theory saw rebellion as a result of political frustration that in turn was derived from the gap between the perception of individual entitlement and the reality of goal attainment[7]. A number of factors are responsible for the escalation of terrorism and insurgency in the Sahel. The presence of terrorism and insurgency is attributed to lack of development in the Sahel,a perceived state of underdevelopment, government incompetence[8].

Violence in the Sahel can be divided into two forms, rebellion and terrorism. Terrorism in Sahel is geared towards overthrowing the regime in power, while insurgency is a form of the violence performed by a small bands, whose aim is to increase the economic voice of the group.[9]

Strong states in Sahel experience terrorism while weak fragmented states experience insurgency, this goes to explain why insurgency is rampant in the Sahel. A lot of smuggling of arms occurred through open borders and states are ineffective to stop the smuggling of goods and human trafficking. Terrorist and insurgents groups have taken advantage of the geographical sanctuary provided by these failed states in Sahel to replicate illicit enterprises giving the terrorist and insurgent groups an avenue to both earn and transfer funds as needed, while on the long run these states are confronted with internal violence and end up not being able to deliver positive goals to the citizenry.[10]

Failed states end up not being able to guarantee security and the result is an erosion of all other services; the weak ones perform poorly and end up failing and others maintain strong security at the expenses of other important requirements.

The presence of terrorism and insurgency in the Sahel can be found in the historical, ethnic rivalries and hatred but also in the structure of the post cold war international system. Bitter ethnic and ethno religious conflicts have become the characteristics mode of warfare in the Sahel. Terrorists and insurgents have embarked on mass terror, ethnic cleansing and total disregard of, for the international humanitarian laws of war.[11]

Terrorism

The issue of definition of terrorism is one of the most controversial issues in the contemporary legal and political arena. A comprehensive universally recognized definition of terrorism has not yet been established. Terrorism is an amorphous phenomena,which effortlessly instigate a mass of semantics controversy, because the word terrorism is fluid, diffuse and ambiguous.[12]

Terrorism manifests itself through distinctive deployment of a variety of criminal acts calculated to harm human life, property and other interests. Jenkins called terrorism the use or threatened use of force designed to bring about a political change.[13] In a definition closer to Jenkins, Lancquer, posited that terrorism constitutes the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective when innocent people are targeted.

According to Cooper, terrorism is so difficult to define because it has a pejorative connotation. A person is politically and socially degraded when labeled a terrorist and the same thing when an organization is called a terrorist organization[15].

Chomsky, identified a two-way approach to the study of terrorism; the literal and

propagandistic. To Chomsky, terrorism became a major public issue during President Ronald Reagan's administration in 1980s.The Reagan administration focused on state-sponsored terrorism. Chomsky frowned at United States hypocrisy and double standard in its attempt to fight terrorism he showed facts and figures of United States sponsored terrorism in Nicaragua, Chile, Panama and Cuba. He also wondered why countries like Libya, Sudan, North Korea, Syria, Iran and Iraq were branded as state sponsors of terrorism, while at the same time the United States did the same thing.[16]

According to Clutterbuck terrorism is the use of threat or violence against small numbers to put large numbers in fear or as stated by an ancient Chinese philosopher, kill one frighten 100000.[17] According to Cunning, terrorism is part of a revolutionary strategy, it is manifested in acts of socially and politically unacceptable violence. Terrorism attractiveness and significance for revolutionary organizations are due to a combination of economy, facility and psychological political effectiveness.[18] Terrorism is a language of being noticed and the peculiarity of horror committed by terrorist is always what the innocent civilian remember.

Insurgency

Defining insurgency is very difficult as defining terrorism because terrorism can exist both as a mode of warfare and as a strategy for insurgency. Insurgency is a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the former consciously employs political resources, propaganda or demonstration or both and instruments of violence to establish legitimacy for some aspect of the political system which the ruling authorities consider illegitimate.[19] Insurgency is a grass root uprising that usually emerges with the aim of overthrowing an established government, they employ the following tacties, subversion, guerrilla tactics and terrorism and they do use these tactics against a government in power or a conventional military as a way of exerting their power. The main aim of insurgency is to weaken governmental control and legitimacy.[20]

Rinehart defined insurgency premised on the following characteristics:

1. Their aim is rooted in the claim for independence for an ethnic minority.
2. The aim of insurgent group is to overthrow the constituted government in an attempt to change the political and social order in a state or region.
3. The aim of an insurgent group is mainly subversion, armed conflict, sustained violence, social disruption and political actions.[21]

Insurgency is a rebellion through guerrilla warfare that has been successful in challenging domination in ECOWAS. It has also been linked to various ideologies. nationalism, religious fanaticism, communism and perhaps even no ideology at all.[22]

Types of Insurgent Movements

There are ten types of insurgent movements, namely:

i. Secessionist Insurgencies:
They do reject the existing political community of which they are credibly a part and seek to constitute an independent organization.[23]

ii. Revolutionary Insurgencies:
They seek to impose a new regime based on egalitarian values and centrally controlled structures to activate the people and change the social structure.[24]

iii. National Insurgencies:
They wish to displace the regime and the values and structures they champion.[25]

iv. Reactionary Insurgencies:
Seek to change the regime by reconstituting a past political order, with religious values and authoritarian structures(eg.the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran.[26]

v. Conservative Insurgencies:
They seek to maintain the existing regime in the face of pressure on the authorities to change it.[27]

vi. Anarchist Insurgencies:
They seek to destroy the existing system of governance[28]

vii. Egalitarian Insurgencies:
Involve mass-uprising and seek the re-distribution of wealth.[29]

viii. Traditional Insurgencies:
Seek the re-establishment of traditional value or belief system, including traditional religion.[30]

ix. Separatist Insurgencies:
They are involved in wars of national liberation or succession[31]

x. Reformist Insurgencies:
They are involved in conflicts that fuse political, economic and social reform with the struggle for autonomy.[32]

Failed States

Similar to the phenomenon of terrorism, there is no universally accepted definition of a failed state. Today, there are numerous definitions of a state failure. State all over the world are expected to provide security, education, political freedom, good governance, conducive environment for economic development, control over its territory, fulfill its sovereign responsibilities, safe guard human rights, maintenance, of law and order etc. when a state is unable to carry out its duties, its begins to detoriate through spectrum of state failure.[33]

The term "failed state" is a new concept in international relations and political science. The term emerged after the terrorist attacks on United States on September 11, 2001. State failure has been associated with the global war against terrorism, with the implication that, failed states today in the international system are now the ones that enhance terrorism and insurgency. 34 Failed states all over the world are a mere geographical expressions of a state, they have collapsed internally but they are still recognized by other states. They lack functioning economic political and social institutions, government of any form and they are characterized by the existence of warlords guerrillas and other para military groups who usually become a substitute for the state armed forces. At the same time failed states lack functioning economic, political, and social institution.

The National Security Council (NSC) defined a failed state as lacking the capacity to fulfill their sovereign responsibilities, lacking law enforcement, intelligence or military capabilities, to assert effective control over their entire territory, unable or unwilling to assure provisions of vital services and holds weak and non-existent legitimacy among its citizens.[35]

The United States Agency for International Development defined failed states as those states recovering from crisis where the central government does not exert effective control over its territory, is unable or unwilling to assure provision of vital services among its citizens.[36] Failed states are also directly linked to the proliferation of regional terrorism and insurgency activities, because they do experience serious international issues due to the breakdown of security and economic conditions, group grievances and population displacement either by the effects of climate change which results in displacement of population.

Very few countries in Sahel can escape the classification as failed states.Failed states provide opportunities for terrorist group to organize, train, generate revenue and setup logistics and communication centres with very little government interference.[37] Failed states can also be understood as being those that have witnessed a number of armed conflict and challenges to its central authority. At the same time the government has difficulty in providing basic services to its citizens.

Many of the states in the Sahel have not been able to meet the needs and aspiration of its members. The leaders in these states have failed to meet their own part of the social contract they entered into with the governed. The theory of the social contract was popularized Jean Rousseau, the governed place their destiny and well being in the hands of the leaders. The leaders on their part promised to meet the needs and yearnings of the

populace. A failed state as opposed to a capable state, is one which has failed its citizens to provide the basic needs like health care, good roads, water, electricity, food etc.[38]

Major Factors Influencing the Growth of Terrorism and Insurgency in the Sahel :

i. Porous Borders

Porous borders of some of the landlocked countries namely, Chad, Mali, Bourkina Faso, and Niger are one of the most significant challenges facing these states. In their attempt to curtail the activities of terrorists and insurgent groups from Libya and Algeria. The porous borders provide easier entry and exit for movement of weapons, combatants, training and ideological reinforcement.[39]

ii. Political Vacuum

Some Sahel States do create political vacuum which enables terrorists to thrive. Some terrorist groups provide personal security, economic assistance and other special services to the citizens in return for protection from other terrorists and insurgents groups. Warlords, guerrillas and paramilitary groups do also become a substitute for the State armed forces.[40]

iii. Pool of Recruits

For any terrorist organization to be successful, it needs to have an available pool of recruits from which to expand its membership. The breakdown of the social, economic and political conditions, creates a very conducive environment for disaffected and alienated youth to join the terrorist organization because they think they have no other alternative.[41]

iv. Proliferation of Global Terrorism

Sahel States are already linked to the proliferation of global terrorism, due to the deterioration of socio-economic conditions in their respective States such as lack of security, population displacement, group grievances.

The Linkage between State Failure-Terrorism and Insurgency

The relationship between failed States and terrorism and insurgency revolves around the fact that, failed States are easier for terrorist organization and insurgent to develop and thrive within.

The Sahel is characterized by high level internal turmoil namely, group grievances, population displacement due to the effects of climate change, high level of deterioration of socio-economic conditions, incompetent and corrupt law enforcement agents, inability to deliver public services, for example, healthcare, security, education, political and economic protection, lack of security from political and criminal violence.[43]

Also, other factors such as, lack of rule of law, spate of violence, demographic imbalance, external/foreign intervention, poverty, a breakdown of social, political and economic order etc. fo not help.the situation. The above factors enhance the conditions necessary to create enabling environment for terrorists and insurgents to thrive and serves as keyboards and safe havens for various terrorist organizations[44]

Counter-terrorism: Responses of States to Terrorism and Insurgency in the Sahel

Measures of counter-terrorism by Sahel States can be justified as necessary to self-defense, to the preservation of that country national sovereignty, and it is also geared to the protection of its citizens from serious harm. States are also morally obliged to use any means necessary to identify the terrorist and preventing them from inflicting serious harm in the future.

The most common criticism of counter-terrorism is that they curtail the liberty of its citizens to an excessive degree[45]

1. Detention

Detention prevents the individual from engaging in any of the normal human activities that give meaning and value to one's life. It is morally justified for a State to detain any suspected terrorist for an indefinite period. Another purpose for indefinite detention is to hold someone in order to extract information

that is urgently needed of which he might be.[46]

ii. Targeted Killing

Some States in the Sahel have responded to the threat of terrorism and insurgency by targeting and killing leading terrorists. Targeting and killing of terrorists is a sate's moral right to self-defense, to use all necessary force to respond to an attack that threatens its very existence.[47]

iii. The Use of Military Force

Military force has been employed by some States in the Sahel when terrorists and insurgents have grown to be strong beyond the power of the police, which most often results into repression and most often the use of the military often eliminates the threat posed by terrorism. It does not stop terrorist and insurgent activities because it tends to drive terrorists and insurgent groups into unproductive tit-for-tat escalation of the conflict.[47]

iv. Pre-Emptive Action

According to military, strikes can be directed against training camps of the terrorist Mali has on several occasions carried out pre-emptive action against terrorist groups across its borders with Algeria.[49]

v. Intelligence Gathering

Intelligence gathering is one the most important aspects of counter-terrorism. The gathering of intelligence of a particular terrorist group is very important because this is the only way one can know more of a particular terrorist organization. The main purpose of intelligence gathering is to identify the members of a particular terrorist group, their training and operation base.[50]

vi. Diplomatic Approach

Diplomacy is the peaceful conduct of relations between many States and the most important of foreign policy and is most successful when a State is able to achieve its objectives within the most minimal of resources and commitments, but a failure when that policy could not prevent war.

The use of diplomacy in counter-terrorism and insurgency involves persuading states that have granted terrorist safe-haven and training camps to close them and seeking permission of that country to arrest terrorist and insurgent leaders that are resident there.51

vii. Assassination

Assassination can be undertaken by government as a form of retaliation against a terrorist group to serve as a preventive measure. Successful assassination require high quality intelligence gathering to locate the target. The killing of any leader of any terrorist or insurgent group is likely to disrupt that particular terrorist organization.

At times, even after the assassination has been carried out, there is likely to be an upsurge terrorist and insurgent activities.

viii. Special Counter-Terrorism Unit

Some Sahel States have trained special units to deal with terrorists and insurgents. The aim of these units is to deter terrorists and insurgents from carrying out terrorist attacks against innocent civilians and government targets.

Conclusion

The cold war marked the genesis of a new era in international relations and also the beginning of modern process of state failure in the international system. The disintegration of the Soviet Union led to a unipolar world. It was also during this period that failed states become a focus of international security studies. Prior to 2000, failed states were associated with humanitarian issues and nobody ever thought that they could be associated with terrorism and insurgency.

The Sahel countries have been faced with the task of uniting their diverse ethnic groups. There is also a high level political and economic disenfranchisement of large section of the population. Prolonged terrorism and insurgency have become a way of life resulting in a culture of violence of which many inhabitants have been

made homeless. The force of globalization has facilitated the flow of weapons by terrorist and insurgent group movement. Means of communication and their bases located far away from the theatres of conflict in the Sahel. Failed States in the Sahel are threats to international security and they are likely to become safe-haven for terrorists and insurgents.

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