

**BOKO HARAM TRANSNATIONAL INSURGENCY AND NIGERIA'S
FOREIGN POLICY (2010-2017)**

By:

OLUWATUNMISE TAIWO PAIMO

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the factors that aided the transformation of Boko Haram into a transnational insurgent group and appraised the influence of the Boko Haram transnational insurgency on Nigeria's foreign policy. It also investigated how the transnational insurgency of Boko Haram has impacted on Nigeria's relations with her immediate neighbours and external relations. These were with the view to understanding the influence of Boko Haram's transnational insurgency on the Nigerian foreign policy between 2010 and 2017.

Primary and secondary data were utilised for the study. Primary data were sourced through documentation and in-depth interviews with 15 purposively selected respondents from the following study population: National Defence College (NDC) (3), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) (3); the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) (2); the Chadian Embassy (1) and Nigerian Embassy (1) in Nigeria. Other respondents included scholars/researchers from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The choice of the respondents was based on the strength of their expertise, knowledge and engagement with security issues and policy formulation. Secondary data were sourced from text books, journal articles, conference papers, lectures, newspaper, magazines, past research works and internet materials. The collected data were analysed using narrative methods.

The result showed that factors such as geographical location, government negligence, globalisation, ideology rooted in Islamic fundamentalism, cross-border

linkage and language, radicalism and extremism aided the easy transformation of the group into a transnational insurgent group. It also showed that the transformation of Boko Haram insurgent group into a transnational insurgent redefined Nigerian foreign policy. Furthermore, the transformation of Boko Haram insurgent group into a transnational insurgent group had negative implications on Nigeria's image projection with other world powers. The study pointed out that Boko Haram's transformation and incursion into the neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger and Cameroon ensured a more friendly and robust relationship amongst the countries.

The study concluded that the transformation of Boko Haram's insurgency into a transnational one on the one hand, strengthened Nigeria's relationship with its immediate neighbours, while on the other gave Nigeria a negative image across the world



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Insurgent activities have wrecked devastating havoc on independent states and the world as a whole; creating apprehension for state actors and threatening global security. In recent years, the world has witnessed an increase in the emergence of insurgents, terrorists or militant groups. For instance, the insurgent groups of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas); Hezbollah; Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS); Taliban; Al-Qaeda; Al-Shaabab; and Boko Haram have engaged in violent activities to achieve their separate objectives. To evade domestic security efforts, these insurgent groups have sought sanctuaries in neighbouring countries, thereby extending their zone of influence, threatening national and international peace and security (Wassel, 2012). Hence, the insurgent groups transform their domestic activities to transnational insurgency which has dominated the contemporary international system.

Transnational insurgency is the gradual expansion of domestic insurgent activities from a national boundary to another, mostly to the adjoining neighbours (Salehyan, 2009). Transnational insurgency limits the coercive power of a state, such that it is impossible for an independent state alone to effectively address the excesses of the insurgents. The extension to neighboring state gives the insurgent groups unequivocal ability to effectively regroup and redeploy (Salehyan, 2009). Several countries of the world have had different experiences of terrorism and insurgent attacks from known groups which are mostly driven by a central motive of ensuring Islamic ideology (Okoroafor & Ukpabi, 2015). For instance, the United States of America had a major attack on September 11, 2001 when the Al-Qaeda bombed the twin tower of the world trade center at New York and the Pentagon. The attack spontaneously transformed

the states' perception to transnational insurgency, defense and security, as it declared war on terrorism (*New York Magazine*, 2010). However, there have been alarming experiences of insurgent across developing countries, particularly in Africa and the Middle East.

Insurgent activities, which usually originate within sovereign states, has overtime become transnational as the insurgent sects operate across national boundaries to include neighbouring countries. For instance, the Al-Qaeda group operates across the Arabian Peninsula and Islamic Maghreb having networks in Libya, Mali and Egypt. Also, the Taliban operates across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border while the Islamic State sects operate along territories across Iraq, Syria and the Sahel Sahara region. Likewise, Al-Shabaah operates in Somalia while the Hezbollah sects are found across Lebanon and some other in Middle Eastern States. Like others, the Boko Haram sect perpetrate violent activities in Nigeria, and this has in recent years extended to countries of Chad, Cameroon and Niger Republic (Fatai 2016, Wassel 2012, Shuaibu, Salleh and Shehu 2015, Okoroafor & Ukpabi, 2016).

In the northeast Nigeria, the insurgent group popularly referred to as Boko Haram but with the official name *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati* which means People committed to the propagation of teachings of Prophet and Holy War (Alao, 2011) has become a transnational threat, undermining sovereignty and legitimacy of the government. The sect has aggressively demonstrated high degree of violence through incessant killings and kidnapping of Nigerians and non-Nigerians; instigating concern for states in the international community. Boko Haram is driven by the ultimate goal of dismantling the Nigerian state and to introduce Islamic doctrines (Fawole, 2014). It seeks for the establishment of a Sharia government; expected to be headed by a religious leader. In like manner, Boko Haram sect believes that the creation of an Islamic state will be a clear example and replica for good governance system. The notion which has gained

prominence is that, Boko Haram is driven by the philosophy that Western education is sinful and forbidden. However, the group opposes this on assertion on the basis that; it is motivated to achieve supremacy of Islamic principles over western civilization and culture (Oviasogie, 2013). The insurgent activities which was initially restricted to the three states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, transformed to other regions, mostly in the north (Fawole, 2015).

The domestic issue of Boko Haram insurgency had become externalized with other terrorist groups. For instance, Reuter (2014) affirms that the sect has continuously engaged with Al-Qaeda, as its members attended AQI training center in Timbuktu, Mali in 2011. The group also dispatched members to Somalia, to join Al-Shabaab in its training camp. There, they were taught on how to construct and detonate improvised explosive devices, and at the same time carry out suicide bombing (Shuai bu, *et al* 2015). Identified also is the affirmation that the group runs an international network of recruitment, training and indoctrinating camps in Gao, and Kidal in Mali, Cameroun, Chad, Sudan and Central Africa Republic. As a matter of fact, this instance portrays how the insurgent group has over the years gained relevant connections with major African Jihadists.

This transformation in the mode of operation and extension to transnational insurgency makes the group to be one of the highly sought terrorist organisation by the United State of America (Fawole, 2012). Also, several multinational cooperations has been initiated in response to transnational insurgency of the Boko Haram sect. Omtuyi (2017) observed that the Multinational Joint Task Force (MTF) operation was initiated to