The Challenges of Security Agencies on Jos North Crisis: Interrogating the Nigerian Security Architecture and Capacity for Conflict Management and Peace Enforcement.

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Abstract

This study interrogates the causes and course of the protracted conflicts among the various sub-ethnic and lingua-cultural groups in Jos North Local Government area of Plateau State in Nigeria. It examines the interplay of ethnic composition and configuration of settlement pattern[s], migration dynamics, colonial policies, psychological issues that conflate in the region that eventuate in virulent, intermittent, and violent conflicts since 1994. The conflict actors in this area are the Hausa-Fulani, Fulani Herdsmen, popularly known as 'Bororo', Afizere, Anaguta, and the Berom. The study also examines the challenges posed to the nation's security community and the factors responsible for the failure in combating the intractable increasingly protracted conflict. The work is an explorative, micro and empirical study. It adopts the social survey design, as data were drawn from the people in respect of their beliefs, attitudes, and understanding of the conflict. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the study area. Other methods employed by the study are interactive methodologies, such as, Focus Group Discussion, Key Informants Interviews and Participatory Rural Assessment. The study identifies political exclusion, pervasive extreme poverty, fear of domination and deprivation of the indigenes by the settlers, that is, the [Hausa-Fulani], dissatisfaction of indigenes with the sociopolitical system, religion as a tool of mobilization for violence etc. as some of the factors responsible for the conflict. The study also finds out that the security agencies, particularly, the Department of State Security, is encumbered by inadequate numerical strength, ineffective deployment of security agents when the need arises, inadequate technical operations, emotional and sentimental attachment of security agencies and government officials in the ethno-religious crises, insufficient inter-agency collaboration and the failure of state actors to respond promptly and appropriately on early warning signs and intelligence reports at critical periods of the Jos North crisis. The study concludes that appropriate interventions in the areas of poverty alleviation/empowerment programmes through capacity building and skill acquisition for the residents, mass education and enlightenment, and dispassionate implementation of reports and recommendations of various investigative panels on the conflicts, would go a long way to resolve the lingering and destructive crisis. The security architecture of the country should also be reviewed with a view to making it more effective and proactive.

Keywords: Crises\Conflict, Internal Security, Intelligence, Indegeneity, Settler, Ethnicity.

BACKGROUND

What is now known as Nigeria today was, before the advent of colonialism, a multinational entity, if viewed against the backdrop of Ferdinand Tonnies' operationalization of the term 'Gesselschaft'. It consisted of several autonomous kingdoms and ethno-lingua-cultural groups

with their own indigenous system of governments. However, with the coming of the British colonialists, the hitherto independent and autonomous groups were forcefully massed together for ease of administration, territorial demarcation occasioned by the process of scrambling and partitioning of Africa by the colonial powers and for the purpose of exploration and exploitation of the resources of the colonized. Consequent upon this, the pattern of inter-group relations which existed among these various groups was altered and this was the case before Nigeria attained political independence in 1960.

The amalgamation of 1914 equally created a forced union of unequal partners if viewed from economic standpoint, thus creating competitive and antagonistic constituents of a newly forged Nigeria. As Ayoade [1999:101] adumbrated, Nigeria, is "a politically arranged country… a product of a British experiment in political cloning". The administration foisted on the people could not and did not engender nor forge unity among these disparate groups, neither was national integration achieved among these various peoples before the British left. This lack of integration and covariance among these "nations" within the Nigerian nation eventuated in the various inter and intra-ethnic hostilities that characterize inter-group relations in the country today. It is also responsible for the various virulent and incessant demands for creation of states based on ethnic and lingua-cultural considerations within the Nigerian federation [Adetoye, 2010]. Hence, rather than integrating, the country was disaggregating towards ethnic divides owing to the various spurious geopolitical restructuring that had taken place between 1960, when the country was a three region structure and 1996 when it assumed a 36 states structure. The events that culminated in the intractable and seemingly interminable Jos North crisis can be situated within the conceptual scaffold of the foregoing.

Jos and its Neighbors: A Historical Exploration

The Jos North area, like other parts of what is geopolitically known today as Northern Nigeria, effectively came under the British colonial rule between 1900 and 1960, a development that terminated the Caliphate's suzerainty or a pretension of its suzerainty, in the pockets that remained unconquered by the Uthman Danfodio Jihadists and their successor rulers[Osunrayi, 2010:1]. The political administrative instrument of Indirect Rule adopted by Luggard, made it imperative for Jos and its immediate environs to be brought under the political and administrative control of Bauchi, probably being the proximate emirate and not because of military conquest. According to Best [2007:18], "it is not clear or acceptable to the indigenes that, Plateau was ever subdued by Bauchi or came under Bauchi Emirate before colonialism… all attempts made by the pre-colonial Bauchi Emirate to conquer and subjugate the area after the Danfodio Jihad were rebuffed or repelled .

The Indirect Rule policy relied on the emirate system more than the chieftaincy system on non Muslims, hence the exigency of ruling the Plateau via proximate emirate in Bauchi, between 1902 and 1926. The outcomes of the anthropological studies commissioned by the colonial administration informed the decision in 1926, to carve out a separate province for non-Muslim elements on the Plateau named the Pagan Administration [Best, 2007: 19]. According to Hugh Clifford, the newly created province was to cater exclusively for non-Muslims of Plateau Province and the subsequent abolition of Hausa Kingship in Jos in 1947 [Ballard, 1972]. The Berom, Anagata and, to a lesser extent, Afizere peoples were carved into this province, while the Hausa-Fulani and other non-indigenes in the province were considered settlers by this specious colonial arrangement. The implication of this is simply that groups outside the former three mentioned above, did not have certain rights and privileges accruable to the indigenes [Osunrayi, 2010:2].

Agitation for creation of states from the three regions after independence brought into fore the fragility of the federal arrangement adopted by the successors of the colonialists. At the forefront of the agitators were the minority groups who found themselves among majority ethnic groups that dominated the regions or states as the case may be. At every turn of state restructuring, new majorities and new minorities emerge. The new majorities in many instances became new minorities and these created new national problems that in many instances degenerated into violent conflicts. On many occasions, the violence was triggered by the fact that the various structural adjustments on the state configuration were pure gerrymandering with all its concomitant political and social consequences. For instance, new Local Government Areas were created in Modakeke, Ogbe-Ijoh, Jos North etc with violent outcomes. Thus the 1991 creation of Jos North, apart from being a major trigger in many crises of the area, was interpreted by the Berom as a way of consigning away their ethnic essence and identity. To the settler Hausa-Fulani group who now constitute the numerical majority in Jos North with its consequence on political office sharing and resource distribution amongst the perpetual competing ethnic groups in Jos North, this signified a victory.

THE PROBLEMATIQUE

The Jos North crises have been the most protracted crises in Nigeria. The crises unleashed immense human and material losses, thus posing serious internal security challenge to the country's security community. Intelligence gathering on these crises had been considered inadequate, poor and lagging, hence their repeated escalations. Another security challenge is the contradictory role of making State Governors, the chief security officer of their states without having full control of the troops in their domain. The President is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and without his authorization; no troops could be deployed for any operations in any state of the federation. In fact, the governor does not have the power of deployment of either the police or armed forces. Given this contradiction, the security community is placed in a dilemma.

National development is predicated on peaceful coexistence of citizens. The diversity of Nigeria, ordinarily, should be a source of strength and not a destabilizing factor. In particular, Plateau State and Jos in particular, have been described as an oasis of peace and tourism. But with the broadening of democratic space in 1999, bottled emotions, pent up anger, and perceived acts of injustices of the military era found expression in liberalism and openness that often characterize liberal democracy. Majority rule gave rise to a new form of democratic leadership and the hitherto autocracy foisted on the people by the military rule became seriously challenged.

The Jos North crisis presents paradoxical but interwoven variables that continually confuse researchers and social observers. One, the crises could be seen as ethnic if viewed against the fact that it is a conflict between the Hausa-Fulani group and the indigenes, that is, Afizere, Anagata, Berom etc. Two, it could be viewed as a distributional conflict in the sense that the Hausa-Fulani are strategically placed in positions of authority than the indigenes,-an advantage that opens more window of opportunities for recruitment of their ethnic kiths and kin into government positions. To this extent, the settlers became more economically empowered than the indigenes. And finally, the conflicts also tend to have religious coloration because the Hausa –Fulani group are predominantly Muslims while the indigenes are mostly Christians. There seems to be a conflation of intractable variables attendant to the crises.

The crux of the crisis in Jos North is that of indigene/settler confrontation. Basically, an identity crisis has been rearing its ugly head. The problem of identity crisis and indigene/settler

confrontation is not confined to Jos North but has found expression in the entire country. Within this context therefore, any successful and modest attempt at solving this problem in Jos North would not only bring a new lease of life to the citizens of this local government but to the entire nation where identity crisis and indigene/settler imbroglio subsists.

This study throws up some research questions. What is the nature of the Jos North Crisis? What had been the roles of security agencies in these crises? What are the challenges of these agencies in crises management? How could these roles be enhanced for maximum performance?

The Political Economy of Religion, Ethnicity and the Jos North Crisis.
Religion, according to the Oxford Dictionary means, "The belief in a super human controlling power that is entitled to obedience and worship". . . "a particular system of faith and worship that one is entitled to" Religiosity, in man, is a veritable source of conflict especially in a multi-religious and materially poor plural society like Nigeria. Incidentally, in Jos North, most of the Hausa Fulani settlers are Muslims by faith while the indigenous groups, already mentioned above, are mostly Christians by faith. The secular nature of the Nigerian republican constitution guarantees citizens the freedom of worship in any place of their choice without let of hindrance. This guarantee presupposes that any religious group can acquire or procure place of worship anywhere in the country without any discrimination or preferential treatment or patronage from any tiers of government be it local, state or federal. Religious insecurity or perceived religious insecurity, as it were, can and does provoke interminable conflicts; because religion has a high emotive content as a value [Elaigwu, 2005 quoted in Yakubu et al., 2005].

Historically, as Agbaje has noted, the colonial administration "underwrote Islam in the Northern part of colonial Nigeria, and used it as basis of political authority in local administration [Agbaje, 1990:28]. It also kept intact the emirate system of Administration with its strong religious content and bias. According to the late Premier of Northern Nigeria Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the imposition of the indirect rule was an expression of the grace of Allah [Kuka, 1993].

Apart from this, the British colonial legacy of pandering to Islam at the expense of Christianity, and the trend of instrumental deployment of religion into politics increased regionalization of politics and as such, politicization of religion continued unabated. This development reached a crescendo in 1986 when the Babangida Administration secretly upgraded Nigeria's membership in the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] from an observer status to full membership. This action set the tone to mainstream intra and inter-religious antagonisms and violence on a national scale in Nigeria. Religion, just like ethnicity, had risen to the status of identity politics in Nigeria and these two had become the most critical identities in Nigeria [Osaghae and Suberu, 2005]. There is therefore a nexus between ethnicity and religion as both do rarely exists or operates in isolation, rather they interact with one another as well as with other variables in an often complex conflicting way and manner [Osunrayi, 2010].

The story was once told of one Alhaji Yahaya Kwande, a Christian from Kwande, Plateau State, who earlier converted to Islam and joined the then dominant party in the Northern Region, Northern People's Congress [NPC]. His reason for conversion, according to him, was to "fight for rights within the system". However, to his chagrin, something was still wrong" with him. At a party convention that held between 26th and 27th, April 1954, Kwande asked the question "why is the Emir of Wase, a Fulani, and a second class chief, while the chief of Shendam, a non-

Fulani is a third class chief? Wase is just one of the ten areas within Lowland Federation and Shendam is a much bigger and more populated Native Authority. Kwande was promptly accused of subversion and being a supporter of Northern Element Progressive Union [NEPU], the opposition party [Kukah, 1993:3].

Ethnicity on its own part suggests traits of language, culture, folktales etc, as defining a group. According to Rosel [1995], ethnicity is a group of collective perception of the selves as having a bond of common descent, religion, language, culture or history. These may be real or imagined. Jos, as it is known today, came into being around the early part of the 20th century through mining activities in the area [Best, 2007:21]. Hausa, Yoruba, Urhobo and other ethnic groups entered peacefully to work in the tin mines or associated occupations that fed into the mining

Meanwhile, a variety of ethnic groups such as the Afizere, Anaguta, Berom, Amo, Buyi, Jere, Irigwe etc had settled to the Northern zone while the Ngas, Nwaghavul, Mupun, Geomai, Montol, Kuleri, Doemak, Meryang, Fier etc settled in the central and south Zones [Best, 2007:11]. Most of these claim to be autochthons or at least preceded the Hausa and other Southern ethnic groups to the Jos area. The ethnic configuration of Jos area thus has set a stage for intense competition and rivalry. The Hausa-Fulani settlers, especially, are thus pitched again against such ethnic groups as Afizere, Anaguta, Irigwe and Berom. The latter groups, actively backed by other local indigenes in the state, feel that they have the inalienable right to control Jos and its environs, that is, the Local Government Area Council authorities at the expense and to the exclusion of the Hausa-Fulani group who they generally regard as interlopers. With all these, the stage was naturally set for conflicts arising from intense competition for political and other accruing economic and political perquisites. Because of its composition, it is not a surprise therefore that these ethnic groups are always in conflict and competition over resources. These conflicts and competitions are usually characterized by civil disturbances which had taken its tolls on human lives and properties with attendant security implications.

Civil disturbances can be classified into religious, ethnic and political conflicts. Experiences in Nigeria show that the conflicts are usually and most times between Muslims and Christians, and Muslims against Muslims, while ethnic disturbances involve one ethnic group against the other[s]. In some instances, there are intra-ethnic and even intra-religious clashes where some sects, clans/villages engage other[s] in contestation and violence. The third category involve the pursuit of common interests that cut across ethnic or religious boundaries such as clashes between two political parties or agitation to redress perceived marginalization. Experience from Nigeria shows that civil disturbances tend to revolve around politics of identity. These violent incidents are in the increase with the advent of democracy because it guarantees freer atmosphere and provides fertile ground for civil disturbances and the contestations for the broader issues of identity, participation and citizenship.

Jos North Crises in Perspective.
The interplay of ethnic configuration, settlement pattern[s], migration dynamics, colonial policies and politics and psychological needs have all conflated in Jos North to occasion intermittent and intractable violent conflicts since 1994. Given these variables, the Jos North conflict had been latent until 1994 when there was escalation. The conflict actors in this area are the Hausa-Fulani, Fulani Herdsmen [Bororo], Afizere, Anaguta, and the Berom and [with th exception of the Fulani Bororo who by their occupation are itinerants], have all been competing for political space both at the traditional rulership and the modern bureaucratic levels. In simple terms, the Hausa-Fulani want the control of the traditional stool of Jos and the

control of the bureaucratic apparatus of the Local Government Council of Jos North. This position was antithetical to the collective aspiration of the Anaguta, Afizere and the Berom. Members of the latter group, that is, Berom, have always considered the Gbong Gwon Jos as the supreme ruler in the area since 1947, when the perceived historical error was deemed to have been corrected, whereas, the Hausa-Fulani consider supplanting the Sarkin Jos with Gbong Gwon Jos by the colonial authorities as a grand conspiracy that was not only discriminatory but aimed at excluding them from the local government administrative system [Osunrayi, 2010].

The 1991 Local Government creation exercise nationwide took place in 89 Local Government areas. This routine political action should ordinarily be viewed as one aimed at creating more development centers with wide political space for constituents and correcting structural injustices. However, the splitting of the erstwhile Jos Local Government into Jos South and North Local Government Areas came with obvious proximate conflict triggers [Best, 2005]. The excision of hitherto numerically preponderant Berom and Afizere mainly to Jos South, gave political advantage to the "new majority", the Hausa-Fulani. To the Berom, Anaguta and Afizere, this was an exercise in gerrymandering. The Gbong Gwon Jos subjects are more numerically in Jos South but less in Jos North thus grossly undermining his traditional power base and pedigree. To the Hausa-Fulani, this was a solution to their age long marginalization, particularly the control of the Local Government [Best, 2005]. The 1994 2001 manifest conflicts were a consequence of these setting and minor triggers were only needed as conflagrant.

Jos North Crises and the Security Architecture.
The intelligence Services of a nation have the major tasks of maintaining its security. When conflict progression is not well monitored and escalation ensues, this constitutes real threat to national security. Conflicts may be unnecessarily prolonged due to unprofessional management style by the state actors and when this happens, national security is also threatened and the integrity of the security community suffers. The intelligence community therefore owes it a duty to intervene in conflict situations such that unfavorable consequences are not experienced. We therefore dwell on the examination of the nation's security architecture and apparatus in this section of our paper.

By security architecture is meant the organizational structure of Nigeria's defense establishment. It also refers to the entire set-up of the country's armed forces and intelligence agencies. These include but not limited to the Army, Air force, Navy, the Department of State Security [SSS or DSS], and the Police. In totality, the phrase refers to the arrangement of the various units or manner they are synchronized to form an organic whole [Imobighe, 1985:1]. According to Imobighe, the key elements include the existence of many parts of and the coordination or bringing together of these parts to form an effective and efficient whole [Imobighe, 1985:1].

What this section of the paper will attempt to discuss is the question of collaboration, cooperation and inter-agency coordination among the various security agencies in the theater of the Jos North crises. What had been the roles of security agencies in these crises? What are the challenges of these agencies in crises management? How could these roles be enhanced for maximum performance?

The Intelligence Services, though created statutorily to carry out security functions as their primary assignment, are yet involved in intervention activities. The rationale for other

involvement in conflict situations is the mastery of the trade craft as a result of training both locally and abroad so that operatives are kept abreast of developments and able to identify security threats. The nature of their training, the specialized skill they have acquired, the significant resources they maintain {personnel, equipment and supplies], the arsenal of acquired intelligence and communication capabilities, and other operational preparedness. The Intelligence Services' roles in conflict resolution are implicit in their respective enabling Acts. The State Security Service is primarily established to detect and prevent threats to Nigeria's internal security of a non-military nature. While National Intelligence Agency acquires intelligence on targets of interest to Nigeria abroad, Defence Military Intelligence detects and nips in the bud all threats of military nature, to the security of the country whether internal or external. The combined efforts of these Services in intervention strategies are meant to mitigate threat situations in the country. It should be noted however, that these roles are only implied in the Nigerian constitution but not explicitly in the documents. Their responsibilities are therefore very crucial to providing early warning signals [EWS] in detecting the sources of conflict and forwarding same to action agencies and policy makers.

Viewed against the backdrop of the foregoing, how have these security agencies fared in the conflict situations in Jos North? From the various investigations, this study found out the followings:

- The operation of the State Security Services, for example, was hampered by inadequate numerical strength of operatives, ineffectiveness of security agents when the need arises, as well as inadequate technical operations etc.
- Emotional involvement of state actors, government officials and personnel of security agencies in the ethno-religious crises. An incident was reported in which the identity card of army personnel was found in the morning in a village that was invaded by unknown assailants overnight. The ethno-religious group that dominates the central government in the country also determines to a large extent the direction and momentum of the crises. Most times, the Hausa-Fulani group was always in control of the central government and armed forces of the nation. The implication of this for the Jos North conflict between the Hausa-Fulani settlers and the indigenous groups is very apparent. And also further aggravates the already combustive situation.
- Insufficient inter-agency cooperation and liaisons, and the failure of state actors to act promptly and appropriately on early warning signals and intelligence reports at critical periods in the crises.
- It is evident that there existed a divergence between policy objectives in the state and the intelligence trajectory, thus creating a lacuna for analysts and the tendency for policy makers to downplay the role of intelligence or refuse the use of intelligence except for self-serving and dysfunctional purposes. This is a further demonstration of a major challenge facing the intelligence and security community in peace building and conflict resolution. We make this observation against the backdrop of the importance of the nexus between intelligence processing and the political environment.

CONCLUSION

This study opines that there is the need to sustain relationship across different political, religious and cultural divides so as to build peace and enhance development. Secondly, an emergent society with multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious peculiarities as a plural society needs to embark on aggressive integration in order to achieve covariance.

On the part of the security community, there is also the urgent need to divest personnel from primordial attachments while carrying out official duties in such critical sector of the national

life. Inter-agency cooperation and collaboration had constituted a big challenge in the area of operation, there is the need therefore to synchronize the operations of the various security agencies involved in the management of the crises.

Also, appropriate interventions in the areas of poverty alleviation/empowerment programmes through capacity building and skills acquisition for the residents, mass education and enlightenment aimed at transforming issues and actors in conflicts are crucial to the crises. Religious organizations and their leaderships have been identified as stakeholders that were networked into positive role players for mitigating the spate of crises in the Jos North Local Government Area.

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