

The International Connections of Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria in the 21 st Century

Paul Kigbu¹ and UJI²

¹ FEDERAL UNIVERSITY.

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Abstract

For the past one thousand years militant Islam has been battling West European civilization or imperialism. Today, pax Americana, the forebear of pax Britannica (American and British peace) have continued with the war, then, at first, it was called the crusades and Jihad: today nothing has changed. The 21st century opened with the bombing of the World Trade Centre buildings in New York, US by Arabs and Muslims a la George Bush Jnr., President of the United States of America in a post attack briefings of the joint session of congress. Bush thereafter vowed that the world was not going to be the same again. That outburst marked the declaration of the war against terror which claimed the independence and sovereignty of first the Afghans, Iraqis, Somalis and is now threatening the Iranians (Persians), Syrians, and anybody who is caught in the crossfire.

Index terms— bigotry and fundamentalism, capitalism-recession, sovereignty, independence.

1 Introduction

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Western imperialism in the 19 th century had dislocated Moslem societies from Hejaz ul Islam (Saudi Arabia) to the Levant, Persia and elsewhere. From the 1920s western imperialism toppled Arab governments and propped up their puppets. The chief magistrate of Mecca Hussein bin Ali was overthrown by Sheikh Majlis (parliament) to confirm him as the new Shah of the new dynasty-the rise of the progressive government of Dr. Mohammed Mossadeq was as evanescent as lightening and as it vanished Mossadeq vanished with it. The Shah's son Mohammed Reza Pahlevi was reinstalled by 1953 until his defeat by the 'mad' Mullahs of Tehran in 1979. The theocracy of Ayatollah Khomeini (which endures to this day) began the exporting of Islamic fundamentalism to other countries; in Lebanon the Shiite militant group Hezbollah under the leadership of Sheikh Fadlallah was born. In Iraq sectarian dissension and strife was promoted. This was the period when Nigerian Moslems were recruited and trained in Iran and elsewhere. On coming back they would spark all sectarian violence all over Northern Nigeria.

There was the rise of Mahammadu Marwa Aka Allah ta tsine or maitatsine and his violent followers who caused mayhem starting from 1980 to 1985. Victor Elaigwu explains the phenomenon of maitatsinism that Maitatsine is a generic term for religious disturbances which plagued Northern Nigeria between ??ecember, 1980 and ??pril, 1985. In Kano ??December, 1980), Bulumkutu (October 1982) Rigasa (October 1982) Jimeta-Yola

(February-March 1984) and Gombe (April 1985) maitatsine militants unleashed terror and destruction on men and property in an unbridled display of religious bigotry and fundamentalism.

The places mentioned above are shanty towns, underdeveloped and populated by miserable residents. This was during the austerity measures of the inept Shagari administration. The religious violence witnessed during this period can be explained against capitalism in an imperial hierarchy which has the US at the top in what is theoretically referred to as Central Imperial States (CIS) including the EU and Japan: coming second is the Newly Emerging Imperial Powers with Russia China and India as members; thirdly are the Semi-Autonomous Client Regimes (SACR) Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Argentina, Saudi Arabia Chile, Bolivia and lastly Client Collaborator Regimes (CCR). Then, Independent States such as revolutionary Cuba and Venezuela; Nationalist states of Sudan, Zimbabwe, Iran, North Korea. Furthermore, we have "contested Terrain and Regimes in the inherent contradictions of capitalism-recession, inflation, stagflation, depression and boom and all other factors that make rise and fall poverty, prosperity and back to poverty, what is referred to, by the so-called experts as the cyclical downturns in western capitalism almost always marked by a depression. Islamic fundamentalism is against the profit motive which is the backbone of capitalism. They therefore fight.

2 II.

What is Islamic Fundamentalism?

The roots of fundamentalism of any hue lies in the heightening of emphasis on religion and ethnic culture which leads, humanity into narrow, exclusive and often violent or hostile groups. Fundamentalism means adherence to the basic beliefs or tenants of a religion or ethnic culture. There is this story from a religious violence episode in Kano which aptly sums up the viewpoint, where Barde reports that:

The protesters disguising as Islamic faithful, attacked and hacked down anybody that is not fluent in Hausa-Muslims, Christians or animists. For instance? the criminal's ways of identifying who is a Moslem or not was to ask the victims to pronounce "Gyero" a Hausa word for millet. One's ability to pronounce the word or otherwise was the factor that determined one's fate⁴.

Such is the character of a fundamentalist, in this instance an Islamic fundamentalist. There are many others who can be more intolerant and they are found even in the Christian religion. In the 19 th century the Catholic Church struggling with its twin foes of revolution and continuing reformation with its protestant zealotry made policies that smacked of fundamentalism under Pope Pius IX (1846-78). Pius began the revolutionary year 1948 as a moderate liberal. However the event that followed turned him into a reactionary, whose hallmark became vigorous opposition to anything that smacked of modernism, republicanism, liberalism, socialism, or nationalism. His Papacy is exemplified by his two most celebrated acts: the syllabus of errors (1864) in which he condemned nearly all modern movements in religion, politics, society and the intellectual world: and the calling of the ecumenical council, Vatican I, in 1869-1870 which promulgated the dogma of Papal infallibility in matters of faith and doctrine.

Back to the question-what is Islamic fundamentalism? The answer would be that the adherence or call to the adherence of the basic teaching of Islam must be followed with death as punishment for refusal. Another question and that is what are the basic tenants of Islam? Again the answer would be short. The introduction of Sharia as contained in the Al Koran. Once you fail Jihad becomes the next option. Moreover Islam justifies violence. According to Brigadier S.K Malik of Pakistan:

Terrorism is "infinitely superior and more effective than conventional warfare because in Islam a war fought for the cause of Allah" ?all means and forms are justified and righteous. Terrorism is the quintessence of the Islamic strategy of war ?terror is not a means of imposing decision upon the enemy it is the decision we wish to impose on him.

In Islam, the above assertion is tenable because Islam is a religion of conquest. The desert Arabs who struck out at the Greco-Roman and Persian worlds in the middle of the Seventh century became, by conquest and by choice, the cultural heirs of These World. Peters aptly summarized Islamic history from its early and later periods that:

The economic, intellectual and spiritual vitality of the Moslem world, particularly between the 7 th and 12 th centuries, is a remarkable part of the rise of Islam. To some extent it is just as remarkable as the appearance of the faith itself, the achievements of Mohammed, and the great early conquests. A religion of desert Arabs created armies, generals, and caliphs, plus a genuine cultural revolution that transformed once and for all, not only the southern and the eastern parts of the old Roman Empire, but the ancient Persian (Modern Iran) world as well, and extended beyond to the Caucasus, India and even South East Asia, where conquest went and religion followed, language went too. The Arabic speaking world as the world of Islamic belief, and beneath that belief lies a formidable culture that culture shaped the golden age of Islam and later provided for western Europeans many of the scientific and philosophical tools and economic institutions that contributed to the numerous changes in European society in the 12 th and 13 th centuries.

Today, the Islamic fundamentalists, now internationalized, are weeping and asking for the return of this long lost golden age. Like Marus weeping over the ruins of cartage, but cartage did not return, the same goes for the Islamic fundamentalists.

3 III. The International Connection:

Then and Now

When Arab armies under Amr.B.al-'As conquered Alexandria in September 642 the "muezzins call in the west was sounded. This would be the end of the 7th century successfully dislocate Christian standing in the whole of North Africa. It was from these episodes of Arab conquests that the Western Sudan in which Nigeria is a part was accomplished. Moslem brotherhoods like the Almoravids, Almohads and the Sufi orders would cross the Sahara desert into the Western Sudan where the British prevented their heirs from dipping the Koran into the Atlantic Ocean a la Ahmadu Bello (the late premier of the defunct Northern Region of Nigeria). The early and later Moslems in Africa were of three types under the dissection of the Sufi orders. According to Rev. Fr. IgbaVishigh (op):

"The first category comes under Muslims of militant resisters and ideologies, such as the Somali Chief Muhammad Abdullah Hassan and al Hajj 'Umar from Futa Toro in Senegal. The second category comprises five moderates who taught mysticism, carried on Jihads, and instituted social reforms. They are Usman Dan Fodio, (Northern Nigeria), The Algerian Amir "Abd al Qadir, a Libyan reformer, Muhammed 'Ali al Sanus, and ShaykhUways al Barawi, of the East African Bandir coast and Zanzibar; ShaykhMa'ruf, of Moroni in the Comoro Islands, between Madagascar and Mozambique. The third category includes a Mauritanian, ShaykhMa'al-Ayhayn, a conservative Sufi leader founder, relatively, little affected by the changes that go on in the world.

Truly, their heirs want a reversion to a state of society where the modern world would have no part to play. In the case of Nigeria, Usman Dan Fodio led a Jihad. The first instance of Islamic violence against the majority of the people of what is Northern Nigeria. Usman was influenced by Khalwatiyya through his Teacher, Jubril bin 'Umar. It has been the norm, and Dan Fodio's son Ahmadu Rabah (Bello) would continue with the foundation of caliphate where a marauding band under the guise of religion seized power. To this Rev. Fr. IgbaVishigh (op) asserts that:

"Starting from the revolution of Usman Dan Fodio to the present, Muslims in Nigeria have assumed the role of a character in the affairs of politics and administration. Therefore when religious issues are being discussed, Islam here again assumes the official position. Added to this situation, the frequent religious riots tend to put off any attempt at dialogue. There is a psychological fear created by Islam and Muslims in Nigeria, whereby attempts at dialogue, between Christianity and Islam are completely put at some distance.

The psychological fear created by Islam grew into resistance. Reprisal attacks followed, such that, eruptions in the far North where mayhem was caused by Islamic fundamentalists often met with the same responses from the people of the Middle Belt and South. Burn a Church in Kano, burn a Mosque in Gboko and killing easterners in the far North attracts killing far Northerners in the eastern part of Nigeria. The situation grew to such levels of genocide that even the reconciliatory moves of the Vatican were rebuffed by high Church authorities in Nigeria. Rev. Fr. Igba Vishigh (op) comments that:

During the religious riots that took place in Bauchi and Katsina States respectively, the Vatican secretariat for Non-Christian religious notified high church authorities in Nigeria for a meeting between Muslims and Christians. The church authorities in Nigeria rejected this. Saying that they are mourning for the lives of their brothers and sisters killed in the said riots.

4 IV. Religious Conflicts in Northern

Nigeria In 1980, Zaria, in Kaduna state experienced religious violence in May. In December, Kano took its turn in the lineup of Northern cities to be torched by the Islamic fundamentalists. 1982 followed with mayhem in October in Borno, Kaduna and Kano. The worst crisis to be perpetrated by the Islamic fundamentalist came in 1984, in Yola where the Maitasine riots had spread. About 2,000 people died and over 17 million naira property damaged. Musa Makaniki, the leader of the maitatsine in Yola escaped but not with his houses which were bombed by the forces of Lt. V. Islamic Fundamentalist Groups in Nigeria and heir International Sponsors

Today, there seem to be nothing that is going on in the Islamic world that is not having effects on the Nigerian State. I was in Kano the first Friday of the starting of the Gulf War and there was this visiting Imam, Ayatollah AmidZanzani, the Chief Judge of Iran. The Babangida Regime rolled out Armoured Tanks that kept plying the route from Triumph Publishing Company Headquarters to Ibrahim Taiwo Road cutting through Bello Dandago Street to join the market; this effectively cordoned off Central Mosque where the visiting Iranian "lawgiver" was presiding over the Friday Jumat Prayers. Anti-American slogan filled the air, the Central Market besides the Main Road I priced a life sized framed Photography of Imam Khomeini the price was cheap. Later I read reports of Jubilation in Kano when the Islamic fundamentalists bombed the World Trade Centre Buildings in New York, that azure morning of September 11, 2001. This jubilation in Kano would be turned into anger in Maiduguri and elsewhere over the anti-Islamic cartoons in faraway Northern Europe, many fellow citizens lost their lives and property in the ensuing so called cartoon riots. This is unfortunate. That would be a personal opinion. Bello Damagun, a Director of the Daily Trust Newspaper holds a different opinion which is influenced by N300, 000 of Al Qaida money which is likely to have come from heroin sales from Afghanistan (the bastion of Islamic fundamentalism where the 'mad' Mullah Omar held the court with his Taliban cohorts who cherish. The reverse to early caveman life, repulsive, a revulsion, vexations, obnoxious and absolute negation of what the civilized world has taken over 1,000 years to accomplish would go down the drain? This is possible if the Islamic fundamentalists are not stopped by moderate Moslems and others. In Nigeria the threat is real because we have

the Nigerian Taliban. These fanatics pour into Nigeria from neighbouring countries whenever the minaret calls for Jihad. In the case of the Kano riots Israeli connection was alleged. This was the position of S.G. Ikoku's postulation which is stated that;

It is on record that Chief Obafemi Awolowo in a broadcast over Radio Oyo on 24 th September 1980, stated that he (Chief Awolowo) was committed to bringing down the Federal Government, and argued that to bring down a government before election is due will require foreign assistance; the foreigners who would agree to assist one in such a venture must be one's friends; and that Chief Awolowo's foreign friends are known to be Israelis. Therefore, he argued, the Israelis must have brought in the arms that maitatsine used.

Whether this is true or not the Shagari Government which treated this disturbance with levity was overthrown and with renewed vehemence the fanatics continued their activities. Let us look at the international connections of the Moslem Students Society (MSS) in Nigeria since after the civil war. The tribunal reports on this group that;

"This militant students organization with headquarters in Lagos, is believed to have been set up, with the active encouragement of Gumi and JNl (Jama'tuNasril Islam Arabic for society for the victory of Islam) to propound extreme religious views in furtherance of JNl's objectives. Its executive members particularly in its branches?are known to the extremists?to have no belief in the Nigerian constitution, do not recognized the existence of the Federal Government? have a firm belief in the ultimate attainment of an Islamic state in the country; through an Iranian type revolution. The most militant of the MSS appear to be its Deputy Chairman, Ibrahim El-Zakzaky? on 20 th August 1980, El-Zakzaky was reported to be circulating in the Northern States, pamphlets captioned, "Fadakarwa ga musulmin Nigeria" (calling on Moslems in Nigeria) in which he condemned the Nigerian Constitution for being anti-Islamic, called for an Islamic Revolution and urged Islamic students to rise against the Federal Government. He also demanded the recognition of the Sharia Law. El-Zakzaky is reported to have visited on several occasions, and he recently returned from Iran where he was said to have received training in planning and executing student's unrest. This is the background of the Nigerian Taliban which was formed by University and Polytechnic Students in Maiduguri 2000 with membership from all over the country. The influence of Al Qaida would further boost the activities of Islamic fundamentalists.

Osama bin Ladan (an Engineer with Computer Skills) and Ayman Zawahiri, (an Egyptian pediatrician) came to form the Al Qaida which is preaching the gospel of terrorism all over the world today their atrocities include the London train station bombing of 2003 and 2005 as well as the Bali bombing of 2004 all financed by all sorts of financiers from oil Sheiks in the Gulf to heroin Lords in Afghanistan and they are spreading the money all over the world. Recently, it was reported in the Nigeria press that the Federal Government of Nigeria on January 16, 2007 arraigned Damagun in an Abuja High Court on a three count charge of receiving from Al Qaida N300, 000 to lure, recruit and train Nigerians in Mauritania for terrorism. Damagun is a Director of an influential Moslem

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Newspaper in Northern Nigeria; which serves as a mouthpiece for Moslem views: which may be contrary to mine. The internationalization of Islam and its confrontation with Pax-Americana is responsible for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism all over the world. During the Cold War era where bipolarity emerged in the world, the arms race, regional conflicts, the propping up of right wing dictatorships, the assassination of Populist leaders were the order of the day. In Afghanistan for 10 years the Russians (USSR) and Americans confronted each other. The last Soviet soldier, General Akhromeyev left in tears. This was the period that Al Qaida was conveyed. Prior to this sad episode was the assassination of Dr. Libyan foreign policy was based on Pan-Arabism. It was greatly promoting terrorism and insurrection wherever possible. It is only the declaration of war on terror by US President George Bush Jnr in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 bombings. Where he vowed that the world was not going to be the same again that Qadaffi and his cohorts now seem to change.

Today the US has gone berserk impeaching the sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan and Iraq declaring territoriality and overlordship. All this against the known and accepted conventions and articles of the UNO, the EU, the AU which recognize the sovereignty of independence states and makes it an offence to interfere in the internal affairs of member nations. Pax-Americana has changed all that and Islamic fundamentalists all over the world are joined in fighting Pax Americana. The Sunni and Shia divide has been joined. There is a report that:

"A strong will among the Arabs and the Middle East leaders to unite against America and British attempts to sow division among them has fortunately borne fruit in Riyadh according to pundits. It also produces a strong Saudi/Iranian alliance beginning to work to end the bloodbath in Iraq and correct mistakes the US committed in the war torn country.

The latest attempts by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and President Ahmedinejad of Iran would be a most welcome development because, the Sunnis are led the Saudis and the Shias by Iran. Already the two sects are engaged in intercaine warfare in Iraq. This is threatening to conflagrate into a full blown civil war. Iran is also the sponsor of terrorism just like the Saudis sponsor fundamentalism. They both blow and are blowing hot and cold with the same breath including here in Nigeria.

6 VI.

7 Recommendations

In the first place Nigerian borders are too porous and illegal aliens pour into country where they perpetrate all sorts of criminality from banditry to brigandage. The immigration services must be strengthened in this direction. Then, the Chief Aliens Officer must intensify intelligence and counterintelligence efforts to check saboteurs. In this direction, a two-way approach to strengthening internal security is suggested. In the first approach, the urban centres are our focus and every street shall have a prefect or an 47 (D)

Year 2014 official of whatever name. A group of streets would form a precinct under a leader; precincts in a local government area councillorship ward would combine to form a Local Government Security Council with a prefect or an official of any designation. On the other hand the rural areas which are in scattered homesteads have in every house a household head they would group at the kindred level under a leader. Then at the Local Government Councillorship Ward level would go to form the Local Government Security Council. Their heads would meet from time to time to review the security situation in the Local Government, and report to the DPO and SSS. Finally internal collaborators no matter how highly placed and with immunity must be brought to book. A situation where the former Governor of Kano State, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi was celebrating while Kano burned (just like Nero did over Rome to persecute the Christians) so that Christians and other non-Moslems elements would be wiped out in Kano and was not punished till today even when found guilty by the Tribunal of inquiry must not be allowed to reoccur.

8 Cited Works



Figure 1:

Tajudeen "On September 29, 2004 an Islamic Suleiman reports that; fundamentalist group, which models itself after the Afghanistan Taliban, Niger Republic 162 Chad 16 Cameroon 4 Mali 2 Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) 1 To the consternation and disbelief of tribunal members, only six people had I.D. Cards as required by law. A list of 18 fundamentalists caught showing their names, nationalities, identity cards where applicable and monies received from them are as follows: 1. AmoumanceWarighlaye Niger Republic I.D Card No. 1499560 2. Ibrahim Edji -family card 3. AttahirAbubakar -I.D. Card No 1499560 and N340 4. Shaibu Alou -I.D Card No 15170 and N168 5. AbdullahiAbdukari (50,000 Francs) 6. HarunaYaro (30,000 Francs) 7. AlhassanGoumar -I.D. Card No 864945 and N158 8. AlahirHaliru -I.D. Card No 126217 and N239 9. Alhassan Don Age -N2.57k 10. Alhaji Dan Aman N90.00 11. Mohammed Abdullahi -N11.00 12. Unclaimed -N340.00 13. Mohammed Musa -Niger Republic Bus Ticket from Onitsha to Jos and N11 14. Ibrahim Abdi Niger Republic 15. Amamadu Aga -N143,000 Francs and N10.50) 16. SumailaDansuleman -N327 17. AmumaniFarizlay -N247 18. LovaliMamman -I.D. Card No 791995

Figure 2:

Figure 3:

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