

Weekly Newsletter

THE ABUJA
SCHOOL



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REFLECTIONS ON AND AN APPRAISAL OF COUNTER-TERRORISM MEASURES VIZ DEMOCRATIC SUSTENANCE IN WEST AFRICA

Crosscutting Issues Betwixt Counterterrorism and Democracy:

Rule of Law that allows for clear observation of legal and policy frameworks, particularly those pertaining to healthy human relationships e.g. civil liberties in terms of fundamental human rights, such as freedom of speech, expression, association, etc. are provided to the people.

Compliance with Procedures that seek to bring about the required coherence amongst myriad of applicable legal and policy frameworks. Whereas, Democratic societies are committed to the values of tolerance, cooperation, and compromise, on the other hand, Terrorism seeks to achieve the opposite by

creating fear in the minds of the people by perpetuating criminal acts theme with measured degrees of violence. Thereby confirming the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit." Conversely therefore, we can affirm that terrorism cannot be contributory to democratic sustenance but an agency for the undermining and truncating democracy. In fact, we can herein assert, as keen Democratic Sustenance Watch/ Preventive Peacebuilding Observers that we have observed with the continued occurrence of terrorism in the West African region there has been an disturbing decline in the quality of democracy as Democracy of DEMOCRACY where the cherished core

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values of respecting the rights, duties and privileges of ALL citizens is the primary concern of each and every stakeholders particularly those in leadership roles. So distinguished colleagues and participants, permit me to submit that contrary to the expectations that after attaining the phase when military coup plots appeared unfashionable by the 1990s with the entrenching of democracy occasioned with periodic regime changes through legal procedures of casting and counting ballots for the declaration of the winners at the general elections of ECOWAS Member States we are going through a seeming resurgence of military coup d'état.

A resurgence of military coup d'état, from cursory observation and extrapolation, remain a manifestation of the earlier noted challenge of the emergence of a culture of "state capture" by contending political forces. In fact, we had earlier posited that with the return to civilian rule in the frame of democracy that there has been increased conflicts in each ECOWAS Member States. The escalation of diverse conflicts has been leading to the "gradual imposition and exchange of kakistocrats and kakistocracy in the place of democrats and democracy!" Unfortunately, many scholars and analysts are finding it difficult to understand or draw the analogy easily that State capture has become convoluted and complicated by elements of the "ever fluid and dynamic neoimperialism – neoislamism – nationalism contestations" are beginning to crystalize around or into terrorism. That is, for the undermining of constituted national authority system in the first instance when they start observing that their state capture collaborative systems are unable to satisfactorily deliver in pure form their utopia defined value e.g. imposition of Islamic governance system of Sharia! Making references to the introduction of Sharia in Nigeria by northern states during the tenure of Obasanjo and the roles of the Islamic religious leadership system has played in fashioning the political landscape in Senegal.

So, the political upheavals we are going through in the West African jurisdiction is the clear manipulative manifestation of the intra elite contestations on how to achieve the purity of neoislamism, neoislamism and nationalism as per each entity's definition.

Appraisal of Counterterrorism Measures:

This must be done within the frameworks that acknowledge that the global standards defined by the United Nations should primarily apply before considering the **ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy Implementation Plan** and those of each member states.

The UN Counterterrorism (UN-CT or shortly presented as CT) is indeed the "central starting point for examining the framework governing

global counter-terrorism efforts is the **United Nations CT Strategy**: Adopted without a vote by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 60/288 on 8 September 2006, thereby reflecting a baseline of universal consensus and legitimacy, this was the first time that the United Nations Membership had agreed and adopted a common strategic approach and framework to fight terrorism. The CT Strategy is reviewed and updated biennially, to reflect changing priorities, by the United Nations General Assembly (see e.g. United Nations, General Assembly, 2008, A/RES/62/272; 2010, A/RES/64/297; 2012, A/RES/66/272; 2014, A/RES/68/276; 2016(b), A/RES/70/291). In this way, the CT Strategy remains a living document. This is illustrated by a General Assembly review on 1 July 2016 (United Nations, General Assembly, 2016(b), A/RES/70/291), which was linked to the consideration of the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (United Nations, General Assembly, 2015(a), A/70/674; 2015(b), A/70/675) as a matter of growing international concern. The changing environment, and accompanying priorities, are reflected in the biennial reports of the United Nations Secretary-General, the Activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (most recently United Nations, General Assembly, 2016(a), A/70/826), which provide an informative summary of current progress and challenges regarding implementation of the CT Strategy.

The CT Strategy is a unique global instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism, including by strengthening cooperation between all key actors. In clear terms, the **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006)** has an annexed Plan of Action comprising of 4 Pillars:

- I – Addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism;
- II – Measures to prevent and combat terrorism;
- III – Measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard;
- IV – Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.



ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy Implementation Plan (ECOWAS CT-SIP)

interestingly has three pillars derived from the that of the global standards of UN-CT Strategy. During today's discourse it's not our responsibility to do any form of critiquing this instrument or that of any member states. Our task is to mirror performance against the instruments as

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legal and policy frameworks often breached by perpetrators to fuel strong desires in the victims of today becoming perpetrators in a cyclic manner.

The 3 Pillars of ECOWAS CT-SIP are:

- i. Prevent
- ii. Pursue
- iii. Reconstruct

In all sincerity, when objectively appraised against the global, ECOWAS and national standards for CT Strategy, the various governments of West African countries are finding it difficult to perform or meet the desired expectations 😞 😞

The African Union (AU) instruments on CT are comprehensive and reflective of the global, sub regional and national CT Strategies.

We shall herein attempt to proffer some reasons. They include:

- Weak knowledge, comprehension, understanding, or correlation of territorial historiographical dynamics and internationalization of West African issues.
- Omnibus and wrongful application of Terrorism to label security breaches, challenges and/or criminalities for which statutes for law enforcement, prevention, apprehension and prosecution of crimes should apply.
- Poor administration of criminal justice systems with clear manifestation of political interferences, manipulation of judicial system because of corruption.
- Politicization of subject matter.
- Conflict entrepreneurship and fleecing of the economy for personal or group systems.
-

Occasionally, when soliloquizing, I begin to wonder if agents of state capture are not transmuting to totalitarians. If they are, can we attempt to infer the probability of "totalitarian tiptoeing"? This is because of the way State actors, law enforcement and security agencies have continued going through with CT in West Africa remain suspect.

Concluding Thoughts, West Africa is gradually substituting Kakistocracy for Democracy 😞 Simplicita, the future of Democracy in West Africa is weak UNLESS concerted efforts are made to reinforce the restorative of humanity and core democratic values. The sustenance of democracy in West Africa is becoming increasingly threatened with heightened intra class contestations for state capture assuming caustic dimensions and abusive use of primordial considerations. In addition, with the seemingly protective law enforcement and security arrangements alongside subverted criminal justice systems that favors

criminals and perpetrators of acts inimical to terror we cannot guarantee classic democracy as originally designated in political science textbooks. We are already living witnessing situations where politicians with diverse unresolved criminal matters hanging over them perpetually consolidating themselves in political relevance and power by oscillating between executive and legislative branches. The same applies to career public servants who transition into politics with criminals and perpetrators of acts inimical to terror we cannot guarantee classic democracy as originally designated in political science textbooks. We are already living witnessing situations where politicians with diverse unresolved criminal matters hanging over them perpetually consolidating themselves in political relevance and power by oscillating between executive and legislative branches. The same applies to career public servants who transition into politics with.

Written by **Elder Ayokunle FAGBEMI** (Senior Fellow The Abuja School of Social and Political Thought)

Tid Bits



Dangote vs FG

In the past few weeks, Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, has been unusually vocal, criticizing the CBN's 30% interest rate and various FG policies for impoverishing Nigerians. Recently, a war of words erupted, with many Nigerians siding with Dangote, believing the FG is undermining his \$20 billion investments.

An NMDPRA Chief claimed Dangote's refinery produces substandard products, prompting Dangote to call for a NASS probe into the quality of imported petroleum, asserting it damages cars. He also announced he is no longer interested in further investments in Nigeria, citing poor treatment of heavy investments.

Support for Dangote has come from figures like Femi Otedola, Femi Adesina and LP presidential candidate Peter Obi, who urged caution and emphasized the need to encourage rather than deter investors.



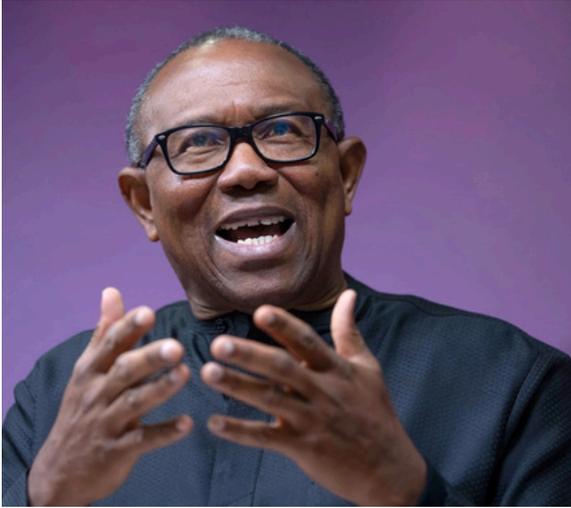
Donald Trump Faces New Opposition for the Presidency

In a heated political climate, Donald Trump is preparing for another presidential run after narrowly escaping an assassination attempt. President Joe Biden has stepped down due to health concerns, endorsing Kamala Harris as his successor. This move has sparked mixed reactions, with former President Obama calling for an open primary.

Prominent names like Michelle Obama, Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton are now emerging as potential Democratic contenders. The stage is set for an intense primary season, with the nation watching to see if Trump will reclaim the presidency or if a new Democratic leader will rise to the challenge.

Presidency Accuses Labour Party Presidential Candidate of Treason and Plans to Unsettle Public Peace

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In a recent social media post, Peter Obi analyzed the economic impact of the APC regime over the past nine years. He noted that Nigeria's GDP growth, once at 6.72% with a GDP of \$568.5 billion in 2014, has now fallen to a growth rate of 2.79% and a GDP of \$252.7 billion under APC leadership. Obi called for a commitment to inclusive and sustainable growth to address the hardships faced by Nigerians.

In response, Mr. Bayo Ononuga, a social media aide to the president, accused Obi of insurrection and involvement in planned protests, leading APC supporters to call for Obi's arrest.



Senate Passes Minimum Wage Bill in Record Time

Last week, the FG and Labour Union reached an agreement to increase the minimum wage from ₦30,000 to ₦70,000. The presidency swiftly sent the bill to the Senate, which passed it in record time. It remains to be seen if the FG will fulfill other promises to mitigate the effects of fuel subsidy removal and rising inflation.

Athletes and Support Teams Arrive in Paris for Olympic Kickoff

With the Olympic Games about to start, athletes and their support teams have begun arriving in Paris, gearing up for the much-anticipated global event. The [Paris 2024 Olympics](#) is set to start this Friday, the first time the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony is held outside of a stadium.

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