



**Research Article**

**Britain Colonial Root of Islamic Insurgency and the Politics of Boko Haram Emergence**

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This work traces the historical root of the on-going Islamic insurgency in Nigeria code-named *Boko Haram* to the emergence of British Colonial administration. It also looks at how the British biased policy of accommodation with the Islamic-driven Sokoto Caliphate became enabling ground for the growth of Islamic fundamentalism within and outside State system and subsequently the rise of present day Islamic insurgency. From the inception of the modern Nigeria, Islam has remained the fundamental problem militating against the unity Nigerian. But for fear of external Arab influence, both the British colonial administration and successive Nigerian leaders attempted to cover up its undermining propensity. This paper shows that the Boko Haram insurgency forms part of a web of historical process of political power struggles between the mainly Muslim Hausa-Fulani in the North and the mainly Christian groups in the South and what is today referred to as the Middle Belt. Its script has always been there as a policy of last resort, only to be applied when the occasion demanded. In its contemporary definition therefore and against the popular thesis of socio-economic basis of its cause, the origin of *Boko Haram* is thus traceable to the organic historical process of the modern Nigerian nation, in which the Muslim Fulani have always strove to maintain an all-time political supremacy through the ideological pedestal of Islam, over the other mainly Christian constituent ethnic groups.

**Keywords:** British Colonial Policy, Nigeria, Sokoto Caliphate, Islam, Insurgency.

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**INTRODUCTION**

On September 21, 2004, a group of Islamic fundamentalists which styled itself the Taliban launched an attack on two Police Stations in Nigeria's Northern State of Borno, killing four Policemen and a civilian, in addition to destroying motor vehicles, buildings and seizing large quantities of arms and ammunition.<sup>1</sup> The September 21 attack was however not the first time the group had struck. *The Source* magazine had in its earlier report revealed how this group, which went by the name *Ahlul-Sunnah Jama'a*, first began its operation at the remote town of Kanamma in Yobe State on December 22, 2003.<sup>2</sup>

According to the magazine's investigations, the objectives of the group were clearly set out thus by one of the captured

<sup>1</sup> "Borno Talibans Strike Again," *The Source* August 24, 2009, 38

<sup>2</sup> "The 'Taliban' Insurgency," *The Source* August 24, 2009, 32

sect's members, Sheikh Ibrahim Lawal Maisandari, who claimed to hold a master's degree in Sociology and Anthropology from the University of Maiduguri:

"Every day of our lives as Moslems, we have been confronted with the issues of Sharia. Most States in the north are warming up for Sharia practice, but while there is urge to introduce Sharia, corruption, deprivation and prostitution, by both men and women is on the rise daily. What we discovered is that we are being fooled with Sharia issue. Our mission is to raise an army of jihadists who can enforce an Islamic State in the north where the people's conduct and behavior would be truly guided by the teachings of Islam regardless of your age, wealth, power, tribe, or sex.<sup>3</sup>"

There is no doubt that from Sheikh Maisandari's evocation, the "Talibans" were primarily enraged by the falling expectations of the Sharia implementation as promised by the Governments of Northern Muslim States. The introduction of the criminal law aspect of the Sharia by twelve Northern States of the Federation, beginning with Zamfara State in year 2000, which was sequel to their electoral campaign promises, was supposed in one way, to usher in a political *deen* of Islam, which to most fundamentalist Islamists did not however materialize (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

The inclusion of the Sharia in the body of the States' criminal law had attracted strong protests from a cross-section of Nigerian citizens mainly among the Christian South and Middle Belt. It consequently resulted in many anti- and pro-Sharia riots in the northern parts of the country, particularly in the multi-religious Kaduna State. The editorial of *The News* magazine of March 6, 2000 reporting on the Kaduna Sharia riot of February the same year raised a number of teething questions on the consequences of the Sharia project to Nigeria's corporate existence. It states *inter alia*:

"What the riot in Kaduna over the Sharia has demonstrated is that the Sharia affair cannot and should not be wished away. It should be tackled head on. At the heart of that incident are a couple of questions: What is the limit and limitation of Nigeria's secularism? Does the freedom of thought, conscience and religion enshrined in our constitution mean anything to both the Christians and Muslims who waged war against each other in Kaduna last week? If the advocates of

Sharia get what they want, how would the country respond to the demands of other religious groups in the country? Is it really possible to have Sharia running side by side with other legal systems as its advocates have been saying?<sup>4</sup>"

But it was Professor Wole Soyinka who actually, in reaction to the Kaduna Sharia riot of February 21, 2000, predicted what might likely fall-out from the Sharia conflict. In an answer to a question by Kunle Ajibade of *TheNews* magazine, Soyinka predictably stated:

"You know I am not an alarmist, but I see where this is heading. It is the duty of people like us to warn - please remember the adage of a stitch in time saves nine. Anybody who fails to predict what happened in Kaduna is not really an intelligent member of this society. It is predictable. It should not surprise anybody and it is going to get worse.<sup>5</sup>"

The fact that the Kaduna anti-Sharia riot broke out just about two weeks after the eighteen Emirs of Northern Nigeria had met in Kaduna under the leadership of the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Mohammadu Maccido, during which they wholly supported the introduction of Sharia in Kaduna State, makes it even plausible for one to suggest a case of the "voice of Esau but the hand of Jacob."<sup>6</sup> In other words, from all indications it was obvious that the Northern Emirs were the main instigators of the Kaduna anti-Sharia riot even though their meeting did not verbally demand so.

The previous 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria had provided for the establishment of either a Sharia or Customary Court of Appeal for those States that so wished. The proposed amendment sought by the Islamist Generals however was to make the establishment of Sharia Court of Appeal mandatory for all the States of the Federation regardless of their religious leanings. But predictably, as Nigeria's weekly magazine *Tell* evidently reported:

"One top official of the junta says the shadow-chasers may only have beaten a temporary retreat. 'I will not be surprised if they try to regroup and find way to achieve their objective.'<sup>7</sup>"

<sup>3</sup> "The 'Taliban' Insurgency," 34

<sup>4</sup> *TheNews*, March 6, 2000

<sup>5</sup> *TheNews*, March 6, 15

<sup>6</sup> *TheNews*, March 6, 11, 2000

<sup>7</sup> *Tell* May 10, 1999, 23

Presently, not only did that prediction come true, with the coming of the Sharia imbroglio in the Northern States, but it has further metamorphosed into an extremist Islamist insurgency.

To those who were well acquainted with the history of the Fulani neo-jihad project therefore, the Sunday July 26, 2009 military insurgency by the fundamentalist Islamic group, *Ja'matus Ahlus Sunnah Lid Daawatis Wal Jihad*, widely known as *Boko Haram*- 'Western education is sin', did not elicit much surprise. It was only a scene in a long-drawn political drama which script has always been there waiting to be acted upon when the occasion calls for it.

### IDEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

In a paper delivered at the Institute of Security Studies, Pretoria, South Africa on February 2, 2012, Jidefor Adibe propounded three hypothetical reasons for the rise of *Boko Haram*. They include the "failed State" hypothesis, "poverty" hypothesis and, "frustration-aggression" hypothesis (Adibe, 2012). Of the three hypotheses, the third appears to the present writer to be supported by strong political antecedents. The facts are obvious. Neither the devastating thirty-month civil war, the over one decade-long Niger Delta militant struggles for economic emancipation, nor the plethora of ethno-religious conflicts that greeted every past regime in the country, could be enough reasons to describe Nigeria as a failed State. Similarly, adducing poverty in the north as one of the reasons for the emergence of *Boko Haram* is, to state the obvious fact, a tacit exhibition of ignorance to the historical evolution of the Nigeria nation. A look at the roll-call of past Nigerian Heads of Government will reveal that the Hausa-Fulani had every undisturbed opportunity to alleviate the inherent culture of populist poverty in their region.

From Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as Prime Minister, to General Murtala Mohammed, through President Shehu Shagari, Generals Muhammadu Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha, and Abdulsalami Abubakar, and finally President Umaru Shehu Yar'Adua, the Northern Muslim leadership had the above-ceiling opportunity to empower the teaming poor masses of the Muslim North through functional job creations and liberation from outmoded intellectual captivity. The question then is, why it should be during the Presidency of a Christian Southerner that the problem of inherent poverty in the North would become a factor for armed insurgency against the State? Again, if poverty is the cause, why should it be addressed through the medium of a counter-ideological framework which bears no better functional model for alleviating poverty?

The fact is that, by the letter of their objectives, as earlier stated, *Boko Haram* is not in any manner agitating for improved economic standard from the Government. In line with what Sheikh Maisandari set out as the objectives of the

"Taliban", the *Boko Haram* objective cannot present any difference in objectives. As Abu Qaqa and Kabiru Sokoto, two captured kin-pins of the organization were reported to have confessed:

"... the original plan was to make sure the Sultan is reduced to a mere traditional ruler without religious powers, and in fact, he was not the only target as they intended to hack into the powers of other powerful emirs with a major design to Islamize Nigeria, starting with the North.<sup>8</sup>"

By the letter of the above statement, *Boko Haram* signifies a clash of civilizations, a process of replacing the domineering Western civilization with the perfectly outmoded Islamic values. In another way, their objective may mean a process of de-secularization of Islam, even though it remains, by its process of evolution the political-sword of the Sokoto Caliphate (Tibi, 2001). Thus, its attempt to follow the trail of the world-wide quest for Islamic reassertion was only a ploy to garner international support from the world Muslim *umma*.

Ibraheem Sulaiman of the Centre for Islamic Legal Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, writing in the London-based Islamic journal *Impact International*, had put the Muslim interpretation of the status of the Nigeria thus:

"There are two civilizations competing for supremacy in Nigeria today: Islam and European civilization. The latter, reaping the fruits of its colonial enterprise, currently holds Nigeria in its sway-superimposing its will in such weighty matters as law, values, morality and world view. That is not all. Nigeria is no more and no less an extension of Western economic as well as ideological and cultural hegemony (Sulaiman, 1986)."

Predictably, if one may be tempted to say, Sulaiman went further to assert:

"Islam is the only way of life, the only civilization, with all capability to upset neo-colonialism and produce a greater and stronger nation from the wreckage left by the Europeans. True, Islam has received great blows from the West, and its institutions seriously subverted. But nevertheless, Islam now exhibits signs of steady recovery from its wounds and its appearance on the centre stage of the struggle for a better society and

<sup>8</sup> *Daily Sun*, Thursday, March 8, 2012

greater nation is but a matter of time.<sup>9</sup>

It is therefore obvious as Sulaiman rigorously and emphatically argued that the major objective of any true Muslim leader in Nigeria is to cast off the burden of Western civilization and deep-sit the *deen* of Islam. The *Boko Haram* insurgency appears to be the answer to that objective, which appears to be in further consonance with “the Khartoum Declaration” of February 1987.<sup>10</sup>

On February 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1987, an International Conference of Islamic scholars, with the Grand Qadi of Kano, Dr. Hassan Gwarzo in attendance, issued a nine-point declaration, which in part demanded that all governments in Islamic world should immediately enforce the Sharia, adopt Islamic economic system for self-sufficiency and balanced development, as well as free the Muslim *Umma* from all types of exploitation.<sup>11</sup>

Going by the Hausa–Fulani thesis of the Nigerian nation therefore, the *Boko Haram* uprising does not seem to be operating on an unfamiliar historical terrain. Both the Sulaiman thesis of ‘clash of civilizations’ and, the “Khartoum Declaration” were issues long embodied in the historical processes of the ultimate political definition of the Nigerian nation by the Hausa–Fulani. This thesis explains that, for Nigeria as a nation to enjoy an all-time peace and security, it must be governed through the ideological frequency of political Islam as defined by the Sokoto Caliphate. This ideological frequency is predicated on what could be defined as the *hadith* of Hausa-Fulani leaders. It is in fact these *hadith* that indeed define in political terms, the generational political relationship between the Hausa-Fulani Muslim and other groups in the Nigerian Federation.

First was the *hadith* of Usman Dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, which defines the nature of relationship a Muslim should have with unbelievers:

“The first, namely, befriending them and loving them because they are unbelievers and because of hatred for the religion of Islam and he who brought it, constitutes an outright unbelief (Kufr). The second, that is, ‘befriending unbelievers’ as a means of acquiring the wealth in their lands, constitutes direct disobedience towards Allah (ma’ siyah). The third, which is, ‘having relation with unbelievers and befriending them out of fear with the tongue and with the heart, would build up

sufficient strength to remove the enemies’ dominance (Sulaiman, 1983).”

It was in fact out of the above *hadith* that the *hadith* of successive Muslim leaders of Nigeria sprouted. One of such *hadith* was the *Risala* of 1903, which outlined the nature of relationship the Caliphate should have with their British colonial conquerors.

Ibraheem Sulaiman has defined the *risala* as:

“A unique document, (which) lays down what we may call the philosophy of submission to non-Muslim rule - the philosophy that subsequently guided in a considerable measure, the attitude of Northern Nigeria towards colonial rule.<sup>12</sup>”

The *risala* came up only after the defeat of Sultan Attahiru I by the British forces in 1903. Earlier around May 1902, the Sultan Abdul ‘Rahman had written to the British High Commissioner Lord Lugard, defining his immutable relationship with the unbelieving invader thus:

“From us to you: I do not consent that any one from you should ever dwell with us. I will never agree with you. I will have nothing ever to do with you. Between us and you there is no dealings except as between Muslims and unbelievers. (‘Kafiri’) – War, as God Almighty has enjoined on us. There is no power or strength save on high. This with salutations.<sup>13</sup>”

It should be recalled that there had been stiff anti-Fulani campaigns few years running to the conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate by members of the London-based Church Missionary Society (CMS) and Hausa Association, calling on Lord Lugard to oust the ruling Fulani class and replace them with the original Habe rulers (Ayandele, 1966). This should have been readily done without difficulties since it was obvious that majority of the Northerners were desirous of a messiah to liberate them from the evil impact of the Fulani domination. As E.A. Ayandele aptly put it:

“The point must be made that the rousing welcome given by the masses to the missionaries from Jebba to Zaria was genuine, and they expected the British Government to supersede the Fulani authority. Without the moral support of the

<sup>9</sup> Sulaiman, “Islam and Secularism in Nigeria,” 9

<sup>10</sup> “The Khartoum Declaration,” Impact International Vol. 17, 5, March 13 – 26, 1987, 6

<sup>11</sup> “The Khartoum Declaration,” 7

<sup>12</sup> Sulaiman, “Nigeria: From caliphate to colonial rule,” 6

<sup>13</sup> Sir Charles Orr (1965) The Making of Northern Nigeria London: Frank Cass, 291

masses the pacification of Northern Nigeria would have been different and is the best proof of the disaffection of the people with the Fulani regime.<sup>14</sup>

However, the above expectation could not be met, mainly on account of the interplay of British commercial interests in Northern Nigeria with the events in South Africa arising from the Boer war. The Boer War had forced the British authorities to heed to the advice of the pro-Fulani group, mainly dominated by big-time businessmen urging for a mitigation of any possible conflict which could be of a wider dimension than the peace-meal pattern of colonial conquest. In defense of the Fulani oligarchy, which the Missionaries had urged Lugard to remove from power, the then nascent *West Africa* magazine in its first editorial wrote in May 1900:

“No fitter people to govern through could be found than the Fulani; the prosperity of the Sokoto Empire - a prosperity unrivalled in Mohammedan Africa - is the palpable evidence of their statesman - like qualities. There has been much talk about ‘breaking the power’ of the Fulani - for which read the mowing down of thousands by Maxim fire-as a preliminary to civilizing them.... Festina lente should be General Lugard’s moto, and patience the cornerstone of his policy.<sup>15</sup>”

The appointment of major Burdon, whom Professor E.A. Ayandele describes as “the fanatically pro-Islamic and pro-Fulani Resident”, as the Colonial Resident in Sokoto by Lord Lugard was to tilt the balance of favour to the pro-Fulani party.<sup>16</sup> As Ayandele further stated:

“In fact the group of residents led by Major Burdon noted the pro-missionary tendency of their overlord. Burdon disagreed with the pro-Christian attitude of Lugard from the beginning and attributed the mounting estrangement between the administration and the Sultan of Sokoto to the proselytizing impression which his Chief was still giving to the Sultan. He went further to the extent of asking Lugard to acknowledge the submission which Islam enjoins on all Christians and pledge the administration’s religious submission to the Sultan of Sokoto. If this was done, contended Burdon, the pacification of Northern Nigeria would be

peaceful and the Sultan would use his spiritual authority in favor of the political submission of all the other Emirs to the administration.<sup>17</sup>”

In taking this position, Burdon was merely guided by the commercial thesis of British colonial interests. He failed to look at the immutable ideological conflict between Christianity and Islam on the one hand, and Western civilization and Arab culture on the other. His vision was therefore hinged on the continuation of *status quo ante*, without the slightest consideration of the British tradition of liberalism, of which the Fulani culture of political Islamism laced with slavery, slave trade and intractable slave raiding against the vast unconquered non-Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups of the North, was fundamentally opposed to.

Thus, aided by the politically strong British bourgeoisies, represented by the likes of John Holt of Liverpool, whose influence as both a powerful businessman and member of the British Parliament prodded the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury to accept their own position, Lord Lugard was forced to partly acquiesce to the position of Major Burdon.<sup>18</sup> It was not therefore surprising that after the conquest of the Sokoto caliphate in 1903, even when it was obvious that the Caliphate, having been evidently subdued, was willing to do the biddings of the British Colonial administration, Lord Lugard resolved to hastily restore the Sultan’s authority. By this post-conquest policy, the Sultan not only retained his influence over his subjects, but went further to extend his powers to those hitherto unconquered Hausa and non-Hausa ethnic groups.<sup>19</sup>

Thus partly guided by the “Burdon Spirit” Lugard, in his first address to the officials of the vanquished Caliphate on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1903, although without the fleeing Sultan present, was to state inter alia, emphasizing principally on the sustenance of the Sultan’ religious authority:

“I am very glad to see you, very glad that you have come back. You made war against us; we beat you and drove you away; now the war is over and it is peace. It is not our custom to catch the people who fight us or kill them; therefore all those who have run away must come back to their houses. There will be no interference with your religion nor with the position of the Sarikin Muslim as head of your religion. The English Government never interferes with religion; taxes, law and order, punishment of crime, these are matters for the Government, but

<sup>14</sup> Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, 131

<sup>15</sup> Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, 139

<sup>16</sup> Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, 133

<sup>17</sup> Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, 142

<sup>18</sup> Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, 139

<sup>19</sup> Orr, *The making of Northern Nigeria*, 294

not religion.<sup>20</sup>

However, in Lugard's second address which took place the following day with the Sultan attending, Lugard was to extend the powers of the Sultan to include hitherto excluded areas of authority. As he put it:

"The Fulani in old times under Dan Fodio conquered this country. They took the right to rule over it, to levy taxes, to depose kings and to create kings. They in turn have by defeat lost their rule, which has come into the hands of the British. All these things which I have said the Fulani by conquest took the right to do now pass to the British. Every Sultan and Emir and the principal officers of State will be appointed by the High Commissioner throughout all this country. The High Commissioner will be guided by the usual laws of succession and the wishes of the people and chiefs, but will set them aside if he desires for good cause to do so. The Emirs and Chiefs who are so appointed will rule over the people as of old time and take such taxes as are approved by the High Commissioner... Buying and selling slaves and enslaving people are forbidden... The Alkalis and the Emirs will hold the law courts as of old.... The powers of each court will be contained in a warrant appointing it. Sentences of death will not be carried out without the consent of the resident.... Government will in no way interfere with the Mohammedan religion. All men are free to worship God as they please.<sup>21</sup>"

But Lugard most profoundly exhibited a tacit act of defeatist hypocrisy when in the same speech, he forbade with one hand the "buying and selling slaves and enslaving people", and with another, upheld the institution of slavery among the people, an action which totally contradicted the British anti-slavery policy. This obvious hypocritical disposition by Lord Lugard and his "born-again" British cronies of the defeated Sokoto Caliphate was to become the *cimen fondu* of the existing feudalistic class differentiation in the Hausa-Fulani society today. It also laid the foundation for a class of political Islamists whose interpretation of the form and structure of the present Federal Republic of Nigeria relies mainly on their immutable vision of a nation under the cloak of the "Green Flag" of Usman Dan Fodio's political estate.

Thus, in laying the foundation of this ominous colonial

legacy Lugard went further to state quite in the fashion of Jesus Christ enjoining the slaves to obey their earthly masters thus:

"Every person, including slaves has the right to appeal to the Resident, who will however, endeavor to uphold the power of the native courts to deal with native cases according to the law and custom of the country. If slaves are ill-treated they will be set free as your Koran orders, otherwise Government does not desire to interfere with existing domestic relations. But slaves set free must be willing to work and not to remain idle or become thieves.<sup>22</sup>"

Perhaps, one can compare this policy of sustaining an outmoded class differentiation in the North with the starkly opposing policy of melting down the obvious pre-colonial social class differentiation in Southern Nigeria, where the British Colonial policy was founded on the fulcrum of Apostle Paul's injunction that, before God there is no Jew or Gentile. It is again on the basis of this that one could understand the underlying ideological and historical basis of the perpetual gross socio-economic disparity among the mainly Muslim Fulani *umma* on the one hand, and the wide socio-economic disparity between the Hausa-Fulani and the Southern groups on the other.

It has therefore been the strong belief of the ruling feudal Fulani class that their relevance in the Nigerian-nation project can only be sustained by the continued sustenance of this class differentiation in their society. And since as Lugard evidently acknowledged, their socio-economic privileges came by way of political spoils of office, the quest for a continued political relevance, coupled with the fear of creating a relatively strong egalitarian society which could undermine their traditional privileges, became the basis of their ding-doing politics of Islamic supremacy in Nigeria.

There is therefore no doubt that their reliance on the political apron-string of Islamic reassertion as the ideological platform for political contest, is guided more by their desire to retain their pre-colonial political privileges and unguided access to the nation's economic resources than the supposed injunction of the Holy Quran to impose the *deen* of Allah on the unbelievers. Islam thus became the clarion-call for political mobilization against the mainly Christian non-Hausa-Fulani South and Middle Belt and not primarily for religious conversion purposes.

The first salvo to be fired in pursuit of this immutable political cause was in 1942. The Northern Emirs had in response to the request by the United Kingdom-based West African Students Union (WASU) for their support for the on-

<sup>20</sup> Orr, The making of Northern Nigeria, 297

<sup>21</sup> Orr, The making of Northern Nigeria, 297

<sup>22</sup> Orr, The making of Northern Nigeria, 297

going campaign for constitutional amendment, retorted: "Holding this country together is not possible except by means of the religion of the prophet. If they want political unity, let them follow our religion (Awolowo, 1947)."

This same jihadist posture was again maintained by the Caliphate two years later, when the Sultan of Sokoto informed the visiting WASU Delegation that the only basis for unity in post-independence Nigeria was for every section of the country to embrace Islam (Coleman, 1971). Thus with the Emirs and the Sultan having laid down the condition for unity in post-independence Nigeria, the field of political Islamism was thrown open for the successive Northern political leaders to pursue that objective - the perpetual political domination of the nation by the Hausa-Fulani. It was therefore along this line of political vision that the former of Prime Minister of the Federation Sir Abubakar Tafawa Belewa was to state in 1948, precisely during a session of the Nigerian Legislative Council:

"Since 1914 the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their background, in their religious beliefs and customs, and do not show themselves any sign of willingness to unite.... Nigerian unity is only a British intension for the country.<sup>23</sup>"

Similarly, during the budget session of the same Council, Tafawa Balewa repeated in like manner:

"Many Nigerians deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one...particularly some of the press people.... This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial and it ends outside this chamber.<sup>24</sup>"

Speaking *sensu stricto* therefore, as a political and cultural entity woven in Islamic ideological thread, the Hausa-Fulani define themselves by opposition to what they believe is the threat posed by the mainly Christian South and Middle Belt region to their sworn mission of painting the entire Nigerian nation in green colors of Islam, the official flag of Usman Dan Fodio's jihad. Symbolically, this may mean just removing the "White" patch of the Nigerian national flag to make it entirely green.

This subversive intention of the Hausa-Fulani neo-jihadists has remained the ideological fulcrum on which they define the contentious peace and unity of Nigeria. It became the pivot of the policies of successive Hausa-Fulani leaders of the nation, beginning with the Premier of the Northern

Region and descendant of Usman Dan Fodio, the *Sardauna* of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, to the present times, as presented by the *Boko Haram* uprising. Thus K.W.J. Post was to write in respect of the Northern People's Congress (NPC), known among the Hausa-Fulani as *Jamiyyar Mutanin Arewa*:

"The defence of the Islamic faith against the unbelievers has been one of the rallying calls of the *Jamiyyar Mutanin Arewa* both as a cultural organization and as an embryo political party. In 1959 the NPC was still the 'party of the faithful', and still used this slogan with considerable effect in the Federal election (Post, 1959)."

Similarly, quoting the *Daily Times* news report of December 14, 1953, B.J. Dudley wrote:

"The Northern People's Congress is not a political party as we know it in the South (i.e. Nigeria); it is merely a political expression for an existing system of administration dyed in religion and innate tradition. More specifically in the context of party leadership, Islam provided both the national and local leaders not only with a religious faith but also with a common cultural background in such matters as law and political theory (Dudley, 1968)."

It was not therefore surprising to see the NPC accusing the members of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and Borno Youth Movement (BYM) of disloyalty to Islam for no other reason than their electoral alliance with the NCNC. It subsequently promoted anti-NEPU/BYM riots in Northern Nigeria, during which many lives were lost (Young, 1979). But the most remarkable expression of this neo-jihad project was to be found in the person of Sir Ahmadu Bello. On October 12, 1960, the *Parrot* newspaper wrote, quoting him *ipso facto*:

"The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great grandfather Othman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the North as willing tools and the South as a conquered territory and never allow them to have control over their future.<sup>25</sup>"

<sup>23</sup> Colman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, 320

<sup>24</sup> Colman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, 361

<sup>25</sup> *Newswatch*, April 12, 2010, 31. See also, Leonard Karshima Shilgba, "The Middle Belt Federation in the British Nigeria," Village Square [http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/quest\\_articled\\_the-middle-belt-federation-in-the-British-nigeria.html](http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/quest_articled_the-middle-belt-federation-in-the-British-nigeria.html)

Earlier on the eve of Nigeria's independence, the Sardauna had changed his name from the original "Ahmadu Sardauna", to "Ahmadu Bello". By implication, in changing to the new name, the Sardauna was positioning himself as the true successor in political terms to Usman Dan Fodio's first son and successor, Sultan Muhammad Bello. John Paden puts it:

"At the personal level, Ahmadu Sardauna was beginning to go through a reawakening which will reinforce his sense of identity with the jihad leaders. Among other things, he 'changes' his name to 'Ahmadu Bello', to emphasize the link with Muhammad Bello, who is not only a brilliant administrator and consolidator of the Sokoto Caliphate, out also a spiritual leader (Paden, 1986)."

The death of the Sardauna on January 15, 1966 was to momentarily put a halt to the jihad project. The subsequent outbreak of the Nigerian civil war the following year was initially thought to be a further means to achieving that objective. But events following the cessation of hostilities portrayed a clear sign of frustration. For instead of using the opportunity offered by the civil war to remove the Southern obstacle to their jihad project, it aggravated it by entrenching the dominance of another class of the same enemy—the Middle Belt Christians, led by General Yakubu Gowon.

Just one year after the civil war, General Gowon, possibly based on the evident disenchantment of the Hausa-Fulani leaders over his religious identity, made sweeping changes in his administrative cadre. Part of the changes involved the removal of the Katsina-born Hausa-Fulani Army General, Hasan Usman Katsina as Chief of Army Staff, replacing him with Major General David Ejoor.<sup>26</sup>

This action in one way removed from strategic positions of power, those people who were evidently sympathetic to Sardauna's jihad project and subsequently helped to preserve the life-span of General Gowon's regime to a greater extent. However, it attracted a salvo of opposition from the evidently unhappy Hausa-Fulani class, notable among them being the Grand Qadi of the Northern Region and erstwhile religious adviser to Ahmadu Bello, Sheikh Abubakar Gummi. The enraged Gummi was to brand General Gowon "the Christian Missionary boy from Pankshin", and went ahead to accuse him of corruption, thus paving the path of civil legitimacy for his eventual overthrow by the Kano-born Hausa-Fulani General, Murtala Ramat Mohammed four years later, who subsequently appointed

Gummi the Grand Qadi of the Nigerian Federation.<sup>27</sup>

The unexpected assassination of General Murtala Mohammed by a group of Middle Belt Army officers on February 13, 1975, just barely six months of assuming power, was yet another shocking episode in the jihad project of the Caliphate. Murtala Mohammed had ascended to power with the whirlwind of anti-corruption, dismissing those he tagged corrupt from the Federal Government; an action invariably targeted at Christians.

His "purge" therapy for the so-called corruption in General Gowon's administration was in fact an Islamic recipe against the domination of Christians in important government positions at the Federal level. On the religious angle, aided by Abubakar Gummi, whom he had just elevated to the position of the Grand Mufti of Nigeria, the General was already setting the stage for the contentious Federal Sharia Court of Appeal safe for his untimely exit and subsequent replacement by General Olusegun Obasanjo a Christian of Yoruba ethnic extraction.<sup>28</sup>

General Obasanjo however was to repeat the magnanimity General Gowon showed to the Hausa-Fulani when he took over power from General Ironsi in 1966. General Gowon had looked around and discovered that there was no single Hausa-Fulani army officer of the rank of Lt. Colonel and above available to be appointed Military Governor of the Northern Region. Subsequently, he had to promote Major Hasan Usman Katsina to the rank of Lt. Colonel to enable him be appointed the Military Governor. The same situation was to re-occur after the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed, when it was found that no Hausa-Fulani officer was qualified to occupy the exalted number two position by rank.

But in a similar show of magnanimity General Obasanjo ordered that the highest ranking officer of Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, who was then Lt. Colonel Shehu Musa Yar'Adua be promoted to the rank of Major General to enable him occupy that position.

In a further act of magnanimity, the same Obasanjo equally caused the Sokoto-born Alhaji Shehu Shagari to be declared the winner of the 1979 presidential election, even though it was constitutionally obvious that the latter did not meet up with the electoral criteria to be declared winner at the first instance without run-off. This was without the slightest regard to the fact that Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the principal challenger against Shagari's victory was General Obasanjo's ethnic kinsman.

Although, President Shehu Shagari's four and a quarter year rule could be seen as a memorable come-back by the neo-jihadists, the diluted nature of the ethno-religious composition of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), coupled with the Party's accord with the Igbo dominated Nigeria

<sup>26</sup> Roman Loimeier, "Islamic Reform and Political Change: the example of Abubakar Gummi and the Yan Izala Movement in Northern Nigeria," in, edited by David Westerlund and Eva Evers Resauser (1997) *African Islam and Islam in Africa* London: Hurst and Co., 291

<sup>27</sup> Loimeier, "Islamic Reform and Political Change," 291

<sup>28</sup> Loimeier, "Islamic Reform and Political Change," 292

Peoples Party (NPP), were inhospitable grounds for the advancement of the neo-jihadist cause. More remarkable also was the plethora of opposition put forward against the NPN by the Yoruba-dominated Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) on the one hand, and the two northern-based political parties - Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) on the other hand.

General Muhammadu Buhari who shoved away President Shagari from office in a bloodless *coup d'état* on December 1983, again tried in the manner of Murtala Muhammad by riding through the whirlwind of accusations of corruption to power, in other to advance the cause of the neo-jihadists. The first act of neo-jihad intent was the appointment of Brigadier-General Tunde Idiagbon as his second-in-command. General Idiagbon was not only a Muslim but a Fulani of the Ilorin Emirate, which also forms part of the defunct Northern Region. The opinion of the *African Concord* of June 9, 1987 was clear in this regard:

“But in 1985, during the Buhari/Idiagbon administration, many Nigerians felt compelled to voice what they saw as the administration’s manifestly pro-Northern policies. In fact, some people went to the extent of publishing figures to show that the North, especially the Hausa-Fulani group, has maintained dominance of the country’s political leadership far longer than any group in a supposedly federal system. For example, not only did Buhari and Idiagbon - two key figures of that administration - hail from the North, both were also Muslims. Two of the four service chiefs were northern Muslims while the Ministers of Defence were also northerners, though the former was a Christian. Out of the 20 members of the Supreme Military Council, 12 were northerners.<sup>29</sup>”

Buhari’s removal from office by General Ibrahim Babangida, his Army Chief of Staff, although could be interpreted as a consequence of intra-class rivalry, the latter nevertheless continued with the same neo-jihadist objective. Subtle and vicious in his strategy of retaining power, General Babangida, even though appearing to ride on the threshold of military populism, carried out the most far-reaching pro-Islamic policy which struck at the very root of the nation’s secular character. The unceremonious admission of Nigeria into the exclusive Muslim Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) was the first shot that baffled most Nigerians, particularly the vast Christian population.

The OIC is an exclusive Islamic organization that seeks to advance the cause of Islam and Muslims. As Chidiebere Onyemaizu writing for *The Source* magazine puts it clearly this way:

“The primary goal of the OIC, according to its statute, ‘is to promote solidarity among all Islamic member States’ Besides this, the flag of the organization has an overall green background (which is the symbol of Islam). In the centre, there is an upward-facing red crescent enveloped in a white disc. On the disc, the words ‘Allahu Akbar’ are written in modern Arabic calligraphy.<sup>30</sup>”

But the most heinous incident that occurred during the regime of General Babangida, which evidently point to a jihadist conspiracy was the ill-fated Nigeria Air Force Hercules C130 crash at Ejigbo, Lagos, in 1992, in which one hundred and fifty officers of the Nigeria Armed Forces of Christian extraction perished.<sup>31</sup> It was like the wiping off all possible dangers of a Christian-sponsored *coup d'état* against General Babangidsa after the Orkar experience.

The Ejigbo tragedy was subsequently followed by the annulment of the June 12 Presidential election, presumably won by Chief M.K.O. Abiola, a Yoruba, although Muslim by religion. The fact that Abiola at the time was the Vice President of the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), the next in hierarchy to the Sultan of Sokoto, coupled with the fact that his Vice Presidential candidate, Ambassador Babagana Kingibe was a northern Muslim of Kanuri extraction, a scenario of Muslim-Muslim ticket did not even matter to the Hausa-Fulani neo-jihadists, who invariably did not see a southern Muslim as a good representative of the Muslim *umma*. This position was well expressed by the Caliphate’s reaction to the annulment. The then Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki in his reaction had advised Moshood Abiola to accept the sad experience as an act of Allah.<sup>32</sup>

General Sani Abacha on his own account espoused that vision and mission of a neo-jihadist fundamentalist not only in his iniquitous iron-fisted tyranny, but by the sheer act of overthrowing Ernest Shonekan, to reinstate the Hausa-Fulani grip on power. Again following the foot-steps of General Babangida, he smuggled Nigeria into another exclusive club of Muslim nations, code-named Development-Eight (D-8 Nations).

<sup>29</sup> Africa Concord, June 9, 1987, October 12, 1992.

<sup>30</sup> Chidiebere Onyemaizu, “The OIC Debate,” *The Source*, April 21, 2008, 19.

<sup>31</sup> Tell, February 14, 1994, 10

<sup>32</sup> Tell, July 8, 1996, 18

## OBASANJO'S SECOND COMING AND THE RISE OF INSURGENCY

The short-lived regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar being dearth of time and space could not however be totally isolated from the jihad policy of his predecessors. A cursory look at his appointments, particularly the members of his Executive Council vividly explains this. But one thing is certain General Abubakar had the singular credit of handing over political power to a southerner and Christian, in fulfillment of his transition programme.

In rooting for the selection of General Olusegun Obasanjo as their choice for the Presidency, the Hausa-Fulani had thought of the former not only as their potential friend, but a readily malleable figure who would always dance to their musical tune of perpetual political dominance. General Obasanjo never supported Moshood Abiola's claim to the presidency. His words that General Abacha's coming to power was "unfortunate but necessary", was indicated of his opposition to the June 12 protagonists.<sup>33</sup> This was coming at the behest of the popular view that the Yoruba are habitually cowards. The words of Sani Kontagora are obvious in this stance. On General Obasanjo's remarkable achievement in handing over power to a Hausa-Fulani, Alhaji Kontagora was to retort thus:

"Who enunciated what programme? What did he know? What did he know to enunciate anything? What did he know? Somebody that was in the army, who couldn't build road. He came and met the programme of Murtala, and he was having Shehu (Yar' Adua) behind him. And the moment he moved forward, he looked backward, and say what do you think Shehu, and Shehu would say okay, move forward."<sup>34</sup>

The same Kontagora went further in much a deriding manner to mock the South's impotency in the Armed Forces. Referring to the South, he stated:

"It has been proved. Where have you ever gone to do something that is courageous? Tell me. Tell me. How many? A soldier should be a soldier. Believe me sincerely. If we are going to handle a gun, you and me, or any Southerner, *walahi*, I would shoot first. I would shoot first. Even when you go to the army, where do you go? Educational sector, Medical sector? Go and find out, my friend. Not every Soldier you see on the street is a soldier. They are

either in education or engineering. Tell me which one you are? We are in infantry, armour. That is army man. Infantry man, armoured man and then artillery. That is the army."<sup>35</sup>

But to the surprise of the likes of Kontagora, General Obasanjo's transformation to a democratically elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was to produce an entirely contrasting personality. It thus befuddles one that the same Obasanjo could later be branded a villain and the author of their political woes. Reason: Obasanjo ordered the retirement of all political military officers, who could by their orientation present a danger to the nascent democracy. Coincidentally, most of the officers affected by the "political appointee officers" label were of Hausa-Fulani extraction and thus scions of the Caliphate. By that action therefore, President Obasanjo was said to have edged the Hausa-Fulani from their hitherto vantage position in the armed forces, thereby forestalling their capability to undermine his government through the armed forces.

The mood was to immediately change from that of a trusted friend to a foe, thus setting the stage for eventual confrontation between the Hausa-Fulani and the regime of President Obasanjo. The first evidence of this changing mood against this act of assumed betrayal of trust to a supposedly friendly and weak General Olusegun Obasanjo, was to expressly manifest in the form of the Sharia controversy in 2000 by the mainly Hausa-Fulani States. This was to gradually filter away as earlier explained. Also, as earlier noted, it was out of the growing frustration over the failure of the Sharia option to achieve its hidden jihadist objective that the "Taliban" group emerged on 22 December, 2003. Remarkably, this was coming just a little over six months of President Obasanjo's second term in office.

However, it could be said that events following the September 9 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York by Al Qaida may have in one way played an important part in advancing the Hausa-Fulani strategy for wresting power from the Christian-dominated Federal Government of President Obasanjo. It was reported that at the heat of the heinous crime by Al Qaida, posters of Bin Laden were being freely sold in such Hausa-Fulani States as Kano, Jigawa, and Zamfara.<sup>36</sup> About a year and six months later, this reckless demonstration of support for international terrorism received international boost by the perceived Bin Laden's broadcast of Tuesday 11 February, 2003, in which Nigeria was included among those countries- Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Pakistan, Morocco, and Yemen, where Muslims were urged to launch jihad against their infidel regimes.<sup>37</sup> It

<sup>33</sup> *Tell*, July 8, 18

<sup>34</sup> *Tell*, October 15, 2001, 17

<sup>35</sup> *TheNews*, March 3, 2003, 18

<sup>36</sup> *Insider Weekly*, No 17, May 2, 2005, 26

<sup>37</sup> *Insider Weekly*, May, 2, 20

should be recalled that, the first volley of Hausa-Fulani reaction to Obasanjo's anti-Islamic posture was fired by the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria, criticizing what it described as the lop-sided nature of the composition of the Federal Cabinet. In an advertorial the organization alleged *ipso facto*: When Obasanjo constituted the cabinet for his second term in office he appointed 42 ministers out of whom only 16 were Muslims and 26 were Christians. In the whole of Kwara, Kogi, South-West, South-East and South-South, there was not a single Muslim.<sup>38</sup> This was followed by a plethora of criticisms and outright threat to the Government of President Obasanjo. It was in respect of the Obasanjo "menace" that the Northern Muslim leaders met on March 28, 2005 in Kaduna under the auspices of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), of which the Sultan of Sokoto is the traditional Chairman. According to Major Abubakar Umar (rtd.) the President of the Muslim Youth Association:

"The meeting that was held in Kaduna was at the instance of the outcry by the generality of Muslims in the Northern part of the country, observing what has been happening with the Obasanjo's administration to the marginalization of Muslims.<sup>39</sup>"

It was in that meeting that the then Emir of Gwandu, traditionally the second-in-command to the Sultan, Alhaji Mustapha Jokolo, let the cat out of the bag. As George Mbah succinctly put it:

"The Emir complained bitterly that northern Muslims today have no banks, and construction companies: that their soldiers were compulsorily retired from the army shortly after Obasanjo came to power: and that their children are being denied recruitment in the army.<sup>40</sup>"

However, Jokolo went further out of uncontrollable rage to threaten a jihad against those responsible for their woes. In his words he thus stated undauntedly:

"We (Muslims) have been pushed to the wall and it is time to fight.... Obasanjo is trampling on our rights and Muslims must rise and defend their rights. The more we continue to wait, the more we will continue to be marginalized.<sup>41</sup>"

<sup>38</sup> *Insider Weekly*, May 2, 17

<sup>39</sup> *Insider Weekly*, May 2, 18

<sup>40</sup> *Insider Weekly*, June 29, 2009, 15

<sup>41</sup> *Insider Weekly*, June 29, 15

However, with the exit of Obasanjo and the subsequent assumption of power by the Hausa-Fulani-born Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the Hausa-Fulani scheme for power appeared to have been fulfilled. Every threat of jihad seemed to evaporate into the political tin air of *Allahu Akbar*. A quiet and unassuming character Umaru Yar' Adua might be assumed to possess, his neo-jihadist background was to direct the course of his policies as the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Armed Forces.

While commendable for his Niger Delta amnesty programme, his policy of insurmountable northern Islamization of strategic positions in the Federal Government far outsmarted the so-called Christianization policy of Obasanjo. In fairness to President Obasanjo, there was always the balancing role of the minorities, which tended to water down the traditional rivalries of the three major ethnic groups - the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba. Thus, although one could accuse President Obasanjo of any other sin, but not that of undue favor to his Yoruba ethnic group. The short span of President Umaru Yar' Adua's reign presented a contrast.

The first act of President Yar' Adua was to descend on the Nigeria armed forces in a frenzy bid to undo what the Hausa-Fulani accused President Obasanjo of doing. It was not therefore surprising that to see him appointing a Hausa-Fulani Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Abdulrahman Bello Danbazzau, whom he believed, had the intellectual capacity to carry out the policy. Thus the latter was to initiate a policy of immediate northern Islamization of the Nigerian Army. As the *Insider Weekly* put it:

"Out of his 32 key appointments, he gave 27 to the North; three to the Southeast; two to the Southwest, and none to the South-South. Of these 32 appointments, sources told this magazine that he gave 24 to Moslems, pointing out that all the Army chief's actions have been based on ethnic and religious considerations.<sup>42</sup>"

The magazine went further to reel out concrete evidence of the President's Islamization policy. It was a pitiable situation when both the Ministers of National Planning, Finance, Petroleum Resources, and Internal Affairs, including the Central Bank Governor, Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) as well as Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) were under the headship of the Hausa-Fulani. The same situation applied, in addition to the Army, to the State Security Service (SSS), Nigeria Intelligence Agency (NIA).<sup>43</sup> It thus meant that, under President

<sup>42</sup> *Insider Weekly*, May 2, 28

<sup>43</sup> *Tell*, March 12, 2012, 23

Umaru Yar' Adua, the rest of the country had no right or principal control over the economy of the country, as well as the Security apparatus, except the Hausa-Fulani.

As a further evidence of his neo-jihad policy, the President on March 2008 attended the Summit of the controversial Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).<sup>44</sup> His attendance of the Summit in being the first to be attended by any Nigerian Head of State since the country's controversial inclusion into the organization in 1996 under President Ibrahim Babangida, was tacit expression of the Hausa-Fulani mission of Islamization in the nation.

Unfortunately, as in the cases of the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Generals Murtala Mohammed and Muhammadu Buhari, Yar' Adua's neo-jihad project met a brick-wall when he died unexpectedly. The emergence of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan into the political scene as Yar' Adua's successor, again dissolved that thick cloud of momentary victory of the Hausa-Fulani. Jonathan's eventual victory over the fundamentalist General Buhari in 2011 seemed to have sealed any hope of the Hausa-Fulani attempt at religiously over-turning the ethno-religious imbalance in the country, which invariably tilts slightly in favor of the Christians. Thus frustrated, the alternative became aggression, which is now defined by the Boko Haram uprising.

It thus follows that when, as earlier noted, the Emir of Gwandu, His Eminence, Mustapha Jokolo called for a jihad against the regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo, it was not Major Mustapha Jokolo (rt'd) as a person that was speaking. As the second -in-command to the *Amir al-Muminum*, the Sultan of Sokoto, his voice could not therefore be ignored. Beyond the fact of being the traditional deputy to the Sultan of Sokoto, as the Emir of Gwandu and scion of Usman Dan Fodio's younger brother, he presides over a number of emirates as his fiefdom. Reacting to the Jokolo's call for jihad, Iyoba Uwugiaren and Bashir Kalija, stated in quite agitating manner:

"If trouble breaks out in Nigeria today, at least, the citizens now know that it is Jokolo and his masters who are behind it. And they should be stopped before the carnage in other African countries spread to Nigeria. A stitch in time saves nine."<sup>45</sup>

The question which follows *in situ* is, to what extent could Alhaji Jokolo's be unconnected with the present *Boko Haram* insurgency, especially arising from the insistence by the group that the Sultan of Sokoto should be a party to any peace negotiation with the Federal Government? In laying credence to the impossibility of isolating the neo-jihad aspirations of the Caliphate from the Boko Haram, the former

Sultan of Sokoto, Ibrahim Dasuki, in a recent interview with the *Tell* magazine, paradoxically expressed his support for the *Boko Haram* when he stated in answer to a question by a journalist:

"What are they fighting for? When they increased fuel price, what did we do? We went out to protest because that was injustice to us all. Let us call a spade a spade; the government is not doing justice to the people. These people we don't even know who they are or where they are. The country is rotten."<sup>46</sup>

It should be recalled that as Sultan, it was Alhaji Dasuki's support for the call for jihad in Southern Kaduna that ignited the ethno-religious inferno in Zango-Kataf which saw the eventual conviction of Major General Zamani Lekwot for the retaliatory killing of Muslims. Sultan Dasuki was reported to have issued an advertorial on a daily newspaper supporting the death sentence handed down on General Lekwot.<sup>47</sup> The fact that there was a letter written to him revealing that there was going to be a jihad against the Kataf which was dated May 9, 1992, and signed by one Aliyu I. Jibrin on behalf of the Nigerian Aid Group of *Jama'atu Izaltul Bidi'n wa Ikametus Sunna*, Zango Kataf Divisional Headquarters, yet he did not attempt to dissuade them from launching the jihad proved his credential as a god-father of Muslim insurrection in Nigeria.<sup>48</sup>

The question then is, could the ex-Sultan and former Secretary-General of Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and later President in his stead as the Sultan, by the above statement be telling Nigerians that the only way to put the rotten Nigerian nation in order is by the means of jihad and imposition of *Shari'a* throughout the country, as being directed by the *Boko Haram*? What other framework of justice is he enunciating for the nation other than Sharia?

But could it be true that the former Sultan does not know who the *Boko Haram* are? Any way there could be nothing more convincing of the Caliphate support for the *Boko Haram* insurgency than the statements of Mustapha Jokolo, a former Emir and Ibrahim Dasuki, a former Sultan. It has been made manifest that at every stage where the Hausa-Fulani were confronted with frustration there was the tendency to resort to aggression, as a form of alternative expression of their alienation from political power. The Boko Haram thus is the peak of that frustration - aggression thesis of Hausa-Fulani approach to competitive politics in Nigeria.

The words of Bello Junaid, the Coordinator of Sokoto Historical Project, are instructive. Bello believes that the

<sup>44</sup> *Classique*, March 22, 1993, 12

<sup>45</sup> *Classique*, March 22, 13

<sup>46</sup> *Tell*, July 23, 2012, 27

<sup>47</sup> *Tell*, July 23, 2012, 27.

<sup>48</sup> *Classique*, March 22, 13

Boko Haram crisis was the creation of “selfish Northern politicians” who felt alienated from government.<sup>49</sup> But it was Ahmadu Abubakar that got the most fascinating joker, when stated 1999 that:

“There are certain opinion leaders in the North I have said this before, whose sustenance is dependent on government office or the benefit of government patronage. Therefore, unless people like these ones are at the helm of affairs or in office from which they can continue to derive such patronage, nobody from the North is in government. But clearly, there are many northerners in this government.<sup>50</sup>”

## CONCLUSION

There is no gainsaying the fact that the present Hausa-Fulani uprising code-named *Boko Haram* is the climax of the jihadist vision and mission of the Caliphate, which began with the 1903 injunction of Sultan Abdul ‘Rahman to the British and, sustained over time by successive Hausa-Fulani leaders. It found expression first on the introduction of the *Shari’a* into the criminal code by the States of Muslim North. Then, when that strategy could not bring the desired impact, they resorted to outright military insurgency, seeking ideological refuge in Islam.

It could therefore be said without equivocation that the original script of *Boko Haram* was written by the Caliphate, rehearsed by the Hausa-Fulani politicians and then handed down for acting to the ideologically bankrupt youth to perform. The Sultan need not to personally speak on a particular matter before it is accepted as his position. After all the *Oba* of Benin, *Omo n’ Oba Uku n’ Edo Okpolokpolo* need not speak himself before it is taken that the *Oba* has spoken. His Chief Priest - the *Isekhure* does that for his Majesty.

It is therefore the position of this paper that had the British Colonial policy of Indirect Rule not been introduced and had the British applied the French policy of down-playing the role of indigenous political institutions in their colonial administration, the present over-riding influence of religion in Nigeria’s politics could not have arisen. What it then means is that there wouldn’t have been a platform as easy as it appears today for Boko Haram to emerge.

## Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

<sup>49</sup> *Tell*, July 23, 2012, 23

<sup>50</sup> *Tell*, July 23, 2012, 27.

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