Beyond Arms and Armaments: Resolving Nigeria's Insurgency Crisis through Strategic Public Relations

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Abstract

Since the first known manifestation of insurgency in Nigeria credited to a university student of Niger Delta extraction, Isaac Japer Adaka Boro in 1965, Nigeria's insurgency crisis has precariously grown in scope and sophistication. There seems to be an intensifying thirst for blood and a spiraling preference for violence as means of expressing pent-up frustration or anger either directed at the state or its people. The conflagration has taken a hefty toll on the soul of Nigeria. This study sought to: examine the nature and causes of Nigeria's insurgency, determine the ideological motivations fueling it, profile the perpetrators of the insurgency, and propose functional public relations strategies for resolving the crisis. The desktop research method was used to qualitatively analyse extant data and literature. Relying on Stakeholder theory and Invitational Rhetoric theory, the paper argues that the enduring solution to Nigeria's insurgency rests not in arms and armaments. It identifies lack of mutual trust, shared understanding and absence of a sense of corporate existence as fundamental to the crisis. The study theorises that there would be no need for a fight if Nigeria is administered using the strategic crisis communication template of a corporate organisation, where parts of the whole appreciate their roles and responsibilities and contribute according to rules towards attainment of pre-determined and consensually agreed goals. The study recommends the non-kinetic deployment of public relations strategies such as lobbying, dialogue, persuasive engagement, crisis communication, stake-holding, invitational rhetoric, in resolving Nigeria's protracted insurgency crisis, in the interest of all.

Keywords: Arms and armaments, terrorism, Nigeria's insurgency, crisis communication, strategic public relations.

Introduction/Problem Statement

Nigeria today is one of the most terrorized countries on earth. Ranked only after nations like Bukina Faso, Israel, Mali, Pakistan, Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia; Nigeria is the country with the eight highest volume of terrorist attacks and activities, according to the 2024 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace and published by Statista Research Department. On the GTI scale of 50 countries ranked from 0 (no impact of terrorism) to 10 (highest impact of terrorism), Nigeria is placed eight, with an index as high as 7.58.

Terrorism and insurgency in Nigeria manifest through activities of groups such as Boko Haram in the North East, Pastoral Fulani extremists in North Central, assorted bandit groups in North West, Igbo secessionist movements and other bandit groups in South East, Niger Delta militant bodies in South South, and other ethnic and regular insurgence groups in South West. A report by Olaiya (2021) on Guardian Newspaper, June 18, 2021, indicates that while unrest increased in 2021 by 10% globally, it increased by more than 800% in Sub-Sahara Africa, with Nigeria recording the highest level of increase in civil unrest.

While terrorism is considered by most authors as the intentional striking of fear, anxiety and intimidation into a target population to achieve a political objective (Schmid & Jongman, 2017; Johnston, 2018), insurgency is considered an organised movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict (United States Department of the Army, 2014; Nagl, 2009; Johnston, 2018). Typically, insurgency integrates asymmetric warfare with a strategy of sustained political opposition. Insurgencies strategically seek to align their compelling drives with the public interest of the people they claim to represent, in order to garner popular support and build street credibility. Every insurgency aspires to expand in size and capacity while degrading the government it opposes to a point of defeat, even through conventional combat.

Nigeria's insurgency comes with a heavy cost on lives, properties and the economy. Boko Haram alone has affected an estimated 14.8 million men, women and children (Presidential Committee on North East Initiative, 2018). The blistering inferno of insurgency in Nigeria has so far consumed millions of lives, turned countless women to widows, rendered a massive mass of children orphans, displaced a huge count of Nigerians from their ancestral homes, and denigrated Nigeria's economy to a near stand-still.

The Government of Nigeria seems to have tried everything in the books, from all-force combat, to carrot and stick approach, to amnesty, to diplomacy; but the conflagration has defied extinguishment. Still in search for solution, there has been an advocacy for multi-stakeholder intervention to the security question, rather than a sole deployment of only military options (Open Society, 2012; Ujomu, 2021; Imhonopi & Urim, 2012; cited in Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim, 2013).

Public Relations is a management function that involves monitoring and evaluating public attitudes and maintaining mutual relations and understanding between an organisation and its publics (Hasan, 2013). It involves aligning the perception of targeted publics with the current realities and reasonable prospects of an organisation. The core business of Public Relations include: evaluation of public opinions and attitudes, formation and implementation of procedures regarding communication with the publics, coordination of engagements and communication activities, cultivation of goodwill with the publics, as well as promotion of healthy relationship between an organisation and its publics.

As a nation, Nigeria has battled insurgency for decades, with no sustainable positive outcome. Ahead of every election cycle, every politician seeking to become Nigeria's President would pledge to resolve the nation's insurgency. But once voted into office, the

usual kinetic methodologies would be deployed, with little or no improvements to show. Could there be a non-kinetic approach to tackling the hydra-headed menace of insurgency in Nigeria? Given that insurgency primarily thrives against the backdrop of mistruth, mistrust, miscommunication, misinformation, propaganda, hatred for the state, and relationship breakdown, the concern of this paper is to explore the possibility or otherwise of deploying tested public relations strategies in resolving insurgency in Nigeria. Beyond the conventional use of arms, armaments, armories and ammunitions, how can strategic public relations help in resolving Nigeria's insurgency crisis?

Objectives of the Study
The primary objectives of the study were to:
  (i)   Theoretically profile the perpetrators of insurgency in Nigeria;
  (ii)   Examine the nature and causes of the insurgency crisis in Nigeria;
  (iii)   Determine the ideological motivations fueling insurgency in Nigeria;
  (iv)   Propose functional public relations strategies for resolving Nigeria's insurgency crisis.

Perpetrators of Insurgency as Part of Nigeria's Publics: Contextualizing Stakeholder and Invitational Rhetoric Theories
In the context of Public Relations, Nigeria can be understood as one large organisation which has a number of publics (internal and external). Jargon Watch (2021) defines an organisation as a collection of people, who are involved in pursuing defined objectives. It can be understood as a social system which comprises all formal human relationships. An organisation, simply put, is an entity, like a company, an institution, a government, comprising two or more people or group of people and having specific purpose(s).

In the context of Public Relations too, every organisation has its publics. Some may be primary or secondary publics; some may be internal or external publics. The publics of Nigeria as an organisation includes all Nigerians governed by the government, all states which are under the Federal Government structure, all groups and organisations within the Nigerian system, all ethnic nationalities, all religious and professional bodies, all pressure and advocacy groups, all political and sociocultural groupings, and even all agitating and insurgent groups. By implication, Boko Haram fighters, sponsors, sympathizers in North East Nigeria are all part of Nigeria's public. The herdsmen and the farmers they clash with in North Central are part of Nigeria's public. The bandits in North West are part of Nigeria's publics. IPOB, ESN and the whole of the Igbos in South East Nigeria are part of Nigeria's publics. Niger Delta militants and all inhabitants of South South Nigeria are part of Nigeria's publics. OPC, OLM and all of the people of South West Nigeria are part of Nigeria's publics.

In the light of the foregoing, it is crucial what the Nigerian organisation does to, for, with or against its publics, just as it is crucial what its publics do to, for, with and against the Nigerian organisation. This section contextualises two relevant theories of Public Relations in order to establish the theoretical dais upon which this discourse stands. They are:
  (i)   Stakeholder Theory
  (ii)   Invitational Rhetoric Theory.

Stakeholder Theory: Propounded in 1984 by Edward Freeman (Freeman & Movea, 2001), the Stakeholder Theory's primary postulation is that for any organisation to be successful, it must find a way to understand, account for and create value for all of its stakeholders. The theory argues that any organisation that wishes to succeed must prioritise the interests of its stakeholders (internal and external publics), even above the interests of its shareholders (financiers). The theory acknowledges that while the interests of an organisation's pubics may typically not be the same, there has to be a way for the interests to go together (Stakeholder-map, n.d.).

Contextualising the theory above, it must be understood that the leaders and managers of Nigeria have the critical role of first identifying all its stakeholders (publics), seeking to understand their peculiarities, needs, interests and aspirations, making efforts to address such needs, interests and aspirations, communicating effectively with its publics and receiving feedbacks, responding positively and sustainably, as well as building and managing quality relationships with its stakeholders (the publics). The leadership of Nigeria must seek to understand the diverse interests of its stakeholders (the peoples of Nigeria). The leadership of Nigeria must devise means to sustain inspiring relationships with its publics. The leadership has to practically demonstrate that it cares about the peoples of Nigeria. It must understand that it is possible to win over its publics including perpetuators of insurgencies, not always by use of might and brute force, but by seeking ways to add value to them, appreciate their diversities of interests, and designing effective strategies to communicate and relate healthily with them.

Invitational Rhetoric Theory: Developed by Sonja K. Foss and Cindy I. Griffin (Communication Monographs, 1995), Invitation Rhetoric theory is a theory of rhetoric and persuasive communication. Rooted in the three core elements of equality, imminent value and self-determination, the primary stance of the theory is that persuasive communication should not be seen as an effort for the communicator to demonstrate power over the audiences with the aim of manipulating or causing them to change in some ways. Rather, it should be an invitation to share power with the audiences as precursor to securing understanding, making a decision or solving a problem. Invitational Rhetoric is therefore an invitation to understanding as a means to creating a relationship. Unlike regular persuasive communication that seeks to persuade at all cost, invitational rhetoric seeks not to directly persuade the audience to jettison their opinions or attitudes for those of the persuaders. It rather seeks to share understanding of the perspectives of others.

Invitational Rhetoric, though first introduces by two feminism scholars as contributions to gender strives, is essentially relevant to Public Relations and particularly relates to the focus of this article. The wisdom from the theory is that if the leadership of Nigeria must win over its plenty publics including perpetuators of insurgency, it must learn not to act as one that seeks to correct another or as one whose positions are superior to those of its publics or as one whose ways have to be imposed on its publics. Rather, it must learn how to invite its publics on common ground of equality to a place of perception sharing, as a strategy to securing understanding and deepening relationship.

Methodology
The study utilised the desktop research method, alternatively christened secondary research method, to gather and analyse extant data and literature relevant to the research. The method was considered suitable owing to its accessibility, flexibility and functionality. The researchers sourced data from reputable databases, to gather academic articles with thematic relevance to the study.

To enhance objectivity, the researchers ensured the enquiry procedures were systematic and methodological. The researchers adhered to standard procedures of data collection, data review, data synthesis, thematic analysis, source evaluation, presentation of findings and proposition of current study, as stipulated in Shem, Umoh, George, Attang and Obong (2024).

The Nature of Insurgency in Nigeria
Insurgency is a form of violence and involves violent killing of persons and destruction of property. Violence is not new to humanity. The first case of violent killing in recorded history, according to the Bible account, involved two biological brothers, with the older, Cain, murdering the younger, Abel, out of jealousy that his brother's sacrifice, not his, was accepted (KJV Bible, Chapter 4). But that was just the beginning.

In Nigeria, what passes as the first case of insurgency began in 1965 with the rise of a university student of Niger Delta origin, Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro. The fight was against environmental degradation and for better life and increased access for his people to opportunities within the hydrocarbon ecosystem. Muzan (2014) recollects:

> The first known insurgency or terrorism attempt in Nigeria may be credited to the movement to liberate the Niger Delta people by Major Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro. Major Boro belonged to the Ijaw ethnic extraction in the Niger Delta region and, at the time of his rebellion, was a student of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. His complaint was against the exploration of the oil and gas resources of the Niger Delta by both the Federal and regional governments, in total disregards of the citizens of the area. Boro formed the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), an armed military group composed of 150 of his kinsmen.

From that infantile start in 1965, insurgency in Nigeria has now expanded in size, might and sophistication, with the deadliest today being Boko Haram, officially known as *Ahlulsu nna wai'jama' ah hija* or "people committed to the propagation of the prophet's teaching and Jihad". Boko Haram, which means "Western Education is Sinful", is an Islamic sect and a terrorist group that believes Nigeria should not be led by "unbelievers". The sect is opposed to Western education, democracy, secular government, Westernization and uses violence, killings and bombings to pursue its goal of instituting an Islamic State of Nigeria. The Boko Haram sect believes that a secular government is wrong and that Westernization is against the teachings of Islam (Omego, 2015).

The Boko Haram insurgency is deeply rooted in religious ideologies and is largely difficult to contend since it cuts across the borders of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad. Members of

the group, which numbers over 40,000, pay daily levies of One Hundred Naira each, totaling about N400,000 to their leaders. The daily levies, according to Aghedo (2013), provide Boko Haram's basic source of funding in addition to loots from attacks on banks, donations from sponsors including politicians, government officials and organisations, as well as funding support from foreign affiliates.

Aside the ravaging operations of Boko Haram majorly in North Eastern Nigeria, there has been frequent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in North Central Nigeria. Though the conflict is complex and multifaced, it primarily centers around agricultural households and nomadic cattle-herder groups who come into conflicts over land access (Azad, Crowford & Kaila, 2018). With hike in population and the attendant miniaturization of available land for agriculture, farmers within the North Central belt of the country seem to have begun to cultivate indigenous lands which had hitherto served as grazing areas. Consequently, lands available for grazing seem to have significantly been reduced, either due to increasing agricultural activities or climatic changes or insecurity or other factor; situations which have compelled the herdsmen to expand their routes into other areas too. It is this strive for land fueled by some ethnic, political cum religious motivations which have prolonged the fight for multiple years.

In 2015, Nigeria's Fulani pastoral militants were named the fourth deadliest terror group in the world by the Global Terrorism Index. Only Boko Haram, ISIS and al-Shabab were deemed deadlier than the scantily known militant group operating principally in North Central Nigeria and in Central African Republic (CAR). In 2014 alone, the group recorded 847 deaths, with 92% of the attacks targeted at private citizens. This shows that the major grouse of this group is not against the Nigerian Government but against private land owners and the State Government who were unwilling to support the group's unending quest for land.

In North West Nigeria, there has been an escalation of insurgency perpetuated by a group the Government describes with the euphemism "Bandits". This genre of insurgency has killed, maimed and destroyed lots of lives in North Western States such as Kaduna, Kanu, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara and Jigawa. According to Ojewale (2021), in actuality, North West Nigeria has become the home of increasingly active terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Jama' at Nusrat al Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, a splinter of Boko Haram popularly known as Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), and Fulani Herdsmen of West Africa.

In South East Nigeria, Biafra secessionist groups, variedly christened, have remained the most vocal agitators and purveyors of insurgency. Decades after the Nigerian Civil War, agitations for self-determination in South East have continued to grow, principally due to what the agitators describe as marginalization by the national government. What started first with the peaceful establishment of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) has morphed into full insurgency. A more militant group called Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by a self-styled leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu now holds sway. The violent wing of IPOB is an assemblage of "fighters" known as Eastern Security

Network (ESN). Plenty of lives and properties have been destroyed by the group, with a partial shutdown of economic activities most Mondays across the region.

Furthermore, there has been increased belligerence in the Niger Delta region by various agitating groups. In recent times, this has manifested as attacks on hydrocarbon installations, kidnap of oil and gas workers, oil theft, sabotage, etc. For this and other factors, Nigeria's major source of revenue has significantly stayed on a low, compounding the problem of lack of funding for national development.

Apart from pockets of banditries, abductions, clashes between farmers and herders, there has been scanty insurgent activities championed by a wing of the Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC), a Yoruba nationalist organisation formed in 1997. According to Muzan (2014), the founding head of the organisation was Dr. Fredrick Fasheun and its militant aspects were headed by Ganiyu Adams. A splinter group, Oodua Liberation Movement was later birthed and became more militant, with its primary agitation being against Nigeria's pseudo-Federalism.

Causes of Insurgency in Nigeria
Insurgency is never like a tree that suddenly springs up in the middle of nowhere. It emanates as a result of something – something outside of it. Corroborating Muzan (2014), this paper identifies some of the paramount causes of insurgency in Nigeria to include:
  (i)   Land ownership and use
  (ii)   Ethnic rivalry
  (iii)   Poverty
  (iv)   Unemployment
  (v)   Marginalization
  (vi)   Eroding social values
  (vii)   Religious differences
  (viii) Failure of government.

Land Ownership and Use: This is a major source of insurgency in Nigeria. When contending parties seek to assert conflicting ownership and use rights, it leads to troubles. The primary cause of the herders versus farmers conflict in North Central Nigeria is the scramble for land. Herders feel hurt that ancient cattle routes are no longer available. Farmers feel even more pained that their ancestral farmlands and their growing crops are decimated by the invading herds of cattle.

Ethnic Rivalry: Ethno-religious conflicts have been identified as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria (Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim, 2013). Ethnic groups get on the toes of one another over who gets what and how powers, lands, resources and territories are distributed.

Poverty: Poverty is at the base of Nigeria's insurgency. Poverty has been weaponized in Nigeria, even by merchants of terror. The poor and hungry are more easily recruited and indoctrinated.

Unemployment: The high volume of unemployment in Nigeria makes the ground very viable and fertile for insurgency. Unemployed persons are very easily recruited into the ranks and files of insurgent groups like Boko Haram, IPOB, Niger Delta militants, etc.

Marginalisation: This is a major cause of insurgency in Nigeria. Each ethnic group considers itself unique and seeks to maintain its identity. Ethnic groups, especially the minorities tend to nurture the suspicion of marginalization by other groups considered better disposed in size, politics and economy. Agitators in South East and South South, for instance, typically allege marginalization of their ethnic nationalities by others.

Eroding Social Values: There seems to be a gradual erosion of the social and moral values operational today in Nigeria. Moral ideals such as integrity, hard work, respect, communalism, value for life, brotherhood and good neighborliness are gradually being replaced by today's pop culture that tends to celebrate wealth by all means, tends to euphemize stealing and corruption as misappropriation, and oppression as strength.

Failure of Government: The state of insecurity in Nigeria partly is a reflection of the state of governance in Nigeria. As Achumba, Ignomerho and Akpor-Robano (2013) note, the foundations of institutional or regulatory frameworks in Nigeria are shaky and have provoked a deterioration of state governance and democratic accountability, thus paralysing the existing formal and legitimate rules nested in the hierarchy of social order.

Ideological Motivations Fueling Nigeria's Insurgency Crisis

An ideology is a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and practice. An idea becomes an ideology once it is taken up as a political or religious or ethnic cause and functions in a process of political differentiation. An ideology can also be described as a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group or culture (Merrian-webster, 2022).

Nigeria is a pluralistic state, one of the most pluralistic nations in the world. There is plurality in religion, ethnicity, culture, language, history and ancestry. The various peoples and groups take pride in sustaining their unique identities and sometimes in fostering their peculiar ideologies above others within the context of a pluralistic Nigeria. They sometimes strive to impose their peculiar ideologies on a pluralistic Nigeria and this becomes the primary motivation for insurgency.

Boko Haram, for instance, is motivated largely by the religious ideology that secular government is wrong, western education is sin, westernization is evil and against the spirit and teaching of Islam. The sect, as noted by Omego (2015), opposes western education and democracy and uses violence, killings and bombings in pursuit of its goal of establishing a fully Islamic Nigerian state driven by the ideology of a fanatical Islamic practice. So, the sect believes that its guerrilla war against the government and society is justifiable and in fact a holy Jihad. This sect hopes that if it continues unabated to hurt the Nigerian state and its security structure, infrastructure and superstructure, it would someday garner enough capacity to defeat the nation's security (in a conventional war) to take over government.

That such feat has already been achieved by a similar Islamic sect called the Taliban in Afghanistan makes it unwise to dismiss Boko Haram's tall ambition.

The Fulani herdsmen in North Central Nigeria are motivated by a combination of religious, political and economic ideologies. The religio-political ideology is that of dominance by conquest. The group believes there is nothing wrong in taking their herds across any land in Nigeria or in settling down wherever they decide. With history also showing the possibility that a land settled upon by them could suddenly become an indigenized Fulani colony with an emirate rulership administration, most indigenous land owners have roundly rejected any settlement. Again, the Fulani herders are reluctant to try new ways of grazing; they still see open grazing across long distances as a traditional way of life that must be sustained at all cost.

The political ideology driving the IPOB and its violent wing, Eastern Security Network, or OPC and its affiliates like Oodua Liberation Movement (OLM), is that of secession. The groups believe it would be better off for their people should they begin to exist as independent nations. Some Igbos, for instance, believe they have over the years been marginalized, discriminated against and unfairly treated simply because of their ethnic nationality. They believe the only true solution is to break away. Some Yorubas are open to true Federalism, where secession is not feasible.

In South South Nigeria, the ideology is more economical and political than religious. The thinking is that the region is the golden goose that lays the golden egg and so should be accorded its pride of place in the scheme of things. Some South Southers seem somewhat unhappy, for instance, that while crude oil extracted from their region is treated as national asset with proceeds shared every month to all states, the gold mined in Kaduna or Zamfara is allegedly treated as belonging to individuals and states, with nothing brought to the national table, for distribution to other states. This unhappiness degenerates into bitterness, then rage, then conflict, and then insurgency.

Public Relations: Concept and Strategies

First coined in 1807 by United States erstwhile President, Thomas Jefferson, while addressing the Congress, Public Relations can be described as the art and science of managing communication between an organisation and its key constituents to build, manage and sustain its positive reputation (Hasan, 2013). It has to do with aligning the perception of the target audiences (or publics) with the organisation's present realities and future prospects. It is a management function that typically involves monitoring and evaluating public attitudes and opinions, maintaining mutually beneficial relationships, and sustaining understanding between an organisation and its publics. Daramola (2003) cites The British Institute of Public Relations, as defining PR as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between organisation and its publics; and The World Assembly of Public Relations as defining PR as the concept as the art and social science of analyzing trends, producing their consequences, counseling organisational leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation and the public.

In a nutshell, Public Relations is anything and everything done to establish and improve mutual understanding or/and create and sustain mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its publics. The primary purpose of public relations therefore is the creation of goodwill, understanding, awareness, useful knowledge and favourable opinion/attitude.

There are certain strategies and channels which PR typically deploys to establish, improve and sustain goodwill between an organisation and its publics. They include: publicity (an effort intended to create public knowledge of an entity), press agentry (promotion of an entity through press releases to garner favourable media coverage), lobbying (an effort towards influencing authorities usually through persuasive engagements in order to change policies or actions to favour an entity or group interest), advertising (paid publicity designed to draw favourable attention and instigate patronage), propaganda (dissemination of mixed information intended to manipulate one's perspectives), public affairs (image making and promotion through representatives and spokespersons), promotion (a publicity strategy aimed at acquiring public awareness and endorsements), publication (task of preparing, producing and disseminating news and feature reports with positive mileage), merchandising (a strategy that blends physical characteristics with psychological attributes to secure public patronage and acceptance), event hosting (a stage activity that seeks to win credibility and acceptability for the entity), exhibition (an element within the promotional that seeks to reinforce an entity's presence), sponsorship (provision of support towards independent activities or good causes in a bid to enhance the sponsor's image and scale up its marketing communications), as well as relationship stewardship (a strategy that involves deliberate establishment and management of mutual relationships).

Applying Functional Public Relations Strategies in Resolving Nigeria's Insurgency Crisis
Some of the causes of insurgency in Nigeria as identified in this paper are land ownership and use, ethnic rivalry, poverty, unemployment, marginalization, eroding social values, religious differences, and failure of government. Some of the ideological motivations fueling insurgency in Nigeria have also been identified as emanating from religious beliefs, ethnic traditions, economic necessities, and the quest for conquest or political survival. A reflection on the causes and ideological motivations responsible for insurgency in Nigeria, reveals that what is required in resolving the insurgency crisis is far more than the might of Nigeria's security force. Aligning with scholars such as Monnard and Sriramesh (2019), Aliede, (2016), Aliede (n.d), Nwanmuoh, Dibua, Amaife and Obi-Okonkwo (2021), this paper posits that non-military approaches such as effective deployment of Public Relations are rather more effective at addressing insurgency and establishing sustainable peace, security and development in Nigeria.

From the channels and approaches of Public Relations strategies established in 8.0, this study outlines the following PR strategies for resolving Nigeria's insurgency crisis.
(i)   Conduct evaluation research to properly profile and understand the complexities of Nigeria's insurgency crisis. Evaluation research is at the heart of any PR effort. An evaluation is required to understand the problems, the causes, and the required PR

strategies to deploy. Approaching the crisis from the root is key to producing positive outcomes.

(ii)   Seek first to understand the ideological motivations fueling an insurgent group and safely engage, either directly or through third party, to share why peaceful dialogue is superior to aggression and estruction. For instance, the primary ideologies inspiring Boko Haram's havocs are their religious beliefs that western education is sin, that democracy is evil, and that westernization is against the teachings of Islam. But, how come only a minority of people within the Islamic faith think so? Since majority of the people, they portend to defend think differently, Nigeria's Federal Government could strategically engage the insurgents through influential Muslim clerics, scholars, intellectuals, leaders and traditional rulers, to encourage them to see from the prism of the majority.

(iii)   Dialogue, negotiate and lobby where necessary. Lobbying as a PR strategy means influencing authorities through persuasive engagements to change policies or actions r ideologies in favour of an entity's interest. Through lobbying, the government can positively influence ideologies of the insurgents using authorities they respect.

(iv)   Seek to resolve, not always to kill. The government can use persuasion, strategic communication and invitational rhetoric, rather than rely only on coercion. As established earlier in 7.1 and 7.2, if Nigeria's leaders begin to see sponsors and perpetrators of insurgence as co-stakeholders in the Nigerian project and adopt the invitational rhetoric approach of reasoning out with the insurgents, without posing as one hoping to impose a superior thinking on the group, a positive result could be achieved.

(v)   Use PR tools like sponsorships, events and exhibitions, as identified in Daramola, (2003), to demonstrate goodwill even towards the insurgents. The Government can creatively utilise PR tools in addressing insurgency. For instance, the Government can choose to sponsor some wholesome initiatives seeking to satisfy reasonable aspirations of insurgent groups or the people they purport to represent.

(vi)   Government should fix its part of the problem or be seen as striving to do so. Since Muzan (2014) recognises poverty, unemployment, marginalization and failures of government as some of the causes of insurgence in Nigeria, it goes without saying that the Government has to begin by fixing its side of the problem if it is serious about fixing the whole of the problems. For instance, Government can significantly stimulate the economy, create job opportunities, provide social amenities and address the hurting issue of marginalisation of any people.

(vii)   Government should slow down on approaching insurgency from the standpoint of warfare, but rather optimise two key Public Relations machineries: strategic communication and relationship building. If there is an open, transparent communication based on mutual trust and an effort to address the reasonable concerns of an insurgent group while sustaining mutually beneficiary relationship, it reasonably follows that such an insurgent group will not hold any moral justification to strike.

(viii) Utilise the mass media to push the right kind of communication even amidst the crisis. Asemah (2011) observes that whenever there is a crisis in any community, the

mass media are quickly used to preach oneness, unity and stress the imperativeness to reside in peace and harmony. So, effective deployment of crisis communication through the mass media is a healthy alternative to deployment of weapons of mass destruction.

Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations

Insurgency in Nigeria has reached a point where it can kill Nigeria if Nigeria does not 'kill' it. While the Government must be commended for its efforts so far in combating insurgency, this study submits that a more comprehensive way to addressing the menace of insurgency is to address its causes and the ideological motivations fueling its operations in Nigeria.

This study concludes that the deployment of strategic public relations is more effective than the use of arms and armaments in resolving Nigeria's protracted insurgency crisis. PR strategies like negotiations, dialoging, lobbying, sponsorship, problem evaluation, crisis management, strategic communication, mutual trust building, issue management, conflict resolution, relationship building, etc. can effectively and successfully be deployed to resolve the spiraling menace of insurgency in Nigeria.

To this end, the study offers the following recommendations:
  (i)   Nigerian Government should adopt a muti-stakeholder, multi-dimensional approach to address the escalating spate of insurgency in the country.
  (ii)   Stakeholders involved in the fight against insurgency should engage PR experts to help design workable PR plans and programmes, aimed at addressing the crisis of insurgency in Nigeria. Engaging the expertise of PR professionals, crisis managers and conflict resolution experts would be a right step in the right direction.
  (iii)   PR strategies such as dialogues, negotiations, lobbying, sponsorships, strategic communication, issue management, crisis management, crisis communication, conflict evaluation and management, and relationship building should be effectively deployed towards resolving Nigeria's protracted insurgency crisis.

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