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The role of 'The Supernatural' in warfare: An analysis of strategic spiritual intelligence in conflict management in Nigeria

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Abstract

The role of the supernatural and spirituality in the influence of human affairs has been an age long phenomenon. Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas at one time or the other had depended largely on the metaphysical for the explanation of the physical. However, with the coming of 'modernization', 'civilization' and 'religion', the concept of the supernatural, witchcraft and sorcery were jettisoned and regarded as barbaric, alien and retrogressive. Without dabbling on the argument of its nature, this paper examines the role of the supernatural in the conduct of warfare by analyzing how strategic spiritual intelligence can be deployed in the management of the multidimensional conflict situation Nigeria finds itself. Using historical methodology, the paper deployed the use of primary and secondary sources in its analysis and discussion. The paper argues that even without public proclamation, all parties to conflicts deploy some sort of strategic spiritual intelligence in the prosecution of the conflict most times at individual levels. It further argues that this strategic spiritual intelligence based on available evidence has been helpful to the users. The paper concludes that despite the unexplainable ways strategic spiritual intelligence operates, it can effectively be deployed to manage the myriads of conflicts in Nigeria ranging from Banditry, farmer-herder conflicts, kidnapping, insurgency, and militancy amongst others. The paper thereafter recommends the official recognition of strategic spiritual intelligence in the defence and intelligence architecture of the Nigerian Armed Forces to enhance its usage and thereby reducing the rate of conflicts in Nigeria.

Keywords: Strategic spiritual intelligence, Nigeria, Military, Conflict, dissidents

Introduction

Conflicts and warfare is as old as man's existence. As early as the beginning of creation, it was reported that the earliest humans Cain and Abel had to disagree leading to one killing the other. This trend has been ongoing especially when people could not resolve their differences peacefully. More so, conflicts have always arisen due to scarce resources. Because resources cannot go round, it results to the fight for the survival of the fittest thereby creating tension and friction. This situation led to the formation of armies during the evolutionary stage of kingdoms and city states to ward off external aggressors and maintain internal peace within the territory. However, in the ancient times, most armies deploy some sort of strategic spiritual intelligence in the management of conflicts. The use of the supernatural such as sorcery, witchcraft, crystal ball in

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determining the affairs of humans in the physical realm has been used to support symmetric or conventional warfare.[1]

As early as the 10th Century, during the era of the crusades between the Arabs and the Romans, the use of magical power, amulets and beliefs in prayer 'swords' were the order of the day in the prosecution of that war. In the 16th Century, William Shakespeare captured in his all time best seller, *Macbeth* the role played by the 'three witches' and their 'prophesies'. There exist several of these oriental works which succinctly captured the use of the supernatural in determining the affairs of man in the physical realm. During the European wars including the 100 years war, the 30 years war, the first and the second world wars, elements of sorcery, amulet and black magic were used in the prosecution of these military expeditions. A common example is the role of Joan of Arc in the determination of French victory against England in 1429 during the 100 year wars.[2]In fact, the Africans who were deployed to fight in the Second World War on the side of the allied powers 'cooked' themselves and 'fortified' themselves before leaving for the war in the 'white man's land'.[3]

In Africa and indeed in Nigeria, the use of the supernatural cannot be divorced from the management of conflicts. In fact, even the physical weapons used in wars are given spiritual blessings. This is vividly depicted in the wars fought in Africa in the pre-colonial periods. Snippets of what occurred in those wars are replicated in some of the movies produced by the Nigeria movie industry, Nollywood. Thus, Strategic Spiritual Intelligence in the prosecution and management of conflict with resounding successes abound in the history of warfare in Africa. The cases of Emotan of the Benin Kingdom, Inikpi of Igala kingdom, and several others sacrificed to manage conflicts are recent cases where human sacrifices are deployed to manage conflicts.[4]

With the coming of the Europeans and Arabs and the attendant introduction of their foreign religions, African religion that believes and uses supernatural effects and strategic spiritual intelligence was declared barbaric and anti-progressive. The religions of Islam and Christianity influenced Africans to abdicate the spirituality of the shrines and gods of their ancestors despite its known potency for the 'spirituality' of the modern religions of Islam and Christianity who deploys prayers, amulets, rosaries, holy water in their physical affairs. Hence, as Usman succinctly puts it, it is leaving the 'African spirituality' for 'European cum Arab spirituality'.[5]

This paper is however not interested in the comparism of religions, but tries to explore the supernatural effect of the African religion using its strategic spiritual intelligence mechanism in combating conflict and insecurity in Nigeria.

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1. P.H. Enesi, 'Peace, Security and Territorial Defence: An Examination of Traditional Defence Mechanism of Ebira People, 1850-1950', in Tangban et al (Ed) *Defence, Security, Economy and Development in Nigeria*, (London: Bahiti Publishers, 2017). 112.
[2]OBC Nwolise, 'Strategic Spiritual Intelligence in the Intelligence Process', A paper presented at the Leadership Course in Criminal Intelligence and Intelligence Management Cycle held at the Defence Intelligence College, Karu, Abuja, (2019): 11.
[3]Rtd MWOII Abel Salami, 95 years, World War II veteran, Okene, 18/12/2017
[4] Omale Okpanachi, 68 years, Retired teacher, Lokoja, 12/01/2018
[5] Usman Adeiza, 66 years, Traditional Medical Practitioner, Okene, 20/12/2017

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It is no gain saying that Nigeria has been bedeviled with myriads of conflicts that have seemingly overwhelmed the Nigerian military in its deployment of symmetric warfare. These security challenges include banditry, kidnapping, famer-herder clashes, insurgency, militancy and a host of others have become a bane for Nigeria's development which must be managed effectively for economic prosperity using strategic spiritual intelligence in combination with symmetric conflict management. In doing this, the paper adopted historical methodology and the discussion presented thematically. The paper is organized in five themes which include introduction, conflict and conflict Management in Nigeria, concept of spirituality in warfare, strategic spiritual intelligence in managing Nigeria's conflict and conclusion.

Conflicts and Conflict Management in Nigeria

Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in human existence as far as people lives in a society where ideas, wants, needs and choices differ. Thus, conflict cannot be avoided but can only be mitigated in families, institutions, organizations and societies where it occurs. Conflict can be described as a situation whereby there arises disagreement, differential opinions, friction and discord between peoples, groups or segments of a society.[6] Michael Nicholson defines conflict as the resultant effect of rancor or divergent interests concerning individual or group wants, needs and obligations.[7] Patzak opines that conflict is an antagonistic state of opposition, disagreement, or incompatibility between two or more parties[8] while Conrad sees conflict as a result of interactions among interdependent people who perceives that their interests are incompatible, inconsistent or in tension.[9]According to University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration, conflict is unresolved differences morph into complex, long standing disputes, which cause stress, damage relationship, destroy trust, hurt morale and hinder productivity.[10] Within the context of this definition, conflict does not just start but it gradually creeps to full blown conflict if differences are not well resolved and nipped at its bud In essence, conflict is simply the resultant effect of disagreements arising from differences in opinions, ideas and interests.

In the Nigerian scene, conflict involves the above conventional postulations and more as it embodies disagreement and most times perceived injustice, marginalization and sheer wickedness.[11] While some of the conflicts in Nigeria had been as a result of disagreements, differentiated opinions and interest of parties, some have been linked to perceive injustice, marginalization and sheer wickedness and criminality. The country has been engulfed in series of conflict

[6]Michael Nicholson, *The Concept and understanding of Conflict* (Ohio: Ohio Press, 2017), 21.
[7]Nicholson, *The Concept and understanding of Conflict* (Ohio: Ohio Press, 2017), 22.
[8]A.F. Hussein & Y.H. Salem Al-Mamary, Conflicts: Their Types, Their Negative and Positive Effects on Organisations', *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research, Vol 8, no. 8* (August 2019): 4
[9] C. Conrad, 'Communication in Conflict: Style strategy relationship', *Communication Monographs 58* (1991): 140.
[10]Conflict Resolution Program monograph, Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware,(2022): 12.
[11] P.H. Enesi, 45 years, Lecturer, Peace and Conflict Studies, Lokoja 01/12/2023

since independence in 1960. From the Western Nigeria conflicts to the Census conflict and thereafter the conflicts over the 1964 General Election which all culminated into the first coup of January 15, 1966 and the 30 months Nigerian Civil War between 1967 and 1970, Nigeria has had several other inter and intra ethnic conflicts, electoral violence and religious crisis. However, in the recent past, Nigeria has been faced with myriads of conflicts which had stretched the security apparatus of the Nigerian state. These conflicts include the Niger Delta militancy, the Boko Haram Insurgency, the Biafran secessionist agitations, the Farmer-Herder Conflicts, Banditry, and Kidnapping amongst others.

These hydra headed conflicts that had engulfed the Nigerian state is a major source of worry to the people, the military and indeed the government whose main role includes the protection of lives and property of the citizens. It may interest you to note that these conflicts enumerated above have resulted to the loss of lives and displacement of millions of people. While properties worth billions in naira have been burnt and destroyed. As explained earlier, the major trigger of crisis or conflict is disagreement in opinions or ideas. While this may be true for the triggers of some of the conflicts in Nigeria especially in the first decade of Nigeria's independence, the present spate of conflicts in Nigeria could be attributed to perceived injustice, marginalization, and corruption in high places. Other triggers include unemployment and unequal distribution of resources. However, some of the conflicts have no basis of linkage and are unwarranted. For better inference, below is a synopsis of conflicts in Nigeria.

The Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) Conflict: This conflict is restricted to the Eastern states of Nigeria where a group of people with the name Independent Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) led by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu agitates for the secession of the Eastern states from the Nigerian Federation. Although, this negates the true spirit of the Nigerian constitution, Independent Peoples of Biafra were bent on having their way by causing chaos, destruction of government facilities and ambush of military personnel. The group went further to declare a 'sit at home' order every Monday in the Eastern states where citizens are forced to stay at home every Monday to prove their points. IPOB movement derived its inspiration to further the cause of secession from the Biafran secessionist plan led by Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu that culminated into the 30 months Nigerian Civil War between 1967 and 1970 and Movement for the Survival of Biafra (MOSOB) led by Chief Ralph Uwazuirike. Thus, the clamour of IPOB is not new but a build up on earlier secessionist strategies of the Eastern region of Nigeria.

The activities of IPOB had caused untold hardship on people and wrecked havoc on businesses in the Eastern part of Nigeria. It further created a gulf between the North and South as the people of the North do not feel safe and secure in the East. This fear was reinforced with the trailing and killing of Alhaji Ahmed Gulak, the former political adviser to former president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan who was in the East on a political assignment for his party. IPOB and the military had also engaged in fierce battles which the military most times decimate the strong hold of these dissidents; it however had not been able to resolve the conflict. This conflict remains unabated even with the arrest and incarceration of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, the political and spiritual leader of IPOB.

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The Niger Delta Crisis: The Niger Delta conflict stems from the militancy of the Niger Delta youths who felt that the Nigerian Federation was not treating the region fairly and equally. This perceived injustice on the part of the Federal Government led the youths to take arms against the state. It is important to state here that the Niger Delta region holds the crude oil which is the major revenue earner of the country. Thus, the conflict is a quest for resource control where they in the Niger Delta will have absolute control of resources found in their land. This agitation started in February 1966 when Niger Delta activists led by Isaac Adaka Boro, Sam Owunari and Nettingham Dick using the platform of the Niger Delta Volunteer Force made a frantic attempt to excise the region from the Nigerian federation with the use of force. The activists were to declare if successful the Republic of the Niger Delta as a breakaway country from the Nigerian federation. This secession bid was quelled by the Nigerian Army after 12 days of fierce battle.[12] Agitations seems to be doused and subdued in the Niger Delta until in the early 1990s, when the foremost environmentalist Ken Saro Wiwa formed the Movement for the survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). MOSOP advocated for equitable distribution of the nation's resources especially a fairer share to the Niger Delta being the goose that laid the golden egg.[13] The movement also protested the degradation and environmental conditions of the land and this brought the movement in confrontation with the Federal Government. The movement was later crushed by the Nigerian Army and Ken Sarowiwa was tried, found guilty and executed on 10th November 1995 amidst international cries for clemency.[14]

The death of Sarowiwa awakened the consciousness of youths in the Niger Delta who organized a pan Ijaw conference where the Kaiyama declaration was signed. The declaration birthed several groups with the zeal to carry on the philosophy of Sarowiwa fighting for the emancipation of the Niger Delta. These groups later became violent and evolved into militant groups that have taken arms against the national government. They target oil companies exploring crude in their domains and bomb oil installations and pipelines at any given government provocation.[15]

The Boko Haram conflict:The Boko Haram insurgents is said to have evolved from religio-political activities where they claimed that 'Western Education has polluted the ideal Islam, hence Education (Boko) is forbidden (haram). The activities of Boko Haram became more worrisome from 21st September, 2004 when its members attacked Bama and Gworza police stations in Borno state, killing several policemen and stealing arms and ammunitions.[16] Apart from a few isolated clashes with the police, the sect received marginal attention until the middle of 2007 and again in 2008 when their militant activities came under surveillance by security operatives. In 2009, the group provoked anti-

[12]C.I. Obi, "Oil Minority Rights versus the Nigerian State: Conflict and Transcendence", *University of Leipzig Papers on Africa, Politics and Economics Series No. 53,*(2001): 12.
[13]P.H. Enesi, 45 years, Lecturer, Peace and Conflict Studies, Lokoja 01/12/2023
[14]P.H. Enesi, 45 years, Lecturer, Peace and Conflict Studies, Lokoja 01/12/2023
[15] Obi, "Oil Minority Rights versus the Nigerian State: Conflict and Transcendence", 12.
[16] Chinedu S. Udeh,"Boko Haram and Counter-terrorism Strategy in Nigeria: An Exploratory Anatomy". Ozoemenam Mbachu and Umaru M. Bature (eds.), *Internal Security Management in Nigeria: A Study in Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism,* (Kaduna: Madusa Academic Publishers Limited 2013), 308.

government uprising in Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Katsina and Yobe, leading to the extra-judicial killing of Mohammed Yusuf the leader of the group.[17] The brutal killing of Muhammed Yusuf leader angered the surviving members of the group to continue their violent attacks on government installations. The growing audacity and violent attacks of Boko Haram also manifested in the bombing of Police Headquarters and UN building in Abuja in 2011.[18] The activities of the sect have had various impacts on the security, social, economy and political activities of the country. Due to these devastating impacts, the Federal Government in collaboration with the affected state governments has made some frantic efforts which include political, socio-economic, security and diplomatic efforts to contend with the security challenges of the Boko Haram sect. However, the conflict continues unabated.

Farmer-Herder Conflicts: The Farmers Herders conflict is one of the major conflicts ravaging the North Central States of Nigeria or what is referred to as the middle belt of Nigeria. The issue of farmer-herder conflict is an age long conflict but in the recent decades the scenario had taken a huge turn for the worst most likely due to the dwindling and scarcity of resources to farm and to graze. In Benue, plateau, Kaduna and Kogi states of Nigeria, several lives have been lost and properties destroyed as a result of this conflict. The conflict took a religious, ethnic and political undertone during the administration of President Muhammed Buhari. It is believed that the Federal Government under the leadership of President Muhammed Buhari did not muster enough political will to curb the menace of farmer-herder conflict. It has been argued that the Fulani herdsmen and their socio-cultural organization Miyetti Allah Cattle Bearers Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) were emboldened by the stands of Buhari because of his ethnic and religious affiliation to the organization.[19]

According to Global Terrorism Index, the conflicts in Nigeria arising from Herder-Farmer conflicts have resulted to over 800 deaths by 2015.[20] In April 2016, there were further incidents in Agatu in Benue and Nimbo in Enugu state where 19 people were killed. In January 2018, 10 persons were killed in Numan Local Council of Adamawa State. In May 2018, four villages of Lamurde, Bang, Bolk, Zumoso and Gon in Adamawa state were attacked killing 15 persons. In June 2018, 200 people were killed and 50 houses burnt in Plateau State. In July of same year, 21 villagers were killed in Dowaya area of Adamawa State. In July 2018, 73 people were killed and 50 houses burnt in Yandang Community Lau local Government Area of Taraba State. In October 2018, 19 people were killed in Bassa Local Government Area of Kogi State. On 16 December, 2018, 15 people were lost their lives in Jema'a Local Council of Kaduna State. On the 11th of February, 2019, 11 people were killed in Adara settlement of Kajuru Local Council Area of Kaduna State. By 1th March 2019, 130 persons were killed again in Kajuru Local Council Area of Kaduna State. On 26th and 27th of January 2020, 32 persons were killed in Plateau State. On April 12, 2022, 23 persons were

[17]Udeh,"Boko Haram and Counter-terrorism Strategy in Nigeria: An Exploratory Anatomy", 308.
[18]. Udeh,"Boko Haram and Counter-terrorism Strategy in Nigeria: An Exploratory Anatomy", 308.
[19]Mr. Terseer Dyege, 61, Farmer, Vandeyika, March 2021.
[20] Global Terrorism Index, Institute for Economic and Peace, (2019), 43

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killed Guma and Tarka Local Government Areas of Benue State.[21] All these killings, loss of lives and destruction of properties as recanted above were as a result of herders-farmers conflicts either as primary conflict or a form of reprisals. As earlier stated, the Herder-farmer conflicts in Nigeria have taken an ethno-religious colouration which criminal and politicians harness for their nefarious activities.

Banditry and Kidnapping: Banditry and kidnapping have been a major form of societal conflict in all parts of Nigeria but most rampant in the North-Western States of Sokoto, Zamfara and Kaduna. Banditry has paralysed businesses and led to mass exodus of people from Zamfara, Sokoto and Katsina villages to the city centre for safety. In fact, many scholars have adjudged banditry in the same level with Boko Haram insurgents. Bandits move into villages, attack and kill scores of people unprovoked and burnt the villages. In some instances, holding the whole village hostage or kidnap several and taken to the bush.[22]

Nigeria being a sovereign nation is expected to manage the myriad of conflicts within its territory through the use of her security agencies. Conflict management according to University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration is the use of processes, tools and skills to find creative and respectful ways to resolve conflicts collaboratively through effective communication skills. It sees conflict as not something bad in totality but an indication that there is need for a change in policies and programs of governance.[23]Conflict can be managed before they occur, when they occur and after the conflict. In all these, conflict management techniques need to be effectively applied. The institute also provided five conflict resolution styles of accommodation, avoidance, compromise, competition and collaboration. Accommodation is the management tool where the government demonstrates the ability to concede and giving up some interest for the aggrieved party to have its way. Avoidance as a conflict management tool is for the government to choose not to acknowledge the presence of conflict knowing well that it exist. Compromise is about meeting the demands of the aggrieved party half way just for peace to reign. In competition as a strategy is to ensure you win and the other looses flatly to show superiority in relationship. Finally, Collaborating is talking through the differences of both parties to arrive at amicable resolution of the conflict.[24]

The Nigerian government through its military has been managing Nigeria's conflict since independence. However, they deploy widely the use of the fourth conflict management mechanism of 'Competition' where they go all out to crush the aggrieved parties in a show of strength and superiority. This is also called the kinetic approach to managing conflict. This kinetic approach has indeed yielded fruits but far from solving the myriad of conflicts that had engulfed the nation. In recent times, military scholars have advised against the constant use

[21] Global Terrorism Index, Institute for Economic and Peace, (2019), 45
[22] Maisaako Aminu, 40 years, Zamfara displaced person, Abuja, 04/06/ 2018
[23]Conflict Resolution Program monograph, Institute for Public Administration,University of Delaware, (2022): 15
[24] Conflict Resolution Program monograph, Institute for Public Administration,University of Delaware, (2022): 15

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of the kinetic strategy to managing conflicts and deploy the non kinetic strategy. This call was reiterated in November 2022 by the Provost of the Nigerian Defence College, Prof. Adam Ahmed Okene after a session with participants of the Nigerian Defence College, Abuja.[25] Scholars and policy commentators had also decried the seemingly lack of intelligence and collaboration amongst the Nigerian security forces which had in no small measure hamper the effective management of conflicts in Nigeria.[26] As much as the government said that they have decimated insurgency and weakened all forces of disintegration in Nigeria, the reality on ground is that these bandits, insurgents, militants, kidnappers and other criminals have been emboldened over time and the spate of their attacks is yet to be abated. Therefore there is even a conflict between government pronouncement on the successes recorded in conflict management and the reality on ground.

The concept of Spirituality in warfare

Many people in Nigeria either profess Christianity or Islam and the doctrine of spiritual warfare is well entrenched in their religious doctrines. Thus the concept of spirituality in warfare is not a new phenomenon. The hypocrisy is that, when it is publicly acknowledged that there is spirituality in western religions with respect to warfare, the use of strategic spiritual intelligence derived from African traditional religion is being shied away from. In reality, just like how adherents of Islam and Christianity believes in using prayers, holy water, rosaries and amulets to fight against known and perceived enemies or the devil, perpetrators of the conflicts in Nigeria, be it bandits, kidnappers, insurgents, militants and the likes also deploys the efficient use of strategic spiritual intelligence by conjuring, divining and offering sacrifices for the successful prosecution of their aims. Thus, adherents of Islam and Christianity believes in the supernatural powers of God that can be mysterious in the context of human affairs, the actors in conflicts also devise supernatural effects using strategic spiritual intelligence in their operations.

In African conflicts and indeed in Nigeria, oral evidence abounds in the use of strategic spiritual intelligence in the prosecution of conflicts by the dissident groups. According to Nwosile, the current spate of conflicts and warfare perpetrated in Nigeria involves irregular and unconventional actors. And because the players are non conventional military forces with non-established rules, they deploy irregular arms and protection which include the use of charms, luck amulets, voodoo conjuring amongst other forms of strategic spiritual intelligence. The Boko Haram for example has spiritual leaders; its key commanders use “African insurance” against weapons, and deploy hypnotism in recruitment, suicide bomb operations, and extraction of allegiance from members.[27] The group also uses Strategic Spiritual Intelligence in planning its attacks, kidnapping, and robbery operations. According to Yero Alkali, a repentant Boko Haram fighter, the use of charms and *rubutu*(washed writings of Quranic verses from a slate) were known feature of their preparation for

[25]Adam Ahmed Okene,Provost of the Nigerian Defence College, in an interview granted the press at the end of a seminar at the Nigerian Defence College, Abuja, November 2022.
[26] Abdulrahman Suberu, 65, Lecturer, Lokoja, 12/02/2018.
[27] Nwolise, ‘Strategic Spiritual Intelligence in the Intelligence Process’, 19.

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attack. The amulets were wrapped from parchments of the Holy Quran for protection and success in their expedition.[28]

The Niger Delta Militants also deploy the use of charms and other forms of strategic spiritual intelligence in the prosecution of militancy in the Niger Delta. The leader of Niger Delta People Volunteer Force, Alhaji Mujahid Asari Dokubo at a time in 2003 confessed to the worship of Egbesu, a local deity who fortifies its adherents from external humiliation. In essence, they perform some rituals and sacrifices before going for any expedition.[29] This strategic spiritual intelligence protects them and grants them victory over the Nigerian state. Several other criminal or dissident groups deploy both juju and charms in battling the state or attacking innocent persons. The Badoo cult group which operated in Lagos at a time devised a form of strategic spiritual intelligence in their operations. It is not just ordinary that the cult group specializes in wiping off the blood of their victims whose heads were smashed with a white handkerchief.[30]

A Major in the Nigerian Army who led a battalion in one of the operations in Eastern part of Nigeria against the Independent Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) in an interview said at a time they rounded up some members of IPOB, the day becomes dark and the dissidents were able to evade arrest and he said that scenario remained mysterious and he could not resolve what happened till date.[31] In some of the raids on IPOB, several charms and other articles of strategic spiritual intelligence were found in their hide outs. This goes a long way to explain the use of strategic spiritual intelligence in the operation of IPOB. In fact, one of IPOB spiritualist was captured in one of the military operations against IPOB.[32]

The use of strategic spiritual intelligence in conflicts and warfare is not peculiar to Nigeria alone. Several other groups all over the world had deployed the use of this form of intelligence in the prosecution of their wars. Nwolise recapped the use of spiritual strategic intelligence in the Liberian Civil War. There was rampant use of strategic spiritual intelligence such as magical success powers and protective charms by all warring sides. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia and the Liberian United Front for Reconciliation and Democracy were very notorious for the use of magical powers and spiritual methods. Nwolise also argues that the death of Samuel Doe of Liberia was also with the help of strategic spiritual intelligence as he was initiated into the Poro cult by the priest of Nyagbeaweh deity which spiritually disarmed and weakened the powers of Samuel Doe. It was later discovered that was the only way Samuel Doe could be subdued as he was spiritually fortified.[33]

In Sierra Leonean Civil War, the Kamajor militia was well known for the use and display of magical powers. The members were also known for their efficacious

[28] Yero Alkali, 41 years, Repentant Boko Haram fighter, Gombe, 12/05/2023.
[29] Mujahid Asari Dokubo interview on African Independent Television (AIT) 2003.
[30]Nwolise, 'Strategic Spiritual Intelligence in The Intelligence Process', 21.
[31]Anonymous, 47 years, military personnel, via phone, 21/12/2023
[32]Anonymous, 47 years, military personnel, via phone, 21/12/2023
[33]Nwolise, 'Strategic Spiritual Intelligence in The Intelligence Process', 21.

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and rigorous initiation processes, and abundant use of protective charms as part of their dressing. The members were spiritually fortified to the point that they could charge at and vanquish the enemy with confidence, and walk into and out of barrage of bullets and artillery fire without a scratch on their body.[34]Behren was also of the opinion in his work that the Holy Spirit Movement of Northern Uganda also deployed the enormous use of strategic spiritual intelligence in their military onslaught against the state as they are backed by spiritual forces.[35]

Strategic Spiritual Intelligence in managing Nigeria's conflicts

The management of conflicts in Nigeria has been a source of concern to citizens who bears the burden of these conflicts. They no longer live and conduct businesses in peace, their sources of livelihood have been deprived of them, their houses and properties burnt and indeed, the loss of loved ones shatters their emotions. Thus, the need to revamp the security management architecture is paramount as kinetic warfare and system of managing conflicts are not yielding the desired results in the ongoing conflicts in Nigeria. Analysts have argued on the several factors that hinder successful management of Nigerian conflicts ranging from banditry, militancy, insurgency and secessionist agitation among others. They attributed the lack of military success in containing these conflicts to improper coordination, failure of intelligence, warpreneurship, infiltration by the criminals, politics and lack of superior ammunitions.

As much as this paper agree to the multifaceted causes of Nigeria's failure to effectively manage its conflicts as enumerated above, the paper argues that there are more aside from them. One major denial of the Nigerian security architecture and indeed Nigerian official system is the use of strategic spiritual intelligence by the perpetrators of conflict. As evidenced in the preceding theme, these dissident groups deploy enormous use of strategic spiritual intelligence in their attacks on the military and the people. A serving commander of one of the troops in the North East containing the Boko Haram conflict in an interview testified to the fact that Boko Haram uses supernatural powers in the theatre of war. He further said that the Nigerian military who are better trained could not shoot at targets even at close range as the bullets defects in different direction while the Boko Haram fighters charges on them. In this scenario, the men of the Nigerian military had to abandon their arms and flee for their lives. It was of the opinion of the war commander that the Nigerian soldiers deserted the battlefield not out of cowardice but the unexplainable mystery in the theatre of war.[36]

With this testimony and many more by soldiers who experienced mystical powers in the battle field not only against Boko Haram, but IPOB, Bandits, and the Niger Delta militants, it is imperative for the managers of conflicts in Nigeria to overhaul their methodology. Nwosile had advocated at several fora that only the use of strategic spiritual intelligence by the Nigerian military can counter

[34]H. Behren, Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirit: Wars in Northern Uganda, 1985-1997, (Oxford: J. Curry, 1999), 51.
[35]Behren, Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirit: Wars in Northern Uganda, 1985-1997, 51.
[36] Anonymous, 51 years, Military Officer, Abuja, 11/03/2023

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and demystify the mystical powers of the dissidents be it IPOB fighters, Niger Delta militants, bandits and the Boko Haram insurgents. He submits that there is no alternative for the state and its defence and security agencies than to expand their intelligence space and build the intelligence service capacities and competencies of its defence and security agencies by the adoption of Strategic Spiritual Intelligence. Nwosile further argues that the fact that the adversary uses Strategic Spiritual Intelligence in the prosecution of the conflict, it is just commonsensical that the state and its defence and security agencies move a little higher to be on top of the adversary by deploying Counter- Strategic Spiritual Intelligence (C-SSI), and even Counter-Counter-Strategic Spiritual Intelligence (C-C-SSI).[37]

Although at the micro level, some soldiers fighting the insurgents against established norms have deployed some form of strategic spiritual intelligence to fortify themselves against the insurgents. A serving sergeant in the Boko Haram enclave of the North East in an interview confided that several soldiers who had access to strategic spiritual intelligence use it to protect themselves against the onslaught of the enemies. The sergeant said when he learnt of his deployment to the North East, he hurriedly went to his village for spiritual fortification. He was bathed in the blood of a sacrificed cock and given seven incisions on his scalp. It was after this, he headed to his base in the North East.[38] Another personnel of the Nigerian Army in his own account revealed that he was a transit route for strategic spiritual intelligence between his boss, a serving colonel and a spiritualist. He said that the Colonel due to his status cannot go to the shrine of the spiritualist and as such, he bears the message for his boss and offer sacrifices whenever it is needed.[39]

In essence, strategic spiritual intelligence is being used by the some members of the Nigerian Military for fortification and protection at a micro or personal level.And because it is not acknowledged by the state laws, it cannot be holistically deployed in the fight against enemies of the Nigerian state. Thus, Nwolise argues that for a holistic deployment of strategic spiritual intelligence for maximum gain, the Federal Government should set up a strategic spiritual intelligence unit in the office of the Inspector General of Police, National Security Adviser, or Chief of Defence Intelligence. By so doing, the nation would have formally acknowledged the presence and legality of strategic spiritual interest which will in turn boost the morale of officers and men of the Nigerian Armed Forces deployed to fight insurgents, bandits and militants amongst other criminal elements.[40]

Enesi in a paper that analysed the traditional defence mechanism of the Ebira people of Central Nigeria argues that if strategic spiritual intelligence were officially and legally allowed as a form of intelligence gathering mechanism, the issues of conflict would have been nipped at the bud. Using Ebiraland as a case study, Enesi outlines the basic rudiments of Ebira traditional conflict management mechanism which include preventive, ameliorative and palliative.

[37] Interview with OBC Nwolise, 74, retired professor, via phone, 13/01/2024
[38] Anonymous, 38 years, soldier, via phone, 03/01/2024
[39] Anonymous, 33 years, soldier, via phone, 23/12/2023
[40] Interview with Nwolise, 74, retired professor, via phone, 13/01/2024

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One way this ethnic group prevents conflict is through the annual divination called Eva-irayi in the Shrine which is always at a mountain top called *Ori*. In this ritual of sacrifice at the beginning of the Ebira new year, the gods through the Chief Priest will inform the people of what is expected in the year be it good or bad. If it is bad, the people through the Chief priest will ask for preventive measure called *Ojinyee*. And the gods will inform the people processes how to ensure it is prevented. If the menace cannot be totally prevented, the people will ask for amelioration of the problem called *Eero*.[41] With vivid examples, Enesi highlighted several cases where conflicts, plagues and diseases were effectively managed in the traditional Ebira society and submitted that if strategic spiritual intelligence was given prominence just like how it was the order of the day in the pre-colonial African societies, these myriad of conflicts in Nigeria will either have been nonexistent or a thing of the past.[42]

Agwanwo and Olumati argue that some of the non-state actors involved in crime control adopt the philosophy of spiritual intelligence as part of their mode of operation with outstanding results. A typical example was the 'Bakkasi Boys' in the South-east. The evolution of this group could be traced to the failure of the conventional police to stem the increasing waves of armed banditry at the Onitsha and Aba markets. Through the use of spiritual intelligence in crime control activities by the Bakkasi Boys, calm and normalcy returned to these markets, as armed banditry was reduced to the barest minimum level.[43] Williams informed that the success of the Bakkasi Boys in reducing crime was based on their adoption of physical and secret intelligence. According to him, the physical intelligence guaranteed only 20 per cent of their success, while the 80 per cent of their success was made possible by secret/spiritual intelligence.[44]

Conclusion

The concept of spirituality and the supernatural in the traditional African societies cannot be simply waved as non-existent despite the non recognition of it by most conventional states. This non recognition and acknowledgement of strategic spiritual intelligence can be attributed to the adoption of Islam and Christianity as state recognized religions especially in Nigeria. However, the country had been engulfed in a myriad of conflicts that have to a large extent defied conventional conflict management mechanism using kinetic warfare. These conflicts have had tremendous effect on the socio-economic and political climate of the nation. With overwhelming evidence of the use of strategic spiritual intelligence by actors of these conflicts, which include the Niger Delta militants, Boko Haram insurgents, IPOB secessionists, Bandits and kidnappers

[41]Enesi, 'Peace, Security and Territorial Defence: An Examination of Traditional Defence Mechanism of Ebira People, 1850-1950', 113
[42]Enesi, 'Peace, Security and Territorial Defence: An Examination of Traditional Defence Mechanism of Ebira People, 1850-1950', 113.
[43]Destiny E. Agwanwo & Rowland Olumati, 'Spiritual Intelligence as an Aspect of Crime Control Strategy: Evidence from Some Selected Law Enforcement Agents', *Global Journal of Applied, Management and Social Sciences, Vol.16*, (January 2019): 88.
[44]O. Williams, 'Ensuring peace by all any means necessary: politics, agenda and modus operandi of the Bakassi Boys',in Babawale, T. (Ed) *Urban violence, ethnic militias and the challenge of democratic consolidation in Nigeria*, (Ibadan: Concept Publishers, 2007) 71.

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in the conduct of their operations, it is just ideal to combine kinetic warfare and counter strategic spiritual intelligence by the Nigerian security architecture in the management of conflicts in Nigeria to combat these dissidents holistically. The paper is of the view that the deployment and use of strategic spiritual intelligence by the Nigerian Armed Forces will accentuate its victory in the fight against these insurgents. The military can prevent these conflicts and mitigating them by strategically locating and decimating these dissidents in their hideouts based on the information gathered from the use of strategic spiritual intelligence.

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