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**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR:
NON-VIOLENCE RESISTANCE AND THE PROBLEM
OF TERRORISM IN AFRICA**

Abstract

Martin Luther King Jr. cannot be said to have addressed the problem of terrorism in general because he proposed his philosophy of non-violence resistance within the context of the oppression, injustice, segregation, violence and discrimination suffered by the African Americans. Nevertheless, his philosophy captured ways by which we can fittingly address the problem of terrorism. Many of the methods of non-violence given by Martin Luther King Jr. are of paramount importance in the face of terrorism. His philosophy is basically important today in Nigeria owing to the fact that our unity as a country is threatened by the recurring activities of terrorism and as such we are at a cross road in the history of our country, where drastic decisions have to be taken to address this perilous trend. The philosophy of non-violent resistance as proposed by Martin Luther King Jr. is a veritable step towards a working solution, as it is not only an outcry against terrorism of any sort, but also an ideology that frowns against any form of action that results in the taking of human life or the carnage that comes with violence. His non-violent resistance theory which he developed after a deep study of Mahatma Gandhi's theory of non-violence, is a radical approach towards the fight against violence of any sort inflicted on the African Americans of his time, an action borne of a passionate fight against racism. So, to aptly address the problem of terrorism in Nigeria, it is necessary we consult and apply some principles of the philosophy of non-violence resistance as postulated by Martin Luther King Jr.

Key words: Martin Luther King Jr, non-violence, resistance, problem, terrorism

Introduction

One of the basic questions that confronts many philosophers, sociologists and political analysts today is: How can the fight against terrorism be won? This question is extremely essential in our country today especially following the outrageous killings and sabotage of government and private properties. Confronted by these phenomena, many thinkers have called for dialogue and negotiations. Some others have advocated for outright violence, and a subtle minority have addressed this through write ups calling on the government to respond radically to the yearnings of the masses. But then, in the face of these impasses and other related issues, scholars like Martin Luther King Jr¹ had advocated for a non-violent resistance. This is a kind of existential, pragmatic and moral philosophy that is geared towards changing the status quo. For him, this is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.² Thus, it is the only panacea to the nation's beleaguered problems.

Arguable as this issue appears, Martin Luther King Jr. tried to establish "Nonviolent Resistance" as an effective method for the oppressed in the face of abhorring segregation, injustice and violence that are rationally inexplicable and morally unjustifiable. Based on this, a philosophical exposition of King's notion of non-violent resistance becomes relevant in these times, bedeviled by the ills of terrorism.

In order to respond to this issue, let us have some conceptual clarifications of the operative concepts, the methods of non - violent resistance as well as the various forms of terrorism, paying particular attention to Africa as a case study. Then an evaluation, with an exposition of the way forward and a conclusion, will sum up the work.

Nonviolence

Non-violence is simply and squarely the negation of violence. It is "the use of peaceful means to bring about political or social change."³ Similarly, it is "a

¹ In the course of the paper the name Martin Luther King Jr. shall be used in short form as King.

² James M. Washington, *A testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*, New York: Harper One publishers 1991, p.38. (This work shall hereafter be cited as James M. Washington, A Testament of Hope.)

³ Simon Blackburn (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 394.

policy of not using force to bring about political or social change.”⁴It is also the practice of being harmless to self and others under every condition. It comes from the belief that hurting people, animals or the environment is unnecessary to achieve a result and refers to a general philosophy of abstention from violence based on moral, religious or spiritual principles.⁵

Again, the term non - violence is often linked with or even used as a synonym for peace, passivity and pacifism. Non-violence refers more specifically to the absence of violence and is always the choice to do no harm or the least harm, and passivity is the choice to do nothing. Sometimes non-violence is the same as being passive, and other times it is not, that is, it does resist. So, for example, if a house is burning down, the most harmless appropriate action is to put the fire out, not to sit by and passively let the fire burn.⁶

Also worthy of note is the fact that non-violence is traceable to one of the teachings of Mahavira, (another name for hero or conqueror which was used to refer to Vardhamana, the man who revived Jainism)⁷ about the necessity of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. Right conduct includes five great vows out of which the first is non-violence. Ahimsa means to cause no harm to any living being in any manner.⁸This definition envisages love as a recruiting factor in the principle of non-violence.

Resistance

Resistance is the use of force to oppose something or somebody, the power to endure something without damage or harm and to use force to stop the progress of something.⁹ Thus non - violent resistance is the capacity to endure ills

⁴ Mahatma Gandhi, *Nonviolent Resistance Satyagraha*, New York: Schocken Books, 1951, p. 196.

⁵ Gene Sharp, *Sharp's Dictionary of Power and Struggle: Language of Civil Resistance in Conflicts*, New York: Oxford University Press 2012, p. 77.

⁶ Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash(eds), *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Nonviolent Action from Gandhi to the Present*, Oxford: oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 3, 13-20.

⁷ Joseph Omoregbe, *A Philosophical Look at Religion*, Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers, 2011 p. 266.

⁸“Mahavira” in Wikipedia the free Encyclopedia <http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/mahavira> (8-3-2014)9:45 pm.

⁹ J. Crowther, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 778.

without choosing the option of violence. It is however pertinent to note that it is different from passive resistance.

Passive resistance is a “form of non-cooperation, that is, refusal to comply, as opposed to resistance by active means such as protest of risking arrest.”¹⁰ On the contrary, non-violent resistance is the practice of applying power, to achieve socio-political goals through symbolic protest, civil disobedience, economic or political non-cooperation and other methods, without using violence.

From the above, we can deduce that non-violent resistance is the general rejection of violence in human affairs not with the aim of passivity, but with the goal of working for the restoration of justice, respect for human persons and peace in the community. Peace, of course, is a precondition for the continued existence of humanity in a bearable and meaningful condition. Without peace in the society, human life will be unsafe and according to Thomas Hobbes, nasty brutish and short.¹¹ However, due to the complex nature of man, to achieve this, it may be difficult, but it is all the same achievable. Borrowing the words of William Frankena, “are not wholly innate, they must all be acquired, at least in part, by teaching and practice.”¹²

Terrorism

The emotion-laden “slippery subject” of terrorism, as sociologist Brain Jenkins notes, is a difficult one to define, but as a matter of fact, this has to be done if we are to discuss and understand this vital issue. For Jenkins, terrorism is “the use of threat of violence, calculated to create an atmosphere of fear and alarm and thereby brings some political result.”¹³ While this definition of terrorism presents a structure to work within, it also leaves us with some intricate ethical issues.

¹⁰Nwinya Stephen Chijioke, “Martin Luther Kings’s Philosophy of Nonviolent Resistance: A moral Weapon against Oppression “in *WAJOPS*, p. 34.

¹¹ M.M Goldsmith, “Thomas Hobbes: Ancient and Modern” in Tom Sorell (ed.), *The Rise of Modern Philosophy, the Tension Between the New and Traditional Philosophers from Machiavelli to Leibniz*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 321.

¹² William K. Frankena, *Ethics*, New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Limited. 1995, p. 53.

¹³ Michael Soroka, et al., *Social Problems: A World At Risk*, London: Allyn and Bacon, 1995,p.53

In Nigeria today, terrorism is traceable to the religious sect called Boko Haram. But then, following from the outrageous killings and destructions of properties in Nigeria, the current state of affairs is regarded in the statement of the former Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh, as a nation that is at war with the international terror organization, Al-Qaeda. For him, "Al-Qaeda forces were now fully in charge of terrorist activities in Nigeria."¹⁴ Both the United Nation and France made true allusion to this after pupils were massacred at the Federal Government College, Boni Yadi, Yobe State. This implies that Boko Haram apart from been a religious sect that is against western education, is now rated as a deadly terrorist group.¹⁵

Types of terrorism

There are at least three prevalent types of terrorism recognized by most political and social experts. They are:

Political Terrorism: This is a form of unconventional warfare without any humanitarian restraints or rules that is waged against governments. The aim of this kind of terrorism is to bring about significant change in and overthrow the existing government.¹⁶ For instance, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and recently in Thailand the Military coup, took over the government because of the incompetence displayed by their civil leaders.

State Terrorism: This is the use of violence by the government against its own citizens with the goal of terrifying them into submission. As with other forms of terrorism, the actual victims of psychological and physical brutalization serve as an example to the larger target audience, creating a pervasive atmosphere of helplessness and fear.

Enforcement Terrorism: This is used by revolutionary groups to gain the support of local people as well as to ensure that they do not collaborate with the government. This kind of terrorism captures the form of terrorism that has gripped Nigeria in recent times.

¹⁴ Yusuf Alli, "Why we met Obasanjo, by Shehu Sani" in *The Nation* Vol.9, May 29, 2014 p. 6.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Michael Soroka, et al., *Social problems: A World At Risk*, ibid, p. 53

More so, on the personality of a terrorist, scholars have argued that their actions are born out of ignorance. To this end, Paul Wilkinson argued that most “hard-core” terrorists are well-educated individuals with above average intelligence, people who are fully prepared to sacrifice their lives for some noble purpose.¹⁷ One other fact is that their agents could either be ignorant and jobless persons or those who have been mis-informed.

The actions of terrorists

The actions of terrorists span from assassination, indiscriminate robbery, killing, kidnapping, liberation of colleagues and hijacking. We shall explain each of these concepts briefly and make proper instances to how they are applicable in our country today.

- **Assassination:** The killing of well-known government and business leaders serves as a mechanism for attacking the hated status quo and generating immediate publicity for their organization. Unlike street criminals, terrorist very often claim responsibility for their actions.

- **Indiscriminate killing:** Detonating bombs in public places and taking the lives of people who are “guilty by association”. In Nigeria today, there have been litanies of bomb blasts, many of which have taken a lot of lives. Until recently, the daily report of journalists will not be complete without the addition of an explosion. As a matter of fact to say that detonation of bombs is their favorite and daily means of destruction is to state the obvious in a fine language.

- **Robbery:** Terrorist need money to finance their operations. In our country today there are occasions of stolen cars, and other expensive properties of great asset. They do this to meet up with their daily expenses and specifically for the purchase of weapons of mass destruction.

- **Kidnapping:** Taking prominent people hostage and holding them for ransom has the dual benefit of raising money and getting news coverage. For instance, in Nigeria, on the 14th of April 2014, the abduction of over 200 girls in a Government Secondary School Chibok, Borno State, filled the nation with apprehension. While some of these girls have been purportedly released, the majority of them are still in the custody of Boko Haram

¹⁷ Ibid.p. 56

- **Liberation of Colleagues:** Terrorists often place a high priority on freeing members of their group who have been apprehended and imprisoned. One strategy for achieving this goal is to step up the indiscriminate bombing of public places until imprisoned terrorist are set free. Another means is prisoners' exchange, which is common in Israel and Arab nations. Likewise, this is considered to be the desire of the terrorist groups in Nigeria.

- **Hijacking:** The skyjacking of airplanes was a favourite terrorist activity in the 1960's and 1970s, but the introduction of armed sky marshals and agreement with countries like Cuba brought about a significant reduction in this behaviour. Terrorists had hijacked airplanes to escape from one country to another or for hostage-taking and ransom.

Methods of non-violent resistance

The methods of non-violence resistance are simply the methods employed by non-violent resisters to express their plight. These methods are numerous; but in this paper we shall closely examine three of them which include acts of protest and persuasion, non-cooperation and non-violent intervention.

1. Acts of Protest and Persuasion

Non-violent acts of protest and persuasion are symbolic actions performed by a group of people to show their support or disapproval of something. The goal of this kind of action is to bring public awareness to an issue, persuade or influence a particular group of people, or to facilitate future non-violent actions. The message can be directed towards the public, opponents or people affected by the issue. It may also express deep personal feelings or moral condemnation on a social or political issue. For instance in Nigeria, since the problem of bomb blasts began, there have been a series of condemnations of such acts by government personnel and the generality of the people. As a matter of fact this has been reported to be the usual first response of Goodluck Jonathan during his tenure as President of the Nigeria to the issues of bomb blast in some states in the North. The focus of this act is to influence the assailant or terrorist, by means of arousing attention and publicity for the issue, in order to convince him

to accept the change. It equally keeps the terrorist informed about the adverse effect that will culminate from the issue if change is not made.¹⁸

Thus, methods used in non-violent protests and persuasion include: Public speeches, public communications, petitions, symbolic acts, act of processions and other public assemblies.¹⁹ It can also be expressed in symbolic public acts such as colours, badge, flowers, for instance the “red cap of liberty”²⁰. Another example is the carrying of placards by many patriotic citizens coming to the streets to protest like Nigerians did in the case of the abducted Chibok girls.

2. Non-cooperation

Non-violent action involves non-cooperation with the opponent. Such that the “actionists deliberately withdraw the usual forms and degree of their cooperation with the person, activity, institution, or regime with which they have become engaged in conflicts.”²¹ In the light of this, Gandhi held complete non-cooperation with the British masters, which he regarded as evil.²² Henry Thoreau also corroborated this view in his essay on “The duty of Civil Disobedience” which enraged the King because Thoreau believed that one should not cooperate with an evil system.²³ In this sense, the actionists terminate their usual cooperation which slows and halts or hinders an industry, political system or economic process and normal operations. In other words non-cooperation involves the deliberate discontinuance, withholding, or defiance of certain existing relationship, whether social, religious, economic or political.²⁴

3. Non-Violent Intervention

This method operates both positively and negatively²⁵. It can be used defensively, for example to maintain institutions or independent initiatives. It can

¹⁸ Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action: The methods of Non-violent Action Part Two*, ibid, p. 118

¹⁹ Gene Sharp, *Waging Non-violent Struggle*, Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 2005, pp.50-65

²⁰ George Lefebvre, *The French Revolution from its Origins to 1793*, New York: Columbia University press, 1962, p. 230

²¹ Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action: The methods of Non-violent Action Part Two*, ibid, p. 183

²² Arthur Herman, *Gandhi and Churchill: The Epic Rivalry That Destroyed an Empire and Forged our Age*, New York: Arrow Books Publications, 2009, p. 265.

²³ Martin Luther King Jr. *Stride Towards Freedom, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 2010*, p. 91

²⁴ Gene Sharp *The Politics of Non-violent Action*, ibid, p. 183

²⁵ Ibid. p. 357

also be used offensively, for example to drastically forward a non-violent struggle into the opponent's territory. Intervention is often more immediate and effective than the other two methods, but it is also harder to maintain and more taxing to the participants involved.

Compared with the methods of the classes of protest and persuasion and non-cooperation, the method of non-violent intervention poses a more direct and immediate challenge. If successful, the victory is likely to come quicker by the use of methods of this class than with the use of methods of the previous classes, because the disruptive effects of the intervention are harder to tolerate or withstand for a considerable period of time.

In most cases, the use of the methods of this class induce change through the mechanisms of accommodation or of non-violent coercion, that is, without the opponents being convinced that he ought to change his policy on the matter in question. Be that as it may, some of these methods, specifically those classed as psychological intervention,²⁶ and also the repression which frequently occurs against others, especially those of physical intervention,²⁷ may contribute to the opponent's conversion.

Two major strategies for terrorism

Contrivances for effectively combating terrorist activities are as controversial as other aspects of this phenomenon. However, we shall view this from two perspectives. They are the soft-line approach and the hard-line approach.

1. The soft-line approach advocates negotiation with the terrorist in order to secure the release of hostages and/ or to end a terrorist attack as quickly and bloodlessly as possible. Although the government hope that once they resolve a terrorist incident through negotiation and appeasement, their tormentors will go away and never return, just the opposite happens. Terrorists are likely to

²⁶ Psychological intervention is a kind of self-exposure to the elements, such as the sun in the form of self-retribution which involves putting psychological, moral or emotional pressure on others to induce them to change their attitudes or to take certain action. Another example is fast, this can be done for religious reasons or to achieve social and political objectives. (Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Non-violent Action*, p.359)

²⁷ Physical intervention involves sit-in, stand-in, ride-in, pray-in" wade-in etc. the purpose is to disrupt the normal pattern of activities, when these actions are carried out in a way that is not in consonant with the norms attention is captured. (Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Non-violent Action*, *ibid*, p. 371-379)

pounce on this motherly nature of the government and increase their level of infringements of pains and destruction. For instance, many have come to the seeming conclusion that the negotiating and amnesty given to the Niger Delta militants, to an extent, spurred the actions of the Boko Haram sect.

2. The hard-liner's approach: In this approach, there is no form of negotiation; rather what is obtainable is jungle justice. Adherents of this kind of approach advocate the death penalty for convicted terrorists. However, it has also been noted that hard core fanatic terrorists will hardly be deterred by the death penalty. As a matter of fact, they may relish the thought of becoming martyrs (after a highly publicized trial) and secure their niche. In this vein, Wilkinson notes that in "revolutionary history", martyrdom can also be a powerful force in gaining converts to the terrorists' cause and mostly attracts new members to their organization.

From the foregoing, one fact that cannot be denied is that the soft liner's approach (negotiation) is in line with the methods of non-violent resistance. This method was equally acknowledged by Goodluck Jonathan and it fostered the conversation of the national conference to meet up with the demands of the nation. He said "even as we remain resolute in our conviction that our union is non-negotiable we must never be afraid to embrace dialogue and strengthen the basis of this most cherished union."²⁸ However, in the face of any political turbulence, outrageous killing, religious crises and terrorism, especially as it is today in our country, the philosophy of non-violence cannot be overemphasized.

Evaluation

As a matter of fact, pride of place should be given to negotiation. This was emphasized by the president of the Civil Rights Congress of Nigeria, Comrade Shehu Sani, now a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, urged government to raise a contract committee and Islamic sect leaders' dialogue committee. The goal was "to trash the calamities by negotiation and in fact the use of force might not help."²⁹ So, physical force, violence, terrorism and war cannot help; our desire can be achieved by way of dialogue or peace-talks and gradual reconciliatory processes. To this end King says:

²⁸ The Nation, Thursday, 27th of February, 2014, p.2

²⁹ The Nation, Thursday, February 27, 2014, p.2

Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Every step towards the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle, the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.³⁰

Furthermore, in response to the hard-liners' approach, it is clearly evident from the Nigeria situation that jungle or death penalty has led to killing of innocent Nigerians. Today, the law regarding the death penalty has equally been morally evaluated. Many people have come to the realization that death is not the best option for any crime committed. This position is basically tied to the religious perspective, especially the notion that life is sacred.

Consequently, King noted that, "the minute a programme of violence is enunciated, even for self-defense, the atmosphere is filled with talk of violence and words falling on unsophisticated ears may be interpreted as an invitation to aggression."³¹ So, for him, even the idea of using violence, particularly that of enforcement terrorism that was envisaged by Malcolm X, was both suicidal and irrational.³² This is because, "he failed to see that no internal revolution has ever succeeded in overthrowing a government by violence unless the government has already lost the allegiance and effective control of its armed forces."³³

Thus, all violent approach cannot be a solution, for it knows only momentary victories just as Hannah argued that "even though the practice of violence, like all actions, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world."³⁴ So, the change brought by violence requires violent means for its sustenance.

At this juncture, we have to make some recommendations: firstly, we must debunk the notion that war is an inevitable, inescapable part of the human condition. This perspective is increasingly found in newspaper editorials and general social commentary. Secondly, campaigns for nuclear and chemical disarmament, which have been somewhat successful, should be continued and promoted. Thirdly, striving for attaining peace should be given the same rewards and prestige as preparing for and fighting war. To this end, there should be the establishment of "peace academies" that have the same standing and prestige as

³⁰Chidi Nwachukwu, in Vanguard, Monday 3rd of March 2014

³¹James Melvin Washington (Ed.), *Testament of Hope*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986, p. 590.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Hannah, Arendt *On Violence*, London: Allen Land Press, 1991, p. 80.

today's military academies. Fourthly, if lasting peace is ever to be attained, the nations of the world with special reference to Nigeria should forego the long-held notion of retribution or "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" philosophy. Lastly, the place of negotiation and peaceful protest cannot be downgraded in this matter. So all means towards negotiation or dialogue should be promoted and enhanced.

The place of non-violent resistance in combatting the current concerns of Nigeria in her fight against terrorism

From the foregoing, it is glaringly evident that Martin Luther King Jr.'s non-violence philosophy is one that is hinged on peaceful negotiations, one that is radical only to the extent to which it passionately desires the total freedom of humanity from fear, terror and oppression. As Mahatma Ghandi rightly puts it, to which King concurs, "non - violence is a quality, not of the body, but of the soul".

The two major terrorist concerns that plague Nigeria currently, are the Boko Haram terrorist group and the "Miyetti Allah" group (also known as the Fulani herdsmen or cattle breeders), – the latter's activities been the most recent and disturbing of the two. While Boko Haram has already been declared and generally recognized as a terrorist group with a religious undertone that presents them as people fighting a religious war in conjunction with the internationally acclaimed Al Qaeda terrorists, it is yet to be fully known what the "Miyetti Allah" basically aim at achieving from their recent obnoxious activities of murder and slaughtering of human beings, leaving a pile of carnage in their wake. Their most recent target areas been Born, Benue, Taraba and Jigawa.

However, the "Miyetti Allah group", in defense of the culprits, the cattle breeders, points out that this cannibalistic rampage, is a response from the cattle breeders to the previous neglect, unpunished killings and ill treatment of these cattle breeders (Fulani herdsmen). They further added that the anti-grazing laws passed in Benue state and other states in Nigeria, made sure that these nomads (cattle breeders), were killed in the past on some occasions when these nomads and their cows strayed into people's farms. For them, the obnoxious activities are a retaliation borne of suppressed anger, and a call on the federal government to improve the condition of these nomads.

While these responses seem quite rational, considering the fact that the herdsmen were at some point maltreated, their response to the problem which in simple terms can be seen as taking laws into their own hands, and most painfully, taking human life in the most gory and heartless of manners, invalidates this claim. This is because, no matter the problem faced by a group, taking human life remains a grievous offence, as nothing justifies an act of murder. The horrible manner in which the herdsmen killed these humans, and the gory pictures presented only conveyed a message of terror, fear and insecurity. More than anything else, the action of the herdsmen bore the undeniable likelihood of "Enforcement terrorism", as earlier described in this paper. The unjustifiable killings only points at an attribute of terrorists in Nigeria, which is basically the indiscriminate killing of innocent souls which are guilty only by association - and in this case, religious association. All of these thoughts and the resultant rumination on these happenings has only pointed out one factor - that the "Miyetti Allah" group may be more than anything else a terrorist group on rampage. A people who had embarked on a religious war, in a calculated attempt to force Islam on the citizens of the country. This religious tension is further heightened, correctly or erroneously, by the fact President, Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim, has not taken very immediate actions and is slow to declare the "Miyetti Allah" group a terrorist organization in spite of the terror they have left lingering in the minds of Nigerians with their recent killings.

In the midst of these social concerns, the president, in his bid to salvage the situation, has seen the creation of grazing colonies and reserves across all states in the country as a way out to put an end to this long fight between farmers and cattle breeders. But rather than providing a solution to the problem, this attempt only aroused suspicion among citizens, as many Nigerians see it as a calculated attempt to Islamize Nigeria. The fear that this group is more of a religious terrorist group, further compounded by the fact that these herdsmen carry ammunitions and dangerous weapons with Islamic inscriptions on them as noted by some eye witnesses, only concretizes this claim.

As a result of these concerns, further compounded by the fear of the people and a rooted mistrust of the president, the federal government is laden with a major duty of addressing this issue with dialogue and negotiations using the "soft line approach". This is because, an attempt to employ coercion and force (hard-liner approach) against "Miyetti Allah", will not only be harsh on them but will be an action that will ignore outright, the outcry of this group who no

matter the conditions still hold a claim that they (cattle breeders) were killed maltreated and ignored by the federal government and society.

Concomitantly, the attempt to create grazing colonies across the whole state to solve the herdsmen/farmers conflict is also a one sided decision and would naturally arouse suspicion because creating legal settlements for Fulani herdsmen, who have exhibited these deadly traits and killings, is only seen as a preposterous act of planting a host of marauding Sahel gangs all over the country, congregating in colonies across the nation, which may be a gateway to launch a hidden devious yet disturbing agenda of Islamizing the nation. This would be an action against religious freedom which should be an inalienable right of every human being.

Whether or not these notions are right, the fact remains that these claims about the Islamization of Nigeria, and the killing of people, mostly Christians, by these cattle breeders, may be a ploy to serve a desperate nation with a dish of Fulani colonies are justifiable considering the religious tensions across the world, and cannot be thrown completely to the mud. Therefore, the federal government must put the interest of the general populace at heart and rather than create colonies in every state create cattle ranches instead. This is where nonviolent negotiations in the spirit of a democratic consensus is needed. Every attempt, therefore to solve the problem of "Miyetti Allah" terrorism, and every other form of tension and terrorism, must not be forceful and unfavourable to any party, but must be balanced with the need for the peace of the nation and the dispelling of all forms of violence and oppression as well as the freedom of every citizen.

Conclusion

Having gone thus far, there is no doubt about the fact that the effectiveness of King's non-violent resistance is debatable. However, we cannot deny the fact that non-violence is morally the most effective method ever employed in the struggle for peace. More so, if we are fully committed to non-violence as King was, our country will certainly become a better place. But if we act on the contrary, there is no gainsaying the fact that commitment to violence leads to ultimate destruction and possible annihilation.

Blaise Pascal is not oblivious of the adverse effect of physical force in the society, but acknowledges the need for a moral force. Thus, on this ground, he opined that “Justice without force is impotent; force without justice is tyranny.”³⁵In all, we are called upon to see how useful, yet dangerous forces are in the construction and maintenance of social order. Firstly, it is a means of securing the peace and order which a society requires in order to grow and flourish. On the other hand, its arbitrary or illegitimate use is nothing but terrorism and despotism, which are anti-progress.³⁶

Basically, the arguments that span across this work are about the appropriate reaction of the oppressed people in their struggle against terrorism. Apparently, we have the methods of acquiescence and violence or terrorism, but King, in line with Hegel, held that truth is found neither in the thesis nor in the antithesis, but in the emergent synthesis that reconciles the two. Thus, in his stride towards freedom, King used this dialectics to indicate some of the basic aims of non-violence resistance, he said, “like the synthesis in Hegelian philosophy, the philosophy of non-violent resistance seeks to reconcile the truths of two opposites - acquiescence and violence - while avoiding the extremes and immoralities of both.”³⁷

Thus, from the foregoing we shall take the compatibilist’s view of acquiescence and violence, but solely on the basis of moral evaluation that would result in non-violent resistance. Therefore, it is our candid opinion that if the philosophy of non-violent resistance is inculcated and lived out in our country, Nigeria and in the world at large, it shall to an outsized degree reduce the various social harms and terrorism that are slowly destroying our country and world.

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³⁶Ibid.

³⁷John J. Ansbro, *Martin Luther King, Jr.: The making of the Mind*, New York: Orbis Books, 1982, p. 123 & 124

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