

BOOK REVIEW

- Title:** *Beyond the Guns: Policing Terrorism in a Democratic System*
- Authors:** MD Abubakar and Michael Ogbeidi
- Publisher:** Babcock University Press, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria
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Written at a time when global peace is greatly challenged by the threats of terrorism and fundamentalism, *Beyond the Guns: Policing Terrorism in a Democratic System* offers a well-researched, illuminating and interesting study of the dimensions of terrorism and national and international responses to this leading threat to global security and peace. Authored by a seasoned law enforcement practitioner and an astute academic, MD Abubakar and Michael M. Ogbedi, *Beyond the Guns* engages the reader on the terrorism discourse and the strategies that could be deployed in a democratic system to counter the scourge. The book is a product of the belief of the authors that Nigeria and other emerging democracies in the world have a lot to learn from the experiences of advanced democracies who have long been involved in the fight against terrorism.

Generally, the book provides valuable insight into national, regional and international responses to the menace of terrorism, the dilemma of policing terrorism in a democratic setting, the need for the state to embrace inter agency collaboration, intelligence-led policing and community policing as counter-terrorism strategies, and highlights the virtues of a holistic approach to counter-terrorism. The book chapters are carefully presented to give a deeper understanding of terrorism and

the need to evolve effective counter strategies to police the scourge without impeding civil liberties.

The authors, in chapter one of the book attempt a definition of the concept, adducing reasons why an attempt at defining terrorism has always been problematic. For instance, they posit that often the word ‘terrorism’ is a pejorative label applied by state actors to describe less powerful groups that oppose them using the instrumentality of violence. The authors also examine the historicity of terrorism by arguing that terrorist tactics and strategies were as old as history. However, the emergence of the current phenomenon could be traced to the 1960s and 1970s, when such groups began to anchor their existence on ethnic and religious ideologies as well as using the new media to propagate their acts/ideologies.

In chapter two, the authors analyse the relationship between democracy, terrorism, civil liberty and national security showing the dilemma of policing terrorism. The authors raised the fundamental issue of how a democratic state can fight terrorism without handicapping civil liberties. Despite the criticisms that trail counter-terrorism initiatives by democratic states, the authors averred that terrorism poses far greater danger to the growth of democratic culture, human rights and the sustenance of a stable national security initiative. The authors showed that it was difficult to fight terror without impeding civil liberties with practical examples from the post 9/11/2001 United States experience when the president and the congress enacted laws that, on the surface, curtailed civil liberty but in reality deepened democracy by removing the pervasive fear created by the terrorist attack.

Chapter three argues that terrorism is better policed using a multi-agency approach. It also interrogates the role of the media in this regard because of the symbiotic relationship between the media and terrorism. The authors alluded to the crucial function of immigration services in the fight against terrorism to ensure that only genuine visitors are allowed into the country. According to the authors, the “September 11 terrorist attack in the United States exposed the frightening weakness in immigration services world-wide as well as failure in airport security and intelligence gathering.” This gap can

best be understood in view of the service rivalry that exists amongst all the agencies. The assertion is that terrorists cannot progress in their quest to spread fear and advance their goals without the assistance of the media. By relaying the news of terror attacks, the media becomes the “oxygen” that gives life to terrorism. The dilemma of the media in this regard is that terror attacks are considered news worthy and, in a fiercely competitive media world, failure to relay such news could lead to a decline in viewership. Terrorists court the media to gain attention, recognition of their motives, respect and sympathy of their significant audience and to gain a legitimate status and a media treatment similar to those of state actors.

In chapter four, the authors examine counter-terrorism strategies deployed by advanced democracies in the fight against terrorism. The Israeli model, which places emphasis on prompt response to terror scenes to buoy the confidence of the populace, was canvassed. In addition, it invests in intelligence gathering and sharing to enable it dismantles terror cells before they are fully established. Another important strategy is to educate the public and to improve routine security preparedness through training and information dissemination. The Israeli National Police collaborate with private security firms to ensure all sectors of the society are thoroughly policed. Unlike the Israeli model, the United States of America employs a combination of preventive detention, strict immigration law and surveillance to keep away potential terrorists.

Chapter five stresses the fact that terrorism is an intelligence-led war and not an enforcement issue. The authors posit that since terrorism has no defined theatre, it becomes imperative that the police monitor potential tension between groups within a multicultural setting where alienation has been identified as one of the factors responsible for terror acts. They aver that intelligence gathering is fundamental to the war on terror but for it to be beneficial, the security apparatus needs to be proactive for prompt action on terror alerts. To this end, the authors recommend the military model of intelligence, which is a four-step process consisting of situational recognition, analysis, comprehending the course of action and rehearsals. This model bridges the gap between deliberate and emergency response, as it is multi-layered thereby giving room for robust response and analysis.

Finally, chapter six interrogates the numerous counter-terrorism options available to the state. The first is the military option aimed at total destruction of terror cells and safe havens but this option is far from ideal because terrorists thrive on covert actions and surprise attacks. Another approach, according to the authors, is the re-engineering of the social structure to ensure the sanctity of the social contract. In addition, they advocated a strong punishment regime, which should be anchored on international cooperation, to ensure intelligence sharing, arrest, prompt trial and sanction. For Nigeria, it becomes imperative that the security agencies are exposed to training to keep abreast of the dynamics in technology and military tactics. Of significance, is the need to ensure better welfare package for security personnel.

In the overall, *Beyond the Guns* is a unique scholarly treatise on terrorism in Nigeria given that contribution in this field has been mainly from foreign authors. However, the authors failed to take cognizance of recent developments, especially in multi-cultural societies, where security personnel have compromised their positions on the basis of ethnicity/or religion. Nigeria and Kenya are good examples, where evidence has shown that military/police personnel play down security information about potential threat or, as it happened in the Kenya University attack, choose to travel home on holiday despite receiving warnings about the attack. In addition, the authors did not interrogate the source of funding for terror groups, as this could help in countering terrorism if funding sources are cut off. Finally, the authors failed to contend with the happenings in the International Political Order (IPO), where the core states shy from availing peripheral states with intelligence and ammunition, especially if they fail to perceive potential benefits from such contexts. In all, *Beyond the Guns* comes as a breath of 'fresh air' in the year 2015. It is a veritable source of information for the academia, the police, military and other paramilitary organisations.