

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and National Security

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and National security could be said to be borne out of the need to enhance efficiency and effectiveness to capture new ways of skill, knowledge, to give power to every individual in the community, society and nation at large. Information and communication technology has become within a short time one of the basic building blocks of securing national security. Many countries of the world today regard the understanding of information and communication technology and security as or basis concepts for growth and development as well as peace keeping. It is on this ground that this paper examines the role of information and communication technology and terrorism, information and communication technology and national security, also the role of information and communication technology in the promotion of peace and development in the country. Conclusion and recommendations were made amongst which include; that government at all levels should provide adequate technologies that will be used to promote security of lives and properties of every individual in the country.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology today is a very strategic development in maintaining National security. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) emerged around 1996 and since remains as it describes itself "the leading academic institute for national security in the world", facilitating national and international cooperation in the global struggle for national security. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a term that involves all types of technologies use for manipulation and communication of information in the country Azodo (2008). The knowledge and approaches has a lot of positive impact on the national security in the country. If there must be effective development, security in the country, there should be a new technological innovation that will promote security of lives and properties of every individual irrespective of race in the country. (Adamu, 2009).

According to Umeh (2008), information and communication technology is a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to create and manipulate information. Umeh went further to say that information and communication technology provides a broad perspective on the nature of technologies, how to use and apply these technologies in order to impact peace and security on self, community, society and nation at large.

Modern form of civilization has become so intricate and sophisticated so much so that one has to be competitive enough to survive. Thus, people are compelled to keep themselves informed of all types of happening in the society, community and nation in general through information and communication technologies which promotes national security Davis (2010). According to Dohn (2011), speed in Improvement and advances in information and communication technology have made available new better ways of living and security of lives and properties in the country. This according to Dohn has changed the way people relate to one another, works, and learn. For instance, the traditional methods of education are no longer able to meet the needs of today's learners. So new technologies provide opportunities including, the ability to be security alert, peacekeeping as well as individual security device.

Information and Communication Technology can be referred to as a building block in the national security, thus can be seen when the united Airlines flight 175 that hit the south tower of the former world Trade Centre on September 11th 2001, the first instance of terrorism across the globe. One may ask what role did information and communication technology play in maintaining peace and security of the nation in that terrorist attack? Information and communication technology administers the largest public domain research database on the internet of terrorist organizations activists and incidents from about 1988 to the present time. One can rightfully say that information and communication technology has become an integral part of our community, society and nation in general in national security and peace keeping.

Information and Communication Technology and Terrorism

Information and Communication Technologies are no longer a luxury for even developing countries of the world. In fact; many of its innovations are emerging from developing countries. They are creating new ways of communicating, doing business and delivering services. Though extending access to ICTs and encouraging the use of ICTs, the world at large aims to stimulate sustainable economic growth to improve service delivery and promote good governance and social accountability around the world. With all these how then can ICT portend a threat to the world? (Jossy 2011)

Despite the so much good that ICT portends and promises, some scholars have however, dismissively argued that the issue should not just be about the technology but its effects. The aim here is to set the ground for the discourse on ICT and terrorism.

- The word terrorism is politically and emotionally charged and this greatly compounds the difficulty of providing a precise definition. Studies have found over 100 definitions of terrorism. Terrorism according to Wittich (2010), it is controversial since it is often used by state authorities and individuals with access to state support to legitimize political or other opponents, and potentially legitimize the state's own use of force against opponents. Such use of force too has been described as terror by opponent of the state. However, an abiding characteristic is the indiscriminate use of violence against non-combatants for the purpose of gaining publicity for a group, cause, or individual. Therefore, terrorism has generally been agreed amongst scholars to the systematic use of terror often violent, especially as means of coercion. In the international community, however, terrorism has no legally binding criminal law definition. Common definition of terrorism refer only to those violent acts which are intended to create fear (terror), are perpetrated for a religious, political or ideological goal, and deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants (Israel, 2012).

Having established this basis, it is paramount to look at information and communication technology and terrorism in our world today. ICT can both be used to foster terrorism on the one hand, and also to counter terrorism on the other hand. It is both a disease and a cure.

In the research of Schuller (2011), cyberspace is a virtual space that has become as important as real space for business, economies, politics and communities, but Malaysia commitment in using information and communication technology as reflected by the investment in the multimedia super corridor and its flagship increases their dependency on cyber space. He further to say that the dependency places Malaysia in an extremely precarious position because cyberspace is vulnerable to borderless attack due to this technology. As such, it has made Malaysia all the more to become a target to cyber terrorism. This is applicable to so many nations around the world today. Stashin (2012), stated that intelligence information are hacked constantly and security codes broken to access nations security information in order to lunch terrorist attacks. He maintained that the world seems no longer safe. The more the world becomes smaller through ICT, the more it becomes unsafe for human habitation as a result of terrorist activities.

According to Nystrom (2012), America, and even Africa are carried out through the calculated machinations from information and communication technologies. Nystrom said that the story has not been all bad when the reports from official website of Southeast Asia, reveals how ICT has been used to counter terrorism.

In fact, the terrorist activities are not far from Nigeria. About two years ago precisely 2011, the media celebrated arrest of one of the kingpins of the much dreaded terrorist group in Nigeria Boko Haram, that sent the nation frenzy in excitement, was alleged to have been tracked in a state's government house in Abuja through his cell phone. Furthermore, in July 2012, the World Bank group released an ambitious new information and communication technology strategy aimed at helping developing countries to use ICT to counter terrorism, transform delivery of basic services, drive innovation and productivity gains, and improve competitiveness.

Rachel (2012), view information and communication technologies as a means through which poverty can be reduced whereby promoting economic growth, combat terrorism, increase accountability and governance. The strategy reflects rapid changes in the use of mobile phones and the internet devices in the face of the increasing prevalence of terrorism across the globe, especially cyberspace.

Information and Communication Technology and Security

Information and communication technology have made available security of every individual, community, society and nation at large. Security of life and property is essential in the development of any nation and with advances in information and communications technologies such as telecommunications, audio-visual and so on development is granted.

According to Breedon (2012), information and communication technology has become an integral part of society especially in the security sector. Breedon stressed further that computer is obviously the backbone of information and communication technology in sector be it the education sector, banking sector, post office, small and large scale industries, research departments, defence departments, medical, e.t.c. information and communication technologies has become an essential part of virtually every field basically for storing huge amount of data (records) that will promote peace and security of the nation. Such data was usually kept in files, and handling was a difficult task, because, with time, there was possibility of such record being spoiled. But with information and communication technologies such as computer the security of such data would be save and could be retrieved without having to search dust-racked files.

Information and communication technology especially World Wide Web has promoted the security of our day to day life. This can be in almost all aspects of life, for instance, whether we have to take admission in a local or foreign institution, collection of geographical information of any region, confirmation of result of any examinations, transferring money from one bank account to another, send e-mail, have instant chat with anybody in any part of the world and so on, internet is the fastest secured and cheapest means to do so. Chase (2012).

Information technology has greatly revolutionized the security of banking system throughout the world. To carry out a small transaction previously was in fear of unknown; one had to spend hours or even a day in the bank. But today, with the computerization of banks and the help of Automated Teller Machine (ATMs), all transactions can be made within minutes with adequate security.

ATMs are found in every nook and cranny as the case maybe. Today, ATM cards are being used for shopping as well as cash withdrawal or deposit as the case maybe. Internet or online banking is the easiest way of making transactions. With an internet connection on the mobile phones, personal computer or cybercafé, one can easily and securely relax to make transactions at the comfort of their homes, offices.

Issue of security is topmost concern nowadays but with the advancement in information technology, security of secret data is procured. For instance, terrorist in their secret files could be also captured through the use of information technologies such as satellite phone communication.

The Role of Information and Communication Technology in the Promotion of Peace and Development in the Country

There is no doubt that information and communication technology has not promoted peace and development in the country. Although the internet was invented in the late 1960s, its use was limited to only a few segment of society until in the early 1980s when the internet protocol suite was standardized. By mid-1990s, the internet became a revolution that impacted tremendously change on culture, social and political aspects of life connecting people in far distances via instant messaging thereby making the world a global village in a World Wide Web (Emos, 2012).

Information and communication technology has facilitated political change in African and in Nigeria in particular and has bridged the ever increasing gap between communication and governance on the hand, and between the citizens themselves on the other hand Nwado (2011). Nwado went further to say that, impact of ICTs on politics and governance in the promotion of peace and development in Nigeria is already been felt. Since the breaking of government's monopoly on telecommunication, and television, more and more Nigerians have suddenly found a voice not only in their interpersonal communication on cultural, social and political issues. Radio and Television calling programmes are already putting enormous pressure on government to perform for the development of the country. For instance, in Abuja, a lot of Radio stations run programmes on cultural, social political issues such as Ray Power FM, Silverbird, Rhythm 94.7 FM, and the emergent and powerful Nigeria into 95.1 FM. Information and communication technology has also promoted peace and development in the country and this could be seen in the aspect of election monitoring and publication of results. It may be recall that during the 1993 general election, it was the wireless walkie-talkie that revealed the overwhelming victory of M.K.O. Abiola even before the result was truncated by the military establishment. No doubt, ICT is a veritable tool in the formation of citizen's network which connects poor and uneducated people who cannot afford the internet in an inter and intra flow of information. This connection is a potential tool for political mobilization in the maintenance of peace and development in the country. The recent ongoing registration of personal mobile phones has reduced to some extent crime committed by the users, this is because the individual can be traced through his/her vital information given and punished accordingly. In this way, the user would therefore use the mobile phones for more important business rather than using it for committing crime which will not promote the peace and development of the country.

Information and communication technologies can also be potent tools for political mobilization such as in political campaigns and elections in order to maintain peace and development in the country. It was this new innovation that gave president Obama an edge over his challengers during the US presidential campaign. Obama's campaign team used social media to rally a huge number of Americans to vote for him. Obama also raised a lot of his campaign money through the same social media. The question is, is that a possibility in Nigeria come 2015 So that peace can reign in the country?

Conclusions and Recommendations

Information and communication technology and National security should be a priority for country's peace and development by making available an accessible communication technology in the country.

One thing is certain; with determination information and communication technologies can change and turn the country into peaceful and secured nation. Information and communication technological gadgets have been made available for the use in the country, yet they demand to be used with prudence and responsibility, so that everybody doing a particular thing does not justify the rightness of the action but to the security of community, society and nation in general.

Every human action irrespective of rank should be based on reason and never on tendencies and natural inclinations. Any action base on sentiments and relativism therefore has no value for national security.

Government at all levels should provide adequate technologies that will be use to promote security of lives and properties of every individual in the country.

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