Review Article

Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria: Issues and Realities

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Abstract

The continuing haemorrhagic nature of Boko Haram calls for an exhaustive discourse on the veracity or otherwise claim of President Buhari's government of "technically defeating" the terrorist group as quickly as possible once elected. This paper examines the evolving and sustained onslaught of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria against the backdrop of government insistence that the sect has been substantially degraded; the index to the contrary is worrying and alarming for the citizens to bear. This has thrown up a ferocious debate about the claim and counterclaim across the political divide and even the country in recent times. However, regardless of what opinion one holds, the sheer scale of brutality of the sect after government's continuous claim that it has been degraded in the face of sustained military offensive, both by ground forces and air interdiction operations imply that the sect is resilient and yet to be degraded. This paper, therefore, attempts to provide explanatory narratives on the prevalent realities and also opines that even though the counter-insurgency operation presaged the emergence of President Muhammadu Buhari; and having inherited the "war" more needs to be done in the immediate years of his presidency. That the Boko Haram sect continues to run rampage is simply unacceptable in the face of his campaign promise to defeat the sect within the shortest possible time of his ascendancy to the highest office in the land. The paper concludes that terrorism currently assailing the Nigerian state requires a critical examination with appropriate solutions rather than government's tepid claims that continues to be challenged by a sect that has evidently grown more audacious in the intervening years since it first evolved in 2009.
Keywords: Boko Haram, Terrorism, Counter terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria was hailed at independence as a miracle project by both the departing colonialists and observers of emerging African states as the wave of independence swept through the continent with rapidity in 1960 in what Harold Smith styled the "decade of independence." This promise of greatness was predicated on the abundance of human and mineral deposits which abound in Nigeria. Assessment about a potentially great country was pervasive and upbeat. The mood was captured by a scholar when he posited that "independence inspired genuine feelings of comradeship and optimism in the political leaders. An editorial in West Africa on 19 November stated, "Even if Nigeria sounds sometimes too good to be true, the Nigerian story is one of the most remarkable and creditable in modern world.'"

In his inaugural address entitled, "Respect for Human Dignity," Nnamdi Azikiwe appealed to the political elites to ensure that efforts be made at national reconstruction and, "this great adventure of restoring the dignity of man in the world." He argued,

> Representative democracy has been tried in Nigeria and we have proved more than equal to the task…. When Britain transferred power to us on 1 October 1960, we were no longer an expression of geography but a reality of history. During all our years of political vassalage we become socially and economically integrated. We have also developed an identity of interest and we have crystallised a common nationality.

His peroration quoted Frank Buchman, the apostle of moral rearmament, when he intoned that: 'let us heal the breaches of the past so that, in forging our nation, there shall emerge on this continent a hate free, fear-free and greed-free people, who shall be in the vanguard of a world task force, whose assignment is not only to revive the stature of man in Africa, but to restore the dignity of man in the world'.

Arguably, post military governance in Nigeria emerged with new security challenges- amongst which are terrorism and insurgency. These twin complex security challenges were before now remotely thought about in Nigeria as occurrences far from its national frontier, given the almost near monopoly of the instrument of violence by the security forces. During the military era which dominated its post-independence trajectory until 1999, the country's national security concerns were mixed with regime survival and the thoughts of crushing any form of dissent with dispatch with marginal extra-national security threats. However, all that changed with the restoration of democracy and the emergence of ethnic militia groups and Boko Haram on the national scene between 1999 and beyond. The birth of the organiSation and campaigns of terror has changed the narrative and brought the issue of terrorism to the front burner of national discourse.

This paper focuses on how "the technically defeated Boko Haram" terrorist group continues threatening national peace and security in the face of government's insistence that the sect has been substantially degraded since 2015. The aim of the paper is to examine the prevalent reality, based on the electoral promise of the then candidate of the All Progressive Congress, Muhammadu Buhari that he would restore the country to the path of security within the shortest possible time.

The campaign of the presidency of Muhammadu Buhari was hinged on a three-fold promise of fighting insurgency/terrorism, corruption and revamping the economy, themes that resonated well with Nigerians given the perceived parlous state of the polity from several years of bad-governance and maladministration. Famed as highly incorruptible and disciplined during his first political stint as Military Head of State, 1983-1985, many turned to him for redemption, placating him to give a shot of the presidency for a record fourth time since the country's return to democracy in 1999. Allegations of his supervision of erosion of civil liberties were rife with the gagging of the press as the most heinous during his stint as military head of state but these allegations were dismissed by his admirers as divisionary but not lacking substance.

By 2015, the country was spiralling on a downward trajectory in all sectors with insecurity on the top of the list; evidenced with the poor ratings that the country was ascribed by both national and global rating agencies and the Army struggling to put down an insurgency which began in 2009 in the North East. He had run for the presidency and failed three times before 2015 and had even promised before then that it was going to be the last, but was persuaded to give it a shot again. The groundswell of opposition against his candidature was an admixture of variables including fear, correct assessments, myths and outlandish claims depending on what side of the spectrum the narrator stood.

In a spectacular and moving article, a former Ambassador of Nigeria to the United States, Ignatius Olisemeka [1] made a daring pitch for candidate Buhari when he wrote of his personal encounter some two decades previously:

Buhari, in my view, belongs to the last and passing generation of this group of Nigerian leaders. It was a pity that fate thrust him into leadership limelight at a period in time when military revolution and coups d'etats were in vogue and held sway. In a democratic setting, as we now have, I believe that the real worth and essence of this man, encapsulated in an exemplary and enigmatic personal life, will blaze through and shine forth. It will soon be clear that those of his followers of questionable and dubious pedigree who think they can latch on to the reputation of this rare Nigerian would be the first to be highly disappointed.

Olisemeka [1] further holds that,

I also believe that what is badly needed at this stage of our national life is a leadership that will turn the country around; and rescue us from the depth of chronic indiscipline, disorder and decadence we have, over the years, gradually descended and slided into. What I believe we need is a strong hand at the helm, with the support of our people, who will instill in us a much-needed sense of order and discipline; inspire us into patriotic zeal and sacrifice; bring out the best in each one of us; and encourage in us the love of nation.

Muhammadu Buhari [2] in a last-minute effort to convince Nigerians that his candidature holds enormous promise asserted:

At no other time in our history is Nigeria in such an urgent need of strong and competent leadership. Sadly, at no other time is this leadership so sorely absent in our country. We live in a time of great opportunities and great peril. It is only a leader that understands these in equal measure that can find the rightful place for Nigeria among the great Nations of the world. I have travelled extensively around Nigeria in the last three months. In the course, of my travels, I encountered directly; what I have always believed: that a Hausa man's desire for security is not different from the Ijaw woman's desire to feel secured in any part of the country.

With that, the issue of insurgency/terrorism and the need to stamp it out as quickly as possible

became an integral campaign issue. The inability of the Jonathan led Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to quell the insurgency/terrorism did not help matters as government was forced to pull back on the elections timetable on grounds that it needed some time to deal some decisive blows on the insurgents. This postponement did not do much good to the government as the opposition party cried that it was playing politics with a serious national security issue and pledged its readiness to crush the insurgents as government lacks clarity of policy and purpose on tackling the insurgents and other grave national security challenges. While terrorism and counter-insurgency operations were on-going before the emergence of Muhammadu Buhari in the political firmament of the country as President in 2015, its dominance as a campaign issue was defining and it is apparent lack of doing much in that regards even into the mid-way of his second term in office has not mitigated growing restiveness about the security challenges that has since grown more complex.

Nigeria has been grappling with diverse security concerns in recent times which includes banditry, electioneering conflicts, communal conflicts, socio-economic agitations, ethno-religious crises, ethnic militias, insurgency, boundary disputes, cultism and criminality [3]. These security lapses have continued with its wave now encompassing terrorist activities on a daring scale with the North East as a hotbed of terrorism with its attendant repercussions in displacement of persons from their ancestral homes, wanton destruction of lives and properties, disruptions of socio-economic activities and uncertainty. The toll has continued to rise with assurances from government of its resolve to tackle and defeat the insurgents. It is therefore important to study the factors responsible for its intractability of Boko Haram terrorism in order to understand the appropriate responses to the security challenge. The ultimate research question is what has been the nature and character of government counter-terrorism strategy in the Muhammadu Buhari era.

Terrorism does not enjoy a singularity of definition. It has been variously defined but this lack of unanimity has not failed to liken it as a tactics of threat or the actual use of physical coercion primarily against non-combatants, mainly innocent civilians, to create fear in order to achieve various political objectives [4]. The controversial nature and ambiguity in definitions of terrorism has not shielded nation-states within the international political system from experiencing its devastating impact when unleashed. Since 9/11 coordinated terror attacks on the United States, terrorism has continued to reinvent itself in new and more dangerous forms. As one terror group is defeated or fizzles out of existence, another new, more radical and violent and more dangerous group announces itself with more ferocity to take the place of the former. The plurality of terror tactics and groups in the international system has changed the dynamic factor of when and how to fight the upsurge. Finkel argues that the true lesson is the need for a more flexible security doctrine that enables one to prepare for multiple options. No Army, not even the richest, can fully prepare for every eventuality.

The use of terror as a political cum military strategy is evident as far back as recorded history but has assumed a global and more devastating dimension, especially following the Al-Qaeda multiple bombings in the United States of America in 2001. Before now the massacre of the inhabitants of a captured city was a common feature of warfare until the last few centuries when rules of engagements during military campaigns were codified. A would-be conqueror could expedite conquest by proclaiming that cities that refused to yield immediately would be razed and their inhabitants killed in a scorched earth strategy. In battle, given the hand weapons and massed formations used, most casualties were inflicted only after one side broke and ran.

Boko Haram was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 but the group launched an insurgency in 2009 in protest against the killing of its founder by security forces. The formation of the group is seen as the first phase and the insurgency is regarded as the second phase of the group by some commentators. The first phase was the period of seclusion, moving from the urban cities to the fringes and remote villages and occasional clashes with the Police and Military, which culminated in his capture by the military and subsequent killing by the police in 2009. The second phase coincided with the killing of Yusuf which was a tipping point for the group.

Conceptual and Theoretical Clarification
Perhaps, partly because of the difficulty of precise definition of what terrorism is or not, Chukudi [5], asserted that, "defining terrorism goes beyond theoretical framework, it involves operative concern as well." However, before going into discussion of issues of domestic terrorism in Nigeria, it is necessary to put the discourse in contextual background, to provide a framework for analysis. While definition of the term may be difficult to aggregate, there is no shortage of definition on the subject. Terrorism is a fluid concept that has remained hotly debated and sharply contested around the world from time immemorial, more so, in recent times. In conformity with the above statement, the centre for non-proliferation studies (www.ict.org), argues that governments use it while describing their foes and avoid it when describing allies. Its complexity is best understood in the maxim that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." A United States Army manual on countering terrorism defines terrorism as "the calculated use of violence to attain goals that are political, religious or ideological in nature. This is done through intimidation, coercion or instilling fear."

These pluralities of definitions include, Shafritz [6], who defined terrorism as "highly visible violence directed against randomly selected civilians in an effort to generate a pervasive sense of fear and thus affect government policies or violence against representatives (police, politicians or diplomats) of a state by those who wish to overthrow its government. This definition is similar to that of Friedlander [7] who sees "terrorism as premediated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine state agents, usually, intended to influence an audience."

In analysing the same concept, Norton [8] views terrorism as "deliberate, unjustifiable and random use of violence for political ends against protected persons. He stated further that the perpetrators of this violence could be the state, agents of the states, or individuals acting independently. The fact that State and non-State actors engage in acts of terrorism inform the position of Falk in Kegley that:

> It is futile and hypocritical self-deception to suppose that we can use the word terrorism to establish a double standard pertaining to the use of political violence…. Terrorism, then, is used here to designed any type of political violence that lacks an adequate moral and legal justification, regardless of whether the actor is a revolutionary group or a government.

Friedlander [7] further sees terrorism as the threat or use of violence for political purpose by individuals or groups, whether acting for, or in opposition to, established governmental authority, when such actions are intended to influence a target group other than the immediate victim or victims. Hoffman [9], expressed the view that terrorism is, "politically and emotionally charged, and this greatly compounds the difficulty of giving the exact definition." However, Schmid and Jongman assert that studies have found over 100 definitions of terrorism. Furthermore, Angus states that "the international community has never succeeded in developing an accepted comprehensive definition of terrorism."

Furthermore, Ismael sees terrorism as "a scourge that affects all of us as it threatens the very way of life we have come to cherish. It challenges the economic and political institutions we have erected. It undermines the principles of interaction among states. It negates one process. And worst of all, it fails to adhere to internationally accepted standards for conflict resolution." According to Hoffman, the word terrorism is politically and emotionally charged, and this greatly compounds the difficulty of giving the exact definition. However, the United Nations defines the term as "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular person for political purposes are in any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the

considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them." Daniyan [10] posits that the term terrorism is not new even in Nigeria. According to him, terrorism is "both a tactic and a strategy; a crime and a holy duty; a justified reaction to oppression and an inexcusable abomination…Terrorism has often been an effective tactic for the weaker side in a conflict. As an asymmetric form of conflict, it confers coercive power with many of the advantages of military force at a fraction of the cost." In 1992, the United Nations defines terrorism: "as anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby-in contrast to assassination- the direct targets of violence are not the main targets." Putting it in a broader definitional perspective, Adeoye [11], views terrorism as the use of any direct, illegal, irrational or random violence or the threat thereof against person or property, either by state or non-state actors for socio-political ends. According to him, state or government-sponsored terrorism may be difficult to trace because this is usually conducted through clandestine agents of states or other proxies.

These multiplicities of definitions have a shared commonality in the pattern of definition about terrorism- fear created by force and intimidation having a deliberately or purposefully harmful objective. Above all else, terrorism is a technique for undermining confidence in a state's ability to protect its citizens [12].

Terrorism along all levels of analysis is a strategy by which dissident or dissent groups unable to achieve power or to influence governmental policy (economic, social, political and even religious) through legitimate means, can coerce governments, over turn established regimes, and intimidate entire peoples. The motive is always psychological and its ends apocalyptic violence leaving in its trail evidence of destabilisation, panic, fear and demoralisation of the entire strata of society. Its modus operandi has always remained static with modification to suit its purpose and objective(s).

Terrorism is not a new historical phenomenon but what distinguishes modern terrorism is the avalanche of opportunities, frequency and variety of options from which it could pick its targets and unparalleled publicity at its beck and call [13].

In spite of the universality of terrorism, there appears some confusion about terrorism. Oftentimes, terror groups, because they hatch on legitimate national and even international grievances to legitimise their actions, havein the process recruited a sizable crop to its fold. Perhaps, related methods and tactics which terrorists groups employ to achieve objectives endear it to people across the world. Tactics employed by terrorists include: kidnapping for ransom, hostage-

taking, ambush and barricade, sabotage/vandalism, hijacking, threat, explosive, bombings, assassinations, mass murder, arson, scorched earth policy, taxation, landmines, extortion and suicide bombings, bio-chemical attacks, snipping, rail derailment [7, 11]. The entire tactics of the terrorist groups is to score and achieve maximum point, however loosely or well defined. Ultimately, terrorist groups gain satisfaction from the profound public anxiety associated with what seems an act of random or wanton violence [14]. From the foregoing, it is obvious that terrorism is a form of psychological warfare and the ultimate aim of such group(s) is to spread fear in the target audience in order to achieve a specific end.

Terrorism in Nigeria

Nigeria has experienced variants and mutation of municipal terrorism since the dawn of independence in 1960. As a matter of fact, both the state and non-state actors (mainly ethnic militias) in the annals of Nigeria's trajectory have resorted to the use of terrorism in advancement of their political interests at diverse periods in the annals of the country. The issue of domestic terrorism applies to opprobrious acts of violence perpetrated in furtherance of both state and non-state objectives, the latter resorting to actions such as publicising their grievances, settling scores, gaining and holding onto the lever of political power, while the state used it to tame the opposition during the march to democracy during the reins of General Sani Abacha.

Domestic terrorism is the broadest form of terrorism and it involves reckless use of terror as a tactics by dissident groups. Domestic terrorism is defined as "the unlawful use of force or violence, committed by a group(s) of two or more individuals, against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objective." Ethnic hatred, social antagonism, political and religious fanaticism which borders on intolerance remains a festering sore which is a catalyst for terrorism in Nigeria. The emergence of Maitatsinism in the 1980s signposted the commencement of full-blown religious fanaticism in Nigeria as the series of premediated violence shook the state, only second to the civil war. The Maitatsine uprisings were the most serious events that threatened the security of the state and engaged the material and human resources of the security forces to their utmost [15].

As the group waxed strong from 1980 to 1985, it threatened the socio-political and religious stability of Nigeria until the full weight of a sustained military operation was launched to uproot it. When the military routed out the sect in December 1980 in Kano, it sprouted in Bullum Kuttu area of Borno state on 16 October 1982, and Riggas village, Kaduna state on 20 October, were perpetrated by escapee disciples from the Kano incidents of the previous two years. The Jimeta-Yola outbreak in Gongola state, 1984 were led by Musa Makaniki while the last of these occurred in Gombe in April, 1985 [15].

Another frightening dimension was opened with spates of bombings and assassinations from 1986 to 1998. The mystery letter bomb that killed Lagos journalist, Dele Giwa was a rude awakening that jolted the nation. By the time of the regime of General Sani Abacha, it was a free rein as killings marked a new normal. Opposition political leaders were targets. The killings of Alfred Rewane, a chieftain of the pro-democracy movement, Kudirat Abiola, the wife of the presumed winner of the 12 June, 1993 elections, Dr. Sola Omoshola, the security officer of the Federal Airport Authority and two other occupants of his car. Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka and a few others fled for their lives.

At the height of the political agitation for the military to revert to its constitutional role of safeguarding the country, a group of Nigerians youths on October 23, 1993 hijacked an Airbus 310 and diverted it to Niamey in Niger Republic. The hijackers were styled the Movement for the Advancement of Democracy (MAD), in protest against continued military rule and the annulment of the June 12, 1993 general elections. This trend continued with the birth of constitutional democracy in Nigeria, with the proliferation of ethnic militia groups such as Odua People's Congress (OPC), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), and Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB). These groups openly confronted security forces. Rather than abate, it only grew worse in subsequent decades.

Boko-Haram Insurgency

The Boko Haram sect is unarguably the most dreaded and violent terrorist group that has sprouted in Nigeria since 1960. The group emerged in 2002 and mutated into its present form in 2009 after the killing of its founder by the Nigerian Police. The Boko Haram insurgency began in 2009, when the Islamist Jihadist Group Boko-Haram started an armed rebellion against the government of Nigeria under the pretense that the killing of its founder was a crime worth avenging. The conflict takes place within the context of long-standing issues of religious violence between Nigeria's Muslim and Christian communities, and the insurgent's ultimate aim is to establish an Islamic state in the region. Boko Haram's initial uprising failed, and its leader Mohammed Yusuf was killed by the Nigerian government. The movement consequently fractured into autonomous groups and started an insurgency, though rebel commander Abubakar Shekau managed to achieve a kind of primacy among the insurgents. Though challenged by internal rivals, such as Abu Usmatul al-Ansari's Salafist conservative faction and the Ansaru faction, Shekau became the insurgency's de- facto leader and mostly kept the

different Boko Haram factions from fighting each other, instead focusing on overthrowing the Nigerian government. Supported by other Jihadist organisations such as Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab, Shekau's tactics were marked by extreme brutality and explicit targeting of civilians with unparalleled savagery.

After years of fighting, the insurgents became increasingly more aggressive, and started to seize large areas in north-eastern Nigeria in its avowed determination to over-run the country. The violence escalated dramatically in 2014, with 10,849 deaths, while Boko Haram drastically expanded its territories. At the same time, the insurgency spread to neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, thus becoming a major regional conflict with disruptive tendencies. Meanwhile, Shekau attempted to improve his international standing among Jihadists by tacitly aligning with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in March 2015, with Boko Haram becoming the "Islamic State of West Africa Province" (ISWAP). The insurgents were driven back during the 2015 West African offensive by a Nigeria-led coalition of African and Western states, forcing the Islamists to retreat into Sambisa Forest and bases at Lake Chad. Discontent about various issues consequently grew within Boko Haram. Dissidents among the movement allied themselves with ISIL's central command and challenged Shekau's leadership, resulting in a violent split of the insurgents. Since then, Shekau and his loyalist group are generally referred to as "Boko Haram", whereas the dissidents continued to operate as ISWAP under Abu Musab al-Barnawi. The two factions consequently fought against each other while waging insurgencies against the local governments. After a period of reversals, Boko Haram and ISWAP launched new offensives in 2018 and 2019, again growing in strength. Boko Haram has been called the world's deadliest terrorist group, in terms of the number of people it has killed.

Boko Haram conducted its operations mainly peacefully during the first seven years of its existence. That changed in 2009 when the Nigerian government launched an investigation into the group's activities following reports that its members were arming themselves. Prior to that, the government reportedly repeatedly ignored warnings about the increasingly militant character of the organisation. When the government came into action, several members of the group were arrested in Bauchi, sparking deadly clashes with Nigerian security forces which led to the deaths of an estimated 700 people. During the fighting with the security forces Boko Haram fighters reportedly "used fuel-laden motorcycles" and "bows with poison arrows" to attack a police station. The group's founder and then leader Mohammed Yusuf was also killed during this time while still in police custody. After Yusuf's killing, Abubakar

Shekau became the leader and held this position till January 2015.

After the killing of Yusuf, the group carried out its first terrorist attack in Borno in January 2010. It resulted in the killing of four people. Since then, the violence has only escalated in terms of both frequency and intensity. In September 2010, a Bauchi prison break freed more than 700 Boko Haram militants, replenishing their force. On 29 May 2011, a few hours after Goodluck Jonathan was sworn in as president, several bombings purportedly by Boko Haram killed 15 and injured 55. On 16 June 2011, Boko Haram claimed to have conducted the Abuja police headquarters' bombing, the first known suicide attack in Nigeria. Two months later the United Nations building in Abuja was bombed, signifying the first time that Boko Haram attacked an international organisation. In December 2011, it carried out attacks in Damaturu, killing over a hundred people, subsequently clashing with security forces in December, resulting in at least 68 deaths. Two days later on Christmas Day, Boko Haram attacked several churches with bomb blasts and shootings. 15 June 2011 also marked the start of a Federal Government sanctioned military effort to counter the growing threat of Boko Haram's insurgency.

The Inauguration of President Muhammadu Buhari and the Fight against Boko Haram

With the defeat of Goodluck Jonathan in the 2015 presidential election, there was an initial calm before another round of disruptions by the Boko Haram insurgents with several mis-steps in government handling and reactions to the sect's onslaught. In the 2015, inaugural speech of President Buhari, he had restated his resolve to take on the insurgents until they either surrendered or were outrightly defeated. In the speech, the president stated:

> The most immediate is Boko Haram's insurgency. Progress has been made in recent weeks by our security forces but victory cannot be achieved by basing the Command and Control Centre in Abuja. The command centre will be relocated to Maiduguri and remain until Boko Haram is completely subdued. But we cannot claim to have defeated Boko Haram without rescuing the Chibok girls and all other innocent persons held hostage by insurgents. This government will do all it can to rescue them alive. Boko Haram is a typical example of small fires causing large fires. An eccentric and unorthodox preacher with a tiny following was given posthumous fame and following by his extra judicial murder at the hands of the police. Since then through official bungling, negligence, complacency or collusion Boko Haram became a terrifying force taking tens of thousands of lives and capturing several towns and villages covering

swathes of Nigerian sovereign territory. Boko Haram is a mindless, godless group who are as far away from Islam as one can think of. At the end of the hostilities when the group is subdued the Government intends to commission a sociological study to determine its origins, remote and immediate causes of the movement, its sponsors, the international connexions to ensure that measures are taken to prevent a recurrence of this evil. For now, the Armed Forces will be fully charged with prosecuting the fight against Boko haram. We shall overhaul the rules of engagement to avoid human rights violations in operations. We shall improve operational and legal mechanisms so that disciplinary steps are taken against proven human right violations by the Armed Forces. Boko Haram is not only the security issue bedevilling our country. The spate of kidnappings, armed robberies, herdsmen/farmers clashes, cattle rustlings all help to add to the general air of insecurity in our land. We are going to erect and maintain an efficient, disciplined people– friendly and well–compensated security forces within an over–all security architecture.

Before the emergence of Muhammadu Buhari's administration, the Boko Haram sect (together with its splinter faction known as Islamic State of West Africa Province- ISWAP) has come under sustained counter-insurgency measures to curtail, degrade and possibly defeat them by the Nigerian state to a variation of success and set-backs. The onslaught however defined and dominated the build-up of the 2015 general elections. Both presidential candidates, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari made promises to stem the tide if elected. For the latter, it was a deal for re-election, while for the former, it was about his military background as suitable for the task at hand.

While is Nigeria is not the only country in Africa fighting terrorism, the response is diverse both at the continental and national levels. At the continental level, the commitment of African countries to counter-terrorism resulted in the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism at the 35ft Summit of the defunct OAU in Algiers in July 1999. This commitment was further reiterated in the Dakar Declaration against Terrorism during the October 2001 Summit of the African Union (AU). Consequently, African leaders resolved to collaborate effectively to combat the phenomenon and this led to the adoption of the AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism.

Efforts to rail in the insurgents by previous administrations were met with an admixture of near successes, successes and missed opportunities. The "dispatching of state security agencies without any

strategy to address the root cause of terrorism" did the expected magic and agitations continued to grow for a more robust strategy to meet the challenge which the terrorist group pose [16]. Ssome scholars dismissed as tepid and uncoordinated the response. Instead of heeding the criticisms for a re-evaluation, the government went further by launching "Operation Flush," tasked with the mandate to decimate the group and contain several security lapses in the region in 2009 [17]. These was salutary and counter-productive as it failed woefully in steaming the tide as characterised by arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial killings and wanton destruction of lives and properties and in the process provoking counter-attacks by the insurgents citing strong arm-tactics of the Nigerian security forces.

At the national levels, various countries over the years, have introduced or amended national legislations to contain the scourge of terrorism to various degrees of successes. Obene (2015) traced the evolution of how the counter-terrorism in Nigeria, through Article 15 (1-3) of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Act of 2004, outlined activities which contradict the terrorism law. Some of the offences listed in the Act include financing of terrorism and engagement in acts of terrorism. The Terrorism Prevention Act, 2011 evolved to tackle the growing menace of terrorism in Nigeria and saddled the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) with the mandate to: ensure the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive counterterrorism (CT) strategy, build capacity for the effective discharge of the functions ofrelevant security, intelligence, law enforcement and military services under the act and do such other acts or things that are necessary for the effective performance of the relevant security and enforcement agencies under the act.

Pursuant to this mandate, ONSA established a Counter Terrorism Centre (CTC) which houses the Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch (JTAB) and the Behavioral Analysis and Strategic Communication Unit (BASCU). These creations were in response to, as well as the development of, the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST), which is organised around five work streams:

a. Forestall: To prevent people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism;
b. Secure: Strengthen protection capacity against terrorist attacks;
c. Identify: Pre-emption through detection, early warming and ensuring that terrorists acts are properly investigated;
d. Prepare: To mitigate the impact of terrorist attacks by building resilience and redundancies to ensure continuity of business;
e. Implement: A framework for the mobilisation of coordinated cross-governmental efforts.

The Presidential Initiative in the North East (PINE), an accelerated intervention programme, which focuses on accelerated relief plan for affected communities, population and redevelopment of the areas affected socially and economically as well as the Nigeria's Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) Programme. The Nigeria's CVE Programme consists of three (3) major areas of actions:

a. Counter Radicalisation- focuses on the community engagement, economic and education-based projects;
b. De-radicalisation- aims to reintegrate extremists and their families back into society through prison intervention and vocational training;
c. Strategic Communication- seeks to produce a counter-narrative, presenting moderate Islamic views as a stark contrast to violent extremism and promoting core national values.

The soft approach and the hard approach which is the military approach to Counter-Insurgency has seen the Army take a lead role, alongside other security agencies. This account for the transmutation of the Joint Task Force in Op FLUSHOUT 1 and OP RESTORE ORDER 1 TO 7 Division, Op BOYANA and Op ZAMAN LAFIYA. With 21 Armored Brigade (21 Bde) of the Nigerian Army as its nucleus, Joint Task Force Operation Restore Order (JTF ORO 1) marked the start of the Army's lengthy counter-insurgency (COIN) campaign against Boko Haram. The campaign has gone through several phases and has greatly escalated in scale, capacity, components and stakeholders, since that time. Results, however, have sometimes been mixed and the Army has been criticised for being too kinetic in its COIN. In January 2012, Abubakar Shekau, a former deputy to Yusuf, appeared in a video posted on YouTube. According to Reuters, Shekau took control of the group after Yusuf's death in 2009. Authorities had previously believed that Shekau died during the violence in 2009. By early 2012, the group was responsible for over 900 deaths.

On 7 March 2015, Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) via an audio message posted on the organisation's Twitter account. Nigerian army spokesperson, Sami Usman Kukasheka said the pledge was a sign of weakness and that Shekau was like a "drowning man". That same day, five suicide bomb blasts left 54 dead and 143 wounded. On 12 March 2015, ISIL's spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani released an audiotape in which he welcomed the pledge of allegiance, and described it as an expansion of the group's caliphate to West Africa.

The Nigerian military has adopted various strategies and tactics to tackle the insurgency including the following:

a. Command and Control: Following President Muhammadu Buhari's directive that the Military Command and Control be moved to the theater of operation, in a terse statement, the military high command stated, "a forward command base for the chief of army staff and other service chiefs. The move would boost the campaign against Boko Haram- known as Operation Restore Peace- without creating another layer of command structure" the statement read.
b. Raid on Terrorists Bases/Hideouts: Air and land assaults of terrorist's locations and camps have been routinely carried out based on intelligence provided by other stakeholders, including intel by security forces and locals with knowledge of the area.
c. Stop and Search Operations: The security forces in the frontline areas have resorted to the use of stop and search operations in fishing out terrorist elements. Such screenings of motorists and pedestrians in designated areas are conducted with the aid of bomb detectors and scanners. Similar operations are carried out in public and worship centers.
d. Multi-National Joint Task Force: The body evolved as a multilateral response to the danger posed by the Boko Haram to neighboring countries and has contingents from Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria. The task force is saddled with conducting military action against Boko Haram, curb banditry and facilitate free and safe movement of people.

Challenges Faced by the Military
In the discharge of the mandate to flush out the Boko Haram terrorists, the military is contending with some challenges in the discharge of its task. These include:

a. Insufficient Troops: Due to the massive land terrain and because of the nature of insurgency which is essentially hit and run, there is a massive need for more boots on ground to spread out the entire area of operation. This lack of adequate troops has made it impossible for the Army to hold on the ground and rotate troops that are fatigued from the war. This is adversely affecting both the morale of the troops and the progress of the war.
b. Perceived Neglect of Welfare of Troops: incessant reports that troops are not well taken care of by news organisations both local and international has contributed to the slow pace of the war and general air of indiscipline of troops who resort to extortion and other forms of indiscipline.
c. Marginal use of technology and modern equipment: The decade long insurgency has shown clearly that because of the terrain and

irregular nature of the war, the Nigerian security forces should rely more on technology than massive military strength in fishing out elements that are both hostile and which easily blend into the civil populace.

d. The Politicisation of the Counter-Insurgency Operation: The reckless utterances of some political leaders due to their vested interests have affected the pace of the war since the build-up to the 2015 general polls. These divisive statements continue to colour the disposition of the political elite to the insurgency operation in an adverse manner.

e. Hostile Media: The military has come under a sustained bad press both from within and beyond Nigeria in its counter-insurgency operations. This is mainly fueled by insinuations and innuendos that the Army is involved in large scale human rights violations in its determination to quickly end the insurgency.

f. Indiscipline: A fighting army is as good as its discipline, especially during an insurgency. The Nigerian Army has seen increased cases of desertion, acts of cowardice, mutiny and allegation of acting as fifth columnists by passing national security/classified documents to insurgents and subservice elements.

g. Infiltration of the Military by Insurgents: Former President, Goodluck Jonathan once alleged that the government is infiltrated by Boko Haram sympathisers and there is also allegation that the rank and file of the security forces is compromised. This has caused a huge set-back in the counter-insurgency operations especially as operational plans and strategies are leaked before major military offensives.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that the current on-going counter insurgency operations by Nigerian Security Forces has not been able to degrade or defeat Boko Haram as claimed by government. This is partly because the strategies adopted and implemented by government have not borne the desired results since 2015 by the President Muhammadu Buhari regime. The government has come under harsh rebuke as security of lives and properties is abysmally low. The much-known carrot and stick approach of government cannot be entirely faulted and dismissed but the implementation has some rough edges. Since the commencement of the counter-insurgency operation, there has been widespread accusation of arbitrariness of security forces in random arrest, extra-judicial killings and compromises. The goodwill that the security forces needs for a successful operation has since been vitiated and where there is no goodwill on the part of the civil populace, security forces waging counter-insurgency operations get bogged down and face needless difficulties. The

Nigerian security forces must, as a matter of emergence, win the minds of the populace to win the war.

Evidently, the war on terrorism is not a conventional warfare with defined objectives, space and time frame and as such requires deft strategic thinking and proactiveness. It has proven complex, fluid and unpredictable with a wave of unguided consequences which has threatened national and sub-regional security, displaced peoples both internally and beyond Nigeria's national frontiers and disrupted socio-economic activities on an unprecedented scale. The wantonness in destruction of lives and properties has proven the Boko Haram terrorist group as mindless and insistent on wreaking havoc at all possible cost. The hybrid nature of the war calls for collaboration, increased use of intelligence, sustained military onslaught and adequate de-radicalisation measures for insurgents that have renounced the set as well as retooling the economic derivatives of the zone.

The raging terrorism and counter-insurgency operations haverevealed that it is time to divorce security and politics as quickly as possible to win the war. Government may do well by concentrating on measures to defeat or degrade the sect with a variety of policies and military onslaught; rather by declaring that the sect has been defeated or degraded when it is still holding on to territories or wreaking havoc in its trail with recklessness. Whilst the campaign in terror is still visible and occurring with rapidity; it is capable of demoralising the citizenry when all that government does is to give assurances and re-assurances in the face of unprecedented destruction without tangible reactions that strikes at the heart of the terrorists.

The slippery nature of the war requires winning the minds of both the insurgents and allaying the anxieties of the worried citizenry who bear the brunt of the attacks and sufferings. The present political leadership, especially the president must provide leadership at this crucial moment in the annals of the country. Leadership is key to tackle, overcome and resolve knotty issues which the hybrid warfare ensues through empathy, direction and taking over the command and control of the security forces with the aim of a win, a total win and nothing else.

That the Boko Haram terrorist group has continued to pose security concerns, both within and far beyond Nigeria is a pointer that the threat analysis of the group is still potent and requires the collective will of the nation to defuse. This can only be done with credible intelligence. The use of intelligence to infiltrate the group is imperative. In some instances, they have taken the initiative of taking the fight to the security forces in a tit-for-tat manner, typical of hit and run tactics and that can only end if the grand strategy of Nigeria is quickly changed to accommodate this reality. Since the emergence of President Muhammadu Buhari,

in consonance with his campaign promises, he has asked the military high command to relocate to the theater of operation and has increased budgetary allocations but yet the possible outcome has not tilted the scale against the terrorists.

Given the above situation, the reality on ground is that Boko Haram has remained resolute, determined and even daring. Beyond increased budgetary allocation, the military strategy should go hand-in-hand with a deliberate action to transform the demented acts of terrorism within the theatre of operation and ensure it contains the insurgent approximately.

To ensure a strict de-escalation of the threat posed by the Boko Haram insurgents, the Muhammadu Buhari administration must invest heavily in technology to combat the sect and other related security challenges. Other strategy that the government can adopt to prevent the continuing resilience of Boko Haram is, as a national urgency, to identify and cut off its sources of income and arms flow and tighten the loose on the national borders to stave off foreign collaborators. Another step in the right direction is for government to evolve a department of home security with the task of providing intelligence, collating and sharing with relevant authorities as a real time basis. Such should be used to disrupt their free rein.

It is recommended that the economy should be empowered to take care of the unemployed and the poverty-ridden populace. Terrorism is generally accepted in poor, vulnerable and unstable societies and as such governments across all levels should invest in critical sectors of the economy with a view to redistributing and making wealth accessible to the vast majority. By doing so, many of the adherents of the Boko Haram terrorists will desert the fold of the sect.

Finally, the imperative for the nation's armed forces to be modernised cannot be overemphasised. This will better reposition the military to combat the threat it is fighting. The need for the national defence policy to reflect this reality is overdue.

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