



### Interrogating the domestic approach of Nigeria's counterterrorism strategy under president Goodluck Jonathan's Administration, 2009-2015

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#### **Abstract**

*Terrorism in northern Nigeria has remained persistent despite government's counterterrorism efforts. Hundreds of souls have been killed, settlements have been deserted, and lots of families have been internally displaced. While the havoc of terrorism is well known, the dynamics of the socio-religious factors that initiated them have not been well studied. It is against this backdrop that the study seeks to investigate the domestic approach of Nigeria's counterterrorism strategy under President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. It will also discuss the origin and causes of terrorism in Nigeria. To achieve its aim, the paper explores the terrorism prevention theory to conceptualize and explain its findings. Furthermore, it defines some terms and also explains the types of terrorism for better comprehension of the discourse. The paper employs both primary and secondary source materials.*

**Keywords:** Terrorism, Counterterrorism, Insurgency, Strategy, Nigeria

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#### **Introduction**

Bruce Hoffman opines that "terrorism is ineluctably political in aims and motives, violent or, equally important, threatens violence, designed to have far-reaching psychological



repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target, conducted by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure (whose members wear no uniform or identifying insignia), and perpetrated by a sub-national group or non-state entity."<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Nigeria has been affected by the spectre of terrorism and the devastation brought by it. She has witnessed series of ethno-religious and resource-based violence that has taken terror dimension and threatened its internal security. The Boko Haram insurgency has constituted a major challenge to stakeholders of Nigeria's national security agencies such as the military, police, and other security operatives as the core and traditional agents of national security in Nigeria. The study aims to investigate the domestic approach of Nigeria's counterterrorism strategy under President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. It discusses the origin, types and causes of terrorism in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarification (Terrorism, Counterterrorism, Insurgency and Strategy)**

#### **Terrorism**

Numerous attempts have been made to define terrorism and to distinguish it from other forms of political violence. As will be apparent, a consensus seems to be emerging that resort to violence by non-elected groups for achieving political ends in liberal democracies is an illegitimate and unjustifiable use of force; that the means do not justify the ends; and that terrorist acts in such societies constitute criminal rather than political offences, and should be prosecuted as such.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Counterterrorism**

To begin with, a clear distinction must be made between counterterrorism and counter-insurgency. Insurgency is an organized effort to overthrow the established government through a combination of subversion, guerrilla warfare, and terrorism. Insurgents tend to focus on a particular state or region, and they use terror quite selectively to

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<sup>1</sup> Hoffman, B. (2006) *Inside Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press. P. 80

<sup>2</sup> Lodge, J. (1981) *Terrorism: A Challenge to the State*. Oxford: Martin Robertson. P. 2

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avoid alienating people whose support they need in order to succeed. In its broadest sense, the term counterterrorism requires no definition at all. Simply put, it consists of any and all measures taken to oppose or counter terrorist acts.<sup>3</sup> Imobighe opines that "counterterrorism represents the various forms of response to pre-empt, prevent and eliminate terrorism. It involves the use of intelligence, counter-intelligence, as well as military and paramilitary forces to deal with all forms of terrorist threats."<sup>4</sup>

### ***Insurgency***

Insurgency is a strategy adopted by groups which cannot attain their political objectives through conventional means or by a quick seizure of power. It is used by those too weak to do otherwise.<sup>5</sup> Insurgency is characterized by protracted, asymmetric violence, ambiguity, the use of complex terrain (jungles, mountains, urban areas), psychological warfare, and political mobilization, all designed to protect the insurgents and eventually alter the balance of power in their favour. Insurgents may attempt to seize power and replace the existing government (revolutionary insurgency) or they may have more limited aims such as separation, autonomy, or alteration of a particular policy. They avoid battle spaces where they are weakest (often the conventional military sphere) and focus on those where they can operate on more equal footing, particularly the psychological and the political. Insurgents try to postpone decisive action, avoid defeat, sustain themselves, expand their support, and hope that, over time, the power balance changes in their favour.

Young and Gray, thus defines insurgency as "a general overarching concept that refers to a conflict between a government and an out group or opponent in which the latter uses both political resources and violence to change, reformulate, or uphold the legitimacy of one or more of four key aspects of politics." These aspects of politics are, "(1) the integrity of the borders and composition of the nation state,

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<sup>3</sup> Mockaitis, T. (2006) Counter-Terrorism. In: Andrew, T. (Ed.) *The Politics of Terrorism a Survey*. London: Routledge. P. 103

<sup>4</sup> Imobighe, T. (2006) Rethinking Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism. In: Imobighe, T. and Eguavoen, A. (Eds.) *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: An African Perspective*. Ibadan: Polygraphic Ventures Limited. P. 9

<sup>5</sup> Metz, S., Millen, R. (2014) *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Responses*. Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute. P. 2

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(2) the political system, (3), the authorities in power, and (4) the policies that determine who get what in societies."<sup>6</sup>

### **Strategy**

The term strategy originally referred to what we now know as military strategy is derived from the ancient Greek word, *strategia*, which referred to generalship.<sup>7</sup> The enormous number of rational and irrational factors that went into the creation of strategy in war, bereft of any certainty, was thought to be beyond systemic calculation by the average man, leading many to conclude that strategy and war were a theoretical. Strategy was initially believed to be an enigmatic art that could only be fully comprehended by military genius. However, the age of enlightenment encouraged scholars and practitioners of war to approach the topic with reasoning and scientific method. Strategy, therefore refers to the use made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy.<sup>8</sup>

### **Theoretical Framework**

In examining the counterterrorism approach of the Nigerian state and the rise of terrorism in Nigeria, this study employs the terrorism prevention theory. Terrorism prevention theory by Alex P. Schmid is used to analyze the counterterrorism approach of the Nigerian state. Previously known as Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), terrorism prevention is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary, proactive approach against the many forms of terrorism ideology.<sup>9</sup> Terrorism prevention works to protect a state from terrorist threats and remains the state's highest priority.

Terrorism prevention can be broken down into three phases, which are:

- Upstream, primary (early) prevention: reducing the risk of the formation of a terrorist group or organization,

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<sup>6</sup> Young, A., Gray, D. (2011) *Insurgency, Guerilla Warfare and Terrorism: Conflict and its Application for the Future*. *Global Security Studies*, Fall 2011, Volume 2, Issue 4. P.2

<sup>7</sup> Bowdish, R. (2013) *Military Strategy: Theory and Concepts*. Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy, Research Thesis, Department of Political Science. University of Nebraska. P. 12

<sup>8</sup> Gray, C. (2007) *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History*. New York: Routledge. P. 16

<sup>9</sup> Schmid, A. (2020) *Terrorism Prevention: Conceptual Issues (Definitions, Typologies and Theories)*, *Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness*. p, 15

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- Midstream, secondary (timely) prevention: reducing the risk of such a group or organization of being able to prepare a terrorist campaign, and
  - Downstream, tertiary (late) prevention: reducing the risk of execution of individual terrorist operations by foiling and deterring them.

In other words, if terrorist group formation cannot be forestalled in an early phase by taking appropriate upstream measures, the focus should be on preventing the preparation of terrorist campaigns and, if that also fails, prevention should seek to obstruct the occurrence of individual terrorist attacks. For each of these three phases (upstream, midstream, downstream), a number of preventive actions can be taken. The examples given below are apt for this study.

**Upstream prevention:**

- Good Governance, because when governance is bad, resistance against corrupt rule gains followers and support and might take the form of terrorism;
- Democracy, because when unpopular rulers cannot be voted out by democratic procedures, advocates of political violence find a wider audience;
- Rule of Law, because when rulers stand above the law and use the law as a political instrument against their opponents, the law loses its legitimacy and credibility, and encourages people to turn to alternative normative systems;
- Social Justice, because when long-standing injustices in society are not addressed but allowed to continue for years, without any light in sight at the end of the tunnel, desperate people, and some others championing their cause, are willing to die and to kill for what they perceive to be a just cause.<sup>10</sup>

**Midstream Terrorism Prevention**

When it comes to midstream terrorism prevention, an important role relates to deficient socialization and education of young people in their own immediate surroundings, especially when children are exposed to violence at home. Domestic violence within the family rarely stays at home but, sooner or later, often tends to spill over into society.<sup>11</sup> Since nobody is born a terrorist, push and pull factors during adolescence and acts of commission and omission from parents, schools, and communities during the formative years of a child play a

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p 28.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p 29.



large role in turning young people to harmful and problematic behaviours when the immediate environment cannot satisfy the basic human needs of young people.

The following midstream preventive measures that should be put in place include:

- Providing parents with infrastructures and opportunities that allow them to take good care of their children until they can stand on their own feet;
- Providing young people with affordable and good quality education to learn skills and develop their talents so that they can find their place in society;
- Offering young people challenging extra-curricular activities to keep them away from criminal gangs or religious sects;
- Providing young people with formal and informal opportunities to engage with the opposite sex in a responsible and respectful way;
- Facilitate cultural exchanges that allow young people to learn about, and tolerate, other ways of life.

#### ***Downstream Terrorism Prevention***

When one thinks of terrorism prevention, what first comes to mind are downstream preventive measures - such as not allowing guns and explosives to be brought/used in strategic places. Below are a number of typical measures that can be taken downstream.<sup>12</sup>

##### *Passive Prevention*

- Gun and explosive materials detection instruments at airports;
- Border and travel documents controls (including entry and exit control systems);
- Deterrence: threatening retaliation and punishment;
- Target hardening (e.g., using bomb blast resistant window films).

##### *Active Operational Tactical Prevention*

- Surveillance of suspects and bugging of their homes, cars, and meeting places;
- Neutralization through infiltrations into terrorist groups;
- Prevention through entrapment of extremists suspected of being on the point of preparing acts of terrorism;
- Preventive detentions or house arrests of dangerous extremists, based on court orders.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p 30.



Should upstream, midstream and downstream prevention fail, mitigating measures ought to be in place to reduce the impact of terrorist attacks through contingency planning and preparedness led by a governmental response-and-recovery apparatus that is geared to reduce harm and also serves to strengthen societal resilience.<sup>13</sup>

The counterterrorism approach of the government has over the years been seen as reactionary instead of being proactive. Terrorism prevention theory, when fully utilized, will drastically reduce terrorist acts (formation, organization and execution) in the country.

### **Types of Terrorism**

There are different types of terrorism, all of them share the common traits of being violent acts that destroy property, invoke fear and attempt to harm the lives of civilians. Terrorism could range from internet hacking to hijacking, bombing, diplomatic kidnapping, assassination and hostage taking among others.<sup>14</sup> Typology of terrorism varies depending on the way politicians, law makers, law enforcement and researchers have defined it. They distinguished different types of terrorism as part of the larger efforts to understand how to counter and deter it. In today's world, the types of terrorism that are common include the following:

#### **Domestic Terrorism**

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 objectives. It is the broadest form of terrorism and it involves car bombing etc. For example, the bombing of Nigerian Police Force Headquarters at Abuja on Thursday, June 16, 2011 was a domestic terrorism.<sup>15</sup>

#### **International Terrorism**

International terrorism takes place all over the world. It is practiced in a foreign country by terrorists who are not native to that country. International terrorism became American news in 1993. Terrorism has been of concern to the international community since 1937 when the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p 30.

<sup>14</sup> Abolurin, A. (2011) *Terrorism: Nigerian and Global Dimensions*. Ibadan: Golden-Gems. P. 20

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



League of Nations elaborated the convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism. The international community since 1963 has however elaborated universal legal instruments related to prevention and suppression of international terrorism, which constitute the universal legal regime against terrorism.

### **Political Terrorism**

Political terrorism as the name implies is politically-motivated. As a matter of fact, majority of the act embarked upon by terrorists are politically-oriented. Terrorism is a political tactic, which is used by activists when they believe that no other means will affect the kind of change desired. Hoffman opined that 'terrorism is ineluctably political in aims and motives.' Government can also use political terrorism to instill fear on the masses so as to achieve its aims and eliminate anyone that opposes its political aspiration.

### **State Terrorism**

State can use force or the threat of force, without declaring war to terrorise citizens and achieve political goal. State terrorism occurs when the national government aids terrorists to further its own foreign policy, and goals. State-sponsored terrorism can be described as a form of secret warfare; it is a means to wage war secretly through the use of terrorist surrogates as hired guns. State-sponsored terrorism has the backing of state's government who supply arms, money and safe haven to terrorists. State sponsorship can place at terrorist disposal the resources of an established country's diplomatic, military and intelligence services.

### **Cyber Terrorism**

Cyber terrorism involves the use of information technology to attack civilians and draw attention to their cause. It can be described as a computer crime targeting computer networks without necessarily affecting real world infrastructures, lives or properties. Cyber terrorists use information technology such as computer systems or telecommunications to perpetrate their act. For instance, cyber terrorists could disable networked emergency systems, totally disrupting its services, by means of what is referred to as computer virus. A large chunk of information could be lost through that process and it may not be possible to recover such.



### **Narcoterrorism**

Narcoterrorism has been used to indicate situations in which terrorists use drug trafficking to fund their other operations. In the original context, narcoterrorism is understood to mean attempts of narcotic traffickers to influence the policies of a government or society through such means as violence and intimidation to hinder the enforcement of law and the administration of justice by systematic threat or use of such violence. Narcoterrorism once denoted violence used by drug traffickers to influence governments or prevent government efforts to stop the drug trade. One of the best known and documented examples of narcoterrorism is Pablo Escobar's ruthless violence in his dealings with the Colombian and Peruvian Governments.

### **Religious Terrorism**

Religious terrorism is rooted in faith-based tenets. It is performed by groups or individuals. Religious terrorism defines an individual or a group's view or interpretation of that belief system's teaching and does not in itself necessarily define a particular religious view. It must be noted that terrorist acts throughout the centuries have been carried out on religious grounds with hope to either spread or enforce a system of belief. Religious terrorism is of two kinds: political religious terrorism; and milleniaristic terrorism. While the former aims for political goals, the latter strives for a higher abstract sacred goal that is impossible to reach. The milleniaristic type of terrorism affects the European society mostly and strikes most fear. It is in retaliation of something somebody has said or done, or something a society has 'done.' And if society has done something, everybody as a matter of fact is a possible target.

### **Origin of the Boko Haram Sect**

The emergence of the Boko Haram sect is mired in controversy, especially if one relies on media accounts. Most local and foreign media traced its origin to 2002, when Mohammed Yusuf emerged as the leader of the sect. However, Nigerian security forces put the origin of the sect to 1995,<sup>16</sup> when Abubakar Lawan established the AhluSunna wal'Jama'ah Hijra sect in University of Maiduguri, Borno State. It flourished as a non-violent movement until when Mohammed Yusuf assumed leadership of the sect in 2002, shortly after Abubakar

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<sup>16</sup> Onuoha, F. C. (2014) Boko Haram and Suicide Terrorism in Nigeria: Current Mode and Extrapolations. In: Nwoke, C. and Ogaba, O. (Eds.) *Contemporary Challenges in Nigeria, Africa and the World*. Lagos: NIIA. P. 73-74

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Lawan left to pursue further studies in Saudi Arabia. Since then, the sect has metamorphosed under various names like the *Muhajirun*, *Yusufiyyah* sect, *Nigerian Taliban*, *Boko Haram* and lately as *Jama'atu AhlisSunnah Lidda'Awati wal Jihad*.<sup>17</sup>

The Boko Haram sect originally tagged itself as *Jama'atu AhlisSunna Lidda'Awati wal Jihad* meaning 'People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad,' but became widely known as 'Boko Haram' due to the ideology it disseminates. The term 'Boko Haram' literally comes from the Hausa and the Arabic languages respectively. The Hausa word 'Boko' means "Western or otherwise non-Islamic education" while the Arabic word 'Haram' figuratively means "sin" (literally, "forbidden"). The Boko Haram can be said to gain the attention of the public in 2002 when Mohammed Yusuf, a Nigerian youth born in the village of Girgir in Yobe State, became its leader in 2002, and in 2004 the group moved to Kanamma, Yobe State. The Boko Haram sect represents the uneducated casual labourers and the Almajiris in the Northern parts of Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> It set up a religious complex, which included a mosque and an Islamic school.

### **Causes of Terrorism in Nigeria**

The causes of terrorism in Nigeria includes the following:

#### **Bad Governance and Corruption**

Nigerian leaders are involved in the most horrendous form of corruption one can imagine. The much-celebrated democracy in the country is slowly turning into a perfect aristocracy. A tiny fragment of the society is gnawing on the huge oil fortune of the country amid decaying public and private sector infrastructure and institutions.<sup>19</sup> Here, the intention is not to explain whether or not there is corruption in Nigeria but to say, candidly, that it has the effect of disillusioning and frustrating the public, especially the youth who see their erstwhile

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. P. 74

<sup>18</sup> Omotosho, M. (2014) Dynamics of Religious Fundamentalism: A Survey of Boko Haram Insurgency in Northern Nigeria. In: Nwoke, C. and Ogaba, O. (Eds.) *Contemporary Challenges in Nigeria, Africa and the World*. Lagos: NIIA. P. 8

<sup>19</sup> Duruji, M., Oviasogie, F. (2014) State Failure, Terrorism and Global Security: An Appraisal of the New Islamic Radicalism in Northern Nigeria. In: Nwoke, C. and Ogaba, O. (Eds.) *Contemporary Challenges in Nigeria, Africa and the World*. Lagos: NIIA. P. 426

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hopeful lives falling to pieces because of the negligence and selfishness of their leaders. So, bad governance and corruption with all its attendant problems of transparency, accountability and all related issues of maladministration in Nigeria have created widening gaps between the rulers and the ruled and it is capable of generating huge social problem including terrorism.

### **Economic Factor**

Terrorism did not develop in a vacuum. Poverty, long neglect and economic disenfranchisement of people, among other plethora of problems, by successive governments in Nigeria combined to generate terrorism in the country. According to a World Bank Report, more than 70% of Nigerian population lives below the minimum standard set by the United Nations and the situation is particularly worse in the Northern part of the country.<sup>20</sup> A situation where most people are poor and lack access to the basic means of livelihood such as quality education, shelter, health, water, electricity etc. This necessarily creates desperation and exerts pressure on some persons to innovate an unlawful means like joining terrorist group such as Boko Haram for the purpose of making ends meet. This is even made worse by the high level of illiteracy and ignorance amongst the citizenry, including those in urban and rural communities in the north-east.

### **Religious and Political Intolerance**

Religious and political intolerance have to do with the unwillingness by some people of particular religious and political beliefs to put up with others who have different religious or political beliefs. Incidents of religious and political intolerance have been manifested in Nigeria on a number of occasions. The Maitatsine episode in certain parts of northern Nigeria and the March 1987 religious riots in Kaduna State, are a case in point. Examples of political intolerance include the political crises of 1965 in the West and the violence which greeted the 1983 general elections in the country. In fact, the events that led to

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<sup>20</sup> Lain, J., Schoc M., Vishwanath, T. (2022) *Estimating a Poverty Trend for Nigeria between 2009 and 2019*. Policy Research Working Paper 9974 for World Bank Group. P. 16



the Civil War of 1967-1970, were not unconnected with this basic manifestation of various shades of intolerance.<sup>21</sup>

### **Ignorance**

Another causal factor is ignorance. It is an underlying factor which aids and provides a fatal ground for all other ills of the society including corruption. There is profound religious ignorance among the people. Religious knowledge is never promoted by the government, and because people could never be compelled to relinquish religion, they try to learn it on their own and consequently build erroneous interpretations on the little they know.<sup>22</sup> This is why the deviant teachings of 'khawarij' (extremists) writers like Abu Basir at-tartosi of London, Abu Qatadah, Omar Bakri Muhammad, Faisal, Abu Hamza and others who partly inspired Muhammad Yusuf and his followers hold firmly in the hearts of so many Muslim youths who have true faith in Islam and the zeal to understand the truth. But the inability of most youths to make good use of their faculty of reasoning makes them fall prey to such deviant teachings, which often contradicts the mainstream of the very Sunni path from where they commence their journey to extremism. In the whole of the Boko Haram camp, one seldom gets a real scholar or even an elderly person, let alone a 'muffi' who can rightly issue verdicts on religious matters.<sup>23</sup> Most of them are aged below forty, and most of them had severed links with their previous scholars on accusations that they are too moderate or scared of the authorities.

### **Porous Border**

Influx of foreigners into Nigeria has recorded an unprecedented increase in the seventies due to the oil boom which opened up many job opportunities in the country. The effect of drought and political unrest in some of our neighbouring countries especially Chad, helped to aggravate the problem. The ease with which people cross the international boundaries between Nigeria and her neighbours are due to the porous nature of the country's borders. There is, of course, the problem of identifying people from the opposite side of the border due to the ethno-cultural linkages between the border inhabitants on

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<sup>21</sup> Amujiri, B., Agu, S. (2012) Threats to Internal Security in Nigeria: An Examination of Security Challenges in Nigeria and the Implications.

*International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences*. Volume 4. P. 288

<sup>22</sup> Duruji, M., Oviasogie, F. (2014) State Failure, Terrorism and Global Security: An Appraisal of the New Islamic Radicalism in Northern Nigeria..... p. 427

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 428

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both sides. The porosity of Nigeria's borders has helped to promote, sustain and nurture the notorious activities of Boko Haram. Furthermore, Nigeria's borders are unmarked, undemarcated and largely unmanned due to lack of modern equipment, inadequate manpower, poor funding and logistics by the Nigerian Immigration Service and the Nigerian Police who are saddled with the responsibility of securing our borders. The porosity of our borders further threatens our national security.<sup>24</sup>

### **Transnational Threats**

Emerging scenario of transnational threats which are irrespective of national border and which comprises of a list of different risk factors that seem unending spanning from different transnational crimes like human and drug trafficking, money laundering, small arms and light weapon trafficking, cyber-crime etc., to widespread environmental degradation, diseases, climate change and even political policies which might threaten our nation's sovereignty has further challenged the concept of national security and aided terrorism.

### **Nigeria's Counterterrorism Strategy**

This section attempts to interrogate Nigeria's counterterrorism strategies, in order to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the government's counterterrorism measures adopted under President Goodluck Jonathan administration. To start with, the policy perspective of the Nigerian government counterterrorism strategy seeks to pursue several key principles which include:

- Upholding core Nigerian values, including the rule of law, civil rights and civil liberties of all Nigerians.
- Harnessing every tool at the country's disposal, including intelligence, military, and law enforcement, and maximizing cooperation between communities.
- Building partnerships with states and international institutions so that nations can take the fight to Boko Haram, its affiliates and adherents in their own countries.

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<sup>24</sup> Dokubo, C. (2010) Enhancing Nigeria's National Security Interest through International Relations. *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 36, No 1, pp. 35-39

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- Building a culture of preparedness and resilience to prevent terrorist attacks and ensure a quick recovery should an attack occur, and
  - Putting into consideration the economic cause of terrorism, which is, working to improve the economic conditions of Nigerians through job creation, improved education, health, security, industry etc.

In 2014, Col. Sambo Dasuki (rtd), the National Security Adviser (NSA) to the President of Nigeria released a statement announcing that the office of the NSA has unveiled a new approach to counter terrorism. It defines the roles and responsibilities of Ministries, Departments and Agencies, as well as that of the civil society on how to fight against violent extremism. Dasuki posits that the programme which was tagged the Nigeria's National Counterterrorism Strategy was developed by the NSA's office, international partners, experienced academics and selected non-state actors based on the experience of other countries in tackling terrorism. The strategy was developed taking into account the root causes of terrorism.<sup>25</sup>

This approach involves the establishment of Counter Terrorism Centre (CTC), under the office of the NSA. The CTC comprises of two departments, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch (JTAB) and the Behavioural Analysis and Strategic Communication Unit (BASCU), the CTC had also developed a dynamic and comprehensive National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST), in consultation with experts and international partners. This approach from limited understanding will be premised on rehabilitation of apprehended terrorists; providing needed infrastructure in the North; employment opportunities, etc.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, the government's counterterrorism measures against Boko Haram terrorist group include: declaration of state of emergency, imposition of curfew, military road blocks and checkpoints, establishment of civilian JTF, and soft power approach. An in-depth analysis of each measure becomes expedient at this point.

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<sup>25</sup> "FG rolls out three new approaches to Counterterrorism." *Nigerian Tribune* (2014) by Chris Agbambu, Wednesday, March 19.

<sup>26</sup> Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) *National Security Strategy*. P. 3

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## **Declaration of State of Emergency**

The first counterterrorism measure against Boko Haram was the declaration of state of emergency. Following the escalation of violence, killing, maiming and destruction of lives and properties by the Islamist group, especially in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, President Jonathan declared state of emergency in the affected states as a measure against the group.<sup>27</sup> This measure was to enable security forces to counter the barbaric activities of the Boko Haram whose violence is comparable to a declaration of war.

## **Imposition of Curfew**

Restriction of movement of people at a particular time interval is identified as an aspect of counterterrorism measure. Curfew is usually an order specifying a time during which certain regulation apply. It is an executive order that effectively prohibits or limits the right to be out in public at certain times or in some cases, require businesses to close during certain hours. Imposition of curfew is a common practice in Nigeria, especially as a measure by the government to swiftly de-escalate any civil unrest at a given place. This enables security forces some reasonable amount of power required to bring the troubled situation under control.

## **Military Road Blocks and Checkpoints**

As part of counterterrorism measures, the military mounted a number of checkpoints and road blocks in nearly every 1000 metres in all the areas of major operations. The checkpoints and road blocks were expected to be a point by point stop and search operations aimed at identifying Boko Haram suspects or vehicle carrying Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) or any arms and ammunitions. The checkpoints and road blocks also provided a platform to get information or report from members of the public as it relates to the activities of the Islamist group. In other words, military checkpoints and road blocks provide a strategic attempt at keeping and maintaining vigilance on suspected persons or groups, who may want to escape being detected, arrested or brought to justice and/or attempting to go and cause havoc elsewhere.

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<sup>27</sup> "Nigeria: Goodluck Jonathan declares emergency in States." BBC (2013) May 15



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### **Establishment of Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF)**

Another counterterrorism approach is the establishment of the Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) which was designed to represent the local hunters and militias who volunteered and were rightly recognized by the authority of the military, based on their familiarity with the people and the various geography and terrain of their respective areas to form a joint partnership with the military to hunt down the terrorist group in their domain. The civilian JTF are expected to be given some basic training in handling firearms even though they mostly relied on traditional weaponry in the defence of their people and community prior to military engagement. Yet their activities are expected to be coordinated by the military that are directly in charge and constitutionally empowered to fight both internal and external aggressors in collaboration with other security agencies of government namely the police and DSS.

### **Soft Power Approach**

The Federal government on Tuesday, March 11, 2014 rolled out three soft approaches to counter terrorism in the country, the approach will result in the development of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programme. The National Security Adviser (NSA), Sambo Dasuki, who rolled out the approaches at a stakeholder's forum in Abuja, said the approaches involved the three tiers of government. According to him, federal, state, local governments, civil society, academics, traditional, religious, and community leaders, as well as different layers of partners, ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) are included.

The NSA disclosed that the first stream is de-radicalisation of convicted terrorists, awaiting trial and those who might be released through court orders or such other government decision arising from the ongoing engagement and dialogues with repentant suspects. The de-radicalisation programme is prison-based and the Ministry of Interior, along with the Prison Service, would drive the programme. The initiative, he noted, would require substantial capacity building of prison staff in areas such as psychology, sport and art therapy, faith-based instructors and vocational training experts that would be included. According to him, the objectives were to engage violent extremist (convicts/suspects) in theological, ideological, physical and entrepreneurial value change that would lead to a change in their

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behaviour.<sup>28</sup> Also, families, community leaders and NGOs would be given access to participate in the process in a fair and transparent manner to speed up easy assimilation of convicts/suspects back to the society.

The second stream, the NSA disclosed, would be a societal approach, as the war against terror could be won through mobilizing the family's cultural, religious and national values. The NSA warned that schools must retrace their steps and return to being the primary laboratories of peace, where children go to learn about diversity, tolerance and how to commune with those of different faiths and ethnicities.

Thirdly, he announced that in conformity with human rights posture of the government, any terrorist arrested would be charged to court within 48 hours,<sup>29</sup> but where it was not possible, they would be arraigned before a chief magistrate court for proper remand, pending conclusion of investigations.

### **Interrogating the Effectiveness of President Jonathan's Domestic Counterterrorism Strategy**

This section evaluates the domestic efforts at countering terrorism in Nigeria within the period under review and the findings suggest that the domestic counterterrorism approach of President Jonathan's administration adopts the medley of military and non-military strategies. The military road blocks and check points, imposition of curfew, establishment of civilian joint task force (JTF) and the declaration of state of emergency were the military approach while the de-radicalisation of convicted terrorists, societal approach and the upholding human right were the non-military approach. It is however pertinent to note that there is no single solution to Boko Haram activities but a conscious attempt to meld hard power military operations with soft power within the elements of national power would speed the defeat of Boko Haram and return Nigeria to the path of peace and development.

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<sup>28</sup> "FG rolls out three new approaches to Counterterrorism." *Nigerian Tribune* (2014) by Chris Agbambu, Wednesday, March 19.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*



Despite the huge budgets for defense under president Jonathan's administration, including the \$1b loan<sup>30</sup> secured, the bloodletting persisted due to lack of transparency in the application of defense votes, leaving the war against terror fraught with obsolete equipment and ill-motivated personnel. Furthermore, the infiltration of the military, the politicization of the problem, corruption, lack of weaponry, unwillingness/inability of the international community to sell arms to Nigeria etc. made the government's counterterrorism strategy ineffective.

### **Conclusion**

The study shows that terrorism in Nigeria is a function of variety of factors such as socio-political and economic issues of entrenched bad governance and corruption, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy/ignorance, religious extremism and porous borders. It shows that a country that is rich but poorly managed can easily get drifted to crisis of unimaginable consequences and Boko Haram is certainly a manifestation of bad governance. It has been revealed that Boko Haram is a repercussion of the polity of mismanagement, corruption, repression and deprivation. Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that poverty and other socio-economic factors mentioned are not sufficient, as there are international dimensions to it in terms of the funding and acquisition of arms used for their operations.

The study has revealed that the declaration of state of emergency, imposition of curfew, establishment of civilian JTF, and the soft power approach were the government domestic counterterrorism measures against the Boko Haram terrorist activities. It is clear that the entire counterterrorism measures of the government against the insurgents are reactionary in nature. However, the study shows that force alone cannot defeat an act of violence where structural poverty, exclusion, intimidation, religious extremism and all sundry types of psycho-social pressures still constitute the society's mainstay. Hence, there is need for the government to embark on a comprehensive militaristic and non-militaristic approaches and also tackle the menace of bad governance, poverty, socio-economic inequality etc. The government should ensure that all political office holders, appointed or elected must be accountable and transparent, but in the meantime, the military operation should be adequately sustained so as to protect the lives and properties of the people until relative peace is restored.

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<sup>30</sup> "Jonathan Seeks Lawmakers' Approval For \$1bn Loan to Fight Insurgency." *Channels News* (2014) September 25