

## COUNTERINSURGENCY IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF THE COUNTERINSURGENCY APPROACHES OF NIGERIA AGAINST THE ISLAMIST BOKO HARAM

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### **Abstract**

This is a review work. The narrative study analyses the various counterinsurgency options adopted by the Nigeria government in combating the Islamist Boko Haram in the country's north. The Boko Haram is a radical Islamic fundamentalist that is opposed to all forms of western civilization including formal school, democracy, rule of law, party politics and secularism. It therefore erupts to violence to forcibly establish an Islamic State to be adjudicated by Islamic Injunctions of Qur'an and Hadith. The mindless violence since 2009 have left thousands of people death with properties worth millions of dollars destroyed. This article revealed that as options of combating the insurgency, the government have resorted to multifaceted strategies involving people-centered, enemy-centered and civilian base counterinsurgency operation. The dominant approach however remained the enemy-centered campaign; a strategy that involve the excessive deployment of troops and hot pursuit toward the perpetrators of the violence. The article recommends that as panacea to terminate the insurgent hostilities, government should focus on the root causes of the insurgency. Others are abolishment of key drivers inducing recruitment to the insurgent camps.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The protraction of the Islamist fundamentalist insurgency of Boko Haram in Nigeria have left the country and its authorities in a state of utmost confusion. It is not an aberration to say that the country has entered into an endless guerilla warfare with the non-state armed group. The insurgent colloquially 'Boko Haram' literally western education is sacrilege is an

Islamist that erupt into violence in 2009 to forcedly constitute an Islamic state in the Nigeria north (Gana and Mali, 2021). While it is antigovernment, it also appeared hypocritical to all forms of civilization including attending formal education, constitutionalism, party politics and gender equality. The objective is to profound a spiritual laws based on Islamic Jurisprudence. It also appeared critical toward Muslim faithfuls whose spiritual thought and believe does not conform with the group. Disputed by the vast majority, the group launched an indiscriminate violence to compel obedience by violently targeting both the state functionaries and the civil population.

The earlier strategies of its violence featured mostly on guerilla tactic comprising of gruesome murder, drive by shooting, suicide attacks, and explosion through vehicle born improvised devices (Agbiboa, 2015; Gana, 2020). Since 2009, it left hundreds of thousands of people death with property worth billions of dollars destroyed. Official statistics of the damages is virtually inaccessible as frequented attacks continuously reported almost on daily basis, however, anecdotal have indicated that over 40,000 people were brutally murdered both by insurgent and aggressive state counterinsurgencies. World refugee agency, the United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) (2020) shows that nearly 2million people were forcedly displaced as Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees.

Consequently, contrary to the guerrilla warfare, in 2011 the insurgent launched offensive against the state authorities by deploying sophisticated weapons while raiding and capturing towns and villages including the military formations Onuoha, 2014: Gana Et.al, 2018. In 2014 alonenfor instance, the insurgent has reportedly captured about five military barracks by forcedly displacing the soldiers from the formations. Among the barracks captured includes the Multinational Joint Task Force founded by the member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission at Baga town. Others are Dikwa, Monguno and the notorious Giwa barrack situated in the metropolitan city of Maiduguri, the command office of the Nigeria military fighting the insurgent. In most respect, the unprecedented violence has pushed the Nigeria armies to a mere defensive combat and at the worst forcing soldiers to flee the battle front.

Arising from the deleterious violence, in 2015, the insurgents have taken control of large swath of Nigeria's territorial land covering about 20,000KM<sup>2</sup> in nearly 25 local government councils in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, the hotbeds of the insurgent. Some authors have equated the land size conquered by the insurgent to that of Belgium (Onuoha, 2014). The State authorities in Nigeria resorted to multifaceted and complex counterinsurgency options. The governments navigate through wide range of strategies involving both stick and carrot approaches. In some instance, the government coopted an informal self-defense group to the operation. This study therefore examines the various counterinsurgency strategies adopted by the Nigeria government. The review work adopted content analysis method. In addition past research works and journals, quit a number of reports of international organizations was utilized before arriving at the article conclusion.

The importance of the study besides adding to the emerging literature of extremist violence, it would have policy relevant suitable for the Nigeria government and other countries facing similar insurgency characteristics. In addressing its objectives, the article proceeded in five sections. The first section is the clarification of major concepts forming the article, the second section is the theoretical review of the people and enemy-centered counterinsurgency strategies. The third section is the overview of the counterinsurgency strategies taken by the Nigeria government, the fourth is the conclusion and recommendations for policy and further studies.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

**Insurgency:** The concept insurgency has been seen used differently in many literatures. However, the popular definition is one put forward by the United State as “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region.” Moreover, from its legal point of view, an insurgency is seen as a violent protest carried out by rebels against a constituted authority or state that has been recognized by the United Nations. Ibiang (2018) have given more characterization of insurgency as a battle that it is usually the product of asymmetric conflict, where one party has an overwhelming force and incontestable physical influence and other instruments of coercion over the other.

**Counterinsurgency:** Every insurgency draws a response known as counterinsurgency (Ibiang, 2018). It is virtually the counter force used in tackling the insurgent and restoring the State order which the insurgent wishes to overthrow. Much of like the insurgency, literature on counterinsurgency have serially avoid attempts at furnishing any concise definition of the term. Among many others, the popular definition however remained that of the United States government, that counterinsurgency is a “comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken separately and or simultaneously to defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes.” In most respect, counterinsurgency is an integrated set of political, economic, social and security measures intended to end and prevent the recurrence of armed violence, as well as to create and maintain stable political, economic and social structures, and resolve the underlying causes of an insurgency in order to establish and sustain the conditions necessary for lasting stability. The most popular United State Counterinsurgent Robert Thompson who refers counterinsurgency as a kind of military response, which entails “clearing an area of insurgent activity, holding it for the government, winning its inhabitants, then moving on to another area.

### **Theoretical Approaches to Counterinsurgency**

Since the earlier writings, counterinsurgency has received a great deal of literature offering a differential explanation on how state authorities should go about combating an insurgency. In this respect, two schools of democratic (population-centric) approach, and authoritarian (enemy-centric) approach emerged. Whereas both ideas indicated

counterinsurgency is a battle of legitimacy between the insurgent and the State for the support and control of people, however, the processes and manners through which the acceptance of the population could be ascertains differs. The preceding literature explain the aassumptions of people-centred and the enemy centred counterinsurgency approaches.

### **People-Centric Approach**

In most respect, the population-centric school advocates for nonviolent approach in the counterinsurgency campaign. The contributors in this perspective suggest that to earn the support and ensure control of the population, counterinsurgent must desist from the use of force or coercion. They proposed that support of the population could be obtain through appeasement and enhance governance suitable for winning the hearts and minds of the people (Galula, 1964; Thompson, 1966; Kitson, 1971). The main contention of the population-centric school is that once the population hibernating the insurgency and the environment of it's operation are adequately controlled, 'the insurgents will be deprived of its logistics support could therefore bel withered, expose, or some combination thereof' (Paul et al, 2016:1022). The overall effect these thus ends the insurgency.

Therefore, the assumptions of the population-centric scholars partly rooted from the fish and water analogy suggested by the 20th-century Chinese leader Mao Tse-Sung. Make indicated that there is an inextricable link in insurgencies between the people and the troops. In this respect, he equated the insurgents to fish and the local population to the sea. Hence, he insisted that once the sea is drain, the fish is forces to die naturally. In the real sense, Mao's analogy implies that the population is the premises enabling the insurgent to hide, benefits from logistics and accesses intelligence to perpetuate and sustain its violence. Therefore, once the counterinsurgent succeeded to withdraw the support of the population, the insurgent would turn a helpless fighter.

The Maoist concept of insurgency and counterinsurgency designed partly on the salient struggle for the control of population and physical territory. His explanation of the isolation of the insurgent from the population reflects the current realities in the Nigeria's north. Although, the Mao's perspective is likely not encapsulates the reality of modern terrorism such as global al-Qaeda and the Islamic States, but the fact that Boko Haram is a localized insurgency with its activities confined to definite territory, the analogy of separating the insurgency from the population would provide insight in understanding the counterinsurgency operation.

Perhaps, the fundamental steps for successful counterinsurgency according to the population-centric approach comprises of intimidating the population to win it's support, as well as organizing and exercising control over the population. The strategy is rooted from the assumption that guerrilla obtain their power from the people, as well as supported by the population to flourish and perpetuate it's violence. By implication, once support of the population is withdrawn, the insurgent is not only separate from its sympathizers, financiers and collaborators, but it is renders an excruciating defeat.

In most instance, the population-centric approach connote to the British counterinsurgency strategy. Beckett (1997) stressed that population centrism is central to the successes of the various British counterinsurgencies operation around the world. Some source shows that the British counterinsurgency doctrine is built on four principles including the use of minimum force; considering insurgency as a political act, and the need to cut connections between the insurgent and the population (Kemeny, 2014).

However, whereas the support and control of the population using democratic techniques is central to all the population-centric scholars, the processes on how the support can be ensures were discussed differently. Galula (1964) insist support could obtain through the active minority in support of the counterinsurgent. Other scholars insisted that support of the population could obtain through addressing the root cause of the insurgency from the population. Thompson (1966) in his side outlines five principles that can lead to successful counterinsurgency including; a clear political aim; acting to according to law; overall plan of action; defeating political subversion; and securing population before mounting a military campaign. Other strategies proposed by the population-centric theorist include enhancing governance system that would Carter for the basic social and infrastructural needs of the local population. Bennett (2007) argued that winning the support of the population consisted of a myriad of possible social measures such villagization, improved social services and nutrition control. Kitson (1971) refers to such social measures as vital for persuading the population to support the government.

However, despite the deferential views on the explanations on how to win the support of the population, the main consensus among the contributors of the population-centric school (Galula, 1964; Kitson, 1971; Thompson, 1966) revolved around the following five headings;

1. **Support of the population:** that to ensure ease defeat of insurgency, the first stage is to win the support of the population within which the insurgent dwells. Designing the strategies that will ensure the support of the population require the understanding of the culture, religion, and terrain of the local community inhibited by the insurgent.
2. **Separate the insurgent from the local population:** once the support of the population guaranteed, the insurgent is rendered helpless therefore enable the counterinsurgent to isolate the insurgent from the population.
3. **Establishing Authority:** Once the counterinsurgent succeeded to isolate the insurgents from the population, it will proceed to consolidate its power on the local population. Among others tactics requires includes raising and erecting barriers to render difficult for the fleeing insurgents to return or get touch with the local population. This process will suppress the insurgents' logistical base.
4. **Civil-military relation:** at this stage, counterinsurgent must establish relationships with the local population. This may require comprehensive actions that will enable the establishment of the local force to aid in the areas of intelligence sharing and fostering stability.

5. **Governance:** At this stage, the key concern of the counterinsurgent is to proffer solutions that will enable long-time stability. The principle in this stage includes preventing the recuperation of the insurgent group, as well as sustaining the established tempo of control over the local population. The principal task at this stage according to the population-centric theorist is the provision of basic social and infrastructural needs of the population. This stage according to Galula (1964) requires the organizing of local election to bring the local population into the realm of governance and decision-making.

### **Enemy-Centric Approach**

The enemy-centric approach, however, differs significantly from the population-centric school. Contributors of this school advocated the imperative of killing the insurgent members, destroying their logistic base and maiming the local population using military aggression to withdraw support from the insurgent. Most scholars in this perspective notably Van Crefold (2008); Zambarnadi (2010) equated insurgency to symmetric warfare fought between nation-states. Therefore, they claimed that the best approach to combat the group is to apply the conventional tactics to annihilate the insurgent through the instrumentality of military aggression.

Furthermore, in addition to the use of force on the fighter, enemy-centric scholars emphasize the importance of repressive measures on the local population. The imperative is to maim the local population to withdraw support from the insurgent. The enemy-centric approach has been the focus of counterinsurgency tactics of many countries, including the United States before the adoption of the FM 3-24 doctrine in 2006. Van Creveld (1991) in his popular book 'The Transformation of War' argued the successes of Hafaz-Al-Assad to crushed the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria in the 1980s rooted from the adoption of the enemy-centric approach in the combating process. In the practical level, the enemy-centric strategy reflected to Russia's counterinsurgency approach as well as that of the United States before the adoption of the FM 3-24 in 2006.

Interestingly, in spite of the differences between the population-centric authors and the enemy-centric authors, there is a consensus between the two schools in many aspects. One important aspect is that, both schools have acknowledged that the control of the population is germane to defeating an insurgency. They both indicated the importance of intimidating the local population to withdraw support from the insurgent. Both schools also pointed out the importance of implementation of draconian laws involving restriction of vehicular movements, the imposition of curfews and restricting supplies of goods and basic needs of the local populations inhibiting the insurgent group. Both schools also proposed that counterinsurgent must establish authority over the population. Strategies include enacting laws that may render difficult for the recuperation of the insurgent group. Others are redeploying police to take control of the reclaimed population and territory. To restore order and maintain stability, both enemy-centric school and the population-centric school agreed on the importance of governance in the liberated communities. The state can provide

for the emergency needs of the population and reconstruct demolished structures and infrastructural facilities. This strategy according to the theory will go a long way to maintaining post-insurgency stability.

### **Nigeria's Government Counterinsurgency Approaches**

Much as in many countries, the eruption of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria have witnessed some concerted counterinsurgency options by the government. In most instances, analyst have categorized the government responses in to two broad categories of military centered and political approaches. The preceding subsection discussed the application of the two approaches in the counterinsurgency operation.

#### **Military Approach**

Since 2009, authors have indicated that the military aggression remained the forefront of the government in the combating processes (Abdulazeez, 2016; Mbah & Nwangwu, 2014; Folade, 2016; Fatile & Ejalonibu, 2014; Amao & Maiangwa, 2017). The principle in this type of combating as indicated by Folade (2016) is predominantly kinetic, a counterinsurgency strategy that prioritized the use of aggressive force by armed security personal to annihilate the fighters while suppressing its support from the sympathetic population. This strategy in most instances emanated from the assumptions of enemy-centric scholar that proposed the indiscriminate violence by counterinsurgent both on the fighters, collaborators and sympathizers. Although, the used of forced on internal strife by the Nigeria government is ahistorical as evidenced during the country's civil war in the 1970s and subsequent uprising by the Maitatsine rebellion in the 1980s, the present idea came to the core in mid-2009 when the insurgent embarked on a weeklong anti-government and anti-west uprising in Maiduguri (Nwanpka, 2016). Some analyst however linked the impetus of the government violence to 2003, when some isolanist identifying themselves as Taliban movement attacked a Nigeria Police Division Office at Kanamma town (Onuoha, 2012). In either case, the military enagement by the government has been classified into two categories of Special Joint Task Force (SJTF) and Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF).

#### **Special Joint Task Force**

The Special Joint Task Force (SJTF) is a special security force set up by the Nigeria government to engaged the insurgent in conventional front 2011 (Odomovo, 2014; Agbiboa, 2015; Folade, 2016; Mbah and Nwangu, 2013). The objective of the use of military force is to identify, detect and arrest the fighters using offensive action. The membership of the Special Force were drawn from both the Nigeria Armed Force and other paramilitary institutions such as the Nigeria Police Force, State Security Service, Immigration, Custom, and other allied forces. The command office of the SJTF was situated at Maiduguri, the spiritual home of the Boko Haran. Statistic of size of the SJTF is contradictory, however, some observers have shown the existence of over 100,000 members of the armed security personnel in the

northeast (Folade, 2016). This number may however be conservative as frequented deployment of troops continued to be witnessed in most parts of the northeast. In Maiduguri alone, a city of about 2 million population, there are about 8,000 members of the SJTF undertaking the combating operation. There is popular belief that this unprecedented deployment of armed troops into domestic conflict was the highest in the history of Nigeria's political dispensation.

Consequently, the SJTF appeared incredible in dissipating the insurgent, killing its founding leaders and demolishing its hideouts. For instance, in the 2009 crackdown, the military have arrested and killed Mohammed Yusuf, the founding leader of the movement alongside Buji Foyi and Baba Fugu, the earlier financiers of the movements in Maiduguri. The subsequent aggression eventually sent the insurgent fighters' to a condition of silence and on soft attacks targeting unguarded areas by the armies (Bappah, 2016; Ogunrotifa, 2013). It was in 2011 the northeastern Nigeria witnessed the resurgence of the group under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, the deputy of the late Yusuf. Under the new leadership, the insurgent appeared more violent by extending its hostilities outside its original zone. Sampson (2015) suggests the Boko Haram spared not even the SJTF by attacking military formations and barracks. Many formations of the armies both within and outside Maiduguri have fallen to unprecedented attacks of the Boko Haram. Although, evidences are scarce, but some people attributed the unfortunate incidences of the failure of the SJTF to such factors of military corruptions, nepotism and terrain factors (Solomon, 2012; Bappah, 2016; Abdulazeez, 2016; Jacob and Akpan, 2015; Umar, 2013). Others have also linked to the transnationalism of the Boko Haram violence (Eveslage, 2013; Shuaibu, et al, 2015; Onapajo and Uzodike).

Consequently, attributed majorly to the kinetic campaign, the SJTF over the years was accused of serial abuses of human rights and liberties. It was alleged that this has undermined its credibility among the population thus suppressing the support and cooperation of the population. The consequences of subjugated population support as indicated by Galula (1964) suppresses the counterinsurgent accesses to vital intelligences about the insurgent movements and their hideouts. Evidence have shown that since 2012, successive reports of the World anti-crime agency 'Amnesty International' labeled the Nigeria SJTF for human rights abuses including summary executions of suspects (Sampson, 2015). The author claimed that since its participation in the counterinsurgency, the SJTF has become misnomer to most of the local communities in the northeast. Its arbitrary use of force has led to wanton destruction of human lives and destruction of valuable property in the northeast.

Consequently, in addition to its offensive, the SJTF was also adopted several laws to boost its operation. Most of the laws were pointed to be draconian tantamount of jeopardizing the civil rights stipulated in the constitution. Notable in the series of the draconian laws is the imposition of dusk to dawn curfew, restriction of movements, and disconnecting of communication gazettes by the Global System Mobilization (GSM) in the

northeast. Akpan (2014) document that between the years 2013 and 2015, all GSM networks in the Nigerias' northeast were disconnected. The multiplying effect of this this resulted in stunting the social and economic activities of the local population. The influence of economic empowerment on counterinsurgent successes was the central focus of most people-centered counterinsurgent experts (Galula, 1964; Thonson, 1966; Kitson, 1971). David Galula in particular proposed that draconian laws undermine counterinsurgents' legitimacy, derailed the support of the population and thus undermined the chances of the combating successes.

### **Multinational Joint Task Force**

Connected to the transnationalism of the insurgent rebellion, recruitment, escape routes and supplies of logistics, the member states of the Lake Chad Basin (Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Cameroun) either established or strengthen the sub-regional military block 'Multinational Joint Task Force' to support the Nigerian armies. Besides the trans-border effects of the Boko Haram, some analyst have pointed out that the Multinational Joint Task Force emerged from stretchiness of the Nigeria's SJTF both in respect to logistics and equipments (Tar and Mustapha, 2017) as well as the spillage of the violence across the participating states. Many accounts have shown that Boko Haram is exploiting the porous borders around the Lake Chad Basin for the perpetration of its violence, escaping detection, moving arms, and transferring hostages for ransoms negotiation (Onuoha, 2013; Thomson, 2012; Tar and Mustapha, 2017). Some of the countries are allegedly believed to be a recruitment and training hub of insurgent. In most instance, the MNJTF correspond to the idea of traditional security functionalism stated by Tar and Mustapha (2017) who advocates for multinational cooperation in some certain areas of security challenges shared by many states. Onuoha (2014) argues that Boko Haram have assumed regional security dimensions through transnational recruitments, training, equipment and funding. Others are cross-border attacks, refugee proliferation and devastating humanitarian situation together with debilitating economic condition along the Lake Chad region. The combined factors thus prompted the member states for the stronger sub-regional collaborations to fight the terrorist group.

The MJTF received a boost to its operation on 29 January 2015 during the African Union General Assembly Summit held in Addis Ababa. It received formal ratification by the African Union leaders authorizing the deployment. The European Union and the United Nations thereafter adopted a draft operational plans for the MNJTF engagement. The operational plan among others outlined the strategic rules of its engagement, the coordination, as well as requirements for supporting and sustaining the missions assigned upon (Tar and Mustapha, 2017). The MNJTF operational command office ws placed at N'Djamena, the capital city of Chad Republic. Despite its bottlenecks in finance, logistics and personnel, the MNJTF managed to make some landmark successes in its counterinsurgency operation. Between the months of February 2014 and March 2014, the MNJTF in conjunction with the SJTF resulted to captured many towns and villages occupied by the insurgent across

the Lake Chad Countries. Tar and Mustapha (2017) shows that the formation of the MNJTF has provided the Nigeria military the capability to monitor, coordinate, and control its operational efforts from the epicentre of the crisis. The MNJTF was also pointed out to be instrumental in the arrest of several Boko Haram fighters along the shores of the Lake Chad.

### **The Civilian Joint Task Force**

Since 2013, the counterinsurgency witnessed the participation of members of civilian self-defense, a group colloquially 'Civilian Joint Task Force,' or 'Kato da Gora' literally man with stick in the operation (Bamidele, 2016; Agbiboa, 2015a; Alfendi and Gumel, 2015). The philosophy of the CJTF was linked to one Baba Lawal Jafar, a resident of the populous Hausari ward of metropolitan town of Maiduguri (Bamidele, 2016; Agbiboa, 2015a; Chuckwuma, 2017). Lawal accosted an armed Boko Haram fighter wrapped with chain of ammunition before presenting to the nearest security formation in his area. Lawal's bravery went viral around from within and outside the community thus fascinating many people bestowed support to fight the insurgent group voluntarily. Agbiboa (2015a) shows that within the shortest time period, the philosophies quickly spread to other states and towns affected by the insurgency. The earlier strategy characterized mainly on neighborhoods watch, including patrolling streets, guarding markets, worship centers, and protection of vital social infrastructures (Agbiboa, 2015a). Extant literature suggests that even as the CJTF have emerged as peoples' action voluntarily, it however earned tacit support from the states in the northeast. The support is majorly offered in cash and kind such as boots, uniforms and patrol vans.

Evidences shows the participation of the CJTF emerged influential in reconquering many towns and villages that have eventually conquered and control by the Boko Haram. For instance, in March 2014, the group supported the Nigeria SJTF to conquer Mafa town, situated about 30 km from Maiduguri, the Borno state capital (Bamidele, 2017). Official report by Integrated Regional Information Network (2013) indicates that shortly after the mobilization of the CJTF, several of the Boko Haram fighters were killed, with thousands either arrested and or surrendered to the Nigeria armies. The civilian force is also key for abating several attacks targeted against the security operatives and the civilian. Despite the mundane nature of its weapons, the group appeared instrumental in abating attack on the notorious Giwa military barrack in Maiduguri. For instance, in their comparative analysis of the frequencies of Boko Haram attacks before and after the participation of the CJTF, Omenma & Hendricks (2018) indicated that the participation of the CJTF has resulted in a significant reduction of the Boko Haram attack rates. They scored the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) at before 11.83 and 4.926 respectively before the participation, and 5.35 and 4.248 Mean and Standard Deviation respectively after the participation.

In most instances, the successes of the CJTF was informed by its technical knowledge of the social and terrain. The social ties of the participants with the host population influences its easiest identification, detecting and arresting of real and disguise fighters in

the locality. The terrain knowledge equally helped the participants to identify and block possible routs of the insurgent thus influencing arrest. The knowledge of the hills, forest and creeks equally helped the counterinsurgent's easy patrolling. Omenma & Hendricks (2018) suggest that the involvement of the CJTF was triggered by a sense of shared purpose and operational urgency, mission focus, and personal relationships with the local population. It is in this context, the Nigeria's then-President Good Luck Jonathan described the CJTF as Nigeria's new national heroes.

Nevertheless, even as the CJTF alleged to be successful, it is argued that the group may probably stand to challenge the formal state system in their localities. Presently, there is increasing accusation that the group will challenge the formal authority of in their localities. presently, many participants were accused of using personal scores to victimized on the innocent citizens.

### **Political Approaches**

The political approach refers to an aspect of the governments' counterinsurgency measure that does not involved the use of military aggression. It is a salient strategy of involving dialogues and peace talks between the insurgent and the government and or its representatives to convince the insurgent to ceasefire, surrender arms and or free hostages. It also characterized to political legal campaign of enacting laws and improving governance system to undermine the support of the population as well discourage recruitment. Prominent among the legal approach was the enactment of the counterterrorism law in the country. It is a martial law that provide among others capital punishment for the insurgent, their supporters and collaborators (Gana et al, 2018). It also afforded the state security operatives to engage in unhindered aggression to obstruct the insurgent, engage in searches and exercise stop and checks for humans and vehicles without necessarily seeking court permission. The counterterrorism law also empowers the members of the SJTF to confiscate properties owned and or operated by the insurgent without resorting to court warrant. Evidence shows the implementation of the counterterrorism law has not deterred Boko Haram terrorists as the group continued its frequented attacks and expand its territorial control (Ike, 2018). To bolster the armies, in 2013, the then Nigeria President Good Luck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in the three states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa by invoking the provisions of section 305 of Nigeria's 1999 federal constitution. The law further empowered the security to raid, search, arrest and detain person in complicit with the Boko Haram group. The emergency law arrived with hiking of defense budget by the government. Some authors have indicated that the governments' defense budget was nearly double between the years of 2013 and 2014 (Odo, 2015; Agbiboa, 2014a). The accelerated hike in the budget enlisted Nigeria among States' with the high military expenditure in Africa (START, 2015). According to Abdulazeez (2016), the expansive military spending has resulted in skeletal provision of vital socioeconomic needs of the population. The multiplying effect of tbusy thus instigate public resentment toward the counterinsurgency operation.

The extended consequences as suggested by Galula (1964) suppressed vital human intelligence (HUMINT) incredibly suitable for the counterinsurgent success.

In addition to the quasi political-legal measures, the government also resorted to numerous demobilization and de-radicalization campaign aimed at encouraging defection from the insurgent camp. START (2015) stressed that the demobilization campaign is to discourage willing recruits as well as to counter and discredit the spiritual thought of the Boko Haram. Among other tactic, in spite of the secularism of the Nigeria State, most of the state governments' promulgated a law mandating the scrutiny of sermons of all clerics before delivering to their followers. Much like the other strategies, the tactic moreover emerged insignificant in countering the hostilities of the Boko Haram. In most instances, Boko Haram resorted to killing clerics observed to be opposing toward its spirit. Al-Efendi and Gumel (2015) have argued that, the insurgent gruesomely killed nearly 30 Islamic clerics in the north. Among the victims includes of Mahmud Jaafar, a popular cleric from the city of Kano and erstwhile teacher to the late Mahmud Yusuf, the pioneer leader of the Boko Haram. The traditional and community leaders were moreover not spared by the de-radicalization campaign. Boko Haram identified and killed several community leaders that are opposed to its teaching. Among the notable monarchs killed includes that of Gwoza, Askira, and Uba in Borno State. The renewed strategy of elimination deterred majority of the population in speaking against the insurgent group thus undermines the successes of the de-radicalization.

In September 2011, former President Olusegun Obasanjo got engaged in dialogue with the Boko Haram group fighters. The former resorted to the carrot approach by proposing the compensation of families of fallen fighters; rebuilding of the insurgents' demolished properties as well as amnesty for defecting fighters. Sequel to this development, the regional government of paid the family of late Mohammed Yusuf. However, some days after the payment, the insurgent identified and gruesomely killed the parties involved in the payment. Killing includes of Baba Fugu Jr, the brother-in-law to the late Yusuf who stand on behalf of the family. The gruesome attacks and threat obstructed any further engagement by the government. In August 2011, the government appointed Alhaji Gaji Galtimari, a renowned diplomat to chair an eight-member committee to dialogue with the Boko Haram. Among other term reference, the committee tasked to ensure ceasefire (Odo, 2015) as well as provide modalities for guaranteeing permanent peace in the northeast. This committee work also short-lived as cases of suspicion of intelligence leakages and feeling of inadequate political willingness led to the withdrawal of the members.

Moreover, former President Good Luck Jonathan inaugurated another 27-member committee tag "Presidential Committee for Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of the Security Challenges in the North" in May 2013. The committee under the leadership of the country's special duties minister was to advance the engagement with the Boko Haram group set up by the Galtimari with the objective of restoring peace in the region. However, even before the engagement, the insurgent rejected the team and preaches for the continuation of the violence. Bamidele (2016) submit that shortly after the inauguration of the committee, the embattled leader of the insurgent, Abubakar Shekau called for the intensification attacks on the government and private citizen.

Consequently, ever then to now, the Nigeria authorities continuously often claimed to have technically defeated the insurgent group, however, many observers have indicated the presence of spectacular attacks on the on the Nigeria highways. Most recently, the insurgent took responsibility of the attack on Nigeria's railway along the Abuja-Kaduna area in April, 2022 leaving nearly 200 people abducted.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article revealed that since the eruption of the insurgency of Boko Haram, Nigeria government resorted to a multifaceted counterinsurgency options involving both people-centered, enemy centered and civilian based strategies. The later strategy involved the raising, arming and financing of local militias to support the government operation. In most instances, the applications of the strategies are not consecutive, but predominantly simultaneous and interwoven. The dominant approach since 2009 however appeared to be enemy-centric campaign. The government in this respect focused on the excessive deployment of military and paramilitary forces into the battle front as well as the enactment of counterterrorism laws empowering unrestricted engagement by the state security apparatus. Others are the declaration of state of emergency at the most affected states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa of the north east Nigeria. In most respect, whereas there is some manifestation of the people-centered campaign instituted through the carrot approaches mostly executed by dialogue and peace talks campaign, the dominant approach to date however remained the enemy campaign. The prioritization of the kinetic campaign over the people-centered campaign can be argued to be behind the protraction of insurgency in the country's north. It is against this background and as a panacea to curtail the insurgent hostilities, the study recommend as follows;

1. On against waging the surface warfare, government should identify the root cause of the insurgency with a view of tackling the crisis upfront.
2. It is obvious that besides the original causation of the insurgency, there is also believe that extreme poverty and high level of illiteracy are also key drivers that influenced the aggravation of the insurgency and thus exploits by the insurgents to induce recruitment. In this regard, government at all levels must focus on strategies of combating poverty and illiteracy among the citizenry.
3. Although, whereas the rising and or support of the local militias 'Civilian Joint Task Force' is incredible in the counterinsurgency, however, stronger regulatory mechanisms must be established to checkmate the excessiveness of participants in their areas of operation.
4. Governments at all level should take issue of governance with all level of seriousness. Leaders should adopt policies that can hasten the ameliorating the difficulties of the civil population. On against the security-centered campaign, focus should also be geared toward provision of basic amenities to the citizenry. This tactic should help undermine the support base of the insurgency from the population.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

There is no conflict of interest in this article

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