



# **Combating Boko Haram Insurgency: A Human Security Strategy Approach**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Terrorism is currently Nigeria's greatest security challenge. However, the government's strategy to counter the threat appears ineffective. This is because the conceptualization of security has therefore moved beyond preoccupation with the territorial integrity of nation states, and has been reinvigorated by the recognition that concerns for the individual have much to contribute to our understanding. Having recourse to the use of secondary sources of data such as is inevitable. The justification is that this method will assist us to collect data stored on files, government archives, libraries, bookshelves/shops and the internet. This study among others reveals flaws in the responses adopted by the government, noting that the counterterrorism efforts of the government of Nigeria were mainly military-centric and not guided by a well documented national strategy until the release of the NACTEST in 2014 as revised in 2016. Even at this, the NACTEST is observed to be fraught with gaps that question its suitability as a policy document for countering terrorism in Nigeria. Assessing the literature on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency (COIN) and the lessons learnt from their usages in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the strategic imperatives of COIN, on securing the population instead of simply attacking the enemy, a strong case can be made for using a combined framework of Human Security and COIN. The study surmised that of absolute necessity for countering terrorism in Nigeria is the adoption of a people-centered strategy that emphasize more on conditions-based type of approach that require focusing on human security issues such as security sector reform, health, poverty, environmental shock, and food shortages, that are more vital to the populations. The paper concluded by positing that if a state-centered security approach had been used to analyze the problems in Nigeria, the entire analysis would have been spent discussing security issues for the state such as the threat of Boko Haram and the various armed groups that are operating in Nigeria. Weapons and equipment can assist the Nigerian military in its fight, but change must occur within the institutions of Nigeria to facilitate a situation that will both end the insurgency, and prevent the conditions that created it.

**Keywords:** Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency (COIN), Population –Centered Approach, Boko Haram, Human Security, Insecurity, Geo-political zones.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Terrorism has moved to the forefront of scholarly debate in recent times. This is because of the deepening security challenges it is generating in the global community. Nigeria is not an exception. This is because in spite of the successful changeover to civil rule in May 1999, the problem of ethno-religious clashes and

separatist agitations and radicalism remain a serious threat to the social-political unity and economic stability of Nigeria. The Boko Haram insurgency since July 2009 is historic, in that it reinforced the attempts by Islamic extremists at superimposing a variant of Islamic religious ideology on a secular Nigerian state, making the security situation of the country and her neighbours most precarious and inflammable. This spate of insurgency in Nigeria is influenced by both internal and external factors.

The Institute for Economics and Peace (2015) had reported that the violent conflict orchestrated by the radical Islamic sect, Boko Haram, in the north-eastern region of Nigeri claimed no fewer than 3,120 lives in 2015 and have displaced over two million people living who are currently living in 42 camps across 13 states of Nigeria(). Official statistics obtained from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA, 2015) shows that 86 per cent of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across the federation are from the North-East region while the remaining 14 per cent are from other states. Boko Haram uprising has attracted attention in the past and presently, it is gaining more momentum to the extent of conquering and capturing communities and local governments, thereby threatening the unity of Nigeria.

As a result of the above, scholars such as Tylor (2016) Eme, et.al (2016) and Eji(2016) among others have been speculating about the relationship between an insurgency, criminality and terrorism alongside the efficacy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's counterinsurgency response to the Boko Haram threat. To address the speculation, we need to define an insurgency. An insurgency group is any politico-military organization whose major objective is to de-legitimize a legitimate government, control territory by means of guerrilla warfare, terrorism, crime, propaganda in order to hold down to those under its control. Boko Haram insurgency fits into this definition. They are a decentralized insurgency that minimally aims to control territory in Nigeria by attacking government forces and civilians and other soft targets such as schools, churches, mosques and markets. They are funded by criminality by taking and trading hostages for ransom, bank robberies, cyber scams, drug trafficking, smuggling and sale of artifacts and propagate their world view via YouTube, the international media, leaflets and terrorist deeds.

It is in light of the above that this paper considers a change in approach in Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts. Adopting a thematic approach, it reflects on issues and challenges of countering terrorism approach from the traditional way in Nigeria and, by way of synthesis of these, proffer some possible measures for the shaping of an effective national counterterrorism strategy for Nigeria. In order to ensure a better understanding of the issues involved, I will begin with conceptualizing counter terrorism and provides a historical perspective of the epochal historical development Boko Haram terrorism their strategies and changes in their tactics and government's responses. Furthermore, from analysis, I identified some policy gaps, addressed them before dovetailing to the central theme of human security strategy as an alternative approach to Nigeria's current counterterrorism strategy.

### **Conceptualizing Counter- Insurgency**

Conceptualizing counter- insurgency like other concepts in the social sciences is very difficult. This is as a result of many related concepts associated with the term. Moore (n.d) captures this way:

As with insurgency, the term counterinsurgency suffers from imprecision and confusion. It has, in the past several years, been used interchangeably with stability operations, foreign internal defense, counter-guerrilla operations, and, most recently, countering irregular threats. In addition, it has been included as a subcomponent of small wars, unconventional warfare, irregular warfare, asymmetric warfare, low-intensity conflict, and military operations other than warfare (Moore, n.d, 13).

To avoid this kind of confusion, I posit that it can be conceptualized from two ways. These are from descriptive and prescriptive perspectives. The former seeks to describe the term in a simplistic manner and offers doctrinal definition while the latter apart from describing offers better perspective by trying to understand the nature of counterinsurgency and the complexity of the conflict. In view of this, the simplest definition of the term counterinsurgency which is frequently referred to by the acronym COIN is just the opposite of insurgency. That is, integrating a combination of measures and strategies articulated by a legitimate government of a country to curb the activities of an insurgent group that have taken up against her. So while insurgents for instance try to overthrow the recognize existing political authority in order to establish theirs, the counter-insurgent forces try to reinstate the existing political order as well as

defeat and annihilate the usurping authority of the insurgents. This is achievable because the state is the only body recognized by the international system as the only body that hold monopoly of violence, legitimacy as well as other material resources often exclusively reserved for states. These factors also emphasize the need for counterinsurgents to act and uphold law and order, something that technically limits their potential action in the fight against insurgencies. On the other hand, insurgents lack these features. This is achievable because the state is the only body recognized by the international system as the only body that hold monopoly of violence, legitimacy as well as other material resources often exclusively reserved for states. These factors also emphasize the need for counterinsurgents to act and uphold law and order, something that technically limits their potential action in the fight against insurgencies. On the other hand, insurgents lack these features.

The Joint Publication 3-24 Counterinsurgency operations, the US Army-Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24) and its modified version defined Counterinsurgency as a “comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances. The core grievances have been articulated by scholars such as Moore (n.d) as few identifiable and repairable issues, usually related to modernization, globalization, poverty, or political in aptitude. In the United States, in particular, lack of democracy and poor economic development are seen as key risk factors for insurgency. Thomas Barnett talks of the destabilizing effects of states and regions unable to tap into globalization and its economic and political benefits (Barnett,2004). Others, such as Samuel Huntington (1996), cite the violent disruptiveness of competing cultures, embodied in religious and ethno-nationalism and exemplified by Islamist radicalism and al Qaeda. Still others focus on repression, terrorism, crime and corruption, and discrimination, actions that incite popular unrest and feed insurgency. Although all these explanations provide useful insights into the causes, they fall short of explaining the underlying dynamics that cause insurgencies to erupt and then sustain them (Moore, n.d:6). As Petraeus & Amos (2006) noted in the revised edition of document noted that “COIN is primarily political and incorporates a wide range of activities, of which security is only one. For them, effective counterinsurgency integrates and synchronizes political, security, legal, economic, development, and psychological activities to create a holistic approach aimed at weakening the insurgents while bolstering the government’s legitimacy in the eyes of the population.”(US Government,2012:1 ).

In order to integrate the issues raised above, the prescriptive definition becomes necessary. The current Department of Defense definition of counterinsurgency reads as follows:

“those military, paramilitary, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.”(Joint Publication,2005 cited in Moore, n.d.)While more expansive than the doctrinal definition of insurgency in its acknowledgement of political and economic components, its emphasis on defeating an enemy betrays a military bias. Additionally, it does little to aid in understanding the nature of counterinsurgency or its expected end state. Given the nature, characteristics, and strategy of insurgency, any definition of counterinsurgency must acknowledge the complexity of the conflict.

The solution this definition offers is that it emphasized on the need to take a more comprehensive approach which encompasses not only ongoing, essential security-based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive measures which directly address the drivers of violent extremism that have given rise to the emergence of these new and more virulent groups. For these reasons, the following definition of counterinsurgency is offered. Counterinsurgency is an integrated set of political, economic, social, and security measures intended to end and prevent the recurrence of armed violence, 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 (Moore, n.d,14). This definition both acknowledges the causes and dynamics of insurgency and the three-dimensional complexity of dealing with them and places military and security operations firmly within the wider context of the conflict. Perhaps most importantly, it also establishes the end-state of successful

counterinsurgencies. In that sense, it is a prescriptive definition; understanding counterinsurgency must begin with comprehending not only its components, but its ultimate objective (Moore,n.d,8-9). It will serve as our operational definition in this paper

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a descriptive study. What the foregoing implies is that the recourse to the secondary sources of data is inevitable. Obasi, (1999) submits that secondary data refers to any documented material (whether hand written, typed, printed or recorded audio and video) that was already in existence, produced for some other purposes than the benefits of the researcher. Reliable and expressive documents are capable of bringing the significant information, which cannot be obtained through other methods. The issue is that where reliable documents exist, generalizations appear more reliable than those emanating from the limited data of other instruments. Finally, another justification is that this method will assist us to collect data stored in files, government archives, libraries, bookshelves/shops, the internet and other documents. This study, therefore, utilized secondary sources of data from the Federal Government and its agencies including NEMA, and International Agencies reports such as AI, IOM, HRW, ICG among others. In addition, textbooks, journal articles, newspapers and magazines served as sources of data for the study.

An important feature of this method of analysis is the content analysis. This is a form of data analysis in qualitative research. It is used to describe events as they are recorded. Bodgan and Biklen (1982:145) defined qualitative data analysis as “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and what to tell others”. Simon (2011) points that qualitative researchers tend to use inductive analysis of data, which means that critical themes emerge out of the data. Simon (2011) further points that qualitative analysis requires some creativity, since the challenges to place raw data into logical, meaningful categories; to examine them in holistic fashion; and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others.

### **Dynamics of Boko Haram Strategies, Tactics & the Responses of Government of Nigeria**

It is worthy to note that Boko Haram had adopted different strategic approaches that reflected the particular demands and requirements of the conditions in which the insurgents found themselves. Insurgent strategies varied with the specific conditions and situations in which they occurred. Additionally, insurgents continually adapted to changing circumstances and the enemies they confronted. Nevertheless, over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, certain common traits and strategic pathways emerged that continue to be at the heart of insurgency strategies today and likely will continue to in the future(Moore, n.d). Most fundamental, insurgencies prey on and exploit deep-seated issues and the complex interplay between them. Whatever the tactics employed, insurgencies reflect legitimate issues, even if those issues only exist in the minds of the insurgents and their supporters.

However the insurgents may be viewed, and whatever their methods, the underlying causes they reflect must eventually be addressed. Insurgencies exploit these causes to gain recognition and popular support, to discredit their opponents, and to lend credence to their activities; and many are genuine reflections of existing problems demanding resolution. Ignoring them, or worse, failing to understand them, only reinforces the insurgency’s appeal.

According to Eme (2015), between 2003 and 2004, Boko Haram fought security forces on three occasions. On 31 December 2003, roughly 200 of her members clashed with police in Geidam and Kanamma, Yobe state. Some accounts posit that the police provoked them while others maintain that the group’s sophisticated organisation implied plans for violence. Whichever was the case; the group raided two police stations, killed a policeman and seized some AK-47 rifles. They subsequently attacked other three police stations in the state capital, Damaturu, and confronted other police units near the Borno state capital, Maiduguri. After four days of fighting in January 2004, security forces routed them, killing at least eighteen and arresting dozens (International Crisis Group interview, prominent Islamic preacher in

Kaduna and former director of an international Islamic organisation, June 2009). Between 2006-2009, the group re-emerged, primarily in Borno state, under the banner “Boko Haram”.

As with the Taliban, the Boko Haram never identified itself as such. It earned that label due to its vocal rejection of “Western education”. It was also commonly known as Yusufiyah. It used various names, indicating its members were strict followers of Islamic texts (broadly equivalent to “Salafist”). Tracts found in Bauchi in 2010, and seen by International Crisis Group use the name Ahlissunnah Wal lidda’awati Jihad (Salafist group for propagation and jihad). Its leadership, particularly Mohammed Yusuf, showed it was a direct continuation of the Taliban (International Crisis Group, 2010).

Boko Haram did not begin its campaign by indiscriminately attacking civilians. Between 2010 and 2013, most of the group’s targets were state security forces or those cooperating officials and individuals. Yet, the group became steadily more brutal over time. As Eme & Ugwu, (2016) observed, over three quarters of the incidents involving Boko Haram in 2014 and 2015 were aimed at civilians. Though the group’s massacres, suicide bombings, kidnappings, and executions may have succeeded in grabbing international headlines, they also helped turn the local population against it, enhancing their eagerness to cooperate with state security forces. For instance, in 2012, as attacks by Boko Haram intensified, former President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency, which was subsequently extended repeatedly, in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. The state of emergency gave overly broad emergency powers to the security forces. Former President Goodluck Jonathan set up a Joint Task Force to lead the operations against Boko Haram, which included personnel from the Nigerian Army, Police Force and other security forces.

Pérouse De Montclos (2014), summed up the situation by positing that this action of the Nigerian security forces was a significant determinant in the trajectory of the Boko Haram crisis. He observed that the repression of the sect in July 2009 was followed by repeated massacres, extra-judicial killings, and arrests without trial, actions that widened the gap between communities and the security forces.

The death of Mohammed Yusuf was only a temporary setback for the sect as it became more devastating under a new leader, Abubakar Shekau. The sect conducted a series of attacks across northern Nigeria, particularly in the North East Zone. This is because Boko Haram which initially took the form of sectarian religious violence has metamorphosed into terrorist activities with international linkages making it difficult for the Nigerian government to annihilate (Gilbert, 2014).

The sect under Shekau graduated from armed assault and the use of roadside improvised explosive devices to vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and suicide bombings. The exponential increases in the conflict’s overall levels of violence can also be traced to 2013, when a government offensive pushed the group out of its main base of operations in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State and spiritual home of the insurgency. Boko Haram fighters moved to remote communities and camps, such as their headquarters in Sambisa forest, Borno state. From these bases, Boko Haram launched almost daily attacks against civilian targets. In July 2014, Boko Haram’s strategy changed as it retained control over captured towns and villages, collecting “taxes” from residents, and limiting their movement. At its greatest extent, territory under Boko Haram control extended across most parts of Borno, northern Adamawa and into eastern Yobe states. The army took full control of operations against Boko Haram in August 2013.

Inspired by the Islamic State’s dramatic seizures of territory in Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram began its own campaign of territorial conquest. The sect managed to seize about 18 of the local government areas in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, as well as bordering territories in Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. As a result of this, the territorial integrity of Nigeria was under siege. The size of the area held by the terrorists as at January 2015 equaled the size of Belgium (Comolli, 2015).

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Fed up with Boko Haram’s brutality, civilians began to involve themselves in local policing. They came together to form a local militias known collectively as the Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) in mid-2013. Some members of this group were in some cases former Boko Haram members, the Civilian JTF’s

knowledge of local terrain provided state forces with information dominance it did not have in the early years of the insurgency. Despite concerns about over the Civilian JTF's identity as a vigilante force, there is little doubt that the organization has been crucial in helping to turn the tide. By some accounts, the insurgents have come to fear the Civilian JTF more than the Nigerian military.

Similarly, the sect's use of the media (particularly the Internet) for propaganda purposes became more pronounced. It equally graduated from attacks on relatively low profile to high profile targets such as the Nigerian police headquarters and the United Nations building in Abuja. The complexity and level of sophistication which the sect attained challenged the capacity of security agencies and other institutions involved in the Nigerian government's counterterrorism effort, particularly as coordination and the needed synergy among them proved inadequate.

Ambushes, improvised explosive devices, kidnappings, apparently random bombings, and selective shootings, for example, prove extremely difficult to combat and can be morally and physically debilitating to the victims. When directed at military or security forces, such tactics incite security forces to overreact, wear away morale, provide weapons and equipment that may be left behind or captured, and keep the counterinsurgency effort off-balance. This was what happened in 2015 when Amnesty International reported that:

In the course of security operations against Boko Haram in north-east Nigeria, Nigerian military forces have extra judicially executed more than 1,200 people; they have arbitrarily arrested at least 20,000 people, mostly young men and boys; and have committed countless acts of torture. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Nigerians have become victims of enforced disappearance; and at least 7,000 people have died in military detention as a result of starvation, extreme overcrowding and denial of medical assistance (Amnesty International, 2015; 6).

Furthermore, Boko Haram's activities has now transcended Nigeria's borders, particularly in terms of training, financing, recruitment, kidnappings, and arms acquisition, thereby raising concerns over border management and Nigeria's relations with her immediate neighbors. Equally significant is the sect's links with international terrorist organizations like the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Shabaab, and lately its pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to the extent of renaming itself as the Islamic State' West African Province (ISWAP).

The situation was made worse with the sect's embrace of the ISIS tactics of beheadings of victims. It abducted women, including schoolgirls and engaged females (including girls as young as 10 years), for suicide terrorism (Akbar, 2015).

In March 2015, after a renewed counter-offensive, the military announced that they had recaptured most of this territory.

A combination of the declaration of state of emergency and the imposition of curfew, the deployment of troops to the Lake Chad Basin to bomb enemy strong holds and the imposed blockade on the group's traditional base of Maiduguri in Borno was able to re-establish Nigeria's "territorial integrity". But on 29 May, 2013, Boko Haram's leader following military claims that the group had been halted, released a video in which he said the group had not lost to the Nigerian armed forces. In the video he showed charred military vehicles and bodies dressed in military fatigues. He called on Muslims from Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria to join his jihad against Nigeria.

During much of the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, the Nigerian military's efforts to combat the insurgency were ineffective with serious welfare challenges. State forces faced a murky enemy that not only had better knowledge of the local terrain but were also equipped with rocket-propelled grenades and vehicle mounted anti-aircraft weapons. In some cases, soldiers were left with limited bullets and no food rations to fight an insurgency with superior arms and fuller stomachs from stolen sources.

Boko Haram's massive expansion between 2014 and 2015 prompted a re-invigorated state effort to contain the insurgency in line with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (Strategy), which calls for a holistic, inclusive approach to counterterrorism. With their own countries threatened, the armies of Chad, Cameroon, and Niger began cooperating with the Nigerian government to prevent it from so easily

fleeing across porous borders. The result is the decision to deploy the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), headquarters in N'Djamena, Chad, on July 30, 2015 to pep up the fight against Boko Haram. This is the same force the Jonathan's administration could not get off the ground in six years. With increased professionalism and better supplied, better armed, and equipped with better intelligence, the counterinsurgency campaign is conducting more targeted operations against insurgent strongholds, which have led to fewer civilian casualties and, if government reports are to be believed, the deaths of almost five thousand militants in the past year and a half alone. The total is more than the government managed to kill in the previous four years of counterinsurgency operations (Fund for Peace, 2016).

President Buhari equally made moves to seek help from outside, such as visiting West African neighbours, the Group 07 in Germany, the African Union during the summit in South Africa and he also visited the United States on invitation of former President Barack Obama. All were aimed at restoring confidence in the country's leadership with allies which had frayed under his predecessor. The government have partnered with foreign forces to "#Bring Back our Girls." It was reported that Patience Jonathan, the former first lady of Nigeria, initially denied the abduction of the girls and ordered the arrest of mothers and protesters. Additionally, there are allegations that the government paid protesters to counter the *BringBack our Girls* demonstrators, who all did not get paid; newspapers critical of the government have been seized on "National Security" grounds; ministers from the South have created conspiracy theories about how the abductions were a plot by Northern politicians to undermine President Jonathan's 2015 electoral campaign; and the Ambassador of Nigeria to the United States had sought to "change the debate" and focus on economic development and the relative peace in the majority of the country (Eme, 2015).

Nigeria might have "technically won the war" against Islamist Boko Haram militants as posited by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015. He told the BBC that the militant group could no longer mount "conventional attacks" against security forces or population centres. It had been reduced to fighting with improvised explosives devices (IED) and remained a force only in its heartland of Borno state. President Buhari had given the army until the end of 2015 to defeat the group - a deadline that was extended as his critics and Boko Haram is still bombing some areas despite losing towns under its control. Critics of the government argue that it has exaggerated the scale of its success against the militants, and that each time the army claims to have wiped out Boko Haram, the militants have quietly rebuilt. For instance, Shekau had taunted government in 2013 positing:

The FRN has been critiqued for using an overwhelmingly military and enemy-centric response to a problem that requires an alternative approach. This approach conceives COIN as a contest with an organized enemy, and thus emphasizes defeat of the enemy as its primary objective, while viewing other mechanisms as secondary. In other words, the focus here is on the complete annihilation of the insurgents or their guerrilla formations and cadres while minimizing the significance of nation-building as well as measures to gain popular support. There are also "many variants within this approach, including "soft" vs. "hard," direct vs. indirect, violent vs. non-violent, and decapitation vs. marginalization strategies." This approach can be summarized as "first defeat the enemy, and all else will follow." In modern times, this approach is often not discussed but it is applied in COIN operations. It has also been said that if this approach is applied to its fullest, it "might work against incipient insurgencies that are led or centrally controlled by a particularly charismatic or powerful individual" (USA, 2009, Van Creveld, 2008 & Holland, 1990).

Van Creveld for instance has put forward five rules on ways of defeating an insurgency:

1. There are situations in which cruelty is necessary, and refusing to apply necessary cruelty is a betrayal of the people who put you into power. When pressed to cruelty, never threaten your opponent but disguise your intention and feign weakness until you strike.
2. Once you decide to strike, it is better to kill too many than not enough. If another strike is needed, it reduces the impact of the first strike. Repeated strikes will also endanger the morale of the counterinsurgent troops; soldiers forced to commit repeated atrocities will likely begin to resort

- to alcohol or drugs to force themselves to carry out orders and will inevitably lose their military edge, eventually turning into a danger to their commanders.
3. Act as soon as possible. More lives will be saved by decisive action early, than by prolonging the insurgency. The longer you wait, the more inured the population will be to bloodshed, and the more barbaric your action will have to be to make an impression.
  4. Strike openly. Do not apologize, make excuses about "collateral damage", express regret, or promise investigations. Afterwards, make sure that as many people as possible know of your strike; media is useful for this purpose, but be careful not to let them interview survivors and arouse sympathy.
  5. Do not command the strike yourself, in case it doesn't work for some reason and you need to disown your commander and try another strategy. If it does work, present your commander to the world, explain what you have done and make certain that everyone understands that you are ready to strike again (Van Creveld, 2008: 241-245).

The adoption of the above creed by the military has potentially strained government's counterinsurgency efforts against Boko Haram and the need for review. The next section of the paper will dwell on the gaps that required for review.

### **Gaps in Nigeria's Counter Insurgency Framework**

Eradicating insurgency in any polity is a wishful thinking just like evaluating the success or failure of the counterinsurgency strategies. That was why Clark, (2003) and Lum, Kennedy & Sherley, (2006) and Eji, (2016) contended that:

Defeating terrorism is more difficult and far-reaching than we have assumed. . . .We may be advancing the ball down the field at will, running over our opponent's defences, but winning the game is another matter altogether. (Clark, 2003: 5).

More importantly to this study, drawing from Clark's assertion, is the question of appropriate and workable strategies for countering the threat of terrorism. In the Campbell Systematic Review, it was observed "that there is an almost complete absence of evaluation research on counter-terrorism strategies" (Lum, Kennedy, & Sherley, 2006:3). It added that for the few studies available, some strategies do not appear to be effective as they "either didn't work or sometimes increased the likelihood of terrorism and terrorism-related harm" ((Lum, Kennedy, & Sherley, 2006: 3). This seems to reflect the Nigerian situation, as there is no existing evidence of a comprehensive review of Nigeria's responses or strategy to counter-terrorism either by policy makers or researchers (Eji, 2016:203). In his keynote address on policy framework and national action plan for preventing and countering violent extremism in Nigeria, Buratai alluded to this fact when he submitted that:

We are gathered today to inaugurate the Working Group on the Policy Framework and National Action Plan in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Nigeria. The working is a testament to the Federal Government's multi-stakeholder approach to policy formulation, made up of Government at all levels, civil society representatives, labour, representative of women, youth and student organizations. The Working Group is expected to shape and influence how Nigeria prevents and counters violent extremism in all its ramifications. We have put this process in place to fulfill the requirement of the Terrorism Act (2013) as amended, where as a coordinating office, the Office of the National Security Adviser is mandated to ensure that the right policies and strategies are in place to counter terrorism(2016:1).



This supports Buhari's thesis of 2015 when he posited that his government intends, after defeating Boko Haram, to commission a sociological study to determine the origin, remote and immediate causes of the movement, its sponsors, the international connections to ensure that measures are taken to prevent a recurrence of this evil (Buhari, 2015). This seems to reflect the Nigerian situation, as there is no existing evidence of a comprehensive review of Nigeria's responses or strategy to counter-terrorism either by policy makers or researchers. Nigeria, like other countries only succeeded in domesticating the UN General Assembly document on Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (Strategy) of 2006, which calls for a holistic, inclusive approach to counterterrorism. Although the primary responsibility for its implementation rests with UN member states, effective and sustainable implementation requires the contributions of a variety of stakeholders, including regional and sub-regional bodies (RSRs). Both the Strategy and resolution adopted by the General Assembly in September 2008 following its formal review recognize the need to enhance the role of RSRs (as well as other stakeholders). However, they offer few details on the different ways in which RSRs can contribute and how their role can be enhanced. This strategy rests on four pillars:

Pillar I: Measures to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, Pillar II: Measures to prevent and combat terrorism, Pillar III: Measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the UN system in this regard & Pillar IV: Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism (UN, 2006 & 2008).

The above policy was domesticated by Nigeria as her policy framework for counter-terrorism. It is domesticated as National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST), which was endorsed for implementation by former President Goodluck Jonathan on April 30, 2014, and the second edition released on August 23, 2016 under President Buhari's administration. It contains such aspects as the nature of the terrorist threat that Nigeria faces, the response guidelines and mechanism, and the roles of stakeholders, as well as institutions involved in countering terrorism. The NACTEST is organized into five work streams, each with its key objectives. The work streams are Forestall, Secure, Identify, Prepare, and Implement. Forestall aims to stop people from becoming terrorists, Secure strengthens protection capacity against terrorists, and Identify aims at pre-emption through detection and early warning. The Prepare work stream has the objective of mitigating the impact of terrorist attacks while Implement outlines the framework for the mobilization of a coordinated cross-governmental counter-terrorism effort. Although its formulation and release is a commendable achievement by the Government of Nigeria, there are identified gaps that need to be addressed for it to provide the necessary strategic framework for countering terrorism in Nigeria (Eji, 2016:204). Some of the gaps that have been outlined in literature by Tylor (2016), Barnett Eji (20), Buratai (2016), Buhari (2016), (2016), (2004) and Moore (n.d). Eji (2016) has articulated these gaps as captured in Table 1` below;

Table 1; Gaps in Nigeria’s National Counter Terrorism Strategy

<b>Serial</b>	<b>Observed Gaps</b>	<b>Implications of Gap</b>
1	Lacks a national definition of terrorism.	Poses a challenge to policy implementation as terrorist acts could be subjected to varying interpretations.
2	Placed its driving organ, the Counter Terrorism Centre (CTC), under the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA).	This could inhibit the effective implementation of the strategy because ONSA does not statutorily have executive functions but advisory roles (as an adviser to the president).
3	Tends to lay sole emphasis on the Boko Haram sect.	Its provisions/implementation may not readily apply to other categories of terrorism or terrorist-related threats that could arise.
4	Government’s disposition to negotiation with terrorists not stated.	Raises doubts and suspicion on policy trust of government.
5	Silent on the protection of Nigeria’s interests abroad and on responses to state-sponsored terrorism.	Necessary contingency plans may not be developed in this regard.
6	Discrepancies and lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities assigned to the ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) for implementation.	Erodes the command directive or authority NACTEST ought to command as a policy instrument.
7	No designated lead ministry or agency.	Makes the coordination of MDAs involved in counter-terrorism difficult.
8	Ambiguity on government’s overall strategic approach.	Could result in disconnect between Policy makers and implementation agencies/the public.

Among the gaps outlined in the table, and crucial to this paper, is the ambiguity and lack of understanding of the Nigerian government’s overall strategic approach. A defined strategic approach to counter-terrorism is a pre-condition that determines the approach to be followed in fighting insurgency starting from defining who a terrorist is. The NACTEST is evidently not clear on the Nigerian government’s strategic approach. Evidences on the ground indicate a hard traditional military approach to fighting terrorism. For instance there were occasions when we were told Nigeria is negotiating with Boko Haram to stop its agitations and release the Chibok girls, negotiate and pay some money to them. Also, there were occasions when conflict of interest arose between the National Security Adviser and the Service Chiefs over who is to coordinate security issues and funding of insurgency. The human right abuse and abuse of rules of engagement by the military were seen and interpreted by the army as against national security. The government is equally finding it difficult on how to deal with suicide bombing, ambushes and intelligence gathering on the enemies.

Another pitfall arising from this approach is the inability of policy makers to conduct a human security analysis of Nigeria in order to understand why there is so much violence in the country. It determines that various threats to human security in the country affect to varying degrees of religiously motivated insurgency fought by Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, community violence sparked by resource and land competition in central Nigeria, and finally the conflict in the Niger Delta.

By focusing on the various categories of human security such as environmental, health, economic, and political securities, one can gain a better understanding of the root causes of the conflict than if one had sought to understand the conflict through a traditional security lens. By analyzing the various threats to human security, one can understand the interconnectedness of many of the problems in Nigeria permitting a more comprehensive conflict analysis.

Buratai (2016) captures the need for change in strategy in human security thus:

In 2014, we began the implementation of a Countering Violent Extremism Programme. Lessons learnt point to the need for a clear Policy Framework and National Action Plan that builds on previous efforts while creating a roadmap for all government and non-governmental actors as they build projects and initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism. To achieve this, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), to support and work with us in reaching out to all stakeholders through the drafting process. Previously, the NSRP provided support in reviewing the national Security Strategy (2015), which strengthened human security as a core element of National Security; a paradigm we believe will enhance the key elements of our Policy in preventing and countering violent extremism (Buratai, 2016:1 ).

The essence of this strategy is to understand the drivers of Boko Haram, which are varied and complex. These drivers are informed by extrajudicial killing of Boko Haram leader Muhammad Yusuf in July 2009, injustice, corruption, poor education and limited economic opportunities. Also Boko Haram's interpretation of the Quran and Hadith inspired by Ibn Taymiyya, Sayyid Qutb, Hassan al-Banna and Osama Bin Laden make their goal of having an Islamic State and the means to achieve it via "jihad" (e.g .insurgency, criminality and terrorism) is clear.

The Nigerian military must reassess the strategic framework guiding operations to combat Boko Haram. The Buhari Administration is positioned to learn from the past and develop a new strategic framework to undermine Boko Haram, and protect civilians. That framework is the concept of Human Security. This approach captures the imperatives of development and security. It is about enlarging people's capabilities and freedoms toward alleviating the freedom from want and the freedom from fear – toward sustainable security and human development.

Assessing the literature on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency (COIN), lessons learned in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the strategic imperatives of COIN, on securing the population instead of simply attacking the enemy, a strong case can be made for using a combined framework of Human Security and COIN. Unlike the enemy approach, the population-centric approach focuses on protecting the population and maintaining or winning its support. Although direct military confrontation might be needed in defeating the insurgents, it is not seen here as the primary objective which is to win the supports of the population. This approach can be summarized as "first protect and support the population, and all else will follow." (Heuser, 2010, Galula, 1964 & Thompson, 1966). There are more theorists supporting the population-centric approach than they are with the enemy-centric approach. Although the people-centric approach presents a good model to tackling insurgent organisations, the reality still remains that "COIN campaigns will rarely be purely enemy-centric or population-centric, but will generally include elements of both, with the relative balance changing over time. (Petraeus & Amos, 2006).

This paper allies itself with the human security analysis of Nigeria based on the United Nations Development Programme's 2016 Human Development Report. This next section of the paper will address human security issues.

### **Human Security as an Alternative Policy Counterinsurgency Framework for Nigeria**

Human Security approach revolve around the scholarly works of Mary Kaldor, Kofi Anan, Sen and Mahbub Ul Haq and their associates. Unlike the traditional goal of national security which emphasised the defence of the state from external threat, the central argument of this approach is that security should focus on the individual because a people centred view of security is required for national, regional and global stability. This is premised on the fact that threats to human life emanate not only from situation of violent conflicts but other non-conflict sources of threats such as poverty, infectious diseases, terrorism,

unemployment, environmental degradation and other basic needs. Human Security is therefore concerned with the protection of people from critical and life threatening dangers. The same researchers formulated human security and human development as part of the same enterprise. Human development and human security are, in fact, inter-linked: whereas human development seeks to increase peoples' options, opportunities and access to public services and goods, and emphasises what can be achieved, human security focuses on the risks, dangers, and threats to human development, evaluates the degree of confidence that people have in public services and goods, and emphasises what can be lost when human potential is defeated.

The report focuses on seven main categories of human security: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. Each security threat presents its own risks but all seven categories are interdependent. It is vital to understand the intricacies of human security in Nigeria. The various categories of human security affect to varying degrees three sub-national conflicts: a religiously motivated insurgency fought by Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, religiously motivated community violence sparked by resource and land competition in central Nigeria, and finally the conflict in the Niger Delta, connected to decades of socio-economic grievances and environmental degradation related to oil production. The instability and violence across the country coupled with its importance on the African continent make a human security analysis not just important for Nigeria, but for the rest of the world as well (Giroux &, Gilpin,2013).

What this entails is that insecurity remains an ever-present threat to peace and development of Nigeria and, without a doubt, poses great danger and exacerbates an already fragile economic development landscape as the country grapples with the reality of shifting from over-reliance on oil and gas sector to other sectors. For instance, the 2016 report highlights the link between human security and human development with a proposition that there can be no human development without human security and that, perhaps, insecurity in the country, as in many parts of the region, is a mirror image of the persistent development deficit. There is no denying the fact that conflict has a direct impact on poverty. During severe conflicts, there is always wanton destruction of lives and property (private and public) which makes life insecure. Such environments become investment-unfriendly and thus poverty becomes the order of the day.

The UNDP (2016) report under the theme “**Human Security and Human Development**”(2016) makes a compelling case that unchecked poverty; persistent hunger; uncontrolled diseases; lack of access to basic services; disregard for human rights; sub-optimal response to natural and man-made disasters; unregulated natural resources exploitation and use – among others, pose serious threats to human development today.

The report further highlights the existing gap in human security across the geo-political zones of the country; - the most human security secure geo-political zone is the South-East while the North-West and the North-East geopolitical zones are the least human security secured, with residents of the Federal Capital Territory being the worst in most realms of the Human Security Index. The North-East region of the country has been the most affected by the more than 6 years long military insurgency. It also remains among the least developed parts of the country.

We commended UNDP for the effort in putting together detailed findings of the human development indices for Nigeria by adopting a broader and more holistic view of the issue of human security and its linkage to human development. From the report, it is clear that human security in Nigeria is mainly constrained by threats of economic access, high unemployment rates, and low perception of job security. Thus, individual choice of sufficient and predictable income ought to be guaranteed. The findings contained in the report lay a strong foundation for not only addressing poverty, reducing unemployment and inequalities, but also rebuilding communities and regions that have been adversely affected by insecurity. The Nigerian Government and indeed the current administration should not be surprised at the findings of the studies reported in this document. This is because despite a robust economic growth of about seven percent between 2010 and 2014, a large proportion of Nigerians still live in poverty and is exposed to various vulnerabilities. An estimated 61.3 percent of Nigerians are classified as poor with 48.8

percent of them classified as multi-dimensionally poor (UNDP, 2016). Not only does the report conclude that the status of human development in Nigeria has not shown remarkable improvement in spite of the changes in the social and economic conditions in recent years, it further states that that economic growth in Nigeria has not been associated with poverty reduction and unemployment has not declined. This state of affairs has consequently slowed down the rate of improvement in human development as evidenced by marginal improvement in HDI between 2012 and 2013 (UNDP, 2016).

Among the recommendations made by the report include addressing social security through the establishment and support to institutions and initiatives that help individuals with low levels of human security; including the access of the lowest-income groups to food and of low-income groups to various forms of social security.

Fundamental precondition for sustainable development is empowerment of people, referring to their education. By educating them, the key barrier to human development – human mind – can be surpassed. Means for achieving sustainable human development are rule of law, respect for human rights, economic development, social development, environmental development and creation of adequate norms and regimes. Many peace-building practices around the globe reflect how development is connected to safety of people. Safe environment is a precondition for implementation of any kind of developmental projects, which further influence the wellbeing of population. A population with more satisfied basic needs is less likely to turn to violence in solving its problems.

The rise of Boko Haram has in part been predicated on the deficiencies of the Nigerian government and military. In many instances soldiers go unpaid, troops requesting reinforcements are ignored and later flee in the face of Boko Haram, and the Nigerian military is oftentimes outmaneuvered in fights against the insurgents. The attacks emphasise the deficiencies of the Nigerian government and military in the face of Boko Haram. Former President Jonathan had faced mounting international criticism due to his administration's failure to contain the insurgency. His 2015 claims that only 150 people were killed in the attacks upon Baga further angered international groups, and the use of satellites to identify human rights violations was quickly used to disregard these claims. Photos taken by American satellite company DigitalGlobe, procured by Amnesty International, quickly and vividly identified up to 3,700 structures in and around Baga that have been destroyed (AI, 2015). The destruction of civilian structures on a large scale stands in direct opposition to the claims of President Jonathan's administration.

In the wake of the 2015 elections, Jonathan has sought to downplay the atrocities being committed by Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria. Furthermore, the administration had attempted to shift blame to the soldiers of the Nigerian military, deeming them cowardly and joining the military only for pay. Sambo Dasuki, Nigeria's National Security Advisor, spoke in 2015 at the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House in London, stating that "We had a lot of cowards, and it turned out there was a problem in the recruitment process." (AI, 2015). Soldiers who have fled in the wake of assaults by Boko Haram have repeatedly accused the government of failing to reinforce military positions after large-scale attacks by Boko Haram.

To fix the military, however, the government must begin to function in a more efficient manner. The institutional weaknesses that plague Nigeria must be solved to create a force adequate for dealing with this insurgency, but the international community has been hamstrung in its attempts to provide assistance.

As long as the Nigerian military commits human rights violations that have led them to be as vilified as Boko Haram in certain instances, direct military assistance is unlikely to be given.

Community Security can best be divided into two different issues in Nigeria: communal clashes in the north and central part of the country between Christians and Muslims, and interethnic rivalries in the Niger Delta. As was mentioned in previous sections, a strong connection exists between communal clashes and environmental degradation and economic insecurity in Nigeria. Whether it is about the distribution of oil rent or climate change leading to population migrations, inevitably groups begin to pressure on each other, which tends to spark violent conflict. Severe drought drove the Muslim Fulani herdsmen southward and in Conflict with Christian farmers in the central and southern parts of Nigeria.

Achieving peace and human security means combining the latter two frameworks by following principles to guide future planning and operations:

Government must set goals that are achievable. Containing the threat rather than eliminating the threat is more attainable. For instance it is wrong to set a goal such as when the terrorists will be defeated or its leader will be killed. Government has failed in this direction because none of these have been achieved since 2010.

Government must observe and live by the rule of law. A respect for human rights and the rule of law and rule of engagement must be privileged, for all guilty parties especially those implicated in the killing of Muhammad Yusuf and other officers implicated in other extra-judicial killings in the North east to demonstrate the just efficacy of a democratic ethos and order.

Also, the government must know the enemy and separate insurgents from the population. This will allow the government to understand relevant grievances driving insurgency and address them when warranted, attack the enemy's strategy and better undermine the radicalization and mobilization process. This is done by negotiating with the reconcilable; and is done when the police and military are perceived as just and thought to be working for the people, and are drawn from local populations. The activities of the CJTF in the North east will achieve this goal and a welcome development.

The security agencies should continue to partner with others and continue to receive advice and training, not limited to intelligence and military raids, to include political, economic, education, and judicial-system reform principally in the North.

The government should create realistic expectations about the challenge insurgency, ethno-religious and identities are pointing to and should not be perceived as beginning today but has long history. This is why the restructuring debate is an opportunity to re-assess our federation is necessary.

Finally, the new approach for it to be effectiveness over time should be judged by the percentage of people in the North that are enlisted to defend their own communities, the percentage of people that believe the government is more just and fair, a reduced unemployment rate, and an increased education rate in the North, cognizant that insurgency, criminality and the tactic of terrorism will not be eliminated in our lifetimes, if at all.

## CONCLUSION

The emergence of Boko Haram as a terrorist group in Nigeria significantly changed the country's security landscape. From a quiet religious study group in the early 2000s, the group rose to become the world's deadliest terrorist group in 2015. Terrorism is currently Nigeria's greatest security challenge. However, the government's strategy to counter the threat appears ineffective. This is because the conceptualization of security has therefore moved beyond preoccupation with the territorial integrity of nation states, and has been reinvigorated by the recognition that concerns for the individual have much to contribute to our understanding. This study reveals flaws in the responses adopted by the government, noting that the counterterrorism efforts of the government of Nigeria were mainly military-centric and not guided by a well documented national strategy until the release of the NACTEST in 2014 as revised in 2016. Even at this, the NACTEST is observed to be fraught with gaps that question its suitability as a policy document for countering terrorism in Nigeria. The study surmised that of absolute necessity for countering terrorism in Nigeria is the adoption of a people-centered strategy that employs whole-of-government and non-governmental approaches. That is, instead of state threats, a more conditions-based type of approach is required, focusing on human security issues such as security sector reform, health, poverty, environmental shock, and food shortages, issues that are more vital to populations. If a state-centered security approach had been used to analyze the problems in Nigeria, the entire analysis would have been spent discussing security issues for the state such as the threat of Boko Haram and the various armed groups that operate in the Nigeria. Little attention would have been paid to some of the underlying human security issues faced by individual Nigerians such as concerns of health, food, environmental, and economic security as well and the other areas advocated by the UNDP framework. State-centric security theorists fail to recognize that the source of military threats often tends to be unaddressed human security issues.

Threats to environmental security have helped spread communal tensions in the north and central parts of the country, giving Boko Haram a ripe opportunity to expand its power base and advocate for its wicked ideas of an Islamic state. A lack of economic opportunity and poor distribution of oil revenue, along with unanswered calls for political reform, have also led to violence in the south east and the Niger delta area. Environmental degradation has further led to a deterioration of food sources leaving individuals to seek alternate livelihoods, sometimes turning to extreme methods such as joining insurgents who have promised to give them economic security. The lack of food security combined with poor health has led to the death of thousands and loss of revenue worth billions to individual Nigerians and the states alike. Finally, the interdependence of these human security issues has exacerbated communal and political tensions in a very fragile economy like ours.

It is imperative that instability be analyzed through a human security lens in order to understand the whole gamut and many of the root causes of conflict in states across the world. Policy makers need to understand that issues of human security will undoubtedly affect issues of state security (Leaning and Arie 2000: 10). By focusing on threats facing individuals, they can at the same time strengthen the security of the state.

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