Vested Interests and Politicisation of Terrorism in Nigeria: A Critical Terrorism Studies Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study interrogates the discourses and issues of terrorism and counterterrorism in Nigeria. That terrorism has plagued Nigeria for over a decade (2009-2020) makes it imperative to subject the purpose, conduct, scope, and outcomes of Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts to a critical analysis. This work adopted qualitative research methods (primary and secondary data collection), and used discourse analysis strategy to analyse the collected data. Using critical terrorism studies framework, the central argument of this study is that Nigeria lacks national consensus on the problem of terrorism, which has impacted negatively on the efforts to counter the scourge. The country lacks the needed unity of purpose to combat terrorism due to vested interests and politicisation of the terrorism issues. Consequently, the menace has lingered in ways that have made the country very fragile. This study concluded that for Nigeria to get out of the woods, both the leaders and the citizens would have to unanimously face the reality that terrorism is a common enemy that should be confronted in unison and with a whole-of-society approach. To continue doing otherwise is to allow the country to dissolve into "socio-political Armageddon."

Keywords: Boko Haram, counterterrorism, insurgency, Nigeria, politicisation, terrorism, vested interests

INTRODUCTION

The Boko Haram group (BHG) and its splinter faction, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), are the officially designated terrorists in Nigeria (National Counter Terrorism Strategy, 2016). As of January 2019, BHG had caused a humanitarian crisis to over 7.1 million

Nigerians (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2018). Between May 2011 and 1st May 2020, BHG directly caused 17,275 cumulative deaths, while 20, 506 deaths occurred following the confrontations between the group and Nigerian security forces (Campbell, 2020). BHG had targeted the UN facility, Military and Police formations, places of worship, and others. The group's activities drew widespread local and international condemnations, especially following the 2014 abduction of roughly 300 young women in Chibok town and the 2018 Dapchi kidnapping (Adelaja et al., 2018). BHG became the world's deadliest group in 2015 and Nigeria became the third most terrorised territory afterwards (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015, 2019).

However, it is worrisome to note that Nigerians lack consensus and unity of purpose in combating the carnages of BHG that is forming alliances with Islamic State (ISIS) and franchise of al-Qaeda (de Graff, 2015; Zenn, 2013, 2017, 2018, 2019). Consequently, this study investigated the trajectories and dynamics of terrorism in Nigeria and argued that internal contradictions have, by implication, continued to reinforce the scourge of terrorism and have partly been responsible for the country's counterterrorism (CT) ineffectiveness.

Firstly, vested interests in this study refer to the competing political agenda which serve the purpose of the hegemonic establishment and the ruling elites but not the interests of terrorism victims and the country. Secondly, politicisation denotes using the existing socio-political divides and ethnoreligious tensions among the Nigerian people in ways that further caused the escalation of terrorism problems. More so, politicisation also refers to exploiting the existing socio-political divides and ethnoreligious tensions just for political gains and ambitions, which has been manifested by the way of using terrorism issues for elections and politics without necessarily addressing the plights of the victims and the larger society. However, the rest of this study are organised into the literature review, methodology, theoretical framework, results of the research, discussion, and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quite a number of studies have investigated the causes and activities of BHG terrorism in Nigeria. For instance, Pichette (2015) argued that religion had largely been employed as a means of legitimacy by BHG but it was not necessarily the motivation for the group's actions. Pichette's (2015) position resonates with a study by Gunning and Jackson (2011), who queried what could be religious in religious terrorism. Therefore, BHG terrorism should be understood from the point of view of governance failure, socio-economic, and socio-political realities in Nigeria (Pichette, 2015). Adesoji (2010) and Akinola (2015) also argued that the BHG existed within the interplay of Islamic fundamentalism, politics, and poverty. Using the theoretical perspectives of Marxism, Relative Deprivation, and

Frustration-Aggression, Usman (2015) considered BHG terrorism to be the extreme outcome of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. Usman (2015) referred to the Tunisian scenario in which unemployment and poverty forced a citizen to lynch himself which eventually sparked the phenomenal Arab Spring of 2010/2011.

With the slight exception of Akinola's (2015) and Adesoji's (2010) inclusion of religion as a motivating factor for terrorism, it appears that all the authors above acknowledged that governance inadequacies have made terrorism inevitable in Nigeria. However, the focus on poverty and unemployment as terrorism inducing factors is at variance with Thurston's (2016) position that holistic CT strategy in Nigeria cannot be reduced to only socio-economic drivers, but by addressing the inherent internal contradictions in the country. It is within the scope of such shortcomings, as identified by the authors above, that our study filled a gap with the argument that the problems of vested interests and politicisation have encouraged terrorism and frustrated CT efforts in Nigeria.

Although the discourses on the rise of BH terrorism have generated controversies, Nigeria's responses have been even more controversial. For instance, Leach's (2016) admonished that Nigeria would have to further deepen its democratic system, good governance, education, and widespread development in limiting the terrorists' appeal and devastating activities. More so, national defence and security forces would have to be subjected to the rule of law in checking the human rights violations, which is a position equally shared by Bauer and Conroy (2016). In a study by Adibe (2013), it was noted that defence and security forces discourses in Nigeria had been dominated by issues of BH terrorism yet almost everything about the group had equally been contested in terms of its name, its origin, objectives it sought to achieve, and even its purported affiliations to other jihadi groups. Thus, Adibe (2013) noted that in the light of the conflicting narratives surrounding BHG and given that a lot of what was known about the group were often shrouded in speculation, there was a need for a study on factors enhancing the lack of clarity about the group.

METHODS

This research had adopted qualitative data collection and analysis methods, using semi-structured interviews for the primary sources of data by drawing on the experiences of the purposively sampled populations of experts who were knowledgeable about the dynamics of terrorism and CT activities in Nigeria. These included military officers who had participated in CT operations and others with research expertise in CT issues in Nigeria. However, there was initially a challenge of getting the military officers for interviews because many of them were sceptical about the intention of the researchers. We overcame the challenge by using the snowballing technique, in which the first two military officers interviewed referred the researchers to another three, making a total of five. The military officers

were interviewed at the Nigerian Army Headquarters in Abuja, Nigerian Army 2 Mechanised Division in Ibadan and Nigerian Air Force Base in Ikeja, Lagos. Defence experts were also interviewed in Abuja, while more field works were conducted at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs in Lagos (a Think Tank under Nigeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The fieldwork also took place in a couple of Nigerian Universities in Abuja, Lagos, and Nsukka. Former Staff of the US Department of State with expertise in Nigeria and terrorism was also interviewed over the telephone while Professor Richard Jackson of the University of Otago (New Zealand) was interviewed via email. Above all, the fieldwork took place between August 2018 and March 2019. Also, the study significantly used secondary sources; books, journal articles, reports, newspapers, and reliable internet sources.

For the analysis, the study adopted the discourse analysis technique. Discourse analysis helps to unravel the asymmetrical power relation among all key political actors that are involved in Nigeria and to probe political issues surrounding terrorism and CT policy-making in Nigeria (Table 1 for annotated references in this regard). Discourse analysis also helps in probing the political motives by looking at the way issues of terrorism and CT have been structured in Nigeria. However, the next section focuses on the theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Terrorism Studies

This research hinged its theoretical argument on how vested interests and politicisation had impacted on the menace of terrorism and CT in Nigeria by using critical terrorism studies (CTS) framework. Broadly speaking, CTS promotes terrorism research which is self-conscious and adopts sceptical attitude towards the entrenched state-centric views of terrorism (Jackson, 2007b). By implication, CTS pays attention to the existing traditional views and knowledge of terrorism but challenges common positions

Table 1

Speeches, statements, and reports of Nigerian leaders with implications for vested interests and politicisation of terrorism issues in Nigeria. Period: 2009-2019

	Political Speeches, Text, and Statements	**Published Political Documents**	**Newspapers**
Vested Interests	"Buhari rejects Boko Haram" (2012) "Buhari said attack" (2014)	Jonathan (2018)	Akowe (2013) "Nigeria's Goodluck" (2012) Premium Times (2012) "Boko Haram has supporters" (2012)
Politicisation	"Buhari rejects Boko Haram" (2012) "Buhari said attack" (2014)	Jonathan (2018)	Akowe (2013) Premium Times (2012) "Boko Haram has supporters" (2012)

Source: Compiled by the authors

and viewpoints of the traditional perspective. To elucidate how vested interests and politicisation had reinforced terrorism and negatively impacted CT efforts in Nigeria, CTS approach helps to understand the elites' political agenda to maintain their hegemony in the military and the executive without necessarily addressing the citizens' grievances that brew terrorism and the plights of victims of the terrorist activities (Jackson, 2007a, 2007b, 2008; Jarvis, 2016; Smyth et al., 2008).

CTS framework, therefore, helps to question the causes of the terrorist campaign in Nigeria and then inspires probing questions as to whether the Nigerian government's violent CT efforts can be effective in resolving the menace while also probing the interests and politics involved (R. Jackson, personal communication, May 29, 2019). As its basic tenets, CTS approach attempts to challenge socio-political and state-centric

views that are commonly held concerning the explanation of terrorism (Jackson, 2007b). CTS emphasises emancipation in the terrorism research agenda in ways that bring the relegated perspectives into the mainstream (Horgan & Boyle, 2008; McDonald, 2007; Smyth et al., 2008). Thus, CTS helps to challenge the mainstream and official narratives of terrorism and CT in Nigeria which then helps to expose vested interests and politicisation that have caused BH terrorism and consequently compromised CT efforts.

Therefore, with special reference to Nigerian leaders, who represent the state, tendencies to politicise issues and manipulate the ordinary citizens, who have often been the victims of circumstances, have been one of the drivers of radicalisation and terrorism. Again, in the aspect of resolving the problem, the Nigerian elites have been at the vanguard of manipulating
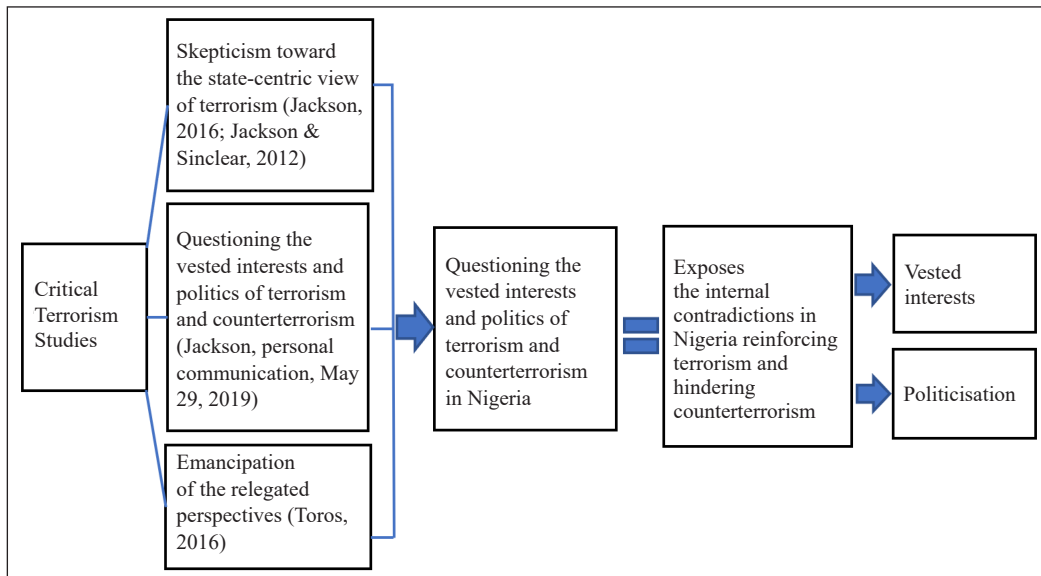

Figure 1. Graphical representation of critical terrorism studies as a framework to explain vested interests and politicisation of terrorism and CT in Nigeria

the ordinary citizens in ways that tend to frustrate efforts to resolve the problem. In this regard, therefore, this article argues that CTS approach helps to provide a more accurate explanation for the terrorism and CT imbroglio in Nigeria. Figure 1 below depicts CTS as a conceptual framework of the study.

RESULTS

Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria: How Did It Immediately Begin?

Although terrorism is an age-long phenomenon to humanity (Hoffman, 1998; Rapoport, 2012), but it is a relatively novel national security challenge that Nigeria has been grappling with since 2009 (Solomon, 2015). Before 2009, the term 'terrorism' was rarely used in the political and security lexicons in Nigeria. Observers have hinted that BHG's original Arabic language name had been distorted by those who *ab initio* lived close the group, while the pseudonym later got popularised in the global political lexicon by the media (Adibe, 2013; Onapajo & Uzodike, 2012). The group's maiden appellation was Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, which could be translated to "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" (Adibe, 2013, p. 10; Onapajo & Uzodike, 2012, p. 4). Thus, 'Boko Haram' has its etymology in a mixture of local Hausa language 'Boko' (book) and Arabic language 'haram' (spiritually unacceptable or ungodly). Therefore, the combination of both words literarily means education is ungodly or sinful (Lacey, 2012; Salaam,

2013). It, however, appears that the group is against western education or any symbol of western civilisation as a result of its perceived negative Western influences on the Nigerian society (Campbell, 2014).

Some studies had suggested the possibilities of the group coming into existence during the 1990s and probably bearing different names (Aghedo & Osumah, 2012; Onapajo & Uzodike, 2012). In another study, Agwu (2013) hinted that the group began as the Shabaab Muslim Youth Organisation initially chaired by Mallam Lawal at a famous Indimi Mosque in Maiduguri. BHG reportedly began the process of radicalisation and exposure to al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) when its leadership was handed over to Muhammed Yusuf as Lawal went for academic training at the University of Medina, Saudi Arabia around 1999 (Agwu, 2013).

Muhammed Yusuf subsequently had a leeway in spreading his message and garnering formidable following given the failure of the Nigerian state, in which widespread poverty and deprivation readily made so many religiously brainwashed young people to welcome his proposals as better means of saving them from their state inflicted misery (Campbell, 2014; Sadiq Mohammed quoted in Sahara Reporters, 2009). Moreover, the BH menace began merely in the form of religious procession and riots by the group in a few northern states until 2009, when things began to get out of hand following the clamp down on the group by a detachment of Nigerian forces

(Adesoji, 2010). These events led to the arrests and even extrajudicial deaths of some of the group's members, while the group subsequently began reprisal onslaughts on the Nigerian forces (Adesoji, 2010).

Boko Haram's Radical Re-Emergence and Countering Terrorism in Nigeria

The earliest form of contradictions in Nigeria's CT efforts manifested in the handling of Yusuf's arrest and his mysterious death in 2009. It is believed that vested interests played out in his extra-judicial killing while in the Police custody, which was to prevent him from indicting some politically exposed persons who sponsored the group (Nigerian Air Force officer, personal communication, January 13, 2019; Nigerian Army officer, personal communication, December 7, 2018). More so, Nigerian authorities had a lukewarm attitude towards the group at the initial stage because the sect had some ties to the officials in the government and authorities (Gorman, 2009). Unfortunately, the killing of Yusuf only had the effect of handing the BH's leadership to Abubakar Shekau, under whose leadership the group had moved from radicalisation to brutality and a hydra-headed monster. With Shekau in charge from 2010, BH relaunched itself in cruel, violent ways and with a mindset to attack Nigeria for vengeance. The group audaciously invaded a prison in Maiduguri and freed about 700 inmates, including its members (Uchehara, 2014). It equally showcased its audacity for violence by bombing the Nigeria Police Force and the United Nations

(UN) facilities in Abuja around June and August 2011 respectively.

However, when BHG intensified attacks under Shekau's leadership, the then Nigerian President Jonathan responded by declaring an emergency rule in the affected northern states, first in December 2011 in about fifteen local government areas (LGAs) spanning six states, and later in May 2013 (Felter, 2018; Sahara Reporters, 2013). The Government began experimenting with carrot and stick strategies: using the military force and soft power approach, including efforts to negotiate with the terrorists (Agbiboa & Maiangwa, 2014). For the use of stick approach, the activities of the Nigerian defence and security forces, however, brought about some challenges, including allegations of human rights violations, especially by Amnesty International and some Nigerian foreign allies such as the US (Amnesty International, 2015; Jonathan, 2018). A more disturbing challenge about the military responses to terrorism is the observation of inadequacies in terms of capacities within the Nigerian defence and security set up. This made Agbiboa and Maiangwa (2014) to consider Nigeria's CT responses as a 'flip-flop' approach. This was also alluded to by a defence expert, who condemned Nigerian military's lack of enough infantry forces and too light security footprint that made it possible for insurgents to overpower security forces (R. Nwasor, personal communication, March 20, 2019).

Again, as for the nation's carrot CT approach, the factors serving as drivers of radicalisation and making it possible for

terrorists to easily have recruits have not been decisively attended to. The Nigerian government had, however, sought to engage the terrorists in political negotiation since the Yar'Adua administration, but major negotiation efforts began when President Jonathan set the Galtimari Committee in August 2011 to inquire into the BHG's grievances and come up with recommendations on how the north-eastern Nigeria could be secured (Onuoha, 2012). Similar negotiation efforts were made at the level of Borno state government under both Governors Ali Modu Sheriff and his successor- Kashim Shettima (Aghedo & Osumah, 2012). The negotiation efforts were even at some point spearheaded by the former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who went as far as holding talks with the relatives of BHG's founder, Yusuf (Agbiboa, 2013b). For whatever reason, there suddenly came a breakdown of communication between the group and the government's negotiators, and the group subsequently resumed violent hostilities (Integrated Regional Information Networks, 2012).

Further negotiation efforts were made when the Jonathan Presidency again came up with a Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North Committee (Dialogue Committee) saddled with the task of convincing BH terrorists to sheathe their swords and embrace the proposed state pardon (Thurston, 2013). Unfortunately, such government efforts did not yield any tangible results, as Shekau only promised further hostilities (Agbiboa, 2013a). The

group acted its threats with the attacks on the Borno city of Bama where 55 persons including defence and security forces personnel were killed and over 100 prisoners were freed. The attacks had destroyed over a dozen villages in the middle belt state of Benue (Agbiboa, 2013c). Ever since the government's negotiation efforts broke down, BHG had continued to cause pain and agony in Nigeria. The high point of the group's destructive attacks was the 2014 abduction of roughly 300 young female students in Chibok town, and the Dapchi abduction of over 100 students in 2018. Thus, it has been a case of 'things fall apart and the centre holds no more' for Nigeria.

Dynamics of Internal Contradictions Showcasing Vested Interests and Politicisation of Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Nigeria

Hansen (2015) had argued that terrorism in Nigeria was a logical consequence of several decades of elite irresponsibility, which buttressed the argument of this study that terrorism in Nigeria was a function of disunity and internal contradictions. For instance, when the Nigerian authorities reinforced the carrot and stick mechanisms towards resolving the crisis between 2011 and 2013, certain vested interests had frustrated such efforts. With precise reference to the country's deployment of the military strategy against the Boko Haram terrorists, the then Presidential hopeful and opposition leader, retired General Muhammadu Buhari, reportedly declared that the military efforts of the government were not in the interests of the people of

Northern Nigeria. For instance, in a show of political opposition, General Buhari, who is the current Nigerian Chief of state, reportedly said: "…any attempt to fight and attack insurgents is an attack on the North" ("Buhari said attack", 2014).

The implication of the statements credited General Buhari, who is currently Nigeria's Chief of State, is that there has been a lack of consensus and vested interests among Nigerian leaders. It was reported that he faulted the attacks on BHG and had accused the Federal authorities over the deaths of BHG members and destruction of their houses. Specifically, and as a manifestation of vested interests and politicisation of terrorism in Nigeria, General Buhari reportedly accused the Federal government of giving the militants in Nigeria's Niger Delta special treatment, apparently referring to the amnesty programme that had been put in place to quell the conflicts in South-South region of Nigeria, while killing the militants in the north (Akowe, 2013).

Moreover, the extent to which Nigeria lacks national consensus and unity of purpose regarding efforts to nip terrorism in the bud can be seen in General Buhari's 2013 rejection of the BHG's call for him to be part of negotiations when the Jonathan administration attempted to negotiate with the terrorists. Assuming another untoward meaning would not have been read into it, Buhari's participation in such negotiations would have solved many problems that his current administration is facing over the menace of terrorism since he assumed power

in 2015. That the terror group welcomed the negotiations if Buhari was part of the efforts. It could have saved the situation if only he had obliged.

However, perhaps General Buhari could be pardoned for his rejection to join the negotiation efforts with the terrorists and helped a country he would later rule over in a matter of a few years. But it is particularly worrisome that for reasons of vested interests and politicisation, the then Jonathan administration could not make overtures to persuade the General to participate in the negotiation at a time the BHG appeared to be favourably disposed to a dialogue. Sadly, it would later be realised that the Buhari administration (2015- till date) has been making more difficult efforts to get BHG to embrace dialogue (Haruna, 2018; Mills, 2016). The frustration caused by the uncooperative attitudes of the Nigerian leaders arising from vested interests and politicisation of national security has been well expressed by Garba Shehu, President Buhari's chief media aide from 2015 till date. Shehu retorted the decision of the then General not to join the dialogue with the BHG by noting that:

> Buhari should have thought of the people, not the opposition PDP… If, as he said, he can't represent the Boko Haram because he didn't know them; he didn't believe in their cause and struggle and he did not know any member of the sect, how does our situation get better by him rejecting their overture? Couldn't Buhari have given them

a bait or laid in ambush so that at least, the state can have the benefit of knowing who is really behind the vicious atrocities being carried out daily against innocent Nigerians? (Shehu, 2012).

The problem of vested interests and politicisation over the problem of terrorism became more evident when the then President Jonathan announced to the nation that his government had been infiltrated by BHG sympathisers ("Boko Haram has supporters", 2012; "Boko Haram sympathisers", 2012; "Nigeria's Goodluck", 2012; Premium Times, 2012). This position was more elaborately discussed when the former Nigerian leader wrote about the disastrous Chibok saga that:

Again, I was accused of not visiting Chibok immediately after the abduction of the girls… For the avoidance of doubt, let me state that I had made up my mind to visit Chibok even against the advice of my Service Chiefs and sent an advance party to the area in preparation for my visit. It was meant to be an unannounced visit. However, someone in the know, most likely a saboteur, leaked the information to the Western media and they reported it. Of course, when it became a public knowledge that I planned to visit Chibok, the security Chiefs requested the trip to be cancelled …I was to access Chibok in a helicopter that would have flown over Boko Haram infested areas. (Jonathan, 2018, pp. 34-35).

Concerning the Chibok saga, however, vested interests and politicisation of terrorism and national security explain the report that the Jonathan administration was reportedly slow in rescuing the Chibok girls, apparently because the President did not believe the kidnapping took place (Jonathan, 2018). More so, before the Chibok Saga, it was even more disturbing that 19 governors from northern-Nigerian states decided to go and seek the audience with the former US President Barak Obama over the issues of terrorism, when they and their own President did not meet to find solutions to their country's problems (Jonathan, 2018). Thus, when the Nigerian young girls were kidnapped, there was no national consensus and synergy toward their rescue between the ruling government and the main opposition groups. This open display of hostilities among Nigerian leaders justified the position of Jean Herskovits, who in her 2012 testimony before the US Congress called for the US to abstain from Nigeria's CT efforts with the argument that terrorism in Nigeria is a function of internal politics and contradictions (Herskovits, 2012).

However, a more daunting manifestations of vested interests and politicisation of terrorism and CT in Nigeria were the revelations of corruption that had plagued the defence budgets under the Jonathan administration (Adebayo, 2015; Bolashodun, 2016; "Jonathan on

$2.1bn", 2016; Kazeem, 2015). About $2.1 billion was allegedly misappropriated even in the face of widespread killings of innocent Nigerians and unequipped troops by the terrorists that possessed superior firepower (Munshi, 2018). A former US State Department official explained the implication of this situation and Nigeria's foreign relations by noting that:

> There have also been concerns in the United States about the level of corruption within the Nigerian Army, which has been a huge problem…There is a need to fix the security sector corruption in Nigeria given the problem of sabotaging the training and equipment for the troops arising from the military budget corruption (M. Page, personal communication, October 3, 2018).

The important point in the remarks above is that defence sector corruption was partly the reason that the US refused to give Nigeria CT assistance during a critical time (Blanchard & Husted, 2019; Page, 2018). Therefore, the US refusal of critical intelligence and materiel to Nigeria at about 2013/2014 was a resultant effect of the vested interests and politicisation of terrorism and CT efforts in Nigeria. By implication, BHG became emboldened because Nigerian forces largely lack capacity in terms of equipment and intelligence, which had led to situations in which troops were running away from their formations and battlefields (Agwu, 2016).

A more appalling manifestation of vested interests and politicisation of national security crisis could be seen in the general attitude of the Nigerian populace themselves. A 2012 survey on the resolution of terrorism in Nigeria revealed that 58 per cent of the Nigerian population favoured negotiation with the terrorists (Anyadike, 2012). However, the large majority in the survey that favoured negotiation were from the northern Nigeria where terrorism has raged for over a decade, while the bulk of the southern people saw no reason for government's negotiation with the terrorists as they considered the problem to be entirely the northern region affair (Anyadike, 2012). By implication, Nigerians see BHG terrorism from the perspectives of the north-south dichotomy, which was why the North accused that terrorism was created by the then President Jonathan (a Southern Christian) to reduce their population for electoral gains, while the South argued that the menace was to actualise Islamisation agenda by the Northern oligarchy (H. Onapajo, personal communication, December 4, 2018). Thus, the lack of unity of purpose against a common enemy gave the terrorists the living space, as Nigerians politicised and 'ethnicised' BH terrorism. Therefore, the terrorists exploited the controversies and confusions within the society, which had resulted in ineffective CT efforts (H. Onapajo, personal communication, December 4, 2018).

Moreover, the challenge of politicisation among the general citizenry also manifested in the vehement rejection of the Government's

plans to relocate captured and repentant BHG members to the Southeastern Nigeria for de-radicalisation and rehabilitation efforts. The frustration about the attitude and disposition of Nigeria's regions that are not directly facing the heat of terrorism was expressed by a retired Major-General, who observed that:

> The main challenge is that there is a lack of unity in fighting terrorism…And without unity, it is impossible to win a war against the terrorists. For example, there was a time the country wanted to build a rehabilitation centre for the captured Boko Haram members in the East. The proposal was vehemently resisted by the Eastern Nigerians who claimed that terrorism is not their problem and should be treated as northern affairs... Until the country rises to the occasion collectively, it is unlikely that terrorism will leave the country (Retired Nigerian Army General, personal communication, January 6, 2019).

In sum, given the observations above, irrespective of the calls for Nigeria to be supported by the superpowers and its neighbours (Barnett, 2019; Omotuyi, 2017), the country is unlikely to get out of the woods unless it resolves its internal contradictions. As the BH phenomenon had proven, Nigeria is beleaguered with deadly fractures that are occurring ethnically, regionally, and religiously in such a way that its stability is upset and its very unity threatened (Bouchat, 2013). This dynamic is evident in the claim by the former President Jonathan that BHG elements infiltrated his government ("Boko Haram has supporters", 2012; Jonathan, 2018). Nigerians, therefore, have to make concerted efforts to reverse the growth in BHG's trajectory and end terrorism in their country.

Nigeria's Flawed Security Architecture as Implications of Vested Interests and Politicisation of Terrorism

While military approach only cannot solve the problem of terrorism, but is important to note that the needed military wherewithal to counter the terrorists' violence had been affected by the dynamics of vested interests and politicisation national security. For instance, and as noted previously, the corruption laden defence sector had made CT efforts unproductive despite huge budgetary allocations totalling N4.62 trillion (roughly USD 14 billion) between 2011 and 2015 (Olufemi, 2015). Nigeria still lacks modernised military and suffers inadequate intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to drive all its CT operations (A Nigerian Army Major, personal communication, December 7, 2018). Moreover, there is an unhealthy bureaucratic rivalry among the defence and security services, which has often created failure and inefficiency in intelligence gathering and utilisation (A Nigerian Army Major, personal communication, December 7, 2018). The implication of this is that the understanding of the military and its

approach to CT have not been the same as those of the Department of State Service (DSS), Police, Immigration, and Customs Services, making the security agencies to work at cross-purposes (A Nigerian Army Major, personal communication, December 7, 2018). The above scenarios have largely been made possible because of the heavily politicised processes of enlistments, promotion, and postings in Nigeria's defence and security establishments.

More so, vested interests and politicisation have equally created Trojan Horses in the country's defence and security establishments. The Trojan Horses, who are unpatriotic and incompetent elements, had been linked to how BH terrorists have sometimes gained access to armoured personnel carriers (APCs), tanks, and other equipment looted from the Nigerian forces' arsenal, in addition to such elements divulging classified intelligence to the terrorists (Agwu, 2016; Jonathan, 2018). Therefore, a situation in which soldiers are aiding and abetting terrorists, who have kidnapped hundreds, responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands (Campbell, 2020; Lallanilla, 2014; Nossiter, 2014) is a major albatross to the Nigeria's CT efforts.

It is also believed that the US refusal to give Nigeria the needed CT assistance, which had gravely affected the nation's CT efforts, is because of the fear that American supplied military equipment may end up in the hands of the BH terrorists and over allegations that some military commanders had been compromised or sympathetic to the terrorists (Agwu, 2016; Blanchard, 2016).

Similarly, the controversies generated by the politicisation in the Nigerian military has also been responsible for the ongoing criticism of Nigeria's de-radicalisation, rehabilitation, and re-integration efforts of the Operation Safe Corridor, in which critics had argued that the programme was an effort to provide soft-landing for the terrorists (Adibe, 2020).

DISCUSSIONS

As this study revealed, Nigeria's CT strategies and frameworks had been largely ineffective because the CT efforts had not been organically developed through collective procedure. Rather than developing local consensus to solve the terrorism problems, the Nigerian elites have been much engrossed with protections of their interests and divisive politics to sustain their hegemonic dominance. Although the country had developed some CT frameworks since 2009, such as Terrorism Prevention Act 2013; National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST; 2016); and the Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) 2017 and several military operations, but the scourge of terrorism lingers till date.

However, concerning the deficiencies and limitations of CT in Nigeria, the country has heavily relied on military strategy and on the short term rather than long term approaches that have often been politicised. Therefore, BH terrorism will remain a threat because of the unwillingness of Nigerian elites to do the right thing. This

is for the reason that the elites benefit from the problems, which they use to mobilise for their political supports and patronages during elections. They perpetuate vested interests and politicisation using the existing socio-economic and socio-political divisions, and the existing tensions between the ethnoreligious groups in Nigeria.

Lastly, critical discourse analysis of the Nigerian leaders' political speeches and texts had confirmed the key assumptions of critical terrorism studies (CTS) that CT and state's activities themselves encouraged terrorism. Thus, the questions that CTS raised about the study of terrorism helped us to understand the implications of vested interests and politicisation as the predominant and persisted features preventing productive, coherent and cohesive CT policy and strategy in Nigeria. Therefore, Nigeria's CT efforts can only be effective and successful if terrorism issues are unanimously addressed as a collective problem, while the ruling class addresses their parasitic and predatory tendencies that partly serve as drivers of radicalisation and terrorism.

CONCLUSION

Problems of terrorism and CT in Nigeria are two sides of "disunity coin" among Nigerians, especially their leaders. This article had argued that the inherent factors such as vested interests and politicisation that had made the outbreak of BH terrorism inevitable also play out in the counter-productive CT efforts. The country's leaders have allowed corrupt practices, political ambitions, ethnoreligious sentiments, infiltration of the government and military services by Trojan Horses that are sympathetic to terrorists, and power tussles to make the cancers of terrorism fester for over ten years. Arising from all the arguments above, therefore, this study concluded that any efforts to address the terrorism challenges in Nigeria that are not unanimously devised by Nigerians, even with external assistance, would remain unproductive in the light of the inherent sabotage and lack of unity of purpose. Therefore, to avoid a situation in which the country would dissolve into socio-political Armageddon, national consensus to address the menace of terrorism needs to be devised.

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