

Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Military Against Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria Under President Muhammadu Buhari

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Abstract

The trends of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria have called for more effective counter-strategies. The terrorist acts of the Boko-Haram since 2009 have created a state of palpable fear in Nigeria and beyond, while the helpless posture of the government and the military is worrisome. This paper specifically examines the evolution and development of the sect, and efforts of the military in addressing the challenges and the implications. It examines the conceptual clarification of insurgency and terrorism, and reviews the handling of the Boko Haram insurgency by both Jonathan and Buhari administration. The paper engaged qualitative methods and extensively made use of secondary source of data such as internet, text books, newspapers, journals, and recorded information. It also made use of both historical method and descriptive analysis. The paper revealed that, the relocation of the Command and Control Centre of the Military to Maiduguri by President Muhammadu Buhari administration added impetus and renewed vigour to *Operation Zaman Laftiya*, which is aimed at bringing the Boko Haram insurgency to an end in North Eastern Nigeria.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Insurgency, Terrorism, Military Operation, Counter-Strategies

Introduction and Problematic

Insurgency is an act of fighting against the government or armed forces of their own country (Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary, 2000). This act is not far from terrorism, which is becoming a global household word as there is no nation that is completely absolved from its effect. This explains why Horne (2002) in Rourke (2008) observes that war, terrorism, insurgency and other forms of transnational political violence are in many ways more threatening today than ever before as civilian casualty has been on increase.

The trend of insurgency in Nigeria as exemplified by the nefarious activities of the dreaded Islamic sect popularly known as Boko Haram has become a major concern to the international communities in general and the Nigerian government in particular. The activities of the sect especially since 2009 has constituted a major security threat to the nation and make Northern Nigeria particularly the North-East (where their activities are rife), the most dangerous region to live in the country. The dynamics and sophistication of its operations and apparent invincibility of the sect have raised fundamental questions not only about military roles on national security, but also on governance issues as well as on Nigeria's corporate existence. The sect group have targeted mainly the government and her institutions and officials, schools, churches, markets, recreation centres, motor parks and sometimes mosques; and countless number of innocent Nigerians have borne the brunt of the Boko haram acts of devastation. The dangerous nature of insurgency launched by the group has pitched Christians and Muslims against each other owing to the incessant bombings of churches in the north particularly the most affected states of Bornu, Yobe and Adamawa. The violent activities of the sect also assumed international dimension with the kidnappings and brutal killings of some Europeans in the country.

The nature of the sect's dastardly acts include bombings (including suicide), kidnapping of innocent people especially women and students (like the 276 Chibok girls kidnapped since April 2014), shooting victims at close ranges, throat-slitting and nocturnal attacks. The increasing attacks of the sect even with the emergence of President Muhammadu Buhari (a Muslim and a Northerner) as the Head of the current civilian dispensation has debunked the myth or belief in some quarters that Boko Haram emergence was particularly targeted to pulling down the defunct President Goodluck Jonathan's administration and resist southern domination of the helms of affairs in the country (Blanchard, 2016). This has further heighten fears among Nigerians over the combat readiness of the military in bringing lasting peace to the North-Eastern Nigeria.

It is against this background that this paper seeks to examine the effectiveness of the military against Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria under President Muhammadu Buhari administration. While it is too soon for a complete examination of how the Jonathan and Buhari administrations have juggled these responsibilities with relation to each other, over a year of the Buhari administration's governance allows for some contrast between approaches.

Conceptual Clarification: Insurgency and Terrorism

Insurgency

Insurgency is an armed upheaval against a constituted authority. The nature of insurgencies is an indefinite

concept. However, not all rebellions are insurgencies, because there have been many cases of non-violent rebellions, using civil confrontation, as in the People Power Revolution in the Philippines in the 1980s that ousted President Marcos and the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 (Robert and Timothy, 2009). Anywhere an uprising takes the form of armed rebellion; it may not be viewed as an insurgency if a state of belligerency exists between one or more independent states and rebel forces. For example, during the American Civil War, the Confederate States of America was not recognized as a sovereign state, but it was recognized as an aggressive power, and thus Confederate warships were given the same rights as United States warships in foreign ports (Hall, 2001). Insurgency always carries an implication that the rebels' cause is unlawful, whereas those rising up will see the authority itself as being illegal and unconstitutional (Osanka, 1962).

The Iraq insurgency is one example of a recognized government in opposition to multiple groups of insurgents. The use of the phrase insurgency does recognize the political incentive of those who partake in an insurgency, while the term brigandry implies no political motivation. If a rebellion has diminutive support, for example those who continue to resist towards the end of an armed conflict when most of their allies have admitted failure, then such a resistance may be described as brigandry and those who participate as brigands (Lieber & Hartigan, 1983). The United States Department of Defense (DOD) defines Insurgency as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict”. Insurgency and its strategies are as old as warfare itself. Joint doctrine defines an Insurgency as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict” (U.S DOD, 2007).

Indeed, the increase of insurgent activity relies on a state political structure enabled to control the economic, political, and social freedoms of the masses. Due to this view, insurgent activity is a form of “movement - a political effort with a specific aim,” (Terrorism Research, 2009). The political aim of insurgencies thrives in situations where “societal divisions were cumulative and were combined with economic and political disparities” (O’Neill, 2005). The identification of exoteric appeals, more specifically political and economic disparages, is crucial in understanding social unrest leading to insurgent actions. Rising unemployment and underemployment, unequal distribution of wealth, inadequate distribution of essential goods, elitist control of the political structure, and corrupt leadership all are highly involved factors leading to popular dissatisfaction, opening the door to insurgent action. In examining the effect of exoteric appeals on both the “intelligentsia and the masses,” leading to “unemployment or underemployment can lead not only to inadequate supply of material necessities, but also to psychological dissatisfaction” (O’Neill, 2005). “The masses,” argues Gabriel Almond (1966) (as cited in O’Neill, 2005), “are only capable of registering their grievances; they cannot grasp the shape and form of the historical process in which those grievances are merely incidents”. This in turn allows for manipulation and extensive exploitation to incite popular support by various movements, such as the earlier Communist or Marxist-Leninist indoctrination in many regions towards the ills of the American/Western capitalistic societies, setting the stage for possible insurgent action against political leadership of the state.

Terrorism

Several attempts at defining terrorism have produced the following explanations. Laqueur (1977) for instance argues that “terrorism is the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective by targeting innocent people”. Bruce (2008) on the other hand states that, “terrorism is a set of methods of combat rather than an identifiable ideology or movement, and involves premeditated use of violence against (primarily) non-combatants in order to achieve a psychological effect of fear on others than the immediate targets”. Hutter (2005) distinguishes three traits that define terrorism for the purpose of academic study. Firstly, it is an act of violence that produces widespread disproportionate emotional reactions such as fear and anxiety which are likely to influence attitudes and behaviour. Secondly, the violence is systemic and rather unpredictable and is usually directed against symbolic targets. Thirdly, the violence conveys messages and threats in order to communicate and gain social control. Terrorism to Trosper (2009) is “the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives”. Bockstette (2008) sees terrorism as political violence in an asymmetrical conflict designed to induce terror and psychic fear (sometimes indiscriminate) through the violent victimization and destruction of non-combatant targets (sometimes iconic symbols), involving acts meant to send a message from an illicit clandestine organization. He argues further that the purpose of terrorism is to exploit the media in order to achieve maximum attainable publicity as an amplifying force multiplier in order to influence the targeted audience(s) and reach short- and mid-term political goals and/or desired long-term purposes.

The preceding definitions suggest that terrorism is not the result of an accidental injury inflicted on a civilian or a group of civilians but stress that this is an act purposely directed against civilians. Terrorism can therefore be defined as the calculated use of violence to inculcate fear, to intimidate governments in the pursuit of political, religious, or ideological goals (September 11, 2001 Commission Report). Terrorist attacks are characterized with indiscriminate disregard for human life, and widely considered as a violation of contemporary

traditions in conventional warfare. Terrorists do not adhere to rules and traditions and thus are considered to be “rogue actors” lacking any centralized coordination for the attacks, political goals or consensus to act. In conclusion, terrorism seeks political objectives mainly and establishes the state of fear, using violence against innocent people.

Sternberg (2003) states that, terrorism is the method or theory whereby an organized group seeks to achieve its vowed aims, chiefly through the use of violence. This conception of terrorism is that it is “the threat or use of violence and terror for the achievement of a political, socio-economic or other expedient purpose against an individual or group of individuals, a thing or group of things, a state or group of states”. Bruce (1998) identified five types of terrorism to include; state sponsored terrorism, which consists of terrorist acts on a state or government. To him, the Nigeria-Biafra war, 1793 French Revolution and the thousands of executions are often cited as the first instance of state terrorism. The second is dissent terrorism, which are terrorist groups which have rebelled against their government. The third type is religious terrorism, which are terrorist groups which are extremely religiously motivated. To him, this group is particularly dangerous due to the fanaticism of those who practice it and their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the cause. He further identified Al-Qaeda, Protestant violence in Ireland, Muslim-Hindu tensions in Pakistan and India, Boko Haram in Nigeria as examples. The fourth type is terrorists and the left and right, which are groups rooted in political ideology; and the fifth type is criminal terrorism, which are terrorists acts used to aid in crime and criminal profit.

The Evolution and Development of Boko Haram Insurgency

There are differences in opinion over the accurate date and conditions under which the group that became known as Boko Haram was first established. A senior Nigerian military officer has suggested that the group has existed in some form or another since 1995, while others have written that it was founded in 2003 or 2004 (Gusau, 2009; Onuoha, 2010). However, Boko Haram has been in subsistence since 2002 but became popular and notorious in July 2009 when its members had a brutal and prolonged clash with security agents who had wanted to dismantle the group, comparable to what it did to the Maitatsine group in 1981 and 1984. However, Boko Haram fought back obstinately and the death toll on both sides was estimated at about 500 in 2009 alone (Kalpesh, 2013). The major centre of violence around this time was at Bayan quarters in Maiduguri. There was a recurrence of the group in July 2010 at northeast Nigeria, starting with low-intensity violence and subsequent transformation into sophisticated methods of operation that was not identical with the sect in the past. They killed policemen, soldiers, politicians; burnt schools, churches, the Electoral commission’s office (INEC) in Maiduguri, they evolved to suicide bombings, and in June and August 2011, they launched series of bomb attacks on the Nigerian police headquarters and United Nations office, both in Abuja. In September, 2010 the sect took its operation to another level by undertaking a successful ‘prison break’ operation, to set its members in confinement free (TSA, 2011).

Similarly, Adeniyi (2011) suggested that the origins of Boko Haram dated back to 2002 when Muhammad Yusuf, the spiritual leader and founder of the sect, an indigene of Jakusko in Yobe State, rose to recognition within the Salafi Islamic circle (Wahabites) preaching against western education, the government and calling for Jihad with a special focus on the youths. He moved from Muhammadu Ndimi Mosque to Daggash Mosque both in Maiduguri, before he finally got a piece of land at the Railway quarters to build a mosque and house from his father-in-law, Baba Fugu. He was seen as a crusader for the poor and thereby got numerous followers which increased his influence and authority. A splinter group among Yusuf’s followers went on to form the ‘Taliban’ and attacked police stations in Yobe Stations in September 2004, with succeeding attacks on policemen in Bama and Gwoza in Borno State. They were to escape into the Mandara mountains on the border with Cameroon upon a crackdown from Nigerian security agents. Yusuf reconciled with this faction in 2005 who had accused him of being too flexible in his approach to the Islamic jihad campaigns; from April 2007, violent attacks stemmed from Yusuf’s group with assaults on public buildings and police posts in parts of Bauchi, Borno, Kano and Yobe states.

Johnson (2011) recorded in another account that Muhammad Yusuf was born on January 29, 1970 in a rural village known as Girgir in Yobe State. He was a Tsangaya Qur’anic teacher, once a Shi’ite faithful and afterwards joined the Izalatul-Bid’a wa Iqamat al Sunna (Izala) movement and again left to be with the Shababul Islam. His radical point of reference was linked to Ibn Taymiyyah after whom he named his mosque in Maiduguri, seeking to eliminate Nigeria’s secular system of government and establish a Sharia law in the State similar to Taleban agenda in Afghanistan. Yusuf was charged to court in 2006 for receiving funds from an Al-Qaeda linked organization but later released; he was able to enlist Buji Foi, a former commissioner of religious affairs in Borno state, as well as foreign nationals as militants from Somalia and Sudan. The sect deployed a guerrilla warfare method by using the civil population as shields from attacks by security agents, established its cell in Yobe State called ‘Afghanistan’, stockpiled arms and ammunition at Fadama Madawas in Bauchi state, used a school as training ground for its fighters in Jalingo, Taraba State and used a mosque in Kano to preach its doctrines and ideologies. Moreover, they made attempts to penetrate the South-West Nigeria when 38 of its

members were arrested on their journey to Lagos in 2009 (Olomojobi, 2013).

Boko Haram became latent for more than a year after their leader's death but re-emerged under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau, who was described by Salkida as always studying and writing, and was more devoted and modest than anyone else (Murtada, 2013). In June 2011, the first suicide bomber struck, with an attack on the Police headquarters in Abuja while a second suicide bomber followed two months later, in August 2011 which exploded at the United Nations building in Abuja too, a move interpreted by Salkida as an attempt to tighten existing links with al-Qaeda in the Maghreb by illustrating Boko Haram's competence to strike "western" institutions. Salkida asserted that the sect's campaign is not against a Christian President but sees the northern governors and emirs as part of the institutions (Rice, 2012). Kolawole (2013), recalled that Boko Haram launched retaliatory attacks on the personnel of Nigerian police in Maiduguri after the killing of their members and burning of their mosques in Bauchi state on the night of July 25, 2009 and rioted in the Federal Low-cost Housing Estate and Dutsen Tanshi areas of Bauchi; adding that it was the beginning of the group's attacks. He identified three motivations of the sect to include religious extremism, resentment over the killing of their members and poverty. He went further to classify three main targets of the group as (i) the Northern establishment (ii) the moderate Muslims (iii) the Christian; elucidating further that "the security agencies are, inevitably, in the line of fire. Boko Haram's grouse against the Northern establishment is well documented as they have killed Northern politicians and launched attacks on the Shehu of Borno and Emir of Kano.

Boko Haram Insurgency under Jonathan Administration (2010-2015)

In May 2010, Goodluck Jonathan assumed office following his predecessor's death, and his election a year later coincided with a major uptick in Boko Haram activity nationally. The group began expanding its operations out from the northeast region. On 16 June 2011, mere weeks after Jonathan's election, it launched the first suicide attack in Nigerian history at the police headquarters in the federal capital of Abuja and another suicide car bomb attack in Abuja followed on 26 August 2011 at the UN compound. Boko Haram was able to support itself through various coercive methods, including bank raids, the extortion of local businessmen, and government officials, and high profile kidnapping case(s) of a French family in Cameroon was returned for a \$3 million ransom in 2013 (Chothia, 2015; Hiribarren, 2016).

In 2013, Jonathan finally began taking substantive legal measures in fighting back against Boko Haram, ordering a military crackdown, while he declared a state of emergency in the northern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa (Botelho, 2013). The killing of hundreds of detained civilians by soldiers after the 14 March 2014 Boko Haram attack on a barracks in Maiduguri was a typical example of how the government continued to alienate locals throughout Borno State in particular, allowing for the mistrust of the federal government and general insecurity which the group took advantage of throughout the course of that year. However, the abduction of the 276 girls on 14th of April 2014 from a secondary school in the village of Chibok and the killing hundreds in the attack boosted its international recognition as a terrorist organization. The attack launched an international campaign for the girls' release, and Western governments such as the US and UK promised additional troops to help (Thurston, 2015; Sieff, 2016; Bloom & Matfess, 2016). Based upon the understanding that people in the under serviced northeast had legitimate grievances, negotiations were seen by the government as a viable to retrieve the Chibok girls. On 17 October 2014, while the Jonathan government announced it had reached a ceasefire with Boko Haram, an insurgent attack was witnessed in Borno state which led to the death of eight people (Soyombo, 2014). In the lead up to the anticipated election, Boko Haram launched devastating assaults against a variety of Nigerian targets and extended its presence across international borders. The January 2015 attack and countermeasures around the town of Baga, on the Chad border killed up to 2000, though the exact figure is disputed (Rosen, 2015). The group followed this by extending its presence into southern Niger in February 2015 and pledging its allegiance to Islamic State in March 2015 (Gaffey, 2016). The military's early inability to subdue the insurgency led the Jonathan administration to supply local vigilante groups in the region, which remain active under his successor.

The pervasive federal corruption that continued under the Jonathan Administration sapped at the effectiveness of the military to fight against Boko Haram insurgency. As Forest (2012) writes, the "shadow economy" developed within such a state allows for the creation of a terrorist infrastructure to take advantage of tax enforcement of law and the regular trade of illicit goods to superimpose its own trade routes and patronage networks that thrive from a lack of transparency. The widespread domestic allegations of corruption and ineffectiveness of the military during this period were buttressed by the concerns of Nigeria's international partners. U.S officials became wary of extending cooperation to the Jonathan administration by 2014, charging that much of the \$2.1 billion in aid sent to the Nigerian military to respond to Boko Haram was not accounted for.

Overview of Boko Haram Insurgency under Buhari Administration (2015 – Till Date)

In March 2015, Goodluck Jonathan became the first sitting Nigerian president to be defeated in a peaceful election widely regarded as legitimate. This is because, the 2015 campaign for president was hard fought on both

sides and, though often ugly, fought over substantive issues. On the part of Buhari, the key issue during his campaign was the nature of the fight against Boko Haram. In the years following his 2011 electoral defeat at the hands of Jonathan, Buhari intimated that the oppressive nature of the Jonathan administration had turned the disenfranchised youth of the northeast to a wayward, misguided, and radical doctrine of Islam. As Jonathan had earlier, Buhari routinely putting forward the possibility of discussing a cease fire with the group, but the incentives for negotiation remained practical: providing long-term security remained as difficult within the region after Boko Haram as it was before the group's rise. As Buhari explained, little point existed to sending the army there to clear areas that could not be held. Upon assuming the presidency, he declared he would negotiate "without preconditions" regarding the release of the girls kidnapped at Chibok, provided a "credible leader" of the group could be identified (Dupraz-Dobias, 2016; BBC, 2015b).

After his election, President Buhari continued to stress the need for drastic military reform, removing top military commanders considered corrupt, incompetent, or unprofessional in an attempt to raise the morale of poorly equipped and poorly led troops. In January 2016, Buhari declared that he believed corruption in the military was a key reason for its unpreparedness in quashing the insurgency during the Jonathan Administration, particularly as it resulted in the loss of fourteen local government areas to the insurgency during 2015 (Nwabughogu, 2016). In addition to the immediate replacement of many general officers, Buhari moved the Nigerian Military Command Center from the federal capital of Abuja to Maiduguri. The general appointed to lead the international task force working against Boko Haram, Major-General Buratai, a native of Borno State, and this measure was seen as enacted to increase local confidence that the federal government was taking its obligation to enforce security while taking the needs of the local community into account more seriously. Buhari's governance reforms have not simply been driven at improving the effectiveness of the police and the military, but renewing the confidence in Nigeria of allies and business interests. To end government graft, Buhari promised to simplify "the books" in Nigeria so that a single account would be used at the treasury, rather than the elaborate network that has allowed for patronage and blatant corruption in the past. The Treasury Single Account was enacted to close the multiple accounts in the various ministries and agencies of the federal government.

In order to reduce crime, a drive to recruit an additional 10,000 police was also put in motion; Buhari speculated that such would not only curb crime but address the challenge of youth unemployment (Premium Times, 2016). Buhari's vow at the outset of his presidency to defeat Boko Haram completely by the end of 2015 year was flamboyant, but not entirely unrealistic. Nevertheless, Buhari had to couch his December 2015 victory announcement by specifying that Boko Haram could no longer launch "conventional" attacks. As of 2016, while Chief of Defense Staff Olonisakin argued that the movement could no longer launch coordinated attacks, Attorney General and Minister of Justice Malami declared that Boko Haram was no longer able to hold territory (Nwosu, 2016; Bello, 2016). On the part of the governor of Borno state, he proudly announced that, Boko Haram had lost its ability to collect "taxes", and that the Nigerian constitution was once again being enforced throughout the country (Salem, 2016).

However, while the movement remains on the back foot, it is far from defeated. As of April 2016 it has launched a campaign of suicide attacks in towns throughout the northeast in proximity to Maiduguri. In early February 2016, a refugee camp in Borno suffered twin suicide attacks killing over seventy people (Al Jazeera, 2016a). On November 2016, there was an attack on a refugee camp near Maiduguri which killed 58 people. Despite its setbacks, the insurgency remains capable of killing hundreds and the movement has become ever more reliant on suicide attacks, and roughly one and five of these are conducted by children (Al Jazeera, 2016b).

Table 1: Chronology of Major Incidents of Boko Haram Insurgency since 2009 to Date

	Incidents	Effects
July 26-29, 2009	2009 Boko Haram Uprising marking the Beginning of the insurgency in northern Nigeria.	Nearly 1,000 people were killed in clashes between Boko Haram Militant and Nigerian Soldier
July 30, 2009	Execution Of Muhammed Yusuf, Spiritual Leader Of Boko Haram by Nigerian soldiers following the recent uprising.	Abubakar Shekau takes control of the group
September 7, 2010	Bauchi prison break	5 people were killed and 721 inmates freed from Bauchi prison.
October 11, 2010	Bomb Attack on Maiduguri Police Station	The police station was destroyed and three person injured
December 31, 2010	Attack at Mammy Market at Army Mogadishu Barracks, Abuja	11 people died
May 29, 2011	Bomb explosion in Abuja and Bauchi (during Goodluck Jonathan's swearing in as new President	15 people killed

	Incidents	Effects
June 16,2011	Failed Abuja police Headquarters Bombing (Nigeria's first instance of suicide Bombing)	2 people died (the suicide Bomber and a traffic policemen)
August 4,2011	Damaturu Attacks	Between 100 to 150 people were killed
December 22-23, 2011	Boko Haram and Nigerian Army clashes in Maiduguri and Damaturu	68 people, of whom are 50 militants, at least 7 soldiers and 4 civilians were killed
December 25,2011	Bombing of St. Theresa's Catholic church, Madalla	46 people killed
January 21,2012	Kano multiple bombs blast	185 people feared dead
April 29,2012	Attack Bayero University, Kano	13 Christian worshipers, 1non-teaching staff and 2 Professors were killed
June 17, 2012	Kaduna church Bombings	19 people were killed
August 7, 2012	Deeper Life church shooting	19 church members killed.
December 25, 2012	Maiduguri and Potiskum church shootings	27 Christians were killed
January 1, 2013	Nigerian Army Raid on Boko Haram	13 militants were killed
March 18, 2013	Kano Bus Bombing	Between 22 and 65 people were killed.
April 16, 2013	Baga Massacre (Borno state)	187 people were killed
July 6, 2013	Yobe state school shooting	Over 42 persons were killed
September 12, 2013	Attacks on Maiduguri Mosque	56 people killed
September 12-18, 2013	Nigeria Army offensive against Boko Haram sect	150 militants and 16 soldiers died
September 19, 2013	Benisheik Attacks by Boko Haram	16 people were killed
September 29, 2013	Guiba College Massacre (Yobe state)	Over 50 students were killed
October 2013	Government force Raid on rebel	101 Boko Haram fighters were killed
October 29, 2013	Raids on Damaturu	At least 128 people were killed (95 militants, 23 soldiers, 8 policemen and 2 civilians.
January 26, 2014	Northern Nigeria Attacks by Boko Haram	138 killed in total
February 14,2014	Borno massacre in konduga	121 Christian villagers were killed
February 15, 2014	Izghe attack by Boko Haram	106 persons killed
February 25, 2014	Federal Government College Attack by Boko Haram in Yobe state	59 students were killed some through throat slitting by militants
March 14, 2014	Attack on Giwa Military Barracks in Maiduguri	Boko Haram Detainees were freed from a detention facility and recaptured detainees were executed by the military
April 14, 2014	Abuja twin Bombing Attack	Over 88 people were killed
April 15, 2014	Chibok School Girls kidnapping (Borno state)	276 female students were kidnapped by Boko Haram
May 1, 2014	Abuja Car bombing	19 people killed
May 5, 2014	Gamboru Ngala Attack (Borno State)	At least 300 people were killed
May 20, 2014	Jos Car Bombings	At least 118 Villagers were killed
May 27, 2014	Buni Yadi Attack (Yobe State)	49 security personnel and 9 civilians were killed
June 1, 2014	Mubi Bombing (Adamawa State)	40 people were killed
June 2, 2014	Gwoza Massacre	At least 200, mostly Christians were killed in several villages in Borno State.
June 20-23, 2014	Borno State Attacks	70 people were killed and 91 women and children kidnapped by militants
June 23-25, 2014	Central Nigeria (Middle Belt) Attack	About 171 people were killed in series of attacks in the middle Belt of Nigeria
July 26, 2014	Nigerian Military Raid on Boko Haram camps	Over 100 Militant were killed
November 28, 2014	Kano Bombing and Gun Attacks	At Least 120 Muslim followers of the Emir of Kano, Muhammed Sanusi II were killed during a Suicide bombing and gun attack by Boko Haram. The Four gunmen were subsequently killed By an angry mob.
December 13, 2014	Gumsuri Kidnappings (Borno State)	About 35persons were killed, while about 185 persons were kidnapped.
December 28-29, 2014	Failed Boko Haram offensive into Cameroon's far North Region	85 civilians, 94 militants and 2 Cameroonian soldiers were killed.
January 3-7, 2015	Baga massacre and Raze	Militants razed the entire town of Baga in North-East? Nigeria. At least 2,000 were killed. Boko Haram then controlled 70% of Borno State. The worst affected by the insurgency.

	Incidents	Effects
January 12, 2015	Failed Kolofata Raid in Cameroon	The Cameroonian Military claimed the army lost one officer, while the Boko Haram group lost between 143-300 rebels
January 18, 2015	Attacks on Villages in North Cameroon by Boko Haram	80 people kidnapped and 3 others killed by Boko Haram
January 25, 2015.	Offensive against Nigerian Forces in Maiduguri	8 civilians, about 53 Militants and unknown numbers of Soldiers died. Rebels captured the nearby strategic town of Monguno.
January 29, 2015	Recapture of Border town of Michika by Nigerian Military in collaboration with Chadian Soldiers	Michika recaptured from the Rebels
January 31, 2015	African Union Pledged to send 7,500 International Soldiers to Nigerian and Fighting s in North of Cameroon	Chadian Forces Claimed to have killed 120 Boko Haram fighters while they lost 3 Soldier
February 6, 2015	Niger Raid by Boko Haram on Bosso and Diffa towns	It marked the first time the Boko Haram attacked the country. The Chadian Military assisted the Nigerien Armed Forces to repel the attack. 5 Nigerien were killed while the government claimed to kill 109 militants
February 12, 2015	Invasion of Sambisa Forest, Borno State (Boko Haram Stronghold) by West African Allied Forces of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger	Undisclosed number of scores of insurgents were killed
February 13, 2015	Ngouboua, Chad Attack (after 30 insurgents crossed lake chad in 4 Motor Boats)	The first attack on Chad by Boko Haram
February 21, 2015	Recapture of Baga by Nigerien Army	Baga which had fallen to Boko Haram on January 3rd was recaptured by Nigerien Army.
February 24, 2015	Chadian Boko Haram Rebels clash near Garambu	Over 200 Boko Haram Fighters were killed, one Chadian Soldier lost and nine others wounded
April 24, 2015	Sambisa Forest last area controlled in Nigeria by Boko Haram Forces	Intensive efforts are still mounted to dislodge the militants and take over the area.
June 16, 2015	Twin Suicide Bomb Attacks in Chad Capital targeted at Police Headquarters and Police Academy	24 people killed and more than 100 wounded in N'Djamena blamed on Boko Haram Jihadists.
June 22, 2015	Maiduguri Mosque Bombing by 2 female suicide bombers	30 killed at crowded mosque as Boko Haram marked the start of Ramadan by targeting a mosque that they saw as falling short in following 'the Prophet'
July 1-2, 2015	Multiple Mosque Massacres	48 persons killed on the 1st at one mosque in Kakawa and 17 wounded in the attacks. 97 others mostly men were killed in numerous mosques on the 2nd July 2015 with a number of women and young girls killed in their homes, while unknown numbers were wounded
July 6, 2015	Jos Bomb attack	At least 44 persons were killed
June 13, 2016	Askira, Borno State	Top Boko Haram recruiter arrested and he confessed how he enlisted three of his son

Source: Extracted and Re-arranged from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Boko_Haram_insurgency. Retrieved on 13th June, 2016

Discussion of Findings

Arising from the findings is that, since 2009 when the activities of the sect in Nigeria assumed frightening dimensions, there has been wanton destruction of countless innocent lives and properties worth billions of naira. This can be gleaned from the table of chronology of major attacks of Boko Haram above. Many people including women and students have been displaced; many have been kidnapped like the Chibok Girls, traumatized and their future shattered by the nefarious Islamic sect. Other survivors whose houses have been burnt and part of their families killed have also been displaced with its unsavoury attendant consequences. This followed the announcement of state of emergency in the North East where about 650,000 persons fled the three states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe to neighbouring states, while thousands of them left the country. The Buhari administration is currently making efforts to rehabilitate the recaptured victims of the Boko Haram onslaughts. For instance, a National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Transit Camp for displaced persons has been

established at Mubi, Adamawa State (The Nation 1/8/15).

Under the Jonathan administration, the insurgency constituted serious threat to national interest, peace and security of the country. For instance, the sect threatened to detonate bombs in Abuja during the 51st independence anniversary. Not only that, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) passing out parade was equally cancelled because of the threats issued by the sect. Thus, “the cancellation of the usual parade of those national events has since set Nigerians wondering at this kind of psychological victory that the federal government has handed to the militant groups” (Rasheed, 2013). Indeed, the military and federal police have faced difficulty in strengthening ties with the civil society. This is because both have a widespread reputation for corruption and brutality that has been difficult to overcome. While it is seen from the above table that Buhari’s administration increased the coordination and effectiveness of the military through restructuring.

Before this current administration, a lot of unaccounted revenue has been wasted by the government on efforts geared towards combating the insurgency, which has not been very successful. This includes huge amount of budget to the defense parastatal and the procuring of needed ammunition. This situation becomes precarious in light of the mass unemployment, poverty, and enormous economic deprivation and suffering ravaging the youths of the country. While, the latest response of the government under President Buhari manifested in the relocation of the Command and Control Centre of the Military to Maiduguri, the action is geared towards adding impetus and renewed vigour to *Operation Zaman Lafiya*, which is aimed at bringing insurgency to an end in North Eastern Nigeria. An alternate command centre was also established in Yola, Adamawa State. (The Punch, 1st June, 2015). Efforts are also being made to strengthen the Joint Multi-nation Task-Force deployed to the region

Lack of education played out in the rise of Boko Haram insurgency. This is because the sects were more active in two states of Borno and Yobe and if this is related with the issue of education, it will be discovered that these two states have the worst cases in terms of children’s school drop-out rate with more than 50 percent drop-out rate (Anaba, 2016). In response to this, Buhari has sought to address education with a national program but the necessary focus on the north is sensitive to the president, as he himself a northerner, and for political reasons.

Conclusion

While it is reasonable to assess the effectiveness of the military under Buhari administration against Boko Haram since 29th May 2015, the group’s decline is also the result of multiple processes at the regional and local level. The new administration was pivotal in coordinating a regional and international response to Boko Haram, persuading the U.S. to sell arms to Nigeria again and working closely with regional states now involved in the fight. Also, a combined approach involving Nigeria’s military and her neighbours (Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin) has demonstrated an impact on the group’s ability to destabilize the area, though long-term causes for Boko Haram’s decline are not only due to government policy, but its own practices.

Indeed, the relocation of the Command and Control Centre of the Military to Maiduguri added impetus and renewed vigour to *Operation Zaman Lafiya*, which is aimed at bringing the insurgency to an end in North Eastern Nigeria. In spite of the success by the Buhari’s government in securing international assistance in the fight against Boko Haram, the underlying issues which allowed the group to gain such international prominence in the first place has not been addressed. So, there remains much to be done by the Buhari’s Administration if the Boko Haram insurgency must be a thing of the past, even as we know that there are still pockets and intermittent attacks been carried out by the sect.

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