

# Beyond the Kinetic Approach to Counter Terrorism in Nigeria and Towards a Sustainable Soft Power Paradigm

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**Abstract:** The world over, nations are striving to contend with the endemic menace of terrorism, insurgency and transnational crimes by non-state actors and criminal gangs. As part of states' constitutional obligation to the entire citizenry, nations react swiftly to the threats of terrorism through military operations and joint task operations. However, realities have shown that counter terrorism operations are better handled with a blend of hard power and soft power. Indeed experts believe that soft power approach to counter terrorism provides a template for sustainable solution. This work is therefore a review of the soft power endeavours of the Nigerian state in her counter terrorism operations in the North East region. The Study employed a qualitative research involving Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) involving a purposively selected sample comprising (Security Personnel, NGO and CBO Personnel, Victims of Terror etc.). Findings from the study showed the different hard and soft power strategies employed and the obvious desirability of soft power, while offering useful recommendations on consolidating the soft power template for sustainable counter terrorism management in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Kinetic, Non-Kinetic, Counter Terrorism, Soft Power, Paradigm, Nigeria.

## 1. Introduction

As a nation, Boko Haram has remained a defining moment in Nigeria's national security history albeit political epochs. The sect's espousal of a brand of 'Salafi-jihadi'

outlook has a blend of violent and reactionary movement (Nte, 2014, Thurston, 2016). From its original interpretative name “People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and Jihad” underlines its core Salafist values which applies to similar movements across the globe. In the same vein, Boko Haram also lays ‘claims to an embodiment of the original legacy of the early Muslim community...and also claims the right to declare Muslim leaders apostates, rebel against allegedly infidel states, and possibly use force to impose the Salafi creed and a strict interpretation of Islamic law on civilian subjects’ (Thurston, 2016:9). Though a minority amongst northern Nigerian Muslims, Salafis have attracted ardent followers by making fundamentalist appeals, through which they portray themselves ‘as a vanguard of true Muslims within a wayward society,’ as well as through their adept use of local media and ‘urban networks of mosques and schools’ (ibid). These ardent stances have triggered disagreements, competition, and conflict not only with other Muslim groups but also within Nigeria’s Salafi movement itself. As a subgroup within this fractious community, Boko Haram’s more violent approach has been understood as a means of differentiating itself amidst the ‘fierce intra-Salafi competition for audiences’ (ibid: 10). Thus, from the ideological standpoint, both the much wider historical context of sectarian conflict and the more immediate and volatile impetus of Salafi-Jihadism have contributed to providing the immediate spark that has ignited this violent conflict.

The Boko Haram crisis has also been fuelled by the confluence of the national issue of corruption and the dramatic poverty and inequality that persists in Northern Nigeria. Nigeria’s political and economic elite who have benefited from the oil political-economy have also created an almost self-sustaining status-quo marked by opulence and conspicuous consumption. At the same time, nearly three quarters of the population in Nigeria’s north live in poverty while the northeast of Nigeria, the birthplace of Boko Haram, has the worst poverty rates in the country (ICG, 2016).

As a result, analysts note that ‘many Nigerians in the Lake Chad area believe that the government could be doing more to share wealth, improve access to food and water, increase opportunities for livelihoods, and generally ease their burdens. They are disgusted by the corruption that they continue to see at all levels of government’ (Cole *et. al*, 2017). These factors have therefore served to both trigger widespread anger and disillusionment amongst the northern Nigerian population and to delegitimise Nigeria’s government and political system. These disappointments and grievances have been a crucial factor fuelling the growth and spread extremist ideologies in northern Nigeria, such as those espoused by Boko Haram (Herbert and Hussain, 2018).

The frequently coercive responses of the Nigerian government to the Boko Haram insurgency have also been one of the driving factors of the conflict. The deadliest phases of the insurgency only began after the police, following a skirmish with the

group in July 2009, carried out a 'bloody purge of the group's members and anyone they suspected of being a Boko Haram supporter and sympathizer' (Walker, 2012: 4). The number of people who were executed by the police in this period is said to be 'more than a hundred' (ibid). The police also executed the group's founder, Muhammed Yusuf, without trial while he was under their custody during this period. This response by the state initially dislodged Boko Haram from Maiduguri and sent its remaining members into hiding. However, this brutal crackdown ultimately gave rise to a more violent phase of the Boko Haram insurgency as the group soon emerged under a more fanatical leadership, driven by revenge and a narrative of victimhood (Asfura-Heim *et. al*, 2015).

The state's approach to Boko Haram has not greatly moderated since this episode. Rather, the Federal government has since launched a full military operation in the territories in which the group is most active. During their campaigns in these regions, the armed forces have frequently been accused of 'arbitrary dragnet arrests, collective punishment, illegal detentions, and, in some instances, extra-judicial killings' (ibid). This approach has been counterproductive as it has not only further alienated the local population and triggered further radicalisation, but also limited the effectiveness of the state's response thereby extending the conflict. The significant governance deficit in the affected region has led to the emergence of alternative conflict actors (e.g. the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) around 2013). Analysts note that, at the peak of the conflict, such volunteers even came to 'outnumber government soldiers,' with their roles expanding 'beyond static local defence to include intelligence gathering, surveillance and tracking, and raids on homes of known and suspected members' (Asfura-Heim *et. al*, 2015, p. 53). While these vigilante groups have been praised for helping push back Boko Haram, they also risk further extending the conflict given that, having already taken up arms, they 'could eventually become another source of insecurity' (Asfura-Heim *et. al*, 2015, p. 53). Structurally, the limited state infrastructure, capacity, and presence in the north-eastern corner of Nigeria have been a dramatic constraint on the state's response throughout the crises. However, more immediate governors' failures during the crises also contributed to its extension.

In this respect, the hesitant response of the Goodluck Jonathan administration (2011 - 2015) to the crises was an important aggravating factor. Not till 2013 did the Jonathan administration finally designate Boko Haram a terrorist group, declared a state of emergency, and deployed troops in the three north-eastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe which were most under threat (Matfess, 2017). The period in which the Nigerian state responded in a hesitant and incoherent manner also coincided with the phase wherein Boko Haram pioneered its most brutal tactics, including widespread abductions and the mass slaughter of rural and small town populations. The

internationally reported kidnapping of the Chibok school girls in 2014 and the 2015 massacre of up to 2000 civilians in Baga, Borno State are examples of this trend.

The vacuum of state authority in the areas under the most severe threat from Boko Haram also meant that various criminal groups have seen the chaos as an opportunity for profit. In this light, Matfess (2017:5) observes that 'the cells that developed and joined the group in this time period were less ideologically oriented than their predecessors and showed greater interest in criminality and material gain.' Instances of such criminality including, 'bank robberies robbing, cash-in-transit convoys, assassinations for hire, and trafficking illegal weapons and drugs,' have been cited as one of the sources of Boko Haram's sustained access to funding, a factor which has greatly extended the conflict (Asfura-Heim et. al, 2015:30).

The Buhari presidency has brought about a period of relative improvement in the Boko Haram's crisis marked by significant gains made by the Nigerian government but also dire humanitarian crises as well as resistance and evolution on the part of the insurgents. The Nigerian government, through its regional collaboration through a Multinational Joint Task Force established with Cameroon, Niger, and Chad has been able to regain most of the territory initially lost to the insurgents. However, Boko Haram has innovated various new approaches to violence including its increased use of women and children as suicide bombers in civilian population centres. Yet, perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the current phase in the Boko Haram conflict is the humanitarian crises it has triggered which is said to affect up to 8.5 million people. Exacerbated by environmental challenges posed by famine and the drying-up of Lake Chad as well as demographic pressures caused by displacement across national and international borders of large numbers of people, the scale of this aspect of the crises still remains to be fully grasped (Herbert and Hussain, 2018). So far the federal government of Nigeria has adopted so much of the hard power approach to the terrorism debacle in North East Nigeria with less than expected results. It has also embarked on several soft power approaches to counter terrorism to complement the hard power approach. Consequently this work seeks to examine the paradigm shift from hard power to soft power approaches of the Nigerian state and the emerging challenges therefrom.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

- (i) To Evaluate the Hard Power Counter Terrorism Measures of the Nigerian State.
- (ii) To Review the Soft Power Approaches in Counter Terrorism Intervention in the North East, Nigeria.
- (iii) To Assess the Roles of NGOs and CBOs in Soft Power Counter Terrorism Strategy in Nigeria

### 3. Research Questions

- (i) What are the Hard Power (Military) Counter Terrorism Measures of the Nigerian State?
- (ii) What are the Soft Power Approaches Employed by the Nigerian State in Counter Terrorism Intervention in the North East?
- (iii) What Specific Roles do NGOs and CBOs play in Nigeria's Soft Power Counter Terrorism Strategy?

### 4. Review of Related Literature

#### 4.1. *Hard Power Approach*

Otherwise known as hard politics or military-based power approach simply refers to a counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency strategy that involves a “military or punitive solution or operations that include offensive measures taken to pre-empt, prevent, deter and respond to terrorism” (Rineheart, 2010: 32). Arquilla, Rondfeldt & Zanini (1999: 51) also define the term as a “war paradigm or measure that is used proactively through pre-emptive strikes and defensively through air strikes and other forms of military combat”.

This military-based approach employs the idea of war on terrorism which Oyewole (2013) argued that it positions the fight against terrorism in military terms as an enemy-centric war and charges the armed forces with the responsibility of developing and effecting strategic responses. Hard power approach or the hard political counter-terrorism measures involves militarized policing and a war-like hunt for terrorists, with the motive of eliminating and deterring them. Oyewole (2013) contends however, that liberal scholars show that hard politics makes democracy less practicable and enables dictators to silence oppositions. However, the hard power has been criticised for its tendency to be overt and disproportionate, often leading to a backlash that delegitimizes the state and, sometimes, sway public support for the terrorists (Crenshaw, 2000; Kaldor, 2005). However, the argument that states' over-reaction is counter-productive is not necessarily true, according to Schmid (2013). Schmid (2013) uses the case of Latin Americas insurgency and counter-insurgency of the 1970s and 1980s to show how difficult it is to measure the impact of CT on terrorism, although he concludes that “a proportionate response based on a minimal use of force appears to be wiser” (p.36). Again, the military-based approach may be emotionally satisfying in the immediate term, in view of the human and material cost of the war on terrorism, but on the other hand, it casts a shadow of fear and destruction that no one would want to live with permanently.

### *4.2. Soft Power Approach*

Soft power approach, which is alternatively called soft politics in quarters simply defined as “a non-war population-centric CT and CI strategy that focuses on winning the legitimacy (hearts and minds) of the local population through a range of political, diplomatic, and conciliatory measures, including capacity building, good governance, economic development, and counter-radicalization policies and programmes” (Rineheart, 2010: 37; Schmid, 2005:40; Oyewole, 2013).

Soft political counter-terrorism measures often referred to as the diplomatic mode, on the other hand, works on the assumption that a political approach yields better dividends of justice for terrorists and against them as well, rather than the courts (Oyewole, 2013). The author further states that this model of counterterrorism entails a soft power approach, consisting of population-centric methods (Oyewole, 2013) that makes the interests of the population foremost and an intricate part of the process. Featured in this method are such things as capacity building, democratization, economic development, and counter-radicalization policies that highlight the underlying causes that enable terrorism to thrive and focus on addressing these causes (Oyewole, 2013). This soft power approach is apparently not an immediate response approach to an ongoing terrorism, but should ideally be implemented genuinely and consistently to counter further radicalization efforts of terrorism, in essence, providing an effective deterrence against acts of terrorism that creates crippling siege and civil unrest which rob communities of normalcy in their daily lives.

### *4.3. Hearts –and–Minds Approach*

Hearts-and-minds approach to fighting terrorism otherwise called Legitimacy Approach, obviously because its goal’ to win the legitimacy of the civil population and/ or that of another sister state (Rineheart, 2010). This approach is defined simply as a form of soft power approach in which the key objective of a given counter-terrorism measure is to win popular legitimacy around the measure through deliberate actions or projects that aim at winning the support, assistance, cooperation, and solidarity of majority members of the immediate community (ies), and civil society groups in and around the area (Sano, 2010, Schmid, 2005; Rineheart, 2010).

Arguably, very few terrorist groups today will respect the doctrine of civilian or non-combatant immunity. One of the key features of terrorism is the deliberate attack on civilians. The targeting of civilian lives and properties is essential to the demarcation between insurgency and terrorism, and, of course, to the concept of winning ‘hearts and minds’. Insurgents need local support for victory, whereas terrorists’ attack on local civilians is indicative of the little need for winning ‘hearts and minds’.



This distinction is essential to the design of an appropriate CT or CI. For instance, Kiras (2007) stresses the importance for governments fighting violent armed groups to win the hearts and minds of the locals by addressing the root causes (basic needs) as well as promoting cooperation between the local civilians and military forces. He argues that such an approach will help to isolate insurgents physically and politically. This approach will be more suited to insurgency than terrorism and likely defines the sentiment of the new terrorism scholars in their repudiation of the necessity of winning hearts and minds (Lesser, 1999; Hoffman, 1999). Paradoxically, Kaldor (2005), a new war proponent, supports the idea that civil society structures may be more relevant than the bureaucratic state and military structures to countering terrorism. This is very similar to Kiras' argument for civilian and military coordination of CI (Crenshaw, 2000). The importance of civil society structures to countering terrorism is framed around the concept of legitimacy- the need for those countering terrorism to "maintain the moral high-ground in the struggle with terrorists by defending and strengthening the rule of law, good governance, democracy and social justice" (Schmid, 2005:144, 2013; Walzer, 2006; Wilkinson, 2000).

Particularly, in the war approach, states often adopt proactive and defensive measures, which/may come in the form of pre-emptive strikes against terrorists' strategic positions as well as efforts to fortify potential targets in order to nullify or minimise the damage caused by an attack (Sandler, 2005). However, the unintended consequences that can come in terms of collateral damage may undermine the expected positive outcome of such an approach, which can lead to escalation and sustenance of terrorism. It is, therefore, possible for states to react in a disproportionate way that will play into the hands of the terrorists. The risk is higher in a state-led (and in a war approach) than in a civil society or in a situation involving coordinated efforts between local civilians and the state forces.

By involving the civilians and civil society organisations, responding states can isolate the terrorist organisations from the community and deny them popular support and recruits as well as encourage defection (Schmid, 2005) and ultimately win "hearts and minds" of the local population a necessary condition for CT victory (Kiras, 2007).

Another way to achieve such success, according to Kiras (2007), is by addressing basic needs (or root causes). This involves addressing the situational or preconditions, which are largely issues of deprivation, including poverty and inequality or social injustice and political exclusion that terrorists may manipulate to justify their acts of violence. Although most scholars agree that these conditions do not necessarily lead to terrorism, it is equally important to address them (Crenshaw, 2000; Schmid, 2005). Addressing the background issues or root causes is a necessary response that not only guarantees development and equality but, more so, removes the incentives for violent conflict (Crenshaw, 1981).

Some scholars argue that a human-based response is ‘useful to a “stable and peaceful future” (Aldrich, 2012: 49).

#### *4.4. Holistic Approach*

In the fight against terrorism, it is not enough for the responding states to just wake up and settle for a particular approach as discussed in section 2.2 (1)-(6) above. Put in another way, before choosing a particular approach, the affected state should first do a proper assessment of the potential outcome of the approach in question. It is also very important to also assess a number of variables such as the strengths and weaknesses of and threats from the conflict groups (a kind of SWOT analysis). Ultimately, the asymmetrical nature of contemporary terrorist and insurgent conflicts means that they continuously transform and reproduce themselves based on the assessment of the information and resources available to them as highlighted in the previous section. Hence, those fighting terrorist groups should find the need to continuously assess their responses and adapt their strategies and tactics to the evolutionary and reactive character of the terrorist or insurgent groups under scrutiny (Crenshaw, 2007; Kilcullen, 2006). In addition, this will involve proactive as well as combative/defensive strategies. The defensive stance is justified against the notion that it is very difficult and impossible to completely prevent or defeat terrorism for many reasons, including the unconventional nature of modern warfare, that avoids battle fields lacks a clearly defined army, clandestine and disregards all rules of engagement guiding armed conflict and the laws of war (Wilkinson, 2000).

It is against the backdrop of the foregoing that most experts and scholars on terrorism recommend a holistic approach to counter-terrorism. By definition, the holistic approach simply refers to strategic combination of some or most of the aforementioned approaches discussed earlier in 4.1-4.6 in this section (Wilkinson, 2000; Rineheart, 2010; Metz, 2007). This involves mostly a tactical combination or the hard power (military-based) approach, the soft power approach, the justice-policing approach, and some other approaches as the prevailing circumstances permit (Metz, 2007).

For, instance, the soft-power (non-military) approaches, including political, intelligence, law enforcement and economic approach will work best in the early stages of terrorism (Metz, 2007). However, by and large, a soft power approach is likely to be more effective to CT than a military approach (Metz, 2007; Kaldor, 2005; Walzer, 2006), For example, when greed rather than an obvious political goal) drives an insurgency, a military approach will be unsuitable in that situation and at that stage. In such a situation whereby insurgency has degenerated into ordinary criminal activity, it is best to use law enforcement (police) than armed combat approach (Rapoport, 2002;



Walzer, 2006). However, law enforcement and intelligence measures may be inadequate in preventing and resolving conflict, especially in societies where genuine grievances exist (Wilkinson, 2000); Economic approach may be ideal in such an environment, as businesses started and jobs created are as much 'indicators of success' as insurgents killed or intelligence provided (Metz, 2007: 30).

An economic approach is nonetheless more than addressing relative deprivations. Quite notably, the relative deprivation or grievance-frustration thesis has garnered little support in the literature as more studies prove that poverty and inequality do not necessarily cause conflict. Yet, it continues to be relevant as an analytical concept of conflict as conflict actors often manipulate it in pursuit of their own narrow interests. The exploitation of the economic conditions for selfish gains by violent conflict actors or entrepreneurs make the new war and new terrorism proponents accord economics more importance than politics as a motivation for conflict (Kaldor, 1999; Metz, 2007). Metz (2007) also argues against the continuous relevance of the Clausewitzian 19<sup>th</sup> century logic of conflict. Instead, he advances the argument that modern insurgencies are likely driven by market needs denoted, of course, by profitability pursued most times by greed. Hence, the government should raise the opportunity or economic costs "and risks for those participating in the insurgency (or other forms of conflict) while providing alternatives" (Metz, 2007: 30; Sandler & Enders, 2004). This is reflective of the cost-benefits logic in economic thinking. For instance, adopting a defensive strategy that protects targets from easy attack from terrorists may increase the cost for the terrorists, and consequently, deter them from attacking.

The state may also degrade terrorist's financial capabilities by targeting its sources of funds, such as freezing the assets of terrorists and their supporters, as well as making it difficult for them to sell their stolen resources in the black market. However, economic sanctions and other CT policies aimed at degrading the terrorists' financial power require a multilateral cooperation for it to be successful (Sandler, 2005). More so, freezing of assets and restrictions of movement and goods through visa denial may be less effective, as some terrorist groups, especially those operating in developing countries and fragile states do well to avoid standard banking or benefit from the un-integrated and weak financial institutions in those places (Nwankpa, 2015a).

## 5. Methods of Research

### 5.1. Research Design

Social scientists are always interested in the best research methods to apply in carrying out each research endeavour. They chose from the list of methods based on the nature and the needs of the research. Consequently, for this research the qualitative

phenomenological research method was chosen because it is most suitable because it has some advantages over the other methods (Giorgi, 2012; Maxwell, 2012; Yin, 2012). In the same vein, the case study approach explores a real-life social phenomenon in the course of social investigations (Yin, 2012). Furthermore, this research design inculcated the case study as a corollary to phenomenological dimension to complement the study. There is also an Ethnographical research design to also help in an appropriate in the enquiries that seek to explore the nature of social structure, culture, power, and human agency (Carspecken, 2013). This will give us the opportunity to immerse ourselves deeply in the study environment for an appreciable period of time needed for data gathering and analysis. That being said, the time required for this engagement made this design very tedious and extra efforts in this study. Finally, Grounded theory was used to analyse stories from participants to help us focus on a phenomenon of study, help us provide explanations, and generate new theories about the phenomenon of our interest in this study (Maxwell, 2012). That way, we were able to successfully sustain this research endeavour.

### *5.2. Population of Participants of the Study*

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research use a much smaller sample population purposively chosen. Consequently, for this study, we are selecting 27 participants from:

- (i) Leaders, heads and representatives of CBOs, CSOs and human rights organisations.
- (ii) Religious Clerics
- (iii) Government Officials
- (iv) Security Personnel (Military and Joint Task Operational Forces)
- (v) Victims of Terrorism
- (vi) Representatives of International Development Partners

### *5.3. Research Instruments*

#### *5.3.1. Interviews*

In all, 18 interviews were conducted in different parts of the three states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe in North-east Nigeria that was the focus of this study. The interviews were based on an initial target threshold of n=5-31 for recruiting of participants for the study, but at the end only 21 participants took part in the interviews. The remaining 10 participants targeted, however, did not show up for the said interviews owing to one reason or the other.

The 18 interviews were distributed as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of Interviews**

<i>S/No</i>	<i>Type of Interview</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Venue</i>
1.	Individual (one-on-one) Interview	11	Adamawa 4 Borno - 6 Yola - 1	Yola, Maiduguri, Damaturu
2.	Group (2 - 3 persons) Interview	5	Adamawa – 1, Borno – 3 Yobe - 1	Yola, Maiduguri, Damaturu
3.	Joint Interview	2	Adamawa – nil, Borno – nil, Yobe - 2	Damaturu

*Source:* Field Interview, 2023

### Focus Group Discussion

Four focus group discussions were held in all: 2 in Yobe in Borno, and 1 in Adamawa. The focus groups were in each case made up at least 7 persons. In most cases, the focus groups were made up community leaders and members, including leaders and members of CBOs, Boko Haram victims, members of CJTF, women, and religious clerics, leaders and members of CSOs and NGOs, country diplomats, staff of international development partners, security personnel, government officials etc.

### Documents

In the spirit of the qualitative research process, collection and sorting of documentary data and analysis were done concurrently—an iterative process that aids theory generation grounded in data (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2013). We collected relevant documents ranging from government’s Legislative Acts, counterterrorism policies, anti-terrorism laws, committees’ reports, development partners’ development policies and strategic documents including terms of reference, newspaper reports, among many other kinds of document. Many of the documents were publicly available, especially the ones produced by international development partners and foreign governments. I downloaded most of the documents from their websites.

The analysis of data relies almost entirely on documents. This can be seen as a methodological weakness as documents analysis is most often combined with other methods in achieving data triangulation. However, document can also be useful “as a stand-alone method for specialised forms of qualitative research” (Bowen, 2009: 29).

Documentary analysis is an efficient method, cost-effective, readily available, having wider coverage and “unobtrusive” and “non-reactive” (Bowen, 2009:31). There are also weaknesses with documentary analysis which include “insufficient detail”, “low irretrievability” and “biased selectivity” (Bowen, 2009:31-32). Some of these weaknesses

manifest in the data collection. However, as Bowen (2009) notes, “these are really potential flaws rather than major disadvantages” (p.32). Below is a list of documents used in this study:

**Table 2: List of Documents used in the Data Collection Process**

<i>S/No</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Producer</i>	<i>Nature/Type</i>	<i>Source &amp; Date of Production</i>
1.	National Security Strategy	Official (U.S. Government)		May 2010
2.	Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism	Department of State (DOS) & United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Counterterrorism (CT) policy document	May 2016
3.	Country Reports on Terrorism 2015	DoS United States (U.S.)	Report	2 June 2016
4.	Lake Chad Basin-Complex Emergency	USAID	Fact Sheet	22 December 2015
5.	Quadrennial Diplomacy & Development Review	DoS & USAID	Policy and Strategy document	2015
6.	The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency	USAID	Policy document	September 2011
7.	International Development Association project paper on a proposed additional credit in the amount of sdr 88.2 million (us\$125 million equivalent) and a global financing facility (gff) grant in the amount of us\$20 million to the Federal Republic of Nigeria	World Bank (WB)	Report (NO: PAD1741)	24 May 2016
8.	World Bank Engagement Framework in Northern Nigeria	WB	Annex 6 (in Report No: PAD1741)	
9.	Engaging Citizens through Mediation in Kaduna State, Nigeria	WB	Report	June 2016
10	Country Partnership Strategy for the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the Period FY2014-FY2017	WB	Report No: 82501-NG	13 March 2014

<i>S/No</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Producer</i>	<i>Nature/Type</i>	<i>Source &amp; Date of Production</i>
11.	Safe School Initiative Questionnaire	UNICEF	Survey documents	
12.	Nigeria Humanitarian Situation Report	UNICEF	Report	January 2016
13.	European Union Contribution Agreement with an International Organisation (EU-ECOWAS Peace, Security and Stability/ ECOWAS-EU Small Arms	European Union (EU)	Contract Agreement document (Contract No. FED/2014/345-376	2014
14.	Project Ecowas/EU Small Arms Project	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Annual Progress Report	2015
15.	Community Based REDD+Country Plan for Nigeria	UNDP	Policy and strategy document	March 2015
16.	Debris Management North East Nigeria	UNDP	Assessment report	2016
17.	Mine Action for North East Nigeria	UNDP	Assessment report	2016
18.	Recovery Shelter for North East Nigeria	UNDP	Assessment report	2016
19.	Solid Waste Management North East Nigeria	UNDP	Assessment report	2016
20.	Standard Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Multi-Donor Trust Funds using Pass-through Fund Management	UNDP	Contract (TOR)	2014
21.	Nigeria Safe Schools Initiative MDTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, UNDP	Program information	2014
22.	Humanitarian Response Plan, January-December Nigeria	Humanitarian Country Team	Plan	December 2015
23.	National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions in Nigeria	Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) (Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development)	Policy and Strategy document	2016

<i>S/No</i>	<i>Document</i>	<i>Producer</i>	<i>Nature/Type</i>	<i>Source &amp; Date of Production</i>
24.	North-East Nigeria Recovery and Peace Building Assessment		Summary Report	2016
25.	Nigeria-EU Joint Way Forward	EU & Nigeria		2008
26.	Council conclusions on the Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020	Council of the European Union	Policy and Strategy document	20 April 2015
27.	Joint Declaration on a Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the European Union and its Members	EU & FGN	Communiqué	12 March 2015
28.	The Cotonou Agreement	European Commission		2008
29.	Operational Plan 2011-2015	Department for International Development, DFID NIGERIA	Policy and Strategy document	2013
30.	60/288. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy	General Assembly, United Nations (UN)	UN Resolution document	20 September 2006
31.	National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Act	FGN	Legislative Act	2010

Source: Field Research, 2023.

## 6. Discussion of Findings

### 6.1. Research Question 1: What are the Hard Power (Military) Counter Terrorism Measures of the Nigerian State?

#### 6.2. Hard Power (Military) Perspective: JTF and MNJTF

The Nigerian government with its CSOs and international development partners are currently applying a “soft approach” to the Boko Haram conflict. The soft approach is synonymous with the concept of a development strategy—a non-kinetic methodology to countering insurgency, adopted in this study. However, the military methodology is central to the Nigerian state’s counterterrorism effort. There seems to be unanimity in the views of the interview respondents and the growing Boko Haram literature



that the Nigerian State, especially its military, is responsible for the transformation of Boko Haram from a social movement into a terrorist group (Cook, 2011; Johnson, 2011; Forest, 2012; Anonymous, 2012; Higazi, 2013). According to Respondent VIII, a Permanent Secretary of the FG and executive member of the high profile committee on dialogue on Boko Haram:

*“It was actually the Nigerian state that was responsible for radicalising the Boko Haram people, in the manner they misunderstood them, in the manner they were attacking, in the manner they fought them, in the manner they killed Mohammed Yusuf, and in the manner they subsequently handled the post-Mohammed Yusuf...”*, (Respondent VIII)

Although Boko Haram had shown early signs of extremism, it was not until after the extra-judicial killing of its charismatic founder in 2009 that it turned into a full blown insurgency.

Respondent VIII is therefore right in his assessment. Essentially, the Boko Haram conflict has attracted largely a military approach which is likely due to its fundamentalist and religious nature. In this regard, Boko Haram falls under the category of contemporary conflict, that has been described as a “Religious Wave” (Rapoport, 2002: 2), asymmetrical-hence difficult to defeat, aimed at achieving strategic outcome by changing the minds of decision makers and has a network structure unlike the hierarchical and command structure of old warfare (Lesser, 1999; Hoffman, 1999; Arquilla, Ronfeldt & Zanini, 1999; Hammes, 2005; Metz, 2007). Even more important is the fact that Boko Haram, like many other contemporary conflicts, is considered irrational in its objectives and use of violence (terrorism is used as an end rather than as a means to an end) (Hoffman, 1999). All of these assumptions likely guided the overtly military approach towards the Boko Haram insurgency.

Respectively, the hard power approach to the Boko Haram conflict has attracted mixed responses. For instance, Respondent VIII speaks favourably of the Nigerian military’s campaign against Boko Haram:

*“It has been successful. Substantially, they have broken the backbone of the insurgency. I think Shekau is dead. They have succeeded in killing Shekau. They’ve succeeded substantially in disrupting its command and control. They’ve succeeded in disrupting or destroying its coordinating capacities. They have killed thousands of Boko Haram members and arrested more. They have cleaned up communities that were totally intimidated by Boko Haram and given them back some confidence. And life is gradually returning to normal. Substantially, the military option has been fairly successful. It’s just that they left it very late. But it was successful”*, (Res VIII).

The view above may be exaggerated and perhaps premature as Shekau, the leader of Boko Haram is still alive (as at the time of this writing) (Shekau has released videos

that prove that he is still alive), as millions of the Northeast residents are displaced, and those living there live somewhat in perpetual fear. But it is understandable as it was expressed in January 2014 and captures the successful military campaign carried out by the defunct JTF between 2011 and 2013, culminating in an 18 month (May 2013–November 2014) State of Emergency in three Northeast states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. The JTF curtailed the geographic spread of Boko Haram at that time and pushed it to the outskirts of the Northeast state of Borno mainly. Between 2011 and 2012, Boko Haram “insurgents had almost defeated the Nigerian state in about more than half of Borno state” (Respondent VIII), as well as spreading beyond the Northeast (its main theatre of action) to Northwest and Central states such as Kogi, Kaduna and even the capital, Abuja. Respondent III, a top British diplomat with the British High Commission in Nigeria, confirms Boko Haram’s initial gains over the Nigerian state, “two-third if not more of Borno state was under Boko Haram control, you had essentially a secession of sort”. It was therefore a considerably huge success for the military, enough for them to declare a State of Emergency.

The JTF was able to contain the spread of Boko Haram. According to Respondent IX, an Assistant Commissioner of Police and a JTF senior commandant in the defunct JTF:

*“There was containment, but no abatement. They could not spread further. You will realise that at a point they moved as far as Abuja. So, you will discover the fact that no more attacks happened in Abuja or in Kogi, Okene axis. No more attacks happened in Bauchi. No more attacks, for some time, happened in Kano...means they pushed them back to the northeast”, (Res IX).*

The Nigerian government declared a State of Emergency in a bid to consolidate its military victory against Boko Haram—in the words of Respondent IX, “in the hope of quickly wiping them out”. Nevertheless, Boko Haram terror continues till today, because in the words of Respondent II, a popular cleric and executive member of several government’s committee on conflict resolution in Nigeria, “Boko Haram, as the evidence clearly suggests, should be seen more as an idea than as a human being to be attacked [as] the more people you kill, the more new soldiers emerge” (Respondent II). Several respondents share similar sentiment: “straightaway we can conclude that military approach alone will not solve it, since it is faith-based, you can kill me and I will be happy dying. And more people are happy to be killed, because by virtue of their religion they are assured a place in heaven” (Respondent IX). While speaking glowingly of the military success, Respondent VIII equally admits that “it would be a long time before Boko Haram as a threat is finished entirely because they just don’t die because you’ve killed a few people” (Respondent VIII). Yet, unlike Respondent II, Respondent

VIII bases his prognosis on the loose and cell-like structure of Boko Haram- “(a) deep classic guerrilla warfare structure”, in his words. Ultimately, the military approach to the Boko Haram insurgency is not enough to end it, as it may even be the sustaining force for the insurgency. Therefore, alternative approaches have been required and applied.

While other alternative (particularly non-military) approaches, as discussed in subsequent sections, have and are been applied to the Boko Haram conflict, Nigeria's counter-terrorism strategy continues to be guided by an overt military strategy. For instance, the new President, upon taking office in May 2015 instructed the military to defeat Boko Haram within three months (deadline December 2015) at the same time showing willingness to negotiate with the group, especially for the release of the nearly 300 kidnapped boarding school girls. Boko Haram kidnapped up to 276 school girls in Chibok area of Borno state on 14 April 2014, in a brazen attack that brought worldwide condemnation for the group and attracted external support for Nigeria's anti-terrorism war. The military campaign has helped curtail Boko Haram's advances and reduced what was a near-daily attack, but the Boko Haram terror is far from finished. The number of Boko Haram hostages freed by the Nigerian military and the assisting neighbouring forces (the MNJTF) show how enormous the task of defeating Boko Haram will be as well as a pointer to the strength of the insurgent group. Respondent I, the national Chairman of PAVE, a coalition of NGOs and CSOs in Nigeria provide an insight into the underappreciated strength of Boko Haram:

*“Every week, the Nigerian military and the Multinational Joint Task Force announces the flushing out of Boko Haram suspects from one hide-out or the other. Every week, an average of 50 insurgents are killed. Every week an average of about 300 captives are freed. That should tell you the scale of the challenge that you face. That should probably also tell you the scale and scope of the organisation called Boko Haram itself”, (Res I).*

However, the military campaign by the Nigerian forces has brought heavy backlash. As some of the respondents aver and as substantiated in the literature, the overt military approach is responsible for escalating the Boko Haram terror. The Nigerian force has often been criticized for grave violation of human rights in its fight against Boko Haram starting from the extra-judicial killing of its charismatic leader, Mohammed Yusuf (AI, 2014). Another point relating to the military campaign that is less explored in the literature on Boko Haram is the overt concentration of counterterrorism power in the hands of the military, following the disbandment of the JTF in 2013 (Nwankpa, 2016) and the inter-rivalry amongst various security forces in the JTF shortly before the disbandment. At one point during the lifeline of the JTF, relations and cooperation among the security agencies (army, navy, air force, police, secret service, custom and immigration) were fraught with “rivalry and competition”, According to Respondent I,

*“the relationship among the cooperating security units deteriorated because the political leadership was convinced or had convinced itself that this was a conspiracy and therefore it was dealing with it as a conspiracy, you know. Because of that, it could not give leadership to the military, to the security sector”.* Respondent VIII, as discussed in subsequent section in this chapter, equally highlights the issue of poor leadership from the Nigerian state (the Federal Government, FG) and its denial of the insurgency.

After all, there was a brief moment of successful coordinated effort by the JTF (although this was after the initial damage done by Boko Haram between 2010 and 2012) before the inter-agency relationship deteriorated and extensive power was given to the military, who was solely responsible for executing the State of Emergency between May 2013 and November 2014. According to Respondent IX:

*“There was synergy...there was synergy each of the services exist and carry out their normal functions. The JTF consists of the attachment from each of the services who are removed from the day-to-day operations of their services and focused on the joint operations. So it was a beautiful arrangement. It was seamless and it was effective. It was so effective that the SSS, for example, was intercepting phone conversations of the insurgents, their plans, intended targets, where weapons are being expected from, date operations are to be carried out, they were intercepting it and they were relaying it to JTF and to the other services. And actions were taken in conjunction. You will discover that between that 2011 and until the State of Emergency was declared there was containment, but there was no abatement”,* (Res IX).

Arguably, a point that has been overlooked is that the declaration of State of Emergency (which by the way was unnecessary and arguably inflamed the Boko Haram conflict) with the extensive and sole power given to the military most likely accounted for the inter-agency rivalry and competition rather than the lack of leadership from the government, as some respondents argue. Although there is increasing coordination now, Respondent I suggests that:

*“The dominant strategy even when it was decided to have a coordinated approach to combating the insurgency is a military strategy, that of a military defeat. So because of that the focus has been on getting the military to act properly, more efficiently. So the other non-military but also armed security sector forces, institutions are not as integrated into that coordination mechanism as the military. And you see that gap clearly in the fact that the capacity of the military is been built, the capacity of the police and the civil defence is not been built for counterinsurgency”,* (Res I).

One area where this overt military approach is having adverse effect is in consolidating the gains made by the military in re-claiming the territories that were

seized by Boko Haram and protecting returning citizens. The military has been unable to protect the Northeast citizens from further attacks from Boko Haram and Boko Haram still controls certain territories as well as shows ambition to seize more. This is perhaps because lasting solution is that of the civil or law and order structure, most especially the police. In the words of Respondent IV, a former military officer and the arch-bishop of the Anglican church in Nigeria “the only cure is to have a police that is able to police, to prosecute, to prevent, to protect and to give itself the image of being a force of law”. Unfortunately, “as it is now, we are partially militarised and the military their code of operation is different, completely different” (Respondent IV).

But the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) “are not prepared for that” Respondent I contested. For instance, “no police station is configured to withstand Boko Haram attack, in terms of building structure and in terms of personnel and in terms of equipment (Respondent IX)”. Even the international development partners consider for “a much longer term really offering our training to the Nigerian military” (Respondent III). However, the success of a military or law enforcement or even economic approach to counterterrorism and counterinsurgency depends on the stage of the conflict, an understanding of the motivation driving each cycle and the strength or weakness of the conflict group (Crenshaw, 2007; Kilcullen, 2006). For a group like Boko Haram, there is need for the government to continuously assess their response and adapt it to the evolutionary character of the group.

One way to mitigate the adverse impact of the overly military approach of the Nigerian state is by adopting the International Relations approach (Pressman, 2007). An international relations approach is a coalition of efforts by states in a multilateral arrangement. A multilateral approach can help a state fighting terrorism gain legitimacy. Nigeria is currently in a multinational joint task force (MNJTF). Conversely, there is the growing belief that “security cannot be achieved within a single country. Intelligence, police and military efforts need to be coordinated and information exchanged in a secure and timely way” (Omand, 2005:10 as quoted by EU, 2007, see also the UN CT document, and the UNSC). The coordinating efforts among the Nigerian forces and the militaries of Chad, Cameroon, Chad and Benin have been rewarding in terms of curbing Boko Haram’s territorial reach and incessant attacks. Nonetheless, the armies of the coordinating forces have experienced difficulties that range from distrust, suspicion, human rights violation, and promotion of selfish national interest over the general purpose. For example, there are notable political and cultural differences between the countries as there are historical tensions such as the border dispute (over Bakassi Peninsula) between Nigeria and Cameroon. For Respondent III “it (the regional military cooperation between the Lake Chad countries) is also going slowly because the region, the countries have not really committed much as they should do to the

whole thing because they kept their domestic priorities” (Res III). Despite this, there is increasingly a shift away, or at most, a combination of military strategies (which appear dominant still) with non-military approaches.

According to Respondent XIV, “to a large extent, we have strengthened our civil-military relations platform” (Res XIV). One area where the military and the civil structures are collaborating is the induction of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) into the counterterrorism framework against the Boko Haram. The joint counterterrorism operations between the CJTF and the military have yielded great success in most cases. The CJTF, consists of Northeast youths who have played a pivotal role in the military campaign by virtue of their indigenous knowledge of the difficult Northeast terrain, the language, and their ability to clearly identify Boko Haram members or would-be members (Respondent XXII:Yobe Focus Group). In fact, the CJTF is a child of necessity borne out of the need to protect the hapless northeast civilian populations against the Boko Haram attacks, on the one hand, and, on the other, to protect them (the Northeast civilian population) from the military’s arbitrary and collective punishment for their perceived role in supporting and shielding the insurgents. “And it was really communities trying to protect themselves both from the military and from the insurgents. So they needed a third force, which was their own force.

And that’s how the militia initially arose” (Res I). Crucially, the Boko Haram group is identified with a particular ethnic group—the Kanuri who make up a large percentage of the NE citizens living in the main theatre of Boko Haram’s activities—Borno and Yobe, and about 4 percent of Nigeria’s population. Interestingly, according to Respondent VIII:

*“Eighty per cent of the key people in Boko Haram, who started it, who command it, are Kanuri. So, the Kanuri community in Borno and Yobe largely saw this as an internal problem and tolerated it beyond a certain degree. By the time it became a real problem, the community had become hostage of Boko Haram and so they eventually became both victims of Boko Haram and victims of the FG agency that were there to fight Boko Haram”, (Res VIII).*

There is an obvious lack of trust in the Nigerian state with its security agencies. People find it difficult to trust the police and military with information as “a lot of times you see leakages of sensitive information, you see leakages about sensitive operations... you know there are insiders” (Respondent IX). The often reactive nature of the Nigerian security forces including “outright intimidation makes people to hate even the presence of the security.

*...The arbitrariness of the state instrument also makes people to be sceptical about their genuineness and the level of corruption” (Respondent XV). It is this issue of distrust for*



*the security agencies that “gave birth to the CJTF, because it started when people will go and voluntarily give information and those who give such information will turn up dead a couple of days [after]” (Res XIV).*

But as Boko Haram’s terrorist activities dwindle, the need for a non-military approach becomes imminent. There is need to reinstate traditional authorities and law enforcement structures which have been displaced as a result of the insurgency. Respondent I believes that “there is really a power and authority vacuum in the communities which the CJTF has just filled and so they are increasingly playing the roles of dispensing community governance” (Respondent I). But the CJTF should not be playing that role. It is essentially the duty of the government to provide security and governance. The civil structure has some form of responsibility, “because a lot of the times we advocate for human rights, but we don’t even talk about human responsibility. It is actually supposed to be complementary” (Res XIV). But the responsibility of the civil structure should not involve taking up arms, as is the case with the CJTF. For Respondent I it is important “to start thinking of how they are armed. So how do we disarm them too? How do we reintegrate them into the society (Res I)?

As noted by Respondent VI, a top British expat with DFID in Nigeria: “if the CJTF are not dealt with you know constructively...their role and attitude are not harnessed either by the local communities or the administration, then that could be potentially another driver indirectly of radicalization” (Res VI). Ultimately, there is a strong case for alternative approaches to the predominant military approach. It is against this background that the argument for a development approach becomes necessary. The following sections will discuss how the non-military approaches are developed and how they mitigate against some of the challenges raised by the military methodology as well as some of the issues that they throw up.

## ***6.2. Research Question 2: What are the Soft Power Approaches Employed by the Nigerian State in Counter Terrorism Intervention in the North East?***

### ***6.2.1. The Soft Power Dimension: Development Policies and Programmes and Initiatives and Interventions***

From late 2013 and even before, the Nigerian government’s approach to countering the Boko Haram insurgency began to change from a predominant militarised strategy to an increasingly non-kinetic approach. This new attitude signals the government’s willingness to understand the grievance and motivation for Boko Haram with the intention of dialoguing and possibly negotiating with the group. It was clear that the Nigerian government did not understand the magnitude of the threat that it was

dealing with. It dismissed Boko Haram “as a problem of local politics in Borno and to a lesser extent in Yobe state [and having] suffered very badly as a result of the post 2011 election violence was unwilling to get too deeply involved in trying to understand the root causes, the nature and the dimensions of Boko Haram”, (Res p.VIII).

The Boko Haram crisis has a long historical root-one rooted and steeped in the particular recurring reformist movements in northern Nigeria (Loimeier, 2012; Last, 2012). Respondent VIII argues that “every once in a while, you get a leader or a group of people who rise up in the effort to purify Islam, to reject impurities in Islam, to expand its scope and take it to those areas where it does not exist” (Res. VIII). Although, the bleak political and socio-economic environment in Nigeria is similar, one that appears bleaker is in northern Nigeria (more so in the Northeast). For instance, Respondent III, a top British diplomat with the British High Commission in Nigeria posits that Northern Nigeria is one of the poorest places in the world. It’s got the highest proportion of children out of school of any country in the entire world. It has high infant mortality. It has high maternal mortality in giving birth. It scores very low on human development indicators.

If you cut off Nigeria to both Abuja and draw a line east and west, you would have only probably the 15 poorest countries in the world-so worthy of assistance (Res III).

Citing information from the global campaign Education for All, Respondent I states that out of the “10.5 million Nigerian children that were out of school, 7 million of these were from the north, about 4 million of these from the NE” (Res I). He argues further that “the NE has the worst of the indices in terms of the poverty rate. Average poverty rate- it is closer to 80% in the NE, whereas the national average is about 66” (ibid). Unsurprisingly, out of the £220 million a year budgeted for UK development assistance in Nigeria about “60% of that is solely focused on the north of Nigeria” (Res III). What becomes evident therefore is, besides the precipitating impact of Nigeria’s excessive military action in escalating Boko Haram, a growing consensus that the “lack of justice in the system” (Res XXI), the fact that “people don’t have jobs” (Res XIV), the fact that “kids are not in school” (Res XXIV), the fact that people are “very poor” (Res XVII), “inequality” (Res IV), “massive poverty, massive alienation” (Res VIII) and the lack of “good governance” (Res XIX) play a major role in sustaining the conflict.

### *6.2.2. Research Question 3: What Specific Roles do NGOs and CSOs Play in Nigeria’s Soft Power Counter Terrorism Strategy?*

#### *6.2.3. NACT and its CVE Programmes and Local CSOs and NGOs*

The soft approach shows Nigeria’s first ever effort to design a comprehensive and coordinated national approach to countering terrorism- National Counter-terrorism

Strategy (NACTEST) in 2014. NACTEST is designed and managed by ONSA but with input from several stakeholders including external agencies. One of the signature programmes of NACTEST is the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programme. The CVE programme represents Nigeria's soft approach to countering terrorism, and it has four basic components/streams, as stated by Colonel Mohammed Sambo Dasuki, the former National Security Adviser (NSA) who unveiled the programme:

The first stream is the de-radicalisation of convicted terrorists, suspects awaiting trials, and those who might be released through court orders or such order government arising from the ongoing engagement and dialogue with repentant terrorists. The second will move from government to society approach on counter terrorism thinking. The third will be building capacity through strategic communication for the military and law enforcement agencies. The fourth stream, based on our understanding of the economic root causes of terrorism and global best practice in addressing them will be working with the governors of the six North-Eastern states to design an economic revitalisation programme targeted at the states most impacted by terrorism (Premium Times 2014).

#### ***6.2.4. Local CSOs and NGOs***

The first phase is explicit enough. Centre for Peace Initiative Development (CEPID) and other CSOs are contributing to government's legislative effort to regulate the Islamic religion in the north. For instance, CEPID has partnered with the Assembly of Muslims in Nigeria (AMIN) to advise and work on legislature that will regulate religious preaching and teachings, set up guidelines, and vet religious preachers. Also in fulfilment of the CVE mandate of de-radicalisation and counter-narrative, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) plays a part in the process of censoring and regulating religious teachings (that will most likely involve licensing religious preachers) (Res XV, Res XIV).

The second phase includes a communal approach that envisions cooperation among families, community members and faith-based institutions with the aim of reinforcing values that will build resilience and aversion towards violent extremism. This phase is quite important and perhaps accounts for the great reception that the government's soft approach has received both locally and internationally. A communal approach to conflict resolution is considered indigenous to Africa and largely used in pre-colonial period. Scholars such as Oshita (2007) have been demanding a return to this approach. However, the likelihood of success for this phase hinges greatly on the government's transparency and political will. To win asymmetrical warfare like the one embarked upon by Boko Haram; there is need for cooperation between the government and the community. Not only does economic marginalisation of the masses and elite greed

and corruption sever the government from the people, the blatant violation of human rights, impunity and inequality before the law will frustrate any form of cooperation. It is therefore important that counterterrorism is conducted with great regard for rule of law. The third phase seeks to produce a communication output with the aim of fostering bipartisan agreement on counterterrorism measures. The last phase seeks to build an economic revitalisation programme in the NE states. The FG soft approach however presents challenges.

The first phase of the FG soft approach is not entirely new. The government has employed a counter-narrative strategy in the past where it employed the services of moderate Islamic clerics to de-radicalise arrested suspects in prison as well as the vulnerable members of the affected society through special radio programmes (Sampson, 2013). This approach brought heavy backlash as prominent Muslim clerics who condemned the group were assassinated by Boko Haram. The vicious assassinations by the sect extend to members that leave the group or engage the government in dialogue as was the case with Babakura Fuga, the brother-in-law of Mohammed Yusuf (the slain founder of Boko Haram) who was assassinated by the sect on 17 September 2011 for attending peace talks with former President Olusegun Obasanjo. It is unclear how past counter-narrative strategies used by the Nigerian Government differ from the de-radicalisation programme highlighted in the NSA's soft approach to the Boko Haram crisis.

There is the possibility of re-offending or 'recidivism' (Horgan & Altier, 2012). It remains uncertain how the Nigerian Government hopes to distinguish between 'de-radicalised' (change in ideological orientation) and 'disengaged' (change in attitude) terrorists. More so, a successful de-radicalisation programme recognises individual's radicalisation process and hence, a 'person-specific and not doctrine-specific process' will most likely be effective (Horgan & Altier, 2012, p. 84). It remains doubtful that such an approach is considered by the NSA and even more doubtful if it is an available resource to reduce the risk of terrorist reoffending. In fact, both the Nigerian government and local CSOs are giving serious attention to addressing the extremist motive in the Boko Haram agenda, especially in their collaborative effort to counter the extremist narrative as well as produce legislation to regulate the Islamic religion in Northern Nigeria.

In the CVE aspects of de-radicalisation and counter-narrative, the government unit, Society against Violent Extremism (SAVE) - a sub-unit under ONSA's CVE architecture collaborated with Partnership against Violent Extremism (PAVE) - a coalition of local NGOs in terrorist hotspots across the northern and central states in Nigeria. The CVE programme terminated with the advent of a new administration (the government of President Buhari) in May 2015. However, "CVE in Nigeria is relatively new and there are not too many actors particularly working around it, except for those

who are doing some kind of activities either related to it but as a stand-alone project” (Res XIV). For instance, Respondent XVII confirms that it is only recently that Renaissance Lifeline Foundation (RELIEF) and other selected NGOs in the PAVE network are beginning to “build in the issue of CVE into the various projects we are already running in our various communities” (Res XVII).

CISLAC, the Abuja-based Secretariat of PAVE network in the North Central was able to incorporate the mandate of the CVE into its existing portfolio-its peace and security programme. Working within the framework of the CVE, CISLAC established the Peace and Security Forum (PSF)-a forum that encourages periodic dialogue between CSOs and the government (especially security agencies). Respondent XIV maintains that “to a large extent, we have strengthened our civil-military relations platform” (Res XIV). There are still though shortcomings which may be as a result of a historical vacuum and an uncharted ground in CVE.

There is more to why the CVE programme failed. For instance, there was a fundamental error from the conceptual and particularly design stage as it excluded the CSOs, who were only considered afterwards when the government realized that “what they were doing was majorly a civil society work” (Res XXI). The partnership between the government (through SAVE) and the CSOs (through PAVE) did not materialize simply due to the government’s realization that they were doing what is largely a CSO job. It was mainly because the government could not gain access to the communities they were looking to help because they are not trusted.

The lack of trust leads to self-help as evident in the rise of Boko Haram and even the CJTF. The prominent role played by non-state actors in the fight against Boko Haram is somehow evidence of the failure of governance and rejection of the government. The government with some of its development agencies is “rejected because they are seen as part of the problem” (Res XVIII).

Unsurprisingly “the people are willing to talk to the civil society” (Res XXI). According to Respondent XV, “you need NGOs to provide that environment for acceptance of intervention” (Respondent XV). Governance failure, in addition to government’s role as “mobilisers of violence and sponsors of violence” (Res I) and the illicit gains made from such ventures create a massive chasm of trust between the duty bearer (the Nigerian Government) and the right holders (the Nigerian citizens). This greatly impedes the cooperation between the government and the people, one considered crucial to winning the fight against Boko Haram. The lack of trust between the government (state) and the citizens badly affects the government’s counterterrorism efforts as the people are “sceptical about their [government] genuineness and their level of corruption” (Res XV). Therefore, to bridge the gap between the state and the citizens, the state is encouraged to partner with local CSOs and CBOs and even international

NGOs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) who already enjoy some level of support and acceptance at the grassroots. Such partnership is considered essential especially for gaining acceptance by the people and access into the community.

The interaction between CSOs and the government has greatly improved, although the relationship remains fraught with mutual suspicion and distrust between them. For instance, the thorny relationship between SAVE and PAVE reveals the government's failure to see "the civil society component of this aspect as very important and so for that, they decided to create their own structure which has collapsed" (Res XXI). For example, CSOs (constituting the PAVE network) were not consulted and hence not involved in designing the CVE programme. More so, the SAVE programme went about setting up its own structures rather than utilising the existing structures and infrastructures provided by the partnering CSOs.

Despite the improved relationship between the civil society and the Nigerian state, the state continues to be more important especially that it has elective power and constitutional mandate to protect its citizens and provide governance (Thomas, 2001). This position is recognized in Hausermann's description of human rights as "a global vision backed by state obligations" (Hausermann, 1998:25). Yet, we cannot disregard the gains made by CSOs, CBOs and NGOs set up by international development agencies such as DFID's JFA and NSRP.

These non-government bodies are influencing government's CT policies and strategies through the use of advocacy, media, mediation and research, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution through dialogue (especially fostering inter-agency and civil-military forums and dialogues), capacity building and awareness/enlightenment programmes, economic empowerment and skill acquisition programmes. These alternative approaches are proving more popular and effective than the coercive human rights legislation—one that the state is expected to administer (Sano, 2000; Sen, 2004; Uvin, 2007).

For instance, CEPID, headquartered in Jos, the capital city of Plateau state, has developed an early warning programme that aims at improving the capacity of local youth, community leaders, religious leaders, government agencies and security forces, particularly providing the bridge through which a concerted effort to security can be achieved at the neighbourhood level. The main objective is to be "able to anticipate, to understand the triggers—what they are pointing to" (Res XV).

CISLAC is helping in the harmonization of the communication infrastructure, which is in fulfilment of the Third Stream of ONSA's CVE programme under the aegis of the soft approach. Specifically, CISLAC canvassed for the creation of an emergency line (112) that will aid the fight against terrorism, especially quick dispersal



of information from the public to relevant security agency. CISLAC also advocated for enhancing National Identity, which extends to immigration services, particularly problematic issue of border control. CISLAC's advocacy in this area led to the establishment of the Border Patrol Corp (Respondent XIV).

In terms of bridging the gap between the state and the citizens, CISLAC is setting up a grievance mechanism in the NE which allows for dialogue between victims of social injustice and the duty providers. Underlying this intervention is the objective of offsetting the "we versus them" mentality that characterizes the relationship between the citizens and the Nigerian state such that the citizens can be able to develop a sense of human responsibility as much as the state improves on its responsibility as the primary duty bearer (Res XIV).

The crucial role of CSOs and CBOs are increasingly being appreciated as their activities are mainstreamed into government's intervention. For instance, CEPID has developed a robust partnership with government-run research centre, the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR). Together, they have developed a partnership that emphasizes the research component of the development approach leading to a fieldwork research in three core NE states-Borno, Yobe and Bauchi and two other Middle Belt states, Kaduna and Plateau. This research has the financial support of UNDP. It focuses on three dimensions or transformation of Boko Haram including the radicalisation process, militarisation and the insurgency. Essentially, it seeks to explore how people are radicalized, how they mobilise the locals, how they gain popular support (assuming they have) and what should be the correct response for de-radicalisation and prevention of radicalization (Res XV).

This initial research effort informs the annual Experts and Eminent Group Meetings (EEGM) that is been managed by the National Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) starting from 2013. The reports from the EEGM have become a useful influence on government's CT policy (Res XV). Like CEPID, CISLAC forged a partnership with IPCR in order to allow the benefits gain "greater entry point and allow for security agencies and government institutions to own it up and be very comfortable to being part of it" (Res XIV).

This has helped the CSOs make great stride at the strategy and policy levels leading to the establishment of the National Security Strategy (NSS) and NACTEST.

Evidently, for CT to be effective in Nigeria, there must be greater cooperation between government institutions and CSOs or CBOs. While we are beginning to witness such collaboration, the relationship is still hamstrung by the historical tension between the Nigerian state and the civil society. The long years of mostly oppressive military regimes in Nigeria produced a crop of antagonistic CSOs (Akinrinnade, 2006). As Respondent XXI maintained, "part of the problem we have in Nigeria is about the

fact that because of the history of the emergence of human rights struggle in Nigeria came majorly during the military, so there is that antagonistic tendencies. There is that belief that we are trouble makers” (Res XXI). Although CSOs in the Fourth Republic are divided between pro-government (mostly) and anti-government (see Res XIV, Tar, 2008), the notion that CSOs are “traditionally critical of government” (Res I) still survives. CSOs are seen to be “traditionally hostile to security forces and particularly the intelligence services” (Res I).

Nonetheless, the collaboration between the government and the CSOs (evident in the relationship between SAVE and PAVE) has failed to mitigate the trust issues between the state and non-state agencies. The non-state agency remains constrained by the knowledge that “we are volunteers... we have limitations—we cannot impose, we cannot enforce” (Res XXI). The state still remains the umpire with the elective mandate (Hausermann, 1998; Thomas, 2001). Moreso, the CSOs are at the mercy of the State and foreign development donors and agencies for funding. For example, Respondent XVI posits that “civil society organisations, especially the ones dominant in Nigeria here, we are donor-driven. So donors tend to lead you to a direction where they want you to go. They all have their objective and interest”. In terms of the relationship between SAVE and PAVE, Respondent XVII states that “there was really no money from the office of ONSA. All the funds, I think it was sponsored by the European Union”. Respondent I confirm this in his assessment of how this kind of arrangement affected PAVE when SAVE was scrapped by the new administration:

As at that time, the relationship of PAVE with the EU was through SAVE and through ONSA and so funding the activities of PAVE was channelled through the SAVE project. So that was the nature of the agreement. So, and for that agreement to be changed, this cycle of funding has to end. So we can't re-negotiate a new agreement until after June. So that affected what we can call the national activities of PAVE, even though the component continued to do their own activity, because in any case, what we were simply doing was integrating CVE into what we were already doing in our own places (Res I).

Lack of direct funds to CSOs and CBOs greatly undermines their capacity and ultimately affects the sustainability of the development projects. One of the consequences of not devolving funding (that is, not directly funding the CSOs) in the case of the CVE programme is that it leads to misappropriation of funds and corruption. For instance, where the government cannot talk nor do certain things, the civil societies are in a better position to do that. But unfortunately the government themselves made a mistake from the designing stage. For instance, ‘kobo’ was not given to us, but they spent not less than N5 million per state where they claim they are working- to rent offices, to equip their offices and carry out programmes. But we the partners, who

are independent, who are volunteers, who already have existing offices were not given anything. And now when DASUKI GATE1 came up, the first casualty was SAVE because they are baby of the ONSA (Res XXI).

Respondent XXI, a foremost Nigerian human rights activist and Kogi State Chairman of the Partnership against Violent Extremism, categorically accuses the government (and criticizes the funding arrangement) of creating new structures (rather than use the existing structures provided by the CSOs) “for the purpose of corruption and embezzlement”. This somewhat justifies the funding approach adopted by most foreign development agencies such as DFID and USAID in Nigeria. Respondent III professes that “what DFID does is...it doesn’t give money to the government, but it partners with state governments and federal government to deliver them”. A similar view is expressed by Respondent V, “We do not partner with state agency from this part of Nigeria. We do in some other parts of Nigeria. But we don’t work with the government directly in Nigeria on principle because of the issue of corruption”.

There is of course every reason to be wary of Nigeria. For instance, Nigeria scores 28/100 (in a scale of 0-100 representing highly corrupt to clean) and ranks 136/176 in Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International, TI, 2016). This pragmatic approach will however have a detrimental effect on the sustainability of development interventions as well as risk producing consequences of securitized development, as it has the tendency of alienating credible local partners, therefore risking the problem of local ownership.

### *6.3. Evaluation of Nigeria’s Soft Power Counter Terrorism Strategy*

Evidently, the Nigerian government is making serious efforts at synchronizing its counterterrorism strategies and approaches under ONSA. However, there are still notable gaps. One of the gaps is that the government’s development initiatives including PINE, VSF, SSI and CVE are far from integrated. There appears to be a lack of an overarching sense of guidance and leadership from the coordinating CT body, ONSA. Respondent I argues that “you don’t see a sense of a strategy of an overarching something, you know, because the responsibility to protect is actually that of the state. Everybody can just support. So you don’t see a sense of the state understanding that responsibility” (Res I). As Respondent VI argues, there is confusion regarding who actually leads the counter-terrorism effort, “whether it is the Vice President Office or whether T.Y Danjuma’s PCNI is”. One clear illustration is ONSA’s foray into implementing its own CVE programme—one that every indicator, including ONSA’s initial study show that CSOs are more suited to implementing. UNDP and DFID and other international agencies such as USAID are assisting the Nigerian government coordinate and synchronise its counterterrorism policies and programmes. But, there

is still that notion among international partners that the Nigerian government should lead the counterterrorism effort.

Arguably, it is more a lack of understanding of its role as the primary duty bearer (as Res I posits) than a deliberate attempt as Respondent III avers that constrains the Nigerian states counter-terrorism efforts. Respondent III states that “Nigeria, at one point wanted outsiders to deal with Boko Haram for them”. One cannot rule out the fact that Nigeria hopes to benefit from the GWOT mantra where countering terrorism is considered a global effort, but this does not necessarily amounts to transference of responsibility to external agencies. Nigeria does genuinely lack experience in fighting terrorism, as it was not until 2011 that it established the anti-terrorism legislation to deal with the threat of Boko Haram.

It is therefore not surprising that the Nigerian government does not seem to have a comprehensive and elaborate soft approach that goes beyond mere rhetorical statements. This much is reflected in the National Security Strategy document. “The gap is simply because even the government has no clear strategy on the soft approach. So, it appears to be scattered and ad hoc. It’s difficult for donors to also understand therefore what the country’s strategy on soft approach is” (Res I). For example, there is no clarity regarding roles and agencies responsible for leading and implementing the functions. One can see a lot of overlap of programmes and interventions that amount to duplicity. The poor coordination is exemplified by the safe school component of the CVE programme that intersects with the SSI. ONSA through the SAVE programme was adopting schools to pilot its CVE, whereas this component could have been integrated with the Safe School Project such that “all the Safe Schools project will now be implementing CVE programme. And then you have wider reach and greater impact” (Respondent I).

Akin to that is the obvious disconnect between PCNI/PINE and the communities it is meant to serve. While the government is taking considerable steps to improve its development intervention by synchronizing all its development initiatives towards the Boko Haram crisis, its efforts are fraught with fundamental errors. One, PCNI/PINE does not fully engage with the victims of Boko Haram and the affected communities that it is meant to serve. For instance, while PCNI involved CSOs and CBOs in the initial consultation and dialogue, there has been no follow-up meeting with these critical components to truly assess the needs of victims and affected societies. The VSF has not been fully directed to meeting the needs of victims of Boko Haram. Rather, the leadership of PCNI/PINE sits in Abuja, away from the theatre of action in the NE fussing more about administrative issues such as renting office spaces and furnishing (Res XXI).

There is also the concern that intervention should be driven at the state, or at most, the regional levels, rather than at the Federal level that PINE represents. The

government of the six affected states should come up with a comprehensive response to the crisis and only solicit assistance from the FG. “What they should have simply done is the fact that Adamawa or the NE independently ought to have had a conference on the crisis and conflict in their states in respect of this insurgency and how to address it, because these are peculiarities” (Res XXI). While the contribution (financial) of the FG is important, especially considering the centralized nature of the Nigerian state, the government of the six NE states should be leading the responses, particularly the design of the intervention. However, this is to be differentiated from the politically-motivated demand for NEDC. The argument for NEDC has been pushed at the legislative level, but the whole debate is flawed as it is based on the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) example one that was set up in 2001 to control the agitation and violent struggle of the Niger Delta militants. Interestingly, external agencies such as DFID and USAID are leading the NE regional development framework.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

This work has shown the different soft power approaches needed to contain terrorism in Nigeria and especially in the North East region. However, the more socio-economic or governance consideration in the soft approach adopted by the Nigerian government is evident in the last phase of the four stream intervention framework. The last phase appreciates the economic root causes of the Boko Haram insurgency. Under the Presidential Initiatives for the North East (PINE), the FG and the governors of the six North East states as well as international partners such as DFID have developed a regional economic or development plan. The objective of this plan, which includes programmes such as the Victim Support Fund (VSF), is to revitalise the damaged economy of the region as well as bring about infrastructural and human development. This can also be seen as response to the demand of NE governors and law makers for a North East Development Commission (NEDC). PINE is a national economic initiative primarily focused on providing emergency assistance (especially to victims of the Boko Haram insurgency) as well as mobilising resources for a longer term economic development of the region. PINE seeks to provide the strategic leadership and guidance for the economic turn-around and long-term prosperity of the NE, hence its effort at collaboration with different stakeholders including relevant FG ministries, the government of the affected states, international partners and other relevant local actors. Some of the projects designed under PINE include: strengthening early warning systems, targeted cash transfer schemes, and mobile hospital for providing quick medical support. The activities of PINE are now coordinated under the Presidential Committee on Northeast Initiative (PCNI)-chaired by General Theophilous Danjuma (rtd). PCNI was set up by President Muhammadu Buhari in attempt to centralise and

harmonise all the presidential initiatives (such as PINE, VSF, and the Safe School Initiative-SSI) towards the humanitarian development of the NE. Nigeria, under its Ministry of Finance, established the Safe School Fund (SSF), in response to the UN-led SSI. The government made an initial contribution of US \$10 Million with a further US \$10 Million pledge from the private sector (UNDP, 2017)). In all, these apparently loft measures and interventions will only make sense if there is a commitment to transparency and political will to deliver the gains of development oriented soft power approach to ensure a holistic human security development based on globally acceptable best practices. Only then can we hope to truly surmount the nagging threats of terrorism in Nigeria.

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