

SECURITY AND FIGHT AGAINST BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL OF MULTI-NATIONAL JOINT TASK FORCE IN BAGA

Akumah, Brown Ihechiluru & Nomeh, Chinedu Christian

Department of Political Science, Ebonyi State University Abakaliki

brownakumah2@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined how the quest to address regional threat through collective security led to military alliance by members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission in the formation of the multinational joint force (MNJTF). The study adopts the time series survey design and made use of secondary sources of data collection which included institutional and official documents. Collective security theoretical framework was applied, descriptive method of analysis from which logical conclusion was drawn. The major findings revealed that; the MNJTF recorded a good degree of success in the fight against terrorism within the sub-region, because it has succeeded in dislodging the Boko Haram insurgents to an extent that their capabilities to launch attack on military garrisons, police stations etc. has been drastically reduced. However, logistical difficulties, together with the attitude of LCBC member states and the fact that certain members of the MNJTF prefer national or unilateral actions were the major constraints that were encountered during the study. The study recommends amongst others that; the MNJTF must promote and imbibe a cohesive doctrine of multinational force that is anchored on a strong desire of collectively securing the Lake Chad region. Hence, the loyalty of the troops should be to the force and not the individual contributing states.

Keywords: *Multinational joint task force, Collective security, Boko Haram insurgency.*

Introduction

Today's world is characterized by rising cases of violent crimes affecting many countries. The situation constitutes a very worrisome development to the global community. Regrettably, terrorism has taken centre-stage in the global upsurge of violent crimes. Over the past decade, different forms of domestic and international terrorism have been witnessed around the world. International Terrorism is the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear: intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological. It constitutes an illegitimate use of force to achieve an objective at the detriment of the innocent masses. International terrorism is a significant threat to world peace and security and as such remains high on the agenda within policy and intelligence circles. Despite the fact that world attention is focused on transnational acts of terrorism with its dramatic and devastating consequences, the underlying causes can always be traced back to domestic grievances or circumstances (Woldemicheal, 2006).

Hence, insecurity is not a new phenomenon to the West African region. Notably, instability and

conflict have always been a common characteristic in the westernmost region of Africa, even prior to the rise of Boko Haram in North Eastern Nigeria. Examining the challenges to stability and security in West Africa, Marc, Verjee and Mogaka (in Goyei, 2018) traced the rise of conflict in the region to the early 1960s. Enumerated in their study are the Civil Wars in Guinea Bissau (1962-1974 and 1998-1999), the Liberian Civil Wars (1989-1996 and 1999- 2003). The Malian Tuareg rebellion/insurgencies (1990-1995 and 2012-2013), the Civil Wars in Sierra Leone (1991-2002), Côte d'Ivoire (2002-2007) and the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), Niger Delta insurgency (2004-2009), the Boko Haram uprising (2009-present) in Nigeria are other examples of conflicts in the West African sub-region. The vast majority of those conflicts are intra-state in nature.

The aggressive activities of Boko Haram in North Eastern Nigeria have not only affected the security dynamics in Nigeria. Niger, Chad and Cameroon are vulnerable to Boko Haram insurgency. Boko Haram fighters have made communities around the Lake Chad basin their hideouts and recruitment grounds (Voice of America News, 2016).

The emergence of the violent militant group called Boko Haram has threatened the survival and the cohesiveness of Nigeria and other Sub-Saharan African countries; Chad, Cameroon, Benin and Niger respectively. The evolution of Boko Haram has painted the image of the Giant of Africa, Nigeria, black as there is tension that Nigeria is at the edge of a civil war as Boko Haram has gone on killing spree, launching rampant and deadly terrorist acts that have claimed the lives of many Nigerians and caused widespread fear across and beyond Nigeria. Boko Haram is only one of many groups that have committed atrocious acts with impunity. Boko Haram is an Islamic Religious sect that has been in existence way before the beginning of their brutal politically-motivated attacks in Nigeria. The group opposes not only Western Education but Western culture and modern science as well. The founder of the group Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf, however was quoted as vowing that “the war which is yet to start will continue for long if political and educational systems were not changed (Sergie and Johnson, 2015).

Increasingly, Boko Haram has become a transnational terrorist movement. Its activities have continued to penetrate the fabrics of the society in and outside Nigeria. The permeating nature of the activities of Boko Haram provoked the concern of governments of the West African region. For example, prior to the formation of the multinational force, the Chadian President, Idriss Déby had in 2012, raised concern about the potentials of Boko Haram in terrorizing the entire Lake Chad Basin, if not contained. Reactions such as these motivated the mutual agreement to form a joint military force to confront the insurgent group (Goyei, 2018).

The emergence of Boko Haram – a threat to Nigeria and the other countries surrounding the Lake Chad area – was a main driver to reactivate and expand common security approaches by Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) member states. The actions of the jihadist movement have led to the disruption of communities and livelihoods in the basin area; have created refugee flows and internal displacement, putting populations at risk of food insecurity and creating urgent humanitarian needs (Sambe, 2016). The Paris summit in May 2014 gave another push to enhance regional cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram, by means of coordinated patrols and border surveillance, pooling intelligence and information exchange (Zamfir 2015).

This was established under Nigerian command, with support from the African Union (AU). The MNJTF was established by the LCBC summit under a Nigerian initiative, but includes only four of the six member states: Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, plus Benin, a non-member of LCBC. The MNJTF members were effectively split between ECOWAS (Nigeria, Niger, and Benin) and ECCAS (Cameroon and Chad) making it difficult for an AU recognised regional economic commissions (REC), and building block of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), to take the lead. Since the majority of the countries concerned belong to the LCBC and Boko Haram's reach had spread to the shores of the Lake Chad Basin, the organisation was seen as a suitable institutional framework for this joint effort providing a pragmatic solution for this cross-regional arrangement.

The Multinational Task Force has its headquarters in Baga (Nigeria) until 2015, when it was overrun by Boko Haram forces. It is currently based in N'djamena, Chad. The MNJTF operates under the political leadership of the African Union (AU), which has mandated the LCBC to be the political coordinating body of the operation. This means that the LCBC's political level acts as a forum to discuss security and military cooperation with its member states, and that the LCBC's Executive Secretary formally plays the role of interface between the AU's Peace and Security Department and the MNJTF's military command. As a regional organisation the LCBC is not directly involved in the peace operations, and due to lack of capacity and the fact it is not a subsidiary institution of the APSA, the African Union Commission is the de facto civilian partner of the MNJTF. Challenges to the partnership quickly emerged, though Nigeria was initially reluctant to cede sovereignty to its fellow task force partners, an issue made worse by historic territorial disputes with Chad and Cameroon. Additionally, its military faced low morale as soldiers refused to fight against Boko Haram due to the lack of ammunition and basic supplies. Nigeria's leadership of the coalition was derailed by an election delay in 2015. In the early weeks of the intervention, President Idriss Déby of Chad complained that his forces were defeating Boko Haram and retaking towns in northern Nigeria, only to be delayed by the Nigerian military, which was supposed to deploy to protect the task force's gains (Siegle 2013). Thus, this paper focuses on assessing the effectiveness and challenges of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) formed by Lake Chad Basin countries in combating the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and the wider sub-region.

Conceptualization of Terms

Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)

The MNJTF is an offensive and stabilization military forces with the objective of combating Boko Haram and other groups labelled as terrorists operating around the Lake Chad Basin. Its establishment was determined by LCBC member states and Benin at the extraordinary summit in Niamey, Niger on 7th October 2014. On November 2014 the African Union's (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) fully endorsed its activation; however, on 29th November 2015 the PSC authorized the deployment of the MNJTF for a 12months period. This was renewed on 14th January 2016 for additional 12 months (Agbiboa, 2013). The MNJTF was initially formed as a

sole Nigerian force in 1994 during the Sani Abacha's reign to checkmate banditry and smuggling activities, as well as facilitate free movement of goods and people across its northern frontier. However, it was expanded in 1998 to absorb forces from neighbouring Niger and Chad with the purpose of dealing with common cross-border security problems in the Lake Chad region. It had its headquarters in Baga, a town in Borno State (Dauda, 2017).

Assanvo, Abatan and Sawadogo (2016) in their study noted that the nature of MNJTF, its member states, its area of operations and the institutional architecture on which it is built determine the specific characteristics of the MNJTF. The nature of the MNJTF the MNJTF is an offensive and stabilisation mechanism with the objective of combating Boko Haram and other groups labelled as terrorists operating around the Lake Chad Basin. The Boko Haram's terrorist activities led to the worsening security in the Lake Chad Basin territories. By the late 2000s and the security forces were faced with a lot of difficulties posed by Boko Haram insurgency and other terrorist groups in the Lake Chad Basin; which resulted in the re-establishment of the joint military task force of the MNJTF.

Collective Security

According to Danchin (2021 p:7), the concept of collective security is “notoriously difficult to define, as the term is associated with a loose set of assumptions and ideas and its continued existence remains a contested concept”. Claude Jr (2018), agrees and further suggests that when the term collective security is used loosely, appears to be a synonym of peace or world order while it has also been used to refer to any and all multilateral efforts to deal with the problem of international peace and security, rather than a specifically to the system that gained prominence after the First World War. Roberts and Kingsbury (1993 p: 4-6) define *collective security* as “an arrangement where each state in the system accepts that security of one of them is a concern of all, and agrees to join in a collective response to aggression”. It is the foundational principle of the League of Nations: namely that member states would take attack on one member as an assault on all of them.

Collective Security according to Kvartanove (2021) connotes a collective defence organization that brings together countries that rule out possibility of war among them and are eager to pursue common security goals considering an attack against one ally as an attack against all. Khalema, Hosea, Abiolu & Mbara (2021) opined that the need for collective security and action in the face of global threat is imperative and went further to define collective security as states alignment and agreement towards pursuance of security objectives.

Kupchan (1995) defines collective security as, “an agreement between states to abide by certain norms and rules to maintain stability and when necessary, band together to stop aggression”. This definition captures three distinct ideas: the purpose or end of stopping “aggression”; the reliance on legal norms to determine both the meaning of that term and the appropriate response; and the rejection of self-help in favour of collective action. Thus, collective security rests on the idea of institutionalizing the legal use of force to reduce reliance of self-help as a rather crude instrument

of law enforcement. Mbara (2021 p:8) further defined the concept of collective security as: “... an institutionalized universal or regional system in which States have agreed by treaty jointly to meet any act of aggression or other illegal use of force resorted by a member State of the system.”

The concept of collective security represents an attempt to bring peace to international relations without altering their fundamental characteristics. It is therefore grounded in the second tradition. It is away to moderate anarchy, which is deemed unacceptable, without establishing a world government, which is deemed unattainable. Collective security therefore represents an attempt to square the circle between universal motivations toward peace and the retention of national sovereignty. Peace is considered possible within the present system of sovereign states. Collective security seeks neither to change the organization of states nor of the international system. In this way, collective security is distinct from other liberal views of international relations, and especially from the revolutionary tradition.

Boko Haram Insurgency

Chothia (2015 p.12) noted that Boko Haram in Hausa word means “Western education is forbidden.” Boko Haram Terrorist Group: is a Jihadist group based in north-eastern Nigeria, also active in Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon. The group is officially called *Jamaatu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad* which is an Arabic term meaning People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad. Obamwonyi and Owenbiugie (2015) noted that the Boko Haram sect, the insurgent and terrorist group which is mainly based in the north eastern part of Nigeria, started its heinous crime in 2009, the year it was widely known and gained relevance. But the group has been in existence before this time. Boko Haram is also commonly known as “Western Education is a Sin”. Some analysts and commentators are of the view that the deadly sect has been in existence before 2002, and that the sect has been operating with different names, namely, the *Nigerian Taliban*; and *Yusuffiyya*.

Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) opined that beyond econo-religious explanations however, Boko Haram is a terrorist group that romances with some desperate politicians in Northern Nigeria. The sect enjoys effective support from some well-to-do individuals, religious leaders, allies, admirers of their ideology and highly placed politicians in the North who claim to be Nigerians but are clandestinely working against the state.

Mbah and Nwangwu (2014) noted that the Boko Haram group has transformed from a sect of Islamic fanatics to one with the overwhelming support of disgruntled politicians and other paid thugs who find the sect's ideology appealing. It is now widely accepted as a destructive political tool with a cosmetic pretension to religiosity. The sect has provided a safe haven for disgruntled, deprived, desperate, frustrated and opportunistic politicians who were dislocated in the political configuration within the terror-infested states and the country at large. They hide under its umbrella, therefore, to perpetrate subversive acts with the ultimate goal of discrediting the President Goodluck Jonathan's administration as fundamentally incapable of preserving the sovereign integrity of the nation. This largely explains the underlying reason behind the resurgence and escalation of Boko Haram insurgency after the 2011 general election.

According to Onuoha (2010), the emergence of Boko Haram can be traced to 1995, when Abubakar Lawan established the Allusunna wal'jama'ah hijra sect in the University of Maiduguri. Lawan then left the country for studies in Saudi Arabia at the University of Medina and since then nothing has been heard about him. The sect gradually developed, spreading to Adamawa, Bauchi, and Yobe, and eventually could be found not only in many parts of northern Nigeria but also in the neighbouring countries of Chad, Cameroon and Niger. The sect continued to move about with its slogan that Western education and civilisation are sinful. The sect has concentrated on destroying government establishments because it believes that the government imposes Western education on it, and it blames the government for not managing the resources of the state for the benefit of the people.

Aghedo and Osumah (2012) observed that the Boko Haram group is a security threat to Nigeria. Its first known violent attack, in which approximately 30 people were killed, was on local government installations, police stations as well as public buildings in Yobe State on 24 December 2003. Ploch (2011) noted that in a bid to stop these attacks on police stations and other government buildings, the government of Nigeria in July 2009 launched a counter-attack against the insurgents which resulted in at least 700 deaths, mostly members of the group, and including the group leader Mohammed Yusuf, who was killed while in police custody. Adi (2014) argued that because its activities have not come to the open, it was not known. What brought the sect to the world and public glare was the extra judicial killing of their leader, Mohammed Yusuf, which triggered anger and vengeance among the sect. The insurgent group is strongly believed to be pursuing a theocratic agenda which is largely based on the 13th century Turkish Sunni Islamic scholar, Sheik AllIslam Ibn Tarmiya. Tarmiya is the philosophical focus of Boko Haram sect. Hence the mosque built in Maiduguri was named after him. Boko Haram was founded by two persons, namely, Mohammed Ali and Mohammed Yusuf. Mohammed Yusuf started an armed insurrection on what was known as the Yobe Taliban. Mohammed Yusuf migrated to Maiduguri and started his preaching, campaigns and recruitment drive.

Theoretical Underpinning

The theoretical framework of the study is anchored on Collective Security as propounded by Organski, (1958), and popularised by Bennett (1988), Kissinger (1992), amongst others. Collective Security can be understood to be a security arrangement in which states cooperate collectively to provide security for all, by the actions of all against any state within the group which might challenge the existing order by using force. Collective security also serves as an exception to rule of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state. That is, while Collective Security aims at promoting friendly relations and equality of states within the arrangement, it does not forget the sovereignty of a state that makes it independent and free from political or economic exploitation and dominance by any other state or entity.

Indeed, Collective Security constitutes a modern device of crisis management. All the members of community of nations are expected to act and save the humankind from the scourge of war and aggression and to use the collective security theory for this purpose. Apart from its being

instrumental to the establishment of regional security arrangement, the collective security concept has also been adopted in many instances around the world to maintain international peace and security, a responsibility which is generally referred to as peacekeeping, peace-making, and peace support and in some instances peace enforcement operations.

Collective security is clouded with some fundamental attributes or assumptions. In its theoretical underpinning, Bennett (1988) stressed that, the theory of collective security rest on assumption that all nations share a primary interest in maintaining peace. Hence, Bennett (1988, p.23) argued that:

In order for collective security to operate, peace must be viewed as indivisible, and threats to peace anywhere must be treated as the concern of all members of the international system. Furthermore, all members must agree in advance to react promptly and effectively against threats to peace and must be organized in such a way as to provide the procedures for collective response to such threats, even if the collection is directed against members with which they are friendly. The aggressor nation will be faced with such overwhelming opposition from all other members of the system that peace will be promptly restored. In fact, the promise of preponderant opposition will usually dissuade incipient aggressors from their inclinations towards breaches of international peace. A collective security system entails the centralization of a society's coercive mechanisms. As a corollary the members of that society, in this case States, give up a great deal of their individual freedom to indulge in self-help, and are generally restricted to a limited right of self-defence, usually until the central authority takes over their protection.

Again, these basic attributes have been clearly delineated by Organski (1960, pp: 23-24) who listed five basic assumptions underlying the theory of collective security. They include:

1. In an armed conflict, Member Nation States will be able to agree on which nation the aggressor is from.
2. All Member Nation-States are equally committed to contain and constrain the aggression irrespective of its source or origin;
3. All Member Nation-States have identical freedom of action and ability to join in proceedings against the aggressor;
4. The cumulative power of the cooperating members of the alliances for collective security will be adequate and sufficient to overpower the might of the aggressor
5. In the light of the threat posed by the collective might of the nations of a Collective Security coalition, the aggressor nation will modify its policies or if unwilling to do so, will be defeated.

Kissinger (1992) observed that collective security requires each state to share responsibility for every other state's security. He argued that it 'assumes that every nation perceives every challenge to the international order in the same way, and is prepared to run the same risks to preserve it'

(Kissinger 1992 p: 6-8). It is such that insecurity of one state makes all states less secure. A local dispute in one part of the world can threaten another part (as the case of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria which affects its immediate neighbours); economic and ethnic rivalries can spill over into other countries. Collective security therefore requires all states to take joint action against any aggressor, and all are to act in concert. However, Joint force is deeply rooted in the theory of collective security. A theory derived from the idealist view of international system as one based on community of states with the potential of cooperating to overcome mutual problems. The dream of the idealists is to create an international system based on collective security that would replace the anarchic system that lacks central enforcement mechanisms (Kant 1957; Scott and Waltz 1995).

The fundamental objective is to lay the foundation for the indivisibility of peace and to advocate its adherence to the governments and peoples of all nation states. Invariably, threats to international security are best countered when people come to the realization that they have to be there brother's keeper and not just isolate themselves by presuming that the conflicts of a given state is her exclusive prerogative. It is an international translation of the slogan, 'one for all and all for one'" (Morgenthau). This is because the nomenclature of society is such that threat to peace anywhere can degenerate to turmoil everywhere as portrayed in the concept of the indivisibility of peace.

Collective security rests on the assumptions that governments and peoples can be expected to recognize and act on the truth, that the fabric of human society has become so tightly knit and woven that a breach anywhere threatens disintegration everywhere. Unchecked aggression in one direction encourages and helps to empower its perpetrators to penetrate in other directions. Or, successful use of lawless force in one situation contributes to the undermining of respect for the principle of order in all situations. The remoteness of aggression is irrelevant.

Theoretical Application

In determining the extent to which MNJTF's fight against Boko Haram guided by the doctrines of collective security, member Nation-States must be able to agree on who the enemy is, the cumulative power of the cooperating members of the alliances for collective security ought to be adequate and sufficient to overpower the might of the aggressor. For success to be attained, member Nation-States must be willing to subordinate their conflicting interests as required by the doctrine of collective security for the common good and security of all member states.

The cooperation and commitment of members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) through MNJTF in adopting a working operational strategy geared towards curtailing and containing the expansion of Boko Haram terrorist activities in Borno Nigeria is one of the core principle and assumption of collective security which must be adhered to for success to be attained in every military alliance/ cooperation such as Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF).

The execution of collective security strategies by the aggressors requires a constant evaluation

and modification of its policies when it is necessary. This is to enable the implementers of collective security strategies/policies to identify corrupt military officials whose activities hinder the efforts of the military alliance/cooperation in tackling the Boko Haram insurgency in Baga Nigeria. The world generally is threatened by conflict spanning from one continent to another. Africa is facing major challenges on the path to sustainable peace and democracy. Thus, the need for nations to come together to establish an arrangement within themselves to tackle these huge problems of security becomes imperative. In all continents worldwide, there are regional security arrangements which form part of the collective international security arrangement. Collective Security concept therefore, is a strategy adopted by members of the international system to collectively restrain the use of force among its members. The principle stipulates that members would take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace (terrorism) and for the suppression of aggressive acts and breaches the peace. The above necessitated the reactivation of MNJTF in 2014 with the mandate of suppressing the aggressive acts of Boko haram terrorist activities.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Collective Security and the Fight against Terrorism

Weeraratne (2015 p:7) contends that what was initially considered by neighbouring states as a Nigerian domestic challenge eventually turned into a regional problem. He also noted that the group has “emerged as one of the greatest threats to human security in Africa, and the Lake Chad region in particular”. The effects of the threats and insecurity generated by Boko Haram ultimately transcended the confines of Nigeria's borders. Other states in the Lake Chad region Cameroon, Chad and Niger are also affected (although less severely than Nigeria) as the combatants have gradually expanded their geographical area of operations. Persistent attacks have led to the kidnapping, displacement, and killing of Cameroonian nationals. Other effects according to Obamamoye (2019), noted that it includes an alarming refugee influx into Cameroon as well as the attacks against the territorial integrity of Niger, chief of which was the Bosso attack where many Nigerian soldiers were killed. As a result of the regional dimension of the Boko Haram menace, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), with contributing troops from the four affected states (and Benin), is currently serving as the platform through which the states in the Lake Chad region respond to the uprising.

Obamamoye (2019) further argued that one of the best ways to deconstruct the emergence of the security menace in Nigeria and the subsequent regional security crisis in the Lake Chad region is through the analytical framework of state weakness. The weakness of the Nigerian state was central to the emergence and expansion of the Boko Haram terrorist group. This position can be explicated in different interconnected spheres. In the economic realm, the Nigerian state has, over the years, greatly underperformed in harnessing the human and natural resources at its disposal to alleviate the increasing economic hardship of the masses. There are alarmingly high levels of youth underemployment, poverty, income disparity and other deleterious economic indicators in the Nigerian socio-economic landscape.

There has always been an implicit relationship between Boko Haram operations and the Northern struggle for political hegemony. According to Malachy (2013), the relationship between Boko Haram operations and the advancement of the Northern agenda struggle for political hegemony is the reason the sect receives financial, administrative and security support from many top Northern Islamic politicians, serving political office holders and Northern members of the Armed Forces. According to Oyeniyi (2010), at the early inception of the group, members were making subscriptions of negligible amount daily. The group Boko Haram receives donations from notable Muslims brotherhood who assist in various ways especially, means of transportation, advertisement and feeding. Oyeniyi (2010) continues to list the most common sources of funds adopted by Boko Haram as state sponsorship, illegal activities, legal activities and popular support.

MNJTF's Fight against Boko Haram and the Doctrines of Collective Responsibility

The first doctrine of collective security holds that in an armed conflict, member nation-states can agree on who is the aggressor; In this case, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon etc all agreed that Boko Haram is the common aggressor and requires collective responses. However, the efforts to adopt a regional response had been preceded by national responses. It was crucial for Nigeria to collaborate with other members of LCBC because her territory was at the epicentre of the Boko Haram insurgency, yet her attitude was felt to be an impediment to any progress in regional cooperation. This was particularly the case under the presidency of Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015) who was criticised for his weak leadership, his lack of political will and his inability to effectively combat Boko Haram. Under his mandate, cooperation with his neighbours left a lot to be desired. There were multiple constraints which affected the efforts aimed at adopting a regional response to Boko Haram which had been preceded by national responses. Whereas Nigeria had carried out a military offensive to halt Boko Haram's territorial gains and retake the localities under the group's control from February 2015 onwards, Cameroon, Niger and Chad had sought instead to contain its expansionist tendencies. Faced with an identical phenomenon, these countries had adopted either offensive or defensive positions.

These different postures at the initial period restricted the regional cooperation needed and were interpreted as the absence of true solidarity among the countries of the region. Each of the countries seemed willing to only defend their own interests and to react to the threat depending on how it affected their own territory. It was only the urgency of the situation, compounded by the geographical expansion of Boko Haram, that finally forced them into joint action. At the initial stage of the Boko Haram crisis, Nigeria perceived it as an internal problem that did not require the intervention of outsiders. The member states of LCBC saw it from that perspective too. Though the MNJTF was established as far back as 1994, it did not start to play any active role in the management of Boko Haram crisis with the involvement of the other nations until 2012 – four years after the Boko Haram sect resorted to terrorist attacks. Other member states of LCBC were forced to join the MNJTF by circumstances beyond their control. They would have ordinarily not had anything to do with Nigeria, just as Nigeria would have not wanted to have anything to do

with Cameroon and Chad. In other words, the MNJTF lacks the attribute of trust between the member states. Although the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is an initiative of the LCBC, only four of the six member states – Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad, joined by non-member Benin – are parts of the force. As a result, the MNJTF is a coalition of states that came into being to confront a common threat. Since the majority of the countries concerned belong to the LCBC and Boko Haram's reach has spread to the shores of the Lake Chad Basin, the organisation appeared as the 'natural' or 'default' institutional framework to take on this effort.

The MNJTF as a security community did not come into being to help Nigeria necessarily but to serve as a platform for the countries of LCBC to collectively defend themselves against a common enemy that Boko Haram turned out to be. The MNJTF has all it takes to be considered a good security community. It provides practical space for the application of the mantra of 'African solutions to African problems'. The force commanders over the years have been given the leeway needed and the space required to operate freely in relation to sector commanders.

Challenges of the MNJTF in tackling the Boko Haram Insurgency in Baga sector

The MNJTF has been faced with multiple challenges/constraints which have undermined the coordination of its military strategy, making the Lake Chad Basin vulnerable to continued Boko Haram attacks. These challenges are as follows:

1. ***The offensives of the troops against Boko Haram have often been short-lived:*** This makes the jihadists and their offshoots to bounce back with ease; while on some occasions, the militants have weathered the offensives to inflict terrible assaults on the military such as the March 2020 episode in which some 92 Chadian troops were killed in a base on the Lake Chad. Such Boko Haram's resilience has engendered a huge displacement burden of over 2.4 million people in the Lake Chad Basin.
2. ***Undermining Troop Morale:*** The MNJTF has suffered enormous funding and procurement delays. Some of the foreign funds such as those from the EU are channelled through the AU. A huge chunk of the funds is sometimes held up in Addis Ababa. Such delays in the release of funds affect military operations and the morale of troops.
3. ***Challenges relating to Economies of the Contributory States:*** Besides, the seemingly interminable insurgency has undermined the economies of most troops contributing states and their funding profile to the MNJTF. The economic crisis may have retarded the capacity of the LCBC to exert its oversight authority and halt human rights violations by rogue military elements (Albert, 2017).
4. ***Structural Limitations of the MNJTF and Weak Political Institutions:*** In general, it can be evaluated that the MNJTF, from the very beginning, suffers from structural limitations. The chain of command is weak as troops-contributing states have been reluctant to cede command to the Force itself, even by the standards of multinational forces, because it includes units of national forces that are limited in operating specifically in a cell/sector

belonging to their countries as agreed in the force mandate. Each force operates in its sector and may operate outside the borders of the sector, in case of a hot pursuit, up to 25km beyond the border of the neighbouring state. This has weakened the chain of command of the multilateral force which comprises units of national forces. Thus, the multilateral force continues to reflect national sensitivities at the expense of joint military cooperation. These internal squabbles tend to affect coordination, integration and performance of the MNJTF. For example, in December 2019, Chad withdrew over 1,000 of its troops engaged with the MNJTF without fully informing the other countries.

The MNJTF is a unique adaption of the “coalition of the willing” intervention structure that has become increasingly prominent across the African continent. The force significantly contributed to more effective regional military operations against Boko Haram; however, the failure of basin governments to subsequently “fill in” behind military victories and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the region highlight the limitations of this model as a strategy for comprehensive conflict transformation.

The regional approach to the Boko Haram threat suffered from a more fundamental challenge facing a wide range of missions—the lack of a holistic strategy to address the overlapping social, economic, and political drivers of the conflict. Most observers, including the AU, stressed that the region's military-heavy strategy did not and indeed could not conclusively resolve the insurgent threat or transform the challenging context that allowed its creation and expansion.

5. ***Poor or Inadequate Funding of the MNJTF Operations:*** The contributions from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger were largely insufficient to permanently hold back Boko Haram activities. These warranted contributions from friendly countries, which could still not meet up the estimated budget of US\$700 million. These financial challenges were further compounded by increasing economic difficulties faced by the affected countries. Even Chad and Nigeria which are the two biggest military contributors to the MNJTF are currently facing economic hardship with the global economic crisis. Cameroon on her part is facing similar challenges including the huge refugee problems caused by same problem. Funding of the MNJTF has therefore been very slow as member states have not been respecting their pledges. This has forced the military of the individual member countries to pick up the financial burden, thereby, "creating financial strain on already tight budgets.

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

This study has so far examined critically the insecurity challenges caused by the Boko Haram insurgency and its impact and effect on the stability of the Nigerian, and other states, within the Lake Chad sub-region. The MNJTF was established by the LCBC summit under a Nigerian initiative, but includes only four of the six member states: Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad, plus Benin, a non-member of LCBC. Deriving from the exposition above, the study examined:

1. The study discovered that the MNJTFs fight against Boko Haram was not adequately guided by the principles of collective security as a result of structural weaknesses and lack of cooperation among MNJTF's sector commands.
2. The study also discovered that the operational strategies of the MNJTF have not adequately curtailed the expansion of Boko Haram Terrorist activities in Baga Nigeria.
3. Finally, corruption among the military high command in Nigeria hinders the efforts of the MNJTF in tackling the Boko Haram insurgency in Baga sector.

Extant literatures were reviewed and a lacuna established that guided the discourse in the study. The study carried out in the Lake Chad Basin area, adopted the time series survey design also known as trend design and made use of secondary sources of data collection which included extract from institutional and official documents, publications from national and international governmental and non-governmental agencies. The study adopted qualitative and descriptive method of analysis to effectively bring to the fore the fundamental issues that triggered the study.

Conclusion

The aggressive activities of Boko Haram in North Eastern Nigeria have not only affected the security dynamics in Nigeria, but also affected by the group's uprisings insecurity in the governments of Niger, Chad and Cameroon in the Lake Chad Basin. Boko Haram fighters have made communities around the Lake Chad basin their hideouts and recruitment grounds. Military alliances are an important strategy for curbing threats and the MNJTF as a military alliance has contributed in no small way in combating Boko Haram terrorism within the Lake Chad sub-region. There is no doubt that since the establishment of the MNJTF, it has recorded some degree of success in the fight against terrorism within the sub-region. The MNJTF in Nigeria has so far succeeded in dislodging the Boko Haram group to an extent that their capabilities to launch attack on military garrisons, police stations, and other very sensitive areas as it was at the peak of its attacks has been drastically reduced.

These problems along with endemic corruption have made the Nigerian military somewhat of a hollow giant resting on its reputation – more capable than any other force in the sub-region, but considerably less capable than it should be with tens of thousands of troops and a large stock of major weapons systems and other equipment. Logistical difficulties, together with the attitudes of the countries involved – which have always tended to focus more on their own interests than on a regional approach – delayed the operationalization of MNJTF. Until now the MNJTF has suffered somewhat from the fact that certain members of the coalition prefer national or bilateral actions which is one of its major constraints that it has continued to face. Attacks by Boko Haram continue, mainly in north-eastern Nigeria and southern Niger, and to a lesser extent in northern Cameroon and the Lake region of Chad. Terrorists persist in targeting innocent civilians, often using young children. Despite commendable regional efforts, the group continues to threaten regional stability.

Recommendations

Deriving from the findings and discussion above, the study put forward the following recommendations;

1. The MNJTF must promote and imbibe a cohesive doctrine of multilateral force that is anchored on a strong desire of collectively securing the Lake Chad region. Hence, the loyalty of the troops should be to the Force and not the individual contributing states. The troops should see themselves as united force against a common regional enemy.
2. In view of the fact that several operational strategies adopted by the MNJTF in the fight against insurgency in the Northeast region of Nigeria has not been able to fully flush out or annihilate the insurgents from the region, members of the LCBC must realize that military approach is not the only panacea to combating terrorism. Hence, there is the need to address the socioeconomic and political situations that led to the emergence of terrorism in the region.
3. The leadership of LCBC should monitor Military personnel deployed to combat insurgency to ensure that their actions are devoid of corruption/abuses. They should also liaise with the AU to ensure that funds donated for counter-terrorism are effectively utilized in the fight against insurgency.

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