



INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AMONG SECURITY AGENCIES IN HANDLING INTERNAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

¹Abbdullahi, Muhammad Maigari; ²Usman Ahmad Karofi

¹*Department of Sociology, College of Social and Management Sciences, Al-Qalam University Katsina.* ²*Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Email: uakarofi@gmail.com*

Abstract

An attempt has been made to unearth operational lapses in Nigeria's internal security architecture. The article has identified parallel operations as the main cause for the inability of the Nigerian security agencies to end the activities of the Islamist insurgents in the Northeast, armed banditry, cattle rustlers and kidnappers in Northwestern Nigeria in the absence of collaborative operations. The article reviewed and assessed best practices in the intelligence community regarding collaboration, relationships and synergy among security agencies in both internal and foreign operations. The study revealed there is no security that is designated to lead the war against Boko Haram insurgents and armed banditry. Nigerian Army, Navy, Airforce, Police and other paramilitary deployed to the areas faced with armed violence have no coherent template for sharing intelligence information among them; which was apparent in parallel operations and response to attacks. The study established that the lack of collaborative operation among the security agencies has created an operational deficit which the criminal exploit to kill both the security personnel and the civilians. In the sense, the paper concludes that as a result of parallel operations, even the security personnel are unable to defend themselves let alone defenceless civilians in the Northeast and Northwestern Nigeria. There is the need for sharing intelligence among military and other security personnel in response to security management. This would reduce operational loopholes and lack of backup to ground troops.

Keywords: Interagency Collaboration, Insurgency, Armed Banditry, Cattle Rustling, Kidnapping

Introduction

Nigeria has been embroiled in a war against Islamist insurgents (Boko Haram) since 2009 and from 2016 onward the country is also facing activities of armed banditry, cattle rustlers and kidnappers in the Northwestern States of Kaduna, Zamfara, Katsina and the Sokoto States. These emerging security challenges are not conventional crimes and warfare which the Nigerian Police Force and the military are conversant with them. In the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it is the responsibility of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) to manage the internal security of the country, but the inability of the Police to manage these crimes and conflicts necessitated the deployment of the military in internal security management. In deploying security personnel, the Federal

Government of Nigeria, which controls the armed forces has not to design a hierarchical arrangement regarding the security outfit to lead the fight against Boko Haram insurgents in the Northeast, cattle rustlers and armed bandits which metamorphosed to kidnappers in some States in Northwestern Nigeria. Even within the military, Airforce, Army and Navy also operates in parallel without a coordinating head that leads the fight. Police, the secret security agency called the Department of State Security (DSS), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and other agencies which supposed to gather intelligence information lacked interagency collaboration in intelligence gathering and sharing of information. The operation of security agencies without collaboration has contributed immensely in prolonging the war on terrorists in the Northeast



and has contributed to the expansion of the network of activities of the armed bandits, cattle rustlers and kidnappers in the Northwest States, despite the deployment of the military under the special military operation tagged Operation Sharan Daji and Tsaftar Daji (Sweep and Clean Bush). Interagency collaboration among the security agencies has been the usual practice in the country that desires optimum performance from the security personnel and restores peace in the face of insurgency (General Accounting Office (GAO) 2003, 6).

In the United States of America, eliciting and processing of intelligence reports and information is under the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). It was revealed that under the overall leadership of that agency, U.S. intelligence agencies gather information on terrorist organizations, monitor terrorist threats, and share information with other nations. The Departments of State, Justice, and Defense collect and analyze intelligence through surveillance programs and liaisons with international police. These intelligence activities support other prevention efforts, such as protecting U.S. facilities and Americans overseas, and visa and border controls. This underscores the need to specifically single out a particular agency to lead other security agencies. It has also pointed out the impact of collaborative work among the security agencies to achieve a common goal which is national security and protection of the country (General Accounting Office (GAO), 2003).

PARALLEL OPERATION

Nigeria has been struggling to curb the activities of the rampaging Boko Haram attacks against civilians and government installations as well as a security operative since 2009 and communal violence since independence in 1960 from Great Britain. In its usual response, the Federal Government of Nigeria reluctantly established a multilayered security, communication structure for the implementation National Counter terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2014 which was further reviewed in 2016 to coordinate the activities of security outfits in intelligence gathering. As a service-wide strategy, it has

become a centre for the coordination and collection of counter-terrorism efforts bordering on the deployment of a carrot-and-stick approach in fighting terrorism, it has provided a clear-cut role for all security agencies in the implementation process of the strategy and execution of the war on terrorism which is under the Office of National Security Adviser (ONSA) (Innocent 2018: 2). It could be deduced that NACTEST has not specifically show which of the security agency to spearhead the intelligence gathering, processing and dissemination of information similar to how CIA leads other security agencies in the intelligence community of the USA. Similarly, National Security in Nigeria Advisor is a political appointee by the president usually a retired military officer is not viewed as a neutral person being a partisan member of the ruling party in intelligence gathering. Furthermore, the appointee could be someone who does not have the cognate experience to coordinate the activities and operations of various security agencies in the country as the CIA coordinates the security activities in the USA. Corroborating this assertion, report on homeland security progress in the state of Washington found that:

Region-based implementation of cooperative efforts may be problematic because of resistance by local elected officials, lack of trust between officials in different jurisdictions or disciplines, and competition over resources. The report also indicated that mutual aid agreements are still predominantly based on single disciplines (that is, law enforcement agencies in different jurisdictions) coordinating their activities and are not yet multidisciplinary (that is, law enforcement, public health, emergency management agencies both within and between jurisdictions) in their approach (Steven 2003, 10).

The quest for supremacy among the military: Airforce, Army and the Navy on one hand and Police, Immigration, Nigeria Civil Defense and Security Corps were attributed as one of the major



reasons why the fight against the Islamist insurgents in the Northeast lingers since 2009. The reason is that the Federal Government of Nigeria has not categorically mandated an agency that would lead the others. The Nigerian Army has been visible in the fight against Boko Haram since 2009, cattle rustlers, armed bandits and kidnappers in Northwestern Nigeria while the Airforce was occasionally seen in bringing aerial assistance to land forces. Parallel operations and lack of interagency collaboration among security personnel in Nigeria is a usual occurrence. There were instances where military and Police formations were attacked, personnel killed and wounded by the Boko Haram in the Northeast and armed bandits in the Northwest without other security agencies especially undercover security agencies detected the arrival of the terrorists and bandits. During the attacks on security establishments and villages, the terrorists spent hours carrying out operations without aerial intervention and reinforcement from Department of State Security Service (DSSS) which is the undercover security agency, Nigerian Police Force, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and Airforce. The parallel operations contributed to the resurgence of Boko Haram insurgent to unleash an attack in Baga town, Kukawa Local Government Area of Borno State in December 2018 and January 2019 (Innocent, 2018).

In Northwestern Nigeria, the armed bandits, kidnappers and cattle rustlers operate freely as at March 2019 until the killings in Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna attracted the attention of the country and the public outcry compelled the Federal Government to send additional troops. Similarly, the absence of collaboration has made security agencies vulnerable to criminals and terrorists to attack both civilians and security personnel. The vulnerability gave the insurgents to attack a base of the Multinational Joint Task Force between Chad, Niger Republic and Cameroon based in Borno State, the arsenal ransacked several military personnel were killed in December 2018. The expectation and the usual practice of interagency collaboration is that, the Army in Baga town supposed to have communicated with nearest Air force base for reinforcement and

assistance, on one hand, the DIA, DSSS and Nigerian Police Force should have gathered intelligence information on the planning and movement of the terrorists and alert the multinational forces to avert the attack. The same in the Northwest, the kidnappers have been kidnapping people for ransom without the interception of Police and secret police to identify the criminals, monitor phone conversations and detect their hideouts.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

Multi-agency collaboration in security centres on information sharing, mutual decision making and integrated operation against impending or existing security challenge at hand. The aim is to decimate the opponents, neutralize the terrorists or arrest the criminals depending on the context and prevailing situation. Countries faced with security challenges often resort to interagency collaboration among various security outfits to frontally confront threats and enemies of the state. In doing so, the collaborative effort is designed to build a form of security circle where an agency is designated to lead other agencies in the security community. This form of interagency symbiotic relationship is known in developed countries like the USA as the intelligence community assembled all the intelligence and security agencies to work together to address national security (Innocent, 2018)

The primary role of the intelligence community in the process of national security decision-making is to provide information and analysis of that information to help policy-makers (including war-fighters and those in the law enforcement communities) understand the elements and dynamics of the various situations they must address. Information provided by the Director of National Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other intelligence community components contributes to the overall assessment about what is happening on the ground, what is the nature of the concern in a particular geographic area, who are the actors, what are their



dispositions, and what are their likely capabilities and intentions (Whittaker, Brown., Smith, and McKune 2011, 58).

The above synergy in the intelligence community is what is virtually absent in the Nigerian context. The Department of State Security Service (DSS), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Army, Airforce, Navy and other paramilitary services such as Nigerian Customs, Immigration, Nigerian Civil Defense and Security Corp all worked at parallel against the Islamic insurgents in the Northeast and armed bandits, kidnappers and cattle rustlers in the Northwest unlike in the US and other countries where an agency is appointed to lead others in the intelligence community.

In underscoring the importance of interagency collaboration in addressing national or internal security challenges as well as foreign security mission, the USA in 2000 established a Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACGs) as a forum or circle for the various security agencies to meet, share intelligence information and take a decision. JIACGs was established purposely for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom for the US Joint Forces Command. In order to improve the interagency efficiency in coordination and planning, it had worked on the prototype at the level of operation in Afghanistan and Iraq which operated from its operational base in Tampa Florida and Qatar. For instance, in Afghanistan the JIACG deployed different operational forces which include personnel from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Diplomatic Security Service (DSS), U.S. Customs Service, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Defense Human Intelligence Service, New York's Joint Terrorism Task Force, and the Justice and Treasury Departments, among others. Through a small detachment in Tampa, the CENTCOM (Central Command) JIACG established and maintained real-time communications from the field to Washington, functioning primarily as an intelligence-gathering, fusion centre, while at the same time jointly operating Afghanistan's main

interrogation facility in Bagram. This interagency collaboration has recorded a lot of success in the US war against terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq, especially weakened the influence and strength of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Nigeria lacked a collaborative and symbiotic system where all security agencies would work under the same umbrella in order to achieve maximum output.

Buttressing the lack of collaboration in internal management among security agencies in Nigeria, the Nigerian President order the Chief of Air Staff in January 2019 to Sokoto and Zamfara States, which are beleaguered by armed banditry, cattle rustling and kidnapping while the Chief of Army Staff ordered by the Minister of Defense to relocate to Maiduguri as result of the renewed and lethal attacks on military formations in Borno and Yobe States (the epicenter of Boko Haram insurgency) which began in October 2018. Similarly, the President in December 2018 instructed the Inspector General of Police to deploy Special Forces to counter the rising waves of kidnapping and cattle rustling in Zamfara and Katsina States. All these showed that the country lacked a centralized command center similar to what is obtainable in the war against terrorism by countries faced with security challenges. Though the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) established in 2014 to coordinate the activities and operations of the armed forces against insurgency and other security problems. NACTEST is under the control of the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA) but has not made an appreciable impact in addressing the insecurity in the country, particularly the emergence of the kidnapping and cattle rustling in the States that were known to be peaceful prior to 2016. The impact of NACTEST since its formation in 2014 as thus: even at this, NACTEST is observed to be fraught with gaps that question its suitability as a counter terrorism policy document for Nigeria. Among the observed policy, gaps include the animosity between and among Nigeria's security agencies and their unwillingness to share the intelligence hampering effort at effectively combating the Boko Haram insurgency in the country's northeast (Innocent



2018). This is not peculiar to Boko Haram insurgency to the fight against other criminals such as armed bandits, cattle rustlers and kidnappers that have bedevilled northwest.

Series of parallel operations were recounted where the security agencies worked without collaboration at the height of security quagmire. It has been observed that the jurisdictional fog has engendered a lack of cooperation and limited information sharing incentives between these important security agencies such that almost every criminal investigation is now bogged down by petty squabbles as we saw in the Radio House in the 2011 blast fiasco for which both the Police and the SSS have different theories as to the motive of the suspect. It was also this petty rivalry that has led to a situation in which both the Police and the SSS are holding different sets of suspects in the homicide investigation into the death of Comrade Olaitan Oyerinde, the former Principal Secretary to the Edo State Governor in 2011 even when it was obvious that two separate killer squads with different objectives could not have murdered one person on the same date and at the same time (Adeniyi 2012).

Furthermore, the absence of collaboration has exposed the security agencies against the marauding insurgents and kidnappers. It has reached a stage where the kidnappers kidnapped the security personnel deployed to Katsina-Zamfara state border as a form of reinforcement of their weapons which showed that the undercover security agencies like DSS and DIA were not monitoring the movement of the criminals and share the intelligence information gathered to the forces on the ground in the battlefield. Similarly, the attack on the Multinational Joint Taskforce in Baga, Borno State and other military bases in Yobe and Borno States in December 2018 and January 2019 has further revealed the lack of coordination and communication between sister security agencies especially the Airforce which supposed to bring aerial assistance and reinforcement to the forces on the ground. Some many critical observations were raised regarding the operational mutual assistance and relationships among the security

agencies. Where were the DSS and DIA when the insurgents moved with their heavy equipment from their hideout to attack civilians and security formations? What were the Police, NSCDC, Customs and Immigration that patrol at the Nigerian borders? What stopped other security agencies from sharing intelligence information with the other? Is that all the security agencies in Nigeria do not know how to gather intelligence information? Or is it the lack of knowledge and availability of modern Information Communication Technology despite huge budgetary allocations to the security sector that hampered their operations and optimum performance. Analyzing the pathetic situation of security agencies in Nigeria. It was stated that what is peculiar to Nigerian security architecture is that the nation is in a situation where senior officials of the critical agencies constitutionally responsible for protecting the citizens would not only openly trade blames and damaging accusations, but would indeed seek to discredit one another in the media in a bid to score cheap popularity in the public. And because of the danger, this portends for our national security, there is a need for urgent intervention at the level of political leadership. It is the failure of the security and crime detection agencies which accounts for why the military that should channel its energy and resources towards protecting our territorial integrity as a nation has had to deploy troops in 34 of the 36 states of our country. (Only Ekiti and Jigawa states do not have one form of any standing quasi-military operations). That was why most ordinary Nigerians have more faith in our armed forces whenever they are in situations of distress, there is also a case of familiarity breeding contempt. The larger implication of this exposure is that it makes the military troops so deployed for these duties rather vulnerable, especially on the roads (Adeniyi 2012)

Therefore, mutual collaboration among the security agencies in the face of security challenges in places faced with insurgency and other security challenges had yielded positive results. For Instance, JIACG has succeeded in ensuring unity of purpose and goal, among the security agencies in the aftermath of the 9/11



terrorist attacks in the USA. In Canada, the interagency collaboration has received priority in the intelligence circle where its importance and significance were emphasized. It stated thus, regardless of agency differences, the security community must come together to create a cohesive model structured to defeat the collective threat. It is the common objective that must prevail (Lannan, 2004). Similarly, in developed countries which their internal security challenges are relatively less complex compared to Nigeria, there were appreciable and concerted efforts to improve interagency relationship and collaboration. But in Nigeria, there is no deliberate effort to design a security template for security agencies' operational hierarchy. Some of the advanced countries which made a serious effort in the US to enhance interagency synergy in the field operation include scenario-based planning, conflict assessment frameworks, multilayered assessment, and operational planning systems. The scenario-based planning involves generating a range of alternative future scenarios, which allows planners to assess the robustness of contingency plans by cross-testing the plan developed for one scenario against the full suite of scenarios. An example of interagency scenario-based strategic planning, was Project Horizon an effort to explore and improve interagency coordination using scenario-based, strategic planning, which included the participation of nine U.S. government departments and six U.S. government agencies or organization (US Department of State 2006). The collaborative effort in the US and other countries like Canada depicts how security agencies operate in collaboration with sister agencies in a hierarchical order fashioned out to achieve the desired goals.

Conclusion

Sporadic operations in the handling of internal security in Nigeria have polarized the security agencies in the country's intelligence community. The country has relied on unilineal strategy (use of force) on war against domestic terrorism and criminals has been ineffective due to the lack of coherent and articulated operations in tackling the security challenge that has become a hydra-

headed monster. The absence of a specific security agency to lead other agencies in intelligence gathering and sharing the same with the concerned intelligence community in the country has been observed as one of the major faults in the Nigerian security architecture. It could be attributed as one of the rationales behind the continuation of the war against the Boko Haram and the rising of cattle rustlers which have transformed into armed bandits and kidnappers in the Northwest. It has also paved way for the spread of the network and operations of cattle rustlers, armed bandits and cattle rustlers in along Niger Republic-Nigeria frontiers. The failure of Federal Government designates an agency to spearhead others in field operations and intelligence which breeds competition of superiority between Nigerian Police Force and the military, DIA and the DSSS whose consequences is the inability to decimate Boko Haram insurgents and the armed bandits, kidnappers and cattle rustlers. The relationship between security personnel deployed to counter the activities of cattle rustlers, kidnappers and armed bandits further exposed the absence cordial working relationship between the Army and Air Force, and Police and Nigerian Civil and Security Defense Corps (NSCDC). The parallel operations depicted lack of communication when the army and police were ambushed on several occasions in Katsina, Sokoto, Borno and Zamfara without any of the undercover security agencies intercepted or detected the plans of the attackers. During a gun duel with Islamists insurgents and armed bandits, security operatives in the field rarely receive reinforcement or assistance from their counterpart personnel which has in no small scale measure dampened the morale of the security personnel and attracted the attention of the public the level of incoherent and disarticulated operations in the security circle. In most cases, reinforcement always arrives after the attackers have fled the locus of the attack or crime.

Policy Implication

It could be deduced from the above discourse that the lack of unity of purpose and synergy among the security personnel has become apparent. It has hindered the success of various operations, which



were designed to restore social order amidst rising internal insecurity in Nigeria. Furthermore, operating at parallel has created an acrimonious relationship in the Nigerian intelligence community where squabble for superiority is the order of the day. Therefore, there is the need for the Federal Government of Nigeria to design a system or model where a specific agency would be designated to lead the war against insurgency and armed banditry in order to reduce frictions, parallel operations and rivalry among the security agencies. In different internal operations and activities to restore peace in the country, the Federal government should provide modern surveillance equipment that would enable intelligence gathering where the communication of the criminals and terrorists would be monitored, intercepted and shared by a designated agency and then share it to the members of intelligence circle. This would enable each agency to operate symbiotically to restore and maintain the security of life and property. In doing so, displaced communities that were disintegrated by the spate of violence would be returned to their respective villages, reintegrated and restart a post-violence life.

References

- Adeniyi, O. 2012. *Terrorism and Inter-Agency Coordination in Nigeria*. Daily Post, December 1.
- General Accounting Office (GAO). 2003. *Combating Terrorism Interagency Framework and Agency Programs to Address the Overseas Threat*. Washington: Report to USA Congressional Requesters, 1-274
- Innocent, E. O. 2018. *Inter-security agency rivalry as an impediment to national counter terrorism strategy* (NACTEST).” AfriHeritage Research Working Paper Series, 1-21.
- Lannan, T. 2004. Interagency coordination within the national security community: improving the response to terrorism. *Canadian Military Journal*, 1-8.4
- Steven, S. D. 2003. *Homeland security in the state of washington: a baseline report on the activities of state and local governments*. The Century Foundation, 26.
- U.S. Department of State 2006. *Project Horizon progress report*, U.S. Department of State, Washington, summer.
- Whittaker, A. G., Brown, Shannon A., Smith, F. C., & McKune, E.. 2011. *The National Security Policy Process: The National Security Council and Interagency System*. Washington: Research Report, August 15, 2011, Annual Update). Washington, D.C.: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, U.S. Department of Defense.