

Inter-Security Agency Rivalry as an Impediment to National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST)

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Abstract

The emergence of Boko Haram as a terrorist group in Nigeria considerably changed the country's security milieu. From a quiet religious group in the early 2000s, the group had risen in 2015 to become the deadliest terrorist group. As a security challenge, however, the Government's counter terrorism policy appears unsuccessful. This article reveals flaws in the policy directions, noting that Government's military-centric approach was not guided by any documented national strategy until the release of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2014 ostensibly coordinated by the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA). 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 intelligence hampering effort at effectively combating the Boko Haram insurgency in the country's North-east. This is an exploratory study aimed at probing the seeming perennial conflicts between and amongst the various security agencies in Nigeria with a view to creating a new path to inculcating tolerance for enhanced synergy towards optimal service delivery and national security. To this end, data were generated from both primary and secondary sources. The study concluded by recommending that there is the need for intensive collaboration amongst the relevant security agencies in Nigeria, as a tonic for achieving national security.

Key words: National security, counterterrorism and counterinsurgency (COIN), NACTEST, inter-agency rivalry & Boko Haram.

Introduction

The fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria recorded a major feat in 2014 when the Federal Government formally established a multi-layer communication structure for implementing National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST). The policy was reviewed in 2016. NACTEST is a service-wide collection of counter-terrorism efforts bordering on the deployment of carrot-and-stick approach in fighting terrorism. While the strategy is coordinated by Office of National Security Adviser (ONSA), several ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) now have clear-cut roles to play in its implementation.

According to the policy, each of the MDAs would now have a NACTEST desk, based on their core mandates to forestall threats, secure territories, identify, prepare and implement policy-directives. The first edition of the counter-terrorism strategy was developed and launched in 2014, with awareness being created. ONSA is, therefore, now in full swing to implement the strategy with the participation and buy-in of the relevant stakeholders represented here by MDAs.

Irrespective of this mandate, the security agencies in the polity appear to be unperturbed as they are engrossed in supremacy rivalry between and among themselves. They include the Department of State Service (DSS), the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Vehicle Inspection Office (VIO), Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC) among others.

It is therefore disturbing to observe the prevalence of insecurity and threat to peace in the full glare of the plethora of these security agencies. Assuming that they had collaborated and pooled manpower and logistics together, insecurity and other threats to life and property would have been drastically mitigated, if not effectively eradicated. Although, the Nigeria Police are the lead agency saddled with the statutory task of maintenance of internal law and order for the protection of life and property of the citizenry, other security agencies have been established to complement this daunting task.

However, it does appear that rather than being an asset, the security agencies in Nigeria have become liabilities. This stems from the fact that the assigned overlapping roles and duplicated duties invariably eventuate into pervasive acrimonious rivalries. More so, the citizenry are often massively confused over which among the array of security agencies to look up to in times of security exigency. As a result, it seems as little or nothing has been, or is being done to combat crime and tackle insurgency in the country. Eventually, the proliferated security agencies appears to have been exacerbating crime rate and insecurity in Nigeria as they dissipate both human and material resources in supremacy rivalry occasioned by jurisdictional conflicts, personality clashes and struggles for operational funding at the expense of other agencies.

In Nigeria, opinions are divided amongst analysts over the motivating force behind this disconcerting trend. As a result, there is no consensus about the factors that provide the fertile ground for inter-security agencies' scuffle in Nigeria. The prevalent view, however, is that it stems from a multiplicity of sources which aggregate to a complex dimension of no love lost amongst the security agencies.

The forum for the Military, Police and Paramilitary Public Relations Officers Forum (MILPOPPROF, 2007) narrowed the incessant conflicts between and among security agencies in Nigeria to communication gap. This, according to them, is prevalent among the junior officers who, out of ignorance about the complementary roles of other sister agencies, always plunge into unnecessary and avoidable violent clashes. Marizu (2007) attributes the phenomenon to the defense of regime survival. In other words, the conflict is a product of each agency's perception of the other as a threat to its relevance and survival. Thus, in a bid to uphold its ego and assert its relevance, the older security agency would unleash attacks on the personnel of the newer sister agency to crush it out of existence or at least, bully it into subservience.

A few studies have focused on the debilitating inter-agency rivalries. This perhaps explains why Alemika (2003), Omoigui (2006), and Odoma (2014), in their separate studies, lamented that the

inter-agency feuds in Nigeria had exposed the country and her citizenry to perpetual threats, nightmares, and insecurity. More so, the ugly trend has dwarfed the giant status of Nigeria as an insecure and unsafe haven for foreign investments. Unfortunately, no one interrogates the security policy implications of this trend and its links with the aggravation of insecurity and how they undermine the war against insurgency in Nigeria. This paper, therefore, attempts to ascertain how the NACTEST policy document promotes inter-agency rivalry with a view to exploring avenues to stemming the tide for effective collaboration and efficient operational agility.

Conceptualising Counter-Insurgency

Counter-insurgency, like other concepts in the Social Sciences, is very difficult to conceptualize. This is as a result of many related views associated with the term. Moore captures it this way:

As with insurgency, the term counter-insurgency suffers from imprecision and confusion. It has, in the past several years, been used interchangeably with stability operations, foreign internal defence, counter-guerrilla operations, and, most recently, countering irregular threats. In addition, it has been included as a subcomponent of small wars, unconventional warfare, irregular warfare, asymmetric warfare, low-intensity conflict, and military operations other than warfare. (2002, p. 13)

To avoid this kind of confusion, we posit that it can be conceptualized from two perspectives: descriptive and prescriptive. The former seeks to describe the term in a simplistic manner which is doctrinal definition, while the latter, apart from describing, offers better perspective by trying to understand the nature of counter-insurgency and the complexity of the conflict. In view of this, the simplest definition of the term – counterinsurgency – which is frequently referred to by the acronym COIN is just the opposite of insurgency; that is, integrating a combination of measures and strategies articulated by a legitimate government of a country to curb the activities of an insurgent group that has taken up arms against her – legitimate government. So, while insurgents, for instance, try to overthrow the recognized existing political authority in order to establish theirs, the counter-insurgent forces try to reinstate the existing political order as well as defeat and annihilate the usurping authority of the insurgents. This is achievable because the state is seen as the only body that holds legitimate monopoly of violence. These factors also emphasize the need for counter-insurgents to act and uphold law and order, something that technically limits their potential action in the fight against insurgencies. On the other hand, insurgents lack these features.

The Joint Publication 3 – 24 Counter-insurgency operations, the US Army-Marine Corps Counter-insurgency Field Manual (FM 3-24) and its modified version defined counter-insurgency as comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances. The core grievances have been articulated by scholars such as Moore (n.d) as few identifiable and repairable issues, usually related to modernization, globalisation, poverty, or political in aptitude. In the United States, in particular, lack of democracy and poor economic development are seen as key risk factors for insurgency. Thomas Barnett talks of the destabilizing effects of states and regions unable to faucet into globalisation and its economic and political benefits (Barnett, 2004). Others, such as Huntington (1996), cite the violent disruptiveness of competing cultures, embodied in religious and ethno-nationalism

and exemplified by Islamist radicalism and al Qaeda. Still others focus on repression, terrorism, crime and corruption, and discrimination, actions that incite popular unrest and feed insurgency. Although all these explanations provide useful insights into the causes, they fall short of explaining the underlying dynamics that cause insurgencies to erupt and then sustain them (Moore, 2002). As Petraeus and Amos (2006) note in the revised edition of the document:

COIN is primarily political and incorporates a wide range of activities, of which security is only one. [For them], effective counter-insurgency integrates and synchronizes political, security, legal, economic, development [sic], and psychological activities to create a holistic approach aimed at weakening the insurgents while bolstering the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the population. (US Government, 2012, p. 1)

In order to integrate the issues raised above, the prescriptive definition becomes necessary. The current Department of Defense definition of counter-insurgency reads as follows: "Those military, paramilitary, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency" (Joint Publication, 2005 cited in Moore, n.d, p. 14).

The solution this definition offers is that it emphasises the need to take a more comprehensive approach which encompasses not only ongoing, essential security-based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive measures which directly address the drivers of violent extremism that have given rise to the emergence of these new and more virulent groups. For these reasons, the following definition of counter-insurgency is offered. Counter-insurgency is an integrated set of political, economic, social, and security measures intended to end and prevent the recurrence of armed violence, create and maintain stable political, economic, and social structures, and resolve the underlying causes of an insurgency in order to establish and sustain the conditions necessary for lasting stability (Moore, n. d.).

This definition acknowledges the causes and dynamics of insurgency as well as the three-dimensional complexity of dealing with them and places military and security operations firmly within the wider context of the conflict. Perhaps most importantly, it also establishes the end-state of successful counterinsurgency. In this sense, it is a prescriptive definition. Understanding counter-insurgency must begin with comprehending not only its components, but [also] its ultimate objective (Moore, 2002). It will serve as our operational definition in this paper.

Methods of the Study and Data Analysis

This study is an exploratory study. What this implies is that the recourse to the secondary data is inevitable. Obasi (1999) submits that secondary data refers to any documented material (whether hand written, typed, printed or recorded audio and video) that was already in existence, produced for some other purposes than the benefits of the researcher. Reliable and expressive documents are capable of bringing the significant information, which cannot be obtained through other methods. The issue is that where reliable documents exist, generalizations appear more reliable than those emanating from the limited data of other instruments. Finally, another justification is that this method will assist us to collect data stored in files, government archives, libraries, bookshelves/shops, the internet and other documents. This study, therefore, utilized secondary data from the Federal Government and its agencies including NEMA, and international agencies

reports such as AI, IOM, HRW, ICG, among others. In addition, textbooks, journal articles, newspapers and magazines served as sources of data elicitation for the study.

Data for the study was analysed through the use of analytic techniques derived from qualitative research, primarily thematic analysis (Manning and Luyt, 2011). Data analysis involves breaking up data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships (Mouton, 2005). Themes that emerged from the data were identified.

Bodgan and Biklen (1982, p. 145) define qualitative data analysis as “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and what to tell others”. Simon (2011) points that qualitative researchers tend to use inductive analysis of data, which means that critical themes emerge out of the data. Simon (2011) further points that qualitative analysis requires some creativity, and the challenges to place raw data into logical and meaningful categories; it also entails to examining them in holistic fashion; and to finding a way to communicate this interpretation to others.

Dynamics of Boko Haram Strategies, Tactics and Nigeria’s Pre-NACTEST Responses

It is worthy to note that Boko Haram had adopted different strategic approaches that reflected the particular demands and requirements of the conditions in which the insurgents found themselves. According to Eme (2015), between 2003 and 2004, Boko Haram fought security forces on three occasions. On 31st December 2003, roughly 200 of her members clashed with police in Geidam and Kanamma, Yobe State. Some accounts posit that the police provoked them while others maintain that the group’s sophisticated organization implied plans for violence. Whichever was the case the group raided two police stations, killed a policeman and seized some AK-47 rifles. They subsequently attacked other three police stations in the state capital, Damaturu, and confronted other police units near the Borno State capital, Maiduguri. After four days of fighting in January 2004, security forces routed them, killing at least eighteen and arresting dozens (International Crisis Group interview, prominent Islamic preacher in Kaduna and former director of an international Islamic organization, June 2009). The group known now as Boko Haram before 2009 was known as the Taliban and operated primarily in Borno State.

As with the Taliban, the Boko Haram never identified itself as such. It earned that label due to its vocal rejection of “Western education”. It was also commonly known as Yusufiyah. It used various names, indicating its members were strict followers of Islamic texts (broadly equivalent to “Salafist”). Tracts found in Bauchi in 2010, and seen by International Crisis Group use the name Ahllissunnah Wal lidda’awati Jihad (Salafist group for propagation and jihad). Its leadership, particularly Mohammed Yusuf, showed it was a direct continuation of the Taliban (International Crisis Group, 2010).

Boko Haram did not begin its campaign by indiscriminately attacking civilians. Between 2010 and 2013, most of the group’s targets were state security forces or those cooperating officials and individuals. Yet, the group became steadily more brutal over time. As Eme and Ugwu (2016) observe, over three quarters of the incidents involving Boko Haram between 2014 and 2015 are aimed at civilians. Though the group’s massacres, suicide bombings, kidnappings, and executions may have succeeded in making international headlines, they also helped to turn the local population against it, enhancing their eagerness of the latter to cooperate with state security

forces. For instance, in 2012, as attacks by Boko Haram intensified, former President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency, which was subsequently extended repeatedly, in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States. The state of emergency gave overly broad emergency powers to the security forces. Former President Goodluck Jonathan set up a Joint Task Force which included personnel from the Nigerian Army, Police Force and other security forces to lead the operations against Boko Haram.

De Montclos (2014) sums up the situation by positing that this action of the Nigerian security forces was a significant determinant in the trajectory of the Boko Haram crisis. He observes that the repression of the sect in July 2009 was followed by repeated massacres, extra-judicial killings, and arrests without trial, actions that widened the gap between communities and the security forces.

The death of Mohammed Yusuf was only a temporary setback for the sect as it became more devastating under a new leader, Abubakar Shekau. The sect conducted a series of attacks across northern Nigeria, particularly in the North East Zone. This is because Boko Haram which initially took the form of sectarian religious violence has metamorphosed into terrorist activities with international linkages making it difficult for the Nigerian government to annihilate (Gilbert, 2014).

The sect under Shekau graduated from armed assault and the use of roadside improvised explosive devices to vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and suicide bombings. The exponential increases in the conflict's overall levels of violence can also be traced to 2013, when a government offensive pushed the group out of its main base of operations in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State and spiritual home of the insurgency. Boko Haram fighters moved to remote communities and camps, such as their headquarters in Sambisa forest, Borno State. From these bases, Boko Haram launched almost daily attacks against civilian targets. In July 2014, Boko Haram's strategy changed as it retained control over captured towns and villages, collecting "taxes" from residents, and limiting their movements. At its greatest extent, territory under Boko Haram control extended across most parts of Borno, northern Adamawa and into eastern Yobe States. The army took full control of operations against Boko Haram in August 2013.

Inspired by the Islamic State's dramatic seizures of territory in Iraq and Syria, Boko Haram began its own campaign of territorial conquest. The sect managed to seize about eighteen of the local government areas in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, as well as bordering territories in Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. As a result of this, the territorial integrity of Nigeria was under siege. The size of the area held by the terrorists as at January 2015 equalled the size of Belgium (Comolli, 2015).

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Fed up with Boko Haram's brutality, civilians began to involve themselves in local policing. They came together to form local militias known collectively as the Civilian Joint Task Force (JTF) in mid-2013. These armed civilian vigilante groups are playing a significant role in the

evolving strategic balance in the northeast. The civilian JTF has, in the past, been active in the fight against Boko Haram's militancy in the area; yet, its operations subsided as the military intensified its counter-insurgency campaign. However, as it became increasingly apparent that the military efforts are oftentimes ineffective in containing insurgency, the civilian JTF revamped its operations.

The Civilian JTF's successful operations confirm local perceptions that such a non-official force is necessary to counteract the deficiencies of the military. While it has proven effective in combating the militants, growing vigilante operations as some analysts posit may challenge the official state security apparatus running the counter-insurgency operations in the region, undermining the military's operational hierarchy and thus potentially further destabilizing the region.

Similarly, the sect's use of the media (particularly the Internet) for propaganda purposes became more pronounced. It equally graduated from attacks on relatively low profile to high profile targets such as the Nigeria Police headquarters and the United Nations building in Abuja. The complexity and level of sophistication which the sect attained challenged the capacity of security agencies and other institutions involved in the Nigerian government's counter-terrorism effort, particularly as coordination and the needed synergy among them proved inadequate.

Ambushes, improvised explosive devices, kidnappings, apparently random bombings, and selective shootings, for example, prove extremely difficult to combat and can be morally and physically debilitating to the victims. When directed at military or security forces, such tactics incite security forces to overreact, wear away morale, provide weapons and equipment that may be left behind or captured, and keep the counter-insurgency effort off-balance. This was what happened in 2015 when Amnesty International reported thus:

In the course of security operations against Boko Haram in north-east Nigeria, Nigerian military forces have extra judicially executed more than 1,200 people; they have arbitrarily arrested at least 20,000 people, mostly young men and boys; and have committed countless acts of torture. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Nigerians have become victims of enforced disappearance; and at least 7,000 people have died in military detention as a result of starvation, extreme overcrowding and denial of medical assistance. (Amnesty International, 2015, p. 6)

Furthermore, Boko Haram's activities have now transcended Nigeria's borders, particularly in terms of training, financing, recruitment, kidnapping, and arms acquisition, thereby raising concerns over border management and Nigeria's relations with her immediate neighbours. Equally significant is the sect's links with international terrorist organizations like the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Al Shabaab, and lately its pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to the extent of renaming itself as the Islamic State' West African Province (ISWAP).

The situation was made worse with the sect's embrace of the ISIS tactics of beheadings of victims. It abducted women and schoolgirls and engaged females (including girls as young as 10 years) for suicide terrorism (Akbar, 2015).

Boko Haram’s massive expansion between 2014 and 2015 prompted a re-invigorated state effort to contain the insurgency in line with the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which calls for a holistic inclusive approach to counter terrorism. With their own countries threatened, the armies of Chad, Cameroon, and Niger began cooperating with the Nigerian government to prevent it from so easily fleeing across porous borders. The result is the decision to deploy the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), headquarters in N’Djamena, Chad, on July 30th, 2015 to pep up the fight against Boko Haram. This is the same force that Jonathan’s administration could not get off the ground in six years. With increased professionalism and better supplied, better armed, and equipped with better intelligence, the counter-insurgency campaign is conducting more targeted operations against insurgent strongholds, which have led to fewer civilian casualties and if government reports are to be believed, the deaths of almost five thousand militants in the past year and a half alone. The total is more than the government managed to kill in the previous four years of counter-insurgency operations (Fund for Peace, 2016). The table below captures the number of deaths occasioned by Boko Haram insurgency in 2015 alone.

Table 1: Human Cost of Boko Haram in 2015

| Month | Number of Persons killed |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| January | 2107 |
| February | 179 |
| March | 80 |
| April | 0 |
| May | 0 |
| June | 61 |
| July | 194 |
| August | 299 |
| September | 106 |
| October | 0 |
| November | 22 |
| December | 72 |
| Total | 3,120 |

Source: Onu, U. D., Idike, A. N., Eme, O. I. & Obioji, J. N. (2017). Boko Haram and human security challenges in Nigeria: The way forward. *Specialty Journal of Politics and Law* 2(1), 12 – 28

President Buhari equally made moves to seek help from outside, such as visiting West African neighbours, the Group 07 in Germany, the African Union during the summit in South Africa and he also visited the United States on invitation of former President Barack Obama. All were aimed at restoring confidence in the country’s leadership with allies which had frayed under his predecessor. The government had partnered with foreign forces to “Bring Back our Girls” (Eme, 2015).

Nigeria might have “technically won the war” against Islamist Boko Haram militants as posited by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015. He told the BBC that the militant group could no

longer mount “conventional attacks” against security forces or population centers. It had been reduced to fighting with improvised explosives devices (IED) and remained a force only in its heartland of Borno State. President Buhari had given the army until the end of 2015 to defeat the group. For instance, according to Global Peace Index (2017) report, for the second consecutive year deaths from terrorism declined. Over the two years there was a decrease of 22% compared to the peak of terror activity in 2014. Terrorism deaths have fallen significantly in Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria. In the latter, deaths attributed to Boko Haram in Nigeria fell by 80% as the group faced military pressure.

Nonetheless, critics of the government argue that the presidency has exaggerated the scale of its success against the militants, and that each time the army claims to have wiped out Boko Haram, the militants have quietly rebuilt.

Gaps in Nigeria’s Counter-insurgency Framework

Eradicating insurgency in any polity is a wishful thinking just like evaluating the success or failure of the counter-insurgency strategies. That is why Clark (2003, p. 5) contends thus, “Defeating terrorism is more difficult and far-reaching than we have assumed... We may be advancing the ball down the field at will, running over our opponent’s defenses, but winning the game is another matter altogether.”

More importantly to this study, drawing from Clark’s assertion, is the question of appropriate and workable strategies for countering the threat of terrorism. In the Campbell Systematic Review, it is *observed* that “there is an almost complete absence of evaluation research on counter-terrorism strategies” (Lum, Kennedy & Sherley, 2006, p. 3). It is added that for the few studies available, some strategies do not appear to be effective as they “either didn’t work or sometimes increased the likelihood of terrorism and terrorism-related harm” (Lum, Kennedy & Sherley, 2006, p. 3). This seems to reflect the Nigerian situation, as there is no existing evidence of a comprehensive review of Nigeria’s responses or strategies to counter terrorism either by policy makers or researchers (Eji, 2016).

In his keynote address on the policy framework and national action plan for preventing and countering violent extremism in Nigeria, Buratai (2016) alludes to this fact when keyed into Buhari’s inaugural speech of 2015. The Presidency had posited that his government intends, after defeating Boko Haram, to commission a sociological study to determine the origin, remote and immediate causes of the movement, its sponsors, and the international connections to ensure that measures are taken to prevent a recurrence of this evil. This seems to reflect the Nigerian situation, as there is no existing evidence of a comprehensive review of Nigeria’s policy to counter-terrorism either by policy makers or researchers.

The UN counter-terrorist policy was domesticated by Nigeria as her policy framework for counter-terrorism. It is domesticated as NACTEST, which was endorsed for implementation by the former President, Goodluck Jonathan, on 30th April 2014, and the second edition released on 23 August 2016 under President Buhari’s administration. It contains such aspects as the nature of the terrorist threat that Nigeria faces, the response guidelines and mechanisms, and the roles of stakeholders, as well as institutions involved in countering terrorism. The NACTEST is organized into five work streams, each with its key objectives. The streams are *forestall, secure,*

identify, prepare, and implement. Forestall aims to stop people from becoming terrorists; secure strengthens protection capacity against terrorists, and identify aims at pre-emption through detection and early warning. The prepare work stream has the objective of mitigating the impact of terrorist attacks, while implement outlines the framework for the mobilization of a coordinated cross-governmental counter-terrorism efforts.

The legal backings to fight terrorism are the Terrorism Prevention 2011 (Amended 2013), anti-money laundering laws and a robust counter-terrorism effort. It is with these in mind that the Terrorism Prevention Act 2011 was signed into law. It was improved upon by the legislature in the Terrorism Prevention (Amendment) Act 2013. What we know and have learnt from other countries is that terrorism compels a nation to reform its laws and processes. Section 1(A) of the Terrorism Prevention Act 2011 puts the coordinating role in matters relating to terrorism on the ONSA, and further provides the Office with the mandate to:

Ensure the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy, build capacity for the effective discharge of the functions of relevant security, intelligence, law enforcement and military services under the act and do such other acts or things that are necessary for the effective performance of the function of the relevant security and enforcement agencies under the act. (FGN, 2013, p. 5)

In order to achieve this mandate, the ONSA established a Counter Terrorism Centre (CTC) which houses the Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch (JTAB) and the Behavioural Analysis and Strategic Communication Unit. The establishment of these structures enabled ONSA to coordinate intelligence sharing and cooperation amongst agencies.

The office of the NSA is empowered to co-ordinate and to ensure that all necessary actions are taken to counter the threat of terrorism. A Counter-terrorism Department is established with a Director appointed to coordinate the Counter Terrorism Centre which houses the Nigeria's soft approach to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) which seeks to counter the ideology of violence, stop the flow of youths towards violent extremism, de-radicalize those who are to return to the community, rehabilitate victims of terror attacks, restore community cohesion, build trust and community resilience at the grassroots. NACTEST is a service-wide assortment of counter-terrorism effort bordering on the deployment of carrot and stick approach in fighting terrorism. While the strategy is coordinated by ONSA, several ministries, departments and agencies, MDAs, now have clear-cut roles to play in its implementation. Each of the MDAs would now have a NACTEST desk, based on their core mandates to forestall threats, secure territories, identify, prepare and implement policy-directives (NACEST, 2014, pp. 1-2).

What was not disclosed at the launching is the fact that NACTEST was a programme conceived and introduced in 2014 by the former National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki, to counter terrorism under soft-approach programme. While unveiling NACTEST in March 2014, the then NSA, Sambo Dasuki, said that the strategy was developed by his office in collaboration with international partners, experienced academics and selected non-state actors. He further said that the strategy was developed taking into account the root causes of terrorism, adding that the approach was to understand the problem in order to apply appropriate solutions (NACEST, 2014).

Dasuki added that NACTEST focuses on key points including increasing the capacity of government institutions and relevant agencies in handling extremists (NACEST, 2014). The strategy was developed to offer a key blueprint for law enforcement agencies to combat terrorists. During an interaction with the media, Dasuki had said: “What we have learnt is that there is not one particular path that leads to terrorism; rather, there are many often complicated paths that led to terrorism. According to him, NACTEST seeks to prevent attacks before such attacks happen, by preventing people from becoming terrorists in the first place” (Shuaib, 2016, p. 4).

The soft approach to counter terrorism developed a CVE programme that is vertical and involves the three tiers of government – federal, state and local. The programme is also horizontal, involving civil societies, academics, traditional, religious and community leaders. The NACTEST programme utilizes existing structures within and outside government to deliver targeted programmes and activities that further the overall objective of stemming the tide of radicalism. The soft approach programmes provide the country with a framework that identifies the roles and responsibilities of every segment of the society.

The revised document is a further consolidation of counter-terrorism efforts. It should also ensure that the measures being adopted on counter-terrorism processes conform to dictates of the law and adhere strictly to the rules of engagement and human rights norms as was canvassed in the past. The current office of the National Security Adviser must be commended for not only initiating new direction in intelligence gathering and coordinating counter-insurgency campaigns, but also for revising the content of NACTEST to ensure its effective deployment.

Thus, the security agencies are integral to the regime survival as no government can function appropriately in an atmosphere of disarray and insecurity. As a result of the imperative of security, most modern states, especially the complex modern national-states such as Nigeria, take penchant for the establishment of security agencies. This presumably is in line with the dictum that, “it takes two to tango”, and that there is strength in plenty. By implication, there is no single security agency that can maintain peace and security in isolation, but through collaborated efforts and synergy with other security agencies, peace and security can be attained. In other words, the security agencies are the critical components of every government; they are saddled with the herculean task of maintaining law and order, as well as protecting lives and properties of the citizenry. Meanwhile, states function through various selected agencies assigned with respective tasks for the good life of the citizenry. Thus, different agencies perform different tasks such as education, poverty alleviation, environmental sanitation, water supply, health, housing etc. Some of these agencies have overlapping roles and duplicated duties. As a result, they are often engulfed in jurisdiction conflict and animosity. However, inter-agency squabble is more prominent amongst the security agencies (Odoma, 2014). These are agencies saddled with the maintenance of peace and security, as well as the protection of life and property in every political community.

Different analysts and scholars have ascribed different descriptions to the security agencies. For instance, the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2008, p. 12) describes the security agencies simply as “law enforcement officers and officers of the state”. This implies that they are delegated by the state to enforce the law. In line with this description, Reid (1997, p. 24) sees the

security agencies as “indispensable formal agency of social control”. In his own contribution, Albert (nd) describes the security agencies by identification as “armed forces, paramilitary organizations and private security organisations”. Based on this description, the security agencies are not restricted to the officers of the state, or to Reid’s “formal agency of control”. According to him, security agencies are broader both in existence and in performance. Thus, even the private security organizations such as the vigilante services in most states of Nigeria as well as the private security guards fall into the categorization of security agencies.

Since security is ubiquitous, and its maintenance a herculean task it becomes expedient for the relevant security agencies to cooperate and collaborate to achieve the desired goals. Any wonder that relevant statutes of Federal Republic of Nigeria, such as the Police Act (2007), provides for synergy amongst the security agencies, and particularly between the Nigeria Police and the military. For instance, section 4 of the Police Act assigns the police with enormous responsibilities which include, but not limited to the performance of “such military duties within and outside the country, as may be required of them by, or under the authority of this or any other act (Asemota, 1993; Odita, 1993). Similarly, the military is saddled with the additional responsibility of assistance to civil authority to restore order and maintain internal security as may be prescribed by the National Assembly. Even the United Nations provides this role under Military Assistance to Civil Authority (MACA).

In spite of the above, security agencies in Nigeria have consistently been intolerant to one another and frequently enmeshed in acrimonious altercations and conflicts. The 50th independence anniversary bomb blast of 2010 at Eagle Square, however, changed the prototype. Since the challenge was novel, it created new awareness and triggered some dimensions of response that required the cooperation and collaboration of all the security agencies, the military and paramilitary institutions.

As observed by Adeniyi (2012):

While the exigency for inter-agency synergy came to the fore, such sudden imperative only helped to expose years of rivalry between and among these agencies. It also brought to fore the abysmal lack of capacity to deal with this new threat. Therefore, it came as no surprise that in the aftermath of the tragedy, the police and the SSS appeared to have worked at cross purposes in the immediate investigations and arrests of suspects. Unfortunately, up till today, that remains the situation. For instance, in the course of security services investigations, while the police considered the 1st October 2010 bombing an infringement on public order and therefore its prime responsibility, the SSS saw it as a national security issue involving the disruption of a celebration presided over by the President and attended by senior government officials and visiting heads of government.

This 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 when the Nigerian Army carried out an operation that led to the arrest of the late Boko Haram leader, Muhammed Yusuf; he was handed over to the police in Maiduguri, apparently for further investigation and prosecution. But shortly after, we all know what happened to Yusuf. His killing became a focus of both local and

international media with the military forced to come out severally to deny having a hand in his death. Such development erodes the kind of mutual trust that is needed to enhance inter-agency cooperation.

Among the gaps outlined in table 2 below, and which are crucial to this paper, are first, the ambiguity, and second lack of understanding of the Nigerian government's overall strategic approach. A defined strategic approach to counter-terrorism is a pre-condition that determines the approach to be followed in fighting insurgency starting from defining who a terrorist is. The NACTEST is evidently not clear on the Nigerian government's strategic approach. Evidences on the ground indicate a hard traditional military approach to fighting terrorism. For instance, there were occasions when we were told that Nigeria was negotiating with Boko Haram to stop its agitations and to release the Chibok girls. Also, there were occasions when conflict of interest arose between the National Security Adviser and the Service Chiefs over who is to coordinate security issues and funding of counter-insurgency.

Another policy gap identified in the study revealed that envy over perceived privileged job specification breeds grounds for inter-agency feud in Nigeria's war against terror. According to Odoma (2014), one factor that has given impetus to the escalating inter-agency animosity in Nigeria is envy by other security agencies against their sister agencies over perceived exclusive privileged job specification. Just recently, the DSS came out, publicly, to label the Police and other anti-graft agencies, without discrimination, as impostors. For effect, it warned the public that not all operators in black uniforms belong to the Service. Let us assume that not all in black uniforms are of the DSS, does that make them impostors? They will qualify to be described as such if they claim that they are of the Service when they are not. Black colour is not preserved exclusively for the DSS. It must be noted that the Police started using the black colour for their uniforms even before the DSS was carved out of it, first as National Security Organization (NSO) (Leadership Editorial, 2017).

From the NACTEST policy document, paucity of information about the rank disposition and organizational structure of the respective security agencies has been found out as one of the major sources of inter-agency squabbles in Nigeria's war against terror. This observation has history that pre-dates this administration. According to the Communiqué released by the Military, Police and Paramilitary Public Relations Officers Forum (2007), the clashes amongst the various security agencies in the country are "largely due to the dearth of information" available to the personnel of these formal organs of social control about their counterparts. This, according to the Forum, has made mostly the junior personnel of these security services wallow in ignorance about their complementary roles in enhancing national security. Most instructively, the communication gap equally denies the junior personnel of these security agencies the awareness about the areas of mutual cooperation and exclusivity of roles. Ekong (2007), therefore, blames the clashes on the absence of regular interaction amongst, mostly, the lower ranks of these formal agencies of social control in Nigeria.

As a result of the dominance of these forces in propelling inter-agency wranglings amongst the various security agencies in Nigeria, the management of the myriad security challenges and sundry crimes becomes virtually elusive as these agencies that are saddled with this

responsibility are embroiled in a feud and acrimonious rancor that give impetus to persistent breach of the peace and escalating threats to national security as identified in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Gaps in Nigeria’s National Counter Terrorism Strategy

| Serial | Observed Gaps | Implications of Gap |
|---------------|--|---|
| 1 | The Terrorist Acts (2011 & 2013) lack a national definition of terrorism. | Poses a challenge to policy implementation as terrorist acts could be subjected to varying interpretations. |
| 2 | Placed its driving organ, the Counter Terrorism Center (CTC), under the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA). | This could inhibit the effective implementation of the strategy because ONSA does not statutorily have executive functions but advisory roles (as an adviser to the president). |
| 3 | Tends to lay sole emphasis on the Boko Haram sect. | Its provisions/implementation may not readily apply to other categories of terrorism or terrorist-related threats that could arise. |
| 4 | Government’s disposition to negotiation with terrorists not stated. | Raises doubts and suspicion on policy trust of government. |
| 5 | Silent on the protection of Nigeria’s interests abroad and on responses to state-sponsored terrorism. | Necessary contingency plans may not be developed in this regard. |
| 6 | Discrepancies and lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities assigned to the ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) for implementation. | Erodes the command directive or authority NACTEST ought to command as a policy instrument. |
| 7 | No designated lead ministry or agency. | Makes the coordination of MDAs involved in counter-terrorism difficult. |
| 8 | Ambiguity on government’s overall strategic approach. | Could result in disconnect between policy makers and implementation agencies/the public. |

Source: Eji, E. (2016). Rethinking Nigeria’s counter-terrorism strategy. *The International Journal of Intelligence, Security, and Public Affairs* 18(3), 198-220.

Expectedly, these gaps have unavoidably resulted in the resilience and devastating consequences of inter-security agency rivalry. For instance, apart from the deterioration of insecurity and threats to peace, inter-security agency conflict has often resulted in the loss of lives and properties which extends to the civil populace. In the end, everybody becomes a casualty of inter-security agency skirmishes in the polity. This perhaps explains why Alemika (2003), Omoigui (2006), and Odoma (2014), in their separate studies, lamented that the inter-agency feud in Nigeria had exposed the country and her citizenry to perpetual threats, nightmares, and insecurity. More so, the ugly trend has dwarfed the giant status of Nigeria, because she is now regarded as an insecure and unsafe haven for foreign investments. Despite these acknowledged and obvious consequences of inter-security agency clashes in Nigeria, security analysts tend to gloss over exploring sustainable pathway to eliminating these seeming endless quarrels amongst the security agencies in Nigeria. Nonetheless, there is no alternative to inter-agency harmony.

Therefore, it would amount to mere intellectual wishful thinking if scholarship is limited to mere diagnostic analysis without a catalytic prescription to the malaise which is the pivot of this paper.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Opinions are divided amongst analysts over the motivating force behind the disturbing inter-agency feud in Nigeria. As a result, there is no consensus about the factors that provide the luxuriance for inter-security agency wrangle in Nigeria. The prevalent view, however, is that it stems from a multiplicity of sources which aggregate to a complex dimension of no love lost amongst the security agencies. The escalating incidences of clashes amongst these security agencies in Nigeria pose the complex question of who guards the guards. This stems from the fact that while the security agencies paradoxically abdicate their statutory responsibility of securing life and property to dissipating their professional skills and material resources in prosecuting debilitating acrimonious rancor, the society that depends so much on them is invariably exposed to the vagaries of security threats. Findings attribute this opprobrious trend to superiority complexes, inflammatory utterances, and jurisdictional conflicts amongst the various security agencies in the country. Apart from the resultant catastrophic loss of lives and properties, the trend fuels threats to national security and ultimately undermines all the extant mitigating measures.

From the foregoing analysis, it is incontrovertible that inter-security agencies' disagreement is an ill wind that blows no society any good. Central to this feud is the policy gaps identified in the NACTEST document by the study. Against this backdrop, it is therefore recommended that with the revised NACTEST document under the current NSA boss, Babagana Monguno, there should be a sustained monitoring and evaluation framework that would track the implementation of each stream of the NACTEST programme in order to avoid clashes of responsibilities. In view of this, a review of NACTEST document is necessary. The focus of such a review ought to be that of addressing the gaps in it as we identified in table 2. For instance, the definition of terrorism as contained in Anti-terrorism Act (2011 and 2013) should be added to the NACTEST document in order to avoid multiplicity of definitions of terrorism and related concepts such as electoral violence, farmers-Fulani-herdsmen conflicts and ethnic agitations.

In addition, for the reason that fighting terrorism requires intervention across multiple security agencies, effective inter-agency coordination is not only desirable, it is essential to meeting timelines as well as reducing wasteful overlap and unnecessary duplication of roles. However, such efforts could only be enhanced by acknowledging the role played by the various units in achieving a widespread target. To achieve this, the office of the NSA where NACTEST is domiciled should be placed properly for effective supervision. The Presidency should supervise it. The demand, therefore, is for the office of NSA which sits atop the security architecture to provide leadership and its duties streamlined in order not to conflict with the duties of mainstream ministries such as defense and interior. All said and done, inter-agency coordination can only be effective in an environment where:

- i) each agency's responsibilities are clarified; and
- ii) modalities for the sharing of information are provided and the operational guidelines that would ensure the realization of the stated objectives are clearly defined.

Since differences in institutional perspectives and individual assumptions can muddle a clear understanding of the challenge, a common sense of possession and commitment is needed, and that can only be a product of an institutional arrangement which is still very much lacking in our polity. Put differently, there is need for effective coordination of counter-terrorism institutions.

In this era of fighting unseen enemy, it is important that all the stakeholders improve their knowledge of who the targets are, and that they come to terms with the reality that this is more of an intellectual than physical work. It is a war in which we need the academics, the clerics, the communities and the media among others to interface. The point here is that fighting and defeating security threats like Boko Haram entails more than an application of force. Stabilizing the crisis environment, assisting traumatized populations, and rebuilding societies and institutions are essential to achieving this objective.

In addition, the leadership of the various security agencies should open a fluid channel of communication through joint training programs and symposia, inter-security agency sports tournaments, social gatherings as well as joint security operations. These efforts will improve the capacity building of our security agencies and institutions.

Finally, seeking international cooperation and assistance and promoting good governance will help to address the drivers of terrorism.

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