

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

Regional Cooperation and the War on Terror: Augmenting Military Operation in North-eastern Nigeria

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Abstract:

Terrorism has been a serious threat and challenge to security in different parts of the world but the involvement of different sovereign states and regional organizations in tackling this menace is a fairly recent development. This paper established the essentiality of regional cooperation in North-eastern Nigeria, the relevance of a collective security force in deterring terrorism and how new subtle approaches such as youth empowerment programmes, mutual extradition treaty, a defined international legislation and laws on Small Arms and Light Weapons can fill the gap and be employed to augment traditional military tactics in stopping the Internationalization and a displacement spill-over of perennial 'Boko Haram' into neighbouring West Africa states and beyond. The paper emphasized that terrorism in the Northeast of Nigeria cannot be countered via traditional, domestic military actions only. But with a combination of other feasible variables which will prevent the indoctrination and radicalization of individuals into joining the terrorist cell.

Keywords: Regional cooperation, collective security, youth empowerment, extradition, international legislation, small arms and light weapons

1. Introduction

The grouping of states by a common bond of policy is seen as existence of regionalism. It is a form of arrangement where two or more states maintain close ties and cooperate with each other on different issues from economic, trade and security matters (Nye, 1968). This kind of alliance helps state battle against a common threat to their survival and growth by the formulation of an effective and collective uniform approach; bed-rocked on pacts and treaties between them.

1.1. Regional Cooperation and the War on Terror

Regionalism is clearly spelt out in the charter of the United Nations. Chapter VIII is fully devoted to "Regional Arrangements" *Article 33* of the Charter recognizes the role of regionalism and *Article 52* authorizes the regional arrangements or agencies to deal with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action. The only condition is that their activities must be within the scope of purposes and principles of the United Nations to make it credible and validated (Joshi, 2012).

Regional cooperation serves as transmission belt between the global and national level; and they help states form alliance to battle a common threat to their survival and growth, by channelling down objectives approaches and measures agreed upon at the global level and also taking pioneering, region-specific initiatives that complements and build upon global objectives. Various Regional blocs in Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the middle East/Islamic world, have become involved in collaborative security ventures typically with the UN, but also with other regional and cross regional institutions (Hettne, 2004).

In Europe for example, given its unprecedented degree of integration and significant resources, Europe has the most developed regional architecture, with the Council of Europe (CoE), the European Union (EU), and the OSCE each playing important yet sometimes overlapping roles in pursuing a regionally coordinated response to terrorism and each promoting close cooperation with the United Nations. Also, in the Middle East and North Africa, the organization of League of Arab States have played leading roles in promoting counterterrorism cooperation among states in the region, its counterterrorism efforts centres on a number of initiatives, most prominently the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism, which promotes "mutual cooperation in the suppression of terrorist offences" (Eric, et al. 2008).

Regional Cooperation has a homogenous nature, membership and clearly defined common interest; they contribute immensely in countering and defeating terrorism and in developing a uniform regional or sub-regional counterterrorism regime to allow for the necessary judicial and law enforcement cooperation between and among countries to help ensure that suspected terrorists are prosecuted or extradited. In the contemporary world, many international and regional bodies are daily realising the essentiality of regional cooperation and are joining forces to combat what apparently have been perceived has a common threat to civilization and humanity.

1.2. The Concept of Collective Security

Since the terrorist attacks in September 2001, many countries have begun to look at international security in a much broader context than was the case during the bi-polar Cold War conflict. The events of 9/11 served as a wake-up call to the world that international terrorism poses grave dangers to civilian and military populations alike. These attacks were distinct in several ways. First, the deaths associated with the 9/11 attacks were unprecedented: the human casualties were equal to the number of deaths from international terrorism since the 1980s to the end of 2000. Second, 9/11 showed that everyday objects (jetliners) could be turned into deadly weapons with catastrophic consequences. Third, the event showed that the goals of today's terrorists were to seek maximum damages and induce widespread panic. Thus, to struggle global terrorism efforts is required in global scale (Erdag, 2013).

Today, terror campaign is a global, regional and local phenomenon. Hence effective counter-terrorism work requires an approach which incorporates all these perspectives. Contemporary terror networks typically have no affiliation to sovereign nations and operate across national boundaries and in areas that often lay outside the Nation States sphere of influence; hence, to respond to this threat, counterterrorism efforts must cut across the cultural, ethnic, regional, and religious divides that terrorists seek to exploit. A collective security approach must remain at the cutting edge of our efforts to capture and defeat terrorist groups.

According to Joshi, he stressed that "Collective Security, is a sort of social contract among states which goal is stability and peace. It is a security arrangement, regional or global in which each state in the system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all and agrees to join in a collective response to threats to or breaches of peace. It seeks to address a wide range of probable threats" (Joshi, 2012b). Collective security rests on the notion of one for all and all for one. While states retain considerable autonomy over the conduct of their foreign policy, participation in a collective security organization entails a commitment by each member to join a coalition to confront any aggressor with opposing preponderant strength. Moreover, in this age where asymmetric warfare has become common, a collective action involving more than one state is paramount to curb threats and destruction terror acts pose to civilization itself.

Furthermore, in the millennium fight against terrorism one thing has appeared to be true, that the world is a global village tied together by strings or webs of cooperation, dependence and interdependence amongst states. For these reasons most issues if not all, confronting humanity like international terrorism has not been seen as a single state's own trouble but a concern of all and have likewise made many countries to become conscious of the need to increase internal and international security and has dictated that countries cooperate to counter it (Johnston, 1993). Hence, since September 2001, isolationism has retreated and the U.S. government supported by public opinion and congress has pursued a highly international agenda to combat terrorism through a collective approach.

More so, due to the incessant internationalization of terrorists groups, leaders across the world have been calling for a collective approach in combating terrorism. Some of them include Tony Blair a former British Prime Minister, who stressed that the west and the east should put aside their differences and join efforts to combat terrorism. He maintained that tackling "a radicalized and politicized view of Islam" should be at the top of the global political agenda; if the war on extremists and their ideologies can be won. Similarly, in the same vein, a former Nigeria President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, has proposed that Leaders should see "an act of terror against one nation as an act of terror against all" he advised that Head of States and Head of Government's reactions to terror should be spontaneous, concerted, broad-based and integrated"(Kingsley, 2014).

Finally, since terrorists defies courts, police, intelligence agencies, national governments, and the United Nations alike; it has evolved into a transnational phenomenon, detached from specific states and territories. Hence, international intelligence cooperation plus bilateral intelligence sharing has become indispensable to detect an increasingly mobile and global threat that could easily escape the control of any two states. As a result, cooperation between States and other inter-governmental organization must occur through a multilateral intelligence network to thwart terror acts. At the present time, there are a multitude of international conventions or protocols which prohibit acts of terrorism (Carberry, 1999a).

These agreements have been developed and are maintained under the auspices of the UN, and they stand as the expressed will of the world community; who see terror acts as a collective security concern confronting the international community and not just a single states trouble but a global challenge to all sovereign states. Many policy makers, strategic intelligence analysts and academics scholars have stressed that terrorism can only be countered through the instrumentality of collective security cooperation among sovereign states and allies. Because terrorism, like HIV or AIDS has crossed national borders and has emerged as a transnational problem, (Joshi, 2012d). Consequently affecting humankind; regardless of national boundaries. Thence, counter-terrorism mechanics must deliberately cut across cultural, ethnic, regional, and religious lines which terrorists seek to exploit via a strong bond of cooperation.

2. Augmenting Traditional Military Operation in North-eastern Nigeria

The Terrorism in North Eastern Nigeria, takes place within the boundaries of the 19th century Bornu Empire which cover North-eastern Nigeria, the Northern tip of Cameroon, South Western Chad and North-eastern Niger (Ely, 2014). The group known as Boko Haram has since 2009, targeted Nigeria's religious and ethnic fault lines in an apparently escalating bid to hurt the nation's stability with a spate of increasing coordinated and sophisticated attacks against religious centres, government buildings, villages/towns, security agencies and International organizations among others; and although military operation has been thorough in the region there is the need to employ other subtle variables such as youth empowerment programmes, mutual extradition treaty, a defined international legislation and laws on small arms and light weapons to holistically put the sect and their operations in the dustbin of history.

2.1. Youth Empowerment Programme

In the contemporary world, there is an increasing realization that the involvement of youths is the key to achieving growth and development; therefore there is a need to discuss how development actors can engage with youth to translate priority areas into development programmes and healthy policies (Akintayo, 2013). Youths are perceived as the foundation of any society. Their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation; on their energies, she builds her vitality and purpose. And because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured.

Today, a number of studies have identified lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training programmes, unemployment, inadequate recreational facilities, lack of quality education, and so on as the reasons for incessant involvement of youths into criminal and unlawful acts. More so, Elegbeleye, identified three other factors that causes youth restiveness; they are peer motivated excitement, Jingoistic pursuit of patriotic ideas and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation (Elegbeleye, 2005).

According to Valrus and Fletcher, they opined that youth empowerment is an attitudinal, structural and cultural process whereby young people gain ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people including adults (Valrus & Fletcher, 2006). The purpose is that youth are the major determiners of peace and stability of a nation (Ozohu-Sulaiman, 2006). And if they are disorderly and unstable the growth of society will be in danger. Also, when youth are dormant without much to do there is generally a feeling of frustration, loneliness, anger, and emasculation and that drives them to publicly loaf and while a time with ventures that are unprofitable and harmful to safety and peace. Thus, empowerment of young people is very essential.

Furthermore, since development encompasses positive change in people's psychomotor and socio-economic conditions; whereas its sustainability depends on political education and popular participation (Balogun, 2008). A robust socio economic development programme which includes: good health, good housing, high literacy ratio, full employment and unrestricted freedom is needed to serve as a catalyst to boost many young Nigerians who lack basic opportunity to acquire formal education; good health, employment and other life supporting skills which will help them become less frustrated and discourage them from displaying a high level of apathy which can generally constitute a great deal of concern to public security and safety (Atere *et al*, 2004a). Moreover, when people have adequate economic empowerment skills which helps them shape their lives in the right direction, terrorist groups will find it difficult brainwashing, recruiting and radicalizing them to find resonance and solace in their ideologies and beliefs.

2.2. Mutual Extradition Treaty

The global problems and challenges of terrorism facing the international community transcend States' capabilities to deal with them effectively as autonomous entities. Hence, cooperation among states is needed to effectively combat trans-border terrorism. Today, extradition treaties play a particularly important role in the cooperative efforts to combat trans-border terrorism (Petersen, 1992). Because cooperation among states is a core tool to neutralize the scourge of terrorist and their campaign across the border of one single state and to also facilitate the easy transportation of a known or suspected terrorist from one territory to another for prosecution or punishment.

More so, contemporary terror campaign is not restricted to any one region, State, or jurisdiction. The force of its impact goes beyond any one designated area and humankind feels its repercussions. Hence, the increased mobility of terrorists to cross borders, acquire resources in numerous States, and access advanced communication systems, like the Internet, creates a global setting. Moreover, the victims of terrorist attacks are not necessarily even members of the same state. For instance, when a terrorist targets an airplane, the passengers might be citizens of numerous countries. Therefore, the organizational structure of modern terrorist groups is diffuse and the task of detecting and apprehending terrorists, is not the atomized effort of any one particular State, nor is any one State assigned the task of singlehandedly curtailing this global threat (Carberry, 1999b). Thus cooperation through extradition is vital to weaken terrorists and their trans-border activities.

Furthermore, extradition treaties are based on the principle of mutuality; with every offender extradited to a requesting state, the requested state's chances grow that when the roles are reversed one hand will wash the other. Similarly, extradition treaties function significantly in the suppression of terrorism but do not receive a great deal of publicity as antiterrorist measures. They play a more covert role within the grand scheme of international cooperation in combatting terrorism because their advantages, is that extradition treaties signal that the contracting states accept each other's sovereign right to prosecute offenders accused of crimes committed against the requesting state or in its territory. Plus: the refusal to grant refuge to an alleged offender wanted by other signatories of the extradition treaty.

Finally also, extradition treaties further international cooperation in reducing the number of safe harbour states to which a terrorist can retreat after an attack. Because if terrorists, by simply leaving the state with jurisdiction over their crimes, can escape prosecution or move across borders to cultivate connections with terrorist groups in other countries, terrorist violence will be neither prevented nor penalized (Petersen, 1992b). Thus, extradition treaties ensure that it eliminate a number of alternatives for terrorists who have completed or aborted attacks and who which to use the territory of a different state as safe haven to regroup and carry out more attacks. It also ensures that terrorist offenders are accountable for their acts either in the country where the terrorist act occurred or in the country that arrested them.

2.3. *Defined International Legislation*

The international law against terrorism consists of United Nations treaties, Security Council and The General Assembly resolutions which are all intended to prevent, suppress and eradicate all forms of terrorism. It also includes various regional treaties from the African Union, the European Union and the Organisation of American States. These documents affirm the threat of terrorism to democracy and security and condemn all acts of terrorism.

However, though the international community has made great strides towards developing legislation to specifically address terrorism, the phenomenon itself remains a vague, undefined issue. Therefore, until the international community solidifies its stance and acts when its guidelines have been broken, illegal and violent behaviour will continue and victim-states will also continue to search for an appropriate and effective response to counter it. Today, there is no one comprehensive treaty or convention on terrorism that exist. Although there are thirteen conventions and multiple resolutions passed by the United Nations, which tackles some specific aspects of terrorism, the international community has failed to draft a unified international treaty in solidarity against terrorism.

This impasse regarding the definition of terrorism reflects an absence of a unified position on terrorism and the means to combat it. Moreover, the historical significance of international law and a review of who it applies to and when it applies shows not only that international law needs to evolve to meet the challenges posed by terrorism but that in order to best address terrorism, international law needs to be clarified to avoid the overlap between humanitarian law and human rights law which hinder victim-state responses or the overall response by the international community to terrorism (Heidi, 2006).

Also, enforcing international legislation on terrorism has been a serious challenge because of independent state policies. Today, despite all the conventions, protocols, treaties and agreements on defeating terror campaigns, there are still not enough states who are parties to agreements related to countering terrorism; and this gives rise to problems when terrorist acts involve states which are not parties to the treaties. For example, the hijackers of a Kuwaiti aircraft escaped prosecution because Algeria was not a party to the Hijacking Convention and any extradition treaty, and therefore "could not be compelled to 'extradite or punish' the offenders. Consequently, most terrorism conventions do not have an enforcement mechanism to secure the compliance of the parties to the treaties. For example, in the *1982 Achille Lauro Case*, non-complying states were not punished. Egypt did not comply with the 1979 Hostage Convention and Italy did not carry out its obligations under the 1983 bilateral extradition treaty with the USA (Ong, 2002). Thus, the failure of a state to live up to their obligations, such as refusing to hand over a known terrorist can have colossal consequences on the war on terror and sovereign states need to advocate for more compliance in obeying International treaties.

2.4. *Small Arms and Light Weapons*

On August 2, 2016 the United Nations raised an alarm over the illicit proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Nigeria with over 350 million or 70 per cent of an estimated 500 million of such weapons said to be circulating in West Africa to be in Nigeria.

The director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), Olatokunbo Ige, gave this statistics at the National Consultation on Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) in Abuja, which was organized by the Agency and Presidential Committee on Smalls Arms and Light Weapons (PRESCOM).

The illicit proliferation of SALW has had a dramatic impact on peace and security in Africa which threatens not only the existence of the state, but also the livelihoods of millions of people across the continent. Nigeria is one of the countries that are experiencing some of the most devastating effects of the proliferation of SALW as a result of spill over effect of on-going crises in Libya, Mali and some Al-Qaeda factions in the Maghreb of North Africa.

Throughout history, the control of weapons of violence has always been an issue to governments and international bodies, whether for reasons of safeguarding the territorial integrity of the state or to assure the security of citizens or both (Atinga, 2008 p.1). However, the massive quantities of small arms in circulation have been primary contributors to a world-wide epidemic of ethnic, sectarian, and criminal violence (Klare, 1999 p.19). Although weapons themselves do not cause conflicts, their proliferation and easy availability exacerbate the degree of violence by increasing the lethality and duration of hostilities, and encouraging violent rather than peaceful resolutions of differences. Arms and ammunitions are a trigger that fuels regional and local conflicts, or help create balances of power that head off conflict. They provide repressive regimes with the tools they need to suppress democratic movements and commit human rights abuses and they can be used to facilitate terrorist acts too (William, 2008: p.346).

Today, the illicit proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons ranks among today's most pressing security threats. Tens of thousands of people are killed or wounded each year in conflicts that are fought primarily with these weapons and in crime-ridden areas outside of conflict zones. They are also the weapons of choice for many terrorist groups including perennial 'Boko Haram'. Moreover, it is on record that 'Boko Haram' does in fact benefit from widespread availability of arms smuggled into Nigeria from Libya and elsewhere, as many of the weapons that have been seized in raids on the group are reported to be of foreign origin. For instance, the Kaduna State police command says it has recovered hundreds of weapons from "suspected terrorists", and that "Most of the weapons, especially the AK-47s, were smuggled into the country, as they are different from the ones used by the Nigerian security personnel" (This Day September 9, 2012). 'Boko Haram' has been engaging in transnational transactions in its weapon acquisition.

Also, Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in the 21st century pose a major problem for countries that are easily susceptible to internal conflict; for example, Nigeria who because of her sheer size, diversity in religion and culture makes it an easy prey for terrorists to exploit and cause mayhem. The influx of small arms through the porous and mostly unguarded borders of most West African states give non-state actors like the 'Boko Haram' terrorist groups the ability to initiate and carry out continuing armed violence, through the use of these particular weapons. Also, the transfer of small arms and light weapons to insurgent groups in West Africa has become a contentious issue for governments and their leaders in the region. Not only is West Africa home to a magnitude

of weak states, but the borders of many countries in the region are susceptible to arms smuggling and trafficking. Furthermore, ethnic divisions and cultural differences plague the region causing greater instability and making it prone to internal conflict. Hence, Arms transfers to insurgent groups in West Africa have continued to impact and influence the outcome of many conflict and terror campaign in the region. In Nigeria, small for instance, Arms proliferation and misuse has not only harmed innocent civilians and caused thousands of casualties, but they have also fuelled the fire for conflict to continue in a country that is already ravaged by insurgent groups (Emilie, 2013).

2.5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the finding of the study shows that a robust youth empowerment programme can neutralise the vices that spun the seeds of terrorism in North-eastern Nigeria which are bed rocked on socio-economic hardships and conditions driven by massive unemployment, rising poverty, corruption and low Human development index among other debilitating developmental crisis. The research also shows that it will be imperative for the government to provide access to life supporting opportunities such as education, housing, healthcare and electricity to deter individuals from finding resonance in terrorist ideologies.

Furthermore, the research also indicates that cooperation on strategic intelligence, good extradition policy, collective border security and Arms limitation and control is pivotal to the neutralization and consequent defeat of terrorism in North Eastern Nigeria. This is because the North East of Nigeria, shares a long and porous border with four West Africa States which are Mali, Chad, Cameroon and Niger. Thus, improving better strategic intelligence will stop a displacement spill-over of the crisis and contain the influx of Small Weapons and Ammunitions into the Nigeria territory; because in the global millennium fight against terrorism one thing has appeared to be true, that the world is a global village tied together by strings or web of cooperation, dependence and interdependence amongst states and that most issues confronting humanity like international terrorism has not been seen as a singles states own trouble but a concern for all and have likewise made many countries to be conscious of the need to increase internal and international security via cooperation.

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