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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE DIMENSIONS OF THE COLLABORATION OF STATE SECURITY PERSONNEL WITH TERRORISTS AND THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines the causes and consequences of collaboration between state security and terrorists in Nigeria. The prolonged war against terrorists in Nigeria has been allegedly partly attributed to collaboration between state security and terrorists groups. The paper uses secondary data sourced from online to support the points raised, because online source provides current data on the insecurity situation in Nigeria. Supply of military uniforms, ammunitions and livestock rustling were identified as the dimensions of state security personnel and terrorists collaboration in Nigeria. Corruption, indiscipline, and poor personnel welfare were identified among others as the causes of collaboration between state security and terrorist groups in Nigeria, with the consequences including a prolonged war against terrorists; a decrease in military equipment; an increase in security funding; and an increase in the number of out-of-school children, among others.

Key words: State Security, Collaboration, Terrorists, Boko haram, Bandits, School security, Nigeria

Introduction

Boko Haram and Bandit terrorists have been terrorizing the northern Nigeria. According to Walker (2012) Boko Haram is an Islamic sect that believes politics in northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims. It wants to wage a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, to create a “pure” Islamic state ruled by sharia law. Walker further posits that since 2009, Boko Haram has sought revenge against politicians, police, and Islamic authorities for their brutal suppression. The group has been adaptable, evolving tactics and targets under charismatic leadership. In 2011, it bombed the United Nations compound in Abuja, killing 23; attacked Government Girls Secondary School Chibok, Borno State and abducted 276 female students and other many more attacks thereafter. The terrorists’ activities have led to destruction and closure of schools. On the other hand, Anyadike (2023) posits that Bandits in Nigeria are armed rural gangs that rustle

cattle, kidnap, loot, and extort villages. With over 100 gangs in the northwest, they are profit-driven and originated from the growing demand for meat in the cities. He further advanced that the gangs have become more militarized, targeting rural villages with AK-47-wielding men. The Bandits have also kidnapped many school children in the northwestern Nigeria which have led to closure of schools for some times.

There are reported allegations of some corrupt state securities officials possibly collaborating with terrorists to sabotage the effort of Nigerian government in the fight against terrorists, probably for personal gain at the detriment of the innocent citizens who were mostly the victims of the terrorists' attacks in Nigeria. Moreover, the small number of officials at the border posts in some cases were accused of conniving and facilitating the smuggling of arms into the country. Haruna (2016) reported that the Nigerian Army has announced the arrest of some Army officers, policemen and some civilians allegedly collaborating with Boko haram in cattle rustling. Haruna further stated that General Irabor, was reported to have said "those who have been aiding and abetting Boko Haram by way of encouraging cattle rustling ; so far we have arrested 30 of them, many are civilians and we have among them four soldiers and two policemen. They are being investigated and the outcome of the investigation will be brought to your notice" (para, 4). Nigeria's efforts to tackle insecurity seem to have long been hampered by corruption, often at the highest levels. Several people have been allegedly charged with corruption in the war against Boko Haram, including a former national security advisor and a former air force chief (Barnett, 2021).

Against this background of rampant cases of alleged collaboration between state security personnel and terrorists, this paper examines the possible causes and consequences of alleged collaboration between state security forces personnel and terrorists and its implications for the future of school security in Nigeria.

The concept of collaboration is etymologically derived from the Latin word "collaborare" which means "to work together." It has its root word from the verb, collaborate, which means "to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor." In other words, collaboration means "to cooperate with or willingly assist an enemy of one's country and especially an occupying force" (Merriam-Webster, n.d., para. 1). It can also be referred to as "a process in which entities share information, resources, and responsibilities to jointly plan, implement, and evaluate a programme of activities to achieve a common goal" (Camarihna-Matos, & Afsarmanesh, 2008. P. 311). The act of assisting terrorists in any way either with information or weapons by the state security personnel is regarded as collaboration.

The State Security Forces Personnel refers to all the government security forces personnel, which comprises the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Air Force, Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Customs Service, and all other security personnel who are directly or indirectly involved in the fight against terrorists in Nigeria.

Terrorism is defined in the Code of Federal Regulations as "the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" (28 C.F.R. Section 0.85 as cited in Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2022). A terrorist is a person involved in the use of force and violence against persons or property to coerce the government or the citizens in order to achieve certain objectives.

The concept of security has been defined by Morgan (2021) as "the protection of individuals, organizations, and properties against external threats that are likely to cause harm" (Mubita, 2021, p. 78). Therefore, school security can be defined as the protection of all educational stakeholders (school head, teachers, students, parents, etc.) within the school premises and the school plant generally (buildings, facilities, materials, equipment, grounds, etc.) against any kind of external threats that are likely to cause harm. Security threats commonly found in schools are fighting and assault,

bullying, victimization, sexual attacks, theft or robbery, classroom disorder, use of weapons, and violent crime (Goodwin University, 2022). The school security threats in Nigeria have taken a new dimension with the increasing rate of terrorist activities including the kidnapping of students and staff, bombing of school buildings, shootings, suicide bombings, etc.

Theoretical Framework

The study's foundation was the Maslow hierarchy of needs theory, which was cited in Manga (2019). Security, according to the theory, is a basic requirement for a person's survival and self-actualization. Given Nigeria's escalating insecurity, it is clear that there is a significant disparity between Maslow's ideas, which emphasize the need for security, and the level of school security provided in schools. Despite the rapid growth of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, and other security concerns, schools in Nigeria have taken little to no concrete action to improve internal security and supplement the efforts of the military, police, and other state security services. The alleged collaboration of some corrupt state security personnel in Nigeria exacerbated the situation. As a result, this study speculates about the alleged collaboration and prescribes its implications for the future of school security in Nigeria.

Kurtus (2022) posits that the Security Theory stated that security is required to protect a person, property or organization from attack. One needs to know the types of possible attacks, to be aware of the motivations for attacks and your vulnerabilities. The security or defense against such a threat is to make it difficult to attack, make a pre-emptive attack on a source of threat, be aware of the types of potential assaults, their causes, and how you relate to them. This theory is relevant to this paper because the alleged collaboration of state security personnel with terrorists has exposed schools to insecurity which would require school administrators to be aware of the types of possible attacks on schools, motivation behind the attacks and schools relationship with such motivations.

The Dimensions of Collaboration between State Security Personnel and Terrorists in Nigeria

The state security personnel and terrorists in Nigeria collaborate in the following dimensions:

Supply of Military Uniforms: According to some allegations, some state security officers assist terrorists by giving them security personnel uniforms. This view was supported by Owolabi (2021) who reported that the bandits terrorising the northwestern states in Nigeria were allegedly often seen in military uniforms. Owolabi, further reported that the Zamfara State deputy chief of staff to Governor Bello Matawalle, Bashir Maru at a press conference stated that following community driven-intelligence, the military has arrested an army officer and his girlfriend who were engaged in helping the bandits with military uniforms and ammunitions in active connivance with other saboteurs.

Supply of Ammunitions: Some state security personnel are accused of assisting terrorists by providing them with ammo and weapons. In support of this view was a report by Associated Press (2016) that the Nigerian military claims that some of its personnel are allegedly selling Boko Haram weaponry and ammunition. Similarly, the Nigerian army prosecuted 16 officials and troops for alleged crimes linked to the fight, including ammunition theft. Maishanu (2021) reported that Bandits have also allegedly bought weapons from police officers and soldiers, either directly or through black market middlemen, as Boko Haram has done in the past.

Cattle Rustling: The state security personnel were accused of collaborating with the terrorists in cattle rustling. Haruna (2016) concurred that Nigerian Army arrests some army personnel, police, civilians involved in livestock rustling with Boko Haram. The cattle rustling is one of the ways the terrorists finance their activities.

Causes of Collaboration between State Security Personnel and Terrorists in Nigeria

Poor salary of state security personnel could be one of the possible causes of collaboration between some corrupt security personnel and terrorists. Inadequate staff salaries and allowances may lead to discontent and sabotage through collaboration between security personnel and terrorists. [Solomon](#) (2017) reported, corruption may result from soldiers not being paid or because there's an

ingrained culture of impunity in the system. Nigerian soldiers who allegedly fired at a general officer (GOC) in the north-east of the country were angry over poor welfare and lack of adequate equipment and weapons despite huge sums earmarked for military campaign (Shimawua, 2020).

Corruption could be a possible key bottleneck to the fight against Boko Haram and bandits in Nigeria. Shimawua (2020) asserted that several other factors have combined to undermine the ability of government to combat insurgency but prominent among them is corruption. Public officials are alleged to engage in corruption freely.

There are alleged rampant cases of indiscipline among the military which may result to insubordinations. Joel (2021); **Marama (2021)** reported that approximately 158 erring troops fighting on the frontlines of Operation Hadin Kai are anticipated to face charges. 28 officers, including a Brigadier-General, and 130 troops are among the military officials who will be charged. Shimawua (2020) reported that Nigerian soldiers who fired at a general officer (GOC) in the north-east of the country were angry over poor welfare and lack of adequate equipment and weapons despite huge sums earmarked for military campaign. All these cases are enough evidence that there are indiscipline cases incidence among the military personnel which may encourage to collaboration with the terrorists.

One other possible explanation for state security personnel collaborating with terrorists could be poor leadership leading to dissatisfaction among military personnel, which could lead to sabotage by collaborating with terrorists. One of the possible causes of state security personnel collaborating with terrorists is that some personnel are greedy to the point where they believe they deserve more than what they are paid and thus collaborate with terrorists to make more money at the expense of the state. Micheal (2022) suspected that Nigerian security agents could be in collaboration with the kidnappers to take ransom from people for personal gains.

Consequences of Collaboration between State Security personnel and Terrorists in Nigeria

One of the repercussions of security collaboration with terrorists is that the country's struggle against terrorists would be prolonged. This is because a lack of desire and sabotage by state security might result in a significant defeat in the country's war against terrorism. Shimawua (2020) asserted that there is sufficient evidence to assume that the military battle in Nigeria against the Boko Haram insurgency has lasted so long due to corruption.

It was alleged that bad elements among the state security are stealing and selling weapons and ammunitions to Boko Haram which would reduce the military equipment available for the fight against terrorists in Nigeria. This could result to a decrease in military equipment available for the fight against terrorists. The Associated Press (2016), reports that the Nigerian military claims that some of its personnel are selling weaponry and ammunition to Boko Haram terrorists.

A persistent war against terrorists in Nigeria would necessitate additional finance, which would necessitate an increase in security funding in the nation. This would lead to increase in security funding. Shimawua (2020), discovered in a research that from the start of the insurgency, the Federal Government of Nigeria has boosted defense votes from N100 billion in 2010 to N927 billion in 2011, to N1 trillion in 2012, 2013, and 2014. Olufemi (2015), also reports that the federal security sector has received N4.62 trillion in funding over the last five years. Year after year, the security sector consumes the lion's share of the country's budget.

Collaboration could lead to loss of confidence in state security personnel in Nigeria. As a result of so many alleged incidents of state security and terrorists collaborating, the general public may lose faith in state security's competence and commitment to fight terrorism. [Ojoye \(2018\)](#) reports that the Aku Uka of Wukari, Dr Shekarau Masa Ibi (Kuvyo II), said Nigerians had lost confidence in the military. The monarch made the comment when he received the Army Probe Panel investigating the allegations of military collusion with armed bandits.

Collaboration between state security and terrorists might harm Nigeria's military's image in the international community. This could tarnish the image of Nigerian military in the international community. [According to Solomon \(2017\), in reaction to the charges against the Nigerian army, the army spokesperson stated that the allegations may ruin the reputation of the Nigerian army, demoralize troops, and dissuade the international community from assisting the country in the fight against terrorists.](#)

The Boko haram crisis has resulted to an increase in the number of school children dropping out of schools in the country. Esiebo, (2013) reported that in “North-eastern Nigeria, 2.8 million children are in need of education-in-emergencies support in ... Borno, Yobe, Adamawa. In these States, at least 802 schools remain closed and 497 classrooms are listed as destroyed, with another 1,392 damaged” (para. 5). This damage has sent many school children out of school and increased the number of out of school children in the country in which according to Esiebo, over 10.5 million children in Nigeria are not in school, despite the fact that basic education is technically free and compulsory.

Collaboration between military and terrorists groups could possibly lead to prolonged terrorist activities which would require increase in military funding. The increased military funding could likely decrease funding of education because government has to choose between education and security. And of course security is paramount. An increase in the theft of military equipment by terrorists will require the replacement of those stolen equipment, thereby requiring increasing the funding of the military. This will reduce the funding of education thereby leading poor quality of education in Nigeria. The percentage of budget allocated to education decreased sharply with the activity of the Boko haram between 2009 and 2010 from 7.249 to 4.826 respectively (Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin [2018] in Odigwe and Owan, 2019). They further reported that the percentage budgetary allocation of Nigerian government from 2014, 2015 and 2016 has decreased continuously from 9.936, 7.735 to 6.534 respectively. The collaboration will further exacerbate the decreasing funding of education because the stolen weapons via collaboration need to be replaced which will require increasing military budget at the detriment of other sectors, such as education.

The activities of Boko haram in the north eastern Nigeria has led to destruction of many school buildings and facilities. According to Ogunode, Godwin and Unoaku (2021) many school facilities like classrooms, administrative block, ICT facilities, tables, chairs and desks have been destroyed by insurgencies and Boko Haram members in the Northern part of the country. Boko Haram has destroyed nearly 1,000 schools and displaced 19,000 teachers (Human Right Watch [2016] as cited in Ogunode, Godwin and Unoaku, 2021).

Figure 1: a picture of destroyed classroom in Nigeria



Source: Esiebo, (2013, para. 5).

The cost of education in Nigeria would increase as a result of the prolonged terrorists' activities in the country especially their act of destroying school facilities which will need to be reconstructed. Garba, et al. (2022) posit that government and school administrators have to spend a lot of money for reconstruction and modernization of the destroyed school facilities. **Challenges of school security management**

The following are some of the challenges facing school security management:

- Poor welfare of state security personnel and lack of guarantee that allowances are paid directly to frontline soldiers.
- Lack of strict commitment on the part of government with regard to the fight against corruption which would help in reducing corruption among the state security personnel.
- Inadequate strategies by government troops in identifying and prosecuting the culprits among state security personnel who are sabotaging the effort of government in the fight against terrorists.
- Poor orientation of school administrators on how to identify fake state security personnel at all times.
- Alleged use of inferior weapons by military personnel in the battle field as compared to the ones use by terrorists.

Future of School Security in Nigeria

Given the current security situation in the country, as well as the collaboration between some bad elements of the state security personnel and terrorist groups in Nigeria, school managers and administrators should exercise extreme caution when relating and handling sensitive security information about their schools in their dealings with all categories of security personnel. School managers should not rely on state security to provide security for their schools rather; they should improvise by engaging all educational stakeholders in the security of their schools. Musa and Manga (2023, p. 9) submitted the following scenario as the future of school security in Nigeria:

- a. In Nigeria, there is a strong link between national security and school security. Schools, as a microcosm of society within a larger society, are inextricably linked to the country's security challenges. When the country is at peace, schools will be at peace as well, and vice versa.
- b. Frequent terrorist attacks on schools may reduce daily school attendance, leading to an increase in the rate of dropout in Nigeria..
- c. Terrorist attacks on schools in Nigeria have created fear in teachers and students, potentially leading to poor concentration on teaching and learning in schools.
- d. Attacks on schools have led to destruction of school facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, offices, hostels, staff quarters, and so forth.
- e. School insecurity has indeed led to loss of teaching manpower. Teachers have been killed during attacks which have reduced the manpower availability in the education sector.
- f. Students and parents now avoid boarding schools due to frequent attacks on schools, especially boarding schools. This would result to systematic destruction of boarding school system in Nigeria.

Suggestions

In view of the above, the following suggestions were put forward:

1. The government should improve the welfare of state security forces while also guaranteeing that allowances are paid directly to frontline soldiers.
2. The fight against corruption should be intensified by all governments in Nigeria to reduce corruption among the state security personnel.
3. Government should identify and prosecute the culprits among state security personnel who are sabotaging the effort of government in the fight against terrorists.

4. Government troops should train school administrators to have a tactic of identifying fake state security personnel at all times. This will help school administrators to differentiate between state security personnel and terrorists who are using state security uniforms.
5. Government should try to supply the military personnel with weapons that are superior to those of terrorists.

Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the effort of the military leaders in the fight against indiscipline among its personnel, there are still a few of cases of collaboration between state security and terrorists groups in Nigeria. Corruption, indiscipline and poor personnel's welfare are among the causes of collaboration between state security and terrorists group in Nigeria and the consequences include: prolonged war against terrorists; decrease in military equipment; increase in security funding; increase in the number of out of school children; among others.

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