



National Interests and Regional Security in the Lake Chad: Assessing the Multinational Joint Task Force

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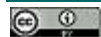
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Abstract

This article assessed security architecture for counter-insurgency against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB). The paper diagnosed the impact of conflicting national interests of contributing nations on the performance of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) as a regional security architecture in the LCB. Some scholars and analysts cite corruption, historical contradictions among LCB members, poor funding, and complex nature of the insurgency, as factors responsible for failure of counter-insurgency operations in the LCB. Others contend that resource geopolitics, linguistic differences, and hegemonic politics have impacted negatively on the capacity of the MNJTF to decimate terrorists in the region. This is a qualitative study that draws from the Fund for Peace, International Crisis Group (ICG), Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), and research literature dealing with national interest and military alliances, while using content analysis to argue that conflicts in national interests, more than any other factor, have hampered the collaborative efforts of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and weakened the capacity of the MNJTF to engage in robust counterinsurgency against Boko Haram in the LCB.

Keywords: National interest; Multinational joint task force; Boko haram; Lake chad.



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1. Introduction

The escalation and intractability of the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Region (LCR)¹ created what (Buzan, 2008) refers to as “regional security complex”, the interconnectedness of complex security concerns among states that compels a form of collaboration or alliances. There are several perspectives to the insurgency and counterinsurgency in the LCR. Global religious extremism, inadequate funding, and historical contradictions among countries of the LCR form the dominant theses in the literature on the factors that impact negatively on MNJTF as a regional security architecture, while the nexus between national interest and regional security, has remained largely unexplored. National interests and military strategies have played significant roles in the choices of military alliances by states against a common adversary. This has constituted a vital research focus in the discipline of international relations (Tar and Adejoh, 2017).

Extant literature has established an inextricable link between states’ strategic national interest and choice of participation in regional military alliances or collaboration (Buzan and Weaver, 2003; Pratama, 2013; Schimdt, 2018; Tar and Mustapha, 2017; Wesley, 2017). Military strategies are only tools for the protection of the strategic interests of participating nations. In complex security situations, marked by historical contradictions, there could be layers of conflicting national interests that tend to blur the common goal of collective security actors. This paper, therefore, examines how conflicting national interests and different military strategies have negatively impacted on regional security in the Lake Chad Region. The paper adopts a qualitative research analysis of recorded events. Sources of data are published documents by the Fund for Peace, International Crisis Group (ICG), Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), and research literature dealing with national interest and military alliances. This paper is structured the paper into four sections. The first section provides the complex security environments in the Lake Chad Basin countries. The second reviews theoretical literature on the nexus between national interest and military alliances. The third section deals with the evolution of regional security architecture in the Lake Chad Basin. The fourth section provides specific examples of how national interests have affected the performance of the Multinational Joint Task Force. The paper concludes that regional security

¹ We use Lake Chad Region to refer to the countries affected by the Boko Haram insurgency. They are Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria.

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architectures in weak states, such as the MNJTF are often undermined by national interests and military strategies of participating countries whenever the stakes are high.

2. Lake Chad Basin as Regional Security Complex

Regional security complex (RSC) refers to a number of nations affected by one or more security externalities that emerge from a different geographic area. In such situations, the security environments of the countries involved are intertwined such that threats within any one country have major impacts on others (Lake, 2009). The countries of the Lake Chad Basin exemplify a region characterized by violent extremism that results in a complex environment of resource scarcity and state fragility. It is widely acknowledged that no single factor can explain the emergence and escalation of Islamic extremist activities in the LCR (Cole *et al.*, 2017; Mahmood and Ani, 2018a; Nagaran *et al.*, 2018; Omenma, 2019). Complex environments are characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability thus rendering causal relationships very unclear and response actions difficult (Cole *et al.*, 2017; Mahmood and Ani, 2018b; Mohr, 2015; Robert and Gregg, 2016). The complex environments of the Lake Chad Countries (LCCs) underlie the current regional security in the region. These are identified as water resource scarcity, state fragility, violent conflicts, and population displacement (Cole *et al.*, 2017). Located in Central Africa, the Lake Chad basin covers an area of 2,397,424 km², which is 8% of the African continent (Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2016). The Lake Chad traverses eight countries, occupying varying proportion of their territories. It is surrounded by trans-boundary basins that include the Nile basin to the east, the Congo basin to the south, the Niger basin to the west, and the Nubian basin to the north (Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2016). The four states that have direct border with the lake include Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. The economies of the riparian communities, marked by livestock rearing, and fishing, are significantly affected by the hydrography of the Lake Chad. Greater percentage of the population in the region, estimated at 37 million by the UNEP-GIWA (2004), live in rural areas and draw their livelihood from the lake. Between 1963 and 2012, the Lake Chad has shrunk from 25,000km² to 4,516 km² with mere depth of 11mm due to the impact of climate change (Omenma, 2019).

The depletion of the Lake Chad set the stage for crisis in the region by leaving its inhabitants vulnerable to drought and desertification, costing many their individual water resource-based livelihood (Okpara *et al.*, 2015). As Young *et al.* (2012) would argue, overgrazing, downstream damming, climate change and excessive irrigation are factors that result in Lake Chad depletion and the attendant shortage of water on water-borne trade shipment which has largely disrupted the economies of already impoverished communities in the upstream and downstream. As Cole *et al.* (2017) would explain, such aridity added to the factors of food shortage and forced migration, with many of the population becoming incautious, lacking secure livelihood, and with little or no government support.

In addition to resource scarcity, the states in the LCB are characterized by governments that have no capacity or will to meet the basic needs of their people. The Fund for Peace Fragile State Index of 2019, places all the 4 countries of the region on red alert, ranking below 95/120 as shown in figure 1 below. This neglect has only succeeded in further alienating the people from their national government and instead knit them with socio-linguistically close communities across national boundaries. They are united by common denominator and therefore see themselves as “comrades” in suffering and systematic neglect while nursing a collective grievance against state powers.

Table-1. Fragile State Index of LCBC

Country	Overall Score
Cameroon	97.0
Chad	108.5
Niger	96.4
Nigeria	98.5

Source: Extracted from Fund for Peace, 2019

For most of the people in Nigeria’s northeastern region, the impact of the nation’s vast oil wealth has not been felt. Rather they are abandoned to poverty, lack of decent livelihood and access to social facilities. The United Nations Global Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (2017) reveals that Nigeria’s northeastern region has 76.8% of its population living below poverty line. Out of the 6 states that make up the region, Adamawa (59%), Borno (70.1%), and Yobe (90.2%) have higher poverty rates and coincidentally are most affected by regional insecurity. Amidst these, the people are subjected to all forms of harassment, extortion, and abuse by security forces who have also been accused of extra-judicial punishment, executions, among others (Cole *et al.*, 2017). The situation is the same in northern Cameroon and eastern Niger that have historically experienced structural violence. Thus there is wide spread and deep-rooted anger among the populace that have created the basis for suspicion towards the government.

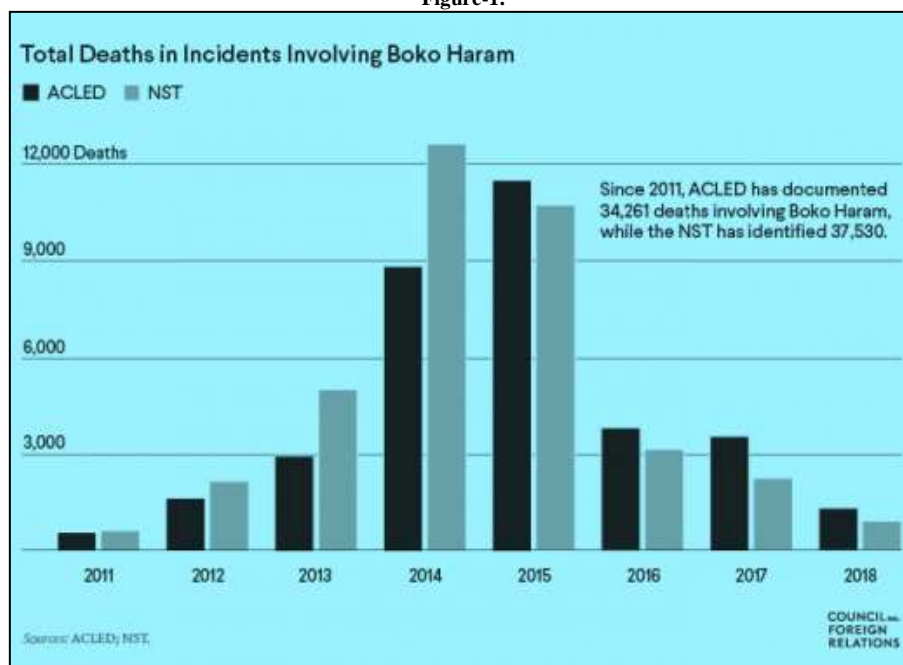
Violent conflicts have brewed out of the scenarios painted above. The emergence of violent extremist groups such as Boko Haram’s in northeast Nigeria has been traced to factors of state fragility (Udegbumam, 2015). Enabled by factors that include poor responses from the Nigerian government, the Boko Haram activities escalated within northeast and some northwestern and central states, including Nigeria’s capital city, Abuja. From a small Islamic sect in Maiduguri, Boko Haram grew and waxed strong to become the world’s most terror organization and operating across four LCBCs-Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. Its reputation grew as a result of its capacities to inflict maximum injuries on security forces, military formations, and defenceless civilians through assassination, kidnapping, suicide, raids, and indiscriminate shootings. Surrounded by violent extremist groups: Mali to the west, Libya to the north, Sudan to the east, and Central African Republic (CAR) to the southeast, and having access to

illicit arms, supported by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Arab Maghreb (AQIM) and Islamic State in Syria (ISIS), and possessing the freedom offered by ungoverned spaces in the Lake Chad, the Boko Haram terrorists became even more murderous and conquered territories, displacing millions, and hoisting flags. In addition, the fall of Muammar Qadhafi in 2011 was a catalyst for the proliferation of many armed networks and groups that constituted formidable threats to northern Chad (ICG, 2016). Thus aside northern Nigeria, the Boko Haram effectively destabilized northern Cameroon, Chad's Lac region, and Niger's Diffa region.

The humanitarian crisis in the LCB was a consequence of the insurgency and counterinsurgency in the region. At the peak of its success in 2014 and 2015, Boko Haram had displaced more than 2 million people within the region (UNHCR, 2018) with Nigeria's northeast housing about 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), more than 100,000 in Diffa region of Niger, over 200,000 in Cameroon's Far North Region, and above 108,000 in Chad's Lac Region (IOM, 2019; UNHCR, 2018). The United Nations World Health Organisation (WHO) describes the break out of cholera in the region as the worst in a decade. This is in addition to acute shortage of food, water, health facilities, shelter, etc such that external aids from the United States and partners within 16 months stood at more than \$400 million (Borno State Government, 2017).

There is a marked poor regional capability for problem-solving characterized by absence of political will (better described as political irresponsibility), weak capability and poor regional cooperation. It has been argued that the failure of Nigeria's security forces to contain Boko Haram was a strong factor in the group's subsequent transformation into a regional lethal force that aspires to promote Islamic jihadism in West Africa. At its peak in 2014/2015, Boko Haram killed an estimated 12,000 people within a year (as indicated in figure 1 below) without any serious challenge from state authorities. There was therefore a very poor regional response to the menace as most of Nigeria's neighbours were not interested in cooperating against Boko Haram especially at the very beginning of the crisis (Omenma, 2019).

Figure-1.



3. National Interest and Regional Security

Alliances or cooperation have long been the subject of theoretical and empirical discourses in international relations (Palmer and David, 1999). Quite a number of studies support the national interest explanation of states participation in military coalition or alliance (Conybeare and Sandler, 1990; Hansen *et al.*, 1990; Olson and Zeckhauser, 1966; Oneal, 1990; Palmer and David, 1999; Tar and Adejoh, 2017).

Some studies contend that motivations for alliance are basically security interest (Gates and Terasawa, 1992; Glaser, 1993; Walt, 1987). Such security may sometimes be achieved through a "balance of power" (Gulick, 1955; Morgenthau, 1973; Morrow, 1994; Organski, 1968; Organski and Kugler, 1980; Schelling, 1966; Waltz, 1979). However, some other scholars have argued that security interest might not be the sole factor for alliances (Altfeld, 1984; Morrow, 1991; Palmer and David, 1999; Signorino and Ritter, 1999). They argue that other factors could include: foreign aides, trade, and general socio-economic operations. Tar and Adejoh (2017), aver that state collaboration for mutual benefits in form of alliances occupy a central position in international relations theory. Dwivedi (2012), contends that states enter into alliance for reasons that include protecting each other or one another militarily or diplomatically. Strong states build alliances to create a balance of power over identified powers; and weak states enter into alliance to secure help against formidable threats. This underlies the basic conception of alliance.

The Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary defines alliance as:

- a) A bond or connection between families, parties, or individuals;

- b) An association (as by treaty) of two or more nations to further their common interest;
- c) A treaty of alliance.

The German term “Allianz” which evolved out of the French “alliance” means “connection”, “pact” or “association” between states”. The French term itself being a derivative of the old verb *aleier* (to connect, combine, or join), which is rooted in the Latin verb “alligare”. “Alligare” is a combination of the Latin word “ligare” which is translated as “to bind” and “to combine” (Duden, 1963). There are scholars who consider alliance to be a “formal commitment by two or more states to some future security related action” (Douglas and Vaquez, 1998; Singer and Small, 1968). Such action could entail anything ranging from military planning, consultation during conflict, or promise by one state to abstain from an upcoming war. Conybeare and Kim (2010), find no distinction between formal and informal alliance as they argue that alliances are one form of coordinated action between the extremes of complete integration and arm’s length, independent integration. Alliances may be formal, loose, informal and nonbinding collaboration where actors’ interests are protected by what they sacrifice to gain. Thus the fundamental essence of alliance is interest, whether the actors suffer immediate loss (tradeoffs) or gains, there is an overall important objective (s) that forms the basis for the decision to enter into alliance.

Morrow (1991) contends that extant literature on alliance is dominated by the conception of alliance as aggregating capability model which is rooted in Morgenthau (1973) balance of power theory. This conception, which includes the work of Waltz (1979), sees alliances as states aggregating capabilities against common threats to their collective security. Such form of alliance ends with the elimination of the threats. Morrow (1991), offers a new perspective to the debate as he argues that autonomy and security are the goals of states entering alliance. He distinguishes between “alignment” and “alliance”, arguing that alignment “occurs when nations concert their actions to pursue common interests at the present without the implication of coordination of their actions in the future” Morrow (1991) while alliance is formal and possesses greater commitment. Morrow (1994), views military strategies as integral part of alliance because they include prewar coordination, joint military planning, specializing forces overtime, and foreign policy.

Jenkins (2016), examines Saudi Arabia-led military alliance with 34 other Muslim-majority nations against terrorism in the Muslim world. He argues that the “alliance reflects a new Saudi determination to act on behalf of its own interest” (Jenkins, 2016). This view is supported by Al-Ghaefli (2017) whose study came two years after the establishment of the Saudi-led Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAF) and identified national interest as a fundamental motivating factor for the alliance. Such interest is also seen as a possible threat to IMAF’s capacity to fight terrorism in the Middle East. For instance, religious differences between Saudi (Sunni Muslims) and Iran (Shia Muslims) is influencing IMAF as both countries struggle for regional dominance manifested in “frequent exchanges of inflammatory quarrels and engagement in surrogate wars” (Al-Ghaefli, 2017).

Liska (1968), avers that while the fundamental rule for alliance is aggregation of power, in the case of regional associations in Third World countries “the aggregation is more likely to be one of weaknesses, compounded by the non-complimentary nature of assets and the divergent nature of interest and apprehensions under stress.” This assertion is supported by Handel (1981) argument that when weak states choose to align among themselves their defence costs rise while efficiency and reliability of their security declines. Acharya (1992), equally opines that “the task of military and political coordination among a large group of weak states becomes particularly difficult, for technical, logistical, and doctrinal reasons”. Such alliance by weak states also result in what Handel (1981) refers to “archives of interests, conflicting priorities, and competition for leadership and influence within the alliance”. Liska and Hendel’s theoretical postulations serve as the intellectual foundation for the investigation of the MNJTF as a military alliance for regional security among the Lake Chad Basin countries.

4. Evolution of Regional Security Architecture in the Lake Chad Basin

Established on 22 May 1964 by the Heads of State of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) was created to promote shared and sustainable management and exploitation of the Lake Chad and other water resources in the area (Galeazzi et al., 2017). However, the emergence of security threats such as identified earlier, led to the beginning of military alliance among some members of the LCBC. At the 8th Summit of the LCBC held in Abuja from 21-23 March 1994, heads of state of member-countries decided to establish a joint security force based in Baga-Kawa in Nigeria to contain criminal activities such as smuggling in the vast ungoverned areas of the region. Other nations, however, did not contribute troops as only Nigeria did (Musa, 2013). By 1998, there was the need to expand the force to include more member states by creating the Multinational Joint Security Force (MNJSF) (Galeazzi et al., 2017). The MNJSF had the following mandates:

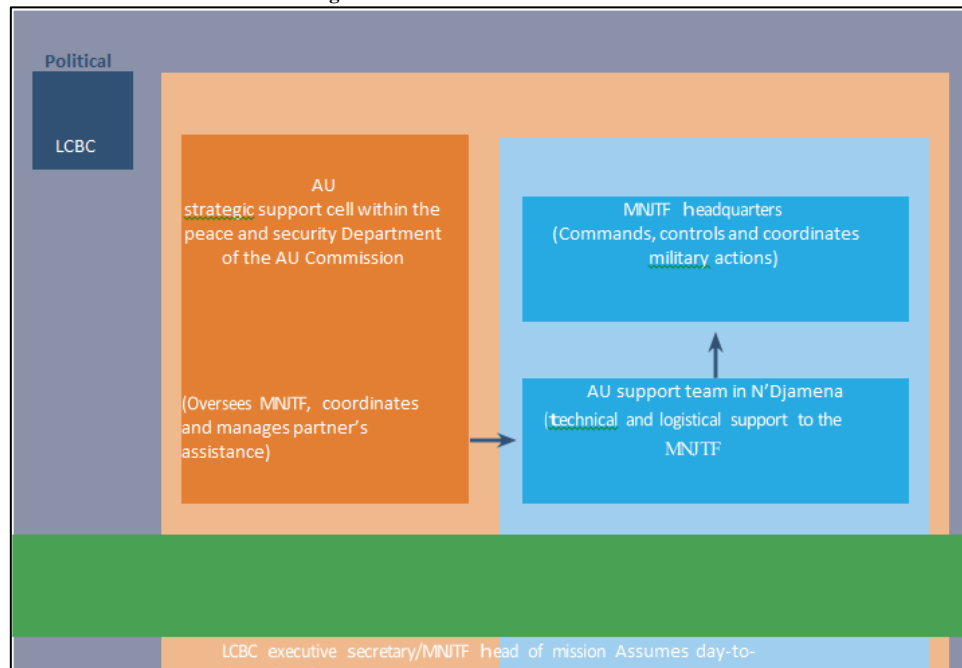
- i. Conduct military operations on the Lake Chad region;
- ii. Check activities of bandits;
- iii. Facilitate free movement of troops from member states across common border.

This early collaboration was not effective and member states remained non-committal thereby rendering the architecture inoperative. The major consequence was that the area remained ungoverned and fertile for the nurturing of criminal elements that would radicalize over time to become formidable threat to the region.

The reactivation and reorganization of the MNJSF in 2012 was a direct consequence of the havoc meted out on military formations and civilian population in the riparian communities of Nigeria by the Boko Haram terrorist organization. The MNJSF was renamed Multinational Joint Task Force with its headquarters in Baga, Nigeria. Sanctioned by the African Union (AU) and its Peace and Security Council (PSC), the MNJTF drew from four members of the LCBC affected by the insurgency-Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria plus a non-member, Benin Republic. The capacity of the fighting force was estimated at 10,000 with Nigeria positioned to make higher troop

contribution (Zamfir, 2017). The AU however, faced the challenge of coordinating the process through one of its regional economic communities (RECs) because Benin, Niger and Nigeria belong to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) while Cameroon and Chad are members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Consequently, the AU placed the civilian leadership of the MNJTF under the LCBC (Galeazzi *et al.*, 2017) while the AU provides strategic and technical leadership as shown in figure 2 below.

Figure-2. MNJTF institutional Architecture

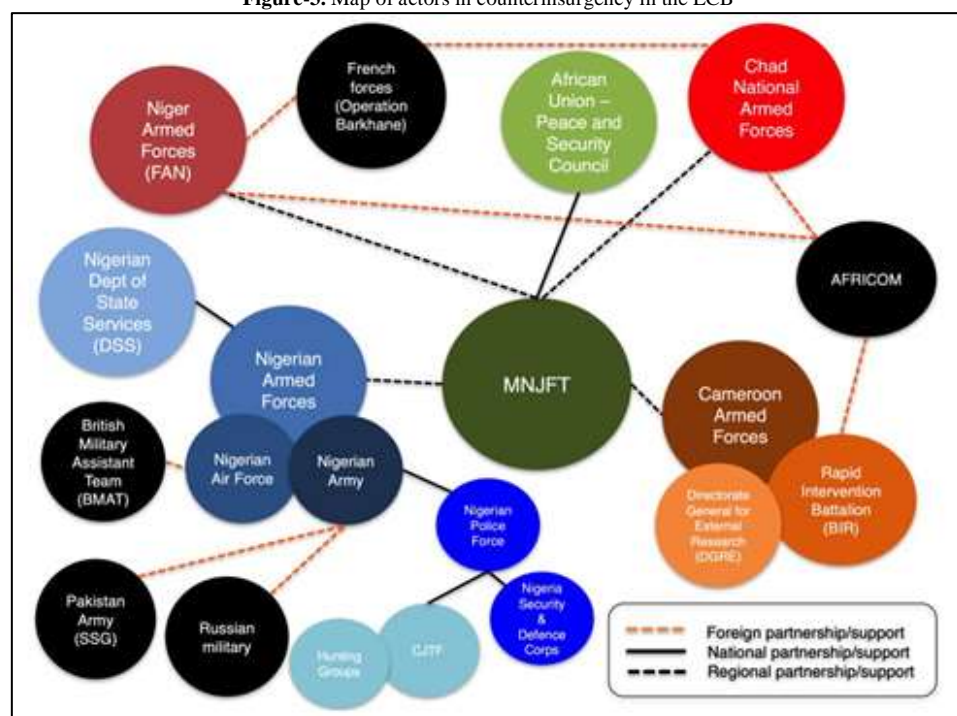


Source: Assanvo *et al.* (2016)

This decision was strategic because four of the six members of the LCBC face direct threat from the insurgents thus creating a cross-regional security platform for effective counterinsurgency in the Lake Chad.

Notwithstanding, the terrorist attacks increased across the four countries until the April 2014 kidnap of more than 270 girls from Chibok in northeast Nigeria. The subsequent global reactions led external state actors such as the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), France and the European Union (EU) to engage further with the four LCBC countries with a view to re-energizing the MNJTF. Their efforts resulted in the Paris Summit of 17 May 2014 where heads of state of Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria again pledged active military alliance through the MNJTF against the Boko Haram insurgents. The meeting also had the US, UK and France in attendance as strategic partners as seen in figure 3 below.

Figure-3. Map of actors in counterinsurgency in the LCB



Source: Hickie *et al.* (2018)

The Summit resolved to do the following on bilateral and multilateral bases;

- i. Implement coordinated patrols with the aim of combating Boko Haram and locating the Chibok girls;
- ii. Establish a system to pool intelligence in order to support operations;
- iii. Establish mechanisms for information exchange on trafficking of weapons and bolster measures to secure weapons stockpiles;
- iv. Establish mechanisms for border surveillance;
- v. Create a dedicated team to identify means of implementation and draw up, during a second phase, a regional counter-terrorism strategy in the framework of Lake Chad (Paris Summit for Security in Nigeria, 2017).

Consequently, on the 9th of June, the heads of state of the four countries plus Benin signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Yaoundé, Cameroon to share intelligence through the creation of a platform. Thus, the Regional Intelligence Fusion Unit (RIFU) was created and membership comprised intelligence and security services of member states as well as the strategic partners (Akondere, 2014). Its headquarters are in Abuja, and it began operation on 18 August, 2014. Its tasks revolve around the collection, collation, processing, analyzing, and dissemination of actionable intelligence in real time through secured channels to member states of the LCBC, MNJTF, and the strategic partners.

The Paris Summit was also followed by the 7 October 2014 Extraordinary Summit of the LCBC member countries and Benin in Niamey where fresh resolution activated the pledge to support the MNJTF. On the 29th of January 2015, the AU PSC authorized the deployment of the mission while the inauguration of its command headquarters took place on 25 May, 2015. Four sector command headquarters were established as follows:

- a. Mora: sector 1 headquarters Cameroon
- b. Bagasola: sector 2 headquarters Chad
- c. Baga: sector 3 headquarters Nigeria
- d. Diffa: sector 4 headquarters Niger

On 11 June 2015, the heads of state of the LCBC adopted the strategic concept of operations and rules of engagements, while the AU PSC renewed the mandates of the MNJTF on the 14 January 2016 to include the following:

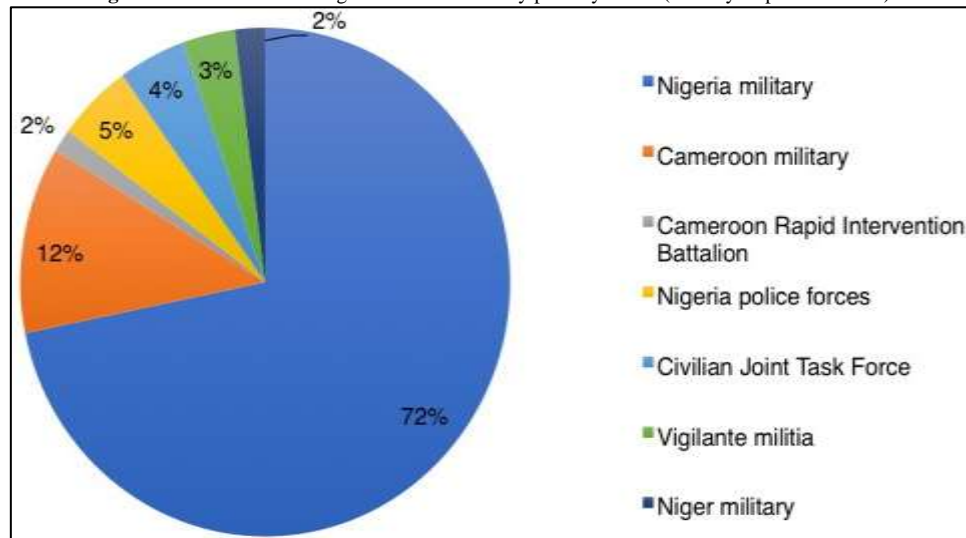
- i. conducting military operations to prevent the expansion of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups activities and eliminate their presence;
- ii. facilitating operational coordination amongst the affected countries in the fight against Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, including on the basis of the intelligence collected by the LCBC Member States and Benin and/or availed by external partners;
- iii. encouraging and facilitating the conduct of joint/simultaneous/coordinated patrols and other types of operations at the borders of the affected countries;
- iv. preventing all forms of transfer of arms and ammunition and other types of support to Boko Haram and other terrorist groups;
- v. ensuring, within its capabilities, the protection of civilians under immediate threat, IDP and refugee camps, humanitarian workers and other civilian personnel;
- vi. actively searching for, and freeing all abductees, including the young girls abducted in Chibok in April 2014;
- vii. undertaking effective psychological operations to encourage defections from Boko Haram and other terrorist groups;
- viii. supporting, as may be appropriate, the initial implementation phase of strategies for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of disengaged fighters into their communities;
- ix. contributing to the improvement and institutionalization of civil military coordination, including the provision, upon request, of escorts to humanitarian convoys (AU, 2015).

As the strategic pilot of the MNJTF, the AU opened a Strategic Support Cell in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to “provide oversight of the MNJTF and coordinate and manage donor assistance” (Assanvo *et al.*, 2016). There is also the Mission Support Team based in N’Djamena and tasked with providing daily logistics that include transport, IT and communication equipment. According to Major-General Chikezie Ude, by 8 February 2019, there were 10,250 military personnel from the 7,600 troops initially contributed from the parties (Premium Time, February 8, 2019).

5. National Interest Military Strategy and the Performance of the MNJTF

Since June 2016 when the MNJTF finally took off, it has recorded some significant successes against Boko Haram terrorists through its operations. As a result of the attack in Bosso, Niger Republic, the MNJTF established *Operation Gama Aiki* (Operation Complete Task) as offensive against insurgents in Niger. Gama Aiki was replaced in September with *Operation Rawan Kada* (Crocodile Dance or Gama Aiki II), with a stabilization mission, and announced the fulfillment of its objectives in mid 2017. It was replaced by a consolidation mission tagged *Operation Anmi Fakat*, aimed at consolidating the gains of Rawan Kada.

The renewed offensive against Boko Haram came from primary and secondary actors as shown in the figure 4 below.

Figure-4. Armed offensive against Boko Haram by primary actors (January-September 2017)

Source: Hickie *et al.* (2018); ACLED (2017)

The consequence of the offensive was a significant decimation of Boko Haram's capability to stage continuous lethal attacks on multiple fronts. The group (and its factions) have been confined to the Sambisa Forests and can only occasionally stage suicide or sporadic attacks without holding any known territory. Dze-Ngwa (2018), observed that since the end of operation Gama Aiki "the ISIS-WA faction has not launched an assault in the area near Bosso". Much of the offensive has occurred in the rural area where Boko Haram had unfettered access within the Lake Chad region.

The initial glaring incapacity of the MNJTF in routing the Boko Haram terror group and even suffering heavy casualties are related to the factors of participating nations placing premium values on national interest and military strategies over collective security. Nigeria's strong attachment on its territorial integrity was a national interest that hampered the effectiveness of regional collective security arrangement. Nigeria's action has to be understood within the historical contradictions and conflicts over territory with all the other 3 major actors.

Nigeria's conflict with Cameroon over the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula got to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In 2006, the ICT delivered judgment in favour of Cameroon thus ceding the territory to Cameroon. The two countries opted for the Green Tree Agreement of 2006. As Albert (2017) points out, the Nigerian Senate was to reject the verdict of the ICT arguing that such decision to cede a part of her territory to Cameroon contravenes section 12 (1) of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution and this has left some deep level of suspicion and mistrust between the two neighbours.

Nigeria's relationship with Chad is historically marred with conflicts over water and related resources in the Lake Chad as well as the expulsion of Chaldean nationals during the latter's civil war in the 1980s (Albert, 2017; Vogt, 1987). The unclear demarcation of the Nigeria/Chad border has remained a source of conflict among border communities who sometimes claim exclusive ownership of the Lake Chad and deny their neighbours access to fishing and water (Albert, 2017). Omenma and Hendricks (2018), report that Nigeria's relationship with Niger has also witnessed some conflicts over access to water in the southwest end of the Lake Chad.

Over the years, the national interest of protecting territorial integrity amidst disputes has become important to the four countries in the region. Even though they had military alliance, their quest to maintain territorial integrity has continued to rob them of rare opportunities to vanquish a lethal force as Boko Haram. The other three countries were not keen to grant Nigeria the "right of hot pursuit" just as Nigeria equally denied them same. As each manned its own borders, they work across purposes such that when Nigeria announced ceasefire in October 2014 due to negotiations to free the Chibok girls, Chad disclosed the pending liberation of the girls and Cameroon announced offensive against Boko Haram (Antimbom, 2016; Pérouse de Montclos, 2015).

Argument about the quest for energy by Nigeria's neighbours and how such national interest aided the success of the insurgents and crippled the regional architecture has been well made (Brown, 2013; Griffin, 2015; Murphy, 2017; Omenma, 2019). Omenma (2019), underscored the point that national energy interest fuels the insurgency in the region more than any other factor. The initial poor performance of MNJTF demonstrated in multiple successful attacks on Nigeria was meant to forestall Nigeria's oil exploration in the Lake Chad while at the same time Chad had unhindered exploration and rose to become Africa's 10th largest oil producer. ICG (2016) shows how Chad's oil revenue had skyrocketed from some \$670 million to over \$ 2.8 billion between 2004 and 2014. This is in addition to Chad's quest for regional power in Africa, which has been boosted by oil revenue used for advancing its military power.

Griffin (2015), explains that undermining the effectiveness of the MNJTF by shielding Boko Haram terrorists served the economic interests of Nigeria's neighbours, especially Chad. This assertion is supported by Ebute (2017) who contend that Chad and Niger provided their territories for refuge, training, transit, attack planning and recruitment, and this explains their manifest lackadaisical approach to the collective regional security. Similarly, Zenn (2013) holds that training cells belonging to Boko Haram have been found in Niger's towns of Diffa and

Zinder. This assertion was corroborated by Comolli (2015) who reports that Zinder and Diffa serve as corridors for terrorists' migration from northern Mali to Nigeria's northeast.

Just like Chad and Niger, Cameroon equally provided a safe haven for Boko Haram terrorists in cities such as Mora, Kousseri, Fokotol, and Banki-Amchide, from where the insurgents conducted cross-border attacks on Nigeria (Zenn, 2013). Omenma (2019) and Comolli (2015) report that Boko Haram had cells in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger used as refuge for planning and conducting attacks on Nigeria. Some analysts have attributed the successful attacks on Nigeria's oil exploration team on 26 July, 2017 as sabotage by Chad to frustrate Nigeria's oil exploration in the Lake Chad. Boko Haram's successful attacks against the MNJTF have also been linked to military strategies of participating nations. For instance, command and control, which refers to "the authority by a designated commander over assigned forces in the accomplishments of a mission" Umoh (2012) was difficult for the MNJTF. Troops sometimes worked at cross purpose due to conflicting orders from political and military leaders whose allegiance lie with their national government. For instance, troop contributed to the MNJTF in Baga by Niger were relocated to Bosso town in November 2014 without the knowledge of the MNJTF Commander (Akerejola, n.d). This relocation opened a flank which was exploited by Boko Haram to rout the MNJTF from Baga on January 6 2015. In addition, the collaboration of troops from Anglophone (Nigeria) and Francophone (Cameroon, Chad and Niger) creates some difficulties in procedures for tactical maneuvers and intelligence sharing (Akerejola, n.d). This also affects the sharing of intelligence as Chad would rather share intelligence with Niger and Cameroon even though there is the RIFU. Language barrier creates a time lag the luxury of which combatants in the field do not possess.

6. Conclusion

The Lake Chad countries will continue to face complex security challenges, at least till the near future. Given global rise in the impact of climate change and state fragility in the region, natural resources such as water will continue to intertwine with other socio-economic factors to make the region a fertile ground to be exploited by criminal elements. This is in addition to the fact that global Islamic jihadists are not in a hurry to denounce violence. It is therefore important that countries of the region play down on conflicting national interests to focus on full support of collective security for their mutual benefits by building a stronger and formidable regional security architecture. The MNJTF in one form or the other will remain relevant in the region for a long time. Its capability to provide regional security will only be possible through the full and sincere support of national governments of the LCBC.

While the military approach to counter-insurgency in the region continues, States in the LCB will need to adopt a long term solution to the emergence of insurgent groups in the region. There is need for a development approach that will build state capacity to respond to the basic needs of the populace. Good governance becomes necessary to securing legitimacy from the locals and policing the ungoverned spaces of the LCB. It is important that geopolitics takes a secondary place in the state interest while people oriented governance integrated the need of the people into national priority.

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