STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY MULTINATIONAL JOINT TASK FORCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BOKO HARAM TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Boko Haram exposed Nigeria’s security flop and eluded the fact that the insurgency is a real threat to national security. Nigeria has traditionally been an important regional actor in securing peace and stability in West Africa, but its army had obvious difficulties in coping efficiently with the threats posed by Boko Haram leading to the formation of the Multinational Joint Task Force to help in the fight against the terror group. The core and popular ideology of the sect is that “Western education is forbidden”; hence they are commonly referred to in Hausa Language as Boko Haram. “Boko” in Hausa means western education and “Haram” in Arabic means forbidden. The aim of this study is to examine the strategies adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against the activities of Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. The study is anchored on Regional Security Complex Theory to clearly understand the interplay of national interests, rationality of states and the role of government in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Findings showed that aerial surveillance as well as intelligence sharing are among the strategies adopted by MNJTF in the fight against Boko Harm terrorism in Nigeria; inadequate strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force hampered the fight against Boko Harm terrorism in Nigeria; it was recommended that Multinational Joint Task Force should urgently reinvigorate its strategies to cover addressing the root causes of Boko Haram terrorism. This would involve the governments of states that contributed troops to the MNJTF to ensure that issues of poverty, unemployment, religious fanaticism, and marginalization are adequately tackled in the country. Those found guilty of terrorism should be charged to special court for terrorism and punishment should be urgently meted out to them.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Insurgency, Terrorism, Regional Security, Counter-Insurgency, Multinational Joint Task Force.

INTRODUCTION

The Boko Haram insurgency is a security threat to Nigeria and other neighbouring countries of the Lake Chad Basin Region Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Benin. Boko Haram was not the initial name given to the Terrorist group but it implies the basic believes chosen to be known with by the group. Officially, the group is known as Jama’atul Ahalul Sunna Waljama’a Lidda a’ wati Wal Jihadi (the group of the people of the Sunnah for preaching and Jihad). Its core and popular ideology is that Western education is forbidden; hence they are commonly referred to in Hausa as yan boko haram. “Boko” in Hausa language simply means western education and “Haram” in Arabic means forbidden Doukhan.
The security threat posed by Boko Haram to Nigeria and her neighbours of the Lake Chad Basin (LCBC) countries necessitating the need for the them, to constitute themselves into a security community – the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to manage the situation.

The MNJTF established in 2015 and still ongoing against the Boko Haram (BH) insurgency in the Lake Chad regions a subregional organisation of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). (Brubacher, M., Kimball Damman, E. and Day, C. (2017). The MNJTF comprises the armed forces of five nations: Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Benin and is designed to cooperate and manage common threats. Nigeria initially established the Taskforce in 1994 to address transborder security challenges. However, it was reconfigured into a multi-national force in 1998 and later into a more elaborate and robust regional force in 2015 to fight the expansion of BH, De Coning, C., Gelot, L. and Karlsrud, J. (2016). BH terrorism emerged in northeastern Nigeria in 2002 and started spreading across other LCBC states – recruiting members and conducting terrorist attacks outside Nigeria’s borders. In 2009, the BH grew into one of the greatest threats to security and stability in the Lake Chad region, with mounting attacks on Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Although the group evolved from Nigeria’s northeast under a different name, like the Yusuffiya Sect, it later transformed into a major regional security threat following the intensification of cross-border attacks in Cameroon, Chad and Niger and the seizure of several territories in Nigeria’s northeast. Onuoha, F.C. (2014). “

A major turning point in the force’s evolution was the spike in violent activities of terrorists in all four riparian countries of the Lake Chad region, coupled with the worsening of regional socioeconomic problems in 2013 and 2014, and the attacks on military locations, which included the raid on the Headquarters (HQ) of the MNJTF in Baga, Nigeria. At the height of its terrorist attacks in 2014, BH controlled about 20 000 square miles of territory in Nigeria. The rise of BH has equally been characterised by substantial infighting over the years, with factions sometimes splitting, such as the Ansaru al-Musulmina fi Bilad al-Sudan (Ansaru) in 2012 and the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) in 2016, Mahmood, O. (2016) The transnational threat posed by BH necessitated that the joint taskforce structure and mandate be refocused on countering terrorism in the region.

As a result, in late 2014, the ministers of defence and chiefs of staff of LCBC states re-activated and re-operationalised the MNJTF as a counterterrorism force, with an increased capacity of about 10 000 troops from Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon as Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), with HQ in N’Djamena, Chad. Although not in combat capacity, Benin also pledged to contribute about 150 troops as of 2016. In November 2014, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) fully endorsed the re-activation of the MNJTF, and later authorised its formal deployment in January 2015, for a 12-month mandate.

In addition, the UN Security Council (UNSC) also recognised the deployment of the force through a presidential statement, UNSC. (2015) The mission is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring a safe and secure environment in the areas affected by BH, reducing violent attacks against civilians, facilitating stabilisation programmes in the Lake Chad Basin region, facilitating humanitarian operations, and provision of assistance to affected populations. To achieve its mandate, the MNJTF undertakes military operations; conducts patrols, interdicts and disrupts the cross-border movement of weapons, fighters and logistics to the group; searches for and frees abductees; and disrupts terrorist infrastructure in the region, Ismail O. and Kifle, A.A. (2021). These are counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism combined actions taken by a government to mitigate the activities of Boko Haram. Nonetheless, while some of the strategies have failed to achieve its purpose, some are still work in progress, which largely contributes to the vicissitudes in the activities of Boko Haram.
terrorists in Nigeria over the years. Therefore, this Paper therefore seeks to assess the strategies adopted by MNJTF in the fight against BH and the effectiveness of these Strategies.

Security is mantra for every existing state and the security of a state directly translates to its ability to protect its citizens, as well as national assets from both internal and external threats. Of equal importance, it is the facilitation of individuals and groups to carry out their legitimate businesses without any significant undue hindrance (Abioye 2015). Nevertheless, the emergence of the activities of Boko Haram terrorism in 2009 and its rise in 2014 hampered the security and welfare of the citizenry in diverse ways. In 2014, Boko Haram's capacity grew as the organization launched almost daily assaults on worship centers, law enforcement and security personnel, the media, educational institutions, politicians, among others. International outrage was triggered by Boko Haram's crimes, which included the kidnapping of 276 school girls in Borno State, Nigeria, in April 2014. This led to a massive regional counter terrorism operation against the organization in February 2015, which drove it out of most of its strongholds in Nigeria (Counter Terrorism Guide, 2023).

Nevertheless, Boko Haram terrorism continued to raise its international profile in 2015, pledging allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in March, and publicly using the name "ISIL-West Africa Province". This has many implications for security in Nigeria. A cursory examination of the activities of Boko Haram suggest that poverty is increasing due to Boko Haram terrorism, particularly in the north where companies and schools are closing and traders and investors are fleeing. In 2009 to 2012, Boko Haram killed between 20,000 to 35,000 people. In 2013 and 2014, Boko Haram killed 1,850 and 6,644 respectively (Mamman, 2020). Consequently, Boko Haram's actions have hurt Nigeria's ability to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's World Investment Report (WIR) revealed that during the 2009 to 2010 period, when Boko Haram escalated its violent attacks, foreign direct investment (FDI) revenue to Nigeria decreased to $6.1 billion ($933.3 billion) in 2010, nearly 30% less than the $8.65 billion ($1.33 trillion) in 2009, costing the Nigerian economy $1.33 trillion (Elaigwu, 2014). From 2015 to 2021, Boko Haram activities was said to have been technically mitigated by the government through the activities of multinational counter-terrorism strategies, especially Multinational Joint Task Force (Adeleke, 2021), but the threats posed by Boko Haram terrorism have continued to fester in Nigeria. This has brought about a real concern about the security of Nigeria due to the degree of bloodshed and instability brought on by the Boko Haram terrorism (Mamman, 2020).

To mitigate the foregoing security threats posed by Boko Haram terrorist activities, adoption of multinational Joint Task Force as one of the strategies for countering the activities of Boko Haram terrorism came with the expectation that the activities of the terrorist group would drastically reduce or totally curbed in Nigeria. Nevertheless, security situation in the country orchestrated by Boko Haram activities has continuously deteriorated over the past few years, against the backdrop of shrinking resources, poverty, porosity of borders and joblessness which further created the reservoir of radicalization, and violent extremism by the terror group.

Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) has the mandate to clear and secure the region already taken over by the Boko Haram (Udeh, 2011). However, a cursory examination of the activities of MNJTF showed that the counter-terrorism body has structural issues. This is because even by the norms of multilateral forces, its chain of command is weak because it consists mostly of national military units operating within their own state. While the AU has attempted to establish standard procedures for handling detained militants and their allies, it has little supervision over the force, which further constitute drawbacks to the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria (International Crisis...
Though some works have been carried out on the activities of MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram in Nigeria, opinions of scholars largely differ on the nexus between the activities of MNJTF and the fight against Boko Haram terrorism, effectiveness or otherwise of strategies adopted as well as challenges confronted by the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. A lot has been researched and written on Boko Haram activities in Nigeria but this work would focus on the role of the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram in the region. Therefore, it is important to interrogate the strategies adopted by MNJTF in combating Boko Haram, terrorism in Nigeria and its effectiveness with a view to understanding the reason for increasing the level of terrorism in the country despite all efforts at combating the activities of Boko Haram.

Research Questions

i. What are the strategies’ adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the Fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria?

ii. How effective are the strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria?

Objectives of the study is to:

i. Identify the strategies adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the Fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria;

ii. Assess the effectiveness of the strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria; and

Conceptual Clarification / Literature Review

Boko Haram

The concept of Boko Haram originated from the Hausa word Boko meaning “Animist, Western or otherwise non-Islamic education” and the Arabic word Haram figuratively meaning “Sin” Literally Forbidden (Mailafia, 2012). It opposes not only western education but also western culture and modern science. It is an indigenous “Salafist group” which only turned itself into a Salafist Jihadist group in 2009 (Shehu, 2011). Boko Haram is not the official name of the group. The official name of the sect is Jama’AtuAhlisSunnaLidda’AwatWal-Jihad, meaning people committed to the propagation of the prophet’s teaching and Jihad. However, Boko Haram is the local dubbing of the sect by residents of Maiduguri, when it was formed in 2002. Boko Haram according to the local Hausa language simply translated to, “western education is forbidden or is a sin (Alozieuwa, 2012). The resident gave the group this name because of its strong aversion to western education, which it viewed as corrupting Muslims. However, the concept of Boko Haram by Mailafia, Shehu and Alozieuwa did not show that Boko Haram is a terrorist organization that has cause grave security threats in then country through their activities.

Tsenzughul (2011) contributed to the concept of Boko Haram by tracing its origin as well as interrogating its structure. Accordingly, the term Boko Haram is a derivative of the Hausa word “Boko” meaning western education “Haram” is word with Arabic origin meaning sin but literally, forbidden. Boko Haram which figuratively means “Western or non-Islamic education is a Sin”, is a controversial Nigerian Islamic fundamentalist group that seeks the imposition of Sharia laws in 19 Northern States of Nigeria. The group presently has an undefined structure and chain of command (Tsenzughul, 2011). According to Halima (2011), Boko means book, while Haram means bad so
Boko Haram implies that learning at school is bad but they are really referring to western schools and not Arabic Schools. It is also an Arabic phrase meaning learning, studying, educating and been educated is bad. Though the foregoing broadened our understanding of the concept of Boko Haram, it did not bring to the fore the modus operandi of the sect, which is terrorism.

According to Alozieuwa (2012) and the Islamic Theocratic State perspective, the Boko Haram insurgency emanated from the intention to bring down the Nigerian government, outcast Western civilization, and ultimately Islamize the country. Though the perspective of Boko Haram by Alozieuwa (2012) covers the fact that Boko Haram is a sect that is against the Nigerian State, which is needed in this study, it did not show the meaning of Boko Haram in relations to this study. Therefore, Boko Haram is defined in this study as a terrorist group which collaborates with other terrorist groups outside of the shores of Nigeria with a view to destroying the Nigerian State and replacing it with a state that would be governed outside of the tenets of modern democracy.

Concept of Terrorism

Many scholars have defined the concept of terrorism in diverse ways. This clearly shows that despite the continued presence of terrorism in international and domestic settings, there is currently no concise, universally accepted definition of the term. There is no single internationally accepted definition of what constitutes terrorism, and the terrorism literature abounds with competing definitions and typologies.

Chomsky (2001) contributed to the examination of the concept of terrorism by pointing out two different and conflicting approaches to the study of terrorism. One is the literary approach and the other is the Propagandist approach. While the one seeks a rational scientific understanding of terrorism as a social phenomenon, with specific empirical cause factors which leads to particular societal impacts, the later seeks to explain terrorism as a weapon to be exploited in some service to the system of power. Also, while the scientific approach is interested in finding lasting remedies, the propagandist is interested in labelling and demonizing to justify military power for a strategic advantage over perceived enemies. Though the foregoing did not cover the meaning of terrorism in relation to this study, it is vital in the understanding of the strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

According to Ted Gurr (1989), terrorism is the use of unexpected violence to intimidate or coerce people in pursuit of political or social objective. For Gibbs (1995), terrorism means illegal violence or threatened violence against human or nonhuman object so long as that violence meets additional criteria such as secretive features and unconventional warfare. Crenshaw (2015) broadened the foregoing definition of terrorism by arguing that terrorism is not mass or collective violence, but rather the direct activity of small groups and that however authentically popular these groups may be, even if supported by larger organizations; the number of active militants who engage in terrorism is small while Malden, (2014) defines terrorism as an asymmetrical warfare of threat and violence targeted against enemies by deploying unconventional means not within the forms of political struggle routinely operating within some current regime. From the foregoing definition of terrorism by scholars from late 1990s to early 2000, terrorism has always challenged the stability of society and the peace of mind of everyday people, which is related to the meaning of terrorism in this study. Nonetheless, the scholars ended up defining the motive of terrorism, which suggests that the concept of terrorism can be better understood from the standpoint of the aim of terrorism.

Critiquing the foregoing, Schmid and Jogman (2022), asserted that most definitions of terrorism
attempt to characterize the phenomenon by focusing on the apparent goal of terrorist organizations, which most analysts presume (but seldom empirically establish in an objective manner) is to inflict, or spread a sense of terror or general psychological distress in their victims for politico-ideological purposes. Terrorism from this point of view is simply the most adequate means to the actualization of those goals. From this perspective, it is taken for granted that the intended aim of terrorists is to terrorize, and thus most people attempt to define what terrorism is by defining what terrorizing is, which usually involves some mention of intimidation, influence and coercion (Schmid & Jongman, 2022). In view of the foregoing, terrorism is defined in this paper as the activities of Boko Haram aimed at killing and destroying lives and properties of people and those of the state in Nigeria with a view to instilling general fear on the populace as well as bringing about regime change.

Multinational Joint Task Force
Before delving into the review of the concept of Multinational Joint Task Force, it is vital to review the concepts of Joint Operation and multinational force. According to the U.S. Department of Defence (2023), Joint Operation is a general term to describe military actions conducted by joint forces, or by Service forces in relationships (e.g., support, coordinating authority), which, of themselves, do not establish joint forces. A Joint operation area is an area land, sea, and airspace, defined by a geographic combatant commander or subordinate unified commander, in which a joint force commander (normally a joint task force commander) conducts military operations to accomplish a specific mission. Joint functions are related capabilities and activities grouped together to help the Joint Force Commander (JFC) integrate, synchronize, and direct joint operations (DOD). The foregoing definition of Joint Operations is accepted in this study because it is related to the fight against Boko Haram terrorism by Multinational Joint Task Force.

Having x-rayed the concept of Joint Operation as applicable in this study, it is vital to examine the concept of Multinational Force (MNF). A Multinational Force is a transnational army that is established (in concert with states) to provide stabilizing functions in security and humanitarian settings. It is a combat force that fights insurgencies, terrorism, banditry, drug and human trafficking, and genocidal wars. As such, an MNF can take the form of a peacemaking, peacekeeping, or peace building force that intervenes to create a humanitarian corridor for aid agencies and refugee or displaced persons protection; it can also be established to respond to humanitarian issues other than wartime crises like natural disasters. MNFs provide national armies with the chance to learn insightful lessons from the troops of other countries during operations. They can significantly curtail the activities of terrorists and even coerce them to surrender (Suleiman, 2017).

Comolli (2017) contributed to the concept of Multinational Joint Task Force by looking at its meaning and origin. In this regard, it was noted that the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) is an offensive and stabilisation mechanism with the objective of combating Boko haram and other groups labelled as terrorists operating around the Lake Chad Basin. In April 2012, the MNJTF was established to combat Boko Haram along the borders of the Chad Republic, the Niger Republic, Nigeria, and Cameroon. That being said, this was not the first MNJTF to be founded amongst the Lake Chad nations. The government of Gen. Sani Abacha established the first MNJTF in 1994 to protect the northeast against armed bandits returning from the Chadian conflict. The Force’s primary duty was to put an end to the bandits’ operations in border regions and facilitate the free flow of people and products across international boundaries. With the addition of military personnel from Nigeria, Niger, and Chad in 1998, the Force became fully multinational, with the task of addressing common cross-border security issues in the Lake Chad area. Though the foregoing is vital in the
understanding of Multinational Joint Task Force as it relates to this study, it did not cover the two steps needed to achieve MNJTF’s mandate as for the determination of the strategies adopted by the MNJTF in combating the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

There are two steps in carrying out MNJTF’s mandate. The first entails using force to destroy the terrorist organization. The mandate encompasses a range of military operations aimed at impeding the proliferation of Boko Haram’s activities. These operations include clearance operations, fighting patrols, raids, ambushes, and the prevention of any weapons or logistical transfers to the group. Additionally, it involves the active search and release of abductees, as well as psychological operations designed to encourage surrender from Boko Haram ranks. However, Boko Haram’s acts of terror are not the only things that contribute to the instability in the Lake Chad Basin (LCBC) region. As a result, it is also anticipated that the MNJTF would assist in identifying the underlying reasons of conflict in the area. As a result, the second phase of the mandate entails implementing stabilization measures in accordance with the RS-SRR’s provisions, which provide a comprehensive regional strategy intended to address the underlying causes of conflict and underdevelopment in the LCBC. In this regard, the LCBC acts as a forum for discussion and coordination of the approaches and plans for putting the RS-SRR into practice among the pertinent governors and regional stakeholders. Furthermore, the Executive Secretary of the LCBC serves as the MNJTF’s Head of Mission (HoM), offering direction and political assistance to the RS-SRR players as well as the military contingent (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2023).

Dadur and Aliyu contributed to concept of Multinational Joint Task Force by looking at its structure. Dadur and Aliyu noted that in order to fulfill its purpose, the MNJTF is arranged strategically around its operational headquarters and four areas. The headquarters is divided into staff branches, each headed by a senior officer from one of the four LCB member nations as well as Benin. These branches are identified as J1 (Administration), J2 (Intelligence Cell), J3 (Operations), J4 (Logistics Cell), J5 (Training Cell), J6 (Communications Cell), J9 (Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), currently led by Benin. In addition, HQ houses the AU-Mission Support Team (AU-MST), the Force Medical Section, the Air Liaison Office, and the Military Public Information Office (MPIO). The four sectors that comprise the MNJTF’s Areas of Responsibility (AORs) are commanded by commanders with brigade level (Dadur & Aliyu, 2022), but this did not cover the connection between MNJTF and international humanitarian law, which is vital in the understanding of how arrested or detained Boko Haram members should be treated.

The African Union Report (2015) examined the concept of MNJTF from the perspective of their mandates. According to the African Union Report, the MNJTF was given the following mandates within its area of operation, which will be specified in the concept of operation: establish a safe and secure environment in areas affected by Boko Haram and other terrorist groups in order to considerably reduce violence against civilians and other abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, in full compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law and the UN HRDPP; assist in the implementation of overall stabilization programs by the LCBC Member States and Benin in the affected areas, including the complete restoration of state authority and the repatriation of internally displaced people and refugees; and facilitate humanitarian activities and the distribution of aid to the impacted communities, to the extent of its capacity. Nevertheless, the foregoing did not largely meet our purpose for the meaning of Multinational Joint Task Force in this study. Therefore, Multinational Joint Task Force is defined, in this study, as a collective security force formed by countries in the Lake Chad Basin who are threatened by the activities of Boko Haram in order to combat the activities of the sect in Nigeria using both military and non-military strategies.
Theoretical Framework
Regional Security Complex
The theoretical framework adopted for this study is Regional Security Complex theory. The theory emerged after the dual effect on regional threat of the Cold War bringing significant retrenchment of great power involvement from much of the developing world. The major proponent of the theory are Barry Buzan and Olen Waever. The leading proponent of the theory which emphasizes on the inter-subjective construction of security issues by state actors while emphasizing on the geographic proximity as foremost generator of security concerns. Regional systems theories conceived of regions as patterns of relations or interactions within a geographic area that exhibit a particular degree of regularity and intensity to extent that changes at one point if the system affects other points (Thompson, 1973). The Structure of International Security to describe a specific kind of region united by common security problems (Buzan, 2003) and emerged where actors (primary states) have inter-subjectivity construed issues in a geographical area as security threat (Buzan, Waever & Dewilde, 1998).

Buzan describes a regional security complex as a set of states with significant and distinctive network of security relations that ensures that members have a high-level interdependence on security involving a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another. The concept covers how security is clustered in geographically shaped regions and in a foreseeable future, threats and conflicts arises out of regional concerns and are viewed by political actors through regional rather than global lenses and the efforts to cope with violent conflicts as well as achieving order and security that will primarily involve arrangements and actions of devised and implemented at the regional level (Buzan, 1991).

The basic assumptions of the theory are built on the concepts of ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘spill over’ effects which define ‘externalities’ as “costs (negative externalities) and benefits (positive externalities) that do not accrue only to the actors that create them. A regional security system is produced if a “local externality poses an actual or potential threat to the physical safety of individuals or governments in other states. However, to accentuate the difficulty in explaining why regional security is, indeed, regional, Lake and Morgan (2021) argued that externalities are not necessarily limited in their effects to states within a particular geographic neighborhood. They argued that “geography might bind most members of a regional security complex together”, they also underline that “geographic proximity is not a necessary condition for a state to be a member of a complex. For this reason, even though there is an intention to associate security to regional complexes (following Buzan and Waever theory), the regional dimension of a complex seems to be jeopardized.

Transnational terrorism is diverse and multifaceted regarding scope and intensity. Dealing with it requires investment in international security and diplomacy. It also entails cooperation between domestic, regional and international actors in the areas of peace, security and development. More so, contemporary terrorism has deviated from the traditional choice of targeting military establishments and governments to targeting vulnerable civilian population. Buzan also includes three levels of analysis: individual, state and the international system. For the theorists, national security depends on the dynamics of international relations (especially regional ones), but a parallel should not be made between national and international security (Buzan & Waever, 1998).

In Africa, more extensive forms of regional security cooperation are pursued but currently faces wide spread domestic political instability, which can spread across borders through flows of refugee, armed rebels and other potential conduit of disruption.
The theory is significant in the study of the Multinational Joint Task Force and the fight against Boko Haram insurgency for several reasons. One, it explained the inter-connectedness, interactions, and interdependency between the security architecture of the Lake Chad Basin countries. It identified the transnational tendency of insecurity (in this case, insurgency), and validates the need for a harmonized and integrated regional effort in fighting them. Thirdly, the theory unveils security as a complex phenomenon which covers a large portion of both national and regional spectrum, at the same time unfolding the roles of other sectors and stakeholders beyond the traditional kinetic military approach in fighting insurgency. By implication, the theory argues that an effective counter-insurgency operations and strategies can only be enhanced through regional framework. Therefore, states in the region have increasingly been impelled to act collectively.

From the assumptions of this theory, security threats are trans-national in nature, share common geographical space, and can transcend to each other’s territory. Therefore, there is a need for a common, cooperative and interdependency of security architectures within the region. Even though about 90% of Boko Haram strongholds and activities are within the Nigerian territory, yet, the Multi-National Joint Task Force was created by the countries of the Lake Chad basin and was authorized by the African Union Peace and Security Council as a sub-regional front against Boko Haram because of the complexity of security threat especially insurgency.

Methodology
This study employed survey and historical research designs. The target population, in his study, is 15,945 respondents. This comprises respondents drawn from residents of Gwoza and Bama Local Government Areas in Wacane and GSSS IDPs Camps, Multinational Joint Task Force in Gwoza, Bama, Geidam and Gujba Local Government Areas. Sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formula for sample size. Data for this study were collected from both the primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected using questionnaires and interview instruments. For interview instrument, in-depth interview variant was adopted because it permits the researcher collect data on the issues under study from experts who have deep knowledge of the issues regarding Multinational Joint Task Force and Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. Eight (8) respondents were interviewed. Data from secondary source were collected from journals, conference papers and from internet materials on Multinational Joint Task Force and Boko Haram terrorism. Data from questionnaire were analysed using simple percentages, and frequency tables. Simple percentages and frequency tables were used in the analysis of data relating to personal data of respondents as well as in all cases of data collected from questionnaire instrument. Data from in-depth interview were analysed using narrative-analytic technique. On the contrary, secondary data from journals, official reports, conference papers and internet materials were analysed using relational-content analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Out of four hundred (400) questionnaires administered to the respondents, three hundred and seventy-eight (378) representing 94.5% were duly-completed and returned to the researcher by respondents. On the contrary, twenty-two 22 questionnaires out of the total number of questionnaires administered to the respondents representing 5.5% were retrieved. Therefore, majority of the questionnaires were duly filled and returned to the researcher for analysis.

Data on the Strategies adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the Fight against Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria
Table 1.: Strategies adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the Fight against Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/ N</th>
<th>Question/Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
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<th>SD</th>
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<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Multinational Joint Task Force adopted both kinetic and non-kinetic counter-terrorism strategies in the fight against Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria</td>
<td>101 (26.72%)</td>
<td>69 (18.25%)</td>
<td>56 (14.81%)</td>
<td>67 (19.72%)</td>
<td>85 (22.49%)</td>
<td>378 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Multinational Joint Task Force adopted aerial surveillance counter-terrorism strategy in the fight against Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria</td>
<td>187 (49.42%)</td>
<td>68 (18.01%)</td>
<td>52 (13.75%)</td>
<td>36 (9.52%)</td>
<td>35 (9.26%)</td>
<td>378 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Multinational Joint Task Force adopted the strategy of intelligence sharing in the fight against Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria</td>
<td>165 (43.65%)</td>
<td>97 (25.66%)</td>
<td>100 (26.55%)</td>
<td>10 (2.65%)</td>
<td>6 (1.59%)</td>
<td>378 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Multinational Joint Task Force adopted the strategy of cooperation with local communities for intelligence sharing in the fight against Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria</td>
<td>193 (51.06%)</td>
<td>96 (25.40%)</td>
<td>52 (13.76%)</td>
<td>16 (4.23%)</td>
<td>21 (5.56%)</td>
<td>378 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aerial surveillance as well as intelligence sharing are among the strategies adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria</td>
<td>190 (50.26%)</td>
<td>99 (26.19%)</td>
<td>51 (13.49%)</td>
<td>18 (5.29%)</td>
<td>20 (5.29%)</td>
<td>378 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. item 1, shows that 101 (26.72%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Multinational Joint Task Force adopted both kinetic and non-kinetic counter-terrorism strategies in the fight against Boko Haram in Nigeria, 69 respondents representing 18.25% agreed to the statement. On the other hand, 56 respondents representing 14.81% strongly disagreed, 67 (19.72%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. The remainder, 85 respondents representing 22.49% were indifferent on the statement. The implication for the finding is that majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or disagreed to the statement. The implication for the findings is that mixed strategy is vital in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

Table 1. item 2, shows that 187 respondents representing (49.42%) strongly agreed that Multinational Joint Task Force adopted aerial surveillance counter terrorism strategy in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, while 68 (18.01%) of the respondents agreed to the statement. On the other hand, 52 representing 13.75% of the respondents strongly disagreed to the statement, while 36 (9.52%) of the total number of respondents disagreed to the statement. The remainder, 36 respondents representing (9.26%) were indifferent. Therefore, majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the statement. The implication for the findings is that the strategies adopted by the MNJTF are targeted at combating the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Table 1. item 3, showed that 165 representing (43.65%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the Multinational Joint Task Force adopted the strategy of intelligence sharing in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, while 97 (25.66%) of the respondents agreed to the statement. On the contrary, 100 (26.45%) of the respondents strongly disagreed to the statement, while 10 (2.63%) of the respondents disagreed to it. The remainder, 6 (1.59%) of the respondents indifferent on the statement. Therefore, majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the statement. The implication for he finding is that adequate intelligence sharing is vital in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

Table 1. item 4, shows that 193 (51.06%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Multinational Joint Task Force adopted the strategy of cooperation with local communities for intelligence sharing in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, while 96 (25.40%) of the respondents agreed to the statement. On the other hand, 52 (13.76%) of the respondents strongly disagree to the statement, while 16 (4.23%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. The remainder, 21 (5.56%) of the respondents are indifferent to the statement. Therefore, majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the statement. The implication for the findings is that with adequate cooperation between the MNJTF and local communities in Nigeria, the activities of Boko Harm would largely be curbed.

Table 1. item 5, showed that 190 (50.26%) of the respondents strongly agreed that aerial surveillance as well as intelligence sharing are among the strategies adopted by MNJTF in the fight against Boko Harm terrorism in Nigeria, while 99 (26.19%) of the respondents agreed to the statement. On the contrary, 51 (13.49%) of the respondents strongly disagree to the statement, while 18 (4.76%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. The remainder, 20 (5.29%) of the respondents are indifferent to the statement. Therefore, majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the statement. The implication for the findings is that with robust aerial surveillance and intelligence sharing by the MNJTF, the activities of Boko Haram would be largely mitigated in Nigeria.

To buttress the findings, the researcher posed questions to respondents from 15th to 20th March, 2024, to determine their views about the strategies adopted by the MNJTF in combating Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. Responses from the findings showed that:

Source: Field survey (2024) SA= strongly agree, A= agree, ID=Indifferent, D=disagree, SD=strongly disagree
Participant 1 (P1), terrorism Office of the National Security adviser, P 2, Director with the Office of the National Security Adviser, P3 A Director of library with Office of the National Security A Defence counsellor to the Niger Ambassador to Nigeria on the Strategies Multinational Joint Task Force put in place in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism, this was the response, P1 said the Multinational Joint Taskforce was divided into four sectors as a strategy of defeating the terrorist, sector A Nigeria, sector B Cameroon, sector C Niger and sector D Chad, each sector have to operate within it sector with a commanding officer in-charge.

P2 Said the strategies put in by the MNJTF to fight the Boko Haram terrorism include the kinetic and the non-kinetic counter terrorism strategies which include amnesty to the terrorist, rehabilitation, reintegration, Operation Lafia Dole, Operation Handin Kai and Operaton crocodile smile.

P3 Said the strategies put in by the MNJTF to fight the Boko Haram terrorism include request for financial assistance from Nigeria and Canadian government, the government has continued to support the Nigeria military by providing military equipment to counter terrorism, the government have also formulated policies such as creation of NGO, Ministry of humanitarian resources and disaster management, NEMA,

P4 Said the strategies put in by the MNJTF to fight the Boko Haram terrorism include countering the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist, given the terrorist a good fight to the extent of surrendering.

Responses from P5, P6 &P7 of selected Yobe and Borno IDPs Camps noted that:

The Nigerian government took a number of steps to increase counter-Boko Haram efforts in 2015 by adopting various strategies aimed at resolving terrorist activities. These include attempt at negotiation, promise of amnesty, stick and carrot approach, strategic communication and military actions among others. Also, Nigeria worked with other Boko Haram-affected neighbours to form and lead the Multi-National Joint Task Force that facilitated collaboration and coordination on counter-Boko Haram efforts. International diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the crisis have multiplied, and military operations took on a cross-border dimension in January 2015. The armies of Niger and Cameroon have also officially joined the fight with Chad’s army undertaking some successful incursions into Nigeria. The coordinated military operations have pushed Boko Haram back onto the defensive…while some of the strategies have failed to achieve its purpose, some are still in progress (Field survey, March, 2024)

Data on the Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Fight Against Boko Haram are presented as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Question/Statement</th>
<th>HE</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rate the strategies adopted by the</td>
<td>65 (17.20%)</td>
<td>92 (24.34)</td>
<td>215 (56.88%)</td>
<td>6 (1.59%)</td>
<td>378 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 item 1, showed that 215(56.88%) disagreed that the strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force are largely adequate in recovering communities formerly seized by Boko Haram, while 92 (24.34%) of the respondents opined that the strategies were effective. Also, 65 (17.20%) of the respondents opined that the strategies are highly effective, while 6 (1.59%) of the respondents were indifferent to the statement. Therefore, majority of the respondents opined that the strategies are ineffective. The implication for the findings of that strategies adopted by the MNJTF in combating Boko Haram terrorism need to be reinvigorated for better outcome.

Table 2, item 2, shows that 326 (86.24%) of the respondents opined that cooperation among Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria and Niger using MNJTF as a platform is ineffective in largely reducing the number of territories previously under the control of Boko Haram, while 19 (5.03%) considered
the strategies effective. Also, 11 (2.91%) of the respondents considered the strategy highly effective, while 22 (5.82%) of the respondents were indifferent. Therefore, majority of the respondents opined that the strategy was ineffective. The implication for the finding is that adequate cooperation among the states in the Lake Chad Basin is needed in order to effectively curb the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria by MNJTF.

Table 2, item 3 shows that 300 (79.36%) of the respondents opined that leaving the command of the troops to the contributing states is not effective in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, while 34 (8.99%) of opined that they strategy is highly effective. Also, 29 (7.73%%) of the respondents opined that the strategy is effective, while 15 (3.97%) of the respondents were indifferent. Therefore, majority of the respondents rated the strategy not effective. The implication for the finding is that the command structure of the MNJTF should be revisited for effective fight against Boko Harm terrorists.

Table 2, item 4, shows that 185 (75.39%) of the respondents rated the strategies adopted by MNJTF in freeing individuals trapped in Boko Haram controlled areas in Nigerian to be ineffective, while 44 (11.64%) of the respondents opined that the strategies are effective. Also, 31 (8.20%) of the respondents rated the strategy effective, while 31 (8.20%) of the respondents rated it highly effective. The remainder, 18 (4.76%) of the respondents were indifferent about the statement. Therefore, majority of the respondents rated the statement not effective. The implication for the finding is that for individuals under the control of Boko Haram to be freed, the MNJTF must reinvigorate their strategies.

Table 2, item 5, shows that 341 (90.21%) of the respondents rated strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria not effective, while 32 (8.46%) of the respondents rated it either highly effective or effective. The remainder, 5 (1.32%) were indifferent on the statement. Therefore, majority of the respondents rated the strategies ineffective. The implication for the finding is that adequate strategies are needed to be deployed by the MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

In order to buttress the foregoing findings, the researcher asked the respondents to volunteer their opinions on level of effectiveness of those strategies adopted by MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria during an in-depth interview conducted from 15th to 20th of March, 2024. The responses are as follows:

P1, A Director with the Office of the National Security Adviser, P2, A Director of library with Office of the National Security Adviser and P3 A Defence counsellor to the Niger Ambassador to Nigeria opined that the strategies put in by MNJTF are effective in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria because, the MNJTF has had significant success at seizing territory from Boko Haram, driving them from multiple population centers in northeast Nigeria and limiting their expansion into neighboring countries and the issue of bombing, killing especially in the north east states has reduced drastically, they further stressed that the military strategies put in place have made the MNJTF to over power the terrorists to the point of them surrendering to the MNJTF (Field survey, March 2024)

P4 Director counter terrorism Office of the National Security adviser noted that:

…the strategies put in by MNJTF are not largely effective in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria because, the MNJTF has not achieved significant success at seizing territory from Boko Haram, driving them from multiple
population centers in northeast Nigeria and limiting their expansion into neighboring countries… the issue of bombing, killing especially in the north east states have not drastically reduced…the military strategies put in place have not largely made the MNJTF to over-power Boko Harm… until those in the captivity of Boko Haram are freed, MNJTF has not adopted adequate strategies in the fight against Boko Haram terrorists (Field survey, 2024).

Similarly, an interview with P5 of Niger Embassy Nigeria showed that:

The MNJTF that was formed to curb insurgency in the Lake Chad region was not the first of its kind. Prior to 2012, during the reign of General Sani Abacha there existed a task force of its kind to police the northeastern borders of Nigeria the sole aim of the task force was to curb banditry and aid movement of people and properties. At inception, the force assumed a National front as only Nigeria was involved. However, by 1998, the force assumed a more Multinational front with the involvement of Niger and Chad and it had the mandate of securing the borders in the Lake Chad region. At this time the headquarters of the force was located in Baga town of Borno State Nigeria. This case changed in 2012. In 2012, the expansion of the infamous group necessitated the equal expansion of the group’s mandate to include counter insurgency with a major focus on Boko Haram. The Multinational nature of the taskforce was even enlarged in 2012 to include elements not only form Nigeria and Niger but from Chad, Cameroon and Benin Republic. MNJTF was tasked to operate with other counter insurgency operations like the JTF Operation Restore Order and Operation Lafia Dole (Field survey, 2024).

Discussion of Findings

1. With respect to the strategies adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, findings from showed that Multinational Joint Task Force adopted both kinetic and non-kinetic counter-terrorism strategies in the fight against Boko Haram in Nigeria as well as adopted aerial surveillance counter terrorism strategy in the fight against Boko Harm terrorism in Nigeria. Also, findings showed that the Multinational Joint Task Force adopted the strategy of intelligence sharing in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria as well as the strategy of cooperation with local communities for intelligence sharing in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. This clearly showed that aerial surveillance as well as intelligence sharing are among the strategies adopted by MNJTF in the fight against Boko Harm terrorism in Nigeria. Buzan (2019) found that Buhari’s government has achieved some degrees of success in combating Boko Haram insurgency. The findings of previous studies by Danjibo (2020) and Buzan (2019) are slightly related to the findings of this study. The foregoing led to the acceptance of our research proposition (ii), aerial surveillance as well as intelligence sharing are among the strategies adopted by Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. The findings of this study are supported by the basic assumptions of the liberal intergovernmentalist theory that is anchored on the states to come together to tackle their common problems without necessarily relying on the international organisations.
2. With respect to the effectiveness of the strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, findings from the study showed that the strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force are largely inadequate in recovering communities formerly seized by Boko Haram. Part of the reasons for the foregoing is the lack of adequate cooperation among Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria and Niger using MNJTF as a platform which has not largely reduced the number of territories previously under the control of Boko Haram and the existence of gaps in the prevailing communication strategy among MNJTF members. Leaving the command of the troops to the contributing states did not enhance effective fight against Boko Harm terrorism in Nigeria. Therefore, inadequate strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force hampered the fight against Boko Harm terrorism in Nigeria.

3. The findings of this study are slightly supported by findings by Gibbs (2020), Foimui (2016), and Oluwaseun. Therefore, our research proposition (iii), inadequate strategies adopted by the Multinational Joint Task Force hampered the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria, is accepted. The findings of this study are related to the basic assumption of the liberal intergovernmentalist theory that states, through their governments, are rational and self-interested actors in international relations. Therefore, states would always endeavour to behave in a way that would favour them first before considering how it would favour other states.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Multinational Joint Task Force should urgently reinvigorate its strategies to cover addressing the root causes of Boko Haram terrorism. This would involve the governments of the states that contributed troops to the MNJTF to ensure that issues of poverty, unemployment, religious fanaticism, and marginalization are adequately tackled in the country. Those found guilty of terrorism should be charged to special court for terrorism and punishment should be urgently meted out to them;

2. Due to the ineffectiveness of the strategies adopted by MNJTF in the fight against Boko Haram, there should be urgent change of strategies for combating the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria. This would involve proactive measures such as providing skills to unemployed youths that are vulnerable to be recruited into the sect. this would equally involve the religious leaders who should be committed to preach against their terrorism activities and the consequences of being involved in the act; MNJTF. There is also a need for a comprehensive, non-kinetic strategy to complete the kinetic approach in which the great powers operate. Only a combination of the two approaches will change the situation and improve the lives of residents in the Chad Basin area and improve the effectiveness of joint forces operations.

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