

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES: EVALUATING THE EFFECT OF BANDITRY AND KIDNAPPING IN NORTH WESTERN NIGERIA AND THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY.

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ABSTRACT

In the last five years, the communities living in Nigeria's Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, Sokoto, Kebbi and Katsina states in the northwest, have been negatively affected by insecurity. About 21 million people living in these states have been exposed to insecurity from activities of bandits and kidnapers. Though unconnected to the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, the banditry violence began as a farmer/herder conflict in 2011 and intensified between 2017 to 2018 to include cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence and killings. The violence has affected about 35 out of 92 local government areas in the 4 states. Therefore, evaluating the situation with the aim of proffering solution through the development of strategic thinking approach as a remedy for attempting to overcome the present day challenges is the main objective of this study. The study is based on a case study design using secondary sources of data. The study employed qualitative research technique for its data analysis. The findings suggest that the skill of leaders represent the knowledge base required for action to implement the vision of what must be accomplished. Furthermore, skills sustain those at senior levels through times of great crisis, allowing them to make timely decisions, issue appropriate orders, and execute plans decisively in the absence of detailed information. Other finding indicates that while the basic tenets of leadership

can be applied without any difficulty, but the greatest challenge faced by senior leadership is of leading subordinates into the face of certain death and motivating them to fight the domestic insecurity and terrorism threats. A recommendation on basis of the current information society, it seems logical that the strategic leadership of all security agencies should put more effort into creating structures and concepts that first of all can cope more effectively both with the network of the bandits/kidnappers and their non-state financiers & sympathisers.

Keywords: *Banditry, Kidnapping, Insecurity, Military, Strategic thinking.*

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study.

The issue of leadership, in general, has long occupied the timely and spatial contexts of a number of theorists and thinkers in all fields of science and human interactions. Its importance resides in its intrinsic value and tremendous impact on both individuals as well as organizations, for it is an intellectually all-encompassing subject. Ironically, this area of study remains a perplexing topic, in most of its parts, because the topic has not yet been experimentally investigated; and there were none or scarcer scientific study on leadership. This is why there is hardly a consensus on an exact definition of the concept.

Therefore, Leadership is both a research area and a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual or organization to 'lead' or 'guide' other individuals, teams, or entire organizations. The changing nature of leadership in the military can be viewed, according to Dandeker (2017) that the military organizations change stemming from both the international environment and their domestic social structures. As a result of changes in the international and domestic contexts, the military establishments are experiencing significant changes in their role and structure and, consequently, in both dimensions of their civil-military relations.

The discovery of gold mines and the activities of illegal miners competing for the control of gold reserves have served to further intensify the existence and activities of armed groups in the northwest. By March 2020, more than 210,000 people have been internally displaced. More than 35,000 refugees

have crossed communal borders to Maradi in Niger Republic by the beginning of March 2020. These refugees are hosted in Madaou in Tahoua region, Dan Dadji Makaou, Garin Kaka and Guidan Roundji.

In addition to displacement, the violence has hampered agricultural activities and heightened the risk of acute food insecurity. Livelihoods have been disrupted, fear and insecurity among the population have increased, and IDPs and host communities are competing for scarce resources such as water, land and food. Protection concerns are heightened for women, children and the elderly, while security, food and WASH are priority needs in affected areas.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

At a time when domestic instability and uncertainty are undeniable, the demand for astute strategic leadership is greater than ever. Unfortunately, tactical triviality and narrow-minded policies of convenience are undermining joint strategic leadership development and the ability to operate effectively. As a result of changes in the international and domestic contexts, the military establishments are experiencing significant changes in their role and structure, and consequently, in both dimensions of their civil-military relations. The cross-border infiltrations by the bandits and the spill over effect of the war in the Sahara and Sahel Africa have compounded the security challenges. Nigeria's Northwest region, while not suffering from the scourge of the Boko Haram insurgency, does have its own serious security challenges. The cocktail of insecurity in the area consists of farmer-pastoralist conflicts and rural banditry. While exploring the drivers of such conflicts across Nigeria's Northwest landscape, the article also would explore the need for a strategic thinking approach to tackle the problems with all might and power of the state and Federal Governments.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To develop a more robust strategic thinking approach that will usher in operational guidelines and rules of engagement as a remedy to overcome the present day challenges facing military leadership in tackling the menace of bandits and kidnapers.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- a) To examine the organisational challenge of tactical supremacy and the lack of a peer-competitor that created complacency and consequently affected the application of strategic thinking in the military establishments.
- b) To evaluate the challenge faced by the military establishments as a result of the multi-faceted nature of insecurity of communal strife, domestic terrorism and insurgency with a view to proffering possible remedy.
- c) To investigate the socio-economic challenge and its impact on the perceived degradation of the societal value system on the attitude of the Officer corps in the military establishment.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The study was guided by the following research questions:-

- a) Is strategic thinking approach been practiced in the military establishment?
- b) Does the challenges posed by domestic terrorism and insurgency overstretched the military establishment thus affected its performance in tackling banditry and kidnapping?
- c) To what extent does the attitude of the Officer corps affected the overall performance of the military in the fight against the bandits and kidnappers in terms of discipline, motivation and morale?

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study took a view of the internal insecurity outlook with the aim of evaluating the situation and to proffer solutions based on the findings. This is an empirical based research, and furthermore, the research adopted a case study approach using the Nigerian military establishment as the focal point of the study. It is also a longitudinal study covering a period of five (5) years (2016 – 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Empirical Research

The bulk of human decisions rely on evidence, that is, what can be measured or proven as valid. In choosing between plausible alternatives, individuals are

more likely to tilt towards the option that is proven to work, and this is the same approach adopted in empirical research.

In empirical research, the researcher arrives at outcomes by testing his or her empirical evidence using qualitative or quantitative methods of observation, as determined by the nature of the research. An empirical research study is set apart from other research approaches by its methodology and features hence; it is important for every researcher to know what constitutes this investigation method.

Empirical research is a type of research methodology that makes use of verifiable evidence in order to arrive at research outcomes. In other words, this type of research relies solely on evidence obtained through observation or scientific data collection methods.

Empirical research can be carried out using qualitative or quantitative observation methods, depending on the data sample, that is, quantifiable data or non-numerical data. Unlike theoretical research that depends on preconceived notions about the research variables, empirical research carries a scientific investigation to measure the experimental probability of the research variables

2.1 Banditry and kidnappings in North western Nigeria.

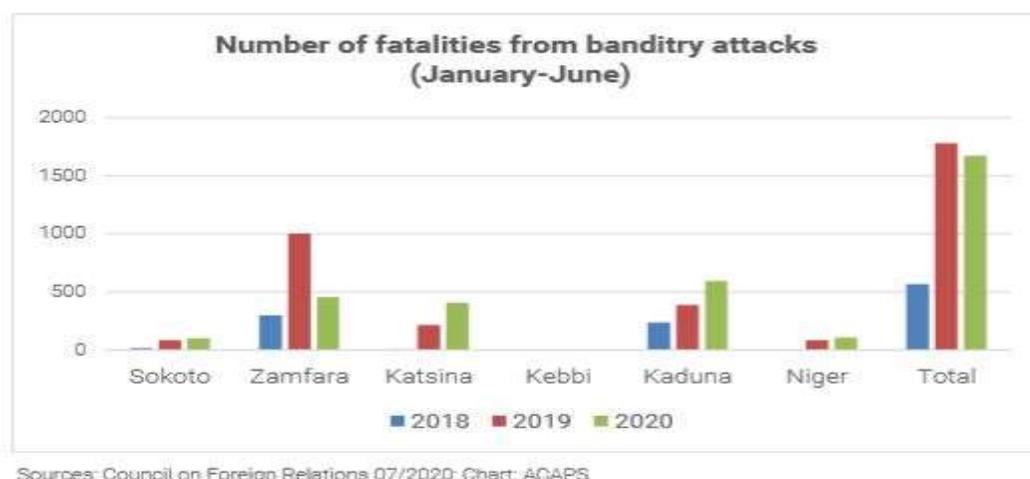
According to Crisis Group Africa Report (2020) Nigeria's arid North West is beset by violence between herders and farmers, which has been compounded by an explosion in criminal activity and infiltration by jihadist groups into the region. The last decade has seen thousands of people killed and hundreds of thousands displaced, with many fleeing into Niger Republic next door

Crisis Group Africa Report (2020) averred that Nigeria's federal and state governments initially responded to the violence primarily through military and police operations, and by prescribing harsher punishments for armed attacks, but results were disappointing. The federal government of Nigeria repeatedly charged troops with orders to eliminate the armed elements that are destabilizing the North West, deploying soldiers and police along with air assets to the region over the course of several consecutive operations. But the security presence on the ground remains too thin and poorly resourced to subdue the armed groups or protect communities across the vast territory. At the same time, military operations against armed groups in the region have dispersed some of them to other regions, deepening insecurity countrywide.

Furthermore, the causes of violence in the North West are complex and inter-related. At its root, the region's security crisis derives from long-running competition over land and water resources between predominantly Fulani herders and mainly Hausa farmers, both of whom have over time mobilized armed groups (referred to by the authorities as "bandits" and "vigilantes", respectively) for protection. Climate change-related environmental degradation and high population growth have intensified this struggle. Amid a boom in the trade of small arms and light weapons in the region, organized gangs operating from ungoverned forests have proliferated, engaging in cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom and armed robbery. Also the presence of miners and traders in the largely unregulated gold mining sector, as well as treasure of communities, aggravated the already bad situation. Having originated in Zamfara state, gang violence has since spread to five other nearby states, namely Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi and Niger, the last of which is in North Central Nigeria. (See figure 1 & 2) below:-



(Figure 1: Source – Adopted from ACAPS. States in Northwestern Nigeria)



(Figure 2: Adopted from ACAPS-Fatalities from banditry attacks)

Strategy and management of internal insecurity Challenges

According to Abubakar (2018), counter insurgency warfare (CIW) has undertaken a new and broader dimension especially in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. For instance, in Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency has become a coke in the wheel of the progress in the North Eastern Nigeria in particular, and Northern Nigeria in general. In Counter insurgency warfare, terror is employed by the irregular adversary as a means to subvert the rule of law and effect change through violence and fear. Insurgency is an asymmetric conflict driven by a philosophy that undermines human needs and aspirations. At the bedrock of such an armed struggle, therefore, exists some grievances that could be historical or generated by inefficient and at times partisan governance. Inept governance provides conditions for the generation of discontent on economic, social, religious, cultural or ethnic lines that over a period manifest into collective aggression and ultimately an armed struggle. The case of the murdered Army General in Dura-Du District of Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State could be the embryonic stage of such discontent manifestation of the economic, social, religious, cultural and ethnic bigotry (Akinroluyo, 2018). Such unconventional warfare seeks to overthrow a constituted mechanism or arrangement of governance and employs subversion and terror as its primary means. Countering insurgency therefore, entails executing an imaginatively evolved campaign on multiple fronts to address the root causes of the imbroglio. It therefore, needs to be remembered by the military pundits formulating asymmetrical war fighting strategies that

neutralizing armed cadres of the movement is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Such warfare besides impinging on the conventional war fighting capabilities of the militaries also imposes on them restrictive rules of engagement, in a battle space marked by a very high degree of unconventionality, uncertainty and irrationality (Abubakar, 2018).

The armed cadres of almost all contemporary insurgency movements show scant regard for the security of civilians, which the traditional insurgents or guerrillas of the yester years showed. Today, almost all insurgency movements are witnessing a very high proliferation of terrorist activity that aims to cause anarchy, paralysis and disorder and helps the perpetrators to shape the asymmetrical battle space. This trend has blurred the distinction between an insurgent and a terrorist. Hence, the noun 'terrorist' is more appropriate to be used to describe all armed cadres of an insurrectionist movement. The terrorists, beyond doubt are the most critical element of any asymmetric environment as they introduce asymmetry into the environment through an irrational, indiscriminate, unpredictable and ruthlessly destructive modus operandi. Knowing their characteristics, capabilities, sources of power from which they derive freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight are, therefore, sine qua non for a military leader to combat the menace of terrorism by Sub conventional Operations. The essential aspects that need to be understood by the military leaders engaged in such operations are as highlighted in the subsequent paragraph.

Sub conventional operational arena poses the most difficult challenge for testing the leadership acumen of commanders at various levels. The volatility, uncertainty and ambiguity of the environment impacts on the decision making and, therefore, underscores the importance of suitable frames of references and training to enable commanders to operate effectively in an arena, which is not clearly demarcated.

What is Leadership?

The fundamental meaning of leadership has not changed in all of recorded history. It has always been about the person in charge of the group. Being a leader has always meant having power over people and the authority to make decisions for the group. The meaning of leadership has been pulled a little bit from the traditionalist status, thus moving it from the dictatorial to more

participative styles, but the essence has remained basically unchanged for centuries.

Basically, leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership knowledge and skills and this referred to as the Process Leadership (Jago, 1982). However, with traits that can influence person's action, this categorisation is called Trait Leadership (Jago, 1982). Consequently, while leadership is learned, the skills and knowledge processed by the leader can be influenced by his/her attributes or traits, such as beliefs, values, ethics, and character. Knowledge and skills contribute directly to the process of leadership, while the other attributes give the leader certain characteristics that make him or her unique.

Leadership is basically a human activity covering with people grouped for a specific intent. Scientific surveys, such as psychological science, group kinetics, work survey, direction techniques and statistics are all import tools that a leader can utilize to the assist the leader to accomplish his aim. Actual leading map remains an art merely because each individual reacts otherwise under the same status. Therefore, in military leadership, the tendency has been to handle it as an art. Stokesbury (2018) sees leadership as an art and it will stay an art.

Leadership in a military environment

Military leadership is defined as “the art of direct and indirect influence and the skill of creating the conditions for organizational success to accomplish missions effectively.” In general, junior leaders exercise their influence directly, while senior leaders must employ both direct and indirect influencing methods.

Military leadership is therefore, process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while command is the authority a person in the military service lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of his rank and assignment or position. The basic responsibilities of a leader are the accomplishment of the mission and the welfare of the soldiers.

The most fundamental and important organizational technique used by military is the chain of command. The chain of command is the sequence of

commanders in an organization who have direct authority and primary responsibility for accomplishing the assigned unit mission while caring for personnel and property in their charge.

Interestingly, while the basic tenets of leadership can be applied to the military environment without any difficulty, the greatest challenge faced by military leadership is of leading subordinates into the face of certain death and motivating them to fight.

In such an environment the military leader has to lead from the front and become the 'larger than life' figure for his subordinates to follow. In the military environment, leadership is not a domain of the few. Ironically, every individual at every level is a leader in his/her own way and thus leadership qualities are a must in all uniformed individuals.

Strategy in warfare is the science or art of employing all the military, economic, political, and other resources of a country to achieve the objects of war. Because strategy is about the relationship between means and ends, the term has applications well beyond war: it has been used with reference to business, the theory of games, and political campaigning, among other activities. It remains rooted, however, in war, and it is in the field of armed conflict that strategy assumes its most complex forms. In that perspective, an American General said "*Leadership* is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without the strategy." (Schwarzkopf, 2010)

Strategic Thinking Approach and its Characteristics

Layton (2018) said that strategy is simply a methodology that can be used to solve specific types of problems and that strategy has a practical purpose for practical people. The type of problems that strategy is intended for are those where an objective – an endpoint - can be defined. The strategy adopted may not succeed but the intention is to achieve this desired outcome. In the case of using military force, Western thinking has stressed that strategy is used to achieve political outcomes; and according to Clausewitz (1984, p 605) "the political object is the goal; war is the means of reaching it..."

According to Layton (2018), the objective in a strategy (as specifically relates to armed conflict) is accordingly best expressed in terms of politics. The field of politics between states has been examined for decades within the academic discipline of International Relations. Its language, concepts and theories

developed over many years can be used to assist defining the ends of a strategy.

LiddellHart (1967) held that the aim of war should be a better peace. Moreover, when fighting ceased, there should be something better, not worse off. Accordingly, the political object is not just the return to the status quo ante as that was the position and which led to the war in the first place. War then aims at the peace beyond, not the war in itself. Clausewitz (1984, p 338) noted that “The political object will thus determine the military objective to be reached...” Achieving the military objective is a stepping-stone to the political end, not an end in itself (Clausewitz, 1984).

In an operation, a strategy constantly evolves in response to the other actors implementing their own countervailing or supportive strategies. Luttwak (1987, p 765)) termed this “the paradoxical logic of strategy” where successful actions cannot be repeated as the other party adapts in response to ensure the same outcome cannot be gained in this way again.

Strategy is simply a particular form of interactive social activity where victory comes from bargaining with those involved.

This attribute reveals the difference between a strategy and a plan. The objects of a strategy actively try to implement their own strategies, changing and evolving as necessary to thwart efforts made to impede them. In a strategy all involved are actively seeking their own ends, which explain the complex level of competitiveness in the strategic power play between negotiators and adversaries (Layton, 2018)

Layne (1998, pp. 2-28) conceived strategy as being solely a balance between ends and means; “strategy is simply the process by which a state matches ends to means.” In the industrial era, victory then seemingly resided with having great mechanised forces; in today’s information technology era, victory seemingly resides with having great information technology. In this perspective, great means leads directly to great victories. Historically however, nations with great means have often found it surprisingly difficult to convert these into achieving their desired ends (Macdonald, 2011).

Understandably, given its great means, the United States of America should have been able to readily achieve its objectives in Afghanistan after 2001, in Iraq after 2003 or indeed in the 1960-70s in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The outcomes actually achieved suggest strategy is more than the

simple balancing of ends and means. The ways also need deep consideration. Freedman (2013, p.21) observed that strategy is “about getting more out of a situation than the starting balance of power would suggest.” Furthermore, good strategy involves an astute course of action, a shrewd ‘way’, that is additive to the available power; the impact of the means is then magnified. In contrast, poor strategy subtracts from the available means; it destroys the power possessed. This might all be simplified into $Ends = Ways + Means$, although it is essential to recall the integral impossibility of actually summing dissimilar objects. The formula highlights that if a strategy fails it may not be solely due to inadequate means; there could be shortcomings in the way the means are used as well. If the means are meagre, the ends may still be achievable through using the means in more clever ways without needing to adjust the ends downwards.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

A research design assists to provide a specific direction for a study (Yin 2009). In a qualitative study, there are various designs such as narrative, phenomenological research, grounded theory, ethnography and case studies (Cresswell 2013). This study is based on a case study design using secondary sources of data. The case study method is another common data gathering method in an empirical research study. It involves sifting through and analysing relevant cases and real-life experiences about the research subject or research variables in order to discover in-depth information that can serve as empirical data.

Empirical research has the advantage of flexibility. In this type of systematic investigation, the researcher can adjust the research methodology including the data sample size, data gathering methods plus the data analysis methods as necessitated by the research process.

Conversely, the empirical research study is time-consuming because the researcher needs to gather the empirical data from multiple resources which typically takes a lot of time, and is one of its demerits.

Secondary data

According to Saunders, Levis and Thornhill (2007), secondary data includes raw data and unpublished summaries which have been collected for other purposes. This implies that the required information is available and only needs to be extracted by the researcher (Kumar 1996). Secondary research provides basis for supporting and explaining questions (Ghauri and Gronhaug 2005).

Secondary data could include organisational data, books, and journal, audio and video recorded materials to obtain historical and other forms of information (McGivern 2006; Kumar 1996). In furtherance to this approach, the desk research was adopted. This research technique is mainly acquired by sitting at a desk. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. However, it could also be a complete waste of time and money if the researcher does not have the proper knowledge of how the research is performed.

Justification

Desk research is very effective and can be conducted in starting phase of the intended research as it is quite quick and cheap and most of the basic information could be easily fetched which can be used as benchmark in the research process.

There are basically two types of desk research techniques, i.e. the internal desk research which can be treated as the most reasonable starting point of research for any organization. Much information could be generated internally within the organization as a course of normal process. Then the external desk research involves research done outside the organizational boundaries and collecting relevant information. These outside resources include the online desk research where there is incredible amount of data available online on internet. It's important for the researcher to be information specific while fetching out this information as there are billions of pages available on internet. There could be two approaches for digging out the relevant information from internet, one is directly browsing the specific information from industrial, marketing or business sites and extracting the information out of these sites. Secondly, using the various search engines like

www.google.com, www.yahoo.com, www.infoseek.go.com, www.altavista.com etc., for modulated searching. The important aspect here is to refine the searching techniques in such a way that results are promising and relevant. For this it is necessary that the researcher should know the importance of the research and follow the guideline intellectually to reduce the efforts made and time consumed in searching.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Socio-economic Challenges

The working environment within the Armed Forces is changing at a rapid pace, greatly influenced by the growing manpower challenges of attracting and retaining a quality workforce, shifting changes in social value systems and technological advancements. These trends cannot be treated as separate issues. Their interdependent effects will continue to exert powerful influences on the armed forces, its culture, and how leadership is viewed. It is important to re-appreciate traditional motivation tools and philosophies in the light of modern social changes. By adapting emerging leadership approaches in a manner suitable for the armed forces, its overall efficiency can be enhanced in the future. Despite these social changes, the need for military leaders with strong fundamentals- character, integrity, and ethics will not change.

The changing nature of warfare and expansion of national interests well beyond geographical boundaries have placed fresh challenges on leadership. Materialism and economic progress have exerted their own pressures on the moderately paid practitioners of the military profession. Intense media scrutiny has also resulted in many leadership aberrations being made in the public, forcing the military leadership to increasingly look inwards and focus on ethics and values. There has been pyramidal structure in the armed forces; competition has always been intense and soldiers in the past have retired or exited from service gracefully and with minimum fuss. This was mainly due to the fact that the honour code was so ingrained in officers that aberrations were kept in-house, to preserve the reputation of the defence services, and not wash dirty linen in public. These are leadership problems that are indispensable and obvious!

Today, things are completely different. Military leaders do not want to retire young because of economic and resettlement uncertainties. There is, at times,

an intense desire in many leaders whose ambition exceeds their ability to rise in rank by 'hook or crook'. Increasing transparency has now come into play and leaders who feel they have been denied rightful place in the sun have started taking the legal route to redress their grievances, bringing issues of fair play, ethics and values into the limelight.

The Changes in Value System i.e. degradation of the value system in society as a whole has had a profound effect on the officer corps. Individualism, materialism, economic gains and success at all costs are all traits embedded in the present day society. The individuals joining the service also form part of this society and therefore cannot totally escape from its effects. Today's armed forces reflect many of the trends of the modern society. The self-motivation levels of the officers have become abysmally low seeing the very rulers of the country indulging in all sorts of corruption and malpractice. A small section of officers could have incidentally indulged in mere career advancements to gain power and monetary benefits rather than working towards the betterment of the military organisation. Even though extant empirical evidence could be absent for some obvious reasons, the reality on ground could lay some credence to the allegation. These young officers simply and amusingly view the 'service' as a mere contractual obligation.

The officer cadre comprises people from all walks of life, increasingly from middle to lower middle class strata with degree and possibly higher degree achievements. Their first exposure to command and the values associated with leadership is only after being exposed to the pressures of leadership. In the absence of experience and leadership training from the very basic levels, it is not surprising that this unique responsibility is inadequately handled.

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Summary

Keeping military capabilities up to date - which means combat-ready - in an environment characterized by a widened threat scenario is the bottom line of military leadership at the strategic level.

This statement has some very specific implications concerning where to focus attention. There will be the need to concentrate on aspects connected with the information era. There are certainly other major challenges for our top military personnel, such as the ever-present media pressure, the never-ending

interaction with political masters and, especially when it comes to on-going operations, the provision of information to the public, but these are things that have to be faced on a day-to-day basis.

The Nigerian federal government and the governments of the North West states have been responding in various ways to the region's violence. These responses have ranged from security and enforcement measures against all "bandit" groups, including herder-allied armed groups and criminal gangs, to offers of amnesty to some herder-allied groups. Thus far, the measures have achieved limited results.

The federal government's attempts to contain armed groups in the North West have largely depended on the security forces. Since 2016, the federal police has launched several "anti-banditry" operations, focusing on herder-allied armed groups and roving criminal gangs. Starting in 2016, the army has also expanded troop presence in the region, converting the Falgore forest in Kano state into a permanent training ground, establishing three new forward operating bases in that forest and in the Kafanchan and Kachia local government areas of Kaduna state, and launching five operations under "anti-banditry" mandates. The air force, which has become increasingly involved since 2017, has also deployed new units (including special forces personnel) and, since 2018, conducted numerous aerial operations targeting forest encampments of herder-allied armed groups and criminal groups.

Military operations arguably have had an impact. The army and police have arrested hundreds of men suspected of being part of herder-allied armed groups and criminal gangs, killed hundreds of others, destroyed some of their forest camps, recovered arms and ammunition, and rescued hundreds of kidnapped persons. More recently, the police conducted operations in which it reported killing hundreds of roving armed group elements and Ansaru members.

Despite these gains, however, the security forces have been unable to subdue the vast array of armed groups. Even with the stepped-up efforts, the available manpower, logistics and equipment are insufficient to respond promptly to armed groups' attacks. Troops lack the motorcycles they need to travel on roads that are impassable for cars and trucks. The army also lacks sufficient helicopters to deploy troops rapidly to remote locations. Locals said that although military operations (Operations Harbin Kunama I and II) expelled

many criminal groups from their forest camps in 2016 and early 2017, the army failed to consolidate those gains and hold territory, enabling the groups to soon reorganise and return. Many vulnerable rural communities are far from any military post, resulting in late responses to their distress calls, with soldiers sometimes reaching them many hours after attacks. Others under attack are sometimes unable to reach security agencies due to poor telephone services.

RECOMMENDATION

Better supported border security and stamping down on corruption: - The federal government must collaborate with state governments to address the immediate challenge of border porosity. Concerted efforts to recruit, train, and post adequately equipped customs and immigration personnel to the region can boost surveillance and stem the tide of the free flow of arms into the country. Moreover, addressing corruption here is pivotal, because border patrol is a major racket for security forces and government officials. The ongoing military response must also be sustained through strategic coordination with the counterterrorism unit of the Nigerian police force, while the recent introduction of drone surveillance and anti-banditry bombardment is maintained.

Improved law enforcement: - The over dependence on military presence and involvement in tackling the menace of banditry and kidnapping has aggravated the already fluid situation, thus creating an image of all-out-war with the local bandits to the detriment of the military as the bandits are operating purely on the basis of ‘Gorilla Warfare’ and this is overstretching the intelligence and fighting capacity of the military as the fighting force.

Moreover, the federal government must prioritize law enforcement solutions in tackling rising insecurity in the northwest by involving policing and intelligence gathering. Policing is critical to intelligence gathering in identifying and tracking the cells of criminal groups in the states and aiding community response to insecurity.

Collaboration with neighbouring countries: - Another effort toward border security is the creation of a bilateral joint task force between Nigeria and Niger to serve as a trans-border security force resourced and managed through the immigration and custom services of both countries. The joint task force

should be matched with immediate and precise action to prevent wide-scale terrorist and bandit movements across the borders.

Strategic investments in human and infrastructural development: - Such investments can work to solve the long-term, underlying challenges created by poor governance and deepening poverty that feed such insecurity.

Concerted local engagement: - The federal and state governments must collaborate with the established religious and traditional institutions to build community resilience against the bandits and kidnappers

Furthermore, the overarching challenge is to appoint military leaders at the strategic level with enough vision to be able to break a tendency that has been repeated over and over again: the tendency to meet the threats of tomorrow with tools designed for yesterday's warfare.

With reference to the potential of the information society, it seems logical that the strategic leadership of the military establishment should put more effort into creating structures and concepts that first of all can cope more effectively both with the network of the bandits/kidnappers and of the non-state actors.

Professional skills encompass the Conceptual skill, Competency skill and Communication skill. Therefore, the skills of leaders represent the knowledge base required for action to implement the vision of what must be accomplished. If properly developed, skills provide the means to plan and direct the battles and campaigns.

Consequently, skills will normally sustain those at senior levels through times of great crisis, allowing them to make timely decisions, issue appropriate orders, and execute plans decisively in the absence of detailed information. Not every skill needed will be important in every situation. But having a broad range of highly developed skills will greatly increase the chances for success.

CONCLUSION

There are a number of components that are necessary to strategic thinking in the military organization. First, there is the need to maintain a clear perspective; ensuring there is the full concern specifically with the goals of the organization and the safety and well-being of all parties involved. Second, there is the need to develop the knowledge of strategies, tactics, and past occurrences. Through this, there will be the existence of the factual basis for making clear decisions that are rooted in logic. Third, there is the need to

display self-awareness. Knowing the individual role in the organization and the steps that everyone needs to take to bring the organization success is essential to demonstrate strategic thinking.

Finally, there is the need to be flexible. Strategic thinking is not demonstrated in one's rigidity and strict adherence to a policy. Instead, strategic thinking reflects an individual ability to adapt to a new situation or to address changing factors as they arise. It is only through the manifestation of these various characteristics that one will be able to demonstrate strategic thinking in any organization, but especially in the Nigerian military establishments.

Understandably, security operations against armed groups are important to curbing violence in Nigeria's North West, but they will not secure the region durably. The same is true of dialogues with them: while valuable, many of the gains produced by earlier amnesty programs and cash rewards have proven short-lived.

Sustainable peace requires a more comprehensive response by Nigerian authorities, at both the state and federal levels that addresses drivers of violence in the region.

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