



REGIONAL SECURITY OPERATIONS AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN LAKE CHAD BASIN: AN ASSESSMENT OF NIGERIA'S NATIONAL INTEREST IN THE REGION

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Abstract

Since 2009, Boko Haram has attacked the North-East of Nigeria, capturing territories and spreading to some parts of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. This means that the LCB region practically needs serious interventions. Nigeria started an onslaught on Boko Haram at the onset of its activities in the North-East; however, before the formation of the joint task force by the Lake Chad Basin regional authorities, the activities of the sect had spread to neighbouring countries. It is very clear that nations always strive to protect their core interests, which security and defence always come first. The involvement of Nigeria in the security activities of the Lake Chad Basin can be seen as a means of achieving her national interest regarding safety, sovereign and national integrity. This paper attempts a critical assessment of Nigeria's national interest in the Lake Chad Basin security operations. The paper argues that, Nigeria's strong attachment to its territorial integrity was a national interest that hampered the effectiveness of regional collective security arrangement; therefore, the Lake Chad countries will continue to face strings of complex security challenges, at least till the near future. This holds to the fact that most of the countries in the LCB are not ready to play down on conflicting national interest to focus on full support of collective security for their mutual benefits by building a stronger and formidable regional security architecture.

Keywords: *Security, Region, National Interest, Nigeria, Lake Chad Basin.*

Introduction

Since 2009, Boko Haram has attacked the North-East of Nigeria, capturing territories and spreading to some parts of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) region of Niger, Chad and Cameroon. Nigeria started an onslaught on Boko Haram at the onset of its activities in the North-East; however, before the formation

of the joint task force by the Lake Chad Basin regional authorities, the activities of the sect had spread to neighbouring countries. Apparently the terrorists targeted these countries for attacks in retribution for their participation in the regional joint task force and for daring to support Nigeria's efforts in quelling the insurgency (Enobi & Johnson-Rokosu, 2016). The cost of combating the attacks and defeating the terrorist group has been confounding and has already taken its toll on the LCB.

The escalation and intractability of the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Region created what Buzan (2008) refers to as "regional security complex", the interconnectedness of complex security concerns among states that compels a form of collaboration or alliances. There are several perspectives to the insurgency and counterinsurgency in the LCR. National interests and military strategies have played significant roles in the choices of military alliances by states against a common adversary. Extant literature has established an inextricable link between states' strategic national interest and choice of participation in regional military alliances or collaboration (Schmidt, 2018; Tar & Mustapha, 2017; Wesley, 2017). Military strategies are only tools for the protection of the strategic interests of participating nations. In complex security situations, marked by historical contradictions, there could be layers of conflicting national interests that tend to blur the common goal of collective security actors.

Hitting international radars in 2013, the current humanitarian crisis of the Lake Chad Basin region is characterized by massive displacements, food insecurity, and incidents of civil conflict. Violence continues to displace people within Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. In communities hosting IDPs, refugees, and returnees, the presence of additional families is straining local resources and exacerbating food, relief commodity, shelter, livelihood, and protection needs, among others. Productive activities, including agriculture, fishing, livestock rearing, and the trade of the respective products, have been interrupted by episodes of Boko Haram's insurgency and systemic violence. Furthermore, community assets and food reserves have been destroyed, which contributes to an already severe problems of food security and prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM). All this means that the LCB region practically needs serious interventions. Hence the need to evaluate the efforts of Nigeria in restoring or maintaining regional security in the LCB within the context of political, economic and military considerations in relation to her national interest.

Conceptual Clarification

Security: Security is a fragile and significant issue which bears different meanings to scholars, analysts, policy makers and organizations across the globe. Basically, security has to do with the presence of peace, safety, gladness and the protection of human and physical resources or absence of crisis or threats to human dignity, all of which facilitate development and progress of any human society. The concept of security has become a preoccupation for the decades following the end of the Cold War which could also be referred to as landmark for diverse school of thought with security studies. Security, as a concept, has diverse dimensions. It is aptly used in psychology, finance, information access, public safety, defense and military matters. Security refers to the state of being safe or free from criminal activities such as terrorism, theft or espionage. That is protection from hostile force, but in a wide range of other senses: for example, as the absence of harm (e.g. freedom from wants); as the presence of essential goods (e.g. food security); as resilience against potential damage or harm (e.g. secure foundations), etc.

Regional Security: Regional Security refers to as the distinct and stable patterns of security interaction between actors. This means that an actor's security concerns are primarily generated in their immediate neighbourhood. The security of each actor in a region interacts with the security of the other actors.

National Interest: National Interest can be defined as the general long term and continuing purpose which the states, nation and the government see themselves as serving. The national interest of a state is rooted in the social consciousness and in the cultural identity of the people.

Theoretical Framework

This paper anchored on the realist theory. The theory of Realism could be traced to such ancient practitioners and thinkers as Sun Tzu (544 – 496 B.C) the Chinese General and the author of “*The Art of War*,” Thucydides (460 – 399 B.C) a Greek Historian and the author of “*The History of Peloponnesian War*” and Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 – 1527) a political philosopher and the author of “*The Prince*.” Therefore, more recently, realism as a tool of analysis took center stage in diplomacy when Otto Von Bismarck (1815 – 1898), the Iron Chancellor, who engineered the unification of Germany under Prussian control. Nevertheless, it finally

became a tool of analysis when it emerged in the year surrounding the Second World War (1939 – 1945) as the dominant theory in the new found discipline of International Relations. Some classic proponents of Realist school of thought are Edward H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau, who argued in his work “*Politics among Nations*” (1973:13), that “*International Politics, like all politics is a struggle for power.*” Realism’s foundation is the principle of dominance; alternatives based on reciprocity and identity (Goldstein & Pavese, 2009).

The realists opined that world politics is driven by competitive self-interest. Realism therefore believes that the decisive dynamic amongst nations is struggle for power in an effort by each to reserve, or preferably, improve its military security and economic welfare in competition with other countries. Furthermore, the realists see this struggle for power as a “ZERO-SUM GAME,” one in which a gain for one country is inevitably a loss to the other. According to Machiavelli (1512), national interest can best be pursued in terms of power. He believes in the naked potency of power when it comes to the issue of national interest. In other words, the best way in which the state can achieve her interests also called the “raison d’état” without having accidents is through power. Realism dominated in the Cold War years because it provided simple but powerful explanations for war, alliances, imperialism, obstacles to cooperation, and other international phenomena, and because its emphasis on competition was consistent with the central features of the American-Soviet rivalry (Walt, 1998:31).

According to Morgenthau (1973), nations as having nothing to “follow...but one guiding star, one standard for thought, one rule for action: the national interest.” The realist theory is also known as the power theory (Mbachu, 2013:27). Morgenthau (1973) defined power as man’s control over the minds and actions of other men. He observed that, whenever a nation strives to realize their goal by means of international politics, they do so by striving for power.

Linking the theory to this paper, it is very clear that nations always strive to protect their core interests, which security and defence always come first. The involvement of Nigeria in the security activities of the Lake Chad Basin can be seen as a means of achieving her national interest regarding safety, sovereign and national integrity. It is therefore on this note that this theory fits into this paper.

Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin Security Operations

It is a known fact that the MNJTF has undertaken a few major operations to counter Boko Haram. The dynamics surrounding the split of Boko Haram into two factions have had an impact on the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), as one of the largest operations, *Gama Aiki* (Hausa for Finish the Job) was launched in June 2016, in response to the devastating attack in Bosso, Niger). In the aftermath of that incident, Chadian troops were sent to Niger, indicative of both the level of military cooperation in response to the common threat posed by violent extremist groups present in the Lake Chad region, but also the pivotal role in which the Chadian Armed Forces have played in kick-starting operations against the militants. *Gama Aiki* ran through September 2016, and was replaced with Operation *Rawan Kada* (Crocodile Dance, also referred to as *Gama Aiki II*) later in the year. *Rawan Kada* had a greater emphasis on stabilization in the same area (African Union, 21 April 2017).

Yet smaller scale incidents have persisted and militants retain a stronghold in northern Borno and parts of Lake Chad, with frequent incursions across the border to Niger, denoting the limits of achievement and the need for sustained military pressure in the region. As the follow-up, the MNJTF announced in April 2018 Operation *Anmi Fakat*, aimed at consolidating the gains of *Rawan Kada* (PR Nigeria, 26 April 2018). With that operation in its infancy, it is too early to tell if it will make a decisive impact on the operations of ISIS-WA in the region. Joint cooperation along the Nigerian-Cameroon border, close to JAS areas of influence, has occurred both within the framework of the MNJTF, and also bilaterally.

At the national level, the Lake Chad Basin countries have undertaken various offensives to degrade Boko Haram. Nigerian security operations in Nigeria, the military, through the command of *Operation Lafiya Dole*, has undertaken a series of actions aimed at both groups, although it is unclear the level to which it has been able to take advantage of the split, or incorporate the factional divide into operational planning, given the distinct tactics pursued by each group (interviewed with government researcher, Abuja, 30 May 2017). Overall, the military initially enjoyed successes in recapturing territory from Boko Haram, but since then a sort of status quo has set in, with limited developments that erode the capacity of both factions. The retaking of many major towns has created conditions for the gradual return of civilians and administrative authority to some LGAs. Yet this dynamic is restricted to urban centres, as rural areas of most Borno LGAs remain too insecure (Nigeria-Counter-Insurgency-Strategy, 2017). This has led to concerns that the military is pursuing a 'garrison town' strategy and largely abandoning the countryside (Carsten and Lanre, 2017). The military has also prioritized the securing of transport routes, evidenced by the much-heralded reopening of the Maiduguri-Banki road in March 2018. Yet similar

to the focus on urban centres, militants remain capable of conducting attacks along re-opened routes. The struggle to degrade the militants to the point whereby rural security improves was epitomized in early 2018, when President Buhari approved a controversial \$1 billion withdrawal from Nigeria's excess crude account, in part to purchase military equipment to reinvigorate the battle against Islamic militancy. Ground forces have been a major aspect of the military response, particularly in south-central Borno, where *Operation Deep Punch I and II* have seen a number of incursions into the Sambisa Forest area.

Public pronouncements related to Shekau include Buhari's fanfare around the clearing of Sambisa Forest in December 2016 and a 40-day ultimatum for Shekau's capture in July 2017, ISIS-WA has not garnered the same amount of public attention (This Day, 23 July 2017). While such statements are just one reflection of the Nigerian Army's approach, the predominant overt focus given to Shekau appears to reflect a greater obsession with his group (Skype interview with humanitarian worker, 2017).

The fact that the MNJTF is only part of a wider response to Boko Haram makes it hard to evaluate. Any success against the various militant factions around Lake Chad depends to a large degree on the policies of each of the states themselves, of which joint operations are only one component. The MNJTF's record appears mixed. The joint force has scored some victories against militants. It has at times reversed their gains and freed civilians captured by them or trapped in areas they controlled. Moreover, working together has allowed forces to learn about and from each other, and boosted the principle of cross-border operations and cooperation. Gains have, however, tended to prove short-lived. Due partly to Boko Haram's ability to adapt, partly to the operations' intermittent nature and partly to the lack of subsequent security arrangements and stabilization initiatives, jihadist factions have been able to regroup.

The MNJTF is an expression of the willingness of the states involved to cooperate, yet their commitment to the joint force has ebbed and flowed. Nigeria's commitment has proven particularly variable. The country faces a dizzying range of threats, from Boko Haram itself to herder-farmer violence largely in its middle belt, mounting banditry in the North-West and a still unstable Niger Delta. In 2016 and 2017, Abuja's attention to Boko Haram dwindled. Many top officials may have taken their eye off the ball, as President Buhari declared at the end of 2015 that militants were on the verge of defeat. Many military units were redeployed for law enforcement around the country.

In this light, it is striking that the MNJTF not only exists nearly five years later, but is frequently operational, including its sustained efforts in 2019. The force's activity compares favourably with some other African-led military operations, such as the G5 Sahel, which has struggled since its

creation to deploy on the ground amid disagreements over funding and command chains. It is all the more remarkable given that the MNJTF has, overall, received little international funding. That operations have continued likely owes partly to the Nigerian governments and senior military officers' discomfort with having to call several times on Chadian forces to fight Boko Haram on Nigerian soil. The MNJTF allows them to frame such operations as multilateral cooperation. Equally, while politicians' commitment has wavered, senior officials and officers in capitals, in national units in the field, and among those deployed into the MNJTF, remain committed to joint action against Boko Haram. They are also convinced that the MNJTF provides vital opportunities for sharing experience and learning.

The Correlation between Nigeria's National Interest and Regional Security among the Lake Chad Basin Countries

How Nigeria has fared in the face of all these issues and challenges within the context of her national interest is the focus of this section of the paper. It should be recalled that since June 2016 when the MNJTF finally took off, it has recorded some significant successes against Boko Haram terrorists through its operations. As a result of the attack in Bosso, Niger Republic, the MNJTF established Operation Gama Aiki (Operation Complete Task) as offensive against insurgents in Niger. Gama Aiki was replaced in September with Operation Rawan Kada (Crocodile Dance or Gama Aiki II), with a stabilization mission, and announced the fulfillment of its objectives in mid-2017. It was replaced by a consolidation mission tagged Operation Anmi Fakat, aimed at consolidating the gains of Rawan Kada. The consequence of the offensive was a significant decimation of Boko Haram's capability to stage continuous lethal attacks on multiple fronts. The group (and its factions) have been confined to the Sambisa Forests and can only occasionally stage suicide or sporadic attacks without holding any known territory. Dze-Ngwa (2018), observed that since the end of operation Gama Aiki "the ISIS-WA faction has not launched an assault in the area near Bosso". Much of the offensive has occurred in the rural area where Boko Haram had unfettered access within the Lake Chad region.

The initial glaring incapacity of the MNJTF in routing the Boko Haram terror group and even suffering heavy casualties are related to the factors of participating nations placing premium values on national interest and military strategies over collective security. Nigeria's strong attachment on its territorial integrity was a national interest that hampered the effectiveness of regional collective security arrangement.

Nigeria's action has to be understood within the historical contradictions and conflicts over territory with all the other three major actors. Nigeria's conflict with Cameroon over the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula got to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In 2006, the ICT delivered judgment in

favour of Cameroon thus ceding the territory to Cameroon. The two countries opted for the Green Tree Agreement of 2006. As Albert (2017) points out, the Nigerian Senate was to reject the verdict of the ICT arguing that such decision to cede a part of her territory to Cameroon contravenes section 12 (1) of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution and this has left some deep level of suspicion and mistrust between the two neighbours.

Furthermore, Nigeria's relationship with Chad is historically marred with conflicts over water and related resources in the Lake Chad as well as the expulsion of Chaldean nationals during the latter's civil war in the 1980s (Albert, 2017; Vogt, 1987). The unclear demarcation of the Nigeria/Chad border has remained a source of conflict among border communities who sometimes claim exclusive ownership of the Lake Chad and deny their neighbours access to fishing and water (Albert, 2017). Omenma and Hendricks (2018), reported that Nigeria's relationship with Niger has also witnessed some conflicts over access to water in the southwest end of the Lake Chad. Over the years, the national interest of protecting territorial integrity amidst disputes has become important to the four countries in the region. Even though they had military alliance, their quest to maintain territorial integrity has continued to rob them of rare opportunities to vanquish a lethal force as Boko Haram. The other three countries were not keen to grant Nigeria the "right of hot pursuit" just as Nigeria equally denied them same. As each manned its own borders, they work across purposes such that when Nigeria announced ceasefire in October 2014 due to negotiations to free the Chibok girls, Chad disclosed the pending liberation of the girls and Cameroon announced offensive against Boko Haram (Antimbom, 2016; Pérouse de Montclos, 2015).

Similarly, Zenn (2013) holds that training cells belonging to Boko Haram have been found in Niger's towns of Diffa and Zinder. This assertion was corroborated by Comolli (2015) who reports that Zinder and Diffa serve as corridors for terrorists' migration from northern Mali to Nigeria's North-East. Just like Chad and Niger, Cameroon equally provided a safe haven for Boko Haram terrorists in cities such as Mora, Kousseri, Fokotol, and Banki-Amchide, from where the insurgents conducted cross-border attacks on Nigeria (Zenn, 2013). Omenma (2019) and Comolli (2015) report that Boko Haram had cells in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger used as refuge for planning and conducting attacks on Nigeria. Some analysts have attributed the successful attacks on Nigeria's oil exploration team on 26 July, 2017 as sabotage by Chad to frustrate Nigeria's oil exploration in the Lake Chad.

Boko Haram's successful attacks against the MNJTF have also been linked to military strategies of participating nations. For instance, command and control, which refers to "the authority by a designated commander over assigned forces in the accomplishments of a mission", was difficult for the MNJTF. Troops sometimes worked at cross purpose due to conflicting

orders from political and military leaders whose allegiance lie with their national government. For instance, troop contributed to the MNJTF in Baga by Niger were relocated to Bosso town in November 2014 without the knowledge of the MNJTF Commander (Akerejola, n.d). This relocation opened a flank which was exploited by Boko Haram to rout the MNJTF from Baga on January 6 2015. In addition, the collaboration of troops from Anglophone (Nigeria) and Francophone (Cameroon, Chad and Niger) creates some difficulties in procedures for tactical maneuvers and intelligence sharing (Akerejola, n.d). This also affects the sharing of intelligence as Chad would rather share intelligence with Niger and Cameroon even though there is the RIFU. Language barrier creates a time lag the luxury of which combatants in the field do not possess. The Lake Chad countries will continue to face complex security challenges, at least till the near future. Given global rise in the impact of climate change and state fragility in the region, natural resources such as water will continue to intertwine with other socio-economic factors to make the region a fertile ground to be exploited by criminal elements. This is in addition to the fact that global Islamic jihadists are not in a hurry to denounce violence.

The Challenges encountered by Nigeria in trying to Combat, Quell and ensure Regional Security in the Lake Chad Basin

As Nigeria struggled throughout 2013 to contain the burgeoning insurgency, its neighbours responded slowly and unevenly. At first, leaders in Cameroon, Chad and Niger reacted with caution and denial, for the most part seeing the group as a primarily Nigerian problem and refusing to acknowledge that it had gained a foothold at home. Gradually, however, their concerns about the insurgency mounted, with Chadian President Idriss Déby, worried that the violence was asphyxiating his country's economy, the most vocal. Starting in 2014, the three countries gradually deployed more troops to affected areas, mobilized vigilante groups and, in Chad and Cameroon, passed draconian counter-terrorism legislation. Their greater involvement drew Boko Haram's ire. Militant attacks, which Boko Haram leaders described as a response to those states' decisions to join counter-insurgency operations, escalated in 2014 and 2015.

Still, regional cooperation in this key period was patchy at best. For every successful cross-border operation, there were many requests from field commanders that superiors rejected and many manoeuvres that were poorly coordinated. Most notable was a failed attempt to mediate a hostage release from Boko Haram, led by Chad and Nigeria in 2013, which ended in acrimony between the two countries, as each blamed the other for the failure. Significant mistrust among all four countries, relating in part to the different perceptions of the threat and disagreements over how to handle it, continually obstructed their ability to work together. Historic antagonisms

did not help. Nigeria's border disputes with all three neighbours on Lake Chad, along with a quarrel with Cameroon on the oil-rich Bakassi peninsula to the south, meant that Abuja was instinctively less inclined to cooperate. In addition, Nigerian mistrust of external intervention on its soil runs deep, informed by foreign support for Biafran rebels in the late 1960s. While these factors did not preclude the governments from working together (and, indeed, Abuja recognizes that Yaoundé supported Nigeria during the Biafra war), they created an undercurrent of distrust and initially curtailed deeper cooperation, especially among the countries' armies.

A number of early decisions would resonate throughout the joint force's operations. First, the AU "authorized" the force but did not "mandate" it, meaning that participating states retained control over the mission. In other words, the AU provided a vital legal framework, and allowed for greater donor funding, but did not obtain the oversight or management it has over, for example, the AU mission in Somalia (which it does mandate). Indeed, over the first two or three years of joint operations, the AU's role was limited to discussions on the CONOPS, providing MNJTF civilian staff and officers some training on the protection of civilians and monitoring human rights compliance through a small AU civilian team at the MNJTF N'Djamena headquarters.

Secondly, the CONOPS defined an operational area for the MNJTF that covers Lake Chad and extends some way along the border between Nigeria and Niger. This arrangement left out large expanses affected by the insurgency, notably parts of the Nigeria-Cameroon border zone and still larger swathes of Nigeria's Borno state. It divided the area of operations into four sectors, each in one of the four countries, and each with its own headquarters. It also gave MNJTF units a standing right to hot pursuit 20km over borders.

Thirdly, the Lake Chad states shelved their initial plans for a more integrated force. The four governments had considered putting in place cross-border sectors. Instead, they opted for sectors entirely within single countries, aiming to avoid legal and political complications that may have arisen from permanent cross-border deployments and to reassure Nigeria that such deployments into its territory would be limited. The four countries' contingents thus operate almost exclusively on home soil, except during large-scale joint operations. The initial CONOPS provided for the force commander position to rotate among participating states, but this idea was later rejected, and Nigeria given the authority to appoint the force commander, in order to ensure Abuja's full buy-in.

Furthermore, the AU designated the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) as the mission's political component. The four Lake Chad countries set up the LCBC in the 1960s, initially to deal with environmental issues and later to coordinate the efforts to stop cross-border criminality. But it remained

dormant or weakly resourced. Participating countries put it forward in 2015 as a political lead for the MNJTF due to the need to have a civilian point of contact for the AU and for donors, who were reluctant to deal exclusively with a military set-up.

Disagreements among officials of the four countries over whether Boko Haram is a regional or a primarily Nigerian phenomenon have not helped. Many senior military officers and seasoned observers in Chad, Niger and Cameroon see their countries as suffering collateral damage from a problem that largely stems, in their view, from Nigerian incompetence. In contrast, some of their Nigerian's counterparts point to the toehold that Boko Haram has gained in neighbouring countries as an indication of complicity among security forces, customs agents and other officials. These contrasting perceptions, occasionally expressed in finger pointing, undercut the region's solidarity and the capability of its response.

The MNJTF's shortcomings reflect the four countries' somewhat erratic commitment, and to some degree that of donors, to fighting Boko Haram. The diverse threat that militants pose in the four countries also hinders coherent regional action. Though the four countries are fighting a common enemy, in reality each has pursued a different set of goals, which are themselves subject to change. The Nigerian authorities have at times been battling a full-blown insurgency that controls large tracts of the country's north east. In contrast, Cameroon has mostly dealt with a cross-border menace, even if that has at times involved repelling well-planned and equipped attacks on its border garrisons. For its part, Chad has focused on periodic skirmishes on the lake and protecting supply routes through Cameroon. Niger has also undertaken mostly containment operations along its border and, occasionally, larger counter-insurgency operations at home or in Nigeria. The divergent objectives complicate the multilateral response as officers from each country seek different things – from limited containment operations in someone else's territory to sustained counter-insurgency in their own. The MNJTF's shortcomings also reflect the four countries' somewhat erratic commitment, and to some degree that of donors, to fighting Boko Haram. After the 2016 and 2017 operations, attention to counter-insurgency efforts waned for the better part of two years. ISWAP's resurgence in late 2018 prompted another more concerted response, with the prolonged 2019 campaign hailed by close observers and MNJTF officers as a departure from previous shorter operations. But it is far from clear whether that operation did in fact represent a turn toward more systematic cooperation, embedded in information sharing and joint planning. Indeed, the largely unilateral Chadian offensive in 2020 and Déby's impatience with his counterparts illustrate the persistent difficulties states have faced in working together.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Over the years, the national interest of protecting territorial integrity amidst disputes has become important to the four countries in the LCB region. Even though they had military alliance, their quest to maintain territorial integrity has continued to deny them of rare opportunities to vanquish the menace Boko Haram.

Argument about the quest for energy by Nigeria's neighbours and how such national interest aided the success of the insurgents and crippled the regional architecture has been well made and this underscored the point that national energy interest fuels the insurgency in the region more than any other factor. The initial poor performance of MNJTF demonstrated in multiple successful attacks on Nigeria was meant to forestall Nigeria's oil exploration in the Lake Chad while at the same time Chad had unhindered exploration and rose to become Africa's 10th largest oil producer. The initial glaring incapacity of the MNJTF in routing the Boko Haram terror group and even suffering heavy casualties are related to the factors of participating nations placing premium values on national interest and military strategies over collective security.

Based on the assessment of this paper, it can be established that, Nigeria's strong attachment to its territorial integrity was a national interest that hampered the effectiveness of regional collective security arrangement, therefore, the Lake Chad countries will continue to face strings of complex security challenges, at least till the near future. This holds to the fact that most of the countries in the LCB are not ready to play down on conflicting national interest to focus on full support of collective security for their mutual benefits by building a stronger and formidable regional security architecture.

In view of the above, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The authorities in the different states that are body to this LCBC must vigorously pursued the goals of the pact. This will be done when countries of the region play down on conflicting national interests to focus on full support of collective security for their mutual benefits by building a stronger and formidable regional security architecture.
- ii. The affected states must promote mutual trust, brotherliness and cooperate on intelligence gathering in respect to regional security in the LCB area.
- iii. The MNJTF has to intensify its nonmilitary strategies in containing Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin region.
- iv. Governments in the LCB region must also create stable and conducive economic environment that addresses the concerns of the population especially the youth, so they are not lured into joining illegal and criminal groups because of economic hardship.

- v. Finally, the membership of the MNJTF should be expanded as a logic to improve on its capabilities to ensure security in the LCB region.

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