

[https://doi.org/10.52326/jss.utm.2024.7\(1\).08](https://doi.org/10.52326/jss.utm.2024.7(1).08)
UDC 343.22(669)



ASSESSING NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN SAFEGUARDING CITIZENS, UTILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS

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Received: 01. 05. 2024

Accepted: 02. 28. 2024

Abstract. Vulnerable places are usually the targets of terrorist attacks everywhere in the world. The scenario is quite the same in Nigeria. Boko Haram and other terrorist groups in Nigeria have attacked ordinary citizens and infrastructure like schools and hospitals. Especially crowded places are the main targets of the terrorists. To mitigate this security challenge, the Nigerian government factored in the protection of soft targets in its National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST). The second pillar of NACTEST, known as “to secure,” is in charge of this assignment. The NACTEST document was launched in 2014 by President Jonathan as a standing policy to combat terrorism in Nigeria. It is expected that this strategy needs to be evaluated since it has been in operation for more than half a decade. The focus of this paper is to examine the extent to which the Nigerian government has successively protected soft targets from terrorism attacks. The paper makes use of both primary and secondary data as sources of data gathering and content analysis for data analysis. The research makes use of the NACTEST document and bases its evaluation on the specified objectives of the NACTEST second pillar, “to secure.” It also adopts asymmetric theory as its theoretical framework. The paper discovered that the Nigerian government has, to a large extent, successively protected the vulnerable, like civilian citizens, utilities, and infrastructure. However, sporadic attacks by terrorists are equally a challenge that the government needs to handle seriously. The paper recommended, among others, that the government should provide needed resources, both human and material, for security and better performance.

Key words: *national counter-terrorism strategy, terrorism, vulnerabilities.*

Rezumat. Locurile vulnerabile sunt, de obicei, ținta atacurilor teroriste peste tot în lume. Scenariul este aproape același în Nigeria. Boko Haram și alte grupuri teroriste din Nigeria au atacat cetățenii de rând și infrastructura precum școli și spitale. Locurile deosebit de aglomerate sunt principalele ținte ale teroriștilor. Pentru a atenua această provocare de securitate, guvernul nigerian a luat în considerare protecția țăintelor slabe în Strategia națională de combatere a terorismului (NACTEST). Al doilea pilon al NACTEST, cunoscut sub

numele de „a securiza”, este responsabil de această misiune. Documentul NACTEST a fost lansat în 2014 de către președintele Jonathan ca o politică permanentă de combatere a terorismului în Nigeria. Este de așteptat, ca această strategie să fie evaluată, deoarece este în funcțiune de mai bine de jumătate de deceniu. Accentul acestei lucrări este de a examina măsura în care guvernul nigerian a protejat succesiv țintele slabe de atacurile teroriste. Lucrarea folosește atât informațiile primare, cât și cele secundare ca surse de colectare a datelor și analiză de conținut. Cercetarea se axează pe documentul NACTEST și evaluează obiectivele specificate ale celui de-al doilea pilon NACTEST, „a securiza”. Este adoptată teoria asimetrică drept cadru teoretic. S-a constatat că guvernul nigerian a protejat succesiv pe cei vulnerabili, cum ar fi cetățenii civili, utilitățile și infrastructura. Cu toate acestea, atacurile sporadice ale teroriștilor sunt la fel o provocare, pe care guvernul trebuie să o ia în considerare cu seriozitate. Lucrarea a recomandat ca guvernul să furnizeze resursele necesare, atât umane, cât și materiale, pentru siguranță și performanțe mai bune.

Cuvinte cheie: *strategie națională de combatere a terorismului, terorism, vulnerabilități.*

1. Introduction

In an effort to put terrorism under control in Nigeria, a standing strategy was put in place called National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST). This strategy was based on five pillars which stated as follows: ‘to forestall’, ‘to secure’, ‘to identify’, ‘to prepare’ and ‘to implement’. The aim of this paper is to assess the second pillar of NACTEST termed ‘to secure’. It is mentioned in Section IV of the document [1]. The concern of this pillar is to safeguard the citizens, utilities, and edifices by falling their susceptibility to outbreaks. The informing tenacities of this pillar are, to:

- a. put in place actions intended to consolidate security in Nigerian borders;
- b. present active means of safeguarding vital substructure;
- c. establish on job trainings for security forces;
- d. reduce the susceptibility of the transport system;
- e. increase security of the crowded places like religious centers [1].

In order to facilitate these, Nigerian government has designed four action plans mentioned in NACTEST. The first is to strengthen border security, thereby implying that the government is aware of how easily people and things enter and exit the nation through the poorly guarded borders, and that this porousness has contributed to the rise in illegal immigration, the illegal trafficking of pharmaceuticals and psychotropic drugs, the increase in the number of light and small arms smuggling, human trafficking, illegal international trades, and other trans-border offenses. To combat this, the government wishes to strengthen security at the borders "through intensification of patrols and by enhancing the effectiveness of the agencies through the establishment of satisfactory apparatus, creating collaborations, and encouraging stronger cooperation" [1].

Lessening the receptivity of the country to assaults on this critical facility is essential to both the citizens and Nigeria's corporate life. Necessary measures to be taken for this include gathering information, identifying weaknesses, and putting preventative measures in place. The third plan is building capacity for security forces, which will require "the placement of security personnel with the necessary tools and training to effectively counter the threat presented by terrorists". In this context, "it is imperative that counter-terrorist forces be readily available to act in concert with various security response assets in order to intervene and thwart terrorist attacks". Because of this, teams and other emergency

response resources must prepare and practice for potential outcomes [1]. The fourth action plan to realize the objectives of second, 'to secure' is to protect transportation systems and crowded places. The plan is to increase the degree of armed security at several important locations across the nation. In this paper, the following indices shall be used to measure the success rate of this strategic plan:

- a. a significant decrease in the number of illegal immigrants;
- b. a considerable reduction in proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- c. a considerable reduction in proliferation of cross-border crimes;
- d. credible information sharing between security agencies operating along our common border;
- e. credible information sharing between neighboring countries' security agencies;
- f. the degree to which vital national infrastructure, such as airports and oil plants, is as little vulnerable as possible;
- g. a discernible improvement in the security agency personnel's capacity strengthening;
- h. a notable decline in the number of assaults on crowded areas, especially places of worship.

Thus, this work aims at assessing the efficacy of the second pillar of NACTEST as a standing policy of Nigeria as a country irrespective of the government in power. The research will further show the extent to which Nigeria's strategy against terrorism would be able to withstand the test of time. This paper adopts asymmetric theory which was propounded by Brantley Womack. After this introduction, the next segment of this paper deals with methodology while discussion of findings follows. The last aspect of the paper deals with conclusion and recommendations.

2. Materials and Methods

This paper adopts both primary and secondary methods of data gathering. It sources primary data through adoption of interview. Stakeholders like military, residents of affected areas and scholars were contacted for firsthand information. Purposive method was used in picking the interviewees. Secondary data was also accessed from books, journal, documentaries, achieves, newspapers and internet sources. Both primary and secondary data were analyzed by adopting content analysis.

3. Theoretical Orientation

This paper adopts asymmetric theory as mentioned above. The theory focuses on providing scientific explanation of why weaker nations or non-state actors are important in the matrix of interstate relations as well as how and why weaker nations win wars against tested and powerful states [2]. Asymmetric theory is used to explain interstate conflicts warfare and even ordinary contest between two unequal actors. The proponents of this theory are of opinion that power might not be determinant of success in the warfare. This is because, in some cases, a weak actor's strategy can make a stronger actor's power irrelevant. According to [3], "If strength in battle is synonymous with success, then weaker parties ought to be unable to defeat stronger adversaries, particularly in cases when the disparity in relative strength is substantial. However, historical evidence suggests otherwise: Sometimes, bad performers succeed".

According to Brantley Womack, initially asymmetric theory is predicated on the notion that a bilaterally asymmetric partnership entails more than just bringing wildly

disparate strengths and weaknesses to the bargaining table [2]. A disparity in perception results from the disparity in capability. Contrary to contemporary views of international relations about unequal connections between nations, overall asymmetry might result in stability and normality [4,5]. Thus, the term asymmetric means that two parts of something are not exactly the same, having no balance or symmetry, unevenly distributed and existing or occurring between two in-commensurate entities, especially to the detriment of one. So, in an asymmetrical situation, a portion of something does not have the same exact form as the other portion [5]. In strategic studies, symmetric implies an imbalance in power between two opponents in an armed conflict, especially one in which a weaker force uses unconventional means, such as guerilla or terrorist tactics.

Asymmetric theory is relevant to this research as Boko Haram is a terrorist non-state actor which is in war with Nigerian state and some other neighboring countries. It is a truism that Boko Haram military capacity is weaker in comparing to Nigeria's. However, Boko haram adopted guerrilla tactics and attacking vulnerable targets like schools, hospitals and other infrastructures. Since the motive of this paper is to assess the extent to which Nigeria has protected lives and properties of Nigerians from attacks of Boko Haram.

4. Results and Discussion

As explained above that second pillar of NACTEST is tagged "to secure". This section is evaluating the extent to which Nigerian government has achieved this goal of protecting and secure the lives and properties of Nigerians. Each objective is evaluated below:

a. A significant decrease in the number of illegal immigrants, the spread of light and tiny weapons, as well as overseas offenses

In assessing this objective, we can consider the report of [6] who said that The Immigration Regulation in 2017 and the Migrant e-Registration Guidelines in 2015 were recently released by the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS). The Act's Section 112(1) clause serves as another foundation for the legality of the Guidelines, which provides as follows: "To ensure that the provisions of this Act are fully implemented and that they are properly administered, the Minister may establish regulations as he sees fit." Furthermore, as stated in Regulation 22(1), "The Commission shall keep an Inventory of Immigrants" [6]. The guidelines were released to enlighten migrants on the prerequisites and registration process in support of the aforementioned rules. Anybody who is not a citizen of Nigeria is considered a migrant according to the Guidelines. Nevertheless, only immigrants who are eighteen years of age or older and want to remain in Nigeria for a duration longer than ninety days are eligible to register electronically, or e-register. The registration requirement does not apply to anyone under the age of eighteen, diplomats, or those staying in Nigeria for less than ninety days. This implies that anyone visiting Nigeria with a Tourist and Business Visa (TBV) or Temporary Work Permit (TWP) and staying for more than 90 days must register with the NIS, unless they are exempt [6].

Two steps make up the registration process: a web-based pre-registration or desktop registration at a migrant registration office, and a migrant registration office biometrics capture and document verification step two. Spouses of Nigerian nationals, dependents, students, self-employed individuals, and employed migrants are among the groups of migrants who must register. Migrants who successfully register will get an appreciation slip attesting to their adherence to the rules. The Guidelines also highlight the requirements of Sections 28 and 29 of the Regulation, which place a duty on property

owners to make sure that migrants who are accommodated - whether for money or not - accomplish the requirements of the Regulation. In addition, home owners have a duty to report to immigration authorities any immigrants who don't follow the rules. Last but not the least, Section 57(5) of the Act specifies the punishment for breaking the rules, which is three years in jail, a fine of N500,000 (five hundred-thousand-naira equivalent of 319.75 United States dollar), or both. The NIS set a deadline of six months for adherence to the Guidelines, which ended on December 31, 2019, after which misbehaving migrants faced penalties [6].

The aforementioned data indicates that the government is making some attempts to manage the immigration of foreign nationals in accordance with NACTEST goals. The fact that NIS is updating its immigration database is praiseworthy as it may help monitor the flow of undocumented immigrants into Nigeria [6]. Nevertheless, the NIS has to set up the proper structure and allow the e-registration process to run smoothly and professionally without interfering with NIS's daily activities. Similarly, initiatives should be made to identify undocumented immigrants who would not voluntarily choose to register.

Correspondingly, it is on record that after due examination of the mandate, objectives, and functions of the service, NIS was then restructured into eight directorates and seven units. Restructuring was also based on consideration of the new Immigration Regulations of 2017 and the growing difficulties the Service is facing as a result of an increase in transnational immigration offenses, as well as the need for control of entry and monitoring of migrants and transnational crimes. The restructuring then covers the areas mentioned below: Planning, research, and statistics; passports and other travel papers; investigation and compliance; border control; migration; human resources management; finance and accounting; visas and home [7]. The NIS's degree of dedication to stopping illegal immigration in particular and battling terrorism in general is demonstrated by Border Management. However, these efforts have yielded little or no result since the Nigeria Immigration Service itself decried its inability to man Nigerian borders (8). And because the present Nigerian minister of interior, Mr. Olubunmi Tunji Ojo, acknowledged the continuity of alien influx into Nigeria but promised to do what he could to combat it (9).

b. A considerable reduction in proliferation of small arms and light weapons?

In recognition of the danger of these small arms, Vanguard reported that at the time, there were about 350 million illicit small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Nigeria, a situation that alarmed the UN. Seventy percent of the 500 million pieces of SALW that are thought to be in circulation in West Africa, according to the UN, originate from Nigeria. Ms. Olatokunbo Ige, Director of UNREC (the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa), presented these astounding figures [10].

Then Inspector-General of Police Solomon Arase advised those in possession of non-prohibited guns to get or renew their licenses as soon as possible before July 2016 in accordance with UN instructions and NACTECT objectives. He urged them to re-register and follow due process, as was written on the Nigerian Police web link. Another reason for taking this decision was that SALW has become an enormous source of threat to Nigeria's security [11]. Another report, but from the same source, says that, at one point, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Solomon Arase ordered anybody found in possession of an illegal firearm to turn it in or face being arrested and charged. Additionally, police requested that owners of non-prohibited guns renew their permits. This directive was made by the police spokesperson, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Olabisi Kolawole [11].

The official annual report of 2019 on the website of the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) does not cover seizures of any small arms. The report only consists of seizures of rice, used tires, pharmaceuticals, vegetable oil, military accoutrements, second-hand clothing, furniture, children's toys, used bags and shoes, expired medicaments, used fridges, etc. [12]. One would suggest that since small arms were not included in the report, it shows that small arms smugglers were then yet to be intercepted. In other words, small arms smugglers were still avoiding detection and tracking by Nigerian Customs. However, the report of Charles (13) that customs intercepted arms and ammunition at Onni Port and the report of Adaku (14) that other arms were seized at Port Terminal and Multi Services Limited (PTML) and Tin Can Island Port in Lagos and Ogun State, respectively, shows an improvement in customs efforts to achieve this objective. One can then argue that efforts are ongoing to achieve this aspect of NACTEST. Though there is still a need for more concerted efforts.

c. Considerable reduction in proliferation of cross-border crimes

According to the report of [15], as of December 2020, there had been a significant decrease in cross-border crime during the period under study. Prior to the closure of the border by President Buhari on August 20, 2019, smuggling was confirmed regular practice on Nigerian borders. These illegal activities on Nigerian borders were also confirmed to have contributed to a serious threat to Nigeria's national security and affected its economy [16]. Therefore, in line with NACTEST objectives, the Nigerian Federal Government ordered the immediate closure of some land borders. The effects of this border closure on Nigeria's security were reported to be noteworthy since there was a decrease in all smuggling activities and other cross-border crimes [15].

The committee charged with assessing border closures reported that policy has greatly impacted cross-border crime reduction [17]. And equally reported that the policy has worked and exhausted its life span. Then the committee recommended an instant review of the policy because it was becoming counterproductive. It says, "Nigeria's ability to bolster the personnel of pertinent government security agencies with state-of-the-art equipment (drones, surveillance cameras) was hampered by the border blockade. In the case of a coordinated border operation, it also had an impact on financing, training, and efficient entrance and departure point surveillance" [17]. The Committee further recommended appropriate border management and control measures to stop smuggling and other illicit operations that are carried out via unmanned, unauthorized channels. It underscored that "these steps would also prevent any misuse of the government's efforts to further its economic interests and national security" [17]. Based on the above discourse, we can affirm that this objective was achieved to some appreciative extent.

d. Credible information sharing between security agencies operating along our common border

In assessing this objective, we considered the report of [18] who argued that Nigerian forces have been sharing intelligent information with one another. He mentioned intelligent information sharing as part of the cooperation and commitment of the Nigerian government in combating terrorism [18]. One of the key areas where intelligent information was shared was in fighting against terrorist financing. This was done by "monitoring, reporting, and sharing intelligence regarding the sponsorship of terror-related activities" [19]. In strengthening the culture of information sharing among Nigerian forces, the U.S.

government created or adapted various structures. Part of those structures is called the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID was a West Africa regional effort for the Common Vulnerability and Exposure (CVE) Unit, which was based in Accra. The state department's chief coordinator for Boko Haram oversaw an interagency cooperation system. Since its founding in 2015, USAID has made sure that agencies in Nigeria and around Africa are more aligned and share better information [20].

However, some other reports identified a lack of information sharing among the forces. Adegoke (a strategic study scholar) identifies the unwillingness of security agencies to share information with one another as a gap in NACTEST. He lamented that "the hostility between and among Nigeria's security services and their reluctance to share intelligence are two of the noted policy gaps. This has made it more difficult to fight the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast of the nation" [21]. Bodunde, Noah, and Goodluck (intelligence and security scholars) [22] corroborate the above assertions and even add that there is little or no cooperation among the security agencies fighting against Boko Haram in Nigeria. They [22] said further that rather than attaining the highest level of protection against all obstacles, the proliferation of security agencies encouraged a lack of collaboration, ego-boosting, nepotism, and exclusion among the many security groups. Instead of pooling intelligence to accomplish a shared goal, individual outfits choose to retain their knowledge to themselves in order to foster needless relevance and rivalry among other outfits. Therefore, as far as Bodunde, Noah, and Goodluck are concerned, there was no intelligent information sharing among Nigerian security agencies. They then strongly recommended it [22].

Okechukwu, Charles, Isah, and Ikechukwu (scholars of public administration) were also in consonance with the views of the above scholars (Bodunde, Noah, and Goodluck). They also identified a lack of cooperation among Nigerian security agencies. In their words, "Interagency cooperation is frequently seen as the answer to all of society's intricate issues. Nevertheless, there remains uncertainty regarding the nature, triggers, and factors that impact the outcome of interagency coordination in the current fight against terrorism". They then identify weak institutional capacity to mount collaboration as the reason why combating terrorism has not yielded the expected results [23].

Based on the above analysis, we are arguing here that this objective has not yet been achieved as expected. Though there is a claim that information was shared to some extent, reports of a lack of sharing are overwhelming. Therefore, there is a need to buckle up in this area.

e. Credible information sharing between neighboring nations' securities

In assessing this objective, we discovered that there is little cooperation and collaboration, as well as the sharing of intelligent information, among the four countries that are mostly affected by the terrorists. In line with NACTEST objectives, Nigeria spearheaded the formation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF), which consists of Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. Some of the positive aspects of this collaboration are that it made it possible for troops to gain knowledge from one another. Additionally, it strengthened the idea of international collaboration and activities and has decimated terrorism in many ways [24].

However, this cooperation and collaboration come with myriad challenges. One of these challenges is debates among officials from four different nations over the reality of Boko Haram. They are arguing on the question of whether terrorism is a regional menace or primarily a Nigerian problem [24]. This disagreement has not really helped. In fact, many

high rank military leaders and professional observers from Niger, Cameroon, and Chad assumed that their countries were just experiencing unintended consequences from an issue that primarily stemmed from Nigerian incompetence. In replying to this, the Nigerian government claimed that Boko Haram only gained ground because it had safe haven in neighboring countries. This led to complicity among the concerned states customs agents, security forces, and other officials. It has led to contrasting perceptions occasioned by finger-pointing, which equally weakened regional harmony and the aptitude of its response [24].

Though all affected states were fighting their common enemy together, in reality, each state was pursuing and protecting its own national interests. For instance, Nigeria has been fighting a dreadful terrorist organization that occupies a sizable portion of the northeastern region of the nation.

On the other hand, Cameroon has mostly faced a threat from outside its borders, even though at times this has required fending off well-prepared and armed raids on its border garrisons [25]. Chad has concentrated on defending supply lines through Cameroon and recurrent battles on the lake.

Additionally, Niger has largely focused on border containment operations and has occasionally carried out major counter-insurgency operations inside its own borders or in Nigeria [25].

Because commanders from various nations desired diverse goals, from limited containment operations in another country's territory to prolonged counter-insurgency in their own, these divergent aims hindered the multilateral response [25]. If this is the order of the day, how do we expect efficient information sharing among these countries?

Still, on the sharing of intelligent information, it was very difficult to assess it in the MNJTF operation. One can ask, "Is the operation embedded with information sharing or was it jointly planned? The answer was negative. This is because it is on record that Chad at one time engaged in unilateral and offensive operations, sometimes around 2020 [26]. It was also discovered that Chadian President Idris Déby was impatient alongside the other colleagues. This may demonstrate the ongoing challenges nations have had while collaborating [27]. In an interview conducted by International Crisis Group, a force commander lamented not enjoying supervision and power over each of the participating forces.

The commander also bemoaned being overworked due to the MNJTF's overflowing decision-making procedure, which leaves him in charge of day-to-day operations. He equally complained about strategic concerns and communication with governments in Lake Chad as well. In addition, the coordinator lamented that the participating nations, such as Nigeria, gave him limited chance for maneuver and shared a small element of the planning with him [27]. According to another source, operational plans have seldom been disclosed with the MNJTF by national governments and military forces. This made it more difficult to coordinate plans and safeguard civilians. Intelligence sharing between MNJTF components remained inadequate even with the establishment of a regional intelligence fusion unit manned by Western and regional officers and supported by the United States, France, and the United Kingdom (UK) [25].

From the above analysis, we can argue that there was collaboration, but it was hindered by states' inconsistent commitments to the mission, Insufficient funds and fragmented planning. This objective was partially achieved, but more efforts are needed to do so as to achieve a desired result.

f. Extent to which the fragility of vital national infrastructure

Robert's report [28] provides us with the necessary information to assess this objective. He explained the extent to which Nigerian security forces had manned vulnerable places like airports, schools, hospitals, and prisons, to mention but a few. Robert said, Following the Dapchi kidnappings, president Buhari issued a directive bolstering school security. However, the military does not have enough personnel to defend every school in the northeast, according to Defense Headquarters Spokesperson Brigadier General John Agim. This is mostly because the military is being used in practically all of the 36 states of the nation for internal security and law enforcement duties [28].

The above quotation shows that the president Buhari wanted to achieve this objective, but he failed to take into consideration the necessary things needed to accomplish this goal. According to the report, there were insufficient security personnel to secure vulnerable infrastructure. In another source, corroborating the above fact, it was reported that the number of federal police officers is insufficient as well. One reason for this scarcity of police officers is because more over 150000 of the 371000 official police personnel are assigned to serve as bodyguards for politicians, high-ranking officials, and other Very Important Personalities (VIPs) in Abuja and state capitals throughout the nation [28-30]. In the three northeastern states, police chiefs sent around 2000 more officers to schools throughout that period. However, these men could only cover some 300 of the over 5000 public primary and secondary schools. Other Nigerian security agencies, like the Civil Defence Corps, also made some efforts by deploying 500 workers to Borno State schools. Unfortunately, these men could only cover seven local governments out of the 27 local governments in the state. Apparently, one can easily feel their numerical incapacity to repel any attack from the terrorists [28-30].

Still, in assessing NACTEST's objective of protecting some vulnerable targets, it is a known fact that the oil sector and facilities are among the targets of terrorists. Oil has been discovered in Maiduguri, very close to where terrorist attacks are rampant. According to John, an armed caravan of oil workers was ambushed by Boko Haram while they were looking for the location of the aforementioned oil in Maiduguri. After the attacks, many people were killed and others were kidnapped. The victims were between twenty-seven and forty, which included troops and participants in the Civilian Joint Task Force [31]. Since such attacks were carried out in the area, there have been no other attempts to explore oil in the region. Deductively, vulnerable places are yet to be protected, and the implication is that this objective is yet to be achieved.

g. A quantifiable improvement in security agency personnel's capacity strengthening

According to Jane, the majority of the nearly 100,000-strong forces were fighting Boko Haram and its affiliates in the surrounding area as part of the continuing operation Lafiya Dole. He also gave statistics on Nigerian police who were on duty combating terrorism: 400,000. However, the majority of these forces lacked the required training and/or technical skills [32]. It was equally reported that despite the government's efforts and determination to develop these forces through collaborative efforts among themselves, no meaningful results have been achieved at the operational level. Instead, some of the agencies involved in border security, cross-border crime, and CT have been accused of corruption, human rights violations, and a lack of professionalism [32].

Another index to assess this objective is to look at government financial commitment. The World Bank reports that the Nigerian government's commitment to capacity building for security personnel was low at the beginning of NACTEST. It was discovered that annual military allocations from the national budget have always been on the decline until 2017 [33]. It was only in 2018 that we started witnessing a little increment. The Table below further expresses this point.

Table 1

Annual Military Allocation				
S/N	Facts	Years	Amount Allocated	Comments
1.	Nigeria military spending/defense budget	2015	\$2.07B	
2.	Nigeria military spending/defense budget	2016	\$1.72B	Declined
3.	Nigeria military spending/defense budget	2017	\$1.62B	Declined
4.	Nigeria military spending/defense budget	2018	\$2.04B	Increased
5.	Nigeria military spending/defense budget	2019	\$1.86B ,	decreased
6.	Nigeria military spending/defense budget	2020	\$2.57B	Increased
7.	Nigeria military spending/defense budget	2021	\$4.47B	Increased

Source: a Table prepared by the researcher; information was sourced from Macrotrends [33].

The figure below also collaborated our argument.

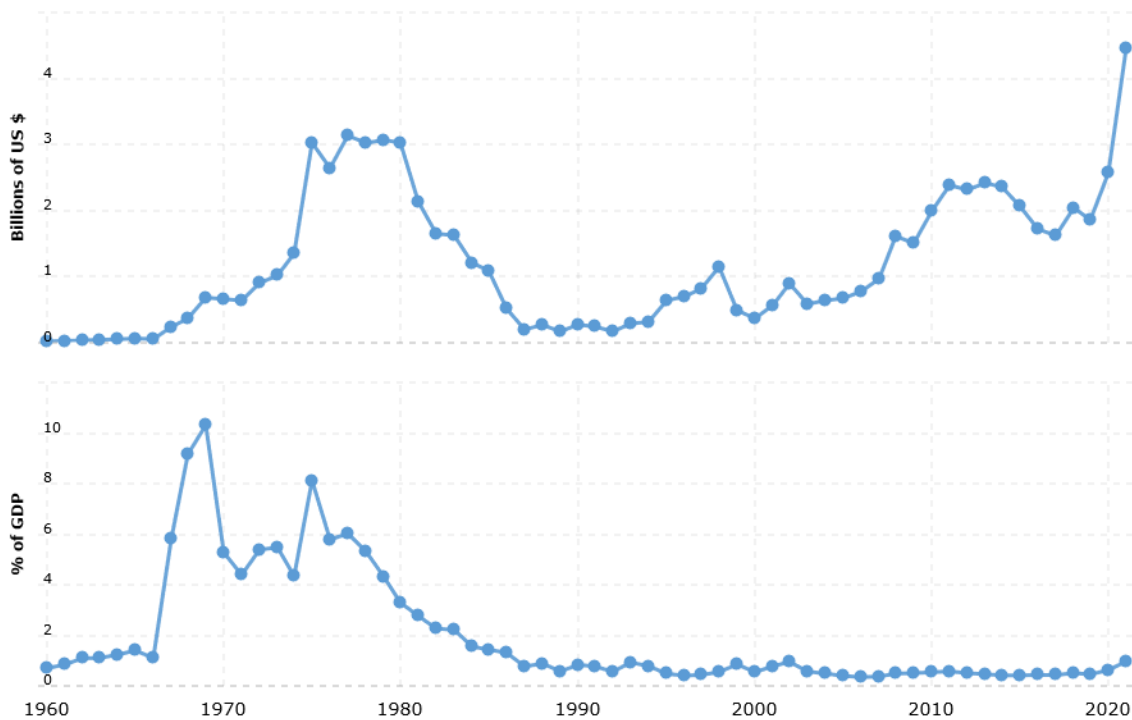


Figure 1. Annual Military Allocation Graph.

Source: Macrotrends Nigeria Military Spending [33].

Still assessing the increase in capacity building of Nigerian forces, the Federal Government was reported to have allocated the entire price of N1.78 trillion to the security division in 2020 [34]. This is a welcome idea since it is a minimal increment from the N1.76 trillion that was allocated in 2019. The 2020 military allocation was shared among military sectors. For instance, N900 billion was allocated to the Defense Ministry, N410.5 billion to Police Matters, and N75 billion to Operation Lafia Dole and other Armed Forces activities. Others were shared between the Ministry of Internal Affairs (N253.4 billion) and the Office of the National Security Adviser (N144.3 billion). At the time, the whole budget for security was around 16.8% of the N10.59 trillion overall budget [34]. The 2021 budget (\$4.47 billion) also showed government commitments to military finance since it also increased more than that of 2020, which was \$2.57 billion. Conclusively, we can argue that this objective was pursued to a reasonable extent, while more is still needed to be done, especially in the areas of physical training and intelligence.

h. A notable decline in the quantity of assaults against congested areas, especially places of worship

From both the literature and interviews conducted, it was affirmed that there was a reduction in attacks on crowded places, including worship centers, during the period under study. However, there were still occasional attacks in some quarters, especially in rural areas. Rt. Hon. Abdulkarim Lawan, the Speaker of the Borno State House of Assembly, disputed certain statements made by the former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Gabriel Olonisakin, and the Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed, claiming that Boko Haram had been driven out of all 27 local government areas in the state. Lawan refuted these assertions, asserting that the Boko Haram sect still maintains complete authority over the Guzamala Local Government Area, his hometown [15]. Additionally, he stated that there is no civic life in Guzamala and that there is no military presence in the council headquarters or the areas that surround it that are not under the control of armed Boko Haram terrorists [15]. Lawan expressed regret during the Guzamala Concerned Stakeholders' Forum in Maiduguri. He reported that people from his community had been at camps for refugees and other communities that accept them for a number of years. He said, despite his persistent calls for the troops to be stationed in Guzamala so that the displaced people might benefit from Governor Babagana Zulum's efforts towards rehabilitation and resettlement. However, all these efforts were futile as Guzamala and Abadam are still under Boko Haram's control as Governor Zulum lamented on January, 2022 (Sahara Reporter, 2022) [35].

Similarly, occasional attacks on schools and mosques are still there despite the government's efforts, even in Maiduguri [36-39]. The report of John and Asch also corroborates the above assertion. They equally added that there had been a change in the patterns of attacks on worship centers. The change was at a particular worship center that was under attack [40]. For instance, churches were more attacked than mosques between 2011 and 2014, while mosques were more attacked than churches between 2015 and 2018. This shows that there is little achievement in this area. Thus, much is still expected to be done.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria as one of the countries facing terrorist menace has come up with a standing strategy to combat terrorism. The strategy is formulated and documented in a book called

National Counter terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) and was enacted in April 2014. We assumed that the effectiveness of this counter-terrorism (CT) could commence in 2015. Therefore, post-NACTEST is considered in this paper to kick off in 2015. Thus, this paper deemed it fit to evaluate the performance of Nigerian government in countering terrorism. This focus of this paper is to assess the second pillar of the strategy. It has been discovered that Nigerian government to a large extent followed this strategy to the letter. Especially in the area of safeguarding the lives of citizens, infrastructures and utilities. In achieving this goal, it is discovered that government made efforts to control movement of foreigners in Nigeria borders. Different measures were also put in place to document data about citizens and foreigners through e-registration. Movement of SALW was also controlled in an attempt to safeguard lives and infrastructures from terrorist attacks.

Similarly, it was discovered that there was information shearing between military and other para military forces involved in fight against terrorism. Even among the three arms of military: soldiers, navy and air force, there were information sharing. Likewise, information was shared among military, customs and immigration officers. Of importance to note is that contiguous countries to Nigeria equally shared intelligent information with Nigeria. Consequently, the numbers and gravity of attacks of Boko Haram reduced drastically. Unlike before the adoption of NACTEST when Boko Haram attacked UN secretariats, schools, markets among other at will, this scenario has changed. Thus, one can conclude that NACTEST's second pillar which is "to secure" has been achieved to a large extent. However, sporadic attacks of Boko Haram to villages, farms and farmers, and kidnaping for ransom shows that government needs to be more decisive in combatting terrorism in Nigeria.

The paper, therefore, recommends that government should put in more human and natural resources as security men used to complain about lack of adequate resources to protect the vulnerable. Moreso, the government should increase its political will to end this menace. This is important because development could one come only when there is peace and security. Corruption must also be tackled since it also has contribution in perpetuating terrorism in Nigeria. International communities could also assist Nigeria with more sophisticated equipment to man vulnerable targets of the terrorists. Finally, Nigerians has to cooperate with government rather than the terrorist. It is quite important for the citizens to give intelligent information to the security instead of being informants of the terrorists.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Citation: Usamotu, B. O; Agara, T. Assessing Nigerian government's efforts in safeguarding citizens, utilities, and infrastructure from terrorist attacks. *Journal of Social Sciences* 2024, 7 (1), pp. 100-113. [https://doi.org/10.52326/jss.utm.2024.7\(1\).08](https://doi.org/10.52326/jss.utm.2024.7(1).08).

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