

Nigeria -U.S cooperation on counterinsurgency: a critical examination of the structures and dimensions of U.S technical aid to Nigeria

Ndidigwe D.C. *

¹Department of Political Science Federal University Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria

*Corresponding author E-mail: douglas.ndidigwe@fulokoja.edu.ng

Abstract

Terrorism and measures to countering it has been a major challenge to the country worst hit by the menace. The attention of the international community has focused on countering extremism in the North-East region of Nigeria ever since. This paper evaluates the Nigeria-US cooperation on counterinsurgency with emphasis on the structures and dimensions of the latter's technical aid to the former. The paper also highlights the importance of collaboration and cooperation with other countries to contain insurgency, albeit concerted efforts from both parties. However, the paper was apt to point that technical aid of whatever variant is insufficient and barely enough to decimate insurgency as such, more often than not progress in such cooperative relations is always at the whims and caprices of the donor or giver nation. It recommends that, a country's pursuit of a robust counterterrorism strategy must have some local panache interlaced with external input.

Keywords: Nigeria-US Cooperation; Counterinsurgency; Examination of the Structures and Dimensions; US Technical Aid.

1. Introduction

Given the recent global profiling of extremism as being considerably more unpredictable, sophisticated and complex for security force to intercept, apprehend and neutralize. It is against this background that the United States recognized Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria as a foreign extremists group. This Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), as uniquely designated a status of a global fundamentalist group in 2013 by the US and a bounty placed on the leaders of this Extremist Organization. A reward offer of up to U.S dollars 7 Million for information that will lead to the capture of Boko Haram Abubakar Shekau was made by the U.S State Department. However, till this moment there is no clue to his whereabouts, for at one point in time it was alleged that the said Shekau met his waterloo at the battle field which severally has been debunked with video clips to that effect.

The negative effects of terrorism including loss of lives, destruction of property, insecurity, underdevelopment, kidnappings and abduction in Nigeria are enormous and have reached an alarming proportion as such have attracted the attention of the international community, especially the United States on the necessity to act decisively to terminate the threat. As noted by the former U.S president Barack Obama in 2013, containing extremism requires a comprehensive approach which resonates with G.W. Bush's submission in 2002 that any state that is not prepared to wage war against insurgency is against global peace (Bush 2003 :15). It therefore became incumbent on individual states to reengineer their security strategies with the aim to repel terrorists and militants that impinge on the peaceful co-existence of people in their enclaves. It is from this standpoint that we could understand the efforts of Nigeria state in the war against insurgency in the country and her collaboration with other international partners especially the U.S who has the capability to counterterrorism in most regions of the world. The observation of Cordesman (2010) in this direction is quite illuminating, that September 11, 2001 changed the global perspectives on both the threat of extremism and insurrection and the capability to prevent and avert it, which he anchored on multilateralism against insurgency as championed by the U.S. To him, though multilateral effort is encouraged, bilateralism always is more efficient and preferable.

This position was collaborated by Long (2008), that cooperation among states is expedient due to the international reach of asymmetric warfare, for cooperation is a desideratum, for no single country has effectively came out victorious against insurgency alone. However, in this paper on Nigeria -U.S cooperation on counterinsurgency, it is incumbent on us to critically examine and appraise the structures and dimensions of U.S technical aid to Nigeria in the war against insurgency. With a view to finding out its effects where necessary and why despite cooperation instead of insurgency attenuating it has escalated.

2. Extant literatures on U.S technical aid to countries

The world is witnessing a litany of threats both actual and potential, which is asking for early anticipation, strategies and corresponding responses as well as special capability of engaging asymmetric warfare methods. To overcome these threat, cooperating, synergizing and

unconventional thought patterns would always come to bear. The observation of the U.S Country Reports on Terrorism (2008) stressed that virtually every country has stretched its activity in both global and state-to-state endeavors. So have many countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Middle East. This involves a crucial number of nations that do not make public the size of their collaboration with others. These collaborative efforts have additionally propelled a wide blend of development at the national level. These according to the Report (2008) have positive influence on intelligence, enforcement of law and host of others. Countries respond to and learn from global interactions, so as the sharing of national lessons have larger international gains. Narrowing it down to the issue of containing asymmetric warfare, Long (2008) stressed that the principal objective is to create a global consensus that asymmetric warfare is not monolithic in approach as regards being pursued by the concerned country, but it is an international challenge to all nations.

Still underlying more conceptual use is Cordesman (2010) idea that international cooperation or counterinsurgency takes a level of ordinary interest that essentially does not and would not exist. By this full collaboration, it would oblige countries to act on the following planks among others:

- i) Resources are sufficient to tackle all threats.
- ii) Internal insurrection as a fierce political revolt is intolerable to other nations.
- iii) Intelligence can be deliberately and uninhibitedly shared among states and organizations.
- iv) The national interest and propensity to terminate insurgency is greater than the willingness for cooperating among nations.
- v) The difference in human rights and rule of law do not stymie cooperation and collaboration (Cordesman, 2010).

To Cordesman (2010), collaboration in managing extremism is inevitably constrained by the factors below:

- i) Intelligences are not freely shared especially raw and sensitive ones.
- ii) The difference in countries' legal system, always stand as major barriers to cooperation.
- iii) Differences in methods in pursuing human rights and good governance differential, limits cooperation and creates media and political hype.
- iv) A country's instability and security challenges which are political in outlook and its concomitant sensitivity creates compartments and forestalls cooperation; and
- v) Cooperation cannot be isolated from budgetary needs and capacity which many countries have limitations in terms of economic capability and or specific expertise.

Despite these challenges identified by Cordesman (2010), it does not foreclose cooperation needs for countering insurgency as such countries have found an extensive means for working around these problems, despite perturbations by the cooperating states, especially the double standard posture of the United States that has the capability to stem insurgency anywhere in the world. This could be seen in Nigeria – US cooperation on war against insurgency in the country.

According to Cordesman (2010) citing the United States and their relationship with other countries averred that countries have created ways to work that tends to avert collaboration as a result of national sensitivity and interests. Among these ways are: gradual and selective fortification of state to state cooperation in more critical areas in tandem with national priorities. To Stohl (2008), the United States customarily has utilized arms deals as a quid pro quo to those countries that are friendly to their policies and strategies and such nations that are adverse to them will not benefit from her largesse. However, the motive behind this policy, have for some time transited from anti-socialism to democratic advancement to anti-extremism. By this the argument of utilizing arms deals as a method for advancing loyalty to United States goal vis-à-vis global war on terrorism has been consistent, not minding its strategic utility and implications.

As revealed by previous studies in which Stohl (2008) observed that consequent upon the September 11, 2001 attack there was a tremendous increase of sales of Military wares. These Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) to these nations were preceded by the lifting of sanctions against them for acts of aggression, significant violation of human rights and romanticizing with terrorist groups. Studies revealed that in the past, the U.S adopted similar policy in Iraq. According to Friedman (1993) in 1982, Iraq was moved from State sponsor of extremism to facilitate the sales of modern military hardware in the Iran-Iraq war. The U.S made its cooperation with Iraq more concrete, by initiating relations with the government and availing reasonable economic aid, counter-extremism training and providing operational intelligence on the battle front. Studies showed that Iraq that was delisted from countries that sponsors extremism in the 1980s by the U.S for political reasons were deliberately listed as supporters of extremism following the September 11 2001 attacks in U.S.A.

Stohl (2008) stressed that from fiscal year 2002 through fiscal year 2006 U.S FMS to about 25 countries increased from about \$ 1.7 billion to \$ 5.3 billion. Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) for these countries reached a new height, it oscillated between \$72 million from 1997-2001 to more than \$3billion from 2002-2006. It could be gleaned that some of the nations were directly involved in the U.S. fight against terrorism. In the judgment of the U.S, the reasons for the cooperation through military aid will be to win allies in the long run through programs such as funding of International Military, Education and Training (IMET) programs. Though military training may aid in numerous ways; it advances the preparedness, effectiveness and proficiency of the recipient countries troops, it additionally compounds the situations of other variables that are not factored into the broad spectrum of counterterrorism policy.

Commenting on these shortcomings, Boese (2007) pointed at the behavior of the Pakistan government under President Musharaf who received more than \$10billion in military assistance from the U.S since September 11, yet tends to apply anti-democratic principles which the U.S is against in her country. Instead of the U.S reacting vehemently, Washington showed it will not withhold weapons transfer, indicating such actions would undermine counter insurgency efforts as it will go contrary to their interest, because Pakistan has always provided the U.S with basing site to launch military actions, as was the case in the war against the defunct USSR in Afghanistan and the post September 11, actions in the same Afghanistan (History commons, 2007; Brzezinski, 1997).

From the copious literature available to this study, evidence abound that the U.S has not only conducted various military strikes against insurgents be it Al-Qaeda and others since the global war on terror began, but as a way of countering insurgency, the U.S has increased their military aid package to countries that they are involved. Macleod (2009) stressed that the U.S has expanded and increased their military assistance to Yemen from under \$11 million in 2006 to over \$70 million in 2009, and additionally giving up to \$121 million for development in subsequent years. Though the aim of the U.S assistance is often to support peaceful outcomes or to promote democracy as part of their counterinsurgency strategies, several studies in political science and conflict studies argued that this form of aid typically produced adverse consequences.

Studies as those undertaken by Schudel (2008) and Svesson (2000) argued that aid from abroad brings a disincentive for states to seek for both security and sound economic policies as both military and economic aid portrays. In a similar vein, literature that demonstrates that foreign aid contributes to decreasing levels of democracy and protection of human rights (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2007). Furthermore, what is often sermonized, by scholars of alliance policy is that, military assistance can be hazardous morally (Lake, 1999). Here beneficiary states with regards to Pakistan, using their recently found capacity from military assistance to act more aggressively in their foreign relations which involves influences likely foreign policy outcomes from their rivals, and being highly intransigent in diplo-

matese. This study opines that regimes which are availed of military assistance seem to be adverse to democratic norms and practices and are more belligerent to their neighbors. The posturing of the Pakistan government to counterinsurgency measures in the Asian region especially to India explains this allusion.

Applying this insight of military aid and its utility to the challenges of national and transnational terrorism, Fearon and Laitan (2003) opines that it is expected that military assistance may effectively reduce extremism, but on the other hand may help exacerbate the condition that prompted the development of extremists groups in the first instance. Hegre and Nicholas (2004), and Fearon and Laitan (2003), put it more forcefully, that nations with poor state capability, chronic corruption and low Capita GDP scores are likely to experience violent extremism. These studies that military and economic assistance exacerbates the corruption of recipient states and triggers disincentives for these states to pull resources together for the benefits of the populace tends to impact on the development of the country. This observation depicts the reasons for the rise of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, as corroborated by Okemi (2013) that the abject underdevelopment and lack in the North East region of Nigeria led to the exposure of the citizenry to all manner of vulnerability, uncertainties and insecurity; though lack and want does not tend to extremism, but insurgency do harp on misery, realizing that despondency gives condition for extremist activities. Corroborating this perception, Ehrlich and Liu (2002), expressed that lack and want and its attendant effects which is skewed distribution among states is clearly one of the variables of insurgency (Ehrlich and Liu, cited in Mudasiru, 2011).

Far more importantly, there is a nexus between graft and revolt. Graft delegitimizes the state and stymies the relationship between the ruler and the governed. Graft of the state undermines good governance and the power and influence of the state there by prompting antagonistic responses, from the populace who perceives the government as enemy. In such conditions, Joseph (2014) and Yusuf (2012) averred that the people tend to revert to the use of violence to make rebellion and extremism possible. More so, several studies analyzing external aid generally advanced the argument that foreign assistances in Africa intensify the challenges of extremism. Kruegar and Malkeekova (2003) asserts that though external aid is of the intention to reduce lack and want which is viewed as reasons for insurgency as we alluded, scholarship demonstrated at the individual level shows that extremists seems to emanate from wealthier people while thwarting democratic advancement, which in most cases increases the tendency of extremists recruitment. Opalo (2014) commenting on the implications of the U.S. military assistances in Africa and her attitude towards countries that exhibit anti-democratic tendency especially those that key into her Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda are key allies of the U.S as such their anti-democratic postures notwithstanding are overlooked by the U.S. So worrisome to the extent that the U.S has been implicated for having secret detention camps in connivance with the government of East Africa States.

These observations raised some pertinent questions as to why policy makers continued reliance on foreign military aid as if there were such abundance of evidence that it is unlikely to reduce the challenges of terrorism. A possible answer to this question may be the relatively narrow conceptualization by scholars of what constitutes a successfully counter insurgency initiative. Azam and Thelen (2010) Bandyopadhyaya, Sandler and Younas, (2009) and Azam and Delacroix (2006) viewed a strategy as fruitful and worthwhile counter insurgency instrument when it has been able to lessen the spates of extremist attacks and reduce the number of groups that are operational or contributes to the termination of the extremist group. The submission of these scholars is certainly stimulating, for it is likely that the objective of military assistance is to preempt extremist from achieving their aims. However, military assistance may not be successful in restricting extremists from engaging in attacks, but may be potent in restricting a state from advancing conciliatory plans toward these insurgents. Military assistance is adduced to have the tendency to stretch the period that extremist group assaults, in order to achieve their desired objective. To Cronin (2009), Jones & Libicki (2008) and Bapat (2005), since most terrorist groups do not endure but carve in quickly, this long belligerence make it difficult for extremists groups to achieve their aims. Therefore if we extend our conceptualization of a good counter insurgency to accommodate not only a decline in extremist attacks, it could be said that military assistance gives recipient states the relative strength to both repel the demands of extremists and sustain the cost of conflict. That being said, technical aid, be it military or economic does not sustain counter insurgency which resonates with Cordesman (2010) submission that resources for counter insurgency must be largely sourced internally. Little wonder the U.S sees counter insurgency operations as expensive and as argued by Woodward (2010) and Haas (2010), the U.S cannot shoulder an international arrangement that scholars advanced as being crucial to counter extremism. Therefore, U.S technical aid does not equal success in counter terrorism strategy more is needed to be done.

3. U.S technical aid to Nigeria against insurgency

Pertaining to the U.S strategic support to Nigeria, Lantigua – Williams (2012) and Meehan (2012), stressed the importance of Nigeria to U.S government hence the adoption of non-confrontational technique that comprised three key U. S Departments in the war against extremism in Nigeria. These initiatives include:

- i) Signing of Bi – National commission championed by the African's State Department
- ii) Availability of Training and Funding by the Department of Defense which are security driven
- iii) Providing aid by USAID and
- iv) Designation of Boko Haram insurgents as an international terrorist group and placing a huge bounty on the leadership especially Abukar Shekau.

The first item on the above listed U.S strategies on Boko Haram which is the establishment of the U.S / Nigeria Bi – National agency with focus on some vital areas of:

- 1) Administration of good governance and transparency.
- 2) Encouraging regional collaboration and advancement.
- 3) Power reforms and financing
- 4) Enhancement of agriculture that will bring food security.

This was the first step taken by the U.S Department of State in the war against insurgency in Nigeria, but this step does not address the issue of containing the insurgent who have gone weird and the Nigerian leadership found it difficult to address the menace. As adduced by the U.S Department of Defense, that training was provided by the U.S as well as funding to the Nigeria Army to advance their capabilities. As observed, the Department of State made available to the Nigerian Army the sum of \$2.2 million for the creation of counter-terrorism infantry unit and a subsequent \$6.2 million set aside for the tactical communications and inter-operability within its counter-terrorism unit (<http://gunpowderandlead.org/2012/06/current-us-policies-toward-nigeria-boko-haram/>).

However, Cordesman (2010), observation here is quite illuminating, that though many aspects of counter-insurgency are shrewd in secrecy, it is not enough to keep programs and budgetary plans secretive to neglect or create effective measures and make them plain enough so that political actors, the media and the mass public cannot decipher what is and what is not actually achieved. Therefore, as it

relates to this study on the structure and dimension of the U.S technical aid to Nigeria on war on terrorism, the actual effects of the U.S military and economic aid cannot be ascertain, the reason being that, it is nebulous.

Furthermore, still on the U.S Technical aid to Nigeria on war against insurgency, from 1999-2015, the data on table 1 captures it vividly.

Table 1: Regression Data

Year	Number of Deaths	Economic aid in millions of US dollars	Military aid in millions of US dollars	Human development index
1998	135	14.4	-	0.439
1999	803	55.5	119,546	0.455
2000	956	133	13.7	0.462
2001	754	104	20.7	0.463
2002	1239	129	8.45	0.466
2003	1018	112	117,769	0.453
2004	2335	157	-	0.448
2005	693	173	1.45	0.47
2006	372	209	2.24	0.448
2007	644	369	2.06	0.47
2008	812	514	2.29	0.499
2009	1180	524	3.43	-
2010	1452	478	2.98	0.493
2011	3356	449	11.1	0.499
2012	2925	331	4.95	0.505
2013	4477	-	-	0.510
2014	10468	-	-	0.514

Source: USAID, United Nations Development Program Report and www.connectsaisafrica.org/np.com.

The data displayed in the table shows that there is marginal increase of U.S economic aid to Nigeria from \$5.5 million in 1999 to \$524 million in 2009, while the US military aid to Nigeria has been unstable for instead of the aid increasing from what was obtained in 1999 which is \$119,546 million, it decreased to \$3.43 million in 2009. Therefore, military aid is quite infinitesimal. From both the economic and military aid received by Nigeria from the United States between 1998 and 2014 it seems that there is no correlation between economic and military aid with the Human Development Index (HDI), which the U.S advances as critical to containing insurgency. Though this aid could assist developing nations in the period of belligerents and sustain the time of conflict.

4. Regression model

$$Y = B_0 + B_1 X + \sum \text{stochastic error term}$$

$$R^2 = \frac{n \sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{n \sum X^2 - (\sum x)^2}$$

$$n \sum X^2 - (\sum x)^2$$

Where R^2 is the coefficient of determination and tells us about the goodness of fit of the model $0 < R^2 < 1$

In the empirical implementation of the work we used:

$$HDI = B_0 + B_1 X ECAID + \sum^1$$

Where HDI = Economic development measured by Human development index

ECAID = U.S economic aid to Nigeria

$B_0 B_1$ is parameters to be estimated

$$\text{Deaths} = a_0 + a_1, \text{MAID} + \sum^2$$

Where death = terrorism measured by the number of terror motivated deaths in Nigeria.

MAID = U.S military aid to Nigeria

5. Econometrics result and the discussion of findings

The revelation made by the result of our regression analysis on the relationship between the U.S military Aid to Nigeria in war against violence and extremism in Nigeria was quite illuminating. It shows that the U.S Military Aid to Nigeria has not reduced the effect of terrorism in Nigeria as could be seen below:

$$\text{Deaths} = 21200 - 1.01986 \text{MAID}$$

$$t\text{- values } (3.250) \quad (-0.636)$$

$$R^2 = 0.0263 \quad F\text{-ratio} = 0.405 \text{DW} = 0.535$$

Our empirical econometric results revealed that military aid has no significant relationship or positive effect on counterterrorism in Nigeria. This is so because its impact is -1.0198 which is negative and statistically insignificant. The (t-value - 0.636 is lower than the critical value). Though, it could be said that the Department of Defense (DOD) spent a relative amount on the war against extremism in Nigeria, its impact on stemming the tide on fighting insurgency remains insignificant.

Similarly, one of the reasons adduced by the commentators on why terror occurs is the level of unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment within countries that terrorism is prevalent in their domain. No doubt developed countries provides aid or technical assistance which more frequently is viewed as being squandered on corrupt leaders, regardless of intended goals of the donor nations. However, because of the poor nature as regards the quality of aid from giver to the recipient nation, the receiving nations have not been indicted on the appropriation. Musharaf Pakistan is an example of this where U.S failed to react vehemently to the anti-democratic posturing of the president despite receiving more than \$10 billion in military assistance since September 11 (Boese, 2007).

More importantly, in 1970 the rich nations consented to offer 0.7 percent of their gross national earnings as official global development assistance yearly. Since then in spite of billions of U.S dollars given every year, rich countries hardly met their promised targets. For instance, the U.S is usually the highest contributor in dollars terms, but ranked low in terms of redeeming the stated 0.7 percent target.

This scenario is vividly captured in the interpretation of our empirical econometric result on the relationship between U.S economic Aid to Nigeria and economic development:

$$\text{HDI} = 0.483 - 0.00014 \text{ECAID}$$

$$t\text{-value (8.908)} \quad (-0.7996)$$

$$R^2 = 0.0481 \quad F\text{-ratio} = 0.639 \text{DW} = 2.316$$

The result revealed that the impact of U.S Economic Aid on human development is about -0.00014 which is statistically insignificant. This is so because the t-value of -0.7996 is lower than 2.00 at 5 percent level. The question yawning for answer is why has the U.S aid (military and economic) not achieved its intended purposes? Hirvonen (2005), observed that though, the world had witnessed increased intervention funds, the West and their allies were selective on who receives their aid especially regimes friendly to their interests (Stohl, 2008; Macleod, 2009).

Shah (2014) corroborated the above assertion that assistance has typically followed the giver nation's interests, not necessarily the beneficiary nation. Simply put, foreign aid, whether military or economic always follow the line or pattern of the geostrategic concerns of the donor countries, especially with regards to fighting insurgency in countries. More revealing is the approval and the disbursement of \$35 million U.S dollars in military defense support to France as an aspect of Washington's contribution to the war against insurgency in Nigeria. The said aid to France, U.S adduced was on account of France efforts for Nigeria's neighbors of French extraction – Niger and Chad in their war against the Boko Haram extremism as well as Mali who had been spearheading the fight against insurgents (The Nation, May 3, 2015).

From the foregoing, no reference was made to Nigeria, which is the worst hit by the insurgents, as such further stresses the double standard postures of the U.S towards Nigeria. President Jonathan's administration did not enjoy the best of relations with the United States as regard military aids and sales of military wares to Nigeria military to fight insurgency (The Guardian, May 13, 2013).

6. Conclusion

Proceeding from the standpoint of over dependency on external aid, be it military or economic to containing insurgency and development in any country. This paper has argued that the provision of technical aid to Nigeria by the United States has been infinitesimal in developing the capacity to contain the asymmetric warfare. And in order to advance the argument further it was necessary to dispel the fog around the concept of technical aid, their impediments and the way forward. It is however, the ultimate conclusion of the paper that technical aid (military and economic), will do little or nothing to a country's pursuit of a robust counterterrorism strategy without a deliberate building capacities autochthonous to them. Therefore, technical aid should not be seen as an end in itself but rather as a means to achieving certain goals by collaborating and cooperation.

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