

Nigeria's Insurgency and Counterinsurgency: Implications, Issues, and Lessons for National Security

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Abstract

Nigeria is presently preoccupied with multi-polar insurgency, with antecedents dating back to the 1960s and 1980s. In the wake of the insurgency, the federal government initiated a counterinsurgency operation, involving all the national security agencies. This naturally brought insurgency, counterinsurgency, and national security in an interface. Disagreeing with the human needs centred view on national security and drawing from studies by other scholars, this paper uses the state-centric perspective on national security to examine the interaction between insurgency, counterinsurgency, and national security. It points out the issues and lessons emanating from the interaction and their implications for national security. The paper further argues, that the provision of human needs should not be the central issue in national security, stressing that the use of the military and other security agencies in achieving the safekeeping of the nation should be the focus of Nigeria's national security strategy.

Keywords: Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, National, Security, Implications, Lessons, Issues

Introduction

Since the advance of European imperialism and capitalism in the sixteenth century, the world has not known peace. From imperialist European rivalries and conflicts to the hegemonic military conquests of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, the world plunged into two catastrophic wars – the First and Second World Wars. What appeared as a flicker of peace at the end of the Second World War was quickly devoured by a raging Cold War, which threatened to push the world into another cosmopolitan conflict. The end of the Cold War and the establishment of peace and conflict resolution bodies at the global, regional, and sub-regional levels signaled a changing world and raised hopes for greater international understanding, cooperation, unity, and world peace. Such hopes were dampened by not only the continuing and escalating orgy of devastating armed conflicts of national dimension in most of the Third World, but most recently by ferocious and high intensity terrorist wars and attacks as well as other forms of insurgency. Thus violent conflict, which can be linked with global historical developments, has escalated into the twenty-first century, with insurgency in particular becoming the most prevalent form of conflict in the world since 1945.¹ The outbreak of insurgency in Nigeria should, therefore, be seen, not entirely as a Nigerian phenomenon but also as part of a global trend. This is not to mitigate the fact, that Nigeria's insurgency is essentially a local problem but to suggest how protracted it could be, given its nexus with global circumstances.

The point, however, must be made, that the present insurgency is not a new occurrence of its kind in the history of Nigeria. What is new about it is its relative sophistication, complexity, and ramifications. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, small, autonomous communities in Nigeria in their warfare against the British invaders used rudimentary guerrilla and terrorist tactics. Such tactics are yet to be distilled especially by military historians for consumption.

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The only insurgency in the classical period of the British conquest on which there is report is that of the Ekumeku, also called the “Silent Ones”, in Asaba hinterland. J. U. J. Asiegbu summarises the nature of the Ekumeku insurgency as follows: The Ekumeku mounted ruthless reprisals against the whiteman and anything or any persons that stood for him – traders, missionaries both white and black, mission houses, native court buildings, Government rest houses and their local servants, court messengers, local chiefs and agents.²

There was also the Isaac Adaka Boro-led insurgency in the Niger Delta, which was carried out by about 150 militants. It led to the declaration by Boro of a Niger Delta Republic within the Nigerian state on 23 February, 1966. The insurgency and the republic were aborted by the Nigerian government after 12 days.³ In the Nigeria-Biafra War, guerrilla warfare was also adopted against the invading Nigerian soldiers by Biafran militia and Biafra Organisation of Freedom Fighters.⁴ The idea that insurgency could occur either in Nigeria or against Nigeria’s interest elsewhere and should, therefore, be prepared for was also in the Nigerian military in the early years of independent Nigeria. The idea led to the training of two Nigerian officers – Major Sotomi and Captain Danjuma – at Fort Bragg in the United States in 1963 in what was “The Counter- Insurgency and Special Warfare Course.”⁵

This suggests that the present insurgency in Nigeria is not a clean break from the past. For instance, there is a link between the present Niger Delta insurgency and that of Isaac Boro in 1966.⁶ There is also a connection between the Boko Haram insurgency and the Maitatsine uprising in the 1980s.⁷ From the hindsight of history, this means, that Nigeria’s insurgency is an atavistic and intractable threat, whose relationship with national security has not been adequately evaluated for an enduring solution. It is against this background, that the relationship between insurgency, counterinsurgency (COIN), and national security is examined with its attendant issues, lessons, and implications for national security.

Conceptualising Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, and National Security

In recent times the conceptualisation of the terms – insurgency, counterinsurgency, and national security – has been embroiled in disputations deriving from nuanced perceptions. For this reason, it is necessary for us to examine the concepts and nature of these terms in order to establish the paradigms from which the issues in this paper are analysed.

Insurgency

The term, insurgency, has been seen in different ways. Three of its definitions are important to us. There is the political conception of the term by the United States. The U.S. government defines insurgency as “the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region.”⁸ From the international legal perspective, insurgency is seen as a rebellion, carried out by rebels, who are not recognised as belligerents, against a constituted authority or state that has been recognized by the United Nations.⁹ Based on our analysis of professional military and security literature, where the term, insurgency, first found a home, we are inclined to see insurgency as any guerrilla, terrorist, militant, revolutionary, or any other form of irregular warfare that does not follow the rules, laws, and conventions of war and is usually carried out against a state.¹⁰ This is the military conception of insurgency. In dealing with issues of insurgency in this paper, we would be doing so from its military and security conception.

In general, and irrespective of its goals, every insurgency adopts any one or more of the methods of warfare or violence mentioned supra. Another characteristic underlying insurgency is, that it is usually the product of asymmetric conflict, where, *ab initio*, one party has an overwhelming and incontestable physical force and other instruments of power over the other. In such situations the people on the weaker side of the conflict fight like desperadoes to be on the favourable side of the conflict. This means that insurgents are insurgents, not by their choice, but by their intrinsic and predetermined incapacity and disadvantage.¹¹ By pernicious, protracted, and dynamic armed struggle in which frontal engagements with the superior forces of the adversary are avoided, insurgents try to effect radical political, social, religious, and economic change or achieve territorial and resource control as well as seek greater accommodation within the state.

Counterinsurgency

Every insurgency draws a response known as counterinsurgency (COIN), which is usually focused on defeating it. Such a response comes primarily and directly from the state against which the insurgency is directed, with the state usually getting support from the international community as the insurgency escalates. Much of the literature on COIN has carefully avoided attempts at furnishing any concise definition on this refractory and elusive term.

However, the United States government, based on its experience in COIN operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, defines COIN as “comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes.”¹² Apparently reinforcing the U.S. perspective, R. Scott Moore defines COIN as follows: Counterinsurgency is an integrated set of political, economic, social and security measures intended to end and prevent recurrence of armed violence, create and maintain stable political, economic and social structures, and resolve the underlying causes of an insurgency in order to establish and sustain the conditions necessary for lasting stability.¹³

While these definitions are focused more on non-military components of COIN, John J. McCuen and Robert Thompson, writing separately in the 1960s, have emphasised the centrality of military and security operations in their conception of COIN. McCuen sees COIN as “preserving oneself and annihilating the enemy, establishing strategic bases, mobilising the masses, seeking outside support, and unifying the effort.”¹⁴ On his part, Thompson looks at COIN as a military response, which entails “clearing an area of insurgent activity, holding it for the government, winning its inhabitants, then moving on to another area.”¹⁵ We have noted, that insurgency, in its overt manifestation, is largely a bestial warfare. For this reason, we would be using more of McCuen and Thompson’s conceptions of COIN in our analysis than those of the U.S. government and Moore.

National Security

Like insurgency and COIN, the concept of national security also suffers ambiguity. It has come under contention among a multiplicity of perspectives that can be brought under two schools of thought – the state-centric school of thought and the human needs school of thought.¹⁶ The state-centric school looks at national security simply as military and related response to threats against the nation. According to this school, which is associated with Hans Morgenthau, R. Niebuhr, and Herbert Butterfield, national security entails a formidable military build-up for the protection of the nation and defence of its territorial integrity. Furthermore, this school is of the view, that national security is the capability of the state to deter potential aggressors or, should deterrence fail, bring any conflict to a conclusion favourable to the state.¹⁷ The human needs school, which has its proponents in such scholars as Richard Ullman, Jessica Tuchman Mathews, Barry Buzan, Ken Booth, and T.A. Imobighe, holds the view, that national security should go beyond the management of military threats to accommodate human related problems.¹⁸ This school thus posits that such non-military issues as poverty, unemployment, safety from hunger, disease, repression, harmful disruption of daily life, food security, personal security, woman, community, political, and environmental security are within the domain of national security.¹⁹ This school of thought is thinking in concert with the United Nations, which is advocating a human needs centred security, as opposed to the military-centred national security that characterised the course of the Cold War. Kofi Annan, the U.N. Secretary General, had, for example, declared in 1998:

Today we know that “security” means far more than the absence of conflict. We know that lasting peace requires a broader vision encompassing areas such as education, health, democracy and human rights, protection against environmental degradation and proliferation of deadly weapons. We know that we cannot build freedom on the foundations of injustice. These pillars of what we now understand as the people-centred concept of human security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.²⁰

We are not in concurrence with this conception of national security, which could throw up problems and open grounds for dissensions and revolutionary moves in especially the Third World nations, which do not have the resources to implement such an unending and malleable agenda of national security. Holmes has also pointedly argued, that this definition of national security, which primarily suits political constituencies, will only lead to confusion, waste, distractions, and possibly even military failures as ... the government is asked to do things that are either beyond its capacity or, worse, tangential to the real meaning of protecting the country from harm.²¹

We are of the opinion, that national security is inherently dynamic and selective. Outside its traditional focus on the safety of the nation, it could, at any given time, bring into its domain for ad hoc attention any human problem adjudged through threat analysis to be a real or potential threat to the nation. It is, therefore, not necessary to bring, parrot-fashion, all human problems into the realm of national security. Human problems which do not constitute threats to the nation should be attended to by the agencies of government created for them. In the light of this thinking, we shall uphold, in the course of this discourse, the traditional meaning of national security, which focuses on defeating or transforming any real or potential threat to national interests.

Put differently, we see national security as the safekeeping of the entire nation and the safeguard of its vital interests by military and security forces through the detection, determination, and management of real and potential threats to the nation. If this is the way we look at national security, then we are in agreement with Nigeria's *Grand Strategy for National Security* as well as with Nigeria's *National Defence Policy*, both of which define Nigeria's national security as the "aggregate of the security interests of all individuals, communities, ethnic groups, political entities and institutions that inhabit the territory of Nigeria."²²

Nigeria in Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

The Niger Delta Insurgency and COIN

The present insurgency in Nigeria was foreshadowed in the last decade of the twentieth century with the emergence of particularistic, militant, and separatist ethnic and sub-ethnic movements. Such movements included: Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MSOP), O'dua Peoples Congress (OPC), Egbesu Boys (EB), Arewa Peoples Congress (APC), Igbo Peoples Congress (IPC), Ijaw Peoples Congress (IPC), Bakassi Boys (BB), and Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). At the turn of the century, Nigeria came under insurgency with the outbreak of militant violence in the Niger Delta region. Up to 2009 the violence was carried out by such militant bodies as the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), led by Asari Dokubo; Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), with Henry Okah as leader; the Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF), led by Ateke Tom; the Bush Boys; and the Martyrs Bigrade.²³ By June 2009 the militants had, put together, established about 21 camps, spread mainly across the western Niger Delta states of Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers.²⁴

With demands for resource control, environmental protection, greater political and economic accommodation, and self-determination, the groups, operating from their various camps, made the Niger Delta region unsafe with dismal activities against the state, business organisations, and private individuals. Armed with an assortment of weapons, the militants, in different groups and at different times and places, occasionally assaulted such oil establishments as the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation, Total Fina Elf, and Chevron. Facilities and personnel of these oil establishments came under attack. The militants killed naval officers, soldiers, and checkmated rescue operations, with attendant casualties and damage to rescue operation helicopters. Police stations, gas facilities, and hotels also suffered deadly attacks from the militants. Illegal crude oil refineries, which refined stolen and bunkered crude oil, were established, and hostage taking and kidnapping for ransom became the order of the day, reverberating the entire Niger Delta region with morbid fear and insecurity. On 1 October, 2010 militancy in the Niger Delta, which combined guerrilla and terrorist tactics, reached its summit with the bombing of the Eagle Square in the heart of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.²⁵

In the first decade of the present century, the Niger Delta insurgency grew rapidly to become the greatest threat to national security. It thus elicited response from the Nigerian government, whose primary and constitutional responsibility is to provide security and ensure the safety of all Nigerians.²⁶ From the beginning, these COIN operations have combined military, security, and civilian efforts.

The leaders of the Niger Delta insurgents have always been known, along with their demands and grievances. They have also always generally shown a disposition to negotiate with the federal government. For these reasons, the central doctrine and approach of COIN in the Niger Delta are those of "stick and carrot", alongside efforts to address the problems that are fundamental to the insurgency. This approach resulted in the granting of amnesty to the insurgents on 4 October, 2009 and a programme to disarm, rehabilitate, and re-integrate (DDR) them into normal life.²⁷

After seven years of relative peace that followed the amnesty, the Niger Delta region witnessed a recrudescence of militant hostilities. A new militant group known as the Niger Delta Avengers appeared in March, 2016 with a 10-point demand, among which are the continuity and good funding of the amnesty programme and the unconditional release of the incarcerated leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mazi Nnamdi Kanu.²⁸ The Niger Delta Avengers, who are armed with most sophisticated weapons, have been backing up their demands with the bombing and destruction of oil facilities in the Niger Delta and Lagos. In spite of this, the COIN approach in the Niger Delta has remained the same, with the government recently commissioning the clean-up of Ogoni land and having dialogue with the Niger Delta communities.

The Boko Haram Insurgency and COIN

In 2009, while Nigeria was writing the epitaph of the Niger Delta insurgency with an amnesty programme, another insurgency that had been smouldering since 2002 erupted in the northeastern region of the country. This time its agency was an Islamic sect known as Boko Haram. Led by Abubakar Shekau after the death of its founding leader, Mohammed Yusuf, in 2009, Boko Haram developed as a terrorist organisation, with a leadership and organisational structure that are shrouded in utmost secrecy. However, its ultimate goal, as has been reported in a recent study, is to establish by means of a jihad, an Islamic state in northeastern Nigeria. It would then use that state as a base to conquer the rest of Nigeria and the West African sub-region and designate the entire of the subjugated territory “the Islamic State’s West African Province”, to be developed as a province of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).²⁹

With this goal in view, Boko Haram acquired military training from within and outside Nigeria and obtained such weapons as the General Purpose Machine Guns, Rocket Propelled Grenades, rocket launchers, AK 47 rifles, SAM-7 anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles, and bombs. It also acquired the rudimentary technology of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDS).³⁰ Armed with these weapons, Boko Haram unleashed a most ferocious, savage, and terrorist war against the Nigerian state and people, mapping out the entire northeastern Nigeria as its immediate base and area of operation. From its central base in Borno State, Boko Haram also occasionally operated in other northern states of Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi and harassed neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. Abuja, Nigeria’s federal capital territory, was also threatened with bomb explosions. In general, the operations have been targeted against Nigerian military and police barracks and stations, government establishments; markets, schools, churches, mosques, motor packs, shopping malls, and international establishments. Kidnapping of people, raping of women, hostage taking and killing of foreign nationals, arson, looting of banks, and smuggling as well as human trafficking have also been the hallmarks of Boko Haram insurgency.³¹ By mid-November, 2014, Boko Haram had, in what seemed like lightning operations, conquered and brought under its control about 21, 545 square kilometres of territory in northeastern Nigeria.³²

The Nigerian government under President Goodluck Jonathan, no doubt, mounted a COIN operation, known as operation Zaman Lafiya, but it was not strong enough to check the advance of Boko Haram. Unlike the Niger Delta COIN, in which non-military efforts have been critically used along with protective military and security operations to achieve some measure of compromise, the insurgents in the northeast had always remained adamant to any overtures for negotiation. They have been most unidentifiable, elusive, and intransigent, making bunkum and risky any moves for dialogue. As a result of this, COIN in the northeast has been driven mainly by military and security operations.

The control of about 21,545 of Nigerian territory in 2014 by Boko Haram from zero ground in 2009 meant, that Operation Zaman Lafiya was a failure. In response to the groundswell of public criticism of the performance of the operation, Muhammadu Buhari, on assumption of office as Nigeria’s elected president in May, 2015, quickly made modifications within the military, dismantled operation Zaman Lafiya, and put in motion the present COIN operation, code-named Operation Lafiya Dole, under the able command of Lt -General Tukur Buratai. Within three months – October to December, 2015 – the operation, marked by a consolidation of efforts from the military, the Department of State Services, Nigeria Police, and other security agencies, and military cooperation from neighbouring countries through the Multinational Task Force, had given a good account of itself. In what can be seen as a blitzkrieg in the history of Nigerian warfare, Boko Haram was effectively pushed out of all its bases within the Nigerian territory. At 1:30 p.m., Thursday, 22 December, 2016 Operation Lafiya Dole reached its highest point with the capture of Camp Zero in Sambisa Forest, the last fortress and hideout of the routed insurgents.³³ However, the fall of Camp Zero is not the end of insurgency in the northeast of Nigeria. While the Nigerian Air Force is continuing with its search, locate, and destroy (SLD) operations against the insurgents, other armed forces and security operatives are working hard to contain sporadic suicide bombing and violence sponsored by Boko Haram.

It is obvious from the foregoing, that Nigeria is mired in two geo-strategic insurgencies – one from the Lake Chad and the other from the Atlantic. This places Nigeria in the category of countries with what is known as multi-polar insurgency. Also, by directing their aggression against the state, nationals of other countries, and international establishments and symbols, the two insurgencies in Nigeria are both domestic and international. Given its multi-polarity, complex nature, and scope, as well as the on-going measures to contain it, Nigeria’s insurgency, with its COIN, has been with significant implications, lessons, and issues for national security.

Implications, Lessons, and Issues for National Security

One of the implications or lessons emanating from Nigeria's experience with insurgency and COIN is, that the state, today, unlike in the pristine of its development, no longer holds unchallengeable monopoly of the means, instruments, and use of force and coercion. This means that there is a dangerous trend in which the control of the means and instruments of force and coercion is being increasingly shared with the state by its real and potential enemies, thereby eroding the power of the state.

Insurgency has suggested that the porosity of Nigeria's international borders could be a serious problem of national security. There can be no doubt, that easy accessibility across Nigeria's land and maritime borders has aided, abetted, and sustained the two insurgencies. Most of the arms and ammunition acquired by the insurgents are smuggled into the country through the porous points of her borders. Thus border porosity is a problem of national security.

On the other side, insurgency and COIN have put to test and reinforced the relevance of collective security and regional cooperation to Nigeria's national security. For example, without the collective diplomatic and military efforts of such neighbouring countries as Cameroon, Niger, and Chad, it would have been difficult for Nigeria's COIN to record and sustain its present level of success in which Boko Haram insurgents are in disarray. The implication of this experiment in collective security is, that the security of Nigeria's immediate neighbours is an extension of her national security, and this reality should inform the country's national security strategy.

Nigeria's insurgency and COIN have brought forth realities, which will help Nigeria to determine whether or not her national security would be focusing more on human needs than on the actual safekeeping of the nation through her military and security forces; or whether in the face of any military threat as posed by insurgency national security should respond by providing human needs or by protecting the people. Nigeria's insurgency appears to defy the concept of a human needs centred national security being canvassed by the United States and Western nations that are themselves still spending relatively much and more than Nigeria and other Third World countries on building their military and security forces. Hassan Salu's study indicates, for instance, that in 2006 Nigeria and South Africa spent 1.5% and 1.7% respectively of their GDPs on the military, while the United States spent 4.06%.³⁴ The argument is that Boko Harm, for instance, could not have been routed just by addressing the human needs of the northeast but by such military and security actions as have been so far taken. The reality is that the insurgents are not interested in the development of the northeast but in fighting for an Islamic state. The intransigence with which they have been responding to any suggestions for negotiation simply confirms findings, that their actions are immutably rooted in the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism, which does not see anything good in any development associated with Western civilisation. Thus, while it is desirable for the northeastern region to be developed, in terms of human needs, the immediate relevance of such development in addressing the problem of Islamic fundamentalism on which Boko Haram is thriving is in doubt. The solution to the Boko Haram insurgency still remains in fighting it to the end. What this means is that a national security strategy that makes adequate provision for developing military capability and security skills will continue to be one of Nigeria's priorities.

Proponents of the human needs centred national security tend to think, that government is allocating too much of national resources for military and security responsibilities to the disadvantage or neglect of other non-military problems. They also think that military and security agencies are developed for leadership and regime protection in the face of hunger, poverty, unemployment, growing illiteracy, and environmental problems. On this thinking, they try to argue these non-military problems into the domain of national security. Nigeria's insurgency and COIN experience suggests, that the scope of national security does not need to be extended beyond the boundary between threats to national safety and governance problems, which these other non-military threats are. What could be done under national security for these other problems is to create, through military and security forces, an enabling environment for them to be attended to within their normal domain of governance, as is being done in the northeast and Niger Delta.

Nigeria's insurgency and COIN experience suggests the possibility of threats to national security also coming from irredentist and separatist tendencies and micro-nationalism, especially among groups that have been agitating for self-determination, true federalism, resource control, and ethnic representation in either a national or sovereign national conference. The idea is not for national security agencies to cannibalise such groups but to properly identify and monitor them, and ensure that appropriate orientation measures are taken to align them with the national ethos.

More importantly, the contagious effect of insurgency among these groups must be checked, especially as it is becoming a national policy to grant amnesty and rehabilitate insurgents with genuine grievances and address the grievances.

Insurgency has brought changes into the theatre and targets of warfare, with implications for national security efforts. Traditionally, wars are fought between the armed forces of belligerent states, with civilians who are non-combatants not brought under enemy targets.³⁵ However, insurgency has come to change the fields of battle and targets of warfare, to the extent that every place and humans within the enemy territory have become targets of warfare. This changing scenario of warfare bodes ill for the endangerment of the civil population and places new demands on national security agencies. In fact, national security strategy should label any civilian population under insurgency as an endangered group and fashion ways for its protection. In fashioning such ways, care must be taken to think, that insurgents could have access to weapons of mass destruction, a possibility that may not be far off, and make projections and contingency plans against such a possible development. This means that national security providers should, in all respects, be thinking 50 to 100 years ahead and preparing accordingly.

One great lesson to be learnt is from the refusal of the United States to offer support to Nigeria or supply her weapons to fight the insurgents on a feigned allegation of human rights violation by Nigeria in the course of her COIN operation. One thing to be noted is, that Africa, and by extension, Nigeria, is not as strategic to the U.S. and Western interests as may be thought. The explanation for this has been offered by Giles Bolton in his book, *Africa Doesn't Matter*. He explains: There is a simple, if shocking, reason why the West doesn't do better by the poorest continent. Africa Doesn't Matter. Its poor markets hold little interest for Western business, and the continent provides almost no political or strategic threat to the West's stability, for the moment at least Africa provides almost no threat to [the] new global market's stability. Africa can remain marginalized ...³⁶

Outside this, it will be recalled, that the United States had predicted that Nigeria would disintegrate in 2015. How could Nigeria have expected the U.S. to render help against what she predicted? Kwame Nkrumah, the great Africanist, had warned, that independent African states would be threatened by security challenges, as they struggle to assert themselves in the international arena. He insisted that in containing such challenges, Africans should shun Western powers and depend on their own initiatives in order to avoid recolonisation.³⁷ For Nigeria to bring her civil war to a favourable conclusion in 1970, she had to depend especially on Britain and the Soviet Union for arms and mercenaries. Nigeria is again, 48 years after that war, still depending on these two nations in her quest for arms and related technical support against insurgency. The challenge before Nigeria and her national security agencies is to assuage this unending dependency syndrome through a repositioned military industrial complex and other complementary efforts.

Another significant issue that insurgency and COIN have brought to the front burner of national security discourse is the question of which agency is responsible for national security? It is obvious from the experience gained so far, that every security agency is important in COIN in its own way. Every agency is required to play its role very well before COIN could achieve its objective. In COIN all the agencies are so organically related, that the most vital agency in any particular role could fail in that role, if the peripheral support required from another agency is not provided. Against any doubt, the agencies in question are the armed forces, comprising the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Navy, and the Nigerian Air Force. Others are: the Nigeria Police Force, the Department of State Services, the Nigerian Customs Service, the Nigerian Immigration Service, the Nigerian Prisons Service, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Federal Fire Service, the Federal Road Safety Corps, and the National Emergency Management Agency.³⁸

Outside these statutory security agencies, there are civilian government ministries, agencies, and departments as well as non-governmental and civil society organisations and resource persons, whose services could be complementary to national security efforts. National security strategy should be able to achieve the coordination and utilisation of all the available efforts and services for the attainment of national security goals. This could lead us to think, that Nigeria's insurgency is a national emergency. Every such emergency would require total mobilisation of needed national resources, including military, security, and civilian resources.³⁹ The implication is that the development of the skills and techniques for total mobilisation would have to be provided for in the national security strategy. It must be noted that total mobilisation also entails the expansion and repositioning of the military and security agencies, and this should not be blinked at by national security efforts.

Already, the armed forces are evidently embarking on this aspect of total mobilisation, which should also be carried out in all other security agencies, as insurgency would, within the foreseeable future, remain a threat to national security.

Once more, inter-agency collaboration and coordination is very important in the attainment of operational goals. It is sometimes difficult to achieve set goals in such coordinated operations because of the tendency among some commanders and leaders to want things to be done in their opinionated and particularistic ways. Concerning coordination, whose benefits he stresses, John Robert Beishline warns:

Points of friction often develop from jealous and selfish guarding of the rights and prerogatives of office. Jealous adherence to prerogatives and unwillingness on the part of commanders to make concessions in the interest of unity of effort leads to failure.⁴⁰

Inter-agency collaboration and coordinated efforts are critical in the post degrading stage of insurgency, where COIN operations should cover the entire landscape of activities, with special focus on continuous disruption of the insurgents' logistics, cutting the insurgents off from supply, and disputing their local and foreign links. The disruption of logistics would be achieved with good intelligence network, continuous pursuit of the insurgents, strategic bombing in the Sambisa Forest, and cooperation from neighbouring countries. Efforts for cutting the insurgents from supplies should be targeted against their real and potential sources of the recruits that are used as suicide bombers and combatants. As much as possible, communities and settlements should be insulated from contacts with insurgents and their radical ideas through appropriate orientation. Cutting them off from supplies and stopping their concealment in the communities were what the British used in defeating Mau Mau insurgents in Kenya in the mid-1950s.⁴¹ Insurgents usually conceal and obfuscate their linkages by counter-intelligence. For example, the recent headlines on Channels Television, which read: "Boko Haram releases new video, targets Cameroon", was counter-intelligence meant to confuse and bamboozle Nigeria on the whereabouts and actual direction and status of the moves of the insurgents.⁴² This means that perspicacious intelligence operations and espionage are required to detect and break the critical links of the insurgents.

Insurgency and COIN have prompted the reinvention of the aphorism, "security is everybody's business." What have national security services done to make real this canvassing adage? Against any efforts being made, we will suggest, that a bottom-top approach is critical to internal security and containment of internally generated threats to national security. Under this approach, there should be what could be called community security, either to replace or absorb into its fold what now exist as community policing. Community security would require the raising of a community security body for every community, with representation from the relevant security agencies. Such a body, which should use or engage any needed members of the community on ad hoc basis, should be assigned such responsibilities as policing, surveillance, and intelligence gathering, which indeed are critical in COIN efforts.

Let us end with the observation, that there has been an abandonment of history in national security efforts. For the historically uninformed, Boko Haram is an enigma; but, for those acquainted with history, it is simply a historical continuity and the manifestation of a national threat that had been latently in existence since the colonial era. In the 1930s the colonial regime had established, that Islamic fundamentalist doctrines were a threat to national security and made effort to sensitise the population against them.⁴³ Even the Niger Delta insurgency can be understood from the perspective of a long tradition of opposition of the Niger Delta people to European control of trade and business in this strategic deltaic region. It will therefore be suggested, that history, along with other perspectives, should be used in analysing security issues and determining possible threats to national security.

Conclusion

Although Nigeria's insurgency is part of a new global trend, it is essentially a local phenomenon, which can be located within the trajectory of Nigerian history. Nigeria is involved in a multi-polar insurgency, whose direct result is a COIN operation, conducted by her national security agencies. Owing to the premium placed on insurgency, COIN, and national security, these concepts have become highly contested, with no consensus ever reached on them.⁴⁴ It is therefore always necessary to define the perspective from which they are used. We have been able to do this by using these terms from their professional and traditional meaning. Thus, we could discern an interface between them, with significant implications, lessons, and related issues for national security.

We have suggested the necessity for national security efforts to be more dynamic and responsive to a certain range of problems and issues in the COIN operation. Against this background, national security agencies would have to be repositioned and refocused in certain respects, but without making any fundamental shift from their traditional approach to the management of threats to national interests. Thus, the goal of COIN should be either to defeat, persuade, or humble insurgents to an agreement or compromise favourable to national interest, return the territory and population under contention to safety and normal life, and provide a sustained enabling environment for the government to carry out its obligations to the people. COIN should not, therefore, be carried into addressing the root causes of insurgency; otherwise, COIN will hardly end, as most of the problems underlying insurgency could take decades to be addressed satisfactorily. In the light of this, we view any shift of emphasis from a military and security oriented national security to a human needs focused national security, being canvassed by the UN and the U S, as unsuitable for Nigeria, as it could produce dangerous contradictions for the nation. It is therefore appropriate for national security to continue to be focused on the use of military and security forces in the safekeeping of the nation.

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