

What is National Security:

It is the duty of government to safeguard and defend the nation from terrorism, minimizing crime, provides economic security, energy security, environmental security, food security, cyber-security etc.

What is Interagency Collaboration:

Interagency collaboration refers to the art and act of promoting active working relationship among multiple security agencies (i.e the Armed Forces, Paramilitary Organizations and Private Security Organization) with a view to improving process outcomes at a reduced cost. It is also process in which agencies exchange information, alter activities, share resources, and enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit and a common purpose by sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards.

Origin of Interagency Collaboration in Nigeria:

Interagency collaboration was formally established by the Federal Government in 2014 which was a multi-layer communication structure for implementing National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST). This policy was reviewed in 2016 and the strategy was coordinated by the Office of National Security Adviser (ONSA). Today several ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) now have clear-cut roles to play in its implementation.

The Major Players of Interagency Collaboration in Nigeria:

The Major agencies involved in the collaboration include;

National Security Adviser (NSA)

Nigerian Army (NA),

Nigerian Airforce (NAF),

Nigerian Navy (NN),

National Intelligence Agency (NIA)

Nigeria Customs Service (NCS),

Nigerian Police Force (NPF),

Department of State Service (DSS),

Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA),

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC),

Vehicle Inspection Office(VIO),

Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offenses Commission (ICPC),

Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS),

Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB),

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP),

Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC) among others.

Example of Interagency Collaboration Operations in Nigeria:

1. Joint Task Force (JTF), Operation Restore Hope in Niger-Delta 2003.
2. Joint Task Force (JTF) Operation Harmony IV in the Bakassi Peninsular 2003.
3. Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTNF) in the Lake Chad Basin 2015.
4. Joint Border Operation Drill along the Nigerian land borderlines August, 2019.
5. Presidential Task Force COVID-19, March, 2020.

National Security Challenges in Nigeria.

Nigeria has witnessed several security challenges emanating from her internal political environment. The country has been under siege for some years largely due to militancy, and act of terrorism perpetuated by some individuals against the state. However, the most serious security challenges witnessed in Nigeria between 2001-2018 include;

a. Niger Delta crisis:

The restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria on May 29, 1999 signaled the emergence and continued proliferation of vigilante groups, ethnic and sectional militias as well as secessionist or separatist groups wielding all sorts of arms and weapons. Prominent among these are: Ijaw Militia and Itsekiri Militias (1999), and the Militia arm of Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) 1992 (Analyst, 2010). A most recent development is the emergence of Niger Delta militants with the name Niger Delta Avengers'. The Niger Delta Avengers' (NDA) has continued to launch attacks on some major oil installations in the oil rich region, using the various arms, IEDS and ammunitions in their possession (The Vanguard, 2016).

b. Kidnapping:

This is a huge security concern spreading across Nigeria. It began in the creeks of the Niger Delta region (Ekhomu, 2013). Gradually, it has spread to the South East, South West and Northern regions of the country. Initially, it was the kidnapping of expatriates that was predominant in the South but today, the situation has gotten so bad that nobody is spared. Serving government officials are not spared in the kidnapping menace, as their family members, relatives and friends have become worthy targets.

c. Jos and Kaduna crisis:

The Jos and Kaduna ethnic crisis is another internal security threat which appears difficult for the internal security policy of Nigeria to address in recent times. The Jos crisis is a combination of the violence that followed the November, 2008 Jos North Local Government election (Audu, 2011). Historically, Jos is the capital of Plateau State of Nigeria. The city of Jos has witnessed several sectarian, ethnic and political clashes among which were the September, 2011 and April 2004 conflicts that resulted to the imposition of state of emergency on Plateau State by the Obasanjo's administration.

d. Boko-Haram crisis:

The militant Islamist group has destabilized the North-East of Nigeria. Since 2009 the group killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions more. About 2.5 million people fled their homes and towns, and the direct consequence of the conflict was that the North-East was plunged into a severe humanitarian crisis as of 2018, one of the worst in the world which has left about 7.7 million people in need of humanitarian aid. The government made significant military gains, reducing the number of Boko Haram attributed deaths from more than 5000 in 2015 to less than 1000 in the recent past years.

e. Farmers-herders Clashes:

The Middle Belt region of Nigeria has faced prolonged violent clashes between the predominantly Christian farmers and the mostly Muslim cattle herders. The conflicts are as a result of disputes over access and rights to land, water resources and rapid desertification which has changed the grazing patterns of cattle. These clashes are not necessarily new, but since 2015, the disputes have become more frequent and violent. In 2018 alone, more than 2,000 people were killed in such clashes. The conflict now claims an estimated six times more than the Boko Haram crisis. The dispute is being

politicized and is stirring ethnic and religious tensions, which is very dangerous in a country like Nigeria.

f.Armed Robbery:

Another security threat that is plaguing the country is armed robbery. Only recently, a new trend of robbery which was quite different in outlook occurred at Offar area of Kwara State and Isanlu area of Kogi State which led to the killing of many police officers and private security personnels. Incidences of armed robbery have become a daily routine in many parts of the country. Apart from public institutions such as banks that are their major targets, major highways across the country are not spared as commuters are routinely attacked and dispossessed of their valuables. (The Panch, 2016).

Economic Effects Of Insecurity In Nigeria:

1) Disruption of Economic Activities: Insecurity leads to internal displacement of people and the crippling of economic activities in affected areas.

2) Decimation of Consumer Confidence: Insecurity can depress consumer confidence, which in turn reduces consumer spending. Not only does insecurity affect individual spending; it also affects businesses who, due to the uncertainty insecurity creates, put off investment decisions. This certainly affects economic output and could be a major factor in the slow-growth environment in Nigeria.

3) Decrease in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Insecurity reduces the confidence of foreign investors in a nation that has massive security challenges. Investor confidence worsen, particularly where there is weak and ineffective government response to the security challenges.

4) Disproportionate Defence Spending Vis-à-vis Other Economic Sectors: Insecurity makes government allocate hundreds of billions of naira to defence and security-related expenditure. These are large sums of money that should have been going elsewhere in the economy, especially in the education and health care.

5) The Struggle for Personal Survival Undermines Innovation: Security is what can give citizens the space to reflect and be creative and innovative.

6) Increase in Brain Drain: Nigeria is losing its best brains on a daily basis through mass emigration to Western countries. The search for a better quality of life is the main reason for the mass emigration of Nigerian doctors and other professionals. The prospect for the good life is being jeopardised in the country by insecurity and by its negative impact on economic opportunities.

7) Decline in Productivity: Continued insecurity leads to a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, especially in the areas that are vulnerable and amongst victims and their families. This state of agitation can affect productivity. For instance, with rampant kidnappings on major highways in some part of the country, many roads have become no-go areas. Inability to travel freely on its own can reduce productivity of those affected. And as people are afraid to move around freely in the country, many opportunities in business are being lost.

8) Possible National Isolation: Tourists do not visit unsafe places. Insecurity in Nigeria has led to many countries advising their citizens not to travel to many parts of Nigeria. With such dire warning, fewer foreigners will make Nigeria a destination of choice.

9) Deepening Corruption at All Levels: Insecurity can provide the breeding ground for corruption. Insecurity can provide an environment for some government officials to corruptly enrich themselves. Thus fighting insecurity can divert government attention, limiting its ability to fight corruption effectively.

Major Challenges Facing Interagency Collaboration.

1. Collaboration is formalized but the aim is yet to be properly understood by the various agencies of government involved.
2. Differences in agencies' structures, processes, and resources can hinder successful collaboration in national security.
3. Adequate coordination mechanisms to facilitate collaboration during national security planning and execution are not always in place.
4. Staff often lack knowledge of the processes and cultures of the agencies with which they must collaborate.
5. Funding and management of budget.
6. The feeling of superiority by a security agency over and above the other usually creates a sense of envy and jealousy which explodes into violent rage at any time.
7. Acts of indiscipline, arising from a false sense of superiority, ignorance, poor education and training, undermines 'esprit de corps' among the security agencies.
8. Unhealthy rank comparisons amongst security agencies often result in commotion, quarrels and fights.
9. Poor or lack of inter-service communication, which is required to ensure prompt command, control and retreat hampers the quick relay of information among the services, leading to clashes.
10. Uncontrolled and inordinate use of force by security operatives at the slightest provocation, is another potent cause of inter-agency rivalry and clashes.
11. Inability of the system to create appropriate sanctions for erring personnel after the clashes, instead prepares the grounds for further rivalry and clashes.

Recommendations(Way Forward)

Recommended Strategies towards Promoting Interagency collaboration among Nigerian Security Agencies:

1. The government will need to consider the extent to which agencies' existing structures, processes, and funding sources facilitate interagency collaboration and whether changes could enhance collaboration.
2. The government has to put in place strategic direction as the basis for collaboration toward national security goals to avoid unnecessary confusion among agencies.
3. Th government needs to clearly define participating agency's roles and responsibilities in the collaboration to avoid conflict.
4. Agencies should enhance and sustain their collaborative efforts by establishing compatible policies, procedures, and other means to operate across agency boundaries, among other practices.
5. Joint training and retraining Workshops and seminars should be implemented during Interagency collaboration.
6. Improved welfare package will uplift the morale of security personnel and reduce unnecessary frictions among the security agencies.
7. Retreat and sports: efforts at creating meeting points for all security agencies as in retreat and sporting activities should be intensified. This will encourage social interaction and understanding among various agencies;
8. There should be clear and well defined communication links between the different hierarchies of the services, including the establishment of liaison officers in all the barracks and units at all levels of command to entertain complaints from aggrieved personnel of other services.
9. Mutual respect for one another with the belief that all services are performing different functions towards achieving a common national goal.

Conclusion:

It is important for government agencies to accept the fact that interagency collaboration is a learning process, with tensions, difficulties as well as insights and innovation to better achieve the goals of National Security.

