AN APPRAISAL OF THE CAPACITY OF NATIONAL COUNTER TERRORISM STRATEGY TO PREVENT AND COMBAT TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract. The standing policy adopted by Nigerian states to fight against terrorism is known as the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST). This tactic has five pillars, namely: to forestall, to secure, to identify, to prepare, and to implement. Most of the literature engages on reasons for the emergency of terrorism, the effect of terrorism, or the strategy adopted by the terrorist to perpetrate their heinous activities. However, little attempt has been made to evaluate the efficacy of Nigeria's strategy against terrorism, especially NACTEST. Based on this backdrop, this paper is an attempt to examine the performance of Nigeria in identifying terrorist plans and its preparations to thwart them. These are two major and critical pillars of the NACTEST document (to identify and prepare). The paper adopts secondary methods of data gathering and content analysis for analyzing both primary and secondary data as a source of information gathering and content analysis methods for analyzing the generated data. The paper also adopted protracted social conflict theory to analyze the reasons for terrorism and the methods adopted by the Nigerian government to address those motivating factors. It was discovered that the Nigerian government has been able to prevent attacks by terrorists by identifying some sources of terrorist funding in Nigeria. However, it was discovered that, as far as the capacity of the government is concerned, security agencies still lack the necessary capacity to efficiently explore and detect terrorist attacks before they occur. The paper recommends more engagement of civilians and community stakeholders in fighting against terrorism in Nigeria.

Key words: *capacity, counter terrorism, prevention, terrorism, strategy.*

Rezumat. Politica permanentă adoptată de statele nigeriene pentru a lupta împotriva terorismului este cunoscută sub numele de Strategia Națională de Combatere a Terorismului (NACTEST). Această tactică are cinci piloni și anume: a preveni, a asigura, a identifica, a pregăti și a implementa. Cea mai mare parte a literaturii se angajează pe motivele urgenței terorismului, efectul terorismului sau strategia adoptată de terorist pentru a-și perpetua activitățile odioase. Cu toate acestea, au fost făcute puține încercări de a evalua eficacitatea strategiei Nigeriei împotriva terorismului, în special NACTEST. Această lucrare este o

încercare de a examina performanța Nigeriei în identificarea planurilor teroriste și a pregătirilor sale pentru a le contracara, doi piloni majori și critici ai documentului NACTEST (de identificare și pregătire). Sunt aplicate metode secundare de colectare a datelor și analiză de conținut pentru analizarea datelor primare și secundare ca sursă de colectare a informațiilor și metode de analiză a conținutului pentru analiza datelor generate. Lucrarea a adoptat, de asemenea, teoria conflictului social prelungit pentru a analiza motivele terorismului și metodele adoptate de guvernul nigerian pentru a aborda acești factori motivatori. S-a constatat, că guvernul nigerian a reușit să prevină atacurile teroriștilor prin identificarea unor surse de finanțare a terorismului în Nigeria. Cu toate acestea, agențiile de securitate încă nu dispun de capacitatea necesară de a detecta eficient atacurile teroriste înainte de a se produce. Lucrarea recomandă mai multă implicare a civililor și a părților interesate ale comunității în lupta împotriva terorismului în Nigeria.

Cuvinte cheie: *capacitate, combatere a terorismului, prevenire, terorism, strategie.*

1. Introduction

Terrorism has been a part of man's history dating back to antiquity for political and social reasons. This is because, long before the French Revolution, there had been philosophical and theological debates over the rightness or wrongness of killing political opponents. This discourse can be found in the works of Plato (429–347 BC) and Aristotle (384–322 BC), two ancient Greek philosophers. Both argued that tyranny is a perversion and thus addressed the issue and morality of tyrannicide (the killing of a despotic or evil ruler) in the republic and politics, respectively. Of equal importance to note is the fact that tyrannicide and other acts of political killing have also been glorified in the works of ancient poets and playwrights such as Harmodios and Aristogeiton. Cicero even noted in his De Officiis that tyrants normally come to a violent end. History actually shows that the Romans celebrated this. Thus, it is worth noting that the modern-day foremost promoter of terrorism was Juan de Mariana. Mariana was a Spanish Jesuit scholar who wrote a book, De Regis Institutions, but the book was later banned in France [1].

However, some scholars have argued that we should better identify the French Revolution and the Terror Reign of Jacobin (1792–1794) as the real dates for the beginning of the modern use of the word "terrorism." In this context, the term "terrorism" was associated with the abuse of office and power rather than overthrow attempts. According to the revolutionary leader, Robespierre, terror was seen as "nothing but justice, severe and inflexible," and hence, "it is therefore an emanation of virtue" and of vital necessity for forging a new society [2]. Since then, there has been no consensus on the actual meaning of the term "terrorism" because there are varying contexts for its common use. Right from the era of the French Revolution, the usage of the term "revolution" has been excessively enlarged to include ferocious rebels who revolted against the government; violent activities of social movements like nationalists, labor unions, or anarchists who demand the liberation of foreign occupation; and violent activism of left-wing groups. The term was also used to encompass all forms of war, including, but not limited to, guerrilla warfare and commando tactics. Moreso, on some occasions, political suppression has been categorized as part of terrorism. In recent years, religious manifestation and activism have been equally deemed and labeled terrorism [3]. Furthermore, depending on whose definition of terrorism one is considering - whether British, American, Israeli, or Arab - the definition of terrorism is sometimes related to and colored by ethno-character.

Terrorism today has its origins in the twentieth century as well. The September 11, 2001, attacks are another turning point in the development of terrorist acts around the world. There has never been a time when terrorism would emerge and there would not be equal counter-terrorism efforts. The recent act of terrorism elicited critical responses from both the affected states and the global community. Nigeria, as one of the affected states by terrorism, has devised strategic plans against terrorism, called NACTEST. The strategy consists of five pillars, namely, "to forestall, to secure, to identify, to prepare, and to implement." Out of these five pillars, this paper is interested in evaluating the two major pillars, which are to identify and to prepare. These two pillars are more about soft power than military engagement.

The third pillar (to identify) has some specific objectives. Studying these objectives would give us a better understanding of the extent to which Nigeria has achieved its goals of combating terrorism in Nigeria. These objectives are: the government's ability to effectively investigate, detect, and disrupt terrorist threats; a significant decrease in the frequency of terrorist attacks; identification of the terrorists' funding sources and activities; a significant reduction in the terrorists' ability to raise money; and the ability for neighborhood members, customary and religious groups, and groups from civil society to effectively work together. The fourth pillar's (to prepare) objective is the ability of first responders, security agencies, and stakeholder organizations to respond to and effectively recover from numerous types of terrorist attacks. The last pillar's (implementation) objective is to ensure that different components act collectively and cooperatively to address a complicated threat.

The paper adopts Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) as a theoretical framework. The PSC argues that any dislocation or disconnection between the state and any of the groups within the state is likely to promote tense conflicts. After this introduction, the next discourse is on methodology, followed by a theoretical framework. The subsequent segment of this paper deals with results and discussion of findings, while the last segment of the paper is on conclusion and recommendations.

2. Methodology

This paper adopts secondary methods of data gathering. The paper secures information from secondary data by consulting available books, journals, documentaries, newspapers, and internet sources on the subject matter. The secondary data generated was analyzed by adopting the content analysis method.

Theoretical framework

This paper adopts Protracted Social Conflict (PSC), which was propounded by Edward Azar [4]. PCS traces prolonged armed disputes between social groupings to desperate needs for basic things like security, social recognition, and acceptance. It also covers equitable involvement in the political and economic spheres. PSC theory studies the interactions between players inside a state, such as tribes, communities, and ethnic groups and rejects making a distinction between domestic and international politics. Therefore, a state's function in the internal interactions of its fellow statesmen is to either appease or irritate them and this in turn would determine whether conflict would be prevented or promoted [4].

Protracted Social conflict theory places emphasis on the intra-state relationships of major actors. Azar was reported to have developed four major variables to explain PSC [5]. The first variable is "communal content." This variable identifies the groups involved, which are racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural groups. Any disarticulation or disjunction between the state and any of these groups is likely to promote tense conflicts. For Azar, most of Africa's states are disarticulated, and this menace is linked to the colonial legacy [5]. The second

variable identified is the "deprivation of human needs." Azar argues that grievances are mostly the by-product of needs' deprivation, which is expressed collectively [5]. Any failure by the state to address and redress these grievances could lead to protracted social conflicts. The third variable, according to Azar, is "governance and the state role [5]." He argues that since the state is expected to protect the lives and properties of citizens in any state where there is protracted social conflict, this signifies the weakness, incompetence, and fragility of such a state. Such states could also be referred to as parochial and authoritarian states that fail to provide for and satisfy basic human needs [5]. Thus, protracted social conflict ensues when a state has limited political capacity due to rigid or fragile authority structures that prevent states from responding to the needs of various components within the state.

The fourth variable is "international linkages". Azar linked protracted social conflict to the international economic system, which makes some countries dependent on others. He believes that the state is influenced by events around the globe, whether regional or international. The pattern of connections within the international system has a significant impact on how domestic social and political institutions are formed, and this influence even influences how the state plays its role in society [5]. Drawing from Azar's work, Agara and Ajisebiyawo trace protracted social conflict to a group's past experience, fear, and belief; it could also be experience from other states since there is linkage in the international system. Also, actions by antagonistic groups are often considered threatening [4]. This reduces the room for tolerance and flexibility, while proposals for resolution are often misconstrued, giving rebels more chances to ventilate their anger [4].

The theory of protracted social conflict is considered appropriate for the study since it would provide us with an adequate understanding of why terrorism exists in Nigeria. Communal content and deprivation of human needs assumptions shall apprise us of why there are protracted conflicts in the north-eastern part of Nigeria and give reasons why Nigeria's Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) has not yet finally put an end to terrorism in Nigeria despite international support and the federal government and state governments' concerted efforts. It is quite noted that prolonged social conflict emphasizes issues of identity. Thus, it could be said that, for conflict to be controlled, there is a need to identify the needs and identities of the conflicting parties.

3. Results and Discussion

As explained above, the third pillar of NACTEST is called 'to identify'. This pillar consists of notable objectives. This study has evaluated each of these objectives as follows:

a. A significant decrease in the number of terrorist incidents

Based on reports from the residents of the affected areas in the North East and media reports, one can argue that there was a considerable reduction in the gravity of the attacks and even in their frequency [6]. More so, before NACTEST, Boko Haram was occupying some territories, especially Sambisa Forest. However, today, terrorists can no longer use the forest as their hideout. The frequency of terrorist attacks decreased drastically after the adoption of NACTEST. Therefore, we can infer that this objective was achieved to a greater extent based on the facts presented above.

b. A substantial decrease in the terrorists' capacity for gathering money, particularly the discovery of their funding sources and revenue-generating operations

Though the sources of funding for Boko Haram are unclear, as the United Nations Security Council rightly argued [7], However, from the literature, we discovered that the

Nigerian government has been able to identify some sources of terrorist funding in Nigeria. This includes ransom kidnappings, bank vandalism, fraud, dues for membership, outside money or supporters, microfinance, and illegal trafficking [8]. Other scholars also corroborate the above report [9]. They equally mention the sources of Boko Haram's finances, which include membership dues, loans to members, assistance from friends both domestically and abroad, and various black market activities including drug trafficking, people trafficking, weapons sales, burglaries with guns, abduction, and other sources that are undependable, such as tax collection in regions thought to be within their jurisdiction and the management of farms around Lake Chad.

Out of these seven sources mentioned by Jason, only five were sustainable after Boko Haram was tagged as a terrorist group [8]. For instance, microfinance was established during the time of Yusuf, the founder of Boko Haram, and survived for a while after his demise. Secondly, membership fees were also launched by Muhammadu Yusuf, but this scheme survived for a while after his demise. However, with little or no efforts from the Nigerian government, these were no longer the sources of funding for the terrorists because of the heavy attacks on the group in 2009 and the demise of the group leader. On microfinance, it is expected that the Nigerian government will be able to freeze terrorists' financial assets. However, this was not done during the period under study. Though there is the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which is saddled with this responsibility, we also discovered that Nigeria has some other legal frameworks and the right institutions in place to seize any assets held by Boko Haram if they are located. Additionally, Nigeria has enacted a number of rules governing its financial sector and prohibiting the sponsorship of terrorist groups. Yet terrorists' accounts were not frozen [10]. Some scholars have brought up some possible reasons for this. First, out of concern for potential Boko Haram reprisals, Nigerian banks would be hesitant to submit suspicious transaction reports (STRs), which would enable them to locate potential Boko Haram cash. The fact that Boko Haram doesn't seem to rely on the official banking sector is the second and most significant element [8].

To curb terrorist funds that were being raised through kidnapping and armed robbery, the government adopted the "follow the money and arrest" policy. Using this strategy, most of the arrests were made before NACTEST. According to Jason, the Nigerian government was able to partially halt financing for Boko Haram by apprehending well-known sympathizers [8]. Sheik Muhiddeen Abdullahi, an Islamic charity director supported by Saudi Arabia and a Muslim businessman from Sudan, was detained at the beginning of 2004.   He was apprehended after his transactions with a Boko Haram middleman totaled millions [11]. Mohammed Ashafa was also detained in 2006 for soliciting people to fly to Niger to undergo training from an Algerian Salifist organization and for accepting money from two Al-Qaeda agents in Pakistan [8]. The accusations made by the Nigerian government as well as the world community that Al-Qaeda was one of Boko Haram's financiers in Nigeria were validated by these arrests [8].

Additional actions included the detention of well-known arms dealer Mohammed Zakaria, who supplied information that resulted in the February 2011 assassination of Alhaji Salisu Damaturu, another supporter of Boko Haram. Mohammed Ali Ndume, a senator from Borno State, and Saidu Pindar, a former ambassador to Sao Tome and Principe, were exposed as Boko Haram's financial backers following the group's 2011 arrest of members. November 2011 saw the arrest of Ndume, who was accused of providing funding to Boko Haram. A Boko Haram spokesperson was detained in 2012 after claiming that governors of Kano State,

Ibrahim Shekaru, and Bauchi State, Isa Yuguda, were providing terrorists with a monthly payment [8]. Through these arrests, the government was able to curtail terrorist funding. The recent report of the National Inherent Risk Assessment (NIRA) in 2022 captures some other efforts that were not captured by the 2016 reports. The misuse of official financial sectors to fund terrorism has been uncovered by this study; these findings were not included in the 2016 NRA, and they may point to the increasing complexity of some terrorist groups' TF abilities. TF has been conducted using Bureau de Change (BDCs), Point of Sale Machines (POS), wire transfers, and Designated Financial Businesses and Professions (DNFBPs) [12].

Another policy put in place by the Nigerian government was the strategy of closing livestock markets to stop financing Boko Haram [13]. The selling of stolen livestock by Boko Haram as a method of financial support was discovered throughout northern Nigeria as a result of the organization's exploitation of financial intelligence by the Nigerian government. To stop this financing source, the Nigerian government responded by closing many livestock markets in northeastern Nigeria at the beginning of 2016. [13].

To deal with all other sources of terrorist funding, strengthening security in the affected area was equally identified as a remedy. It was discovered that some terrorists' sources of funding, like external money from admirers, extortion, hostage captures, the financial institution burglaries, and illegal trafficking were all triumphs because there was a security crisis in the affected areas [8]. This objective of NACTEST believes that external funding and illicit trafficking would be impossible for the terrorists if there was adequate security since they depend on man-to-man financial transactions rather than making use of existing financial institutions [8]. Thus, strengthening security was then used as a strategy to curb bank robbery and kidnapping for ransom. Closely related to the above strategy was the fact that terrorists were no longer allowed to occupy any territory. Since this was done, terrorists' ability to launch operations has decreased, while kidnappings and bank robberies have also decreased [14].

However, some scholars have equally identified some shortcomings in the actions of the government in decimating terrorist finances. For instance, on the issue of kidnapping for ransom, they believed that the government should discourage paying ransom as this would discourage terrorists from taking action [15]. They argued that this strategy has been tested by the USA and Britain. In Maghrib, terrorists prefer to kidnap citizens of other European countries rather than Britain and the USA. This is because other European countries always prefer to pay ransom rather than risk the lives of their loved ones [16]. Recently, the Nigerian government has criminalized paying ransom to kidnappers or terrorists, as was done in the USA and Britain [17]. Hence, this objective of NACTEST faced some challenges in curbing terrorist finance. These challenges include, but are not limited to, a lack of institutional and techno-scientific instruments, the problem of the political elite, who are beneficiaries of terrorism, and the challenges of uncoordinated CT strategies. Other challenges are the There is no political appetite on the part of the pertinent parties to deal with TF's challenges and its structural circumstances that rendered the Combating the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) policies ineffective [9]. Despite all these challenges, we can categorically say that there is a reduction in terrorist financing, going by the above discourse.

c. Establishing the necessary infrastructure to efficiently look into, identify, and neutralize terrorist threats

As far as capacity is concerned, security agencies still lack the requisite capacity to effectively investigate and detect terrorist attacks [18]. The FATF Report corroborates this

view that "law enforcement and regulatory agencies, security and intelligence services, and the judiciary lack the requisite capacity to effectively address the challenge of terrorism and terrorism financing" [19]." Ability to detect relies on capacity to investigate, and from reports so far, Nigerian security and even the MJTF lack capacity to independently investigate suspected attacks. The Stars and telegraph papers provide relevant information in this regard: there were two surveillance drones owned by the Nigerian government. But still, the ability of the Nigerian government to conduct efficient monitoring is lacking [20,21]. According to a former US military commander, the US taught the Nigerian air force to operate a surveillance drone, but they only purchased two, and we don't know if the other one is still in service [20,21].

Therefore, Nigeria becomes dependent on outside help for photographic intelligence. As a result, US satellites, mounted surveillance aircraft, and surveillance drones have monitored the activities of Boko Haram combatants, especially their practice facilities. Additionally, it was stated that Israel, China, and France agreed to exchange information and satellite photos, and the UK government is promising to deploy a surveillance plane [22]. At the time of writing this report, these promises have yet to be fulfilled, despite the fact that they were made in 2014. In assessing this objective, we could conclude that it has not yet been achieved. The implication of this is that it is most likely to constrain the performance of Nigerian forces in combating terrorism in Nigeria.

d.   Government's effective leverage on the capacity of community representatives, traditional and religious institutions, and civil society organizations

The Nigerian government has tried to leverage the capacity of community representatives to combat terrorism in Nigeria. This could be deduced from the speech of the chairman of the Counter Terrorism Center, Rear Admiral Yaminu Musa, at the United Nations High Level Conference on Counter Terrorism, which was held in New York between June 28 and 29, 2018. He reported that "the policy framework adopts a "whole-of-government" and a "whole-of-society approach" [23]. He explained further that "it encourages the active participation of ministries, departments, and agencies of government, as well as critical stakeholders from different sectors of civil society, such as religious actors, youths, teachers, women, law enforcement, the media, and community-based organizations" [23].

We discovered that students and teachers were also carried along in this revolution to discourage them from becoming radicalized. Musa also gave an account of these concerted efforts being made by Nigeria in his report [23]. He laments that students were urged to plan conferences and seminars to talk about the reasons behind extremism and violence, come up with strategies for combating it both online and on campus, and establish connections with young people all over the world in networks dedicated to doing just that [23]. Still on youth, Nigeria has also enacted the "Not Too Young to Run Bill," with the intention of eliminating age constraints for youthful aspirants. It is the government's belief that youth involvement and upward trajectory will lessen the likelihood of being a target of extremist acts [23]. More so, the chairman reported efforts that have been made that have led to kick-starting a community-based preventive program with youths and community leaders. These efforts are also being facilitated with the support of the UNDP Office in Abuja.

In a special report of the United States Institute of Peace, as reported by [24], there are a series of programs that were organized by the government and NGOs to sensitize the general public on security. Based on these facts, we can say that the above objective is followed and achieved by the Nigerian government to a considerable extent.

4. Assessment of fourth pillar of NACTEST "to Prepare"

This pillar is more about the ability of the government, stakeholder organizations and security agencies to swiftly respond to terrorist attacks and to successfully recuperating from a range of terrorist incidents

In assessing this objective, we have discovered that the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) spearheaded the government's response to a crisis in terms of humanitarian assistance, intervention, planning, and recovery. It has also been at the forefront of humanitarian relief provision since the onset of the Boko Haram saga. NEMA has been in charge of overseeing the diverse IDP camps, distributing philanthropic aid in the form of things both edible and non-food, enrolling and supervising IDPs, and reacting quickly to crisis situations via ambulances and other paramedics [25,26]. NEMA and its state counterparts, State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMAs), have also collaborated with other humanitarian organizations to provide assistance to IDPs both in formally recognized camps and in host communities, where the majority of IDPs reside [25,27]. In addition to the role played by the Federal Government through NEMA, state governments, particularly in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States, have equally played critical roles in the care of IDPs. They provided lodging, food, non-food equipment, and pharmaceuticals, as well as leading advocacy for assistance in coping with the insurrection and its impacts on a domestic and international level. In reaction to this activism, various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have made contributions to supplying much-needed humanitarian assistance to the insurrection's survivors in partnerships with Global Development Partners (GDP) and state governments [27].

Other international bodies that have collaborated with Local collaborators in Nigeria to assist the government in providing humanitarian relief are the United Nations' Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), Non-Food Items (NFI), Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), and The Buhari Plan (BP), which consists of Strategic Response Plans (SRPs), Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), Joint Humanitarian Action Plans (JHAPs), and the North East Development Commission (NEDC). As a result of these efforts, annual plans for relief efforts have been designed and deployed mostly in collaboration with local, state, and federal governments [25,27].

The Presidential Initiative for the North East (PINE) is another initiative formulated by Nigeria's government. The ex-president of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonatan, instructed his National Security Adviser (NSA), Sambo Dasuki, to take the helm of a significant project to create a Marshal Plan for the economic recovery of the Northeast when the Boko Haram insurgency ends in order to respond tactfully and strategically to the insurrection's national security concerns [28]. A short-term fiscal intervention policy was also included in the mandate, allowing the federal authorities to use economic tools to deal with the insurgency's fundamental problems. The Presidential Initiative for the North East (PINE) was launched in 2011 by the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) for the purpose of investigating the reasons behind the insurgence and its impacts. Two additional studies were conducted in 2012 and 2013 for the same purpose. One of them was conducted by ONSA, while the other was done in collaboration with the European Union (EU) [29].

The research conducted by ONSA during that period was handled by ONSA's Economic Team in the North East. The aforementioned study served as the foundation for the development of the North East Economic Transformation Initiative (NEETI), which the Directorate of Economic Intelligence (DEI) oversaw [30]. Not too long after, the "Soft approach

to Counter Terrorism" was implemented in order to tackle the North East's underlying economic issues. The President unveiled the economic intervention agenda in 2014 as a consequence of this endeavor. [30]. The bottom-up approach of the initiative was disclosed. It was tasked with cultivating regional contributions through contributions from North East governors, the public and private sectors, and individual stakeholders. The action plan also sought to organize worldwide community involvement and contributions via global development partners of Nigeria as well as other global groups that are non-governmental [31]. Several federal government agencies, departments, and ministries' programs focusing on the Northeast economy eventually crystallized into PINE in 2014. These agencies include, but are not limited to, the Federal Initiative for the North East (FINE), the Federal Ministry of Finance (FMF), and the National Planning Commission (NPC), which launched the Special Planning Initiative for the North East (SPINE) [27,31].

Another state-level initiative addressing the North East's recovery is the North East Economic Summit Group (NEESG). The six Executive Governors of the North East Region met in Gombe, Gombe State, on the 3rd and 4th of December 2013 for the second North East economic conference [32]. The first meeting took place on the 6th and 7th of December 2012 in Bauchi, Bauchi State. ONSA's work influenced the President's decision to attend the said 2nd North East Summit Group, and it was at the summit that the PINE was announced [27]. Another significant outcome of the 2nd Summit was the determination of the region's representatives at the pinnacle of politics to draft a state-level development plan akin to the "Marshall Plan". In response to that, governors formed individual state development plan committees and charged them with swift action. This plan's development took place from January to August of 2014. A thorough discussion with important parties was conducted as part of the preparation. Officials from the federal and state governments, the organized private sector, Nigeria's international development partners, and youth and women's groups from the Northeast were among the stakeholders [27]. During this period, important and helpful contributions were given for the scheme's development. Additionally, the procedure allowed the committee to interact with the budget and planning officers, who had been allowed to depart the area to assist the committee. The strategy was named the "North East States Transformation Strategy" (NESTS) [31]. The NESTS was created to provide affected states with strategic information and representation before the federal government. From its inception, the NESTS Plan was thus incorporated into the Federal Government's regional planning effort [27,31].

The Victims' Support Fund (VSF) was likewise established during President Jonathan's tenure. The then-federal government investigated supplementary funding sources for the much-needed recovery efforts to encourage backing for the government's initiatives to provide assistance to the increasing number of insurgent casualties. As a result, the former President, Goodluck Jonathan, established the Victims Support Fund, led by General T.Y. Danjuma (Rtd.), on July 16, 2014 [33]. It was saddled with the following responsibilities: to pinpoint sources and methods of generating long-term financial support to assist victims of the Boko Haram insurrection; to devise effective fund-raising schemes; and to identify individuals, societies, infrastructure, and valuable property that have been impacted by terrorists [27].

From the report of PCNI [27], we discovered that the VSF sponsored the Nigeria Foundation for the Support of Terrorist Victims (NFSTV) as a voluntary action that serves as the committee's execution arm, with excellent committee members serving on its team [34].

On July 31, 2014, during the formal fundraising occasion, the committee received commitments of over 50 billion naira, of which over 20 billion have been returned thus far. As part of the Federal Goverment's Strategic Response Plan, the Committee is cooperating closely with other collaborators; through its foundation, it has planned many relief efforts to aid those who have survived the onslaught by the insurgents [27].

In addition, on May 7, 2014, during the World Economic Forum Africa (WEFA) in Abuja, Nigeria, the Federal Government of Nigeria established "The Safe Schools Initiative (SSI)" as part of the immediate interventions in the Northeast. Together with a group of influential Nigerian entrepreneurs, the UN Special Representative for Education Worldwide was involved in this [27]. The SSI wants to keep numerous schools throughout the nation safe. from future attacks and kidnappings, beginning with schools in the Northeast. On July 9, 2014, past President Goodluck Jonathan inaugurated a steering committee for the initiative, and the North East Schools Students Transfer Programme was successfully launched [27,35].

Still on the recovery objective, Buhari's government also put in place its strategy for recovery and stabilization. It was also reported that the findings of the Recovery and Peace Building Assessment (RPBA) were incorporated into the Nigerian government's master plan for rebuilding the North East [36]. The Buhari Plan and the RPBA have been transformed into the North East Nigeria Recovery and Stabilization Program (RSP), which was expected to operationalize the RPBA's findings and translate them into an efficient and successful implementation for rehabilitation and peacebuilding across economic, social, and infrastructural facilities, including restoration, recovery, and reconstruction. The program also includes an institutional structure for recovery program execution, coordination, quality control, supervision, and appraisal, as well as a financing mobilization plan [35].

This research corroborates the general as7essment of scholars that the achievement of this objective was somehow low. For instance, Steven [31] argues that, so far, no government entity in Nigeria has managed the emergency effectively. He contends that the President's Initiative for the North East (PINE) and a related plan were not effective. The plan lacked prioritization, budget, sequencing, or even ownership for operationalization [36]. Likewise, the North East States Transformation Strategy (NESTS) achieved little or nothing because it was established at a time when President Jonathan and many of these northern governors were not from the same political parties. Apart from that, the PINE and NESTS plans were both desk studies without data or public consultation [37]. Though some early 2017 military gains and improved security in some parts of northeastern Nigeria have spurred a greater focus on conflict stabilization measures, Yet, the so-called Buhari Plan, which outlines its post-conflict recovery priorities in the northeast, which could range from emergency assistance to stabilization and early recovery, was ineffective.

This is because the recovery policy put in place by the Nigerian government was not all-encompassing. An evaluation of Nigeria's counterterrorism strategy and post-conflict rehabilitation plans revealed that these plans lacked consideration for the psychological wellness of kids impacted by terrorism in the country [38]. This lack of assistance is a result of the Nigerian government's insufficient readiness to combat terrorism and the absence of a legislative framework to address the emotional requirements of children who have experienced violence [38]. Because of corruption, children seldom have access to the little services provided, which are reactive rather than proactive [39]. If the mental health needs of those impacted by the trauma of terrorism are not met, peacebuilding efforts may backfire and fail to bring about a lasting peace. More so, traditional cultural systems do not support

the mental health needs of children. For instance, any child who is sexually harassed will have a psychological problem due to stigma [38].

According to Saskia [18], Nigeria's recovery and peacebuilding program is overstretched, under-resourced, and corruption-plagued. As the military struggled to consolidate its gains, civilians in many parts of the northeast faced threats from both insurgents and government officials. Another challenge was rampant corruption and ineffective coordination, which have hampered the government's response to the crisis. In other words, elites in various agencies and levels of government (federal, state, and local) illegally benefited from the continuation of the crisis [18]. Therefore, major recovery programs were only made possible by international donors. These recovery exercises were handled by the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the African Union Commission. They adopted a regional stabilization strategy that highlighted short-, medium-, and long-term programs for stabilization, resilience, and recovery needs [40]. These programs did not only aim at strengthening local conflict prevention and mitigation systems but also at restoring local governance and basic services. The programs were equally aimed at fostering social cohesion and ensuring the reintegration of former combatants [38].

With these reports and the analysis above, we can conclude that this objective was not achieved to a large extent. Therefore, the government needed to really work on this area.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

According to a study, all hands should be on deck while combating terrorism in both wealthy and developing nations. The National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) is the long-standing anti-terrorism policy that Nigerian governments have embraced. The five pillars of this method are to forestall, secure, identify, prepare, and implement. The majority of the literature discusses the causes of the terrorist situation, the effects of terrorism, or the tactics used by terrorists to carry out their horrific acts. Nonetheless, not much work has been done to assess the effectiveness of Nigeria's counterterrorism policy, particularly NACTEST. In light of this, this paper has assessed Nigeria's effectiveness in following the two essential and main pillars of NACTEST.

It has been discovered that Nigeria, to a large extent, has worked to prevent many attacks by terrorists, but there are still areas where government efforts have not yet yielded the expected results. It is observed that there was a significant decrease in the gravity of the attacks and even in their frequency during the period under review. We also discovered that the Nigerian government has been able to identify some sources of terrorist funding in Nigeria. Though the Nigerian government has tried to leverage the capacity of community representatives to combat terrorism in Nigeria, some scholars have rated the government's efforts low on decimating terrorist finances. Moreso, it was discovered that, as far as the capacity of the government is concerned, security agencies still lack the capacity needed to look into and identify terrorist attacks before they occur. Thus, there is a need for the government to do more, especially in the area of soft targets.

Similarly, on the fourth pillar, which is to prepare, the government has also tried to This pillar is more about the ability of the government, safety apparatus, and participant organizations to swiftly respond to terrorist attacks and to efficiently emerge from a range of terrorist incidents. We have discovered that the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) spearheaded the government's response to a crisis in terms of humanitarian assistance, intervention, planning, and recovery. However, NEMA works in collaboration with

other agencies, both government and private-based agencies. It is recommended that the government employ sophisticated technologies for tracking terrorists to forestall their attacks before executing them. This, no doubt, will reduce the number of casualties and increase people's confidence in both the military and government.

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