

NIGERIAN NAVY'S ROLE IN COUNTER INSURGENCY OPERATIONS IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN: NAVAL OUTPOST (NOP) IN PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Nigerian Navy is one of the military components in the counter insurgency operations in the North East. The FGN directed for the deployment of a multidimensional operation in the North-East code-named Op LAFIYA DOLE and the NN component of that operation called Naval Out Post (NOP) LAKE CHAD had its Operational Base in Baga alongside the MNJTF Sector 3 in the fringes of Lake Chad. It is from their operational Base that the NN supported other components in an operation against Boko Haram since 2016. In an effort to contain, if not defeat the BH in the Lake Chad region using a variety of option including national and regional deployment of military operations. This paper attempts to access the activities of NOP LAKE CHAD as a component of the military operation in the region. Adopting primary and secondary sources of data collection and analysis, it identified lack of clear command structure, lack of logistic base, poor access road to Fish Dam and shrinking Lake Chad as challenges that confronted the operation. To deal with these challenges, it suggested development of clear command structure, effective logistic base, construction of good road network to Fish Dam and recharging of Lake Chad as options for improved deployment.

***Keywords:** Lake Chad Basin; NOP Op; MNJTF; Logistics Base; Nigerian Navy; Counter-Insurgency Operation*

INTRODUCTION

The internalization of insecurity which was made possible as a result of globalization has increasingly become a concern to nations all over the world. One aspect of insecurity that stands out is the proliferation of insurgent

groups, particularly since the 9/11 attack in US orchestrated by Al Qaeda terrorist network. However, since then many other groups like Al Shabaab, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Talibans in Pakistan, Salafist Movement in Algeria that metamorphosed into Al Qaeda in the Magreb (AQIM), Islamic State in the Greater Sahel (ISGS), *Boko Haram*(BH) among others have continued to infiltrate national boundaries using asymmetric battle tactics. Insurgent and their activities have created apprehension for state actors and threatening global security. To further perpetuate violence, insurgent sought sanctuaries in neighbouring countries leading to transnational insurgency. Accordingly, it is on the strength of the advancement and proliferation of these groups that Boko Haram emerged and grew in sophistication since 2009. Boko Haram Terrorists (BHT) group, within space of five years began to occupy territories within Nigerian North East region, such as Baga in Borno state. The group took a transnational outlook, spreading across territories within Lake Chad Basin. In Nigeria alone, activities of BH has led to the death of about 25,000 people (Onuoha,2013) and displacement of about 3 million people within and across Nigeria (Osagioduwa. and Oluwakorede, 2016).

Accordingly, and in an effort to contain, if not totally annihilate the group, governments of the region, in addition to national measures, mounted a multinational joint task force (MNJTF) headquartered in Ndjamen. Thus, while the MNJTF was mandated to checkmate the cross border incursion by the group, Nigeria Government equally adopted a multi-agency and joint operation approach and deployed an integrated force in an operation code named Op LAFIYA DOLE in line with the directive of the FGN. The MNJTF operated in sectors that covered a vast area. One of the sectors covering the fringes of Lake Chad is Sector 3.

Sector 3 comprised 7 bde of the Nigerian Army under OP LAFIYA DOLE which had its headquarters in Baga to coordinate operations within Northern Borno. These areas of operations of 7 bde include Kross Kanwa, Malam Fatori, Kangarwa, Baga and the Islands of Lake Chad also known locally as the Tumbuns. The Bde also had an amphibious company to assist in the riverine operations especially along the fringes of Lake Chad. The Lake is strategic to the BHT as it is their main supply route (MSR) which is strategic in movement of personnel and logistics to sustain their nefarious operations. This necessitated the decision by the FGN to deploy the NN to Lake Chad. It is on these bases that the Nigerian Navy established NOP LAKE CHAD Baga in 2016 in response to the directive from the FGN. The mandate of the Unit was to contain the activities of BHT while checkmating their entry from their locations and to effectively dominate the islands within Lake Chad in support of Op LAFIYA DOLE. This task is also in line with the NN Total Spectrum Maritime Strategy (TSMS) in support of the Nigerian Defense Policy. The TSMS covers operations in the backwaters and also land operations.

To realize this mandate, the NN drafted personnel to the newly established Unit. The NN also invested in the training of the personnel of the newly established Unit in counter terrorism and light infantry tactics. NOP LAKE CHAD could not sustain the gains recorded in the fight against BHT. NOP LAKE CHAD was dislodged in December 2018 by the BHT in addition to 7 Bde headquarters. Personnel and equipment were lost during the encounter. Nonetheless, NOP LAKE CHAD played a vital role in curbing BH activities before its dislodgement by the BHT. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to outline the role of the NOP LAKE CHAD in countering the incursion of BHT in the Lake Chad Basin.

The purpose of this paper therefore is to highlight critical roles played by the NN in the Lake Chad basin in countering and containing the BH insurgency. The paper will define some key concepts. It will then examine the

Lake Chad Basin as a region in crisis and further look at the overview of NOP Lake Chad operations, while the challenges and lessons learnt will be highlighted in other to suggest options for hitch-free operations in future. The paper will be limited to the activities of NOP LAKE CHAD from 2016 to 2017 being the period when operations were conducted by the Unit. A fair knowledge of the NN operations as regards backwater and land operations is assumed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To properly situate this paper for clarity and easy understanding, some concepts have been reviewed. This include: terrorism, insurgency and a periscopic look at the Lake Chad Basin. The succeeding paragraphs explain the concepts.

Terrorism: Terrorism by nature has no universally acceptable definition. Many scholars have come to define the term differently and reflecting geography, socio-political, economic, religious and other considerations. For instance, some scholars and statesmen have tried to link terrorism with one's religious affiliation or geographical location. While the same act considered as terrorism by some, is perceived differently in other sections. The term therefore has been a contextual issue and does not have a universally accepted definition. Hence, Poland (2011) defines terrorism as the premeditated, deliberate, systematic murder, mayhem, and threatening of innocent lives to create fear and intimidation in order to gain a political or tactical advantage, usually to influence an audience. While the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) sees terrorism as the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives. One thing is clear here, and that is terrorists use instrument of violence to create fear and achieve political or social objective.

Insurgency: Obene (2015) made a distinction between terrorism and insurgency. He argues that while terrorism makes use of violence which targets mostly civilian population in order to create fear and achieve political, social or even religious goals, Insurgency seeks to subvert or displace the government and completely or partially control the resources and all government apparatus and even population of a given territory using instrument of force including terrorism. In a similar vein, the US Department of Defense sees insurgency as a protracted violent conflict in which one or more groups seek to overthrow or fundamentally change the political or social order in a state or region through the use of sustained violence, subversion, social disruption, and political action (US Department of Defence, 2001). This paper therefore submits that terrorism as an act is one of the tools used by insurgents whose overall aim is to subvert government and control resources and people.

LAKE CHAD BASIN REGION IN PERSPECTIVE

Lake Chad Basin lies within the Sahel region and cuts across countries of Central, North and West Africa. Although Lake Chad itself flows majorly across Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, Countries that fall within the basin extends beyond the above listed countries to include: Central African Republic (CAR), and Libya. These 6 countries form the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). The Commission is headquartered in Ndjamena, Chad. It is worthy to note that CAR and Libya joined the Commission in 1996 and 1998, 32 years after its formation increasing its membership from 4 to 6. Congo, Egypt and Sudan have attained observer status in the Commission

beginning from 2000. The Commission was formed basically to ensure effective distribution and management of the Lake Chad resources while at the same time, preserving the natural ecology of the area and promoting integration and security (Lake Chad Basin Commission, 2014). The Lake Chad has been a source of vital resources such as fresh water, water resources, oil among others.

Most conflicts in Africa have always been linked to contestations around natural resources. In the case of Lake Chad, the shrinking of the Lake over the years calls for concern from all stakeholders and the international community at large. For instance, the Lake has shrunk from a peak of 25,000 square km to the present size of about 1,350 square km (Buhari, 2018). A change in climatic condition over time is largely responsible for this phenomenal change and this certainly has implications for survival of the affected population. Activities around the area has been largely affected by the change in climatic condition and its associated shrinking of the Lake. This also resulted in struggles for survival and sometimes conflict of divers' magnitude leading to breakdown of economic, political and societal structures. The situation painted above presents a society that lacks structures required in the maintenance of law and order. Such environment naturally would house different forms of insecurity including terrorism and insurgency. More so, most of the countries in the Lake Chad basin are countries that have had one form of armed conflict or the other. For instance, the aftermath of Libya 2011 war has left the country more polarized and vulnerable than ever, with spill-over effect on neighboring sub-Sahara African states. In the last decade, virtually all member states have played host to varying dimension of armed conflicts, insurgency, transnational organized crimes and scourge of terrorism (Ude, 2019).

Accordingly, Chad and Niger have had to contend with insurgent groups that have been advancing to usurp government authority and overthrow legitimate governments in these states. Just as Nigeria has borne the brunt of BH insurgency since 2009, the group found sanctuaries in and around enclaves in these countries. Poor governance presence posed a critical challenge in these areas. It is a well-known fact that the fight against BH insurgency appear to have lasted for quite a long time owing to the vulnerabilities of Nigeria's contagious neighborhood. The activities of BH in Nigeria have grown to become a regional conflict with its spill-over effect crossing across board, requiring regional approach to counter.

BOKO HARAM CONUNDRUM IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

As earlier mentioned, BHT activities in the Lake Chad region is made possible as result of multiple of factors which include shrinking of Lake Chad, chronic unemployment and political instability among others. These factors made it possible for the availability of foot soldiers to recruit and use for nefarious activities including terrorism. BHT found sanctuary in the region with support from global terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahel. No doubt, BHT metamorphosed from a small movement in North East Nigeria in 1995 calling for the practice of pure Islam with a longer aim of enforcing it on the state to a group with international spread. The group has since evolved to have gained international character, spread its operational base, enlarge membership in terms of number, and improve in its weaponry and operational strategies with funding support from other transnational terrorist groups such as Al Shabaab, and the Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM). It was in 2003 that the group started adopting open violence in their campaigns against the state. The group was then called "Nigerian Taliban" as it was then modeled along Afghanistan Taliban (Sani, 2011).

The activities of the group remained largely internal at the early stage of its existence except for regular training it received from groups that shared similar ideology. However, following the 2009 killing of its leader and adherents, the group laid low only to resurface years later with capacity to inflict fear within its areas of operation. It is with this momentum that it has spread across territories of Lake Chad Basin such as Cameroon, Chad and Niger. While BHT activities in all these areas has inflicted severe pain on the citizens, economy and even damage critical infrastructures, other groups such as AQIM, Ansar Dine, Al Mourabitoum and Macina Liberation Front (MLF) in Mali have much influence on security of the region. All these have contributed to sustain the dominance of terrorism in the Lake Chad Region.

The use of child soldiers and girl-child suicide bombers have been their common characteristics and this poses huge burden on government counter insurgency operations such as the Op LAFIYA DOLE and regional consensus such as the MNJTF to remove their foot soldiers, de-radicalize and reintegrate them into the society.

Increasing criminality and indulgence in activities inimical to what it preaches remains part of BHT activities in the Lake Chad area. The group equally engages in criminal activities such as extortion, in what it calls “protection” fees within occupied islands of Lake Chad, collection of ransom for exchange of hostages, armed robbery among others. All this criminalization of its activities is with the aim of generating money to fund its operations (Ude, 2019). These criminal activities cut across national borders to many parts of the Lake Chad Basin, creating atmosphere of chaos around the region. It is worthy to note that Lake Chad region has vast ungoverned areas that facilitate activities of these criminal groups with little or no resistance from governments of the region. Regional and international cooperation is however required for a robust intervention that would translate into sustainable peace and development.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Regional Collaboration to Counter Boko Haram Insurgency in the Lake Chad Region

The realization of the need for concerted effort by countries in the Lake Chad region to counter the BH insurgency manifested in the consensus to deploy a multinational joint task force (MNJTF) headquartered in Ndjamen, Chad. The political process leading to this consensus took a lot of high-level negotiations before a consensus was reached. Consequently, MNJTF was deployed to counter the BH incursion from the region. Nigeria agreed with neighboring Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger to send 8,700 strong regional force which was authorized by the African Union Peace and Security Council (Soniya and Ogunmade, 2015). Nigeria political leaders had in the past opposed any arrangement to have foreign boots on ground to help combat *Boko Haram* insurgency even when *Boko Haram* expanded beyond Nigerian borders and increasingly threatened neighboring countries.

The deployment of the MNJTF was necessitated by the increasing sophistication and BH incursion from border areas following its gradual dominance in the Lake Chad area and the need to rid the region of all forms of organized criminal activities taking place in that region and to strengthen regional solidarity by creating safe and secure environment suitable for economic development to take place. The AU authorized MNJTF was to operate within the borders to contain BH regional expansion. Thus, it was not until July 2015 when improved multilateral and bilateral relations between Nigeria and her Lake Chad Basin Commission neighbors contributing troops to the

MNJTF that Nigeria began to record significant progress in the counter insurgency operation at the domestic and across borders.

The formation of G5 Sahel force on 2 July 2017 by leaders of Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali and Niger and with support from France, no doubt weakened the battle morals of the operations. G5 Sahel's concept of operation was endorsed by the AU Peace and Security Council and it has the following mandate: to combat terrorism and drug trafficking, contribute to the restoration of state authority and the return of IDPs, facilitate humanitarian operations and the delivery of aid to affected populations, and contribute to the implementation of development strategies in the G5 Sahel region (ISS weekly, 2017). These are laudable objectives; however, security observers consider it a diversionary move which in the long run may affect full objective of the MNJTF.

Military Joint Operation to Counter Boko Haram Insurgency in the North East

The deployment of military for internal security operations is covered in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Section 217 (2c) of Nigerian Constitution, 1999). This may have informed why government in 2003, 2009 and upwards mobilized a joint operation comprising the NA, NN, NAF and other sister security agencies against the BH insurgency. The Naval component of that operation, code named "NOP Lake Chad" is located on a temporary site around Fish Dam in Baga with responsibility to dominate the maritime domain of the operational area. In 2011, the "*Terrorism Prevention Act*" was signed and this empowered the military to detain and prosecute terrorist suspects (Eboh, 2011). This was part of government strategy to counter the increasing BH terrorist influence in the region. So far, the operation is still active with its successes and setbacks. The operations had only succeeded in containing the sect, limited their activities, and to some extent, degraded their conventional weapon capabilities especially with the purchase of new counter-insurgency equipment.

OVERVIEW OF NOP LAKE

The overview of NOP LAKE CHAD will cover location of NOP LAKE CHAD as well as training and deployment of personnel. This will be presented in themes. The NOP Lake Chad is located on a temporary site around Fish Dam in Baga, within Lat 13° 30' 29" N and Long 14° 30' 17" E. The Headquarters and support Base were at the Federal College of Freshwater Fisheries Technology (FCFFT) Baga. It is co-located within the 7 Bde MNJTF Sectors 3 and accessible through the Baga village roadway. The Outpost is demarcated from the hinterlands by a dredged canal that leads to the open Lake and the international boundary between Nigeria and the Republic of Chad. Some of the islands (Tumbuns) in the Lake Chad region include Shuwaram, Kwallaram, DuguriMadayi and Litari. Others are Kangallam, Tumbun Abuja, TunbunGini and Dumbaa among others. Intelligence report suggests that these islands have been reported to harbor BHTs and serve as training camps for new recruits. These Tumbuns have a dense vegetation which provides cover for BHTs clandestine operations and therefore difficult for Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) Ops. This terrain had hindered effective operations in the Lake Chad. Consequently, extensive and coordinated riverine and amphibious operations with close air support would be required to rid these islands of the BHTs and dominate them accordingly.

It is worth mentioning that additional nautical miles were recovered from water hyacinth using manual labor of about 250 locals to enhance boat navigation. This was done in preparation for OP RAWAN KADA II. This recovery has made 2 of the suspected islands visible and within heavy weapon ranges. However, favorable water depth

remains a major challenge. Mud churning is experienced at different part of the channel during patrols. Furthermore, the depth at the canal ranges from 0.75m to 1m. The depth and marine growth in the basin hinder the deployment of boats especially during the rainy season when the water level at the lake rescinds. This also hinders effective amphibious and riverine operations using platforms with force protection characteristics.

Training and Deployment

After the appointments and drafts of personnel to be deployed to the NOP LAKE CHAD, it was observed that many of the personnel have inadequate knowledge in riverine operations as well as infantry tactics. These tactics are necessary for operations especially in the OP LAFIYA DOLE theatre of operations. Consequently, a pre-deployment training was arranged by NHQ for all personnel drafted and appointed to the NOP. The training of personnel was conducted in 3 phases. The first phase was the riverine operations at the Joint Maritime Security Training Centre (JMSTC) Navy Town Lagos. The second phase was conducted at the Nigerian Army School of Infantry (NASI) Jaji. While the third phase was a 2 weeks in-theatre quick adaptation training. It was conducted through the assistance of 7 BdeMNJTF upon insertion. The in-theatre training was conducted to ensure that personnel understand the terrain, routine in defense of the AOR, heavy weapon handling and counter IED procedures. It is worthy of note that the personnel deployed adapted to the terrain and operational expectations of the Theatre in the performance of their duty.

On completion of the training, the Ship Company was deployed in 2 batches; Advance and Rear parties respectively. The Advance Party being the first batch comprised of 4 x 46 personnel were inducted in the theatre of operation on the 8 Oct 16. The Rear Party, second batch comprised of 10 x 101 personnel were married up and inducted with the advance party in January 2017. Logistics support was also provided to support the unit as the operations commenced. The deployment enhanced security both at Fish Dam and FCFFT where the personnel, platforms and logistics were deployed.

Operations in NOP Lake Chad

NOP Lake Chad was fully integrated into Op LAFIYA DOLE routine. The Base performed light infantry duties in the security of the Base. Also, the Unit conducts routine in defense which include sentry duties, fighting patrols and joint operations in defense of own AOO. More so, the Base conducted mobility Operations in support of Base logistics and administrative movements as well. The Unit also conducted operations with 7 Bde Amph Coy from time to time which had culminated in different successful joint clearance operations since commencement. NOP Lake Chad came under serious attack by the BHT on 14 February 2017. The BHT attacked the temporary base at Fish Dam and vandalized the containers which were erected as a makeshift accommodation. At that time, personnel were not allowed to sleep at the location due to logistics challenges. However, after the incident, personnel were deployed to wade off any intending saboteur. Additionally, a new base defense strategy was adopted to enhance the security at Fish Dam. Some of the strategies adopted included digging of anti-vehicular trenches round the base and erection of fortified observation posts. The observation posts were fortified with 12.7mm guns and AGLs as well as GPMGs in addition to personal weapons and Night Vision Goggles. Furthermore, concertina wires were used in strategic locations and also sentry posts were established along the Fish Dam route. The base also cut a lot of trees to enhance visibility and effectiveness of weapons. To augment intelligence, the Base liaised with the Civilian JTF

in Baga town. Also, some members of the CJTF were employed to enhance security at the base especially from sunset till dawn. Both foot and riverine patrols were also sustained to deter the BHT from using the waterways as much as possible.

Civil Military Relations (CMR) operations were also conducted by NOP LAKE CHAD in Baga. This was done in conjunction with the 7 Bde. The base repaired water tanks for the locals and also supplied fresh drinking water to some places in Baga town. The base also organized a medical rhapsody to commemorate the Navy Week in 2017. Medical care and drugs as well as other relieve materials were distributed to the locals. The medical team also delivered lectures to the locals on HIV/AIDS and attended to patients in collaboration with UNICEF staff. This feat fostered the CMR between the base and the locals which improved exchange of information especially on the activities of BHT and their informants within the AOO.

The base also conducted some operations with the 7 Bde. These operations were conducted at Metele, Cross Kanwa and Arege. In the operations, many terrorists hide outs and weapons were neutralized and some of their equipment were captured. Sadly, these operations also led to the death of an officer and some ratings in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Some equipment including vehicles were also lost during the operations. In December 2018 however, BHT conducted a massive attack on Baga town after dislodging Cross Kanwa. The 7 Bde and NOP Lake Chad defended the town. However, 7 Bde MNJTF withdrew as they were overwhelmed. NOP Lake Chad stood for 24 hours before finally withdrawing tactically due to inadequate logistics to support the operations. Scores of terrorists were neutralized during the encounter. Also, the base lost personnel and equipment during the operation. The Base withdrew to Maiduguri pending further directives.

Issues and Challenges of NOP Lake Chad Operations in the North East

The Naval Base in Baga played significant role in support of the overall military objective in countering BH insurgency in the North East. However, despite its successes, the base was confronted with several challenges. These challenges include lack of clear command structure, lack of logistic base, shortage in POL supplies, poor access road to Fish Dam and shrinking Lake Chad. These challenges would be discussed subsequently:

Lack of Clear Command Structure: The Theatre Command, Op LAFIYA DOLE maintains Operational Command (OPCOM) of all Military and Para-military forces serving in the North East. These forces include 3 NA Divisions, One NN Outpost and 2 NAF Composite units. Coincidentally, NOP Lake Chad AOO lies within the MNJTF Sector 3 AOR. The mandate of MNJTF Sector 3 had been the responsibility of 7 Bde. More recently, NOP LAKE CHAD operates within Sector 3. The Bde is tasked and supported primarily by HQ MNJTF Ndjama to accomplish the mandate of the Task Force in Sector 3 while the Theatre Command supports the Bde for CTCOIN Ops. The chain of command for the Bde in all its missions is clearly spelt out by AHQ, and same not applicable for the NN Outpost. The Unit struggles with OPCOM till date and it affects the freedom of action of the Unit particularly in joint operations. Therefore, to avoid ambiguity in complying with mission directives, there is the need to define a clear OPCOM for the Unit similar to that instituted for 7 Bde MNJTF. A clear OPCOM would ensure the Unit is appropriately supported by the designated AA for all its missions.

Lack of Logistic Base: Logistics is vital to the success of every peace operation, both internal and regional.

All military formations under the OP LAFIYA DOLE take up logistics from Maiduguri. Similarly, personnel proceeding to and from on admin passes/leaves are escorted from their various units to the capital. On return, the personnel wait at the logistic bases designated for their unit to be escorted back. Paradoxically, NOP Lake Chad does not have any of such places in Maiduguri. NOP LAKE CHAD Personnel are compelled to stay in hotel accommodations at their own expenses and risk. The situation puts tremendous pressure on personnel finance and negative command and control ability in Maiduguri. The logistic base would serve the purpose of logistic storage, admin purposes for personnel reporting/proceeding on leave and passes as obtainable within the theatre.

Shortage of POL Supplies: The requirement for POL is crucial in every military operation. Since inception, the Unit receives 10,000 litres of PMS and AGO every 3 months. The quantity was sufficient before the addition of 6 x 500 Hp patrol boats, additional mobility operation equipment and Unit strength. With this increase, it becomes increasingly difficult to meet up with the operational requirement viz a viz the provided POL. In the quest to sustain operational tempo, the Unit has often resorted to purchasing these products with the limited funds available.

Poor Access Road to Fish Dam: One of the greatest challenges facing the NOP Op is poor access road to the Base at fish dam. The major road that leads in and out of the Base is through the Baga market and village. This road is mostly sandy and have on many occasions bugged down own vehicles. This poses a higher threat during rainy seasons. Own movement could easily be predicted by BHTs through its sympathizer within the populace, to execute suicide missions or deploy IEDs on the bad road that provides many concealment positions.

Shrinking of Lake Chad: The change in climatic condition along the Lake Chad has over the time resulted in the shrinking of over 90% of the Lake. This has serious implication for the security of the Basin. Unfavorable depth and width of Lake Chad water has gravely affected clearance operations in the AOO. While remarkable progress has been made to enhance navigation by clearing the water hyacinth on the Lake, mud churning is still experienced at different shoal parts of the channel during patrols. These challenges could only be resolved through dredging and recharging of the Lake. Therefore, there is the need to reconsider the dredging option for the Lake Chad region.

Suggested Options for the Effective NOP Lake Chad Operations

In a way to have effective NOP Lake Chad Operations as a component of the military operations in the north East that will be devoid of challenges, there should be clear command structure, effective logistic base, adequate in POL supplies, construction of good road network to Fish Dam and recharging of Lake Chad. These options are further expanded thus:

Clear Command Structure: The challenge associated with lack of clear command structure within NOP Lake Chad that affected its operations could be mitigated by avoiding ambiguity in complying with mission directives, and this could be achieved by re-defining a clear OPCOM for the Unit similar to that instituted for 7 Bde MNJTF. A clear OPCOM would ensure the Unit is appropriately supported by the designated AA for all its missions.

Construction of Logistic Base for NOP in Maiduguri: The challenge associated with poor logistic in the NOP Lake Chad operation could be mitigated by building logistics base that cut across all sectors and formations to aid personnel movement in and out of the base. While makeshift camps could be constructed to accommodate

personnel to avoid the risk of personnel sleeping in hotels. The logistic base would serve the purpose of logistic storage, admin purposes for personnel reporting/proceeding on leave and passes as obtainable within the theatre. Therefore, there is an urgent need for NOP Lake Chad to have a logistic base in Maiduguri.

Adequate POL Supplies: The challenge associated with shortage of Pol supplies in the operations could be mitigated by provision of adequate Pol supplies for the NOP Op. Increase in the Units PMS and AGO supplies from 10,000 litres of PMS and AGO to 30,000 litres every 3 months will be adequate for a smooth operation for the same period. This would enable the Unit to effectively run its machineries and equipment's without operational lapses.

Construction of Good Road Network to Fish Dam: The challenge associated with poor road network to the operation area could be mitigated by constructing good road network to NOP Lake Chad Base in Fish Dam. Construction of the road would network the operation for ease of movement.

Recharge and Dredging of Lake Chad: The challenge associated with the shrinking of Lake Chad as a result of the changes in climatic conditions could be mitigated by concerted effort by international community to re-charge the Lake or dredging the water sides. This is an expensive project that requires huge resources and expertise to achieve. Alternatively, it is suggested that NHQ liaises with National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) and Lake Chad Basin Authority (LCBA) regarding the dredging of the Lake

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper examined the role of Nigerian navy in counter insurgency operation in the Lake Chad. It x-rayed the activities of NOP Lake Chad to determine its challenges in other to suggest options for a better deployment in the future. The paper took a periscopic look at Lake Chad Basin in other to determine the nature and causes of terrorism and insurgency in the region. It observed that the socio-economic and political structure in that region creates enabling environment for terrorism and insurgency to thrive. It is based on this premise that the Boko Haram terrorist and other transnational organized terrorist network have found safe haven in Lake Chad region where they launch attacks from border lines, killing thousand and many more numbers displaced internally and across nations. Efforts at national, regional and continental levels towards ending the insurgency were considered. Some of these efforts include deployment of AU authorized MNJTF, deployment of military joint task force in which NOP Lake Chad was a Navy component of the operation among others. The paper gave an overview of the NOP Lake Chad operation by identifying its activities, successes and challenges. Some of the challenges identified include lack of clear command structure, lack of logistic base, shortage in POL supplies, and poor access road to Fish Dam and shrinking of Lake Chad. However, in order to have effective operation, the paper suggested some option which includes: clear command structure, effective logistic base, adequate POL supplies, construction of good road network to Fish Dam and recharging of Lake Chad. The paper holds that implementation of these option would help in addressing most of the challenges encountered by NOP Lake Chad.

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