RESEARCH ARTICLE

DECONFLICTING NIGERIA'S INTER-AGENCY INTELLIGENCE RIVALRY: AN EFFECTIVE MEASURE TO THE SECURITY OPERATIONS AGAINST ARMED BANDITRY AND KIDNAPPING FOR RANSOM IN NORTHWEST NIGERIA

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Manuscript Info	*Abstract*
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It is a generally accepted belief among scholars and practitioners that inter agency rivalry among inter connected organizations or institutions tends to distort the potentials embedded in a seamless inter-agency coordination and collaborative mechanisms. The Nigeria's national strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency policy mechanisms designed to coordinate information/intelligence to support national security and law enforcement operations is not isolated from the persistent menace of inter-agency rivalry amid the humongous material, logistical and operational resources committed to supporting operations . The research therefore seeks to explores factors that have continued to sustain inter-agency intelligence rivalry among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies in the context of the security operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in northwest region of Nigeria. In the light of this, the research adopts qualitative research methods of data collection and analysis to explore secondary data drawn from Nigeria's national strategic security and counter insurgency policy documents, aimed at inter agency intelligence coordination and collaboration, as well as from other intelligence related literature in juxtaposition to primary data sourced from security and law enforcement officers and civilian components within the northwest region.

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To this end, the research explores Organizational Culture and Identity Theory as it theoretical framework to explain why inter-agency intelligence rivalry persists. The research found that emphasis on policy document with no explicit or implicit legal framework to coordinate and bind the operational activities of these agencies together under a single unified legal framework created the gaps for security and law enforcement agencies to exhibit the organizational cultural identity of superiority among agencies. Hence, it recommends the enactment of laws with an integrated enforceable legal framework to bridge the institutional, operational and technological gaps with a view to compel and coordinate the activities of security and law enforcement intelligence agencies at all levels with a view to share information and intelligence under an integrated authority.

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Introduction:-

The events of 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001, the terror attacks on Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, has exemplified the significance of intelligence coordination, collaboration and intelligence sharing (Abioye and Alao, 2020). In the context of Nigeria, the Nigeria's national strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency policy mechanism, which is designed to coordinate the security and law enforcement intelligence agencies operations to support tactical/physical security operations (National Security Strategy, 2019), against the criminal activities of terrorist groups, armed bandits and kidnap gangs is challenged by a handful of issues (National Security Summit Report, 2021), which in the context of this paper, are most often facilitated byfactors, such as inter-agency rivalry among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies in the face of huge material, logistical and operational resources committed to supporting security and law enforcement operations in the country (Nte and Eyororokumoh, 2025).

The criminal activities of armed bandits and kidnap gangs in the northwest region have continued to pose national security threat with high economic pay-off in terms of derivable financial benefits, mostly facilitated and sustained by factors, such as the proliferation and sophistication of Small Arms and Light Weapons – SALWs across territories, the movement of illicit drugs mostly aided by criminal markets across porous borders and ill-governed spaces or ungoverned territories (National Security Strategy, 2019; Ojo, 2020; National Security Summit Report, 2021;Global Organized Crime Index, Nigeria, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2022; Ojo, Oyewole and Aina, 2023; Osason, 2023; Nwagwu and Enwelum, 2024; Ibani and Jacobs, 2024; Chinonyelum and Onwudinjo, 2024; Fidel, 2024).

Thus, to effectively and proactively combat the criminal activities of armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region of Nigeria, the Federal Government has established in conjunction with inter-agency intelligence mechanisms, a number of frontline security and law enforcement operations (Ojo, Oyewole and Aina, 2023; Babatunde, 2023; Madubuegwu and Abah, 2023; Olubiyo and Ibrahim, 2022; Aina, Ojo and Oyewole, 2023; Yusuf, 2023; Rufus and Ogbe, 2025).   Similarly, the government through the instrumentality of   the National Counter Terrorism Centre - NCTC in the Office of the National Security Adviser - ONSA have established a Multi-Agency Anti-kidnap Fusion Cell with the support of the National Crime Agency of the United Kingdom. The Multi-Agency Anti-kidnap Fusion Cell represents a structured and a coordinated multi-agency approach aimed at ensuring that the military, security agencies, law enforcement, intelligence and judicial institutions work seamlessly to combat kidnapping (www.nctc.gov.ng, 3/2/2025). The government have also partnered with the United States in the sharing of intelligence (US Department of State, 2022),and other regional bodies, such as, the Economic Community of West African States - ECOWAS and the Africa Union - AU (ECOWAS, 2022; African Union, 2022).

Research Problem:-

While, the dynamic and complex nature of the criminal violence of armed banditry and kidnapping ransom in the northwest region highlights the need to improve the nation's strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency intelligence mechanisms (Adebayo, 2022; Transparency International, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2022; Adebayo, 2022; Arumede and Edwin, 2024), inter-agency rivalry persists among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies. Hence, in the context of the security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region, the research seeks to address the following research questions:

Research Questions:-
In the light of the above, the research is guided by the following research questions:
- ✓   What factor (s) is sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry among intelligence agencies in the operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region ?
- ✓   How can enhanced inter-agency intelligence mechanisms prevent occurrence ?

Objectives of the Research:-
The research examined in the context of Nigeria's strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration policy framework:
- ▪ Factor (s) sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry.
- ▪ How can enhanced inter-agency intelligence mechanism prevent occurrence.

Significance of the Research:-
Coordinated and collaborative security and law enforcement intelligence efforts is required to effectively approach the fluid nature of violence criminal activities of armed bandits. The research is also of academic relevance to researchers interested in deconflicting inter-agency intelligence rivalry.

Scope and Limitations of the Research:-
The research is concerned with the factor (s) sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry and ways to deconflicting inter-agency intelligence rivalry as an effective measure to support security operations against armed banditry and kidnapping in the northwest region of Nigeria.

However, primary data, which informed the research were limited to respondents serving in the internal security and law enforcement agencies and some civilian component in some localities within the three states of northwest region of Nigeria – Katsina, Zamfara and Kaduna State. While, secondary data used to juxtapose realities from the field were sourced from related literature and national strategic security and counter-insurgency policy documents as well as other legal books.

Research Methodology:-
The research adopts qualitative research approach to examine and explore government strategic policy directives and other statute books in juxtaposition to primary data sourced during field interview with a view to understand government inter-agency security and law enforcement intelligence mechanisms and examine factors sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry as well as its impact on the security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region of Nigeria. The rational for adopting qualitative research method is exemplified in the opportunity it provides for an in-dept exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of participants (Creswell, 2009). In the light of this, the pilot study for the research was conduct in the month of June, 2024 in Katsina State in the northwest region of Nigeria to test the feasibility of the research and the tools for data collection. Mixed Purposeful Sampling embedded in Purposive Sampling technique was used to select respondents from and across the following government agencies; the Nigeria Police Force; the Nigerian Military, the Department of State Services, the Judiciary and from members of some identified communities within Zamfara, Katsina and Kaduna State respectively.

As suggested, a lengthy interview with two, to up to ten experienced respondents could be good enough to provide an informed opinion on the subject under research (Creswell, 1998). Hence, the total number of 68 respondents – 23 respondents each from Zamfara and Katsina, while 22 respondents were interviewed from Kaduna state. The respondents/informants were selected from and across the ranks of inter-mediate senior officers, senior officers, junior officers and members of the community who have experienced incidents of armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom region. In the light of this, Key Informant Interview and Semi-structured Interview were used with open-ended questions to allow for flexibility and in-dept exploration of opinions of respondents with specialized knowledge or unique perspectives on the topic with the view to gather detailed information. (Miles and Gilbert, 2005). The research adopted document and thematic analysis embedded in qualitative research method to analyze and juxtapose primary and secondary data collected. The essence for adopting document and content analysis is because data for the research were drawn from multiple sources (Dezin, 1970; Braun and Clarke, 2006). As argued, qualitative researcher is expected to take reference of evidence from multiple sources with a view to seek convergence and collaboration through the use of different methods (Bowen, 2008).

Validity and reliability are crucial aspect in examining the quality of research findings, most importantly in ensuring that the conclusions are accurate with precision (Anderson, Boateng and Abos, 2024). Hence, the research sourced for multiple data from multiple sources through the use of triangulation. In the light of this, reliability of the data is based on Lincoln and Guba (1985) criteria for credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability to ensure trustworthiness in the data collection and analytical process through the aid of multiple data collected.

The research sought for the consent of respondents before the commencement of the research in an attempt to adheard strictly to the right of research participants/respondents all through the process of data collection. Therefore, respondents were informed of the essence of the research and the importance of guaranteeing their confidentiality. In this regard, respondents were willing to express themselves in a very open manner that enable them to provide detail information on their experience and opinions.

Literature Review:-

Nte (2012), notes that, "the nature of today's threats has blurred the lines between traditional diplomatic, military, and law enforcement concerns, requiring all instruments of national power to work as a seamless network to defeat our adversaries." (Nte, 2012). The events of 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001, the terror attacks on Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, has exemplified the significance of intelligence coordination, collaboration and intelligence sharing (Abioye and Alao, 2020). The increasing need for joint task forces, intelligence operations centers or fusion centers, offers professionals from across the law enforcement, military, and intelligence communities the unique opportunities to share tools and expertise to defend their nation (Baginski, 2007). Inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration may not be limited to the military, police, and intelligence services, it may extend to other related agencies (Udochukwu and Uchenna, 2024). In the light of this, the effective inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration is critical for national stability in the face of the multitude of security threats (Nigeria Security Tracker, https://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483). The essence and significance of inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration in combating serious organized violence or threat of organized violence like terrorism, transnational crime, and cyberattacks has been emphasized (Chen, 2023). It is argued that, effective information gathering through multiple intelligence sources and analysis, as well as seamless intelligence coordination, cooperation and collaboration among intelligence agencies (Olowonihi and Musa, 2024; Udochukwu and Uchenna, 2024), through established fusion centers or intelligence operating centers is critical for timely identification and understanding of criminal behavior and their motivations; tracking criminal networks as well as preventing multifaceted security and law enforcement threats through informed decision making and effective national security policies (Nte, 2012; Johnson, 2024; Clark, 2016; Chen, 2023; Olowonihi and Musa, 2024; Lee, 2024).

However, historical fact shows that, issues such as institutional silos, secret operations, absence of trust, superiority complex among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies, poor communication infrastructure, bureaucratic inefficiencies and issues of training, have continually affected negatively the flow of information and intelligence sharing among security and law enforcement services (Smith, 2020; Udochuchwu and Uchenna, 2024; Sunday, 2024; Arumede and Edwin, 2024). The gap in intelligence coordination among intelligence agencies hampers intelligence sharing among agencies, thereby enabling terrorist groups to explore and exploit these weaknesses (International Crisis Group, 2022). The prevention and management of multidimensional threats as terrorism, organized violent crime and other serious crime are hampered by the lack of effective inter-agency coordination and collaboration. To them, despite the growing need for inter-agency efforts, the response of government agencies to these issues are often done by individual agency or organization, thereby resulting to duplication of tasks and waste of resources (Okafor and Anyanwu, 2020), thereby sustaining inter-agency rivalry. Hence, the concern to address factors sustaining inter-agency rivalry in the context of Nigerian inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration informed the research.

The research theoretical frame is guided by Organizational Culture and Identity Theory. Proponents of this theory, such as, Stewart Albert and David Whetten (1985), Henri Tajfel and John Turner, Blake Ashforth and Fred Mael (1989), argued that inter-agency rivalry occurred and sustained between related agencies under the quest and influence of 'strong internal cohesion and distinctiveness' through deep rooted organizational culture and identity transmitted to members of an organization over time through recruitment and training process. This to them, often resulted to 'superiority and inferiority relationship' among members of different organizations with inter-connected institutional and statutory mandatesand subsequently leading to inter-agency tension and rivalry (Ravasi and Rekom, 2003; Parker, 2000; Ravasi, 2016). Nigerian security and law enforcement intelligence agencies, such as the Defense Intelligence Agency DIA, the Department of State Service, Directorate of Military Intelligence - DMI, the Directorate of Military Intelligence – DMI, the Directorate of Airforce Intelligence – DAI, the Directorate of Naval Intelligence – DNI, the National Intelligence Agency - NIA and the Nigeria Police Force – NPF Intelligence Department are inter-related with blurred statutory institutional and statutory mandates. However, in the light of Organizational Culture and Identity theory, the historical influence from the implicit internal organizational culture of identity embedded in the perceived institutional practice of superiority versus inferiority relationship among these intelligence agencies, have played a significant role in facilitating and sustaining the inter-agency intelligence tension and inter-agency intelligence rivalry. Thereby distorting a seamless inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration in an effective process of collecting, analyzing information and sharing of intelligence for appropriate utilization.

Definition of Terms:-
Understanding critical concepts is the initial step in effectively comprehending any activity (Carter, 1990). Hence, for the purpose of this research, the following terms were adopted and defined as follow:

Strategic Security and law Enforcement Intelligence: The understanding of the changing and fluid nature of today's criminal environment, necessitates the need to holistically understand and address security issues from the lenses of strategic security and law enforcement intelligence (Johnson, 2007). Thus, strategic security and law enforcement intelligence is a process of collecting and analyzing information to identify long-term trends, threats, and vulnerabilities to inform policy and proactive strategies against crime and security risks. It is concerned with the understanding of emerging threats, criminal patterns, and the vulnerabilities of criminal organizations through strategic and operational analysis with a view to provides strategic foresight and insight to support strategic decision making to prepare for future risks/threats or to prevent future crime and instability (Pythian, 2006; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2017; Nte and Eyororokumoh, 2025).

Inter-agency Intelligence Coordination and Collaboration: Generally, Coordination is concerned with the development of a workable framework that is aimed at uniting inter-related components parts of a system for a harmonious and effective relationship. Wilder Research Center defines collaboration as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals… (Roy, 2007).
In the light of this, inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration is concerned with the organized efforts and commitments to synchronize the activities of different intelligence agencies with other related stakeholders to achieve common objectives. It emphasizes the systematic sharing of information, resources, and expertise for the purpose of timely and actionable intelligence to facilitate effective operations (Al Waroi, 2024). It is concerned with established protocol of communication and leveraging on knowledge/skills, expertise, technology and resources with the aimed of achieving a common objective in combating complex security and criminal threats (Hull, 2008; Sunday, 2024). The effective and seamless coordination and symbiotic collaborative mechanisms between and among intelligence agencies (Arumede and Edwin, 2024) is critical in an ever-changing and ever-evolving technological world.

Inter-agency Intelligence Rivalry: This is inter-agency tension between various inter-related security and law enforcement intelligence agencies in which the activities of these various inter-related intelligence agencies are in constant overlap. This may result from competition for superiority, relevance and resources by inter-related intelligence agencies with similar mandate (Abioye and Alao, 2020).

Armed Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom: The concept of armed banditry has been changing in time, space and context (Rufa'i, 2018), defined and classified globally by its peculiar drivers (Kae, 1986). The activities of armed bandits in the northwest region are driven by economic benefits/gains: Defined as loose collection of various criminal groups involved in kidnap-for-ransom and other crimes (Osasona, 2023). Hence, in the premise of this research, Armed Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom is defined as acts, absence of any ideological necessity, but in the pursuit of illicit violent use of force or threat of force to intimidate, extort, sexually assault, rape, maim or kill in order to constrain movement of their victims to undisclosed location (s) for the purpose of eliciting financial/economic benefits from the victims' family, close associates or government as ransom (International Crisis Group, 2020; Osasona, 2023).

Nigeria's Inter-agency Intelligence Coordination and Collaboration Mechanisms:-
The Nigerian Strategic Security and Law Enforcement Intelligence measures to serious violent crime, such as terrorism, armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom is based on inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration through the Office of the National Security Adviser – ONSA (Constitution, 1999; Police Act, 2020; National Security Agency Act, 1986; NSS, 2014; 2019 NTAL, 2016; NACTEST, 2016; www.nctc.gov.ng).

In the light of this, the Nigeria inter-agency intelligence institutional coordination instruments may not be limited to the following agencies of government:
The Nigeria Police Force - Department of Force Intelligence – DFI: The Nigeria Police Force is the lead internal security and law enforcement agency. It is the first responder in the five strands of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy – NACTEST, that is, to forestall, secure, identify, prepare and implement with support from other security agencies. It is responsible for the updates of crime registry and store information digitally for easy access (National Terrorism Aert Level, 2016). In the performance of its general constitutional mandates of maintaining the internal

security of the country. The Nigeria Police Force - NPF, through the Department of Force Intelligence – DFI is responsible for the collection and collation of information, analysis of information, assessment/evaluation, and then subsequent dissemination of criminal intelligence to proactively prevent and detect crime and the activities of criminals (www.npf.gov.ng).

The Defense Intelligence Agency – DIA: The Defense Intelligence Agency shall be charged with the responsibility for   the prevention and detection of crime of all military nature against the security of Nigeria; the protection and preservation of all military classified matters concerning the security of Nigeria, both within and outside; such other responsibilities affecting defense intelligence of a military nature, both within and outside Nigeria as the President may deem necessary (National Security Agencies Act, 1986). The Defense Intelligence Agency - DIA is to coordinate the Counter Terrorism efforts of the Directorate Military Intelligence – DMI, the Directorate Navy Intelligence – DNI, and the Directorate Airforce Intelligence – DAI and, in conjunction with relevant agencies, the Defense Intelligence Agency is the lead agency for the collation of military-related intelligence within and outside the country ((National Security Agencies Act, 1986; NACTEST, 2016). It gathers military threats intelligence and then conducts strategic reconnaissance operations and supports defense planning operations (Olowonihi and Musa 2024).

The National Intelligence Agency – NIA: The National Intelligence Agency   shall   be   charged with responsibility for the general maintenance of the security   of Nigeria outside Nigeria; concerning matters that are not related to military issues; and such other responsibilities affecting national intelligence outside Nigeria as the National defense Council or the President, as the case may be, may deem necessary (National Security Agencies Act, 1986). The NIA is to serve as the lead agency for external information/intelligence collection/collation and, in conjunction with relevant Ministry Department and Agencies – MDAs, monitors all terror-related activities with a view to forestall, identify and secure in the five strands of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy – NACTEST (National Counter Terrorism Strategy, 2016).

The Department of State Service – DSS: The Department of State Service shall be charged with the responsibility for the prevention and detection within Nigeria of any crime against the internal   security of Nigeria; the protection and preservation of all non-military classified matters concerning the internal security of Nigeria; and such other responsibilities affecting internal security within Nigeria as the National Assembly or the President, as the case may be, may deem necessary (National Security Agencies Act, 1986). The DSS is to serve as the lead agency on information/intelligence collection/collation on all non-military components of internal security as well as prevention and detection of terror-related activities/crimes. The agency is to reactivate/resuscitate the crime registry for the storage of digital information and collaborate with the Ministry of information and National Orientation Agency to develop public enlightenment program that will sensitize the public. It will also liaise with religious bodies and relevant departments in the academia to develop de-radicalization programs (NACTEST, 2016).

The Joint Intelligence Board – JIB and The Intelligence Community Committee – ICC: The Joint Intelligence Board – JIB and the Intelligence Community Committee – ICC were established during the Military Government in 1986 under General Ibrahim Babangida, the then Military President of Nigeria. The Joint Intelligence Board - JIB and Intelligence Community Committee - ICC are charged with the responsibility of supervising and coordinating intelligence and information analysis required for strategic decision making. The Board collate and compiles intelligence from other intelligence agencies, re-evaluate, synthesize and disseminate through the Office of the National Security Adviser to the National Security Council (National Security Strategy, 2019; Bot, 2023; Bala and Ouedraogo, 2018).

The Directorate of Intelligence – DINT: The Directorate of Intelligence – DINT is a department in the National Counter Terrorism Centre – NCTC in the Office of the National Security Adviser with its analysts drawn from the Armed Forces, Intelligence and Law Enforcement Agencies. It functions as an all-source intelligence production facility focused on timely identification of threat to Nigeria's national security for informed strategic response. Through collaboration with domestic intelligence agencies and international partners, the Directorate provides a comprehensive and integrated picture of threats, vulnerabilities and opportunities to enable the NSA take informed decisions in the interest of national security. It monitors terrorism activities and violent extremism, secessionist agitation groups, farmers – herder conflict, maritime security, other criminal groups involved in banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, illicit movements of Small Arms and Light Weapons - SALWs and drug trafficking. (www.nctc.gv.ng).

Data Analysis and Results:-

The analysis of data and the presentation of results were guided by the sequence of the research questions examined in the context of Nigeria's strategic inter-agency intelligence mechanisms vis-à-vis the factors sustaining inter-agency rivalry and its effects on the security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom   in the northwest region of Nigeria. Hence, the analysis of secondary and primary data was done through Policy and Document Analysis. On question of national strategic security policy directives on inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration through formal channels of communication. A policy analysis of Nigeria's national strategic security policy documents and other extant laws expressed as follows: "…the Joint Intelligence Board – JIB and Intelligence Community Committee - ICC working in concert with the National Crisis Management Centre – NCMC will continue to coordinate intelligence and information analysis required for strategic decision making by National Security Council" (National Security Strategy, 2019). The 2019 National Security Strategy document further states: "To balance enforcement with preventive and proactive measures as a departure from reactive response to insecurity through collaborative intelligence driven approach, the Police at all levels are mandated to engage in active partnerships with armed forces, security agencies, citizens, non-governmental organizations, government agencies, traditional institutions, faith-based organizations, educational institutions and businesses to collaboratively solve problems of crime, reduce the fear of crime, maintain public safety and apply proactive measures that addresses anti-social behavioral patterns before they evolve into more serious forms of criminality" (National Security Strategy, 2019).

In its national strategic efforts to respond to acts of terrorism through inter-agency platforms and mechanisms at strategic and operational levels, the government established the Counter Terrorism Centre – CTC with the strategic document of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy – NACTEST, developed to guide and coordinate national counter terrorism efforts. Hence, the document states: "The Office of the National Security Adviser will develop a single comprehensive database to serve as an information sharing system for the various agencies. The aim is to provide a mechanism where law enforcement, public safety and security agencies can collate their various data bases for a single purpose and easy access. Similar facilities will need to be created at state levels and linked to the central system" (NACTEST, 2016). Still on collaborative efforts, the 2016 NACTEST document, further states: "Security Services, Ministries, Department and Agencies are to work collaboratively with one another and with the Office of the NationalSecurity Adviser – ONSA to ensure they undertake programs and projects that are both counter terrorism relevant and specific, according to the provisions of their mandate, to position the Country by being resistant and responsive to terrorism" (NACTEST, 2016). On the collaborative efforts to regulate the flow and use of fire arms and explosive devises, the 2016 NACTEST further states: "The Nigeria Police Force in conjunction with the Department of State Services - DSS, Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps - NSCDC, Nigerian Immigration Service - NIS, Nigerian Customs Service - NCS, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria - FAAN, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency - NIMASA, National Intelligence Agency - NIA and the Ministry of Solid Minerals, will ensure that firearms and explosive are not illegally imported and unlawfully used in the country" (NACTEST, 2016).

Similarly, "the Nigeria Police Force in partnership with the Department of State Services – DSS, maintain and monitors information on quarries and industrial explosive sites in the country. It institutes measures to monitor and control the sales, distribution and use of materials that may be used in making Improvised Explosive Devises – IEDs. Also, in collaboration with National Space Research Development Agency – NASRDA, the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Information, the Nigeria Police Force – NPF shall develop mechanisms to control the activities of cyber criminals (NACTEST, 2016). In line with the need for a well-developed and holistic system to respond to serious organized violence and transnational organized violent criminal activities, through intelligence gathering, analysis and intelligence sharing, necessitated the need for the establishment of the Nigeria's National Terrorism Alert Level – NTAL system in the Office of the National Security Adviser. Thus, the 2016 Nigeria's National Terrorism Alert Level document states: "The National Security Adviser is to issue threat levels upon assessment of risk and threat analysis in receipt of assessment from Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch – JTAB, whose work is dependent on inputs from relevant intelligence gathering and security intelligence agencies" (NTAL, 2016). Furthermore, to underscore the commitment of the Nigeria's national strategic policy directives, the 2019 National Security Strategy document also states:

"To meet the challenges posed by serious crimes to internal security, we will improve the intelligence-gathering, logistical, technological, forensic and rapid response capabilities of the Nigeria Police Force. In specific terms, the Nigeria Police Force will be upscaled in five key areas, namely; recruitment, training platform and equipment

modernization, data collection, management and retrieval as well as technology-driven command, control, communication and intelligence networks to meet modern standards" (NSS, 2019). In juxtaposition to the responses of respondents during the field interviews in the context of Security and Law Enforcement Operations in the northwest region on the channels of formal communication between agencies as specified in the national strategic security policy documents and other extent rules: The key theme in the responses from multiple respondents vis-à-vis field operational inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies, shows that: "The channel of communication is of policy dominated with little operational compliance in terms of adequate and seamless coordination and collaboration among/between security and law enforcement intelligence agencies and other agencies" (Interview, 2024).

Also, it is evident in the response of respondents that: "Historical factors embedded in bureaucratic bottle neck, the traditional orientation of silo and secret operations by individual agency, as well as other factors, such as the establishment of multiple security and law enforcement agencies with similar or differing mandate, institutional superiority complex, paranoid relationship (issue of trust), inadequate and up-to-date inter-agency training, collaborative training and technological gap within and between agencies are some of those factors sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry" (Interview, 2024). On the question of legal obligation on individual security and law enforcement intelligence agency to collaborate with other agencies under a single institutional coordination. Respondents notes that: "The absence of legal obligation on individual agency or group of agencies to collaborate with a view to share information and intelligence to support security and law enforcement operations in the region has facilitated and sustained inter-agency intelligence rivalry, thereby affecting the effective response to the violence of armed banditry and kidnapping ransom in the northwest region." (Interview, 2024). On how timely, accurate and frequency do the security and law enforcement agencies received actionable intelligence through inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration mechanisms to respond to threats of armed banditry and kidnapping in the region. The central theme in the responses shows as follows: "Community led-intelligence has been instrumental to the proactive and reactive operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region" (Interview, 2024). The response further states: "The Police are mostly the first responder in the event of armed violent attack on communities, but mostly, the Police are often reacting to these attacks, rather than been proactive or preventive" (Interview, 2024).

Research Findings:-
Based on the analysis of data, the following findings emerged:
- The need to adjust and align the strategic thinking of Nigeria's security and law enforcement intelligence agencies and other security and law enforcement agencies to proactively respond to the ever-evolving and complex criminal environment, necessitated the need for the development of strategic security and law enforcement inter-agency policy documents, aimed at guiding and coordinating efforts of agencies through the Office of the National Security Adviser as a formal means/channels of communication with various relevant agencies to prevent, detect, investigate and contain all kinds of threats in the country, including armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom.
- Historical factors embedded in bureaucratic bottle neck, the traditional orientation of silo and secret operations by individual agency, the establishment of multiple security and law enforcement agencies with similar or differing mandate, institutional superiority complex, paranoid relationship (issue of trust), inadequate and up-to-date inter-agency training, collaborative training and technological gap in information collection, gathering and analysis within and between agencies are some of those factors sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry. Thereby hindering seamless coordination and collaboration that could lead to all source of intelligence in the field of operations in the northwest region.
- This formal means/channels of communication as a basis for inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration is not so visible at regional, state and local level to proactively guide and coordinate efforts of security and law enforcement intelligence agencies and other security agencies to support the operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region.
- The absence of a legal document binding and obligating agencies to collaborate and share information/intelligence at strategic and operational level under a single coordinating agency – Fusion Centre have sustained inter-agency intelligence rivalry, which has affected seamless inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration among security and law enforcement agencies.
- The proactive and reactive security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region is being supported by community driven-intelligence.

- The Nigeria Police Force is designated by the Nigeria's national strategic policy document as the first responder in the event of impending threat or escalated violence through inter-agency coordination and collaboration. However, it lacks any legal power or institutional legal instrument to compel other security and law enforcement intelligence agencies withholding or hoarding information/intelligence to share their information/intelligence to facilitate prompt coordination for the purpose of timely, accurate and actionable intelligence.
- The fluid and highly flexible nature of the activities of bandits and kidnap gangs in the region and the ability to adapt to relevant influences, such as propaganda with the intention to confuse authorities have given the criminal gangs the operational edge to resist security and law enforcement operations in the region.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation:-

The findings in the preceding section revealed significant evidence in the context of the research. Hence, this section presents Discussion of the research findings, Conclusion, Implications of the study, Recommendations and Contribution to knowledge and policy improvement in the context of Nigeria's security and law enforcement intelligence inter-agency coordination, collaboration and information sharing. And finally, the section presents suggestions for further study. Therefore, a comprehensive examination and assessment of Nigeria's strategic inter-agency institutional and policy response to complex security and law enforcement issues revealed a holistic strategic institutional and policy coordinated response center, domiciled in the Office of the National Security Adviser – ONSA through the institutional mechanisms like the National Terrorism Alert Level - NATL system, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch – JTAB, the Directorate of Intelligence in the office of the National Counter Terrorism Centre – NCTC, Joint Intelligence Board - JIB and Intelligence Community Committee – ICC. For example, the National Terrorism Alert Level policy document states:

"The National Security Adviser is to issue threat levels upon assessment of risk and threat analysis in receipt of assessment from Joint Terrorism Analysis Branch – JTAB, whose work is dependent on inputs from relevant intelligence gathering and security intelligence agencies" (National Terrorism Alert Level, 2016) This represents an established fusion center at central strategic level to aide, guide and coordinate information collection from all-sources, information sharing, information analysis – connecting the dots and intelligence sharing among related agencies to provide a comprehensive and integrated picture of threats, vulnerabilities and opportunities to enable security and law enforcement agencies to respond proactively, and to allow for the National Security Adviser – NSA, to take informed decisions at strategic level in the interest of national security and law enforcement agencies. This ensconced and aligned with the works of Baginski (2007), Nte (2012), Gill and Webb (2023), Abioye and Alao (2020) and Cross (2023) on inter-agency intelligence coordination, collaboration and information/intelligence sharing, intelligence operating centers and fusion centers in today's dynamic and ever-evolving complex criminal environment.

However, at operational level in the context of the research, the data suggests that, such fusion centers or intelligence operating centers were not visible at regional, state or local government level to aide, guide or facilitate successful proactive or reactive security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region. Rather, community driven intelligence through Human Intelligence - HUINT has been instrumental most often for reactive operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the region. Signal Intelligence – SIGINT, Communication Intelligence – COMINT, and Geospatial Intelligence – GEOINT is underutilized to collect and gather information in the region. Hence, this operational communication gap at regional, state or local level as well as the underutilized use of technology has sustained inter-agency intelligence rivalry. Thereby preventing information/intelligence sharing among intelligence agencies and providing operational edge for the armed bandits and kidnap gangs to thrive in the region. According to International Crisis Group (2022), the gap in intelligence coordination among intelligence agencies hampers intelligence sharing among agencies, and enabling terrorist groups to explore and exploit these weaknesses.

Aside the absence of fusion centers or intelligence operating centers at the regional, state and local government levels, the research identified challenges to seamless inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration at the tactical operational level. Thereby facilitating and sustaining inter-agency intelligence rivalry. These challenges include, bureaucratic bottle neck, silo and secret operations by individual agency, the establishment of multiple security and law enforcement intelligence agencies with similar or differing mandate, institutional superiority complex, paranoid relationship (issue of trust) among agencies, inadequate up-to-date intra and inter-agency training and technological gap within and between agencies. All these factors are enabled and active to sustaining inter-

agency intelligence rivalry in the absence of legal framework obligating and compelling individual security and law enforcement intelligence agencies to de-conflict under a single legal framework. The implication is in the fragmented intelligence community and the practice of suspicion or paranoid relationship based on mutual distrust and rivalries. As Nte, (2012), argued there is absence of cooperation between Nigeria Military Intelligence and State Security Services on one hand and between the intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies on the other hand. Sanda (2011), argued that every security agency in Nigeria has its own security policy that drives its operations, with this comes a lack of effective coordination among the different security and government agencies and the ensuing interagency rivalry (Alli, 2012). This have resulted to poor information coordination and intelligence sharing among intelligence agencies. As argued, Inter-agency rivalries and lack of coordination hinder information sharing and collaboration efforts (Adebayo, 2022).

Conclusion:-
The Nigeria's inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration mechanisms against serious organized violence of armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom is a complex inter-web institutional mechanisms with institutional focus on both internal and external threats (Constitution, 1999; Police Act, 2020; National Security Agency Act, 1986; NSS, 2014; 2019 NTAL, 2016; NACTEST, 2016; www.nctc.gov.ng). A policy analysis on impact assessment into Nigeria's inter-agency intelligence measure to the security and law enforcement operations against armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region of Nigeria revealed that factors, such as distrust among agencies, bureaucratic bottle neck, superiority complex among intelligence agencies led to inter-agency rivalry in the absence of legal instrument to compel agencies to share information/intelligence, rather than operate in silo. These factors have negatively affected inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration in the region. This has resulted to a situation of incident-based reactive and investigative intelligence approach with little effect on the growing complexity and dynamics in the criminal behavior of the armed bandits and kidnap gangs in the northwest region. Hence, the failure of the Nigerian security and law enforcement intelligence agencies to provide accurate and timely intelligence assessments through inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration have provided the fluid and highly flexible nature of the criminal activities of these bandits and kidnap gangs the operational edge over the security and law enforcement operations in the region.

Recommendation:-
Base on the research findings, the following feasible and actionable recommendations are proposed to de-conflict inter-agency intelligence rivalry and enhance strategic inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration to support security and law enforcement operations:

- To enhance effective and seamless inter-agency intelligence coordination and collaboration among security and law enforcement intelligence agencies, there is need to reform the operational perception and legal processes and procedures of the Nigerian security and law enforcement intelligence agencies to enable it function under a coordinating and collaborating inter-agency mechanism with clearly delineated laws to guide, bind and compel security and law enforcement intelligence agencies to collaborate in training, technology and information/intelligence sharing at operational level.
- The Nigeria Police Force is the first responder to any form of security and law enforcement threats by its proximity to the public and the community safety, there is need to legally empower the Nigeria Police Force to serve as a fusion center or an intelligence operating center to enabled it coordinate information/intelligence through inter-agency collaboration to support security and law enforcement operations to proactively respond to impending threats or escalated criminal violence.
- There is need to establish under a single legal framework an inter-agency intelligence operating center or fusion center that is context-specific, and based at regional, state and local government level to holistically assesses the roots causes of criminal threats that are peculiar within the community in order to provide timely, accurate and actionable intelligence to support security and law enforcement operations. As McNamara argued, the state and local fusion centers "are a critical component of the Information Sharing Environment because they can dramatically enhance efforts to gather, process, and share locally generated information regarding potential terrorist threats and to integrate that information into the Federal efforts for counterterrorism" (Ron, 2007).
- Armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the context of northwest geopolitical region of Nigeria is an organized crime, fluid and highly flexible with adapting nature of tactics within the community. Hence, there is need to enhance community driven-intelligence approach in partnership with inter-agency intelligence mechanisms for holistic analysis of information and assessment of situation to support security and law enforcement operations.

Contribution to Knowledge:-
Serious organized violence, such as armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom is increasingly multidimensional, fluid and often transcending   national boundaries and resisting security and law enforcement measures. Having examined the effects of inter-agency intelligence rivalry to the security and law enforcement operations in the context of armed banditry and kidnapping for ransom in the northwest region. It is worth to note that, the research have added value significantly to the existing discussion on inter-agency intelligence rivalry in the context of Nigeria.

Further Research:-
Based on the findings and limitations of the research, the following windows for further research could be suggested:
- Community Engagement and Information/Intelligence sharing: Exploring Local Information/Intelligence Sharing Model to National Security and Law Enforcement, Experience from Practical Successful Community Initiatives.
- Regional, State and Local Intelligence Fusion Centre: A Recipe to De-conflicting Multi-Security and Law Enforcement Operations.
- Local Intelligence Fusion Centre: Exploring Community Trust and Community Engagement to National Security and Law Enforcement.

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