The Nigerian Military: Analysing Fifty Years of Defence and Internal Military and Fifty Years of Internal Security Operations in Nigeria (1960-2010)

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ABSTRACT Since the attainment of political independence in 1960 till the present (2010), the military had been involved in the pursuit of activities aimed at promoting peace and security within the country. The task of ensuring Nigeria's security and territorial integrity involves the continuous "x-raying" of both the various internal and external threats to the nation's sovereignty. The study observes that the onerous task of ensuring internal security operations engendered by incessant civil uprisings and religious violence capable of destabilizing the country, curtailing the upsurge in the activities of armed militia groups as well as grappled with the issue of how much money is dedicated to the military expenditure, the imperatives of a civilian control of the military under a democratic setting and the highly volatile controversial issue of an existing (or otherwise) of a concise, and codified defence policy, has been both complex and highly challenging. These challenges had long been a contending factor in the military's task of keeping Nigeria as an indivisible and indissoluble entity.

INTRODUCTION

The complex task of keeping Nigeria one, and of protecting the nation from external aggression and attacks undoubtedly rests primarily on the Nigerian armed forces that is, the army, navy and the air force. Between 1960 when Nigeria secured its independence from Britain right to the present 2010, when the country is in the process of consolidating the gains of democracy it started in 1999, the journey into the "tortuous terrain" of defence and security of the nation's territorial integrity from internal and external threats in a rapidly changing, complex albeit an unpredictable environment, has been both challenging and onerous for the nation's military.

It is therefore not surprising that the Nigerian military, which is composed of the Army, Navy, and Air force, is the most potent element of Nigeria's national security. With a total strength of about one hundred and thirty-three thousand (133,000) men, with no official reserve, the Nigerian armed forces has over the years, acquired considerable stock of weapons of offense and defence, and has also been engaged in series of military exercises aimed at boosting the combat readiness and war preparedness of its officers and men. The primary purpose of the Nigerian military, just like those of other nations, is to defend their nation from external attack and deter or attack would-be enemies. The realization of this function primarily entails the preservation of the territory, peoples, culture and the national security of the nation. In Nigeria, the functions of the military, is contained in the Federal Constitution (1999: 105) thus:

The protection of the country against all forms of internal and external danger/threat or attack is a primary responsibility of government performed through the armed forces in collaboration with the civilian population. Subversion of government policy from within or without, religious intolerance and fanaticism, ethnic antagonism and class struggles, unemployment, hunger, perceived inequality and social injustice, etc. are the major sources of internal threats to security, while the grave forms of external threats are aggression or actual attack on our territorial integrity, both of which represent an assault on our survival as a people.

Nigeria is a conglomerate of several nationalities. The ethnic composition consists of the Yoruba's' in the south –west to the Ibos in the east and the Hausa-Fulani in the north, to a multitude of other minorities like the Tivs, Edo's, Efiks, Ibibios, Nupes, Jukuns, etc. spread across the length and breadth of country. The task of

keeping the people of these nations together as one Nigeria since independence in 1960, has been daunting and challenging. The political crisis during the western regional crisis of 1959 and the civil war of 1967 - 1970 that almost tore the nation into "shreds, bits and pieces" are examples of the threats to Nigeria's national security in the 1960s. Couple with these, are the various military coups that relegated the ethos and values of democracy into the back burner in Nigeria's political history. In addition, the incessant civil and religious uprisings, the rise of armed militia groups clamouring for "their share of the national cake" and often resulting in violence and the loss of human lives and properties are issues that continued to impinge on the attempt to keep Nigeria as an indivisible entity.

With a total strength of about one hundred and thirty-three thousand (133,000) men, with no official reserve, the Nigerian Armed Forces has over the years, been engaged in series of military exercises aimed at boosting the combat readiness and war preparedness of its officers and men. The primary purpose of the Nigerian military is to defend their nation from external attack and deter or attack would-be enemies. The realization of this function primarily entails the preservation of the territory, people, culture and the national security of the nation Federal Government of Nigeria (1999: 105)

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The Nigerian Defence Policy

In Nigeria, the issue of an existing, concise, and codified defence policy is a highly debatable and controversial one. The furore over an articulate military policy stems on one hand, from a perspective, which contends that the armed forces of Nigeria lacked a well- documented (Alli 1994: 2 and 3) defence policy and firm posture in responding to threats of territorial violations from her neighbours. In her own analysis, Vogt (1986: 473) posited that there is a lack of clarity and understanding of the political factors that should dictate the nature of the defence policy. Consequently, this has led to the pursuit of diverse and often contradictory policies by the various arms of the defence establishment.

On the other side of the coin, however, is the military perspective, which expounds that the acts of the Nigerian Armed Forces, and the Sec-

tions of the Nigerian Constitution (1979) on Foreign Policy and Responsibility of Government, contain certain provisions, which are translated as Nigeria's defence policy. The main objectives of which are enunciated as:

· The defence of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

· The creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will facilitate the defence of independence and territorial integrity of all African countries, while at the same time fostering national self-reliance and rapid economic development.

· The promotion of equality and self- reliance in Africa and the rest of the developing world.

· The defence and promotion of world peace.

In order to consolidate the nation's defence policy, military authorities came out in 2006 with a document entitled the "National Defence Policy". This document based on the analysis of Nigeria's strategic environment presents the government with a short-term policy framework for defence. The defence policy also analyses the risks and challenges (national interests and threats) facing the Nigerian military and the scenarios for the deployment of forces. It specifies the defence policy objectives (same as those enumerated in the preceding paragraphs) as well as the management and organization of the armed forces. Furthermore, it highlighted the various aspects of resource support such as defence infrastructure, research and development, defence budget and reform signposts in the armed forces among others. In addition, the policy enumerated the import of civil-military and media relations in peace and in times of war. This particular aspect according to the defence policy (2006) is an overarching goal, which not only emphasize the consolidation of civil control over the military, but which is also one of the characteristics of a truly democratic society.

National security is a concept employed by the military in the defence of the nation. This concept is primarily concerned with the preservation of sovereignty and the independence of nation-states. National security is closely related to, often equated and juxtaposed with, and in fact has evolved from the idea of national interest. According to McGrew (1988: 101), the security of a nation is predicated on two central pillars. On one hand, it entails the maintenance and protection of the socio-economic order in

the face of internal and external threat. On the other, it entails the promotion of a preferred international order, which minimize the threat to core values and interests, as well as to the domestic order. The preoccupation with national security in this regard therefore, often and always creates an apprehension over security that tends to generate military activity regardless of the nature of threats.

It is important to stress that the contemporary thinking about national security is an all-inclusive concept, which connotes the element of development: economic security, social security, environmental and food security, the equality of life and technological security. To buttress this point, Nwolise (2006: 352) explained that security is an all–encompassing

holistic concept implies that the territory must be secured by a network of armed forces: that the sovereignty of the state must be guaranteed by a democratic and patriotic government, which in turn must be protected by the military, police and the people themselves, the people must not only be secured from external attacks but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals, unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation, pollution and socio-economic injustices.

In his analysis of national security in Nigeria, the Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Paul Dike, (in a lecture delivered at the Royal United Service Institute, London, March 26th, 2010), affirmed that Nigeria's security is based on a holistic view which sees the citizens as the primary beneficiaries of every security and developmental deliverable that the state can offer. For instance, Nigeria's national security is seen from a grand strategy perspective, which provides that:

* *National security in Nigeria is an ensemble of two (2) broad elements, that is, state security and human security.*
* *The primary objective of national security shall be to strengthen the federal Republic of Nigeria, to advance her interest and objectives to contain instability, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development progress and growth, and improve the welfare and well being and quality of life of every citizen.*

* *National security entails the preservation of the safety of Nigerians at home and abroad and the protection of the sovereignty of the country's integrity and its interests.*

Threats and Threat Analysis is another major concept also employed by the military to analyse its various activities since independence. The concept of threat itself involves the declaration or intent to inflict harm. It further involves the perception of an imminent danger of attack on a nation's territorial integrity. According to Robert Purnel (1973: 129), one of the factors to be taken into consideration, when reaching and carrying out decisions of military power, is both the perception of external threats to a state's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and the assessment of hostile intentions of perceived enemies.

Threats from the perspective of this study have two major dimensions namely, external and internal threats. External threats occur when a state perceives an intolerable situation development in its environment as a result of action by another state or states. It may be intolerable for a variety of possible reasons; for example, it is threatening to the state's external or internal security, its economic viability or affronts its national dignity and prestige. Internal threats on the other hand, involves changes internal to the country, that is, changes in the values and perceptions of leaders, or a change of the balance of power between factions within the regime, or a change of the regime, economic crises, political upheaval and religion uprising. Under these circumstances Rosenau (1976: 686) opined, state leaders do perceive opportunities for change by coercion and consequently places a high value on such changes. As will be revealed in this study, the Nigerian Military have had to contend with both external and internal threats to the nation's defence and security. Incessant attacks and forceful collection of taxes by the military of neighbouring countries (for example, Cameroon, Chad, Niger), on Nigerians living in villages along the nation's border, illegal smuggling, piracy on Nigeria's territorial waters, the civil war, incessant military coups, the rise of armed militia groups, ethnic and religious violence culminating in political instability and upheavals within the country, unemployment, trafficking in illegal arms, pipeline vandalisation and willful destruction of public property, are some of the recurring threats.

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE MILITARY BETWEEN 1960 TO THE PRESENT (2010)

Since the attainment of independence in 1960, the military have had to contend with various challenges in the performance of its duties. Some of these challenges are torturous and provided a litmus test for the military's capability to defend and protect Nigeria's territorial integrity. Among these challenges are the Nigerian civil war, military coups and the involvement of the military in politics, the formulation of a viable defence policy, the control of the military by civil authorities, high defence budget and military expenditure, defence of the nation against armed militias and religious insurgents amongst others.

MILITARY COUPS IN NIGERIA

One major challenge the Nigeria military have had to contend with in the history of defence and security of Nigeria is the high incidence of military intervention in the governance of the nation's polity. Although military intervention is seen as 'an aberration, which should only be endorsed only in an emergency', yet, it became a norm and a recurring decimal in Nigeria's political history. In fact, between 1960 and the present 2010 (a period spanning forty (40) years), the military ruled for twenty years (50% of the period under review). Truthfully, the critical, productive and developmental stages of the country, 1966 – 1999 (with only a break between 1979 - 1983) were under the control of the military. During these period, the economy was at an all time high characterized by oil boom, massive influx of foreign and local investments, manufacturing was rife and there was a flourishing business in the exportation of agricultural and cash products. The military between 1970 and 1984 contributed significantly to maintaining a commendable level of political stability particularly since the end of the civil war in 1970. This political order in turn, facilitated rapid economic growth (Oyediran 1984: 47).

In spite of the massive foreign exchange earnings from oil wealth, the military embarked on unproductive "white-elephant" projects that had little or no impact on the lives of the masses. There was also high level of corruption, nepotism and tribalism. All these, led to a high fre-

quency of military intervention/coup, which left in its wake serious consequences for the Nigeria (Dudley 1985: 80; Panter-Brick 1978; Oyediran 1984; Eminue 2006)

The military continued to intervene in the nation's governance even when it was a known fact that a military government is a major setback for any nation and should be avoided at all costs (Madeibo 1980: 387). It is therefore no wonder to posit that the recurrence of military coup and intervention in Nigeria is made expedient by certain political and environmental factors which are germane to Nigeria politics and by extension, the people's psyche. The phenomenon of such military recurrence can best be captured in the following illustration (Financial Times 1981: 120):

Once the army has tasted power, there must always be a danger that some group within it will want to try again. It is perfectly possible to envisage a time when some officers might think politicians are unable to cope. If there was a failure of leadership at the centre, and politicking got out of hand, if corruption continued unabated but the country's oil wealth declined or was squandered; and if at the same time groups of officers felt themselves disadvantaged within the army: these are the sort of conditions which could provoke another military intervention.

THE MILITARY AND INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS (1960-2010): AN ASSESSMENT

The Nigerian Civil – War (1967 - 1970): When the military took over in 1966, the economic situation in the country worsened and ethnic tensions broke out. The resultant effect was the killing of up to 30,000 Ibo civilians in the struggle for power with the Hausas and around 1 million refugees fled to the Ibo homeland in the East (BBC World Africa 2000). On May, 1967, Colonel Emeka Ojukwu head of the Eastern region (under the Gowon administration) unilaterally declared the "Independent Republic of Biafra. This led to the 30-month Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970)". The prosecution of the civil war posed serious threat to the continued existence of the country as an indivisible entity. The civil war indeed provided the Nigerian military with a test-case for the defense and security of Nigeria.

The strategy and tactics adopted by the federal Government hardened and effectively led to the timely and successful security of the nation. Although faced with a lot of challenges, the federal war policy was riddled with a lot of challenges which made the war dragged on for the period it lasted (Atofarati 1992). The military's involvement in internal security operations became prominent after the 1967 –1970 civil war. The civil war largely caused by internal political, ethnic and tribal antagonisms brought to fore, the struggle to achieve national integration in Nigeria. Decades after the conclusion of the civil war, the nation is still plagued by threats of ethno-religious intolerance and political violence, corruption, mass unemployment, poor economic growth, arms smuggling and proliferation of small arms as well as an unprecedented upsurge of ethnic and armed militia groups. These threats "have led

to a weak, volatile and unpredictable internal security situation, which has, more than ever, resulted in heavy military aid to civil authorities" (National Defence Policy 2006: 16).

ETHNO-RELIGIOUS/CIVIL UPRISING

In the late 1970's to the present (2010), there has been a persistent outbreak of ethno-religious violent attacks across the country. Notable among these are: the Maitasine riots of 1978 (Kaduna) and the same Maitasine uprisings of 1980, 1981 and 1984 in Kano, Yola and Maiduguri. The Musa Mankini riots in Kano in the 1980's, the 1999 and 2000 Kaduna sectarian riots, the September 2001 Jos riots, the October 2001 riots in Benue, Taraba and Nasarawa states, the 2002/2003 Tarok farmers versus Fulani herdsmen riots in Jos, the 2004 Telwa Christians/ethnic Tarok versus ethnic Muslim Hausas in Central Plateau state, the 2004 Christian attacks on Muslims and the April 2005 riots in Jos, the Boko Haram uprising of 2009 and the recent Hausa Fulani versus indigene Christians sectarian massacre in March 2010 at Dogo Nahawa South of Jos.

All these crises in military parlance are regarded as internal security and low intensity conflicts (IS-LOC), which is the primary responsibility of the Nigerian Police Force and other para-military forces. As experience have shown however, these forces have had difficulties in curtailing and containing these civil disorders and disturbances in the past hence, the inter-

vention by the military whose secondary constitutional responsibility requires it to "assist civil power in times of civil disturbances, insecurity, as well as conduct counter-insurgency operations as authorized by the President" (National Defence Policy 2006: 18; The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria). The point must be stated that the conduct of IS-LOC operations by the military had in many instances generated heated debates among Nigerians about the amount of force deployed, the response time and the handling of civilians who are combatants in the uprisings. The following are some examples.

The military response to the Maitasine uprisings of the 1980's even though swift, on-time and successful, was still criticized as an overwhelmingly show of force and killing of civilians by an army whose duty is to protect them. Nigerians also had their misgivings about the military's handling of the 2009 Boko Haram case. Many wondered why it took the security forces so long to discover the activities of the Boko Haram sect. Again, questions were raised about the brutal killing of Muhammad Yusuf – the alleged Boko Haram leader who was brutally killed in Police custody after being arrested by the army.

The most controversial and challenging of the military IS-LOC experience, is the recent March 2010 crisis in Jos. The issues involved in this particular case is a kind of eye-opener on how the military will adapt to the task of ensuring peace, political-order and stability and other emerging threats to Nigeria's national security in a rapidly changing citizen conscious world. This particular incident clearly exposed the imperatives of civil-control over the military (particularly in a democratic setting) and the pervasive problem of ethno-religious crisis in Nigeria. Although the military has been commended for the rapid response and the success it recorded in quelling the violence, yet, other issues about the military's handling of the March 2010 Jos ethno-religious crisis remain as worrisome as any that reared its head since independence. Some of the pertinent issues that arose centered on certain charges, which are that, the military:

- Did not respond appropriately by nipping the crisis in the bud
- Was unable to stop attackers from reaching villages on smaller roads, despite being on duty along major roads in and around Jos.

- ⬥ Compromised the security of the state by showing bias in their handling of the crisis
- ⬥ Slow reaction by the security forces (Police) and the military are part of the (sectarian) problem in Jos.

An insightful account of the Jos test case and, which best capture the situation was the one given by Nuhu Gagara (the Plateau State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftancy Affairs), who claimed that (http: // www.elombah.com March 2010):

The massacre (March 2010 in Jos) happened for several hours without any military intervention…Soldiers who were belatedly drafted to the scene curiously freed several of the arrested assailants… The soldiers were also withdrawn immediately… Hence, the government (of Plateau State), no longer has confidence in the military to maintain peace in the state.

AGITATIONS BY MILITIA GROUPS IN NIGERIA

The Nigerian military since 1966 have had to contend with breaches on the nation's security engendered by the upsurge in the formation and activities of armed militia groups within the country. In retrospect, the phenomenon of militia groups had its historical antecedents in the January, 1966 Isaac Boro's revolt against the Nigerian state. With one hundred and fifty nine volunteers, Boro proclaimed the Niger Delta Peoples Republic of Nigeria and launched a guerrilla war against the federal government. Boro also established the first ethnic militia in the Niger Delta known as Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) that engaged the armed forces of Nigeria in a bloody battle. Although Isaac Adaka Boro was defeated by the federal troops, he awakened in the Ijaws the need for action against oppression and exploitation (Joab-Peterside 2007).

Between 1966 and the early 1990's, agitation for equitable resource allocation and a viable federal structure assumed more of political and diplomatic dimensions resplendent in the form of protests and demonstrations, demand for constitutional re-engineering of the polity, discussions and the like. However, the advent of dictatorial military regimes of the 80's and 90's, coupled with series of ethnic unrests and conflicts of the late 1990s (such as those between the

Ijaw and Itsekiri), as well as the prevalent influx and availability of small arms and other weapons, led increasingly to the militarization of the Niger Delta area.

Consequently, the demand for resource reallocation and the fight to end the economic marginalization of the oppressed people (particularly in the Niger-Delta) assumed a much more military dimension which resulted in the formation of ethnic militia groups across the country. These militias were not only meant to be the militant organs of expression of defiance against the oppressive rule of the Nigerian State, but also represented a form of reaction to the failure of the Nigerian state, the lack of equity in its distribution of power resources and the absence of social justice in its relationship with its constituents (Babawale 2001: 1)

IMPACT OF MILITIA ACTIVITIES ON NIGERIA'S SECURITY

Militia activities have taken several dimensions inimical to the security and continued survival of the Nigerian nation as one sovereign entity. The conflagrations spurred violent acts against the local population, resulting in numerous deaths and widespread displacement. Daily civilian life was disrupted, forcing schools and economic activity to shut down and resulting in widespread property destruction. The militants according to Wikipeadia (2008) have repeatedly bombed pipelines, sabotaging and attacking oil operations with their characteristic vandalization of oil-pipelines and attacks on oil wells triggering an international increase in the cost of oil, disruption of oil supply, which contribute to fluctuation in oil prices and instability within the country. They have also abducted and kidnapped (Osaghae et al. 2007: 18) foreign oil workers, Nigerian nationals, as well as children and people not associated with the oil industry. They are also engaged in the hijacking of ships and the abduction of crew- members.

The most serious of all the activities and which constitute grave concern for the Nigerian military are the firepower (capabilities) and the tactics employed by armed militias such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND) and the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF). It is now an open secret that the militias have long been engaged in the possession of small arms and the acquisition of sophis-

ticated weaponry. Most of the militants particularly Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND) and the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) had over the past decade engaged in the acquisition of weapons and firearms (http: //www.pbs.org 2007) such as "expensive machine guns from the Czech Republic instead of the old AK-47 assault rifle commonly used by other armed militias". They also possess modern speedboats, assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers among others (Osaghae et al. 2007: 23) (http: //www.csmonitor.com 2006).

The military capabilities of the militias are as overwhelming as those of the Nigerian armed forces that, one does not find it difficult, to contend that, "the militias are now evenly matched with the Nigerian military which was dispatched to the region in 2003. The result of the conflagration has been a stalemate (http: //www.usip.org). The tactical maneuverings of the militia particularly those of the MEND, had also become a clog in the wheel in the resolution of the Niger-Delta crisis. While the Nigerian military employs the 'highly predictable' tactics such as the; search and rescue operation, cordon and search, aerial bombing and counter insurgency operations, the MEND's attacks involve substantially more sophisticated tactics than those of previous militant groups in the Niger Delta.

STATE RESPONSE TO THREATS ON SECURITY BY MILITIA GROUPS

State responses to militia activities in the country, has generated mixed feelings among the populace. Some segment mostly from the military sector argued that the activities of the militias constitute breaches to the nation's national security hence, the need for decisive action to repress and deter future and similar actions. The other segment coming mostly from civil societies and human rights groups have on their part, called for a more civilized that is, political cum diplomatic approach where all stakeholders will be able to dialogue and discuss in an enabling environment acceptable to all. The government on its part, particularly the Abacha regime (1993) and the Obasanjo administration (1999), opted for a more repressed and fire-for-fire approach. The Yar'adua government (2007) for its own part adopted the 'carrot and stick approach'. The following analyses will put into

focus the reaction of successive governments in the handling of the militia phenomenon in the country.

After the Isaac Boro-led 1966 militia uprising as well as the accompanying civil war, which ended agitations through the use of arms in the country, this situation changed dramatically the late General Sanni Abacha's brutal dictatorship. At the height of the Abacha regime in 1994, agitation for emancipation became heated due to internal wrangling among the Ogoni people of the Niger-Delta region. On May 21, 1994, soldiers and mobile policemen appeared in most Ogoni villages. On that day, four Ogoni chiefs (all on the conservative side of a schism within MOSOP over strategy) were brutally murdered. Saro-Wiwa, head of the opposing faction, had been denied entry to Ogoniland on the day of the murders, but he was detained in connection with the killings (Sofiri-Peterside 2007).

The occupying forces, led by Major Paul Okuntimo of Rivers State Internal Security, claimed to be 'searching for those directly responsible for the killings of the four Ogonis.' By mid-June, the security forces had razed 30 villages, detained 600 people and killed at least 40. This figure eventually rose to 2,000 civilian deaths and the displacement of around 100,000 internal refugees (Okonta and Douglas 2001). In May 1994, nine activists from the movement who would become known as 'The Ogoni Nine', among them Ken Saro-Wiwa, were arrested and accused of incitement to murder following the deaths of four Ogoni elders. Saro-Wiwa and his comrades denied the charges, but were imprisoned for over a year before being found guilty and sentenced to death by a specially convened tribunal, hand-selected by General Sani Abacha, on 10 November 1995. The activists were denied due process and upon being found guilty, were hanged by the Nigerian state.

The Nigeria military's response to the militia struggle in the Niger-Delta is well documented. Numerous newspaper reports and studied detailing the activities of the Joint task Force (JTF) abound. Notable reprisal attacks embarked on by the Nigeria military against the militants are listed below (Wikipedia 2008; The Punch 2008; (The Guardian, July8 and September 2004).

In December 1998, two warships and 10-15,000 Nigerian troops occupied Bayelsa and Delta states as the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC) mobilized for Operation Climate Change. On the

morning of December 30, two thousand young people processed through Yenagoa, dressed in black, singing and dancing. Soldiers opened fire with rifles, machine guns, and tear gas, killing at least three protesters and arresting twenty-five more. At the end of the operation, the military declared a state of emergency throughout Bayelsa state, imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew, and banned meetings. At military roadblocks, local residents were severely beaten or detained. At night, soldiers invaded private homes, terrorizing residents with beatings and women and girls with rape (The Guardian July 8, 2004).

On January 4th , 1999 about one hundred soldiers from the military base at the Chevron's Escravo's facility attacked Opia and Ikiyan, two Ijaw communities in Delta State. The same soldiers set the villages' ablaze, destroyed canoes and fishing equipment, killed livestock, and destroyed churches and religious shrines. In the context of high conflict between the Ijaw and the Nigerian Federal Government (and its police and army), the military carried out the Odi massacre, killing scores if not hundreds of Ijaws.

In August 2008, the Nigerian government according to Joab-Peterside (2007) launched another massive crackdown on militants. The military patrolled waters and hunted for militants, searched all civilian boats for weapons, and raided numerous militant hideouts. On May 15, 2009, a military operation undertaken by a Joint Task Force (JTF) began against MEND militants operating in the Niger Delta region. It has come in response to the kidnapping of Nigerian soldiers and foreign sailors in the Delta region.

The government had on several occasions, explained its role in deterring and curtailing the activities of the armed militia- men. For instance, the former spokesperson of the Joint Task Force (JTF), Col. Rabe Abubakar, explained that the Nigerian troops were, deployed to rescue hostages, free hijacked ships and fish out the hoodlums who attacked military personnel on legitimate duties.

In sum, one would not be too wrong to assert, that the military still need a lot of convincing to do. Nigeria is under a democratic dispensation and citizens are wont to criticize governmental actions that are at variance with democratic norms and civil ethos. This is the more reason that this study is in agreement with the view, which affirmed that (Joab-Peterside 2007).

State response against these popular pressures assumed the forms of arrest, detention and trial of activists on trump charges and execution the aim being to silence opposition voices, and deployment of military forces that operate more like an army of occupation to demobilize the people. State's approach to security is, dominated by the character of deterrence exhibited by unrestrained willingness to show maximum force at the slightest hint of insecurity. Operation Sweep, Operation Fire-For –Fire, Operation Hacurri No.1 and No. 2, Operation Restore Hope, and Operation Flush 1, 2, and 3 are examples of high profile security initiatives that mirror the repressive mood and tendencies of the state . . . Unfortunately, military might dramatically escalated violence as militant groups emerge resorting to the use of arms ostensibly in self-defense provoking bloody clashes with federal troops deployed to contain violence, to drive home their point of deprivation and marginalization.

MILITARY EXPENDIURE/DEFENCE BUDGET (MILEX)

The controversy over the Nigerian defence expenditure has become much more intense because defence allocation (like that of other African countries), is seen as a reflection of the interplay of many variables which are perceived by different people in different ways. However, as controversial as the defence budget may be, a state evaluates its security requirements on a variety of geographic, demographic, and economic grounds, hence, the tendency to relate economic wealth and growth to security problems (Emile 1973: 4). Moreover, since the Nigerian leadership is subjected to rapid changes either through military coups or through the normal democratic process, the perception of threats as well as what constitutes the optimum defence spending is often subjected to reviews by these different administrations.

Despite the changes in administration, various Nigerian leadership, since the period of independence (in 1960) up to the present, have constantly allocated the lion share of the overall federal budget to the defence sector. The greater share to the defence sector is premised on the fact that the armed forces are the overall protectors of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Nigerian nation, which includes the protection of the totality of the states' economic, political and socio-cultural interests.

Although defence cannot be considered as productive in the economic sense it is nevertheless believed that a strong and efficient armed force, strong enough to guarantee national peace and security is indispensable for the economic progress of the nation. Thus, the crucial role of the military as stated above, has often endeared an increase in the resources allocated to the armed forces for the procurement of arms, the provision of logistic backup, and military welfare needs (Third Nigerian National Development Plan).

The issue of how much is dedicated to the military expenditure has long been a contending factor in Nigeria's defense and security since independence in 1960. Undoubtedly, defense takes a substantial share of the country's total budget. This fact is substantiated by Nigerian scholars in the field (Imobighe 1987; Omede 2001; Omitoogun 2003), which all, came to the, conclusion, that there, has been a systematic rise in the amount allocated to defense between 1960 and 2009.

CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Before 1999 and with the exception of the period (1979 – 1984), the military ruled Nigerian without the due regard for democratic norms and values. It also goes without saying that military rule itself is an aberration. More often than not, one has had to wonder whether the military is above the nation's constitution. With the advent of democracy in Nigeria since 1999 however, the military has, been inundated with calls to conform to democratic norms and value.

Civil control over the armed forces simply refers to the hierarchy of authority between the executive, the parliament (national assembly) as well as the armed forces. It involves the supremacy of the constitution, the imperatives of democratic norms and ethos, civil-military relations and military professionalism. The assumption underling the concept of civilian control over the military lies in the fact that if the military is not properly managed and if not democratically controlled or that if it (military) is not fully integrated into the fabric of the society, it can pose a variety of threats for democracy. Some of the threats the military might pose include (GDCAF 2003: 149; National Defence Policy 2006):

- *Exercising unconstitutional influence or even staging military recurrent coup and rebellion*
- *Practicing unauthorized military or commercial activities and politicisation of the military*
- *Consuming excessively high levels of resources which are needed for other sectors of society*
- *Misusing public funds*
- *Violating human rights (looting, harassing civilians, rape, robbing and using illegal violence) etc.*

In order to avoid the threats of coups and politicisation of the military, the Nigerian government since 1999 (with particular reference to the Obasanjo administration of 1999-2007) have made several efforts to re-orientate the military. Mechanisms such as the parliamentary oversight and civilian control over the armed forces and raising awareness of and respect for the nation's constitution have also been embarked upon (Omede 2004). Some of the specific efforts made are the appointment of a civilian defence minister, the establishment of a defence committee in the senate, the appointment of three chiefs of staff for each of the arms – army, navy and airforce, conducting conferences and retreats on democratic norms and ethics and inculcating the importance of the supremacy of the constitution as well the need for the armed forces to be absolutely loyal to the constitution and the President and the Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian armed forces.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The military is one the most consistent subsector of the Nigerian federal structure. From the period of independence in 1960 to the present period of democratic rebirth of 2010, the complex task of keeping Nigeria one, and of protecting the nation from external aggression and attacks undoubtedly rest primarily on the Nigerian armed forces - army, navy and the air force. The military in protecting the territorial integrity of the nation has been engaged in the analysis of threats to Nigeria's national security.

As shown in this study, the Nigerian Military have had to contend with both external and internal threats to the nation's defence and security. External threats faced by the military included, the incessant attacks and forceful col-

lection of, taxes by the military of neighbouring countries (for example, Cameroon, Chad, Niger), on Nigerians along the nation's border, illegal smuggling, piracy on Nigeria's territorial waters. Internal threats which included the civil war, incessant military coups, the rise of armed militia groups, ethnic and religious violence culminating in political instability and upheavals within the country, unemployment, trafficking in illegal arms, pipeline vandalisation and wilful destruction of public property, are some of the recurring internal security operations that the military have had to contend with.

On the challenge posed by the high incidence of military intervention in the governance of the nation's polity, our analysis revealed that the military continued to intervene in the nation's governance even when it is a known fact that a military government is a major set-back for any nation. Again, the thirty-month Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) indeed provided the Nigerian military with a litmus test for the defence and security of Nigeria. The civil war largely caused by internal political, ethnic and tribal antagonisms brought to fore, the struggle to achieve national integration in Nigeria.

It is indeed noteworthy to reiterate that the military's role in internal security operations were fraught with a lot of issues and controversies. Military authorities in reacting to the issues have argued that the series of civil uprisings and religious violence are capable of creating insecurity, disorder and instability in the country.

The study also analysed the litigious issue of high military expenditure in Nigeria. This has long been a challenging factor in Nigeria's defence and security since independence in 1960. Undoubtedly, defence takes a substantial share of the country's total budget. In spite of the debate on the high allocation to defence, the military on its own part has expounded that the Federal Government shall continue to accord the sector the level of funding it deserves bearing in mind irrespective of the global suggestion that defence budget should be 1.5% - 3% of a nation's GDP.

A major revelation by the study is the effort made by the government to consolidate the nation's defence policy. To achieve this feat, the study recorded that the military authorities came out in 2006 with a "National Defence Policy" based on the analysis of Nigeria's strategic environment, which analyses the risks and chal-

lenges (national interests and threats) facing the Nigerian military and the scenarios for the deployment of forces. Obviously, the Nigerian defence policy is based on a careful assessment of the national objectives, interests and the nation's perception of both internal and external threats.

Finally, the study also highlighted the imperatives of civil control over the armed forces. It examined the importance of the hierarchy of authority between the executive, the parliament (national assembly) as well as the armed forces. Finally the study posits that for the armed forces to continue to be relevant in a rapidly changing democratic environment that Nigeria is currently passing through, then its officers and men must be ready at all times to subjugate themselves to the supremacy of the constitution, the norms and ethics of democracy as well as embark on aggressive and productive military training that will ensure a higher state of their combat readiness and military professionalism.

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