

The role of the military to national development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The broadened thinking of national security has reduced the efficacy of military strategy in dealing with all the various threats that face the world now. For instance, more than half of Nigerians are living in extreme poverty, hence the least deprived can easily sacrifice their lives for terrorist attacks and engage in crime to help relieve the rest of their families from continued suffering. These new actors now have various names, but in essence, they are among the disillusioned poor people. Nigerian militant groups, e.g. Niger Delta Militant, Boko Haram, and the Indigeneous People of Biafra (IPOB) have some undertones to these realities. Due to the above reasons, there is a need for the Nigerian military to re-strategise and rethink security and other economic related roles within the country. To find a solution that could lead to success in both tackling insurgencies as well as underdevelopment, this work explores the economic role the military force can play towards Nigeria's national development. The investigation focuses on the non-military and non-political role of the military. The conclusion of this research offers a framework for rethinking counterinsurgency, thus arguing that the traditional role of the military as the guardian of national sovereignty should remain unchanged because of the strategic uncertainties in the African region. This role has to be complemented with a new role, which is that of contributing to social projects as well as contributing its resources towards poverty alleviation.

Keywords: Nigerian Armed Forces, national security, national development, Boko Haram, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

After the Second World War, followed by globalisation and within it, countries have become more interdependent than ever before (Bassey et al., 2019). This has a far-reaching significance in that the way the countries conducts international relations has shifted from the use of high politics to low politics. This implies that countries now prioritise issues regarding the economy, infrastructure development, labour markets, healthcare, education and the environment (low politics) over issues involving the military, national security, and diplomacy (high politics), and thus the use of the military in war is greatly reduced. The main challenge left to the militaries is to justify their legitimacy. Whereas it has been emphasised that the military should conduct their traditional business of securing the sovereignty and integrity of a country, the emergence of liberal democracy as the main political ideology in the international system calls for the re-evaluation of the military mission.

There is now an increasing awareness by Nigerians of their poverty and the very slow march toward progress. Modern means of travel have drastically reduced the distance between the rich and the poor nations into a matter of hours and this has made their awareness more pronounced. Aware of the wealth and great technological advances in wealthy countries, e.g. the United States, Russia, China, and Western Europe, Nigerians have become impatient over their slow rate of progress. They constantly demand concrete results from their leaders notwithstanding what cost and the Nigerian government responds by launching grandiose national development programmes. They do this with an urgency equal to the impatience of the people. They commit substantial slices of their scarce resources to support costly development projects. Despite this, they borrow money from rich countries and international lending institutions. In this process, they also copy development models that have been successful in these countries, ignoring the fact that the conditions under which said success was attained are very different from their situations. The results are cat-

astrophic, to say the least. Problems arise, exacerbating their difficulties. One such problem is the serious drain on their economic capacities.

The requirements of national development are simply tremendous and Nigeria does not have the kind of economy to sustain a drawn-out development programme. Consequently, costly projects could not be completed. Expensive equipment and infrastructure go to waste due to a lack of funds. For their huge investments, all that could be seen after they were started are half-finished or half-heartedly undertaken projects, all dismal evidence of the fact that development is a difficult process. R. Gill (1964: 94) aptly noted economic development described this resulting situation when he wrote that “a poor country, in trying to do more than it can afford can easily sap the strength of the forces which might make for permanent economic development”. The frustrations and disappointment of the people over the failure of their government to steer the nation toward progress eventually assume political dimensions. Because it is very convenient to do so, people blame the government for their misery. Radical groups, military, economic and political elites clash on what alternative the country should take toward development. More dangerously, the people become more susceptible to the promises of an ideology alien or opposed to that of their country. The results may lead to political instability in violent forms, including military coups and insurgency. There are strong reasons for the claim that the military possesses certain attributes to enable them to play a crucial role in national development. These are a superior organisation, effective systems and procedures and disciplined mode of behaviour, to name a few. Many students of the development process argue that the military exhibited these attributes when it took an active part in national affairs in many countries of Asia and Latin America.

L. Pye (1966), for instance, views the military as a modernising agent, a vigorous champion of change and development in some countries. He observes that in many underdeveloped countries, and even in the industrialised West, armies played an important role in providing technical training in the development of their industries. In Germany, military personnel were designated foremen in steel mills and other industries (Devilbiss, Binkin, 1988). In the United States, military engineers played a central role in the development of the West (Ledlie-Klosky, Klosky 2013).

In Japan, the military were credited with providing the reservoir of manpower for its industries (Ledlie-Klosky, Klosky 2013). In India, Malaya and the Philippines, the military trained people in the operation and maintenance of vehicles and machineries (Avant 2006). In the light of the foregoing observations, this paper points to the fact that the military can play a major role in national development.

This study, therefore, examines the role that the military plays towards national development in Nigeria in the post-cold war era and the emergence of globalisation. Whereas the Nigerian military can be involved in many nation-building activities besides the core duties, e.g. limited construction of public utility infrastructure, relief supplies services, peacekeeping, search and rescue, restoration of water supply systems, rehabilitation of water dams for irrigation, sinking of boreholes for community use and other civil related activities. They should be looked at more closely and seen whether they should be included in the core duties of the Nigerian military. This study tries to answer the question of whether these activities constitute significant national development and whether they compromise the core role of the military in the maintenance of security from external aggression. It is hypothesised that the military has a direct role in national development and that much more development is achieved through military actions that are not directly core security issues.

2. Concepts of development

The concern for development grew radically after the Second World War, particularly among the new nations which suddenly found themselves not only free from their colonial masters but also in a sad state of poverty. There is now a proliferation of literature on the subject, many of which espouse a particular development model for underdeveloped countries to follow. There is, however, no sufficient agreement as to the definition of development. Various authors offer contrasting views on what development is. This has led to confusion, for the term “defies a precise definition which is both sufficiently specific in the identification of all the elements and can be held to have generic utility” (Falk 1997: 351). One definition is that development is a process that pertains to those changes in society’s pattern of values, structure and action and those increments in social and physical technology which

will lead to more efficient utilisation of the society's resources and contribute more to greater social welfare (Doménech, Davies, 2009). A similar definition contained in the UN report to the Secretary-General defines the development as growth plus change, the change being socio-economic and cultural, as well as quantitative and qualitative (Artuso 1999). It is also defined as a series of interdependent changes (Redclift 1992).

Other authors prefer to use the term *modernisation* and define it as a process of change toward the condition of modernity, the elements of which were given by the experiences of societies in Western Europe and North America which have achieved this status (Finlayson 2017). It is also referred to as a series of economic, social and political changes which began in Europe toward the end of the Middle Ages and which have continued up to the present, a transition from a traditional society (Artuso 1999), a process which enabled historically evolved institutions to adopt rapid changes that reflect the unprecedented increase in human knowledge permitting control of the environment. Social scientists contend that development should be pursued in terms of its ultimate goal – the realisation of the potential of the human personality (Brown 1951). Development using this paradigm is measured in terms of poverty (food and other necessities), unemployment (jobs and other gainful activities), and inequality (income, compared to others) – (Glennerster 2010).

Closely related to the social scientists' definition are the economists' views. They see development as a process whereby the real per capita income of a country increases over a while, under the condition that the number of people below an absolute poverty line does not increase and that income distribution does not become unequal (Glennerster 2010). More often, the economic model is more attractive in the sense that indices of development, e.g. GNP, per capita income and mortality rate can be quantified.

3. Nigeria's insecurity and political violence

With a variety of both renewable and non-renewable resources, Nigeria has one of the largest economies in Africa, and it is classified as a mixed economy emerging market with lower-middle-income status (Mensah, Özer, 2016).

Before 1956, when crude oil was discovered, the Nigerian economy was heavily hinged on agriculture (Ebeku 2018). In fact, at one time, Nigeria was the world's largest exporter of palm oil, cocoa, groundnuts and a substantial producer of cassava, sugar cane, pearl millet, coconuts, yams, maize and citrus fruits. Since the late 1950s, however, petroleum has overtaken and played monumental roles in Nigeria's economy, accounting for about 95% of exports and 95% of its total foreign exchange earnings. Petroleum also contributes about 80% of the Nigerian government revenue and thus moving from the generation of about 5100 barrels per day in 1958, Nigeria has emerged the "10th largest oil producer in the world" (Onoh 2018: 970) the third largest in Africa and the most prolific oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa. She now has crude oil production of 2.51 mln barrels per day and thus shares 2.95% of the world production. She also has a daily crude export of 1.02 mln barrels to the United States alone, and proven reserves of 37.2 bln barrels (Oduyemi, Owoeye, 2020).

Nigeria, on the one hand, is fortunate to have enormous mineral and natural resources; on the other hand, she is tormented with turmoil within and outside her borders. Although fractures along ethnic and religious lines have received perhaps the most sustained international attention, much more important to Nigeria's security is the underdevelopment and the underlying complex causes. The major threats to Nigeria's security include terrorism, ethno-religious violence, communal crises, militancy in the Niger Delta, piracy, health and infectious diseases.

Terrorism in Nigeria is mainly perpetrated by Boko Haram. The exact origin of Boko Haram is obscure, but its linkage with Nigeria's fanatical Maitatsine sect of the early 1980s seems to resonate in most literature. Boko Haram translates to English as "Western education is forbidden", a programmatic motto that well reflects one of the group's aims; the group prefers to be identified by the name *Jama'atu Alhus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad* (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad) – (Ekhomu 2019). The group is religiously motivated and espouses a pan-Islamic or Jihadi ideology. It wants to see the creation of an Islamic regime in northern Nigeria, free from Western influences. Boko Haram came to the attention of the Nigerian media in 2003, when it attacked police stations and government buildings in Yobe because of police intervention in fishing-rights disputes. The

group then referred to as the *Nigerian Taliban*, also ultimately attracted the attention of the media and the U.S. embassy in Nigeria. Boko Haram's major campaign began in 2009 when members on motorcycles shot some traffic policemen enforcing the use of helmets (Zenn 2017). The event was followed by a series of attacks on police stations, punctuated by a video that the group disseminated in which Mohammed Yusuf threatened more attacks on police and government buildings. In response, the government security agencies launched a full-scale operation against Boko Haram in 2009. Ibn Tammiyah mosque was cordoned, several people were killed, and some were executed without trial (Ekhomu 2019). The Nigerian Army arrested and handed over Mohammed Yusuf to the police during one of its raids, in 2009. M. Yusuf died in police custody, but the police claimed he died during a shootout. The surviving members fled, while others blended into society. The period between late 2009 and 2010 was relatively peaceful, which appeared to mark a victory for Nigerian security agencies. In reality, however, the sect used this period to reorganise and train across the Sahel and North Africa.

Now under the leadership of M. Yusuf's deputy, Abubakar Shekau, the group is said to have trained with other extremist groups, including Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb, Al-Shabaab, and the Tuareg rebels in Mali. A. Shekau organised the group into cells that have committed atrocities across Nigeria in the years since. The frequency, audacity, ferocity, and indiscriminate nature of Boko Haram's attacks have cast doubts on Nigeria's ability to counter terrorism alone. Boko Haram and its cohorts have resorted to kidnapping for ransom and intimidation (Zenn 2017). Boko Haram represents a particularly dangerous extension of Nigeria's ethno-religious violence and communal crisis, which continues to present great threats to Nigeria's security and stability, with huge ramifications in terms of lives and property. Since the early 1980s, Nigeria has witnessed several ethno-religious crises (Hinshaw 2012). Some of these crises include: the Maitatsine religious disturbances in Kano, the *Zangon Kataf* crisis in Kaduna State, the Ife-modakeke crisis in Oyo State, and the most current ethno-religious violence in Jos, Plateau State. Most of the ethno-religious conflicts have triggered retaliation against religious or ethnic minorities in other parts of Nigeria.

Militancy in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria also remains a major national security threat despite the federal government of Nigeria's amnesty agreement in 2009. The major militant groups that existed before the amnesty were the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) - (Aniche 2019). Even after the amnesty agreement, the erstwhile militants still see themselves as the defenders of the Niger Delta people who have suffered neglect for decades in spite of the region's huge oil resources. Indeed, the oil industry has inspired some of the militancy and violence among the groups, angry over environmental degradation from oil spillage and gas flaring that is connected to the destruction of fishery habitat and agricultural land - the main means of livelihood for the locals. The militants capitalised on these environmental problems and hazards to perpetrate all sorts of crimes in the name of righting wrongs, and these actions have had significant effects on Nigeria's oil production capacity. The crimes include damaging and destroying the oil pipelines, stealing oil, and kidnapping of foreign oil workers for ransom. Kidnapping is aimed at the foreign employees of multinational companies, who covertly or overtly pay huge ransoms to the Niger Delta militants.

Nigeria now ranks third, after Mexico and India, among the top 20 countries in the world with the highest kidnapping rate (Oluwadare 2019). In a move to stop this criminality, the government granted amnesty to all the militants. The amnesty agreement required the militants to hand over arms, ammunition, and equipment to the government and to give up criminal acts. For its part, the government promised reforms and other immediate benefits to the militants. The central government also inaugurated rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for the ex-militants. It is estimated that Nigeria spends more than 400 mln NGN (nairas), i.e. ca 907,607 EUR, every year for the amnesty programme (Oluwadare 2019). Despite these huge sums of money spent on the post-amnesty programme, militancy and criminality, especially oil theft and kidnappings, continue in the Niger Delta. Most of the criminality is blamed on disaffected militants who either are dissatisfied with the amnesty package or perhaps prefer to make easy money from oil theft instead of reintegrating into society. The ramifications of their activities are the further degradation of the environ-

ment from destroyed oil pipelines and the high loss of revenue to the country. Nigeria loses about 400 mln NGN (ca 907,607 EUR daily because of illegal oil activities (Wilson 2014).

4. Underlying causes of insecurity in Nigeria

Generally, the drivers of insecurity in a country can be categorised as either internal or external. H. Idris (2013) argue that internal sources are the key drivers of insecurity in Nigeria. The internal root causes that ramify most in Nigeria include poverty and illiteracy. Poverty is a major catalyst for insecurity in Nigeria. Despite enormous resources and wealth, most Nigerians still live in abject poverty. For example, World Bank data show that about 46% of the total population lives below the poverty line. As of 2010, about 50.2% of Nigerians live on less than 2 USD a day (Paulinus, Wonah, 2020). Notably, Nigeria's monthly living wage or minimum wage was about 7500 NGN (ca 17 EUR a day) until 2011 (Nkwatoh, Nathaniel, 2018). In 2012, the Nigerian Senate passed a bill increasing the minimum wage to 18,000 NGN monthly (ca 412 EUR monthly or ca 1.40 EUR a day) - (Paulinus, Wonah, 2020). However, most states, especially in impoverished northern, have not been able to comply with the provisions of the bill. The data from the National Bureau for Statistics in Nigeria shows that unemployment has increased from less than 10 mln people in 2006 to about 17 mln in 2011 (Paulinus, Wonah, 2020). Unemployment is closely related to poverty, as most of the poor people are either unemployed or underemployed. What is most worrisome is that most of those affected are the young. For instance, according to the National Bureau for Statistics, Nigeria, the percentage of unemployed persons based on age distribution is more than 35% of Nigerians aged 15-25 years and about 22% for those aged 25-44 years (Alumona, Onwuanabile, 2019). These statistics imply that the segment of Nigerian society that should be the most vibrant and active is unemployed. With the unemployment rate coupled with the high poverty rate, extremist groups brainwash the youth and entice them with promises of a better life than the government can provide. Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria used this strategy for recruitment. Additionally, most of the militants in the Niger Delta were unemployed or had menial jobs before joining the groups.

5. The Nigerian state and the formation of the Nigerian military

Like many African militaries, the Nigerian armed forces are the creation of the country's former colonial masters. During the colonial period, the Nigerian military remained relatively small vis-à-vis the total area for which it was responsible. Its responsibilities primarily focused internally as it served to accent the power, authority, and legitimacy of the British colonial rule (Manea, Rüland, 2012). Moreover, for most of its colonial history, the Nigerian military remained completely independent from the departments of the Nigerian colonial government. Internal control of the Nigerian forces was typically exercised through the commanding generals at district headquarters in Lagos where the governor-general of Nigeria was officially the commander-in-chief of the Nigerian Military Forces (Muffett, Luckham, 1972). The command, however, was largely nominal. As late as 1956, Nigerian units remained part of the West Africa Command under the British Army whose headquarters was located at Accra in the Gold Coast. Accordingly, the commanding generals of Nigerian units reported directly to the command in West Africa and hence to the war office in London and not to the government in Lagos. During the colonial period, the relationship between the Nigerian armed forces and the Nigerian people was characterised more or less by mutual antipathy.

The Nigerian people regarded the military for most of the colonial period as the instrument of colonial power, fashioned by the British Crown to destroy any political independence of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria (Agara 2006). The presence of Nigerian forces in villages, towns, or neighbourhoods was not seen as a positive sign by Nigerian people. Instead, many citizens felt the presence of Nigerian forces often signified trouble or outright disaster. The Nigerian people's negative perception of the Nigerian military was further exacerbated by unruly soldiers. Many soldiers often abused their authority by taking law into their own hands, imposing fines, and inflicting levies on inhabitants. These actions did not foster a good relationship between Nigeria's military and its people. However, things began to change after independence from Britain in October 1960; notwithstanding, it inherited a pattern of civil-military relations that was long entrenched in the British tradition of civilian control. However, British officers predominantly occupied most officer and non-

commissioned officer posts in the Nigerian armed forces at the time. In fact, by 1960, only 18% of officers in the Nigerian military were Nigerians, and most of them served in administrative rather than leadership positions (Agara 2006).

For the first years of independence, the Nigerian government made no decisions on the role of the armed forces. Instead, the country's armed forces remained relatively small and were largely left alone. The constitutional framework that the British put in place in Nigeria before it departed could hardly contain the ethnic cleavages in the country. In the years following independence, it quickly became clear that the Westminster-style parliamentary system that the British had left would fail. The differing agendas of the three main ethnic groups coupled with the deep-rooted social polarities and peculiarities of power politics in the region would prove detrimental in a country that needed a miracle (Auma-Osolo 1980). As the political elite postured to capture government power and resources, the Republican Constitution, which ushered in the First Republic in 1963, lasted only three years before it was overthrown by the first military coup in January 1966. Moreover, the Nigerian ministers lived extravagantly while they urged the people to accept austerity for the sake of economic development and starved the government of any moral authority amongst the public. When law and order collapsed to the point that the Nigerian government heavily relied on force to secure its perpetuation in office, the January 1966 coup 26 plotters believed that they were acting in the interests of all Nigerians to end a corrupt and discredited despotism by removing the civilian government.

One conspirator, Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu stated: "We wanted to get rid of rotten and corrupt ministers, political parties, trade unions and the whole clumsy apparatus of the federal system" (Agbese, Kieh, 1992: 7). Additionally, in a radio broadcast, the leader of the group announced: "The military has taken over to bring an end to gangsterism and disorder, corruption and despotism. My compatriots, you will no longer need to be ashamed to be Nigerians" (Agara 2006: 62). It is documented that the first coup was well received by the Nigerian people who believed that it was a legitimate instrument of regime-change in the country. General J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi took over the government in 1966, promising the Nigerian people that the military's stay in power would only be temporary. His attempt to impose a military gov-

ernment in Nigeria, however, would turn out to be a disaster largely because of how the first coup took place.

During the first coup, many Northern officers and leaders were killed while Southern officers' lives were spared. As a result, heightened ethnic division fomented in the military and exacerbated the ethnic tensions, ultimately leading to a counter-coup later that year. This chain of events worsened the national crises. As the new head of state, Colonel Yakubu Gowon attempted to ease tensions; however, this too failed to pacify the mistrust and suspicions within the government and the military. Differences between the military governor of the Eastern region, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, and Colonel Yakubu Gowon sparked off another chain of events that led to the Eastern region seceding from the Nigerian federation and eventually to the Nigerian Civil War, which lasted from 1967 until January 1970 (Agara 2006). When the war ended, two important consequences would continue to influence civil-military relations in Nigeria. First, the Nigerian military increased largely in size after the war. Such a large armed force raised scholarly debate which questioned the legitimacy of such a sizeable military presence. Second, when the Nigerian military emerged from the war with the nation still intact, the military leaders came to see the armed forces as a symbol of the national unity. These leaders felt it was their responsibility to intervene whenever violent and fractious politics threatened the country's integrity (Muffett, Luckham 1972). Interestingly, however, the Nigerian armed forces saw military rule itself as an aberration and necessitated only by social crises. As such, in the period following the end of the civil war, Nigerians witnessed several transition plans by various military governments in which the military junta vowed to lead the country toward democracy and remove the military permanently from politics. In the post-civil-war period, the Nigerian military intervened in the polity of the country six times, of which only two led to a successful military-led transition to civil rule. Each time the military intervened, it justified its actions by stating that it was necessary to eliminate the massive corruption in the country by civilian leaders or that the previous military leader was not committed to the transition process to military rule. During the 1970s, scholars agreed with the popular opinion. They believed that the discipline in and the perceived absence of ethnic or regional divisions in the military

institution made the military the best alternative to ensure stability and economic development in Nigeria (Agara 2006).

6. The Nigerian army after the independence

At independence, the Nigerian Army's strength of about 10,500 all ranks was structured into four infantry battalions with the combat support units (Mensah 2019). Two infantry battalions and two artillery batteries were deployed in Northern Nigeria and the other two infantry battalions were deployed in the South. The strength of the Nigerian army rose up to 250,000 all ranks at the end of the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970. By the time the civil war ended in 1970, the Nigerian Army had grown to some 200,000 men, among them many untrained recruits. Since then, there have been some violent incidents between army troops and civilians and police, mainly in the North (Mbanasor, Sampson, 2004). There has been vague talk of the need to demobilize, but the federal leaders are in no hurry to do so, and Nigeria seemed likely to have a relatively large standing army for some time to come. For economic reasons and Nigeria's threat perception, the strength was later reduced to about 150,000 all ranks and structured into three Infantry Divisions and Lagos Garrison Organization (LGO). In 1982, there was another structuring of the Nigerian Army (Mbanasor, Sampson, 2004).

Emphasis was placed on increased mobility and improved firepower. That exercise marked the beginning of the concept of mechanisation of the Nigerian Army. To make the structure effective, the Nigerian Army procured more sophisticated equipment and trained more personnel on operational and professional courses locally and overseas. The poor economic situation of the 1990s necessitated a review of Nigeria's defence policy and the restructuring of the Nigerian Army to match with the economic realities of that time. The period coincidentally witnessed more of the Nigerian Army's involvement in various Internal Security (IS) operations, participation in peacekeeping operations and the imbroglio with Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula. In addition to these, Nigeria was apprehensive of possible conflicts with her other neighbours. It would require a well-structured force with adequate manpower and equipment to meet these challenges. By the late 1990s, the Nigerian Army

was too large, but to downsize the army requires alternative employment for Nigerian soldiers to avoid social unrest. The military in Nigeria was very strong and very powerful. The question was not whether that military was going to be reduced in strength or effectiveness, but what attitudes will they have once the civilian government took place. The military had been the greatest threat to civilian stability in the country, and it needed to be trained by an army and a country that understands how a military ought to relate to a civilian government.

According to A. Omeni (2018), the Nigerian Army, the largest of the services, has about 67,000 personnel.

7. The emerging roles of the Nigerian military

There have been recent trends that have had an impact on the role of military establishments. One such trend is globalisation caused by the forces of liberal trade and technological advancement. These forces have shrunk the world to an unprecedented extent and have resulted in a high degree of interconnectedness and interdependence between states. At the same time, those forces that draw the country closer in the market place have fostered diverse security threats, e.g. environmental threats, transnational crime and terrorist acts. Many countries are finding it difficult to handle these security challenges on their own as such threats transcend borders. Security challenges have, thus, become more diverse and multifaceted in an interconnected world, political, economic and even environmental factors have an impact on the security of the nations. These new strategic realities dictate that closer cross-border cooperation and multi-dimensional responses are increasingly needed to ensure national and regional security. While the possibility of inter-state conflict cannot be ruled out, what is more worrisome is the increase in intra-state conflicts. Now, fragile states face secessionist, ethnic and various other intra-state tensions caused by a myriad of factors, e.g. the erosion of bureaucracy. This has an impact on both the state itself and its neighbours.

The strategic trends highlighted to make it imperative for regional defence establishments to rethink their security roles. However, the traditional role of the military as the guardian of national sovereignty and territorial integrity will remain un-

changed given the strategic uncertainties in the region. This role has to be complemented with a new role, that of promoting regional security. With greater security interdependence between states, regional militaries should see themselves playing a bigger role in contributing to regional peace and stability. In this new role, the Nigerian Armed Forces have contributed to regional peacekeeping missions, the provision of humanitarian and disaster relief, and undertaken various civic action activities to improve the living standards of the public.

Peacekeeping in the 21st century is a challenge for the military as such missions no longer deal with conventional inter-state conflicts where the role of peacekeepers is largely confined to monitoring the demilitarised zones. Peacekeeping now does not simply involve just military or police actions. Instead, peacekeeping has evolved to be multi-dimensional where peacekeepers, amongst their traditional roles, help to strengthen the rule of law and to monitor human rights violations (Pearson, Miner 1972). Peacekeepers also tackle issues related to disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration in particular of child soldiers, as well as repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons. Increasingly, peacekeepers are also working with NGOs in the peace-building process.

Humanitarian relief is an important area of concern for the modern militaries in view of the many large-scale disasters that may occur in a state. The bombing of the American Embassy is an example of a disaster where the military had to use their resources to minimise the level of suffering and save as many lives as possible. These unprecedented disasters require highly skilled teams that can be mobilised within minimal time delay, such kind of attributes are easily available in the military. These major disasters, man-made or natural, do not respect political boundaries, and have the potential to inflict damage on local and regional economies, as well as the social stability and security of states. The most recent tsunami disaster with its origin off the coast of Indonesia has brought damage up to the African coast with Somalia being badly hit (Burrows 2019). These disasters inflict more damage than any military invasion.

Besides disaster relief, the Nigerian armed forces in the region can contribute to regional security by engaging in navigational safety and security cooperation. The

use of the waters in drug trafficking and illegal fishing has adverse effects on the economy and therefore a need to safeguard our coastline. Given the fact that pirates, militant and Boko Haram are a real threat to the county's development, as a regional concern the Nigerian Navy should take charge to boost security in the region. Most of the trade in the world is conducted via the sea and thus the control of the West African and the Horn of Africa is of vital importance to the economic well-being of Nigeria and the countries in the region There is also the danger of a major ecological disaster involving oil spills if oil tankers are attacked and left unmanned.

The new strategic trends in the 21st century have also meant that the military needs to take on the added responsibility as a defence diplomat, a task usually performed by foreign affairs officers. Military officers can help to build the foundations for regional cooperation which is based on mutual trust and confidence. They can do so by forging close defence ties and promoting military exchanges and exercises. Defence dialogue and interactions will serve as additional channels for countries to resolve differences and misunderstandings. Such defence diplomacy and networking can help to reduce miscalculations, and promote a culture of peaceful resolution of disputes in the region. Defence diplomacy can be conducted through various means such as student exchanges, joint exercises and seminars.

Joint military exercises with foreign countries are one way in which regional forces can benchmark themselves against highly professional counterparts and at the same time serving to promote transparency and bilateral defence ties. Thirdly, seminars can facilitate interaction among regional militaries and serve as non-political forums for senior military officers to meet and discuss professional military subjects on a non-attribution basis. An important aspect of defence diplomacy is the development of multilateral programmes designed to promote understanding and trust among regional forces.

8. The Nigerian Armed Forces and poverty eradication

Nigeria survived these turbulent times but more democratic space emerged with calls for a multiparty system of government. Though the authoritarian regime retained power some consecutive terms, the desire for democracy has always re-

mained high among the Nigerian people. Many Nigerian believe that there is a need for significant changes in the new world order, where accountability and transparency are the panaceas to modern governance. In Nigeria today the state cannot feed its entire people and thus those hungry have nothing to lose if they committed suicidal attacks at the promise of some money to relieve the rest of their families from continued suffering. These single suicidal bombers are worse than any other military force in the world; you do not know who they are and where they are. These new actors in the international system have various names (terrorists, criminals) but in essence they are among the disillusioned poor people who have lost hope in this world. They can easily be bought with very little and since they have given up in life, they risk and even sacrifice their own lives, the consistent suicide bomb attack in the Northern part of the country continues to show this (Agara 2006). These threats and others discussed earlier offer some of the most critical challenges to the political leaders and military strategists. The broadened thinking of national security has therefore reduced the efficacy of the military strategy in dealing with all the various threats that face the world now. Therefore military strategists must go back to the drawing board and formulate such military strategies that will be able to defeat the enemy that is threatening the survival of the state. In Nigeria, the most existential threat has been identified as poverty and the political objective has been set as eradication of poverty. Consequently the military has to strategise bearing in mind that the main enemy of the state is poverty and therefore formulate military strategies that will assist in defeating the enemy. Poverty touches on all the instruments of national power in that, poor populace becomes unproductive thus stagnating economic growth, there is an increased crime as the poor use all means to satisfy their basic human needs and thus directly affect the security of the state when these two areas are touched it follows that the populace becomes ungovernable and could lead to the collapse of a state. This is not an easy task for the military given that since time immemorial; the military has been concerned with facing armed enemies mostly from the external borders. This form of threat calls for a complete paradigm shift in the operationalisation of the military strategy. Unlike in the traditional doctrines, enemies with sophisticated arsenals, the new enemy does not need conventional weapons to deal with.

First one needs to understand that governments need to be strategic in the poverty eradication and wealth creation as well as incorporate the policy statements into the military strategy and then operationalise them. There have been three main policy documents that outline the government objectives in the fight against poverty.

In Nigeria, involvement in poverty alleviation programmes is mostly through women association groups. These are groups composed of officers and servicemen's spouses in each service. There are the Army Women Welfare Association, Air Force Women Welfare Association and Navy Women Welfare Association, each charged with the responsibility of coordinating women's welfare activities in their respective services. The Armed Forces should be seen directly involved in these programmes. The Army Engineers have departments that deal solely with civil projects. Such projects are contracts awarded by the government. They are usually large projects requiring quick action and the government pays the Armed Forces for any contracts awarded. The cost of the project is usually lower than if it was undertaken by a civil contractor. Like the Engineers, the Army Signals has a department that solely deals with civil projects that are communications in nature. Again, such projects are large and require urgent action (Manea, Jürgen, 2012). Depending on circumstances, both the Engineers and Signals can carry out some government projects free of charge. Civil action units are separate from operational units and they are mainly staffed with civilians. Military officers are rotated between such units and operational units.

Like in the case of India, the Egyptian Armed Forces are large compared to that of Nigeria. Some key facts about it are: The Army Logistics has separate units that are also involved in commercial activities (Barany 2018). Such activities include the operation of supermarkets and farming in both agriculture and livestock. All proceeds from commercial activities go to the Armed Forces and not the Exchequer. The Force operates military industries that manufacture both military and civil products. The Military manufactures its uniforms, weapons, vehicles and other equipment. The Force is also heavily involved in research projects in collaboration with other institutions. Civilians are served in military hospitals at subsidised prices (Barany 2018). Unlike in Nigeria, they are served free of charge in times of crisis. The Nigerian Armed Forces can learn from and cooperate into its programme.

9. Options available to the Nigerian Armed Forces

Lessons learned from countries with more advanced forces show that involvement of the Armed Forces in poverty alleviation and economic development programmes should not interfere with operational readiness. Therefore, four options are open to the Nigerian Armed Forces to be detached from poverty alleviation and economic development programmes and concentrate on its core function of ensuring security from external and internal aggression. This option has a major disadvantage in that it will isolate the Armed Forces from the rest of the community. There will also be a feeling that the Armed Forces are not doing enough for the country during peacetime. Another option is that the armed forces should be involved in poverty alleviation and economic development without any demarcation between the resources to be used for these programmes and those that are intended for operational readiness. In other words, maintain the current status quo. Substantial rehabilitation of the existing equipment will be necessary. There will be need for additional equipment. The main disadvantage of this option is that it will be difficult to avoid interference with operational readiness. Reaction to situations will also continue to be on ad hoc basis. The third option is that the Armed Forces should be involved in poverty alleviation and economic development programmes, but there should be a clear demarcation between the resources to be used for these programmes and those meant for operational readiness. This option requires a substantial injection of additional funds for rehabilitation and the sustenance of existing equipment and the introduction of new ones. It may also require a reorganisation of the Armed Forces. The fourth option is similar to the second one but calls for more radical changes. It involves the establishment of civil action units that are separate from operational units and mainly staffed with civilians. Military officers are to be rotated between such units and operational ones. The main disadvantage of this option is that it calls for a major reorganisation of the Armed Forces, as well as a large injection of additional finances for personnel recruitment and purchase of the necessary equipment.

The recommendation of this paper is a combination of options two and three with the following guidelines for implementation. Poverty alleviation and economic

development is a continuous process in which the role of the individual is important. It involves empowering an individual to meet basic needs. The individual has, however, to play a role in the whole process. While it is a good idea for the Armed Forces to be involved in poverty alleviation and economic development programmes, it should not be seen to be taking opportunities away from other Nigerians. To avoid such an eventuality, the Armed Forces involvement should be limited to those programmes that may be outside the reach of the civil enterprises due to insecurity and inaccessibility. Some projects can be more expensive if carried out by the Armed Forces than they would be if carried out by the civil enterprises which have existing infrastructure. The Armed Forces should, therefore, be involved in only those projects for which necessary infrastructure lacks in the civil enterprises. The projects to be undertaken by the Armed Forces should be limited to only those that have security implications and in those areas where civilian contractors cannot operate. These may involve the provision of water in areas where communities fight over it, provision of access roads in rural areas for food security and programmes involving disaster prevention/management. In the short-term, there should be a budget for disaster prevention/management that is separate from the operational budget. This should aim at rehabilitation and sustenance of the existing equipment. In the mid-term, it should be aimed at the procurement of more equipment for capacity building. In the long-term, it should be for the creation of units dedicated to civic action.

Though the Armed Forces should not be seen to be directly involved in competitive commercial activities, existing facilities such as the Nigeria Ordnance Factories Cooperation can participate in some income-generating activities. This can be achieved through the recruitment of competent management from the corporate world. There should be more involvement of the armed forces in research. This will enhance the production of more skilled manpower not only for the Armed Forces but also for the national economy. The Armed Forces involvement should not be seen to be in terms of individual services but in terms of a combined effort of the three services.

10. Conclusion

It is argued in this article that the Nigerian Military should welcome the challenge of participating in poverty alleviation and economic development programmes only to the extent that it does not interfere with operational readiness. The Nigerian Military should also not be seen to be taking away opportunities from civil enterprises. In this respect, projects undertaken should be limited to those in an insecure or inaccessible environment. There should also be continued support to disaster-related programmes and calamities. However, to be effective in all these undertakings, the Nigerian Military needs to be enhanced in terms of manpower and equipment. The Nigerian Military should be more involved in poverty alleviation and economic development programmes but should not be seen to compete with the civil enterprises. In this respect, civil-military operations should be limited to those with security implications and those that are in areas that are inaccessible to civil enterprises. In all programmes involving other government ministries or departments, the parent ministry or department should be the sponsor of the project. Armed Forces' involvement should be through detailed policies. The Armed Forces' capability to participate in civil programmes should be enhanced. This should be a gradual process that starts with the rehabilitation of existing equipment, followed by the acquisition of new ones to fill the existing shortfalls and then expansion through additional personnel and equipment. In the long-term, there should be a budget, personnel and equipment that are separate from operational resources. This should apply to Engineers, Transport, Medical, Air Force and Navy resources. A coordination centre should, however, be centralised at Defence Headquarters (DHQ) in the future, Armed Forces deployments of a battle group and above should be coupled with numerous civic projects. There should be a department, within the Armed Forces, that coordinates civic action. If well-coordinated, the Armed Forces can be involved in commercial activities without interference in its core functions.

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