

NIGERIAN MILITARY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST INSURGENCY: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores connection between corruption, security and military effectiveness. It positions efforts to defeat Boko Haram, Hoodlums, and Bandits etc in Nigeria within the doorstep of Governance challenges. The empirical evidence has documented how corruption affected the effectiveness of military responses to insurgency. The Paper also found that the Nigerian armed forces do not have adequate weapons to prosecute the war against insurgents. There are also reports of a third force within and outside the armed forces that sabotage the efforts of the armed forces. This third force is politically and financially exposed persons who are involved in corruption. The paper recommends adequate funding and monitoring of these funds of the armed forces to enable them purchase modern military equipments to fight the insurgents. The armed forces themselves should be motivated through training and adequate financial and material incentives. Finally, the federal government should fish out sponsors of Boko Haram and other groups in the country and punish them as provided by the law of the country. The finding reveals that corruption in the defense sector weakened the military's capacity to respond to National security swiftly. However, efforts to address corruption and sabotage positively leads to enhanced military capacity gearing towards a temporal victory.

Keywords: Armed Forces, Corruption, Insurgency, Military Politics, Nigeria.

Introduction

The funding of the military, especially the ongoing decade of counter insurgency operation, is generating heated controversy especially over who handles the money allocated to the Ministry as both the Ministry of defence (MoD) and the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) have repeatedly denied handling the money. Corruption is an act done with intent to give some advantage inconsistent with official duty and the right of others. The act of officials or fiduciary person who unlawfully or wrongfully uses his station or character to procure some benefit for himself or for another person, contrary to his duty and the rights of others. Corruption has never been condoned by any legal system. Official corruption is legislated against in our statute books and the military is not as exception in the regards. For example section 98 of the Criminal Code provides Extortion by Public officers : inter alia, "that any person who being employed in the public service, and being charge d with the performance of any duty by virtue of such employment not being a duty touching administration of justices, (a) corruptly asks, receives, or obtains any property or benefit of any kind for himself or any other person on account of anything done or omitted to be done or afterwards done or omitted to be done by him, in the discharge of his office, or corruptly

gives, confers or procures or attempt to procure or promises or offers to give confer, or to procure or attempt to procure, to upon or for, any person employed in the public service, or to upon, or for any other person any property or benefit of any kind on account of any such act or omission on the part of the person so employed is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for seven years”.

What corruption is about today, it is not about exposing issues? It is not about us telling you what you need to do but we are here today to help you to understand the reasons and I learnt from the comments we had with officers. There is a great understanding to the challenge. It undermines the confidence and public trust in the constitution of the state and of the Armed Forces and it is wasteful because too much is spent on a lot of things which do not meet the needs of the Armed Forces (TI, 2017, p2). There have been different efforts to define corruption by many organizations, scholars and commentators. Ontologically the word corruption comes from the Latin verb “rumpere” meaning “to break”, which connotes the breaking of normal or societal norms or practices. Corruption is to make putrid, to taint, to rot, it means depravity, to defile, not genuine, much vitiated, dishonest, and venal (Eme, 2015). The word “corrupt” when used as an adjective literally means “utterly broken”. It was first used by Aristotle and later Cicero who added the terms bribe and abandonment of good habit. Corruption is a form of dishonest and unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit (Aristotle, 1981) Khan sees corruption as an act which deviates from the rules of conduct governing the action of someone in a position of public authority because of private regarding motives such as wealth, power and status (Khan cited in Amundsen, 1996). Corruption could also be conceived as pervasion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour or depravity (Otite, 2000). In a more holistic conceptualization, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) vignettes corruption as an abuse of office or trust for private benefit: and is a temptation indulged in by not only public officials but also by those in positions of trust and authority in private enterprise or non-profit organizations (IMF, 1998). Transparency International observes corruption to be the use of entrusted power for private gain; and is classified as grand, petty and political depending on the amount of money lost and the sector where it occurs.

The military is not elected by anyone and for that reason, its intervention in the political process of a country, even at a peripheral level, is harmful for the democratic process and accountability. Some of its other important implications are as follows: the military may be involved in government on account of an actual or created internal or external threat to national sovereignty. This situation implies the distortion of government policy because certain policy options need to be required and implemented to meet this threat; for instance, a reallocation of budget in favor of the military at the cost of other important budget allocations. The threat of a military takeover can force an elected government to change its policy in line with the desires of the military or may even replace it by another government more acquiescent to the wishes of the military. If a military takeover, or a threat of takeover, indicates inability of the present government to function effectively then the economy will pose high risks for foreign businesses and a full-scale military regime poses the greatest risk. Although a military regime may temporarily provide stability and therefore reduce risks for businesses in the short term, in the longer term risk will almost certainly rise for two major reasons: the system of governance will be become corrupt and, second, the continuation of such a government may create an armed opposition (International Country Risk Guide, 2008).

Extortion by Public Officers

Section 99 of the Criminal Code provides: "Any person who being employed in the public service, takes or accepts from any person, for the performance of his duty as such officer, any reward beyond his pay and emoluments, or any promises of such reward is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for three years." Military leaders improve their personal financial condition by frequent involvement in the economic system. To do this, they seek close working relations with local and foreign businessmen. The military manages a secure business environment while businessmen provide capital and entrepreneurial skills. The engagement of the military in economic corruption is greatest when the military are involved in the political process. In other words, the opportunities for economic corruption for the military are greatest when its role in politics increases. The civilian leaders provide opportunities for senior army officials to increase their personal wealth in reward for their loyalty to the stability of the political regime. Politicians may approach the military for direct intervention in government, to limit the power of political opponents, or the politician may tacitly acquiesce to such involvement.

A drop in oil prices has left corrupt officials in Nigeria scrambling for other ways to enrich themselves, according to TI's findings. Since defense makes up 20 percent of Nigeria's budget, it is an attractive target. Although military rule officially ended in Nigeria in 1999, TI says a small group of senior officers continue to control spending, and they, along with civilian enablers, enrich themselves through schemes like phantom contracts.

In 2014, for instance, National Security Adviser Colonel Sambo Dasuki awarded a \$500 million contract for refurbished helicopters to a company owned by a friend and financier of former President Goodluck Jonathan. The delivered helicopters were not suitable for combat and have never been deployed, TI reported. "For the price of each helicopter provided by this contract, the Air Force could have acquired seven top-grades, brand new military helicopters," an unnamed source cited in the report said.

The Military as an Institution

As an institution the military has many justifications for seeking a political role. Four important reasons are discussed below. First of all, the military wants to maintain an increase in the military's share of national resources. Case studies often note that one reason for a military take over a rise in military expenditures is evidenced, such as a rise in salaries, new military hardware are ordered, and new facilities are provided to the officers and their families. For instance, military expenditures rose by an average of 22% per year in Ghana over the period 1966-69, following a military coup against Nkrumah's government (Anton Bebler, 1973). This is in fact a reflection of the fact that prior to the coup Nkrumah had placed the army on an austerity budget. A second reason for the role of military in politics is simply the maintenance and survival of the armed forces within a country and this is often seen when attempts are made to undermine military hierarchy. For example, in the case of Brazil, President Goulart tried to counter the power of top military officers and consequently was overthrown by the military in April 1964 (Eric A Nordlinger, 1977). The military also gets involved in political power if a politician, who was removed by the military in past, becomes active again. For example, it is one of the key reasons for the coups in Ecuador and Guatemala during 1963 (Martin Needler, 1964; Nordlinger, 1977). A third reason for military involvement in politics is fear of national disintegration. For example, military officers often

argue that their intervention in politics is necessary because civilian governments are inefficient, corrupt and incapable of governing a country and as a result the country is plagued by widespread political, economic and social disorders. In fact, a military intervention or take over becomes easy in the presence of weak, poorly elected civilian-dominated governments. These governments often fail to respond to the voices and needs of a large segment of society. As a result, military-dominated governments are initially welcomed because they promise to curb corruption and to respond to the needs of the poor people. However, in practice military governments do not follow through on these pledges. The evidence shows that the military-dominated governments appear as inefficient and corrupt as their civilian predecessors. A fourth reason for military involvement is the extension of the concept of 'national security' to include internal securities. Militaries not only devise military techniques and doctrine for confronting domestic insurgency but they are also interested in the social and political reasons for insurgency. In countries where civilian-dominated governments are more unrepresentative, the military comes to power in an attempt to institutionalize their role, such as in Indonesia, Chile and Brazil. At present, most developing world militaries are mainly concerned with internal security that implies in future military officers throughout the world will be more interested in politics and government. Transparency International (TI) (2017) informed the Nigerian armed forces that corruption in the military is dangerous, divisive, wasteful and fuels insurgency. It said where graft is entrenched among military establishment, was dangerous. This was made known at a one-day Leadership Workshop organised by the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) in conjunction with Transparency International and the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CSLAC). Senior Advisor to TI, Ian Andrews, explained that high level of corruption in the military has the tendency to derail national growth, development and even stir up insurgencies and warfare.

He maintained that the problem of corruption in military establishments across the globe, adding that corruption in military procurement was not peculiar to Nigeria, but a global challenge which undermines confidence in state institutions. He said: "Corruption in military establishment is dangerous, divisive and wasteful with far reaching consequences on the state, and fuels insurgency". As Dixon, et.al (2017:2) rightly observed that corruption has been particularly destructive in the Defense and security sector. Overlooked in peacetime, Defense sector corruption has devastating real world consequences when conflict flares. With lower oil prices, corrupt elites have increasingly exploited alternative illicit revenue streams. The secret nature of Defense and security budgets has made them the easiest and most lucrative opportunity to exploit. While Boko Haram has constructed a conflict economy geared around pillage, racketeering, and kidnapping; senior players in the Nigerian security sector have also profited from the insurgency.

Military rule by nature is characterized with arbitrariness. By virtue of the fact that they are not accountable to anybody or representatives such as parliament or National Assembly makes them vulnerable to all sorts of abuses. The consequence of which is corruption. Corruption flourishes in a situation of unaccountability, and is exacerbated by absolute discretion. Corruption grows like cancer and pushes whatever limits there may be if there may be if there are no limits and controls. A corrupt regime is the one most likely to abuse human rights in order to repress the accountability and transparency which would reveal the dishonesty of the culprits. These appear to be the fate of Nigerian which have had to be under

one form of military administration or the other for almost 29 years out of 39 years of political independence

The enhancement of personal power and wealth is a key factor and a top priority for individuals within the military who seek a political role for the military. It is evident from case studies of military-dominated governments that the maximization of personal power and wealth is indeed a very high priority for a large number of coup leaders. There are a number of ways through which individuals within the military, especially officers, enhance their personal wealth. It is often the case that military expenditures increase because officers want high salaries, better housing, and other privileges, such as medical and educational facilities, for their families. More lucrative opportunities are associated with the involvement of military officers in the political process of the country. 'The best opportunities are, of course, in those countries where bribery, rake-offs and other forms of corruption flourish as a matter of course' (Nordlinger, 1977). In Sudan, for example, military officers acquired restricted public land for their own use, undertook public projects for their own benefits and demanded money for the provision of import licenses. Following the first coup in Ghana, for example, the salaries of the military officers rose substantially and foreign exchange was used to buy luxury goods, like Mercedes Benz automobiles, for military officers (Nordlinger, 1977). In general, personal wealth maximization is easy to achieve in cases where the military take over the government, but this is not a necessary condition, as the enhancement of personal wealth is also facilitated even in civilian-dominated governments where military officers are appointed to top bureaucratic posts, which provide them with ample opportunities for enriching themselves through corruption and kickbacks. Dixon believes that it's ultimately the frontline troops who suffer from this kind of corruption. Under-equipped soldiers have been killed in ambushes or have simply fled the battlefield when faced with the superior firepower and equipment of the terror group.

In 2015, 66 soldiers who had been sentenced to death for desertion had their sentences commuted when the court heard testimony that they did not have proper weapons or equipment. Other soldiers, supposedly on the front lines, don't exist at all. "Payments aren't made to the soldiers on the ground, and you end up finding lots of ghost soldiers in the ranks," Dixon said, referring to soldiers who exist only on paper to generate payments for commanders.

TI found that the corruption also helps Boko Haram in its recruitment efforts. "If you've got an ill-disciplined security sector that is abusing its own power, whether it's because its soldiers are not being paid or because there's just [a] sort of a culture of impunity, then, of course, you are driving people to join groups like Boko Haram, who offer a very simplistic alternative to what is considered to be a corrupt establishment," Dixon said. TI recommends that the Nigerian military develops an anti-corruption strategy, provide public access to security information, regulate security votes and protect whistle-blowers.

Dixon says that monitoring confidential procurement is also essential. "Some secretive spending will inevitably have to happen that should be overseen by a particular committee, so that you have proper monitoring that's confidential procurement," she said. "So any spending that is important enough to remain secret is important enough to monitor effectively."

Excessive secrecy

In any country, a proportion of spending must remain confidential for security reasons; typically 15 per cent, including among states in conflict.¹⁸ Yet Nigeria classifies nearly all defence contracts and budgets, and considers any broadly-defined security-related matter 'secret' by definition. Even according to the Nigerian government, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) ranks among the agencies least compliant with the 2011 Freedom of Information (FOI) Act.¹⁹ Civil society, meanwhile, ranks the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) among those security agencies most resistant to disclosing information in response to FOI requests.²⁰ These opaque habits are cultural remnants of the decades Nigeria spent under military rule that have been preserved by contemporary military and civilian leaders keen to forestall outside scrutiny of their activities.²¹ As a result, Nigeria ranks among those countries at the highest risk of corruption due to the over-classification of budget data and weak oversight of secret budgets.

- Cash in bullion vans For Special Services? Late 2014 to early 2015 Cash withdrawal from CBN using two bullion vans Former President Goodluck Jonathan authorised the withdrawal of N67.2 billion in cash from the Central Bank of Nigeria between November 2014 and February 2015 for "special services," linked to defence and security operations. How the funds were used remains unclear.
- N2 billion grew wings from the office of the National Security Adviser May 13, 2013 The Nigerian government released N1.35 billion to re-stock ammunition for OPERATION BOYONA, aimed at dislodging terrorist camps along the borders with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Two months later, the National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki, requested and got approval for additional N2 billion. It does appear neither the Defence Headquarters nor the soldiers on the battlefield benefited from the second cash released to the NSA. The money is believed to have disappeared, an allegation Mr. Dasuki is denying.
- "Urgent" N7 billion Boko Haram funds missing January 2015 Nurudeen Mohammed, the then Minister of State Foreign Affairs, requested N7 billion to urgently fund operations of the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin. The funds were released to the National Security Adviser. It is unclear how the money was used. Officials say most were traced to companies that had no business with the Task Force. One and a half billion naira was withdrawn in cash.

Conclusion

For a nation that is not at war, Nigeria's defence spending raises several critical concerns. The paradox of course is that the more government spends on defence, the more insecure Nigerians feel. Travelling inside the country has become so perilous that it is now advisable to get a „security report“ of all towns and villages on our way before setting out. Today, all major defence-related structures in Abuja, and the North-east which supposedly should be the safest place in the country are so barricaded are constantly attacked . The non- investment of previous administrations on the security sub-sector has both internal and international security implications for Nigeria and her population. In an effort to justify this lack of investment, Crisis Group (2016, pp i-ii) posits that inadequate funding, corrupt procurement and poor maintenance result in serious equipment and logistics deficits. Nigeria's corrupt elites have profited from conflict; with oil prices at a record low, defence has provided new and lucrative opportunities for the country's corrupt kleptocrats. Former military chiefs have

stolen as much as US \$15 billion – a sum equivalent to half of Nigeria's foreign currency reserves – through fraudulent arms procurement deals. Defence sector corruption in Nigeria has enabled the political elite to accumulate and distribute political patronage. Longstanding military exceptionalism meanwhile, has justified weak and compromised oversight of security-related spending and excessive secrecy.

Recommendations

Based on the discourse above, this study sees the Nigerian Military as one with great prospects. In order to overcome its challenges and materialize its prospects, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Develop a unified anti-corruption strategy for the defence sector

Consideration should be given to engaging all levels of staff and grounding anti-corruption efforts in an analysis of the main opportunities, causes and enablers of corruption, such as the 'five common themes in Nigerian defence fraud' listed in this report. This Reform Board could be comprised of senior leadership of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Office of the National Security Advisor (ONSA), senior military officials, and key functional personnel who have an important role in ensuring integrity in the ministry. President Buhari could signal endorsement by inviting expert international and domestic technical experts to contribute.

2. After Service Military Care

The army has made some progress in regard to the recovery of territory from Boko Haram. However, much more is needed to thwart the group. To consolidate military gains, grievances among troops on the ground must be attended to. Part of the solution lies in dialogue to understand concerns of those on the battlefield. For instance, some units lament the delays in getting weapons and supplies when their detachments are under attack. To consolidate military gains against Boko Haram, grievances among troops must be attended to.

3. Monitor confidential procurements

For genuinely confidential procurements, a separate legal procedure could be designed allowing for monitoring by a confidential senate committee and a unit with suitable security clearance within the Bureau for Public Procurement (BPP). Establishing a procedure for confidential procurements and thereby protecting national security would enable Nigeria to extend the commitments made by President Buhari at the 2016 London Anti-corruption Summit to the defence sector. These commitments included 'ensuring transparency of ownership in public contracting; implementing Open Contracting Principles and preventing corrupt bidders from winning contracts'¹. Prohibiting the award of contracts to companies that do not fully disclose their beneficial ownership could be a positive move towards tackling 'briefcase companies' - shell companies that only exist on paper - and cleaning up defence contracting.

4. Regulate secretive security votes

There is no oversight of 'security vote' spending. Widely perceived as one of the most durable forms of corruption in Nigeria today, security votes should be abolished or strictly regulated. The President, state level governors or the Attorney General could work with

civil society and the National Assembly to publish guidelines that allow for proper scrutiny of how such funds are budgeted, spent and monitored. Declassifying how the security vote funds have been spent, after a two year information embargo, could also enable citizen oversight.

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