

UNDERSTANDING DEFENCE POLICY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NIGERIA AND CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

A good attempt has been made in the study which covers a comparative study of Nigeria and Cameroon's defence policies. In carrying out this task, three fundamental objectives were set out, that examined comparatively the force posture, decision making and weapon acquisition of Nigeria and Cameroon. In course of the study, secondary materials were used, sourced from textbooks, journals, and the internet, among others. The paper concluded that the two countries lack the capability to advance the required formidable force posture, that their inability to maintain unwavering decision-making is observable, and finally the acquisition and maintenance of sophisticated weapons required for enforcing effective defence policy is weak in both countries. Also, the two countries do not possess sufficient military posture, credibility, capabilities, human resources, and military infrastructure to execute the task of defending the nation, among others. The findings revealed that Nigeria and Cameroon's defence policy share similar weaknesses in term of force posture, decision-making, maintenance of modern weapons for military credibility and capability, among others. The paper therefore recommended that a collaborative functional effort should be made with technological advanced countries, industrial sector, research institutions, among others to reposition their force posture, develop full strength decision-making and maintain effective weapons to wield power both at the domestic and international levels, also both countries should concentrate in areas of national development such as agriculture and socio-economic empowerment that would be transformed into military strength of both countries.

Key Words: Cameroon, Defence, Policy, Nigeria,

Introduction

Defence is essential to every nation and state on earth and that is why a nation needs a culture of defence. The defence of a nation state is concerned with the preservation and continuity of the State; whether democratic or military alongside other States on the earth surface. A nation State's defence entails combating drug trafficking both inside and outside the country, combating organized crime, protecting borders, combating trafficking in persons, preserving the country's interests (economic, political or even environmental interests), which is becoming increasingly more competitive, within the international arena. Obviously, defence for nation states has the function of preserving the nation's national interests abroad, as well as preserving the integrity of the people over its jurisdiction. Defense for nation states contributes to peace and security; such security entails the collective and individual protection of the citizens against threats to their survival and autonomy (Artur, 2018).

World over, the defence posture of any nation-state remains an embodiment of its security priorities, and it entails an evaluation of its environment, threat analysis, the resources and allocation for the maximum realization of its national interests. The essence of defence for nation state include among others deterring a nation's potential aggressors or enemies. In the view of Katsina (2008), "deterrence is the act of discouraging an enemy from taking military action by presenting him with costs and risks, more than his gains" So deterrence yields best on an enemy in rebuking the likelihood of an enemy's moves and intentions to attack or strike.

However, the realization of any quality defence position must involve a sound defence policy. Defence policy is premised on the claim that self-defence completely dominates any strategic interest (Quiggin, 2001). We cannot separate foreign policy architecture from a nation's defence policy. The nation's foreign policy includes its territorial defense policy against external aggression. Each African country's defence is linked with that of other African countries, and other regions. Thus, every African country has defence policy to ensure its survival and continuity as it co-exists with the other African countries. Nigeria and Cameroon are two of the African countries with defence policies that could enhance understanding defence policy in the African continent. Hence, the purpose of this paper is a comparative assessment of Nigeria and Cameroon defence policy with the main aim of assessing each country's force posture, decision making and weapon acquisition.

Theoretical framework and methodology

Defence of a state is predicated on the type of particular threat facing a country at a particular period of time. For example, it was the cold war, that influenced the realist view about the meaning of defence. The realists such as Morgenthau embraced the cultural situation of that time to embrace military connotation of defence. This implies massive military build-up to protect the territorial integrity of the state from both internal and external attacks (Malik, 2015). The reason is that states are the prominent actors, interacting in the anarchical international system with the absence of centralized political authority to superintend over states competition for resources, territories, among others. Therefore, to the realist a state is secure to the extent to which is able to garner its capability to deter real or perceive enemies or defeat the enemies. It is on this account; interests were placed on deterrence theories, arms control, disarmament, preventive war, the nuclear taboo and the impact of technology on warfare. The realist connotation of defence informed the both countries' military posture; having army of great strength, military capability, military strength with nonoperational and operational readiness low equipment. Decision-making requires flexibility and creativity, manage risk, rather than simply avoid, application of time and resources proportionate to the possible consequences of a decision, balance certainty that a decision is correct against the need to make a decision in a reasonable time frame, balance individual and organisational requirements and accountability. military technology, range of weapons, equipment, structures, and vehicles used specifically for the purpose of warfare. It includes the knowledge required to construct such technology, to employ it in combat, and to repair and replenish it. The technology of war may be divided into five categories. Offensive arms harm the enemy, while defensive weapons ward off offensive blows. Transportation technology moves soldiers and weaponry; communications coordinate the movements of armed forces; and sensors detect forces and guide weaponry.

Empirical Review

Defence

Defence refers to all the measures and provisions of any kind adopted by a state, which has as its object the assurance, in any circumstance and against any form of aggression, of the security and the integrity of the territory, and also the life of the population (Moștofleu & Duțu, 2004). To Chiș-Manolache & Chiș (2019), the defence of a state refers to the actions and measures taken by each individual state in order to protect the lives of its citizens, its own property and national territory, and to guarantee her independence. From the above definition, what seems obvious is that the defence of a nation is very important because it provides the nation with a reasonable security state to guarantee security and public order for the population (Artur, 2018). According to Chiș-Manolache and Chiș (2019), defence involves combating the possibility that what belongs to a state (population, territory, heritage, property, values, attributes, among others.) is not threatened. The defence of a nation state must keep in mind that the risks and threats, possible, on one's rights and freedoms (individual, group, state) are in continuous transformation under the complex action of a wide range of social, economic, military, cultural factors, among others.

Defence Policy

Ezeani (2006), defined policy is a “plan of action, which the government intends to implement in response to a problem or situation confronting it”. It is a statement of what the government wants to do. Policy also means an intended course of action of an individual, group, or government within an environment providing opportunities which the policy proposed to use and overcome to reach a goal or realize an aim or a purpose (Ikelegbe, 2006). It was further defined as a high level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body (Todor, 2006). Defence policy refers to a course of action or conduct, as defined by senior executive leadership, proposed or intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters relating to the conduct of military affairs, consistent with a nation’s security strategy (Todor, 2006). It also means a program for defending a country against its enemies (Todor, 2006). Omede (2012), defined defence policy as an instrument of a state’s foreign policy, statecraft, the preservation of sovereignty and independence. The main aim of the defence policy makers is to design a strong defense strategy that promotes national security.

Nigeria’s Defence Policy

At independence in 1960, Nigeria’s defence policy was based on the need to maintain internal security and the country’s foreign policy interests, which were closely aligned and intertwined with British and Commonwealth interests (Peters, 1970). Nigeria's military during the First Republic was described as constabulary force. The army was deficient in its operational capacity to operate beyond Nigeria’s borders. This is because there was no air force, and the navy was virtually and essentially a harbour patrol unit. The situation was so because the British government felt there was no need to establish a formidable defence base system in the country before the country was granted independence (Peters, 1970). Consequently, the British colonial rulers could not realise that a powerful defence system would enhance the state to strengthen its external relations and to cope with the emerging security challenges which the country might face in its external relations (Bakare, 2019).

In Nigeria’s National Defence Policy (2006), Nigeria is expected to sustain adequate defence power and express her intentions according to the threats to ensure that potential aggressors will know of the capacity to use the Armed Forces and available weapons. The policy document further affirms that Nigeria will not hesitate to use force in order to gain basic deterrence capabilities. Deterrence and force application are the key elements and principles which underpin Nigeria's national defence policy. The Nigerian Defense Policy provides a conceptual basis of the national defense policy as “designed to guarantee national security from threats and aggression. The primary interest in defence policy is aimed at preventing real and perceived war, among others through diplomacy and deterrence. It is the responsibility of the country to ensure that the military possesses the capability to defend Nigerian territory and its people. This portends natural defense policy to serve the natural interest of Nigeria which contains the core values that involve the survival of Nigerian society and its population, political sovereignty and territorial independence (Bodunde & Balogun, 2019). Nigerian defence policy objectives include security and stability in the West African sub-region through collective security (Bakare, 2019).

According to Bassey and Dokubo (2011), the defense policy of Nigeria is problematic. This involves the imperative necessity of making an explicit judgment about the scope and direction of defense policy commitments and the conditions for processing the ability (structure, magnitude and institutional parameters of Nigeria’s defense establishment) to meet these functions and challenges.

Cameroon’s Defence Policy

The national defence of Cameroon is defined by the law no 67 / LF / 9 of June 12, 1967. The defence policy aims to ensure that there is preparedness against all forms of aggression, and strengthening the security and integrity of the State, within the framework of national sovereignty.

Cameroon's defence policy seeks a balance between internal stability and specific relations with its neighbours. The unease that characterized Cameroon's relationship with Nigeria and the crisis over the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula, which has been disputed with Nigeria since early 1990s, prompted national defence to become a priority in Cameroon. Its position as a major country in the Central African sub-region also ensures that adequate attention is paid to national defence (Wuyi, 2003).

Previously, Cameroon army's role was only to fight urban crimes, preventing coups d'état and civil strife, and dealing with any threats to the regime's survival. The orientation of the armed forces is shifting from internal to external defence. Besides the border conflict with Nigeria and the fight against piracy, the defence posture has always been inward-looking.

However, the fight against Boko Haram has now transformed Cameroon's defence posture. The trickling down of the violent terrorist group from Nigeria to Cameroon in 2014, and its regional proximity, remains its external challenge to national security and territorial integrity. No day without reports of attacks, as well as the frightening and deadly nature of the group's tactics. With Boko Haram, the Cameroonian Forces have to engage in an unconventional war, making the role of the army as security to become more visible to citizens by defending the country's territorial integrity and also providing direct security services to the population, protecting them from the growing risk of Boko Haram suicide attacks. Thus, the army appears to be re-conceptualising its role to include that of a trusted provider of people-centred security services (Akong & Gael, 2015).

Comparative Assessment of Nigeria and Cameroon Defence Policy

Comparing Nigeria's defence policy with that of Cameroon can be done considering three major factors which are force posture, decision making and weapon acquisition. Force posture, means the overall military disposition, strength, and condition of readiness of a military. The force posture comprises current force capabilities, military actions and decisions taken, and the infrastructure. The Cameroonian military appears to lack the capability of achieving adequate national defence. Cameroon is currently facing a security threat from Boko Haram and the country's military personnel are finding it difficult to defeat the insurgents. Kouma (2017), made it known that Cameroon's weakness in dealing with the terrorist threat is increasingly clear through the vulnerability of its defense and security forces. Even with over 3,000 BIR troops deployed in the Far North to fight the insurgents, the force is not enough to stop the threat Boko Haram poses to Cameroon (HIS Markit, 2015). The International Crisis Group (2016), observed that Cameroon presently has around 8,500 troops in the Far North region. And even with this number, the military response is still lacking in some respects; as the troops are still not adequately provided.

Other factors that also hinder the actualization of Cameroon defence policy objectives are lack of modern equipment, availability of old or unreliable equipment (inappropriate bullet proof vests, shortage of night vision goggles), and break down in logistical support. The inadequate of personnel and the poor operational quality of the army caused difficulties for troop success. Soldiers sometimes spent nine months in forward bases without being substitution. There were also command structure problems, which manifested as lack or little cooperation between officials of the Emergence 4 and BIR-Alpha (International Crisis Group, 2016).

Equally, Nigeria's defence policy is yet to be properly articulated to attain an independent capacity to deter internal and external aggression (Eze, 2011). Nigeria is placed among countries with the lowest national defence power in the world, because the basic ingredients which make countries independent are conspicuously absent. In Nigeria, there is an absence of well-built economic and technological complex to strengthen the defence like the armed forces and arms industries (Okonkwo, 2018).

Decision making is another factor that promotes defence policy. In ensuring the defence of the country, Nigeria and Cameroon have taken certain decisions. For instance, the Cameroonian authorities are digging a major defence mechanism: a trench that will stretch for some 100 kilometers along the border. The aim of the trench is simply to keep the extremists far away from the borders of the country

(Fandio, Akpro, Tchaya & Landais, 2017). Cameroonian authorities have also launched various operations which are geared towards defending the nation from aggression. The latest operation was the one launched by the “Defence and Security Forces (DSF) on Tuesday September 8, 2020 to secure the city of Bamenda and its surrounding area. It is code-named “Bamenda Clean” (Forku, 2020). Although a positive decision has not been taken to prevent security forces from abusing the rights of citizens carrying out their duties. Security forces responding to separatist attacks targeted civilians and killed people in the North and south regions. On January 17 and 20, 2020, security forces conducted a military campaign in Bali, North-West region, a reprisal for separatist attacks and killing of several civilians. On February 14, government security agency and armed ethnic Fulani killed 21 civilians in Ngarbuh in the north-west region. Human Rights Watch was told by residents that the attack was made to punish civilians suspected of aiding separatist fighters (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

A lot of efforts have also been made by the Nigerian government for the defence and internal security of the country. For instance, the Nigerian government established an intelligence gathering centre that is saddled with the responsibility of coordinating, improving and integrating intelligence gathering and sharing across the intelligence community, security agencies and other aspects of government. The government of Nigeria also embarked on criminalization of terrorism by passing the anti-terrorism Act, installation of computer-based Closed-Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV) in some parts of the country. The Joint Task Force (JTF) was also established to counter militancy and terrorism in the country.

The Nigerian government has also taken some decisive decisions that could enhance the defence policy of the country. For instance, good economic decisions have been made in the country which are affecting the effectiveness of the country’s defence policy. Fage (1999), observes that, for a nation to achieve its aim of national security, it must be sufficient economically. Adding that the physical training of personnel, availability of armament, combat readiness logistic operations, among others, are functionally predicated on national economic viability. An economically viable nation provides the needed confidence when executing national power. Karl Marx (in Aligwara, 2009), in the same vein, supported the above view that the economy is the fundamental foundation where the superstructure of the society rests. Tedheke (1998), equally articulated the view that, “economic power should be viewed as the primary source of national power. Adding that it is the fundamentals of grand strategy, the base on which stands military strategy”

The poor way Cameroonian military is equipped has also remained an impediment to the actualization of its defence policy. It is on record that the forces of “3rd category” apart from the little they get, are also poorly equipped (Kouma, 2017). In order to surmount the challenges of equipment for the defence of the nation, Cameroon has remained beneficiary of French military assistance. Cameroon has signed various treaties with France aimed at facilitating the security provision for the country. The last Defense Pact between the two countries, signed in 2009, entered into force on 1 August 2012. This partnership consists of training personnel from different Cameroonian security agencies and neighboring countries. They are provided by three establishments National School with Regional vocation: The Inter-national Superior School of War (ESIG) in Yaoundé, the Center for the improvement of policing techniques the International School of Security Forces (EIFORCES) in Awaé, and the National Aeronautical Center with a regional vocation of Garoua. In addition, the 2009 agreement also provides for collaboration between the two countries in the area of intelligence sharing and the organization of joint military exercises. However, the agreement does not have a permanent French presence in Cameroon, nor military intervention inside the country, especially in the event of unrest (Leymarie, 2009). In addition, the Cameroon military lacks intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft, which would be crucial to a counter-terrorism campaign (HIS Markit, 2015). Wuyi (2003), observed that although the defence pact with France under normal circumstances would have allowed Cameroon to have some confidence in its national defence against external aggression, the country is not confident of its security. Complaints of a lack of equipment are not also new for the Nigerian military (Stein, 2015). Babagana Zulum; the Governor of Borno State and a former military administrator of Kaduna State, Col. Abubakar

Umar (rtd), pointed out that the Nigerian military does not have enough vehicles, ammunition, AA guns, helicopters, and numerical strength (The Nation,2021). However, Mbachu (2011), have emphasized the impact of technology on modern warfare cannot be overemphasized. He added that modern high-tech electronics, innovations in firepower and mass of weaponry had transformed warfare unprecedentedly. Thus, without modern military equipment, it will be very difficult for Nigeria to achieve its defence policy objectives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

So far, we have successfully compared Nigerian and Cameroon defence policies. The paper shows that Nigeria and Cameroon's defence policy have the same features. Both countries could not foster the required force posture, superb decisions and modern weapons required for implementing effective defence policy. We observed that Nigerian and Cameroon military do not have adequate capabilities, human resources, and military infrastructure to execute their task of defending the nation. The performance of the two countries' military is low apparently as a result of corruption in the military sector like every other sector. Inadequate equipment was also observed as a major factor hindering the implementation of defence policy in Nigeria and Cameroon. Most of the weapons acquired by Nigeria and Cameroon were majorly purchased from developed countries such as Russia, China France, United State of America, among others. There is an absence of industrial manufacturing defence equipment in both countries. It is for this reason that military personnel saddled with the responsibility of ensuring the defence of Nigeria and Cameroon rarely have sufficient equipment and improved or modern gadgets to carry out their duties, because both countries have internal and external security problems. Okonkwo (2018), therefore averred that it would be out of place to assume that the present military infrastructure is sufficient to deter against potential aggressors, in the absence of a strong and self-propelled indigenous technological base. It also observed human rights violation and absence of good economic decisions as factors hindering the implementation of defence policy in Nigeria and Cameroon. The paper therefore asserts that implementing defence policies in Nigeria and Cameroon has not been effective. Thus, based on the observed findings, the following recommendations are imperative.

Nigeria must maintain a holistic effort in alliance with technological countries and new processes which will yield great dividends. Collaboration with the civil industrial sector, universities, and research centres is very important.

To achieve profound defence status for national security in the 21st century, Nigeria and Cameroon must prioritize their resources in research and development, information and technology; technical education for a highly vibrant and industrialized economy to increase military power and capability.

The governments of Nigeria and Cameroon must realize that national defence and security is centred on the threat facing the state and on indigenous economic infrastructure which serve as the beckon for advancement of the military and other vital areas of national development such as agriculture and socio-economic empowerment in all.

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