

Defence Economics and National Security Challenges in Nigeria

Adejoh Sunday Ph.D

Department of Defence and Security Studies,
Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna

And

Ukhammi Emmanuel

Department of Political Science and International Relations
University of Abuja

Abstract

The capacity of a state to guarantee national defence and security is germane to her survival. The Nigerian state has been grappling with series of security threats that undermine the sovereignty and coercive prerogative of the state. Terrorism, banditry, trans-border crimes, farmers-pastoralist conflicts, ethno-religious conflicts, militancy, insurgency, amongst others are major manifestations of insecurities threatening the peace and stability of Nigeria. Regardless of the resources allocated to addressing these challenges, the country seems to be sinking deeper into insecurity. This paper therefore is an attempt to interrogate the management of defence and security in Nigeria within the context of defence economics by exploring and interrogating the utilization of and utility derived from resources meant for defence and security. It is a secondary research and it adopts the Herbert Simon's theory of decision making as framework of analysis. It is the position of this paper that there is a causal relationship between defence economics and national security. It identified corruption, misappropriation, mismanagement, inflated and phantom contract, lack of responsibility and accountability, poor threat analysis, inter-agency rivalry as the major challenges of defence and security management in Nigeria. It recommends amongst others the need for defence expenditure to be determined by specific defence and security needs of Nigeria.

Key Words: Defence Economics, Security, Threat, Defence Policy, Military Expenditure.

Background

Since the end of the Cold War, the world has been faced with new regional conflicts, terrorism and threats from the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and weapons of mass destruction and from rogue states. The world remains uncertain, unstable and insecure with continued threats to global peace and security. The world economic crisis has also threatened government spending with defence as a candidate for spending cuts. Choices have to be made about the size of a nation's defence budget, its allocation between nuclear and conventional forces, between equipment and personnel and between air, land and sea forces. Major reductions in defence spending and the challenge of maintaining security with increasingly limited resources will confront the defence budgets of all nations (Hartley, 2011). Military expenditure is a measure that describes how much of its resources a country is willing to spend on its armed forces. While military expenditure does not automatically translate into military capability, which is also linked to resource allocation and efficient resource utilisation, it does give an idea of how countries measure up against each other. It also provides us a picture of how national defence is prioritised over time and in comparison with other public expenses (Olsson and Bäckström, 2016). The demand for military expenditure will be influenced by society's preferences, and its willingness to pay for defence will be affected by its perception of the threat and by the political composition of the government. "Threats might take the form of actual involvement in conflicts or an arms race with potential enemies. Demand will further be influenced by household income levels, by the relative prices of military and civil goods, by spill-ins in the form of military expenditure by a nation's allies and by strategic doctrine.

Supply side factors comprise technical progress, economic growth and the economy's productive capacity" (Hartley, 1991:59).

Nigeria is not in isolation of these global security trends and developments. The political history of Nigeria vis-a-vis her geopolitical arrangement is in no small way associated with the galaxies of security challenges bedevilling the country. Nigeria has six geopolitical zones with each having one form of peculiarity or the other in terms of geographic and demographic characteristics. North Eastern Nigeria is grappling with Boko Haram terrorism, North West is grappling with armed banditry, cattle rustling and kidnappings, North Central is faced with the challenge of pastoralist-farmers conflicts, South West with kidnappings, South-South with militancy and South East is grappling with kidnapping, ethnic and secessionist agitations. The poor management of borders further by the countries bordering Nigeria aggravates the insecurity situations of Nigeria.

Terrorism, insurgency, kidnapping, militancy, cattle rustling, pastoralist-farmers conflicts among others, which are new security challenges characteristic of the Nigeria's return to democratic governance in 1999 have continue to threaten the corporate existence of the country. The management of these challenges over the years has not yielded adequate positive results regardless of the huge resources annually allocated to defence and security. It is surprising that immediately the country got transitioned to civilian or democratic rule in 1999, it is widely observed that the political space got more broadened, giving room for various violent agitations, putting more pressure on Nigerian military. In the South-South region, there are militants' agitations and ritual killings; in South East, there exists Biafran agitations for secession and call for a sovereign state, North East, there is armed banditry, Boko Haram terrorism in the North East and kidnapping has remained a "huge and lucrative business" in all parts of the country (Abiodun, Opatoki, Adeyemo and Obi, 2020).

The Nigerian Armed forces is Nigeria's major element of national power and Nigeria's involvement in several regional peacekeeping operations and the performance of the military has earned Nigeria a lot of respect within the comity of nations. However, the increasing security challenges in Nigeria and the inability of the military to nip in the board has raised a lot of questions regarding the capability of the Nigerian defence and security agencies. The nexus between defence budget and defence outcomes in Nigeria clearly shows the missing link in Nigeria's defence and security management. Defence economics and the economics of defence are critical in defence planning and execution. The challenges to security now come from new sources; they threaten new dangers, and require new instruments and concepts from us. The field of play for defence economics has thus greatly increased, but the opportunity to exploit new insights from throughout economics grown accordingly (McGuire, 2007).

Defence economics is not solely about budgets and money. Broadly, it embraces all aspects of the economics of war and peace including defence, disarmament and conversion. The definition includes studies of conventional and non-conventional conflict, such as civil wars, revolutions and terrorism. It involves studies of the armed forces and defence industries, and the efficiency with which these sectors use scarce resources in providing defence output in the form of peace, protection and security (Hartley, 2011).

It is based on the foregoing that this paper attempts to interrogate the nexus between defence economics and the management of Nigeria's security system. It is divided into sections; it contains terminological clarifications, theoretical framework and empirical analysis of issues bordering defence budgeting and expenditure in Nigeria.

Terminological and Theoretical Perspectives

Defence Economics

Defence economics is an interesting development both in the field of economics and strategic studies. It involves the applications of economic knowledge and principles in defence planning and execution. Hartley and Sandler view defence economics in a minimal fashion, stating that it ‘applies the tools of economics to the study of defence, disarmament, conversion and peace’ (1995:1).

A more comprehensive description of the field is provided by Intriligator (1990: 3):

Defence economics is concerned with that part of the overall economy involving defence-related issues, including the level of defence spending, both in total and as a fraction of the overall economy; the impacts of defence expenditure, both domestically for output and employment and internationally for impacts on other nations; the reasons for the existence and size of the defence sector; the relation of defence spending to technical change; and the implications of defence spending and the defence sector for international stability or instability.

Defence economics applies the tools of economics to the study of defence and defence related issues; including defence policies and industries, conflict, arms races, disarmament, conversion, peacekeeping, insurgencies, civil wars, and terrorism. When applying these tools, defence economists must tailor economic methods, both theoretical and empirical, to defence issues and policies, while taking account of institutional aspects that characterize the defence section (Sandler and Hartley, 2007).

McGuire (2007:630) claimed that any contributions we can make to understanding defence and security whether national or global will involve application of these principles:

- i. First and above all, even defence is ruled by the iron law of scarcity of resources, and even for the “richest” group of countries. “Pay any price, bear any burden” will not suffice to judge how much defence really is too much (Enthoven and Smith, 1971).
- ii. Second, defence or security economics as a normative project will always include a concern for efficiency and the many attendant conceptual, measurement, and implementation questions surrounding it.
- iii. Third, economics of defence must be always alert to the role of incentives, our own, an ally’s, an adversary’s – and to the possibilities of influencing those incentives for our long run benefit. A special instance of incentives especially relevant to security and defence is the interdependence among own and others actions in small interacting groups as distinct from the conventional large competitive markets.

The concept of the economics of defence in the context of business economics, which in turn relates to defence or the defence industry, has affinity with the cooperation relationships that exist between organisations, strategic alliances, management of knowledge and the economic value of innovation and the R&D linked to dual-use technology associated with the security and defence industry (Briones, 2013:4).

National Security

In the view of Gallie (1995:167), the term ‘security’ has become, to use words, an ‘essentially contested concept’ in that there are no assumptions of agreement as to its meaning and that this lack of agreement constitutes a widely recognised ground for philosophical inquiry. To shed light on the lack of consensus on the meaning of security, Wolfer (1962) points out the importance of perceptions within the meaning of security: ‘. . . security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked.

The two classical notions of security in international relations have contoured scholarly discussions about this term: realist and idealist-inspired security ideas. The realist school used to see security as a derivative of power: an actor with enough power to reach a dominating position would acquire security as a result. On the other hand, the idealist school tended to see security as a consequence of peace: a lasting peace would provide security for all (Buzan, 1991). Lipmann (1943:32) defines it by stating that “a nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interest to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war. To Baldwin (1997), seven specific questions are important for the analysis of the security concept. The questions are: (1) Security for whom? (2) Security for which values? (3) How much security? (4) From what threats? (5) By what means? (6) At what cost? (7) In what time period?

3.1.1 **In** redefining, widening and deepening of the concept of security, **McNamara situates his analysis of security in relations to development. Hence, the security development nexus.** Security is development and without development there can be no security [...] development means economic, social and political progress. It means a reasonable standard of living, and reasonable in this context requires continual redefinition (**McNamara, 1968**). To Buzan (1998), **the concept of security extends beyond military security. He claims that there can be other dimensions to security such as economic, political, societal, and environmental security along with military security.** The UN Secretary-General echoed the same sentiments when he stated that, "In an increasingly interconnected world, progress in the areas of development, security and human rights must go hand in hand. There will be no development without security and no security without development (Annan, 2005).

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

There are several theories and approaches that can explain the relationship between defence and economics and the application of economic principles in matters of defence and national security especially in terms of resource allocation, defence budgeting and expenditure. Theories such as the political economy theory, structural functionalism, Keynesian theory among others readily comes to mind. However, this paper adopts the Herbert Simon’s theory of decision making.

The decision making theory is applicable in different fields of study; in economics, political science, public administration, international relations among others. The thrust of the theory lies in the fact that decision making is a critical component of government and individual actors called decision makers. The decision maker is usually presented with alternatives among which choice needs to be made. The theory presents the decision maker as rational actors hence decisions or choices are made based on rationality. To Simon, the distance between rationality and behaviour is bridged by the concept of “decision”. A choice is a selection of one, among numerous possible behaviour alternatives, to be carried out. Every behaviour involves a selection of this kind, be it conscious or not. A decision is a process through which this selection is performed. It became evident very early in the study of human choice that people have a difficult time trading off one goal against another when making a choice (Slovak 1990; Tetlock 2000).

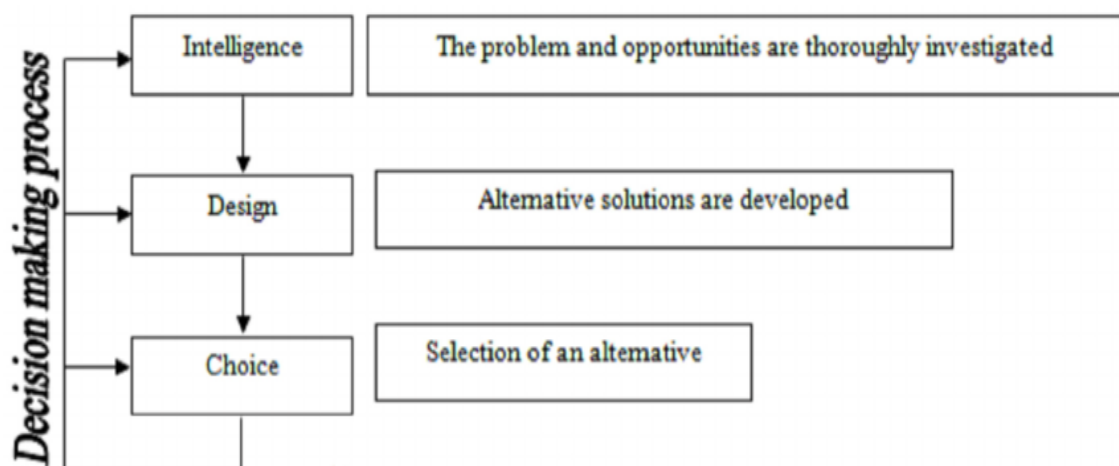
Rationality is defined by Simon as a relation of conformance (efficacy) between pre-established ends and the means to reach them. To him, the specification of these ends is a question of value and, hence, is beyond the scope of science. However, the relation between means and ends is a question of fact. The factual evaluation of this conformity involves, in theory, three “steps”:

- (i) the listing of all possible be-havioral alternatives;

- (ii) the determination of all the consequences that will follow, in the future, to the adoption of each of these alternatives (in a determinist way or in the form of distributions of probabilities);
- (iii) The comparison of the alternatives that should be evaluated by the sets of consequences following each one of them, according to the pre-established ends (utility, profit or any other specified pay-off function).

In addition to the concept of rationality was the principle of bounded rationality introduced by Simon to further distinguish his decision making theory from regular rationality of neoclassical theory, which assumes that the decision maker has a comprehensive, consistent utility function, knows all the alternatives that are available for choice, can compute the expected value of utility associated with each alternative, and chooses the alternative that maximizes expected utility. The capacity of the human mind for formulating and solving complex problems is very small compared with the size of the problems whose solution is required for objectively rational behaviour in the real world — or even for a reason-able approximation to such objective rationality (Simon, 1957 :198).

Bounded rationality, a rationality that is consistent with our knowledge of actual human choice behaviour, assumes that the decision maker must search for alternatives, has egregiously incomplete and inaccurate knowledge about the consequences of actions, and chooses actions that are expected to be satisfactory (attain targets while satisfying constraints) (Simon, 1997:17).



Steps in Simon's Model (Simon, 1997)

The relevance of this theory towards understanding defence economics and national security challenges in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. Defence economies reflect the authoritative allocation of values to specific defence and security needs. Nigeria is grappling with galaxies of security and defence challenges, which are usually taken into consideration in defence planning and budgeting. Since 2009, defence budget in Nigeria has persistently increase especially because of the increasing activities of terrorist and bandits in Nigeria. Decision making is critical as far as the management of security challenges in Nigeria is concerned. Apart from the mismanagement and misappropriation of funds meant for defence and security, the issues of corruption and embezzlement among top rank military, security personnel and the ministry of defence has been a major issue. Apart from this disconnect between defence policy decisions and implementations, there also seems to be a serious gap in terms of basic defence needs and policy outcomes. The failure of the Nigerian state to combat the threats posed by terrorism, banditry, farmers-herders conflict and the increasing rate of kidnapping depicts poor quality of decision making.

Defence Economics and Nigeria's National Security management

The increasing spate of insecurity in Nigeria and the emerging trends and catastrophic dimensions of insecurity call for questioning the way and manner economic resources meant for defence are expended. Defence and security are critical components of every state and the abilities of states to guarantee her territorial integrity and the security of lives and properties of her citizens has made defence budgeting and expenditure very germane. A cursory look at Nigerian defence and security system clearly indicates regular increase in budgetary allocations without a commensurable defence performance. The fundamental question is why?

An analysis of defence economics and the management of Nigeria's defence and security architecture will be more appreciated if situated within the context of Baldwin's (1997), analysis of the security concept. For Baldwin, seven questions are sacrosanct to the issues of national security and they are: (1) Security for whom? (2) Security for which values? (3) How much security? (4) From what threats? (5) By what means? (6) At what cost? (7) In what time period? These questions to a large extent justify not just the economics of defence but the political economy of defence and security. The determination of who gets what, when and how, and the authoritative allocation of values for defence and security in Nigeria do not seem to tally with Baldwin's analysis of security. Just as there are basic economic problems, so also there are basic defence and security problem that must be identified to ensure efficient and effective utilization of scarce resources.

A starting point in the economics of defence focuses on the classic choice between guns and butter, or between defence and social welfare spending, or nuclear weapons and hospitals. Choice and efficiency are central to economics. The range of choices facing any government is outlined and the principles of substitution, competition and self-interest are applied to defence issues, often showing new and controversial insights. But defence economics ranges wider and studies war and peace, embracing defence spending and its consequences, disarmament and peace. Consideration is given to the case for defence and the determinants of defence spending, including budgeting, arms races and military alliances. Defence is a major buyer of equipment and personnel and the economics of procurement for these inputs is explained and assessed (Hartley, 2011:15).

Sound financial management of a state's security sector remains the key to efficient and effective security forces capable of responding to the citizens' legitimate security. The huge budgetary allocations for defence or military in Nigeria annually remain higher than budgets of all other West African states' defence/military operations combined together in all ramifications. But one would be dismayed that with the usual bogus defence budgets in Nigeria, the attendant effects on her political and socio-economic stability coupled with peace and security still fall far below ebb (Abiodun, Asaolu and Ndubuisi, 2020).

Budgetary Allocation to the Armed Force of Nigeria 2011-2017

Year	Recurrent Expenditure	Capital Expenditure	Total Budget	Percentage of capital expenditure
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
2011	114,435,551,274	6,978,617,081	121,414,168,356	5.78
2012	121,158,281,410	5,425,200,000	126,583,481,410	4.29
2013	123,817,975,129	8,463,468,000	132,281,043,129	6.39
2014	127,885,396,725	4,8924,913,470	132,710,310,195	3.64
2015	144,087,334,517	5,746,383,337	149,833,717,854	3.84
2016	129,343,169,634	19,623,070366	148,966,240,000	13.17
2017	325,870,000,000	140,000,000,000	465,870,000,000	19.58

Source: Budget Office of the Federation, 2018

An assessment of the objectives of the national defence policy of Nigeria vis-a-vis contemporary security trends and challenges clearly shows the missing links in the policy. The high degree of ambiguity in Nigeria's defence policy also goes to show that the policy cannot redirect and redefine Nigeria's defence direction. It is obvious that Nigeria's defence policy still views defence and security from the traditional perspective which lay much emphasis on military might and capabilities as an element of national power (Ibori and Adejoh, 2015).

The national defence policy of Nigeria failed to identify the nexus between security, political and socio-economic conditions of Nigerians. There is no way a nation will be secured when there is poor standard of living, high degree of poverty and unemployment, widened gap between the 'haves and have not' etc. it is in line with this line of thought that Oshio (2009:2) posited that:

The worsening economic conditions have been generating a mix of domestic social and political tension. Normally, citizens expect their governments to provide them with political stability and socio economic security, including employment, healthcare and shelter, the non-fulfilment of which breeds discontent and social unrest or even serious political challenge. Unfortunately, Nigeria is, today plagued with social disorder, insecurity, poverty, illiteracy, balance of payment deficit, poor health statistics, ethnic and religious conflicts, corruption, crime and criminality and political crisis and all these mean that we are very insecure in terms of human well-being.

According to Akpuru-Aja (2011:457),

Ideally, national defence programme guidelines define the country basic national security outlook from defence image and specific time frame. What should be done in the medium term (5 years) plan and long term (10 years) plan, or perspective plan (15 years and above).

There are two distinctive economic characteristics of the defence sector. First, both defence and peace are public goods which are non- rival and non- excludable... Second, governments are major buyers of both equipment (weapons) and military personnel (in some cases, they are monopsony buyers) and their procurement choices affect defence industries and labour markets. Inevitably, agents in political markets seek to influence government purchasing in their favour. The armed forces will lobby for larger budgets; defence firms and industries will seek to be awarded contracts; and politicians will demand contracts be awarded to firms in their constituencies and that military bases be retained (Hartley, 2011:3).

Lack of transparency in particular results in high vulnerability for corruption, most especially in arms procurement processes. The procurement of military arms or weapons in Nigeria is usually shrouded in secrecy; therefore, old-fashioned items are ordered and purchased by the government and military institutions instead of purchasing sophisticated weapons and ammunition that are supposed to be deployed to crush the terrorists. There is absence of transparency in the process and transparency has to do with probity and accountability of the military to both the government and the people at large. However, most developing countries are lacking on this crucial aspect of military budgeting and implementation due to certain aspects of expenditures shrouded in clandestine manner or not adequately recorded (Abiodun, Asaolu and Ndubuisi, 2020).

Aside from the evident waste, the kleptocratic capture of the defence sector has had serious consequences for the security of Nigerians. Despite sharp increases in ad hoc defence spending between 2011 and 2015, operations in the northeast have remained stubbornly under-

resourced, with multiple reports of front line operations hampered by equipment, materiel, and pay shortages, particularly in 2013 and 2014 (Amnesty International, 2015). These shortages undoubtedly cost lives. Military sources have privately blamed the suspected deaths of 83 soldiers in an October 2016 Boko Haram ambush, directly on equipment shortfalls and low morale resulting from an uptick in corruption among Army leaders (Premium times, 2016).

Relating defence corruption and the subterfuges used by top rank military and the political elites, Transparency International (2017:1) claimed thus:

Defence sector corruption is a major threat to Nigeria's internal security and political stability. Largely unaddressed, it has weakened Nigerian counterterrorism capacity whilst strengthening Boko Haram. 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.

Corruption has been particularly destructive in the defence and security sector. Overlooked in peacetime, defence 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 defence 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 (Transparency International, 2017:1). Analysts and scholars have given various reasons why the Nigerian military was unable to deliver on their core mandate. There is no denying the fact that large-scale corruption characterised defence funds and arms purchases in Nigeria. The Dasuki-gate of about \$2.1 billion is an example of the endemic corruption that bedevilled Nigeria's defence spending (Onapajo, 2017). With evidences uncovered by the two ad-hoc audit committees established by President Buhari, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), indicted over 300 individuals and companies for defence sector procurement theft and misappropriation. Fifty-five people, including former government ministers, military chiefs, state governors, and bankers were reported by the committees to have stolen 1.34 trillion naira (\$6.8 billion) over a seven-year period in the shape of arms equipment deals. A further \$2 billion was allegedly stolen from the National Security Budget under the watch of National Security Advisor, Colonel Sambo Dasuki (BBC, 2015).

Apart from the military, security agencies like the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Security (DSS), Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Immigration Service, Correctional Service, among others also have serious cases of corruption even though in most cases are unreported because of the high level of secrecy that characterise their procurement processes and activities. For instance, on April 12, 2017, whistle blowers led the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to a house in upscale Ikoyi where \$43.4 million was kept. The NIA director later claimed the money was meant for undisclosed special security and defence projects. Investigations are still going on and the real motive for keeping the fund in that location remained unclear (Eme, & Umeokafor, 2019).

Creating inflated or phantom contracts is still one of the easiest ways for corrupt actors to steal from the Nigerian defence budget. In 2014, former NSA Dasuki awarded a US \$500 million contract for refurbished helicopters to Triax Company Limited, whose CEO at that

time, according to media reports, was Arthur Eze, a major financier of the PDP and a family friend of former President Jonathan. The helicopters had limited to no combat utility and have not been deployed. One source in the Nigerian Air Force described the purchase as “pure waste”. Another source states that, “for the price of each helicopter provided by this contract, the Air Force could have acquired seven top grade, brand new military helicopters (Sahara Reporters, 10 March 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 (Eme, & Umeokafor, 2019).

According to Transparency International (2016), there are five common themes in Nigerian defence procurement fraud namely:

- i. The price of the equipment, product, or service purchased is inflated out of all proportion to its true value.
- ii. Bidding entities are ‘briefcase companies.’
- iii. The beneficiaries of these front companies are financiers of the ruling party, closely connected to senior party figures.
- iv. The equipment purchased is old, damaged, procured without reference to military needs, has limited to no combat ability, or simply does not exist.
- v. In return for financing the ruling party, contract beneficiaries determine the winners of the election primaries for Federal legislative seats, securing their favoured candidate who in turn has access to the award of contracts at the federal or state level, enabling the beneficiaries to recoup their financial donations to the ruling party.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There are contending views and arguments on government expenditure for defence and national security in relations to the allocation of resources for the welfare of the citizenry. These arguments rest within the line of warfare and welfare. Several literatures have showed that each is very important and there is need to maintain a balance since they both fall within the basic responsibilities of the state. Defence economics is critical to the management of national security. Regardless of the increase in military budgetary allocations, the Nigerian state seems to be sinking deeper into galaxies of security crises. There is a serious disconnect between defence needs, defence expenditure and procurements in Nigeria. The inability of the Nigerian military and other security agencies to address the persistent security issues in Nigeria is a pointer to the way and manner security is managed in Nigeria. Issues of corruption, over-inflated and phantom contracts, misappropriation and mismanagement of resources made for defence and security is a major challenge to Nigeria.

This paper therefore recommends the following:

- i. There is need to develop an anti-corruption strategy specifically for the military and other security agencies to checkmate defence expenditure
- ii. Defence budgeting, expenditure and procurements should be based on obvious defence and security needs
- iii. The Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) needs to enhance its monitoring of defence procurement among several security agencies
- iv. There is a need to penalise banks that aid military and the political class in laundering stolen monies meant for defence and security.

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