

## The Challenge of Bringing the Traditional Military Authority Structure in Nigeria in Line with Modern Technology

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### Abstract

A military is an organization that is authorized by its greater society to use lethal force, including the use of weapons, in defending its country by combating actual or perceived threats. The military may have additional-functions of use to its greater society, such as advancing a political agenda exemplified by a military junta supporting or promoting economic expansion through imperialism, and as a form of internal social control. However, the extent to which the military uses lethal force is depended on its ability to manipulate the instrument of force in the wake of a dynamic technology. That is why the military is an organization whose parts of the corporate body are designed, developed, deployed, trained, supplied, informed and directed so that they can be relied upon in the period of war. In spite of this, there is the real problem of bringing the traditional military authority structure in Nigeria in line with modern technology. The basic focus of this paper is to examine this problem with a view to making relevant recommendations as the way forward. The historical descriptive approach was adopted as method of data collection in researching for this work.

**Key words:** Military, Organization, Lethal force, weapons, war, modern technology

### Introduction

As a noun, the military usually refers generally to a country's armed forces or sometimes, more specifically, to the senior officers who command them. In general, it refers to the physicality of armed forces, their personnel, equipment, and physical area which they occupy (see [http://maps.thefullwiki.org/Military\\_br](http://maps.thefullwiki.org/Military_br)). As an adjective, military originally refer only to soldiers, but it now broadened to apply to land forces in general and anything to do with their profession. However, at about the time of the Napoleonic wars, the "military" began to be used in reference to armed forces as a whole and the 21<sup>st</sup> century expressions like "military service", "military intelligence" and "military history" encompass naval, marine and air force aspects. Therefore, it now symbolizes any activity performed by military personnel. At the core of military operations is the use of weapons of warfare which of course is tied to the dynamics of technology. Therefore, the relevance of the military in Nigeria lies in the ability of the Nigerian government to bring the traditional military authority structure in Nigeria in tandem with modern technology.

### Traditional Military Authority Structure in Nigeria

The basic principle of combat organization is that men and their equipment are grouped into carefully designed units capable of rapid assembly into a range of force structures which can be varied to meet any particular emergency such as war. This principle of operation applies to both the composition of armed forces and to their methods of operation (C.O. Bassey 1999:10)



The fighting formations of the army, for example, consist of a variety of different types of units, each trained to carry out its own particular function as part of a coordinated whole. Parachutist, armoured troops and gunners are specialists in their particular roles and are grouped in parachute, armoured and artillery requirements. The men in each type of formation are also able with varying degrees of refresher training to undertake the basic infantry tasks (C.O. Bassey, 1999:10)

At the higher levels of an organization, the composition of a formation naturally becomes more flexible and more capable of independent opposition. For example, an armoured division will contain not only tanks but also motorized infantry division and self-propelled guns; the formation as a whole being trained to undertake not only rapid thrusts into enemy territory or around his flanks, but also to conduct an orderly withdrawal operation to a more rear word defensive position. Therefore, in principle a modern army is capable of a wide range of operations and has a variety of structural options which can be rapidly chosen by assembling a force of appropriately armed and trained sub-formations.

It is worthy to note that the modular principle on which armed forces are constructed is basically simple. The nature of each element or unit is determined by its function. The structure of infantry battalions differs from that of an armoured or artillery requirement; the composition of a warships company will depend on whether it is an aircraft carrier, or frigate or a submarine, the crew of a bomber or transport aircraft will be different from that of a maritime patrol aircraft or an interceptor. In the army, battalions, brigades and divisions are composed and organized according to whether their roles are predominant infantry, armoured or airborne by varying the mix of their constituent elements.

In the navy, the same modular principle is used. Men are organized into functional groups or divisions with a number of divisions forming a department. Four main departments, namely, operations, marine engineering weapons and electrical and supply go to make up the ship's company. For operations, ships are formed in mutually supporting task units which may be grouped into larger task groups or forces whose composition depends on the types of operation at hand; examples an amphibious group or anti-submarine warfare group. When ships are not engaged in operations, they may be grouped administratively under "type commanders" whose staff act as a centre for a particular expertise. So, problems relating specifically to, say aircraft carriers, or to submarines, will be under the control of a "flag officer" usually an admiral who is specialized in this role, in much the same way that army policies relating specifically to field engineers or artillery will be under the control of generals who are specialized in those particular arms of the service (C.O. Bassey, 1999:10)

The organization of air forces is less easy to typify than that of the army or navy because air forces are fewer and have come into being with varying per parentage, sometimes not achieving independent status. Moreover, air forces can fight air campaigns and also take part in land and maritime warfare, changing their organization to some extent for each of these purposes. It should be noted that the same modular principle applies in the structuring of air force aircraft being grouped both type and role into squadrons which in turn are grouped under higher formations specializing in one or more roles-groups and commands. But when aircraft operate together in the company, which is becoming rare their formation will almost certainly consist of one type of aircraft, unlike naval groupings which usually consist of a mix of differing ship types. Aircraft are, therefore, in this respect, more like tanks, which ideally operate in groups of one type of tank (Bassey 1999:11).

It can, therefore, be seen from the above analysis that land, sea and air forces each employ the modular principle of structuring in order to be flexible in the face of emergency.

### **What is Technology?**

There are as many definitions of the concept technology as there are scholars in the field of technology. However, many of these definitions are unable to clearly unfold what one meant by technology. This situation has given vent to definitions which identify technology with science, applied science or with all the products of technology. Rather than go to the length of advancing the various definitions of technology here, it would be necessary to say what technology really is by using characterization approach which in itself sought to distinguish between the form and the content of technology.

In terms of form, technology is often used to refer to a distinctive form of human, cultural activity like the religion, sport, medicine, science, art and philosophy. This form of human activity is characterized with six general components as follows:

- a) Its output or products
- b) Its functions;
- c) Its resources;
- d) Features of the processes in which the form of activity is carried out;
- e) The mental sets of the activity's practitioners;
- f) The socio-cultural environmental context of the activity.

Elaborating this component further, technology can be characterized as that form of cultural activity devoted to the production of transformation of material objects or the creation of procedural systems in order to expand the realm of practical human possibility. As for the content of technology, technology can be defined as the complex of knowledge, methods and other resources used in making a particular procedural system at a given time in a particular society. So, the content of technology at a given time in a particular society consists of the ensemble of all the technologies-rocket technology, telephone technology, etc. used to produce all the techniques in use at that time in that society (Charles Singer 1954:8)

### **Problem of Bringing the Traditional Military Authority Structure in Nigeria in line with Modern Technology**

The challenge of bringing the traditional military authority structure in Nigeria in line with modern technology hinges on certain restraining factors in military statecraft. These restraining factors are as discussed below:

#### **Military Capability Factor**

Since the main thrust of defence policy is the relation of force to national objectives, military capability constitutes a fundamental restraint on a nation's use of force. Thus, any consideration of the Nigerian military as an instrument of national policy hinges on how it compasses in operational effectiveness with possible opponents. That is to say that for the potential and the viability of the armed forces in Nigeria to function adequately as an instrument of statecraft it need of necessity relate to the strategic environment, strategy and tactics and available technology (Ogonsanwo, 1980:20).

It is worthy to note however, that given the variability of factors involved such as organization, doctrine, equipment, leadership, training, experience, morale, the military in

Nigeria is placed in a position where it is very difficult for it to face emergency situation of war with utmost certainty. A more realistic approach to determining the readiness of the Nigerian military establishment to meet the challenges of its security role and mission is to integrate both national capability and intentions. In qualitative terms, the Nigerian defence system can be readily seen in the rudimentary or nascent nature of its military industrial complex. This is manifest in the type of weapons produced, assault rifles, armour cars and support vehicles, bombs and ammunition, the level of defence industrial production capacity, and the age of technology “vintage and intermediate” military components and systems rather than the “advanced”, “land-edge” or “significant” technologies manufactured in the industrialized countries. Furthermore, since organized research and development is a crucial determinant of national technological capacity, its continued relegation to the background in Nigerian’s defence planning in favour of quick-fix solution can only undermine independent decisions concerning the rise and usability of national military power (Bassey, 1987:7).

It is worthy to note that how much and how quickly Nigeria can augment its military capability under the fog of war will unavoidably depend, among other things on the strength of its economic base at the given time, its trained reserves, its industrial capacity, political control, technological skill and its internal communication and preplanning for mobilization. These variables constitute critical domestic socio-economic and political deciding factors for the production and use of military force. Their underdevelopment in Nigeria may seriously restrain the use and usability of military force as an instrument of policy.

### **Socio-economic Factors**

Since the production, maintenance and use of armed forces requires a variety of goods and services, competing social and economic demands in an underdeveloped nation such as Nigeria set definite limited to decisions concerning the use of military force as an instrument of policy. Military policy defined in terms of the relation of force to national purposes inescapably hinges on structural decisions involving the procurement, allocation and organization of the men, money and material which go into the strategic units and uses of force (Aron Raymond, 1968:14)

Taking the Nigerian situation into consideration, her economic base appears at a glance to be impressive and should be able to support a well-equipped mobile and virile defence force without the concomitant risk of compromising basic development programmes. Her energy base is abundant and potentially supportive of a vibrant industrial economy. However, this seemingly rosy picture by itself is misleading for the reason that the transformation of national economic potential into usable resources is not an automatic process for it depends critically on interlocking administrative, scientific and technological skills. And secondly Nigeria’s low level of industrial capacity especially in the crucial areas of machine production and related infrastructural systems has largely negated the substantive bearing of its economic potential on its capacity to produce and use military force as an instrument of policy (Bassey 1999:12).

### **Normative Restraint**

This restraining factor is central to systemic factors. The variable impact and implications of the normative devaluation of force as a policy alternative in the Nigerian subsystem has to be express through world public opinion which even contemporary dominant powers such as the US can now ignore only at a price of inevitable isolation. World public opinion encompasses

opinions that react to events the world over and are in part and to a degree interconnected resting on a strong and expanding technological foundation. Adverse opinion turns out to be strong thus undermining its capacity to sustain effective application of military force in pursuit of national objectives. Depending on the circumstance, this incapacitation may be consequent upon two systemic factors such as embargo on arms, ammunition and spare parts, and political and diplomatic isolation. It should be noted that the capacity of Nigeria to utilize military force diminishes if the arms suppliers adjudge such a course of action inimical to their strategies or geo-political interests (Northedge, 1974:30).

### **Recommendations and Concluding Remarks**

Organized research and development which is a crucial determinant of national technological capacity should be motivated, encouraged and funded by Nigerian government. Nigerian industrial capacity, specially her defence industries such as Nigerian Defence Industrial Corporation (NDIC) located in Kaduna among others should be revived; advance technology should be introduced and made to engage in sophisticated production with a view to satisfying local needs. The military budget has to be given priority to as a strategic and critical sector and accordingly in proved upon to address current realities. World public opinion that bears relevance to Nigeria's strategic sector has to be respected, investigated and accordingly positive response shown.

Training and retraining of military personnel is central in bringing the traditional military authority structure in Nigeria in line with modern technology. This is a cost intensive venture though, it worth the sacrifice. Let there be a conscious effort by successive governments in Nigeria to develop indigenous (Nigerian) technology with de-emphasis on importation of arms. Japan has set a worthy legacy in this respect. Japan capitalist class including many former feudal land owners borrowed technology from Europe and successfully domesticated it before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, Nigeria should import, adopt and internalize technology (the strategic sector inclusive) instead of relying on massive importation of technology in the cover of technology transfer.

In conclusion, restraining factors such as military capability factor, socio-economic factors, and normative restraint among others has made it quite difficult to bring the traditional military authority structure of Nigeria in line with the modern technology whose impact in warfare has led to the emergence of weapons of unlimited destruction. However, the way forward lies in the recommendations aforementioned which if followed would transform the military in Nigeria to world class standard.

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