

Colonial Legacies and ‘Post-Military Rule’ Soldiers in Nigeria
Why the Nigerian military, on its own, did not defeat Boko Haram

“[t]he armies of Africa today are, therefore, direct descendants of the colonial forces raised in their territories by imperial powers”¹

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Letter to the Publishing Journal

I hereby submit this article titled “Colonial Legacies and ‘Post-Military Rule’ Soldiers in Nigeria: Why the Nigerian military, on its own, did not defeat Boko Haram” for publication in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. I testify that this article is the original version and has not been submitted for publication anywhere. It is based on chapter 6 of my PhD thesis and I request for some versions of the article to be republished in my PhD project. I would be grateful if the paper is considered for publication in your journal.

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¹ Ejiogu, E. C. 2007. Colonial Military Recruitment Patterns and Post-Colonial Military Coups D’Etat in Africa: The Case of Nigeria, 1966-1993”. *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies* 35(1):100-132, p. 102.

Abstract

After the independence of most African countries, military institutions across the continent were regarded as custodians of territorial integrity. The theory of the ‘modernizing soldier’ (Luckman 1994:14)² emerged to portray the military as the bulwark against social unrest, ‘a modernizing and stabilizing source of organizational strength in society, which could be called in to prevent subversion’ (Coleman and Brice 1962:359)³. This particular article interrogates the nature of the Nigerian military from its inception to the present. It argues that rather than being modernizing, the cumulative effect of colonial legacies and post-colonial military politics became an obstacle for the Nigerian soldier to adapt to democratic control. The emergence of Boko Haram came at a time when the military institution in Nigeria was bereft of professional integrity and institutional discipline, and enmeshed in ethnic politics and corruption, unable to keep its ‘barracks clean’, or defeat Boko Haram.

Introduction

Different reasons have been given as to why the Nigerian military, on its own, failed to defeat Boko Haram. The first set of scholars argue that the Nigerian army failed because it lost its professional soul. According to Janowitz, the Nigerian military was considered disciplined and effective during the colonial times (Janowitz, 1971)⁴, able to put down internal rebellion successfully (Coleman 1958:423)⁵. Over time, the military became “bankrupt” (Soyinka 1997:15)⁶, lawless (Adejumobi 1999:6)⁷ and lacked discipline and loyalty (Emokpae 1999:20-28)⁸. To these set of scholars, it is the loss of professionalism in the military that derailed the war against Boko Haram. The second group believes that the Nigerian military failed because of its involvement in politics. According to Kukah, every military regime that came to power in Nigeria described itself as the child of necessity with a strong determination to enthrone lasting democracy (Kukah 2011:3)⁹. But once in power, the military suspended the constitution and foisted military decrees on the justice system. Like ancient tyrants,

² Luckman, Robin. 1994. ‘The Military, Militarization and Democratization in Africa’, In *African Studies Review*, 37 (2):13-75, p. 14.

³ Coleman J. S. and Brice B. 1962. “The Role of the Military in Sub-Saharan Africa”, in *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, edited by Johnson J. J. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 359.

⁴ Janowitz, M. 1971. *On Military Intervention*. Rotterdam: University Press.

⁵ Coleman J. 1958. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 423.

⁶ Soyinka, Wole. 1997. “Interview with Zia Jaffrey”. *Tell* 14 July, 1997. p.15.

⁷ Adejumobi, Said. 1999. “Demilitarization and the Search for Democratic Stability in Nigeria”.

<http://www.unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/.../UNPAN009003.pdf> (accessed October 1, 2014).

⁸ Emokpae, Roland. 1999. “We Don’t have an Army”. *Tell Magazine* 12 April, 1999, p. 20-28

⁹ Kukah Mathew Hassan. 2011. *Witness to Justice; An Insider Account of Nigeria’s Truth Commission*. Ibadan: Bookcraft, p.3.

soldiers indulged themselves in the trappings of political power, took advantage of the primordial fears of the people, sowed further anxiety by skewed policy choices, and ruled with an iron fist. The military institution was fractured from within and from without (Adekanye 1978:29-40)¹⁰ resulting in avarice, opportunism and reckless corruption by officers, a reality that became quite palpable to the society (Adejumobi 1999:6)¹¹. Thus, violent conflict against the Nigerian state was no longer seen as a national security emergency but an opportunity to do business. The entire process of paying soldiers at the war front and purchasing military hardware became marred in corruption.

The third group of scholars rather argue that the Nigerian military failed to defeat Boko Haram because of strategic reasons. First, there were massive internal rivalries within the military institution and intra-rivalry between the different branches of the security services. Within the military institution, there are lots of intrigues, conspiracies and ethnic cleavages, all seeking to outdo each other before the civilian administration (Joo 1996:5)¹². Between the different branches of the security services, there is a clear lack of trust, with each branch trying to promote its legacy and manifesto. This explains the constant change in the echelon of the military authorities throughout the fight against Boko Haram. Since the Boko Haram violent uprising in 2009, Nigeria had had 3 National Security Advisers (Sambo 2011)¹³, six Inspector General of Police (IG) (Africa Confidential 2007)¹⁴, three chiefs of Army Staff, and three chiefs of Defence Staff (BBC News Africa 2014)¹⁵. This resulted in the constant shift from one military strategy to another against Boko Haram, with incomplete implementation, and without practical results.

While it is true that the loss of professionalism, the politicization of the military institution and internal rivalries all combined to derail the military's fight against Boko Haram, particularly from the beginning of the conflict, there is a need for deeper investigation and analysis. First, the arguments limit the reasons for the failure of the Nigerian military to post-colonial military politics, ignoring the colonial legacies at the basis of the problems. Recent studies by Jenkins and Kposowa examine why there was no factionalisation and coups within

¹⁰ Adekanye, Bayo. 1978. "On the Theory of Modernizing Soldier; A Critique" *Current Research on Peace and Violence*. 8(1):29-40.

¹¹ Adejumobi, Said. 1999. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹² Joo, Rudolf 1996. "The Democratic Control of Armed Forces". *Chaillot Papers*. Institute for Security Studies, Paris, p. 5.

¹³ Sambo, Shagari. 2011. Nigerian Security Services and the Fight against Terrorism". *Sahara Reporters* 9 September, 2011.

¹⁴ Africa Confidential. 2007. "The New Man in Abuja". 48(12):1-12, p. 3.

¹⁵ BBC News Africa, 2014. Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan Sacks Military Chiefs, 16 January, 2014.

the army under an all British officer corps compared to the nature and degree of factionalisation and coups within the army in post-colonial Nigeria. Their conclusion was that ethnic factionalisation and coups were a given African pathology (Jenkins and Kposowa 1992:271-291)¹⁶. Perceptions like this link ethnic factionalisation, coups, corruption and lack of professionalism in the Nigerian army to an inbuilt African drive and fails to address the colonial mindset and policies that contributed to the ethnic factionalisation within the Nigerian army. They fail to appreciate the fact that the culture of coups in post-independence Nigeria is a direct result of these colonial legacies. Furthermore, the debates ignore how post-independence military politics rather than reform, perpetuated these colonial legacies which in turn influenced the emergence of ethno-regional infighting within the military and aborted the principle of military neutrality in conflict management in Nigeria. Colonial legacy of using military force against internal dissent also set the pace for the culture of impunity in the Nigerian military.

While the article recognises the individual and collective efforts of some Nigerian soldiers, it does not shift the blame of failure away from the Nigerian military to a complex colonial period. Rather, it blames the Nigerian state for failing to reform the military inherited after independence. It argues that the colonial military formation encouraged the evolution of military structures that produced a legacy of post-independence military coups. Additionally, the perpetuation of these legacies and the failure to reform them derailed the military's effort in adjusting to democratic control and in defeating Boko Haram. To construct an effective policy for reforming the military institution in Nigeria, it becomes imperative to exhume this history. The article is divided into three parts: part one is a conceptual clarification of 'colonial- legacies' and 'post-military rule soldiers' as understood and applied in this article. Part two presents a brief summary of these colonial legacies, their perpetuation in post-independence military politics, as well as a brief history of Boko Haram emergence. The third part is an analysis of the effects of these legacies on the military institution as it tries to adjust to democratic control and the spill over into the fight against Boko Haram.

Part One: clarifying 'colonial legacies' and 'post-military rule soldiers'

¹⁶ Jenkins, Craig J. and Kposowa, Augustine J. 1992. "The Political Origins of African Military Coups: Ethnic Competition, Military Centrality, and the Struggle over the Postcolonial State", *International Studies Quarterly*, 36(3):271-291; Jenkins, Craig J. and Kposowa, Augustine J. 1993. "The Structural Sources of Military Coups in Postcolonial Africa, 1957-1984", *American Journal of Sociology*, 99(1):126-163.

The concept of legacy has different meanings depending on the discipline from which it is approached. Generally, it is understood as anything handed down from the past, in this context it could be in the form of policies, structures, laws, approaches and methods that were put in place for the effective adjudication of colonial territories (Bleich 2005:171-195)¹⁷. Every society has a history and in its own right narrates its past (Jorn 1987:88)¹⁸. The narration is a society's effort to understand and to make sense of the present and the future, through interpreting the past (Jorn 2002:3)¹⁹. Consequently, legacies become historical when they are linked to a particular event and period in history (Jan 1995:125-133)²⁰. Colonial legacies therefore reflect the particular methods, approaches, structures and laws that were used by the colonial administration at this particular period to administer African territories under their control. In this context, there were specific rules, policies and methods for recruiting, training and deploying natives in the colonial army. Some of these legacies are still being perpetuated in the Nigerian army, albeit in a different socio-political and economic context.

The general consensus amongst Nigerian military historians is that the Nigerian military has four phases. The first phase was when native Nigerians were recruited and trained to answer to colonial demands (Ukpabi 1987)²¹. The second phase is the post-colonial military, the military institution that emerged immediately after independence and could not submit to the democratic control of Nigeria's first civilian administration in 1960 (Janowitz 1971)²². The third phase is the military rule period which refers to the era of military dictatorship. This was the period where Nigerians were "seduced into thinking they have chosen a lesser evil" by accepting military rule (Kukah 2011:14)²³. The fourth phase is the post-military rule period, when Nigeria returned to multiparty democracy in 1999 to present. It is the period where once again the Nigerian military has struggled to adjust to democratic control, and on its own, is unable to defeat Boko Haram. The article argues that in the post-military rule period soldiers are products of the colonial legacies, and the politics of the period of military

¹⁷ Bleich, Erik. 2005. "The Legacies of History? Colonization and Immigrant Integration in Britain and France". *Theory and Society* 34(2):171-195.

¹⁸ Jorn, Rusen. 1987. "Historical Narration: Foundation, Types, Reason", *History and Theory*, 26 (4):88.

¹⁹ Jorn, Rusen. 2002. *Geschichte im Kulturprozess*, Köln: Bohlau Verlag, p. 3.

²⁰ Jan, Assmann. 1995 (1998). *Op. cit.*, p. 125-133. Jan has suggested a distinction between 'communicative memory' and 'cultural memory', which denotes the difference between the personally experienced recollection and the culturally and collectively mediated memory.

²¹ Ukpabi, S. 1987. *Mercantile Soldiers in Nigerian History: A History of the Royal Niger Company Army*. Zaria, Nigeria: Gaskiya Corporation.

²² Janowitz, M. 1971. *On Military Intervention*. Rotterdam: University Press.

²³ Kukah, Matthew Hassan. 2011. *Witness to Justice: An Insider's Account of Nigeria's Truth Commission*. Ibadan: Bookcraft, p. 14.

dictatorship. To understand why the Nigerian military failed to defeat Boko Haram it becomes imperative to understand some of these legacies.

Part two: colonial legacies and post-colonial military politics in Nigeria

The British implemented various policies to consolidate their colonial hold on Nigeria, policies such as the 1914 amalgamation of the north and south, and the system of indirect rule (Afigbo 1971:443-458)²⁴. To understand the current state of the Nigerian military is important to acknowledge the British policy of recruitment and formation of the colonial army, a process that continued even after Nigeria's independence. The Nigerian military was first assembled by the different British agents working in Nigeria before colonisation (Ejiogu 2007:102)²⁵. The Royal Niger Constabulary established in 1886, commanded by Lugard as a security outfit of the Royal Niger Company, and the 'Glover's Hausa' security outfit established in 1863 with 18 Hausa men by Lt. John Glover, Governor-General of Lagos Crown Colony, 1861-73 (Smith, Robert S. 1974:393-416)²⁶ and renamed Hausa Constabulary in 1887 (Arnold-Baker 2001)²⁷, were merged to establish the West African Field Force on August 26, 1896 (Ukpabi, 1987)²⁸. The West African Field Force together with the northern and southern regiments formed the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force in 1914, a regiment dedicated to fighting external wars for the British. The remaining troops from the north and south regiments which were not part of the Nigerian Regiment of the West African Frontier Force (Welch 1995:593-614)²⁹ were renamed the Queen's Own Nigerian Regiment (QONR), in honour of Queen Elizabeth II, during her visit to Nigeria in 1956. At Nigeria's independence in 1960, the name was changed to the Royal Nigerian Army, later renamed the Nigerian Armed Forces, which remains till today (Welch 1995:593-614)³⁰.

It is very reasonable to argue that the foundation of the current state of the Nigerian military was laid on the legacies of this history. First, the different British agents whose military forces later made up the Nigerian army, recruited from disaffected individuals to raise their army. As earlier mentioned, Lt. John Glover raised the "Glover's Hausa" army from

²⁴ Afigbo, A. E. 1971. "The Consolidation of the British Imperial Administration in Nigeria, 1900-1918", *Civilization*, 21(4):443-458.

²⁵ Ejiogu, E. C. 2007. Colonial Military Recruitment Patterns and Post-Colonial Military Coups D'Etat in Africa: The Case of Nigeria, 1966-1993". *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies* 35(1):100-132, p. 102.

²⁶ Smith, Robert S. 1974. "The Lagos Consulate, 1851-1861: An Outline". *Journal of African History* 15(3):393-416.

²⁷ Arnold-Baker, C. 2001. *The Companion to British History*. New York: CRC Press.

²⁸ Ukpabi, S. 1987. *Mercantile Soldiers in Nigerian History: A History of the Royal Niger Company Army*. Zaria, Nigeria: Gaskiya Corporation.

²⁹ Welch, C. 1995. "Civil-Military Agonies in Nigeria: Pains of an Unaccomplished Transition". *Armed Forces & Society*, 21:593-614.

³⁰ Ibid.

runaway Hausa slaves (Kirk-Green 1964:129-147)³¹, making compliance to the British Crown authority a condition for recruitment (Smith 1974:393-416)³². The military forces commanded by Lord Lugard in 1903 were also comprised of runaway slaves and other disaffected and marginalized individuals in Hausaland (Miners 1971)³³. Later the alliance that emerged between the British colonial rule and the Hausa-Fulani elite made Lugard institute loyalty to the British imperial cause as major criteria for the recruitment of indigenous men into the colonial forces, and the Hausa-Fulani became a symbol of that loyalty (Afigbo 1971:443-458)³⁴. The oath Lord Lugard made the new recruits swear runs like this:

“I swear, in the name of Allah and Muhammad his prophet, to serve well and truly his Majesty King Edward VII and his representative, the “High Commissioner” of Northern Nigeria, to obey the laws of the Protectorate and the lawful commands of the “High Commissioner” and of the Resident, provided they are not contrary to my religion. And if they are contrary to my religion, I will at once inform the Resident for the information of the “High Commissioner”. I will cherish in my heart no treachery or disloyalty, and I will rule my people with justice, and without partiality. And as I carry out this oath, so may Allah judge me” (Afigbo 1971:443-458)³⁵.

In this context the indigenous people of the south were deemed unsuitable for recruitment, first for their indisposition to colonial authority and their exposure to western education (Nwabughogu 1981:65-92)³⁶. The recruitment policy also categorised some tribes as “martial tribes”, naturally deemed suitable for military service. The definition of martial tribes appears to suggest that the qualification of a human resource was based solely on the remoteness of ones homeland. The British believed that soldiers recruited from remote parts of the colonised territories would be more psychologically detached from other nationalities to which they are deployed, making them more effective soldiers in suppressing anti-colonial uprisings (Gutteridge 1970:286-319)³⁷. Colonial policies which succeeded in the north easily provoked riots when implemented in the south. Using the martial tribes, the colonialists deployed the mostly Hausa-constituted army to smash the anti-tax uprising by women in parts of Igboland (Gutteridge 1970:304)³⁸. Again, in 1952, mutiny by some 100 southern

³¹ Kirk-Green, A.M.H. 1964. “A Preliminary Note on New Sources for Nigerian Military History”, *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria* 3:129-147.

³² Smith, Robert S. 1974. “The Lagos Consulate, 1851-1861: An Outline”. *Journal of African History* 15(3):393-416.

³³ Miners, N. J. 1971. *The Nigerian Army, 1956-1966*, London: Methuen.

³⁴ Afigbo, A. E. 1971. *Op. cit.*, p. 443-458.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Nwabughogu, Anthony I. 1981. “The Role of Propaganda in the Development of Indirect Rule in Nigeria 1890-1926”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 14(1):65-92. Cf. Ejiogu, E. C., 2004. *The Roots of Political Instability amongst Indigenous Nationalities and in the ‘Nigerian Supra-National State, 1884-1990, A Longitudinal and Comparative Historical Study*. Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Maryland, College Park, USA.

³⁷ Gutteridge, William F. 1970. *The Military and Police Forces in Colonial Africa, in Colonialism in Africa: 1870-1960. Volume II. The History and Politics of Colonialism 1914-1960* edited by Gann L. H. and Peter Duignan, Cambridge: At the University Press, p. 286-319.

³⁸ Gutteridge, William F. 1970. *Op. cit.*, p. 304.

clerks attached to the Command Ordinance Depot in Yaba, near Lagos, over poor wages and living conditions was quickly suppressed by a detachment of the military and infantry rifle men who were mostly from northern Nigeria (Coleman 1958:423)³⁹.

The British also manipulated the “pagan areas” for recruitment into the colonial army. When manpower pressures compelled the British War Office during World War I to send a recruitment mission to West Africa in 1916, the mission was advised to pay attention in recruitment from “pagan areas” and not to the Christianised nationalities of the south as viable sources of recruitment. The pagan areas, mostly in the Middle Belt region were considered “suitable sources of useful and steady expanding volume material for colonial armed forces” (Haywood and Clark 1969)⁴⁰. This explains why the Tiv or Munshi, the Bachama of Numan, the Tangale, the Dakakor and other remote inhabitants were exclusively recruited as infantrymen into what became the Nigerian army (Miners 1971)⁴¹. The consequence of this colonial mind-set in recruitment was two-fold. First, Lugard and his successors became favourably disposed to conservative Islam which provided ideological support for Hausa-Fulani rulers, and by extension provided stability and lack of resistance against the colonial administration. Second, it made available a steady stream of recruits for the colonial administration as part of the agreement of the alliance (Ejiogu 2007:100-132)⁴². However, when colonial structures began to damage the structures of Islam and Muslims, the reaction was the emergence of extremist Islamic militants, which continues to haunt Nigeria even when the colonialists are no more.

No one thought that colonial rule in Nigeria will last for only sixty years. In the early years of the colonial period, an official boasted in 1919 that “the Whiteman has come to stay as long as men lived” (Coleman 19858:81)⁴³. But this dramatically changed with the transfer of power to Nigerians effective through peaceful constitutional changes after 1945 (Crowder 1962:273-288)⁴⁴. The transfer of power also meant the independence of the military from colonial administration. However, the British legacy of forming the colonial army with indigenous men created a sense of ethnic and regional divide, and equally sowed the seed of

³⁹ Coleman, S. 1958. *Op. cit.*, p. 423.

⁴⁰ Haywood A. and Clark F. A. 1969. *The History of Royal West African Frontier Force*, Aldershot: Gale and Polden.

⁴¹ Miners, N. J. 1971. *Op. cit.*

⁴² Ejiogu, E. C. 2007. *Op. cit.*, p. 100-132.

⁴³ Coleman J. S., 1958, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, p. (Toyin Falola, 1999, *The History of Nigeria*, London: Greenwood Press, p. 81.

⁴⁴ Michael Crowder, 1962 (1966), *The Story of Nigeria*, London: Faber and Faber, p. 273-288.

division within the army. The ‘Nigerianization’ policy and the gradual departure of more British officers in the 1950s onward meant that indigenous men who possessed the requisite Western education were recruited to replace departing British officers (Adewale 1981:24)⁴⁵. Sensing that this policy will not favour the north, prominent Hausa-Fulani individuals, including Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto, who was also the Regional Premier, embarked on an elaborate and extensive campaign to convince boys from secondary school to enlist in the officer corps. The Sardauna harped on “the former martial glories of the jihads” (Robin 1971:244)⁴⁶ and called on the students to “show that they were not women” (Robin 1971:244)⁴⁷. Immediately after independence in 1960, northern leaders enacted policies that increased the number of northerners in the corps. For instance, they lowered entry qualifications and drastically slashed failure rates in selection tests into the Nigerian Military Training College with the aim of attracting more northern enlistees (Ademoyega 1981:23)⁴⁸. This was necessary for the northern elite to perpetuate the narrative that the northern tribes were the martial tribes and loyal, while the south was proud and rebellious.

The competition within the military spilled over into the political class where political parties were formed based on regional and ethnic alliances rather than ideologies (Nnoli 1995:66-67)⁴⁹. Awolowo called northern leaders despots and British stooges (Crowder 1962:284).⁵⁰ Abubakar Imam declared “we despise each other...we call each other ignorant; the south is proud of western knowledge and culture, we are proud of eastern culture....to tell you the plain truth, the common people of the north put more confidence in the white man than in either their black southern brothers or the educated northerners” (Coleman 1958:360-1).⁵¹ Tafawa Balewa insisted that “if the British quitted Nigeria now at this stage, the northern people would continue their interrupted conquest to the sea” (NLCD 1948:227).⁵² The above scenario set the stage for the post-independence military politics. The first military intervention in Nigeria was through a very bloody coup led by Major Nzeogwu on 15 January 1966, about five years after independence on 1 October, 1960. The coup was led by five

⁴⁵ Adewale Ademoyega, *Why We Struck: The Story of the First Nigerian Coup* (Ibadan: Evans Brothers Nigeria Publishers Limited 1981):24.

⁴⁶ Robin Luckham, *The Nigerian Military: A Sociological Analysis of Authority and Revolt, 1960-67* (Cambridge: At the University Press 1971):244

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ademoyega, *Why We Struck: The Story of the First Nigerian Coup* (1981):23,

⁴⁹ Okwudiba Nnoli, 1995, *Ethnicity and Development in Nigeria*, Aldershot, England: Avebury, Ashgate Publishing Limited, p. 66-67

⁵⁰ Michael Crowder, 1962 (1966): 284.

⁵¹ Coleman J. S., 1958: 360-361

⁵² Nigerian Legislative Council Debates, 1948:227

majors, Nzeogwu, Ifeajuna, Okafor, Anuforo and Adegboyega. The coup was dubbed an ‘Igbo coup’ because most of the plotters and executors were Igbo (Martin 1971)⁵³. However, the utterances of the individual coup-makers do not indicate that they wanted to generate an Igbo hegemony. The overwhelming reason could be to rescue the country from the autocracy of Hausa-Fulani rule, to end corruption and tribalism, including misrule and ineptitude of the political class (Falola and Heaton 2008)⁵⁴. But then, the coup itself indicated levels of corruption and ethnic division within the military. This led to a counter coup on 29 July, 1966 and Lt-Col. Yakubu Gowon was installed as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. As a result the civil war erupted in 1967, and since Nigeria’s independence the military governed the country from January 1966 to October 1979 and December 1983 to May 1999, almost 30 years (Agbese 2012:90-193)⁵⁵.

The military became so used to political power that it was difficult for the institution to submit itself to reform or civilian control. The military always suspended the constitution and ruled with military decrees. Regimes of Generals Buhari, Babangida and Abacha often evoke nostalgic fear amongst ordinary Nigerians. Buhari’s regime ruled for less than 20 months from 1983-1985, but with his famous policy of War Against Indiscipline, he displayed brazen abuse of human rights including flogging for urinating in public places (Forest 1993:93-104)⁵⁶. General Babangida on the other hand entrenched the patron-client culture in both the military establishment and the civil society. Loyalty and godfatherism became a professional theme in the military. There were sporadic cabinet reshuffles, massive retirements of military rivals, and assassinations of prominent journalists critical of his stance and ambitions. For example, General Babangida became so powerful that one day he simply sacked an entire Armed Forces Ruling Council in one fell swoop (Kukah 2011:23)⁵⁷. By the time of Abacha’s regime “torture strategies had been refined especially as the government leaned towards such dictatorships as in Libya and North Korea in terms of the training of some sections of its security officers” (Kukah 2011:300).⁵⁸ Lt. Col M. A. Igwe and General Diya outlined the following punishment for coup plotters in detention; suspension on a horizontal pole while

⁵³ Martin J. Dent, “The Military and Politics: A Study of the Relations between the Army and the Political Process in Nigeria, in *Nigeria: Modernization and Politics of Communalism*, (eds), Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe (Lansing: Michigan State University 1971); Larry Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press 1988).

⁵⁴ Falola, T., & Heaton, M. M. (2008). *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge University Press, London.

⁵⁵ Agbese, Dan. 2012. *Ibrahim Babangida: The Military, Power and Politics in Nigeria*, London: Adonis and Abbey Publishing Ltd, p. 90, 127-137, 173-193.

⁵⁶ Forrest Tom, 1993, *Politics and Economic Development in Nigeria*, Boulder: Westview Press, p. 93-104.

⁵⁷ Kukah 2011:23.

⁵⁸ Kukah 2011:300.

being hit and questioned, and standing throughout the night in a dark room, damp and unventilated (Ajayi 2000).⁵⁹ This was followed by insults saying “if you do not confess we will kill you and nothing will happen, for many have died and nothing happened” (Elikwu 1999)⁶⁰. Sometimes victims were picked up in the dead of the night for these torture sessions called “local tours of duty” (Anyanwu 1999:1-2)⁶¹.

Post-independence military politics and its failure to reform the colonial legacies mean that the Nigerian military institution remained fractured (Adekanye 1978:29-40)⁶². The military became so obsessed with political power and lost the key characteristics of command and control, the professional ethos of esprit de corp, strict hierarchy, and unquestioning obedience of the military institution (Kukah 2011:17)⁶³. The military became marred in corruption and competition (Adejumobi 1999:3)⁶⁴. Professionally, military students were trained to be governors, not generals. “Those who wanted to be generals were only interested in being head of state, not as a general in the army” (Alani 1999:39)⁶⁵. The need to prevent coups and ensure the survival of generals in power made the military officers pamper loyal members of their ethnic constituencies through accelerated promotions, political appointments and special welfare packages (Adekanye 1997:66-67)⁶⁶, while targeting other ethnic groups for surveillance and repression (Luckman 1994:27)⁶⁷. Any military coup, successful or abortive, is usually accompanied by the large-scale retirement of military officers. When a coup is successful, members of the ousted regime and their supporters in the military are often retired, if not detained. On the other hand, when a coup is abortive, the culprits are regarded to have committed treason, and thereby not only dismissed, but in most cases executed. The implication of this is that the Nigerian military engaged in a cyclical game of internal self-destruction with most of the professional and competent of its soldiers either detained, retired or executed in the process (Joo 1996:5)⁶⁸.

⁵⁹ G. A. Ajayi, 2000, *Petition to the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission*, Abuja, October 24, 2000.

⁶⁰ Theresa Elikwu, 1999, *Chidi Elikwu: Victim of Human Rights Abuse by the Nigerian Police Force*, Enugu, 23 July 1999.

⁶¹ Chris Anyanwu, 1999, *Petition to Human Rights Investigations Commission*, Enugu, p. 1-2

⁶² Adekanye, Bayo. 1978. “On the Theory of Modernizing Soldier; A Critique” *Current Research on Peace and Violence*. 8(1):29-40.

⁶³ Kukah, Matthew Hassan. 2011. *Witness to Justice: An Insider Account of Nigeria’s Truth Commission*, Ibadan: Bookcraft, p. 17.

⁶⁴ Adejumobi, Said. 1999. “Demilitarization and the Search for Democratic Stability in Nigeria”, *Republic of Nigeria*, p. 6.

⁶⁵ General Alani Akinrinade (retired) “We Are Not Safe Yet” *Tell Magazine*. No. 5, February 1, 1999. p. 32.

⁶⁶ Adekanye, J’Bayo. 1997. “The Military in the Transition”. In Larry Diamond et al, eds. *Transition Without End: Nigerian Politics and Civil Society Under Babangida*, Ibadan: Vantage Publishers, p. 66-67.

⁶⁷ Luckman. Robin.1994. ‘The Military, Militarization and Democratization in Africa’, In *African Studies Review*, 37 (2):13-75, p. 22.

⁶⁸ Joo, Rudolf “The Democratic Control of Armed Forces” *Chailot Papers*. Institute for Security Studies, Paris, February 1996.p. 5.

General Gowon's 1972 Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree meant to facilitate indigenous participation in economic management and reduce foreign ownership, ensured that military officials became considerably wealthy (Olusoji 2012:48)⁶⁹ as board members of choice blue-chip corporations, with large interests in banking, oil and automobile industries (Olusoji 2012:49)⁷⁰. When Gowon declared all the country's oil and gas reserves to be federal property (Khan 1994:16-18)⁷¹ and boasted that "Nigeria is rich; the problem is how to spend the money" (Alubo 1990:62)⁷², the statement alerted the military and police to the sleazy deals political power can bring. Consequently, the Nigerian military abandoned their duty posts and competed with businessmen and women to move up the socio-economic ladder (Adekanye 1999)⁷³. For example, an examination of the 1993 boards of some financial institutions revealed that at least some 61 retired military officers were involved in those financial institutions (Lewis 1997)⁷⁴, enjoying an "unceasing good life" (ThisWeek 1988:17)⁷⁵. This affected the state of the barracks, welfare of junior officers and the procurement of arms. Everything was marred in corruption and most military barracks were in an utter state of disrepair.

As the society was militarized, more and more people were recruited to join the military force to carry out tortures and executions. The size of the military grew astronomically after independence, from 10,000 soldiers in 1960 to 250,000 in 1970 and slightly down to around 150,000 in the 1980s (Butts and Metz 1996:21)⁷⁶. It is currently estimated to be about 76, 000 to 100, 000 (Adekanye 1981:10-11)⁷⁷. The process recruitment was not only soaked in ethnicity, bribery and corruption, but it also meant that school dropouts, gang leaders, illiterates, over-aged and uneducated men and women were recruited into the army. By the same token politicians began to misuse the military to attain political goals (Joo 1996:5)⁷⁸.

⁶⁹ Olusoji James G. 2012. Op. cit., p. 48.

⁷⁰ Olusoji James G. 2012. Op. cit., p. 49.

⁷¹ Khan, Sarah Ahmed. 1994. *Nigeria: The Political Economy of Oil*, Oxford: Oxford Institute for Energy Studies.

⁷² Ogoh, Alubo. 1990. "Doctoring in Business: A Study of Entrepreneurial Medicine in Nigeria". *Savanna* 11 (2):62

⁷³ Adekanye, Bayo *The Retired Military as Emergent Power Factor in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1999 Fayemi, Kayode "Entrenched Military Interests and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria." *Democracy and Development* vol. 2, January – June 1999.

⁷⁴ Lewis, P. and H. Stein, "Shifting Fortunes: The Political Economy of Financial Liberalisation in Nigeria." *World Development*. Vol. 25, No. 1, January 1997.

⁷⁵ *This Week*, May 9, 1988. P.17.

⁷⁶ Butts, K. H., & Metz, S. (1996). *Armies and Democracy in the New Africa: Lessons from and South Africa*. Strategic Studies Institute (SSI). P. 21.

⁷⁷ Adekanye, Bayo *Nigeria in search of a stable Civil-Military System*. Gower: Westview Press, 1981. p. 10-11.

⁷⁸ Joo, Rudolf "The Democratic Control of Armed Forces" *Chaillot Papers*. Institute for Security Studies, Paris, February 1996.p. 5.

There emerged a powerful block of “retired soldiers” switching to civilian life to join politics (Adekanye 1999)⁷⁹. It is estimated that no less than 130 rich, and influential retired military officers became members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), dubbing the PDP as a party of “Army arrangement” (Nmodu 1999:27)⁸⁰. The concern of the general public is that having destroyed the institutional integrity of the military profession, these soldiers turned politicians could re-militarize politics in Nigeria (Oyeleye 1998:7-8)⁸¹, use politics to protect their mostly illegally accumulated wealth, and ensure that they block any form of prosecution.

In fact military rulers transformed institutions like the judiciary, public parastatals and agencies into organs of patronage and clienteles network (Newswatch 1992)⁸². The consequence was that public institutions became thoroughly depreciated and devalued, unable to deliver public goods and services or guarantee public welfare. The culture of impunity evolved in the military so much so that rather than protect the people, the military terrorized them. The combined effect of colonial legacies, the involvement of the military in politics and the failure to reform the military institution for many decades left the Nigerian military corrupt, weak, divided and bereft of professionalism and discipline. When Boko Haram emerged, there was no gas left in the military’s tank to fight the sect.

Consensus amongst analysts appears to suggest that Boko Haram emerged as a non-violent socio-religious movement as far back as 1995 known as *ahl al-sunna wa jama’a al-hijra*; the People Committed to hijra and the Prophet’s Teachings (Taiwo and Olugbode 2009)⁸³. In 2002, the group declared the entire city of Maiduguri intolerably corrupt and irredeemable. Under Ali Muhammad’s leadership, they embarked on hijra; along the lines of the Prophet, from Maiduguri to a village called Kanama, Yobe state (Walker 2003:3)⁸⁴. In December 2003, following a community dispute regarding fishing rights in a local pond, the group got into a conflict with the police. Group members overpowered a squad of officers and took their weapons. The confrontation led to a siege of its mosque by the army that lasted until January 2004, with more than seventy of the sect members being brutally murdered including

⁷⁹ Adekanye, Bayo *The Retired Military as Emergent Power Factor in Ngeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann. 1999.

⁸⁰ Nmodu, Danlami “PDP’s Army Arrangement” *Tell*, January 11, 1999. p. 27.

⁸¹ Oyeleye Oyediran, “Tentative Qualitative Criteria for Measuring the Progress of Democracy and Good Governance in Africa”. *Paper presented to the Conference on Democracy, Civil Society and Governance in Africa II. Organised by the Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF)*, Addis Ababa. December 1998. pp. 7-8.

⁸² *Newswatch*, October 5, 1992.

⁸³ Taiwo Juliana and Olugbode Michael. (2009). “Mohammed Yusuf Killed While in Custody”, *This Day*, July 31, 2009

⁸⁴ Walker, Andrew. (2012). What is Boko Haram?, United States Institute of Peace, Special Report, No. 308, June 2012, p. 3

the leader, Mohammad Ali (Adesoji 2010:98)⁸⁵. The Kanama siege survivors who returned to Maiduguri appointed late Mohammad Yusuf as the new leader (Gargon and Bean, 2010:4)⁸⁶. Under the leadership of Muhammad Yusuf, Boko Haram recruited and expanded their network across the north-eastern states. The group was apparently left alone by the authorities, and it expanded into other states, including Bauchi, Yobe, and Niger state (Walker 2012:3)⁸⁷. Yusuf constructed the Ibn Taimiyyah Masjid, attracting thousands of young people from across the border (Isa 2010:333)⁸⁸.

When Yusuf was killed in 2009, Shekau, assumed the leadership of the sect. He shifted the sect's ideology substantially away from addressing local grievances to establishing an immediate Islamic State. He aligned Boko Haram with other global jihadi organizations like AQIM, MUJWA and ISIL (Vanguard 2012)⁸⁹. Shekau introduced the concept of *takfirism* into the group. It is an ideological principle that underscores the authority to declare both Christians and Muslim non-Boko Haram members as apostates (Tobi 2012)⁹⁰. There is no doubt that the emergence of Boko Haram in 1995 and its violent uprising in 2009 posed an existential threat to the Nigerian state. Its activities have caused chaos in the north-east, spread fear of counter attacks, and left Nigerian authorities scrambling for effective military and political policies of engagement with the sect. The group expanded its operational capabilities from drive-by motorbike shootings to using vehicle born improvised explosive devices (VBIED), kidnappings, suicide bomb attacks, and other violent strategies which have left scores of people dead and properties worth millions destroyed. The abduction of 276 female students from Chibok Government Girls Secondary School on April 14, 2014, the recent declaration of an Islamic Caliphate in Gwoza, and the alliance with ISIL represents the height, thus far of its achievements (Chasmar 2014)⁹¹. From 2009, the Nigerian government deployed full military force against Boko Haram, a military that had already been badly damaged.

⁸⁵ Adesoji, Abimbola. (2010). "The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria", *Africa Spectrum*, 45 (2): 95-108, p. 99; Sulaiman, Tajudeen. 2009. 'The Plot to Islamise Nigeria', *Tell*, Lagos, 30 November, p. 19-23.

⁸⁶ Gargon, F. and Bean, S. (2010). Northern Nigeria's Boko Haram movement: Dead or resurrected? *Terrorism Monitor*, 8(12):4.

⁸⁷ Walker, Andrew. (2012). *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁸⁸ Isa, M.K. (2010). "Militant Islamist groups in northern Nigeria", In *Militias, rebels and Islamist militants: Human security and state crises in Africa*, edited by Okumu, W. and Ikelegbe, A., Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies, p. 333.

⁸⁹ Vanguard. (2012). "Dozens of Boko Haram Help Mali's Rebels Seize Gao", April 9, 2012. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/.../dozens-of-boko-haram-help-malis-rebel-seize...> (accessed November 3, 2014)

⁹⁰ Tobi, Soniyi. (2012). "Boko Haram: Zanna Urges FG to Probe Sheriff", *ThisDayLive*, 28 October 2012. <http://www.thisdaylive.com> (accessed December 1, 2014)

⁹¹ Chasmar, Jessica. (2014). "Boko Haram Leader Declares Islamic Caliphate in Nigeria", *The Washington Times*, August 24, 2014. Cf. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/.../boko-haram-leader-declares-caliphate-nig...> (accessed August 27, 2014).

Part three: Why the Nigerian Military, on its own, failed to defeat Boko Haram

As earlier indicated, different experts have argued about the different reasons the Nigerian military could not defeat Boko Haram at the beginning of the conflict. The reasons analysed here are not intended to counter established facts but to broaden the horizon of the debate. First, looking at the antecedents of the Nigerian military, it is obvious that the military was bedevilled by internal wrangling, politics, conspiracies and how to take control from a civilian administration in matters of war. This resulted in inconsistent conflict strategies which included a constant change in top echelons of the Nigerian military, mostly due to allegations of corruptions and intense ethno-regional power play. Since the Boko Haram violent uprising in 2009, Nigeria had had 3 National Security Advisers, General Aliyu Gusau, General Andrew Azazi and now Col. Sambo Dasuki (Sambo 2011)⁹². Police Chiefs include, Sunday Ehindero, Mike Okiro, Hafiz Ringim, Muhammad Abubakar and the incumbent Suleiman Abba (Africa Confidential 2007:3)⁹³.

Lack of continuity affected the type of security policy to be used in engaging with Boko Haram. Each newly appointed military or police chief designed strategic and tactical policies that made nonsense of the previous one. Conceptually, most of the security policies were based on the understanding of security as the mere absence of conflict. Military and security tactics included the deployment of the JTF to Maiduguri, the establishment of roadblocks and security checkpoints, the formation and collaboration with the civilian JTF, and the deactivation of internet and mobile networks. In August 2013, the 7th Infantry Division was established as an additional military resource to fight Boko Haram. Since the creation of the 7th Division, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) has been removed three times. Two of which were at the instance of junior officers who staged a mutiny in May 2014. In fact, when in February 2014, Boko Haram stormed the Federal Government College, in Buni Yadi, Yobe State, opening fire on innocent students and killing scores of them, the Chief of Army State, Kenneth Minimah was given a marching order by the Senate Committee on Defence to relocate to Maiduguri and ensure that his troops take the fight closer to the dens of the insurgents (Senate Committee 2014)⁹⁴.

⁹² Sambo, Shagari Summer. 2011. 'Nigerian Security Services And The Fight Against Terrorism', Sahara Reporters, September 9, 2011.

⁹³ Africa Confidential. 2007. The New Man in Abuja. 48(12):1-12, p. 3.

⁹⁴ Senate to Army Chief: Relocate Your Office to Maiduguri Now.

http://www.aitonline.tv/post-senate_to_army_chief_relocate_your_office_to_maiduguri_now_#sthash.AgDG0q0U.dpuf

According to Othman Galtimari, the Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the North, inaugurated July 2, 2011, “there is palpable operational inconsistencies and obvious service rivalry between the army and the police, in addition to lack of cooperation between them. Thus the general failure of effective and coordinated intelligence gathering has emboldened Boko Haram and enabled the sect to continue to expand its activities” (Othman 2014)⁹⁵. Consequently, Boko Haram has benefitted from these inconsistencies: First, Boko Haram effectively penetrated the military through the civilian JTF, a civilian security outfit that emerged to counter the activities of Boko Haram in Maiduguri and Yobe, but reorganized to work with the army. Some of the members of the civilian JTF turned out to be Boko Haram’s intelligence hunting dogs (Lowenthal 2007:8)⁹⁶. They were able to fish out information about the movement and whereabouts of the Nigerian army. An official of the JTF confirmed that through the civilian JTF Boko Haram “penetrated the ranks of the security agencies and they were able to quickly adjust their strategies and tactics, almost simultaneously as we plan against them” (Anonymous Interview 2014)⁹⁷. For instance, Boko Haram was able to kidnap the Chibok girls using local leaders like Ibrahim Tada Ngalyike. Ngalyike, initially posed as a member of the civilian JTF but in 2013, seized teenage girls and forced them to wear veils and cook for his foot-soldiers within and outside Maiduguri (Zenn 2014:5)⁹⁸.

Again, the military could not defeat Boko Haram because of the level of corruption, lack of welfare packages, motivation and effective weapons for soldiers at war front. Atiku Abubakar, former Vice President of Nigeria asserted that the Boko Haram conflict created an independent economy where different layers of the military and security forces were benefitting. One of the biggest problems we have in this country is not that of security funding. It is the problem of transparency and accountability. When most of these funds come, or are distributed, are there proper accounts of how they are disbursed. In situations where the security personnel are equipped, there is a terrible culture of no maintenance. Consequently, how do you expect a military officer who is not paid his basic salaries, his allowances, to be motivated to fight terrorism? That is why most Nigerians are asking, if the politics of security funding has become more important than fighting terrorism (Atiku

⁹⁵ Interview with Ambassador Othman Ganji Galtimari, the Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Security Challenges in the North

⁹⁶ Lowenthal, Mark (2002) *Intelligence: From Secret to Policy*. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press (2nd Edition), pp. 8.

⁹⁷ Interview with a Member of the Security JTF in Maiduguri, Borno State.

⁹⁸ Zenn, Jacob. 2014. Kidnap of Chibok Girls. Op. cit., p. 5

2013)⁹⁹. For instance, questioning why the budgetary allocation to security forces jumped from 9.8% in 1987...to 15.8% between 1994 and 1999 (Adejumobi 1999:6)¹⁰⁰.

A report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), based in Sweden, shows the continuous rise in Nigeria military and security expenditure. The researchers stated that the Nigerian government claimed to have spent \$1.067 billion in 2006, when there was relative peace. By 2009 when the Boko Haram crisis erupted in the north-east, the expenditure rose to \$1.825 billion. In 2010, a huge sum of \$2.143 billion was allegedly used to procure military hardware, and the figure rose to a staggering \$2.386 billion in 2011. According to the report, in the year 2012, when the military claimed to have commenced massive procurement of security equipment to fight the Boko Haram insurgency that had begun to spread from the north-east to the north-west and to some parts of the north-central, the Federal Government allegedly spent some \$2.327 billion (Onwubiko 2014)¹⁰¹. The same report indicates that Nigeria's military spending is the sixth highest in Africa, and competes with the expenditures of countries like Libya (\$2.9 billion), Morocco (\$3.4 billion), Angola (\$4.1 billion), South Africa (\$4.4 billion) and Algeria (\$9.3 billion). Additionally a \$7 billion Close Circuit Television cameras contract awarded to a Chinese company to help fight Boko Haram is mired in controversy (Onwubiko 2014)¹⁰².

The increase in these budgets has transformed neither the professional integrity of the Nigerian military nor security forces, or improved their fighting capabilities. Military barracks are in a state of complete disrepair. They are congested, overpopulated and lacking in almost all facilities. Fighting equipment appears to be out-dated, obsolete and not maintained. Most of the junior military and security personnel drafted to fight Boko Haram do so under strained conditions, use old and outdated weapons, some are even ill trained and unmotivated (Oko 2006: 42–48).¹⁰³ Rather than defeating Boko Haram, the level of corruption has played out in favour of Boko Haram. Boko Haram used the case of military corruption for ideological propaganda, and the justification of the sect's atrocities. Shekau in his October propaganda video said "here is a summary of what I intend to say to the Nigerian infidels (particular reference to security forces that announced his alleged death) from

⁹⁹ Interview with Atiku Abubakar, Former Vice President of Nigeria, Asokoro, Abuja, November 19, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Adejumobi, Said. 1999. Op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰¹ Onwubiko, Emmanuel. 2014. Terrorism, corruption and the N76bn CCTV Scam, Sunnews, April 25, 2014.

¹⁰² Onwubiko, Emmanuel. 2014. Terrorism, corruption and the N76bn CCTV Scam, Sunnews, April 25, 2014.

¹⁰³ Oko, Okechukwu. 2006. "Seeking Justice in Transitional Societies: An Analysis of the Problems and Failures of the Judiciary in Nigeria," *Brooklyn Journal of International Law* 9: 9–82.

President Jonathan to the ordinary man...you lie, your lies, hypocrisy (corruption) and your disloyalty will come to an end even before you start” (Author’s translation 2014)¹⁰⁴. With these videos, Boko Haram generated huge tension between the military and political class regarding the constitutional responsibility of procuring arms and weapons for security forces. In November 2013, the then Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Azubuike Ihejirika threatened their civilian bosses for what he described as a “pile of mess” created by politically appointed ministers who oversaw the affairs of the ministry of Defence. This was an open reference to the procurement of arms and ammunitions presided over by politicians and soaked in corruption and bottlenecks (Haruna 2014)¹⁰⁵.

In addition to ideological propaganda and the generation of tension within enemy camps, Boko Haram also used the issue of corruption within the security forces for its own recruitment. A suspected member of Boko Haram revealed in an interview that he joined the sect not because he had any theological or ideological affinity but to seek revenge with respect to a late cousin. He claimed that “security services took away my cousin’s vehicle loaded with petrol when he could not pay the amount demanded by the soldiers, they shot him point blank and set the vehicle on fire. I escaped through the bush and after a week, I found myself fighting alongside Boko Haram” (Boko Haram member 2013)¹⁰⁶. Though this may be evidence of a unique case, it also tells the story of how indiscipline and corruption in the military emboldened Boko Haram. Boko Haram was able to acquire arms from corrupt military officials. In June 2014, Elliot stated that “ten military generals and five other senior military and security officers were found guilty in a courts-martial of providing (selling) arms and information to Boko Haram extremists, a leading Nigerian Newspaper reported” (Hannon 2014)¹⁰⁷. Relaying a recent incident in Bama, Tuesday, 7 May 2014, a soldier confirmed how two of his colleagues were killed because they ran out of ammunition to fight back. They were basically “sitting ducks.” “Our comrades died because they did not have any bullets. We took bullets to them”. Sometimes soldiers had to bribe the armoury to get working guns and adequate bullets. Troops die because sometimes they have a ration of only 30 rounds, against the minimum 120 rounds for such duty (Military officer 2013)¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁴ Shekau’s Video declaring he is alive October 2, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Haruna, Mohammed. 2014. Why Governor Shettima Was Right (II), Daily Trust, March 19, 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with a Member of Boko Haram in custody, Yola, Adamawa State.

¹⁰⁷ Hannon, Elliot. 2014. Nigerian Generals are Arming Boko Haram, Associated Press, Abuja, June 4, 2014.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with an anonymous soldier that served in Maiduguri, later transferred to Ganye. For further details cf. <http://newsrescue.com/nigeria-top-level-sabotage-behind-military-and-civilian-casualties-in-boko-haram-war-military-sources/#ixzz3G2wkGqbf>

Allowance of security personnel fighting Boko Haram was cut from N30000 to N15000 without an explanation. Food for soldiers was rationed and sometimes units were merged to save costs. The problem is that the money saved goes into the pockets of a few people. For instance, at the height of the crisis, three separate army units, which are supposed to have different camps and areas of operation, have been kept in one military base along Mubi Road in Mubi local government area of Adamawa State for a long time. The units are the Special Operations Battalion, SOB; Forward Operation Battalion, FOB; and Task Force Mike, TFM, which are all camped in the same base in Mubi. No one has been held to account for all the money meant for these three units that merged together” (Iro 2014)¹⁰⁹.

On the flip side, disaffected soldiers refused to take orders when deployed against Boko Haram and twice mutinied against their commanders in Maiduguri (Sahara Reporters 2014)¹¹⁰. The wives of soldiers also came out to protest against the deployment of their husbands. According to Aljazeera, about 300 women and 500 children gathered at the gates of a military base in the Borno state capital and protested for two days (Aljazeera 2014)¹¹¹. They claimed that their spouses were ill-equipped to take on the armed group. “No weapons for our husbands, no trip to Gwoza or any volatile place. We are tired of burying our loved ones” (Tabitha 2014)¹¹². The soldiers were “ill-equipped to fight the dreaded Boko Haram”. Another soldier's wife, added: “our husbands are always given inferior weapons while Boko Haram have superior weapons” (Rahina 2014)¹¹³. The Nigerian military also has to contend with internal grievances, mutinies and indiscipline. In September 2014, the Nigerian military and security forces constituted a panel to try over 100 soldiers for “acts of cowardice” as they “disobeyed deployment directives” in Maiduguri (PT 2014)¹¹⁴. The situation re-assured Boko Haram that they are capable of winning the war against the Nigerian state (BH suspect 2014)¹¹⁵. Encouraged by these signs, Boko Haram which moved from a rag-tag army to a semi-conventional army fighting with sophisticated weapons and superior morale, even declared an Islamic caliphate in Gworza in August 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Iro, Dan Fulani. How Corrupt Army Commanders Undermine Fight Against Boko Haram”, International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), May 5, 2014.

¹¹⁰ Sahara Reporters. 2014. Near Mutiny At Army Barracks In Maiduguri Over High Number Of Nigerian Troops Casualty In Gwoza, August 7, 2014.

¹¹¹ Aljazeera, 2014. Military Wives Protest Boko Haram Deployment, August 12, 2014.

¹¹² Interview with Tabitha John, the wife of a soldier deployed to Gworza

¹¹³ Interview with Rahina Ali,

¹¹⁴ Premium Times, 2014. “EXCLUSIVE: Nigerian military to court-martial over 100 soldiers for cowardice”, August 17, 2014.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Boko Haram suspect in Maiduguri....

As the case may be, the culture of impunity within the military damaged the level of civilian-military collaboration in the conflict. As one of the victims confirmed, the crimes of the military range from “extortion, extra-judicial killings, torture, arrests of innocent civilians, and rape of women and abuse of girls at various military and security checkpoints. It is simply a conflict where anything goes” (Musa 2014)¹¹⁶. Authorities generally do not hold the military or security forces accountable for the use of excessive or deadly force or for the deaths of persons in custody (Chika and Joshua 2011:50)¹¹⁷. A senior police official confirmed that sometimes “people are so frustrated that they just want to pay and bribe their way out” (HRW 2009)¹¹⁸. The culture of impunity and corruption amongst the military directly fighting Boko Haram instilled fear and resentment in people. The security forces “brandish firearms, threatening ordinary civilians to hand over money and other valuables, or face arrest, beatings and detention, rather than going after Boko Haram” (Interview BH Victim 2014)¹¹⁹. The actions of the security forces in this context have become so pervasive that they appear to have turned the conflict into some kind of criminal enterprise. They have fueled more violence, entrenched ethno-regional and religious divides, and reinforced widespread patterns of human rights violations that were rampant during the military era. In turn, this has aided the atrocities of Boko Haram.

The attitude of the military allowed Boko Haram to construct an ideology that denounced them as an apparatus of a western state as anti-Islam. In fact, it is cases such as this that made the Boko Haram spokesman, Abu Qaqa declare that their target is to retaliate against the arrest and victimization of innocent civilians by security forces, and to uproot the culture of impunity within the government in the north-east and the whole nation (Thurston 2011:1-5)¹²⁰. Unsurprisingly, there is an atmosphere of unspoken appreciation in some quarters that at least someone is standing up to the impunity and corruption of the military, though this opinion may be considered negligible in the face of a successful military offensive in recent days. Also, the culture of impunity within the military institution provided an excuse for individual radicalization. Instances are awash with innocent individuals who were eventually

¹¹⁶ Interview with Musa Mahmudu, Maiduguri, 5 May, 2014. Mahmuda’s house was burnt down on the suspicion of renting out part of the compound to alleged members of Boko Haram.

¹¹⁷ Chika Charles Aniekwe & Joshua Kushie. 2011. Electoral Violence Situational Analysis: Identifying Hot- Spots in the 2011 General Elections in Nigeria, National Association for Peaceful Elections in Nigeria (NAPEN), No 2B Buchanan Close Off Buchanan Crescent Off Aminu Kano Crescent Wuse 2, Abuja, Nigeria, p. 50.

¹¹⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with senior official in the Police Service Commission, Abuja, July 17, 2009.

¹¹⁹ Interview with victim of security arrest.

¹²⁰ Alex, Thurston. 2011. “The Threat of Militancy in Nigeria” (accessed 14 August 2012). <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/.../threat-of-militancy-in-nigeria/4yk8>

recruited by Boko Haram because they have a personal history of victimization by Nigerian security forces (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008:415-433)¹²¹. For instance, immediately after the 2009 military and security assault on Boko Haram, security forces executed thousands of Almajiris, itinerant Islamic students. The killings were done in full view of the public and some were recorded on video (Alzeera Videos 2010)¹²². Those who survived the killings became more radicalized and were easily recruited by Boko Haram. The killings also galvanized a sense of common victimhood amongst Almajiris across the northern cities such as Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri and Zaria (Ibrahim 2010)¹²³.

Conclusion

Since the 1967 civil war, insurgency, militancy and political violence have not been new in Nigeria. “Every single one of Nigeria’s six geo-political zones has experienced violence and insecurity in the past fifteen years” (Siollun 2015:36-37)¹²⁴. Yet Nigeria’s five biggest security challenges since independence: the Biafran civil war (1967-70), the Maitatsine riots (1980), the Sharia riots (2000), the Niger Delta militancy (2003-2009) and Boko Haram (2000..) all emanated from internal problems rather than external threats. While the Nigerian military was equipped for the civil war, even fought without borrowing, the same military cannot defeat Boko Haram despite the increase in budgets and international donations. The corruption, ethnic division and loss of professionalism in the Nigerian military today is linked colonial legacies, post-independence military politics and lack of reforms in the military institution. Military coups and dictatorships, and undoubtedly the Nigerian civil war that ensued after independence is rooted in the colonial policies of divide and conquer. The ethnic divisions created and exacerbated by colonial policies still continue today, to the extent that corruption, incompetence and a sheer lack of professionalism in the military goes unchecked. This is of course at the expense of national security, and to the delight of terrorist groups like Boko Haram, who have used this colonial legacy to its advantage.

Again, Nigerian defense budget since the Boko Haram uprising is estimated to be well above \$6 billion – among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa – and many experts suggest it is lost to corruption. Many low level soldiers have refused to be deployed, and when deployed, refused

¹²¹ McCauley Clark and Moskalenko Sophia. 2008. “Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism”. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20 (3):415-433.

¹²² Video shows Nigeria ‘executions,’” Al Jazeera, February 9, 2010, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2010/02/2010298114949112.html> (August 26, 2012).

¹²³ Ibrahim, Y. (2010) FG to build 100 Tsangaya schools. *Daily Trust*, 13 December.

¹²⁴ Siollun, Max. 2015. “Transforming Nigeria’s Security”. *New African Magazine*, 49th Year, No. 549, p. 36-37

to fight. Some have absconded, while others complain of low allowances, as low as less than \$50 a month. Evidence suggest that there are cases of poor and insufficient weaponry. Some soldiers indicated that “they could not even leave the barracks armed with as little one rifle and two magazines”. The Nigerian government must push for immediate reforms within the military. First there is the need to demobilize excess troops. Some analysts like Tome Ogwe, director of the Sub-Saharan African Intelligence Community argue that some functions of the Nigerian military should be professionalize. The military should also be decentralized to ensure it is weeded of ghost workers. One very crucial step in the right direction is having a meritocratic recruitment system, whereby servicemen are recruited based on their ability and achievements. In conjunction with this recruitment method, corrupt military personnel, particularly higher ranking personnel, should be sacked and/or jailed. This in itself shows a clear message that corruption in the military will not be tolerated, while also correcting the issue of impunity. A wider task of state building and strengthening national identity will also help to form a competent military that aims to protect all Nigerian citizens. If recruits to the military came from a society that was more cohesive, and not so deeply divided along ethnic lines, a product of colonial legacy, such staunch ethnic divisions that persist in the Nigerian military that has reduced it to an unprofessional institution, will be less salient.