Chapter 22

Military Budget, War Against Boko Haram Insurgency, and Its Impact on Nigerian Politics and Economy

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the relationship between the components of defense spending, the fight against insurgency in Nigeria, particularly Boko Haram in the Northeast, and its impact on the politics and economics of the country for the period 2009-2017. The long duration of military rule in Nigeria contributed significantly to under-developing the military, a strategy by the military men in power to secure their hold on power. Added to this was the general poor performance of the military administrations in Nigeria that suppressed civil society in the country. Consequently, the widening of political space when the country transited to democracy in 1999 opened up the space for bottled-up agitations that gave rise to ethnic and religious sect militias propagating diverse agendas. One of such is the Boko Haram which waged an insurgency against Nigeria in the northeast region of the country. To tackle the challenge, the budget for the military was increased. The chapter also discusses the military budget as a result of the counter insurgency, its management in the prosecution of the war against Boko Haram, and its impact on the Nigerian economy.

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INTRODUCTION

The military institution is unarguably the most important state institution, not only because they have the mandate to protect the territorial integrity of the state but also its internal cohesion. A military is an organization authorized by its greater society to use coercive instruments, including use of weapons, in defending the motherland by combating actual or perceived threats. The International Committee of the Red Cross in its customary law, has provided a most universally accepted definition of armed forces of a party to the conflict as consisting of all organized armed forces, groups and units which are under a command responsible to that party for the conduct of its subordinates (ICRC, 2011). However, for the United States Armed Forces, the military refers to the five armed service branches: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy. Each branch of the military has a unique mission within the overall mission of U.S. security and peace. The Secretary of the Department of Defense (DoD) has control over the military. The President of the United States is the Commander in Chief, who is responsible for all final decisions. This definition simply states the composition, duties and leadership of the military in the United States of America (USA). It did not state the nature of military that distinguishes it from other security organizations.

The “physicality” nature of the military differentiates it from other forms of official security organizations in a state. In addition, the terms armed forces, defence, security, arms, war, soldiers are important in understanding the nature of the military. The key functions of the military are to ensure the peace and security of the state.

The Military has been dominant for most of the history of post-independent Nigeria, before the country finally transited to democratic rule in 1999 (Duruji, 2008). For most of the period military generals presided over the affairs of Nigeria, they tended to under-develop the military and other security institutions by underfunding the institutions and focusing on only an elite class of guards to protect the ruling military elite and secure their power bases. Also unfortunate is the general poor performance of the military administrations in Nigeria that suppressed civil society in the country, such that the political space widened when the country transited to democracy opening up the space for bottled-up agitations that busted into the open including the Boko Haram insurgency that confronted the political class (Duruji, 2015). The tactics and modus operandi of the Boko Haram particularly in the use of non-conventional method and attrition has indeed put the Nigerian military and the democratic governance to task. To tackle the huge challenge of defeating the Boko Haram insurgents, implies the reversal of the many years of successive military administration deliberate under development the military and other security institutions. This of course means that huge amount must be budgeted to re-equip and re-train the military for it to be able to achieve the task. The question that arises from here is to ascertain how much has been spent on military and security since the counter insurgency began? What are the impacts on other sectors of the political economy? What are the specifics of this budget spending on the military and of what effect on the war against insurgency? Of what impact are this insurgency and the response of the government having on the politics of Nigeria? While most studies on defense spending rely on monetary measure of the impact on the subject of study, this study intends to construct the impacts index from political-economy perspectives using principal component analysis. The sources of data relied heavily on secondary materials while descriptive analysis were used in the analysis to provide answers to the questions that were posed.