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## Corruption and National Security: The Military Campaign against Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria

**Shimawua, Dominic**

*Department of Public Administration  
Veritas University Abuja*

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### Abstract

There is enough evidence to believe that the military campaign against Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria has lasted so long as a result of corruption. This study examined the extent to which the cankerworm has affected military operations which the current Head of State promised to execute within a very short time, so much that it is taking several years. Data was obtained from secondary materials which include – books, journals, periodicals, newspapers, the internet, etc. Data analysis was done by the technique of content analysis while the economic paradigm of corruption, Vannucci (2015), was adopted as the theoretical framework of the study. Findings revealed that the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria has lasted so long due to corruption that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the military hierarchy. It was therefore, suggested in the paper that the military hierarchy be sanitized by flushing out all culprits to ensure that every kobo released for the campaign is efficiently utilized for the very purpose for which it is meant.

**Keywords:** *Insurgency, Corruption, Boko Haram, National security, Military campaign.*

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*Corresponding Author:* Shimawua, Dominic

### **Background to the Study**

In recent times, the link between corruption and national security is beginning to gain the attention of scholars, policy makers, administrators and various government officials and public analysts. Particularly, there is the public glare on the phenomenon of corruption since the allegations against senior government and military officers who were bribed to turn a blind eye to Boko Haram activities or short-charge the military by providing sub-standard military wares in the fight against the insurgents. Thus, the poor state of security in Nigeria through the perpetration of crises and corrupt-handling or theft of military appropriations meant for procuring the necessary equipment to confront and suppress these insurgents, point to the systemic failures and frustrations which the Nigerian military suffers in its effort to attain the demands of national security.

Insinuations from various quarters point to the fact that Nigeria may never witness an end to the insurgency by Boko Haram since some elites in government and other high positions of leadership have seized the opportunity of the fight against “insurgency” as a way of making quick and cheap money. This is to say that the end to the “insurgency will throw them out of business. A report by Transparency International (TI) on “how military officers' benefit from the fight against Boko Haram lends support to the insinuations”. The TI report revealed that corrupt military officials had taken advantage of the campaign to create and award non-existent and fraudulent contracts to themselves and foes while the Federal Government and the victims of menace are counting them loses. The proceeds from these illicit deals are known to be laundered in foreign financial institutions notably in the UK, USA and elsewhere around the world. This is considered as some of the factors that have militated against the smooth military action against the group.

To further highlight the devastating blows of corruption on the military campaign against Boko Haram, mention should also be made of the complacencies of the likes of Alhaji Buji Foi, an alleged sponsor of the Boko Haram insurgents, executed 24 hours after Mohammad Yusuf, the sects founder and leader. A two-time chairman of local government and Commissioner in charge of religious affairs under Governor Ali Modu Sheriff (Borno state), who succeeded in using his position to provide shelter and support for Boko Haram insurgents. Perhaps more startling was the implication in sometime 2012, of General Azubuike Ihejirika (Rtd) former chief of Army Staff, Senator Ali Modi Sheriff as well as a senior officer of the Central Bank of Nigeria. These revelations were made by Dr. Stephen Davis an independent negotiator who claimed that the chief sponsors of the sect are politicians who channeled their funds through the nation's Apex Bank to make their transactions look legitimated. Although these allegations were dismissed by the Goodluck administration on the grounds that they were aimed at tarnishing its image, the truth remains that there can be no smoke without fire. There were also series of allegation from several quarters and the story of Colonel Sambo Dasuki (Rtd) is fresh in the minds of many Nigerians.

Across the board, public sector corruption has undermined the state's ability to address Nigeria's numerous challenges which includes insecurity. Thus, corruption has been

particularly destructive in the defense and security sector. With lower oil prices, corrupt elites have increasingly exploited alternative illicit revenue streams. The secret nature of defense 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, kidnapping, senior Nigerian security players have also profited from the insurgency. Extra-budgetary spending on counterterrorism has dramatically increased between 2014 and 2015, and with it, the scale and scope of corrupt opportunities in the defence sector. Corruption has succeeded in whittling down the effectiveness of the Nigerian Army, the largest in West Africa and the integrity of the country's navy has been compromised. This has resulted to a corrupt war economy which has constituted an incentive to high ranking of officials and security personnel who crave to perpetuate insurgency for personal gains. The extent to which these corrupt practices have elongated the military campaign over a longer period is the subject matter of this study. The study seeks to ascertain the extent to which corrupt disposition of high-ranking military personnel and the political collaborators have prolonged the war against insurgency in Nigeria. Specifically, the study will be interrogating issues such as:

1. How has the misappropriation of funds by the military hierarchy affected the performance of the personnel in the fight against Boko Haram in Nigeria?
2. What role do the corrupt politicians play in prolonging the military campaign against Boko Haram?

### **Conceptual Clarification**

**Boko Haram:** This is an Islamic sect that believes politics in Northern Nigeria has been hijacked by a group of corrupt, false Muslims. It is waging a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally to create a "pure" Islamic state ruled by sharia law. The nomenclature "Boko Haram" is derived from a combination of Hausa word "book" (book) and the Arabic word "haram" (unlawful). Together, Boko Haram means "Western education is unlawful".

Boko Haram was derived as a nickname given to the movement by outsiders by truncating a slogan repeated by the late Mohammed Yusuf on video discs, prohibiting not just the colonial European format of literacy but any collaboration with the neo-classical state (Manfred, 2014:2).

From its own perspective, Boko Haram prefers going by the slogan that "Western culture is forbidden." According to a leading member of the group, 'culture is broader, it includes education but not determined by western education' (Onuoha, 2012:136). Literature has it that, "the Boko Haram group which initially called itself the "Nigerian Taliban, adopted a live off-the-land' lifestyle and set up a camp in a remote area of northeast Nigeria, which the group dubbed ' Afghanistan' (Agbibo, 2014). Like Maitatsine of the 1980s, Boko Haram 'strove' for self-exclusion of its members from the mainstream corrupt society by living in areas outside or far away from society in order to intellectualized and radicalize the revolutionary process that would ultimately lead to violent takeover of the Nigerian state' (Umar, 2011).

**Corruption:** This is a phenomenon that is widely regarded as one of the biggest challenges of the contemporary human society. Ademihe (2013) believes, “corruption has no uniform definition, this is so because what is regarded as corruption depends on the actors, the profiteers, initiators, how and where it takes place. The world Bank and the IMF posit that it is “the abuse of public office for private gains”. Soachs (2007) defines corruption as “endemic as well as an enemy within”. According to Osunyinkanmi (2009), the term corruption, “is synonymous to the terms fraud, bribery, settlement”, etc. while transparency international defines corruption as “the misuse of entrusted power for private gain”. Tiolu and Ogunro (2012), identified four types of corruption as follows:

- a. Moral corruption: This is exhibited in sexual pervasiveness, greed, especially (i.e uncontrollable tongue such that reveals secrets or slanders in busy-body, indecent dressing or appearance, etc.
- b. Economic corruption: This includes actions like the manufacture of fake drugs, adulteration of drinks, piracy, and fraud at all levels.
- c. Political and Bureaucratic Corruption: This involves the illegal, unethical and unauthorized exploitation of one's political or official position for personal gain.
- d. Electoral corruption: Electoral corruption includes frauds like rigging, manipulation, snatching of ballot boxes, etc.

**Insurgency:** O'Neal (1990), refers to 'insurgency' as, “organized movements aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of supervision and armed conflict. The term is often used to cover a wider scope of low intent conflict and often linked inextricably to terrorism since terrorism is a tool that many insurgent groups use to further their agendas. Hence Bernard (2005), believes that, “insurgency is the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection”. It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger.

A better approach to understanding insurgency is perhaps to begin by explaining what does not consist insurgency. In this vein, Liolio (2013), posited that “insurgency is not terrorism or conventional war, though they share some similarities such as the use of force, or guerrilla tactics to achieve an end which is often political”. Fundamentally, the difference between insurgency and terrorism lies in the scope and magnitude of violence. Traditionally, “insurgencies seek to overthrow an existing order with one that is commensurate with their political, economic, ideological or religious goals” (Gompart and Gordesn, 2008)

**Military Campaign:** A military campaign denotes the time during which a given military force conducts combat operations in a given area often referred to as area of operation (AO). Such a campaign may be executed by either a single Armed service, or as a combined services campaign conducted by land, naval, air, cyber and space forces. The purpose of a military campaign is to achieve a particular desired resolution of a military conflict as its strategic goal. This is usually constrained by resources, geography, and/or season. The success of a military campaign is evaluated based on the degree of achievement of planned goals and objectives through combat and noncombat operations.

This is determined when one of the belligerent military forces defeats the opposing military force within the constraints of the planned resource, time and cost allocations. The manner in which a force terminates its operations often influences the public perception of the success of the campaign.

**National security:** This is a concept that is directly, related to the notions of both security and nation or state, and their relationship to each other. National security “may not mean the same thing to different.”

Fitz-General affirmed the above view by stating that, “national security differs from country to country, and indeed from institution to institution”. For Lippman (1943), a nation is secure to the extent that it does not have to sacrifice its core values, if it wishes to avoid war and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war.” Overtime, the idea of security within the international system has broadened to reflect varying degrees of the union of national military and defense related security within that of domestic/homeland security, as well as to ensure the inclusion of the state, civil society and the individual. In the vein, the overall concept of national security is being considered to include a “country's society as a whole and to also include addressing transnational threats ranging widely from energy security, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and catastrophic natural disasters to population growth, pandemic disease, climate change and global poverty.

**Table 1:** Past and Current Studies on the Effect of Corruption on the Military Campaign against Insurgency in Nigeria

Name of Researcher, year, title of the study.	Scope/Variables	Methodology
Godswill (2016). The Challenge of Managing insurgency in Nigeria	Managing Insurgency in Nigeria-2009-2015, Nigeria. 2009-2015	Paper used documentary research method to examine why Government is unable to contain the menace of insurgency. The paper discovered that government agencies opportunistic behavior accounts for the poor performance of government in wiping out insurgency. It recommended that government should take steps to curb the corruption amongst its security agencies and provide effective tools to the security forces.
Usman (2017) Impact of corruption on Insurgency in the North Eastern Region of Nigeria	Nigeria: corruption and insurgency: 2009-2015	The study employed secondary data and adopted content and observational method of analysis. It discovered that the failure of the Nigeria military to defeat Boko Haram insurgents was due to corruption perpetrated by highly placed government functionaries like the former National Security Adviser. The paper recommended that the administration of Muhammad Buhari should continue with its war against corruption.
Duruji, Idowu, Dibia and Duruji-Moses (2018) Military Budget War against Boko Haram Insurgency and its impact on Nigerian Politics and Economy	Nigeria: Military Budget and the War Against insurgency covering 2009-2017	The study examined the relationship between defense spending and the fight against Boko Haram insurgency. Secondary data were employed. Prudence in managing military budget against insurgency was recommended.
Mohammed, N.S and Mohammed, A.K (2015). Cycle of Bad Governance Corruption: The Risks of Boko Haram in Nigeria.	Nigeria: cycle of bad governance and corruption.	The study examined the cycle of bad governance and corruption particularly the north east of Nigeria. Qualitative data were employed through interviews. It concluded that corruption is a major factor in the Boko Haram activities and the prolonged military campaign against the insurgency.

### Theoretical Framework

Literature is bereft of theories of corruption. In this vein, Vannucci (2015), formulated the three paradigms for the analysis of corruption. First is the economic paradigm which emphasizes the crucial role of individual incentives reflecting contextual opportunities to engage in corrupt activities. This study adopts this first paradigm as its theoretical framework as it tries to explain the incentives of individuals to engage in corrupt activities. Corruption is considered the outcome of rational individual choices and its spread within a certain organization is influenced by the factors defining the structure of expected costs and rewards. As with other behaviours involving deviation from laws and/or informal norms, the individual decision to participate in corrupt exchanges depends also on the expected risk of being reported and punished (or “cheated” by the partner in the deal), the severity of the potential penal and administrative penalties, and the expected reward as compared with available alternatives. As Rose-Ackerman (1978) puts it in a study of corruption, one can make substantial progress with models that take tastes a value as given and perceive individuals as rational beings attempting to further their self-interest in a world of scarce resources.

There is the axiom that, "corruption is a crime of calculation, not passion" (Rose-Ackerman, 1978).

### **Methodology**

This study is a descriptive analysis of the effect of corruption on the war against insurgency in Nigeria. In addressing the two research questions, the studies adopt the methodology of content analysis. Hence the research questions are taken sequentially as follows:

**Research Questions One (1):** What was the extent of misappropriation of funds that were allocated for the military campaign against Boko Haram Insurgency by politicians and government officials in Nigeria?

In a discussion on extra judicial killings in the North-east," it is evident that politics played a role in the crisis" (ICG, 2014:16). Policies recruited members of the sect to help them win elections only to dump them later in the day. This did not go down well with such members. Alao, (2012:5), posits that "the consequence was that the aggrieved members of the sect in seeking revenge, decided to use the guns and bombs procured by politicians to intimidated opponents to fight the government".

Several other factors have combined to undermine the ability of government to eradicate insurgency but prominent among them is corruption. Public officials engage in corruption freely. There is evidence that since the beginning of the insurgency, the budget for defence to combat insurgency has increased from 100 billion naira (625 million) in 2010 to 927 naira (\$6billion) in 2011 and trillion (\$6.25 billion) naira in 2012, 2013 and 2014 (ICG, 2014:30). Leadership Newspaper with March, 2014 reported that, "the federal government over a period of four years, spent about N3.38 trillion to combat insurgency alone (Eme and Anyadike, 2013:13 and 24-25). An investigation on how these monies were spent reveals that a large chunk of the sum was misappropriated by top government, military and other security agencies officials in collaboration with politicians and contractors supplying military hardware. This came to the fore when the Buhari Administration came to power. Thus, as the Administration decided to probe spending of funds which were meant for the procurement of arms and ammunition, the biggest scam in the history of Nigeria was unraveled. It was discovered that a former National Security Adviser (Col. Sambo Dasuki, Rtd) and others, under the immediate past administration of President Goodluck Jonathan, had laundered and diverted \$2.1 billion dollars (over N550 billion) arms funds. He shared the fund in the following manner:

**Table 2: Arms and Ammunition Funds Shared by Former NSA**

Arms and Ammunition Funds shared by former NSA				
S/N	Name	Amount	Purpose	Remarks
1	Attahiru Bafarawa	<del>₦</del> 4.6 billion	Spiritual purposes	Arrested by the EFCC
2	Chief Raymond Dokpesi	<del>₦</del> 2.1 billion	Publicity and Media	Arrested by the EFCC
3	Alh. Aminu Babakusa	<del>₦</del> 2.2 billion	Shared to politicians	Promise to refund part
4	Waripamowei Dudafa	<del>₦</del> 10 billion	Shared to PDP delegates	-
5	Chief Olisa Metu	<del>₦</del> 1.4 billion	Shared to politicians	Arrested by the EFCC
6	Bala James Ngillari	<del>₦</del> 450 million	-	Arrested by the EFCC
7	Mrs Esther Nenat Usman	<del>₦</del> 2.5 billion	Shared to party officials	Arrested by the EFCC
8	Air Marshal Adesola Amosu (rtd)	Returned <del>₦</del> 2.3 billion	-	Returned 2.3 billion
9	Air Chief Marshal Alex Badeh (Rtd)	\$930,500 and \$690,000	Questionable contracts	Arrested by the EFCC
10	Femi Fani-kayode	<del>₦</del> 840 million	Campaign publicity	Arrested by the EFCC
11	Chief OluFalae	<del>₦</del> 100 million	Received from MrsUsman	-
12	Rashidi Ladoja	<del>₦</del> 100 million	Received from MrsUsman	-
13	Prof. Rufai Alkali	<del>₦</del> 320 million	Support Group	-
14	Bashir Yuguda	<del>₦</del> 1.5 billion, <del>₦</del> 1.2 trillion, And <del>₦</del> 775 million	Suspicious payments	-

**Source:** Adopted from Jimoh, 2016

The table 2 shows the recklessness with which funds meant for the purchase of arms and ammunitions were misappropriated by top government functionaries and politicians. Moreover, following questionable contract deals by the former National Security Adviser (NSA), the following companies are meant to refund huge sums of money to the Federal Government in the following manner:



**Table 3:** Amounts to be refunded to FGN by companies

S/No	Companies and persons	Amount to be refunded
1	Acacia Holding Limited	₦600 million & 650 million
2	Reliance Referral Hospitals Limited	₦750 million
3	Societed'EquipInternationanx	\$148 million, 4.148m
4	Arailac Global Limited	₦100 million
5	Stellavera Development Company	₦250 million
6	African Cable Television Limited	₦350 million
7	DAAR Investment Holding	₦2,120, 000.00
8	Bello Matawalle	₦300 million
9	Bello Fadile	₦100 million
10	Former National Security Adviser	₦47 million
11	ShuaibuSalisu	₦47 million

**Source:** Adopted from Jimoh, 2016

The above table 3 us a further representation of the magnitude of contracts and funds which were misappropriated by the immediate past regime of President Goodluck Jonathan. The funds and contracts were all meant for arms and ammunition procurement but were all diverted. All deals were done by the office of the former National Security Adviser. These are all instances of well-established cases of corruption in relation to arms and ammunition procurement for the war against insurgency. This obviously must have consequences on the prosecution of the military campaign.

**Research Question two (2):** What is the effect of the misappropriation and diversion of funds on the war against insurgency?

Over the years, Nigeria as a country has portrayed itself as a state with a poor record of managing internal crisis. The careless manner by which it responded to Boko Haram uprising lends credence to this view

It was only when violent attacks by the Boko Haram insurgents became persistent that the government began to scramble to quell the threat using repression which include arrest, detention, proscription of the group, declaration of emergency rule in parts of the north and killing of the sect's members as well as the enactment of the anti-insurgency legislation (Aghedo and Eke, 2013:98 & Agbiboa, 2013:79).

It is also noteworthy that while government had relied mainly on the use of coercive force, "in recent times, she somewhat soft pedaled to the calls in some quarters to consider the option of dialogue, grant amnesty, or even compensate some members of the group who had suffered losses due to Nigerian security agencies high-handedness". There is also the aspect that is rooted on the initial tactics adopted by government to solve the problem of Boko Haram. The Nigerian government has always been reactive to events even when it has prior information on an imminent crisis situation. For instance "it is unfortunate that even when she had information that Boko Haram was stocking arms, it ignored the reports on the sect prior to 2009 (Alao, 2012:5) little wonder that the escalation of the insurgency attacks in early 2010 caught the government flat-footed" (ICG, 2014:30).

On the issue of misappropriation, the story of the unholy manner by which the federal government had smuggled monies to South Africa in the name of acquiring military hardware to combat insurgency, explains the role of corruption in undermining the effort to curb insurgency in Nigeria. Again, despite the refutation by top military and other security agency officials, the event that provoked some ground troops to fire at their GOC (the Commandant of 7<sup>th</sup> Division in Borno State) who was immediately replaced and the near mutiny (Daily Sun, Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2014) situation by soldiers due to poor welfare in Adamawa state (Blenchard, 2014:9-10), support the view of the adverse effect of corruption on the military campaign against insurgency. It is a clear evidence of how corruption influenced the discipline among the soldiers, their morale and fighting spirit to the advantage of the insurgents.

Thus, ICG, (2014), Blenchard (2014), opine that, “the factors that have undermined government capacity to curb and eradicate insurgency include – underfunding, lack of equipment, poor intelligence, corruption complicity, interagency rivalries, and lack of effective political leadership”.

### **Findings**

This study revealed the following as factors that militate against the war to curb insurgency in Nigeria.

1. Since the beginning of insurgency, the Federal Government of Nigeria has increased defence votes from N100 billion in 2010 to N927 billion in 2011, to N1trillion in 2012, 2013 and 2014.
2. A large part of sum was misappropriated by politicians, top government and military personnel. It has been revealed that former National Security Adviser (Colonel) Sambo Dasuki over N550 billion which was shared among politicians and ex-military personnel which has led to several arrests.
3. The South African Authorities impounded huge sum of money laundered in the country in the guise of acquiring military hardware for the Nigerian Security forces. This is a disgrace and evidence of corruption on the part of Nigerian government officials.
4. The show of indiscipline by angry soldiers who fired at the GOC (the commandant of 7<sup>th</sup> Division in Borno) was the result of frustration by such soldiers over welfare and lack of adequate equipment and weapons in spite of the colossal sums earmarked for military campaign.
5. Some other factors also militate against the effort to curb insurgency- these include the fact that the authorities ignored the initial reports of arms buildup by the insurgents only to start reacting on the escalation of the crisis.
6. Government also ignored the suggestion from some quarters early enough, to dialogue, grant amnesty and even compensate some of the insurgents for their losses.

## Conclusion

More than any other factor, corruption has contributed immensely to the inability of the Government to insurgency. The phenomenon incapacitated the military in terms of adequate and required weaponry, the sagging morale of the troops on the frontline, and the indiscipline among the rank and file in the military. The approach of the government initially was inadequate and lacked every element of seriousness.

## Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions have been made:

1. The approach whereby government starts to respond to challenges on escalation is often too costly as the consequences usually culminate into more complex situations. Government must learn to be proactive and nib issues early enough to avoid escalation.
2. Nigerian security forces must learn to improve on intelligence gathering. This will enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of such forces.
3. Governments in power should learn to explore dialogue, amnesty and every other avenue before going into combat with any group of agitators, be it internal or external.
4. Discipline of the military should be enhanced to forestall the kind of indiscipline that almost resulted in mutiny among soldiers of the Nigerian Army. This can only be attained by addressing issues bordering on the welfare, adequate remuneration and equipment of soldiers.
5. Finally, the current war against corruption must be sustained and more efforts should be made to recover loots of corrupt government functionaries especially in respect of monies laundered abroad.

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