

## CIDOB International Yearbook 2008 Keys to facilitate the monitoring of the Spanish Foreign Policy and the International Relations in 2007

Country profile: Nigeria and its regional context  
Annex Defence policy: military balance\*

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## Defence Policy: Military Balance

### Historical Origins of the Military

The Nigerian military structure comprises the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. The history of the institution reveals that not only did the three arms develop differently, they also developed in stages and along lines peculiar to them and their specialization. This was the case up to 1967 when, in the wake of the Nigerian Civil War, they had the first opportunity to operate together as a body. The Army which constitutes the oldest arm of the Nigeria military owes its origin to the Imperial Governor of Lagos, Lt. Col. Glover of the Royal Navy, who in 1863 formed the very first force of 18 selected locals of northern origin that became known as "Glover Hausas" to mount punitive military expeditions in protection of British trade routes around Lagos. This group became "Hausa Constabulary" and thereafter transitioned to become part of the "Royal West African Frontier Force" (RWAFF). The Nigerian Regiment of the RWAFF, as became known after the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates by Lord Lugard in 1914, was later renamed the Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment (QONR) upon Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Nigeria in 1956. The agreement for internal self-autonomy for the country later in the year set the stage for the re-designation of QONR to be the Nigerian Military Force (NMF), and later "Royal Nigeria Army" at independence in 1960. This latter name was again re-designated the "Nigeria Army" in 1963 to reflect the country's adoption of a Republican status.

The history of the Naval arm of the Nigerian military dates back to 1886 when the Royal Niger Company established its headquarters at Asaba and later Lokoja, to maintain communication in its territories, re-supply its strategically located forts and garrisons, as well as embark on military expeditions. It also transported troops and patrolled the Niger-Benue confluence to combat smuggling activities in RNC controlled areas, while also ensuring blockade and destruction of communities and settlements adjudged to be hostile to the RNC. On revocation of the Charter that allowed the RCN to operate in the Nigerian area by the Britain in 1900, the succeeding colonial government created the Lagos Marine out of the company's complement of Nigeria ratings which had a few Sierra Leoneans and Ghanaians. The Lagos Marine served as a quasi-military organization and combined the duties of present day Nigeria Ports Authority, the Federal Inland Waterways and the naval marine policing duties.<sup>1</sup> The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 led to the merging of the marine forces of both protectorates into the Nigerian Marine, under the Nigerian Maritime Department, and subsequently, The Nigerian Naval Forces on June 1, 1956, with specific duties being the "naval defence of Nigeria within its territorial waters, hydrographical surveys, maintenance of Nigeria's customs laws as well as naval and maritime training duties".

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nigeriannavy.gov.ng/history.aspx>

The Air Force component of the Nigerian military was the last to be launched by an Act of the Nigerian Parliament in January 1964. Although the idea of having a Nigerian Air Force was originally proposed in 1958, it was not until 1962 when the country was confronted with the challenges of airlifting its troops to participate in peacekeeping operations in Congo and to quell military insurrection in Tanganyika (Tanzania) that the real need for an Air Force was appreciated. The country had to rely on civil aircrafts and other foreign air forces to convey its men and logistics. This was the context in which Part 1, Section (2) of the Parliamentary Air Force Act that established the Nigerian Air Force states that: "the Nigerian Air Force shall be charged with the defence of the Federal Republic by air; and to give effect thereto, the personnel shall be trained in such duties as in the air as well as on the ground".<sup>2</sup> Sequel to this, the objective of the Nigerian Air Force was thus set to be: (1) To achieve a full complement of the military system of the Federal Republic of Nigeria both in the air and on the ground; (2) To ensure fast versatile mobility of the Armed Forces; (3) To provide close air support for ground forces in all phases of operations; (4) To ensure the territorial integrity of a United Nigeria, and (5) To give the country the deserve prestige which is invaluable in international matters.<sup>3</sup> The Nigeria Air Force thus started as a nucleus in the Ministry of Defence.

### Structure and Operations of the Military

All arms of the Nigerian military have undergone serious structural and operational changes since their formations. The personnel strength of the army grew from 18 under the *Glover Hausa* in 1886 to about 10,000 soldiers at the beginning of the Nigerian Civil War in 1967. This figure further rose astronomically to over 250,000 at the end of the war in January, 1970,<sup>4</sup> though a massive restructuring embarked upon after the war has since reduced the number. The Navy has also grown from a mere insignificant 250 officers and men drawn from ex-British service men and from staff of the Mand Waterways Department, Port Authority and Maritime Department in 1956 to a sizeable number today, while the Air Force which started as trained pilots and aircrew in the air forces of Ethiopia, Canadian, India and West Germany prior to its formal creation by an Act of the Parliament in 1964 has also grown big. Even though there are still conflicting figures of the personnel strength of Nigeria's military, it is however estimated that it ranks 52 in the world in terms of number of active troops, with a 0.61 ratio of active troops per thousand. A source put the present figure of the three armed services – Army, Navy and Air Force – at 80,000. Of this figure the Army alone shares 62,000, while the Navy and Air force figures are put at 8,000 and 10,000, respectively.<sup>5</sup> Another source put the active duty personnel figure of the

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.nigeriaairforce.net/naf\\_history.htm](http://www.nigeriaairforce.net/naf_history.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> M.I. Wushishi, "The Nigerian Army: Growth and Development of Combat Readiness" in T.A. Imhobighe, *Nigerian Defence and Security: Issues and Options for Policy*, Macmillan, Lagos, 1987, p.54.

<sup>5</sup> IISS Military Balance 2008, Routledge, p.309.

Nigeria's armed forces at 78,500, with a distributional record of 62,000 for the Army; 7,000 for Navy and 9,500 for Air Force.<sup>6</sup>

Structurally, the Nigerian Army is organized into nine structures, namely: (1) Office of the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) which is at the apex of the structure; (2) the Department of Army Policy and Plans (DAPP) which is at the centre of General Staff activities of the Army headquarters – serving as both the think-tank and the coordinator of all Army Headquarters and principal branches; (3) the Department of Army Operations (DAOP) which serves as the hub of operations and training in the Nigeria Army; (4) the Department of Army Administration which handles matters of administration, welfare, discipline, employment and human resource development; (5) the Department of Army Logistics which deals with all matters of logistics, including quartering services; (6) the Department of Army Standards and Evaluation (DASE) which is responsible for ensuring impartial and objective inquiries about combat readiness, discipline, efficiency, economy, morale, training and safety measures; (7) the Department of Military Secretary responsible for appointment, commissions, promotions, conversions, inter-corps transfer, extension of service and retirement in accordance with terms and conditions of service; (8) the Army Headquarters Garrison (AHG GAR) responsible for all administration of Army Headquarters and its Directorates in both the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and Lagos; and the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) directly responsible for conducting research into manpower development, and overseeing the use of training institutions to meet capacity needs of the Nigerian Army. Each of the departments highlighted above is headed by a Chief, while all chiefs are under the Chief of Army Staff.

Operationally, the Nigeria Army is organized in five (fighting) divisions, namely: *two mechanized, two motorized and one armoured*. The mechanized divisions are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Mechanized Infantry Divisions headquartered in Kaduna and Ibadan. The motorized divisions are the 81<sup>st</sup> (Amphibious) Division headquartered in Enugu and 82<sup>nd</sup> (Airborne and Amphibious) Division in Lagos in the South. The other is 3<sup>rd</sup> (Armoured) Division headquartered in Jos. There are also Lagos and Abuja Garrisons. While the Abuja's is more of a Guards Brigade with responsibility of providing security for the Presidency, ceremonials duties and Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the Lagos Garrison is comparably as large as an army division. Yet, other Divisional Artillery Brigades, Ordnance corps and Combat Engineer Regiments are scattered across the rest of the country.

As for the Nigerian Navy, the structure comprises the Naval Headquarters. The Navy is headed by a Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) who is assisted by seven principal staff officers, who, like their counterparts in the Army, are Chiefs in their line of duties. These branches are: (1) Policy and Plans, (2) Training and Operations, (3) Accounts and Budget, (4) Naval Engineering (5) Logistics, (6) Navy Secretary, and Administration. Each of these branches comprises Directorates. Operationally, the Nigerian Navy is organized into the Western Command located at Apapa in Lagos State and the Eastern

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<sup>6</sup> Nigeria: National Security, [http://www.mongabay.com/reference/new\\_profiles/344.html](http://www.mongabay.com/reference/new_profiles/344.html)

Command located at Calabar in Cross River State; each of the commands is under a flag officer commanding.

The Air Force is headed by a service Chief, who operates from the Air Force Headquarters in Abuja. He is also assisted by other principal officers handling strategically designated departments as in the Army and Navy. Operationally, the Air Force operates from three commands, namely: Tactical Air Command, Training Command and Logistics Command. It is known for its commitment to a policy of developing domestic training and military production capabilities, while also upholding the country's strict policy of diversification of military procurement from outside.

As necessitated by the challenge of the Nigeria Civil War, there had been efforts to ensure strategic policy coordination among the Army, the Navy and the Air Force on several national security issues for better results and efficiency. This explains for the existence of a Joint Defence Headquarters, chaired by Chief of Defence Staff. The Chief of Defence Staff is responsible to the joint armed forces, as well as serves as the Chief Military Adviser to the President as Commander-in-Chief; though there is also a National Security Adviser who deals more with domestic security. Beyond this is the Ministry of Defence (MoD) which serves as the political leadership of the Nigerian military. This ministry has often been headed by either service Chiefs or retired military officers, except in the last two experiences where civilians have been appointed ministers into the ministry, perhaps to promote the long advocated civilianization of the military and defence.<sup>7</sup> While the ministry is led by the Minister of Defence, the head and chief accounting officer remains the Permanent Secretary who is a career civil servant.

### **Defence Doctrine and Military Balance**

The Defence policy of any country is not only a reflection of its national security concerns, it is also a coherent and coordinated strategy of dealing with those concerns. The core of the role of Nigeria's armed forces has been given as the defence of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. Where necessary and required, they also provide support and reinforcement to other internal security institutions and paramilitary services such as the police, customs, immigration, and civil defence estimated at 82,000,<sup>8</sup> as well as participate in disaster management and humanitarian relief services and perform economic-related defence functions like protection of oil installations and pipelines.

In Nigeria, the MoD is saddled with the responsibility of formulating and executing the national defence policy and the planning of military expenditure, as well as providing administrative and support services for training, equipping and combat readiness of the armed forces in accordance

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<sup>7</sup> The civilian ministers that have so far headed the Ministry of Defence are Dr. Musa Kwankwanso (2003 – 2007) and Alhaji Mahmud Yayale Ahmed (2007 – date).

<sup>8</sup> IISS Military Balance 2008, Routledge, p.309.

to standards and optimum performance.<sup>9</sup> Before now there had been allegations to the effect that Nigeria had no National Defence Policy; at least, one that is published and regularly reviewed in the context of changing times and realities.<sup>10</sup> Added to this is the fact that even the unpublished one that existed prior to 2001 is not “a crystallized national security strategy that forms the basis for the development of a doctrine”, though the constitution and certain statutes, principles and doctrines are replete with the country’s defence goals and aspirations and the means to actualize them.<sup>11</sup> The Nigeria’s Defence policy objectives as highlighted in a new Draft National Defence Policy (2001) are:

- Protect Nigeria against external threat and aggression
- Provide defence as well as strategic advice and information to government
- Promote security consciousness among Nigerians
- Respond to requests to aid civil authorities
- Participate in disaster management and humanitarian relief operations at home and abroad
- Assist other government agencies and levels of government in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ensure stability in the West African sub-region, which constitutes primary zone of strategic interest
- Participate in bilateral and multilateral operations
- Contribute to international peace and security

While the above objectives are largely general, it is the responsibility of the three armed services to design their strategies of achieving them. Such strategies include “prevention, protection, deterrence, rapid mobilization, force projection and cooperation with allies”. A minimum defence budget that is not less than 2.5% of Nigeria’s GDP is proposed to keep the country’s strategic planning and programming profile in the next 10 years.<sup>12</sup>

Projecting how to meet the objectives above the Nigerian defence policy is set in a concentric circle, in appreciation of the fact that the country does not only exist as a nation for itself, but also within the same environment with other countries in West Africa, Africa and the world system. Defined in three military strategic objectives, this defence policy is reflected in the defence of the country against aggression and the promotion of security (at regional, continental and global levels). While this demonstrates an avid consciousness of domestic and external security challenges, it nevertheless forecloses a

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<sup>9</sup> See T.Y. Danjuma, (Retired General and former Minister of Defence), “Mission Statement of the Ministry of Defence”, Abuja, 1999. (<http://www.nopa.net/Defence/message/1.shtml>)

<sup>10</sup> Wuyi Omitoogun & Tunde Oduntan, “Nigeria”, in Wuyi Omitoogun & Eboe Hutchful (eds), *Budgeting for the Military Sector in Africa: The Processes and Mechanisms of Control*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) & Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006, pp. 169-171.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p.169.

<sup>12</sup> The Draft National Defence Policy (2001) as cited in Wuyi Omitoogun (2006).

ranging debate about “the extent and application of Nigeria’s defence policies.”<sup>13</sup> The debate has been centered on budgetary constraints and the requirements for defence transformation through maintenance of basic self-defence, while still satisfying ‘secondary’ functions.<sup>14</sup> Thus, given the context in which Nigeria’s defence objectives have been adjudged by analysts to be over-ambitious and unrealistic in the light of limited resources available to achieve them, the challenge had been how to achieve a nexus of balance between effective, concise defence policy and the material resources required to achieve them. While there is no one way solution to this, what is not in doubt is the need to prioritize by addressing a balance between diverse requirements in applying resources.

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p.156.

<sup>14</sup> Nigerian Air Force, “Nigeria’s Defence Policy”. <http://www.nigeriaairforce.net/ndp.htm>