

Military Industrial Complex and National Security in Nigeria, 2015 – 2022

ANNA YONNANA AKINGA, ISAAC CHUKWUEUKA OKORIE
Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna

Abstract. The ability to wage and win a war or to deter potential adversaries depends on the degree of technological wealth in the country, which should be seen to be adequately developed and functional. Therefore, the success of modern day military forces is measured by their ability to develop and use unique technologies to effectively confront unique security challenges this entails the importance of military industries and technological development to the national security of any country. This study, therefore, sets out to discuss the relevance of Military Industrial Complex (MIC) in relation to the national security in Nigeria between 2015 and 2022. This study adopts the use of secondary source as its methodology, which will be accessed through published works, journal articles, internet sources and other secondary source materials. Some of the findings of this study are as follows; 1) Military Industrial Complex (MIC) began to be firmly established after the WW II. 2) a country's maintenance of a good national security is not unconnected with its ability to produce and develop a high level of local military arms and ammunitions through its MIC. 3) Nigeria's overdependence in arms and ammunitions' importation is affecting both her national security and economy. 4) between 2015 and 2022, Nigeria has spent more money importing military hardware. 5) the MIC in Nigeria is lagging behind other MICs even in some Third World countries like Brazil, India and South Africa, hence the need for its rehabilitation, upgrade and reinvestment. The study concludes that for Nigeria's national security and economy to be better, the government ought to invest more in the development of a viable and strong MIC to drastically reduce her high dependence on foreign countries for her national security.

Keywords: MIC, National Security, Nigeria, Technological Development, Third World Countries

1. Introduction

The responsibility to protect and ensure the safety of lives and properties of the citizenry within the territory of each state has been and will continue to be the task of the government of every country. However, the ability of a state to guarantee an atmosphere of peace, stability and development within its territory depends largely on the efficient measures set in place to prevent and respond to the sources of threats which endanger the lives, values, and assets of the citizens. The success of this depends on the state not only having the quality of security officials engaged with the task of providing adequate security but also on the availability of the necessary equipment (weapons, ammunitions, etc.) needed to perform the task of maintaining the defence and security of the state.

In the light of the above, nations strive to enhance the capabilities, capacity, effectiveness and efficiencies of their military technology. But, while developed countries produce most of their defence requirements, developing countries are faced with either importing their defence needs or striving to develop their own domestic industries. This has largely contributed to why the national security as well as the economy of the former is more improved and better than that of the later. Hence, the total absence or weakness, as the case may be, of MICs in developing countries has subjected them to high level of dependence on developed countries for their military needs in order to tackle their national security challenges. This does not only affect the economy of these dependent countries as huge amount of their budget is channeled towards this course, but also the quick supplies of these military needs in times of urgency as well as the quality and nature of these arms and ammunitions thereby jeopardizing their national security. These dependent countries also suffer in their national

security when embargoes and sanctions are placed on them by their suppliers or developed countries. Thus, they are bound to be manipulated by the developed countries because of their high dependence on them for their national security, justifying, therefore, why the developing countries need to make the establishment of a strong MIC part of their national security priorities.

Nigeria has sought to produce her military equipment locally which informed the establishment of the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) in 1964. But, several years later, DICON has not been able to meet its targets as it has not gone beyond the production of small arms and ammunitions with heavy dependence on foreign partners for many requirements. However, this is not totally the fault of the industry as it is faced with a lot of challenges, especially when stringent efforts are not made by the government to sustain the industry in its course. Therefore, for the weakness and short fallings of DICON and other MICs in Nigeria, the Nigerian Armed Forces depend heavily on the importation of military technology, both hardware and software. This overdependence on the procurement of military equipment from foreign countries is detrimental to the development of the country, depriving it of the growth of Research and Development (R&D) and MIC, thereby constituting a continuous drain on the nation's scarce foreign exchange and fundamentally compromising her national security. In fact, sometimes these nations 'conspire' to deny the military urgent and quick supply of as well as up-to-date defence equipment thereby jeopardizing our national security. It is therefore worthy of note that no country, including Nigeria, can develop and enhance her national security by continuously depending on other countries for military supplies without making cogent efforts to establish her own MIC and R&D so as to improve her self-reliance and drastically reduce her overdependence.

On this backdrop, therefore, this study will discuss the relevance of MIC in the Nigerian national security within the period between 2015 and 2022. To achieve this, this paper has been structured in the following sections: first, abstract (already treated above); second, introduction (also treated above); third, conceptual clarifications; fourth, MIC and Nigeria's national security between 2015 and 2022; fifth, factors inhibiting a well-developed MIC in Nigeria; and lastly, conclusion and bibliography.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

2.1 Military Industrial Complex (MIC)

MIC as the broad spectrum of relationship and support between the military and other strategic non-military establishments that are involved in the research and development of services critical to the sustenance and boosting of the state's capacity to meet its security needs. It relates to the existence of armaments industry to the economic and manufacturing base of the state. MIC also refers to a network of individuals and institutions involved in the production of weapons and military technologies. Though, states and empires in the past had similar organs or establishments like the modern MIC, but the beginning of the MIC is typically seen as having occurred at the end of WW II. In order to provide for the huge military needs during WW II, many domestic industries in the private sector converted their manufacturing centers to weapons and military manufacturing. These firms discovered that the reliable purchases of these weapons by the government created higher profit margins than the goods they previously produced, especially during times of war. This is the first step of creating the MIC. However, though these companies tried building industries similar to MIC, they never referred or called them MIC. Hence, the concept and idea of MIC was introduced by President Dwight Eisenhower of USA who, in his 1961 farewell address warned against the potentially strong influence and power generated by the military industrial complex that had been created through the massive military mobilization during WW II. Since then, the concept has flourished and is still flourishing till today.

2.2 National Security

National security is the protection through a variety of means (military, paramilitary and civil) of vital economic and political interests, the loss of which will threaten fundamental values and the vitality of the state. This connotes that the nation and its survival is uppermost to individuals, associations, political parties and pressure groups, military and para-military bodies. Hence, national security is not seen as an exclusive duty of the military and para-military bodies, but the shared concern of everyone thereby making every citizen of any given state a national security asset as well as security operative. A state is therefore nationally secured when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate national interests to avoid war, and is able, if challenged to maintain them by war.

3. Military Industrial Complex and National Security in Nigeria, 2015 – 2022

Between 2015 and 2022, Nigeria cannot boast of having developed a strong and advanced MIC which is capable of producing most of the military requirements needed to ward off every kind of security threats and maintain a stable national security. This explains why Nigeria and the government of President Buhari relied more on the importation and purchase of military hardware and equipment for Nigeria's security agencies to tackle security threats. In his speech at the National Defence College in Abuja shortly after he assumed office in 2015, President Buhari stated that Nigeria must evolve viable mechanisms for near self-sufficiency in military equipment and logistics production complemented only by very advanced foreign technologies. This he further demonstrated when in 2018 he signed the Executive Orders 5 (EO5) directing ministries, departments and agencies of government to engage indigenous professionals in the planning, design and execution of national security projects and maximize in-country capacity in all contacts and transactions with science, engineering and technology components. More so, President Buhari reiterated and re-emphasized his position on the need to establish a viable MIC in Nigeria when in his opening remarks at a 2-day Mid-Term Ministerial Performance Review Retreat in 2021, he affirmed that it is time Nigeria starts building its own weapons to curtail dependence on foreign supply, hence had instructed the Ministry of Defence to create a modest MIC for the local production of weapons to meet some of the requirements of the country's armed forces, which would address Nigeria's over dependence on other countries for military equipment and logistics.

In the lens of the above, it reveals how much the then government understood the importance of establishing a strong MIC in Nigeria. It also reveals the effort of the government in actualizing this goal. This, probably, might be because of his background as a retired military officer. Hence, explains his strong position on the need to develop MIC in Nigeria, not only for its benefit to the economy, but also to the readily availability of military hardware and equipment for the military and other security agencies in tackling national security threats in Nigeria. Though, it should be noted that one must not be a military or security personnel before he knows the importance of MIC to any nation.

However, more than any other time since the return of democratic rule in 1999, the Nigerian Armed

Forces (NAF) received more equipment and increased weaponry from the federal government during the administration of President Buhari (2015-2023), which was designed to contain the spiraling security challenges as the nation battled insurgents, bandits, rogue herdsmen, unknown gunmen and oil thieves. According to Nwezeh,

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) acquired 38 aircraft since President Buhari assumed office in 2015. It procured 12 A-29 Super Tucano Fighter jets, 10 Super Mushshak fighter planes, 5 Mi-35M attack helicopters, 4 Augusta 109 helicopters, 3 J-F 17 Thunder jets, 2 Bell 412 helicopters, and 2 Mi 171-E helicopters...on the Nigerian Navy (NN), he stated that

The Nigerian Navy (NN) also acquired, between 2015 and 2023, 200 Riverine Patrol Boats and 114 Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs). It also procured 22 fast attack Boats, 14 Aerial Vehicles (drones), 14 house boats, 14 River Town Boats, 12 Manta Class/Inshore Patrol Craft (IPC), 3 Whaler Boats, 4 helicopters, and 4 Barges/Tugboats. Others include 14 House boats, 2 Seaward Defence Boats (SDB) And 4 Capital Ships.

For the Nigerian Army (NA) he asserted that, The Nigerian Army (NA) also acquired hundreds of new equipment including VT-4 main battle tanks, SH 4 battle tanks, MRAPs, ARRV & Mine Sweepers, Infantry Fighting vehicles, and self-propelled howitzers. Others include armoured fighting vehicles, mountain climber bikes, STI light tanks, 700 troop-carrying vehicles all assembled in Nigeria among others.

Although, it is undisputed that the above procurements have aided significantly the military operations in one way, but in another way it keeps draining the economy of the country which also forms part of the national security of the country. Hence, dependence on foreign procurement of military requirements is aiding military operations, and at the same time, detrimental to the national security of Nigeria with the later far significant than the former. This would have been different if sufficient money and efforts were invested in the development of MIC in Nigeria. It should be noted that within the period of this study, the budgetary allocation to defence and security was at increase. Between 2016 and 2022, Nigeria spent nearly \$20billion on defence and security with China as the largest foreign supplier of military equipment to Nigeria since 2007. In 2019, Nigeria and the Chinese North Industries Group Corporation Limited signed

weapons supply contract, which worth about \$152million and included VT-4 main battle tanks, STI light tanks, SH-5 self-propelled 105mm howitzers, Buffalo vehicles, Armoured guard booths, etc. these were offloaded into Nigeria in 2020. In the fiscal year 2022, the Nigerian Ministry of Defence spent about \$15billion on capital expenditure for military security operations; \$1trillion on defence operations and the procurement of military hardware, upgrade of utility vehicles, and arms and ammunitions.

Inasmuch as it is unarguably that the various military procurements within the period of study beefed up security operations, it is also unarguably that Nigeria faced various intense security threats within the same period. One thing is certain, no matter how friendly a country is with another, it cannot sell to her the best military equipment to tackle her security challenges, hence will mostly be attained if the country has her own well developed MIC. This is to say that national security can best be sustained and readily responded to with a strong MIC developed. For instance, if USA had not developed her own MIC during WW II, where would she had quickly purchased the atomic bomb used against Japan in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which had a tremendous and significant impact to the end of the war? Or, which country would have willingly sold out such a powerful weapon to her? The answers are simply nowhere and no country would have sold out such weapon because it forms part of the nation's power. Secondly, had the defunct Republic of Biafra no developed her own local weapons during the Nigerian Civil war (1967-1970) through her Research and Production Unit, it is so obvious that the war would have not lasted the way it did. In essence, not only that a strong MIC boosts a country's power to respond easily and quickly to her national security, it also makes her a strong force to be reckoned with. Additionally, when a state relies heavily on foreign acquisition, its economic cost increases, especially when it is faced with security challenges and hence, this predicates the importance of MIC and strong manufacturing industries as a crucial factor in effectively promoting national security. This significantly informs why Russia pushed hard for her industrialization process in the 1930s under Joseph Stalin, especially in light and heavy industries, and also some Third World countries like Brazil, India and South Africa pushing hard in the 1960s for an enhanced MIC in their various countries. Of course, we can see the results of their efforts today as far as their national security is concerned.

Therefore, no country can comfortably and effectively combat her national security threats

without a strong MIC vehemently developed in such country. Nigeria speaks volume of this assertion within the under study. The various security threats in Nigeria within this period should have been a necessity that propels a stronger push for invention (development of a viable MIC) instead of relying more on foreign procurements. In addition, delay in quick supplies, readily available of sophisticated weapons and ammunitions at all times, quality of weapons supplied, embargos, self-reliance, safety of the national economy, etc should have also serve as a necessity for the development of a strong MIC in Nigeria within this period of study, especially with increasing security threat. Hence, the more the security challenges, the more needful for the development of a viable MIC. It is very much possible that these foreign suppliers, directly or indirectly, fuel some of these security challenges for their arms business to keep booming. Because, the more security challenges a country like Nigeria faces, the more money the foreign arms suppliers make since they not only supply to Nigeria, but also to terrorists and insurgents. Meanwhile, it is worth acknowledging here the efforts of DICON in collaboration with an indigenous arms company, Proforce Defence Limited, in the manufacturing of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protective (MRAP) vehicle in 2021 named "Ezugwu" in honour of Gen. Victor Ezugwu on whose stewardship as the Director General (DG) of DICON the MRAP was manufactured. The Ezugwu MRAP is reportedly armoured against small arms fire and using flat bottom armour technology, its hull can withstand a 7kg TNT explosion and its wheel can withstand a 12kg TNT explosion. This is a high indication that DICON as well as other military industries have the capacity of producing the military requirements in Nigeria for our national security when pushed harder and enhanced with significant government support. In fact, this can be seen as a breakthrough for DICON as it has gone beyond the production of small arms and ammunitions with heavy dependence on foreign partners for many requirements.

On his visit to Washington in 2015, Buhari accused US of "aiding and abetting" Boko Haram in the past by refusing to sell weapons to Nigeria. This US act was as a result of a US law preventing the government from selling arms to countries like Nigeria on the basis of human rights abuses. This US' stance had effectively stopped other Western countries from selling sophisticated military hardware to Nigeria. Also, according to Akinyemi, the Northern Elders Forum (NEF), through its Director of Publicity and Advocacy, Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, asserted that in 2015 the Buhari's

government requested for US military support in the form of Super Tucano jet fighters for the Nigerian Air Force (NAF). But, two years later, that jet delivery was rescinded, reasons hinged on the poor religious relations in Nigeria. All of these references highlight the difficulty and complexities Nigeria faces in respect to her national security as her a result of her overdependence on foreign supplies for her military requirements. Of course, when these weapons and ammunitions are not readily supplied and made available, the fight against national security threats suffers. On the other hand, when huge capital is invested in steady procurement of these military requirements, as in some cases within the period under study, the economic aspect of Nigeria's national security suffers to. Hence, the need for a viable MIC in Nigeria to achieve less import of these military requirements, more sophisticated local production, and improvement of the country's national security in all angles remains a crucial one. On this backdrop, it is worth mentioning here that in 2020, the then Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. T. Y. Buratai, was optimistic that with the state of the transformation in infrastructure, equipment and general facilities of DICON, Nigeria is on the path of attaining self-sufficiency in military armaments and hardware. This clearly indicates not only that Nigeria has all it takes to establish a strong MIC, but also that she can do so if necessary conditions and variables are in place. This drives us to factors inhibiting the development of a strong MIC in Nigeria.

4. Factors Inhibiting the Development of a Strong MIC in Nigeria

Just like the fate of other non-military industries, a lot of factors are militating against the development of a viable MIC in Nigeria. Among many factors, five will be discussed in this section.

Inadequate equipment and funding of R&D

According to Ogunkale, one of the major problems DICON is facing is the absence of a well-equipped and well-funded R&D. This, on its own, has not only affected the efficiency and productivity of DICON, but the development of a viable MIC in Nigeria. In his own view, Adoba asserted that Nigeria's technological base is weak as a result of the lack of investment in R&D. Diligent R&D into military weapons systems, equipment and platforms would eventually lead to self-reliance in the production and maintenance of such weapons systems and platforms.

4.1 Overdependence on Import of Military Equipment

Nigeria, over the years, highly depends on the import of equipment which is not sustainable due to foreign exchange limitations. The over reliance on foreign supplies is a big challenge to self-reliance through the development of a strong MIC. The more Nigeria highly depends on foreign countries for her military requirements, the more she finds it difficult to look inwards for her self-development. Also, over reliance on foreign supplies makes Nigeria feels she can't produce such things she is importing of which a strong and sustainable import substitution strategy, like in the case of Brazil, can go a long way in minimizing this over reliance on foreign supplies and further aid self-reliance.

4.2 Policy Implementations

Nigeria is among the best policy making countries in the world, but unfortunately these policies are only good on papers without adequate implementations. These government policies, if adequately implemented can help the development of a strong MIC in Nigeria that can produce military hardware to support military operations on sustainable basis. However, this inadequate policy implementation is not unconnected with high corruption (most especially in terms of embezzling and siphoning funds meant for arms and ammunition procurements) and inadequate political will of the Nigerian leadership.

4.3 Poor Economic and Industrial Base

The development of a strong MIC in Nigeria can adequately be supported by a strong and virile economic development and a good reflection of how strong a national economy is would be found in the nature of the industrial base that the nation exhibits. This is obviously lacking in Nigeria as she is very much unstable in economy and has no strong industrial base. This explains why she imports virtually everything. Poor economy and industrial base to support and supply the MIC with the necessary raw materials inhibits its development in Nigeria.

4.4 European Imperialism

Inasmuch as various internal factors are standing in Nigeria's way of developing a strong MIC, external factors are not totally left out of the picture. European imperialism has been and is still one of the major hindrances to Nigeria's ability to develop a strong MIC in particular and viable industries in general. The Western, and even Chinese and Russian powers will be very much uncomfortable if a strong MIC is

developed in Nigeria. Apart from losing billions of dollars and markets, a Nigerian arms industry, if well developed and operated, will limit their domination in the country's internal affairs and strengthen her diplomatic muscle.

5. Conclusion

The importance and significant contribution of a strong MIC in Nigeria in particular and all over the countries of the world in general cannot be overemphasized. A strong MIC in Nigeria will go a long way in aiding national security, both in military and economic perspectives. This can be very much feasible if an adequate infrastructure, especially 24-hours electricity power supply is established; re-awakening of strategic industries wasting across the country, which will improve the industrial base for the development and sustenance of MIC; skillful and innovative personnel in the design, innovation and development of high quality military weapons system, hence the study of military technology should be established in Nigerian institutions, particularly in institutes of technology and the Nigerian Military institutions. Other significant factors that will aid the development of a strong MIC in Nigeria include; the enhancement of a sustainable R&D programs in higher institutions and military establishments; availability of adequate finance to companies like DICON to promote domestic production of defence hardware; consistency in implementation of policies and recommendations; etc. Therefore, national security and defence could be enhanced in Nigeria if a resilient MIC capable of providing the input necessary to create a well led national security and defence component to defend a her from security threats exists.

References

- Adoba Isreal, "Military Industrial Complex as a National Security Component for Nigeria: Analyzing the BRIC Countries of Brazil, India and South Africa," (2015).
- Aja Akpuru-Aja, *Policy and Strategic Studies: Uncharted Waters of War and peace in International Relations*, (Nigeria: Willyrose & Appleseed Publishing Co., 1999).
- Bioluwatife Akinyemi, "Weapons Delay: Blame Military Conduct not Kukah, NeEF tells Presidency." <https://tribuneonline.com/weapons-delay-blame-military-conduct-not-kukah-nef-tells-presidency-2/>. Accessed on 5th October 2023.

- Cartiglia Katherine, "The Military Industrial Complex and its Impact on Politics," (Unpublished B. A. Dissertation, Tulane University, USA, 2021).
- Dada Kayode Sunday John, Akila Jechoniah and Omeiza Suleiman Usman, "The Defence Industry Corporation for the Advancement in Research and Development on Military Hardware and Warfare of Army in Nigeria," *Journal of Advances in Military Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (2022).
- Dunne J. Paul and Elisabeth Skons, "The Military Industrial Complex," in Andrew T. H. Tan (ed.), *The Global Arms Trade: A Handbook*, (UK: Routledge, 2010).
- Elaigwu Victor A., *The Military and the Management of Civil Crises in Nigeria 1960 – 1993*, (Nigeria: Nigerian Defence Academy Press, 2003).

<https://www.tekedia.com/nigeria-to-begin-local-firearms-production>