

IS STATE POLICE A PANACEA TO SECURITY THREAT IN NIGERIA?

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ABSTRACT

The issue of whether or not the states of the Nigerian federation should have their own Police Forces has become a vexed issue in recent time. This is not unconnected with the high and sophisticated crime rate and insecurity attendant with the country. No doubt, the sustenance of order, security of life, legality, development and democracy may be difficult without the roles of the Police in a given polity. If these roles are assessed vis-à-vis the security challenge in Nigeria, it will be right to say that the Federal Policing has performed below expectation. Pseudo-federalism, tribes and diverse culture have been the major reasons for the protagonists of the state police. The antagonists have argued against the establishment of State Police stating the fact that the country is not ripe for it and insisting that the state governors might turn them into personal army to fight political oppositions. Would state police solve the security challenges in Nigeria even if it is established? This is a serious question that begs for attention. The crux of this paper is to critically examine the missing link for Nigeria's security threat. The paper concludes that whether state police is established or not, there is need for constitutional and police reforms to address leadership crisis and corruption in Nigeria. If not, the security situation in Nigeria will continue dwindling.

Keywords: State police, security challenge, leadership crisis, corruption, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of enforcement of law and unity in diversity, the constitution stipulates a centralized police which is known as the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) (section 214 of the 1999

constitution of Nigeria). NPF is an important security outfit of the government essentially charged with the internal security of the nation (NPF, 1996). For some years now, the country's police image has been under constant and severe negative criticisms by the press and the public. This is not unconnected with the fact that, the police force is alleged to be bedeviled with social vices such as graft, corruption, robbery, indiscipline and so on (Tunde-Awe, 2005). All these have posed and still posing serious security threat and loss of confidence in the NPF by the citizens.

Thus, the continuous increase rate of sophisticated crime, incessant killings and security threat over a period of time coupled with the helplessness, lackadaisical and sluggish attitude of the centrally controlled police in Nigeria has conditioned the clamour for the creation of state police (Ehinder, 2012). However, there is opinion that suggests that state police will lead to a situation in which there will be two rivaling institutions of the same responsibility, duty and nature. This is mainly the opinion of the antagonists of state police. Nevertheless, the protagonists of the state police maintain that the creation of state police is the only answer to all Nigeria security challenges (Adedeji, 2012).

From the abovementioned schools of thought on the concept of state police, and despite the structural deficiency of the Nigerian police as it were, caution is needed for critical examination of the root cause of security challenge in Nigeria to avoid pitching tent with those clamouring for a change from status quo. For many years now, the debate for the creation of State Police in Nigeria has endured. There has been a plethora of strong arguments put forward by those in favour of the proposal and those against it. Be that as it may, in the view of the fact that the concept of state police is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria, so also the establishment of a single police was not an accident. Therefore, there is need to thread the path of the missing link for the country's security situation. By so doing, it would give room for effective measure of controlling the security threat and taming the monster of leadership and social vices, which have been the challenges of effective policing in Nigeria.

The paper is organized into five main sections. The introductory part is a brief review of the traditional and constitutional functions of the Nigerian police. The second part narrates briefly,

the historical development of Nigeria police right from the early days of colonization of Lagos; through the whole of colonial era then post independent Nigeria. The third section bothers on the debates for and against state police in Nigeria. The fourth segment of the paper is on the missing link and weakness of the Nigerian police. While part five resides on the mechanisms or things to consider in tackling the security challenge in Nigeria irrespective of the structure (Federal or State Police) of evolving a better police institution for Nigeria. The paper infers that without an efficient police, Nigeria's democracy may be difficult to nurture and consolidate.

HISTORY OF POLICE IN NIGERIA: COLONIAL ERA

An adequate analysis of the problems and challenges of any police force should start with the appreciation of the history and dynamics of its development. The raging debate on the necessity of State Police in Nigeria is interesting and compelling. Without a shadow of doubt, the Nigerian Police as presently constituted is an overstretched outfit that has completely transmogrified from the template of its original designers and founders. The present day organized policing was a colonial creation. The various communities that constitute the present day Nigeria had mechanism in place to protect their societies (Rotimi, 2001). It was natural that Nigerian colonial masters secured their lives and properties with the annexation of Lagos as a British colony in April 1861 (Alemika, 2010). The British, without wasting time in proposing the establishment of police, established a consular guard to be stationed in Lagos. Although the request was turned down by the British foreign office for economic reason, it was not long before the acting governor of Lagos colony realized the indispensability of organized police in the conquered territory (Onyeozili, 2005; Adedeji, 2012).

According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2012), there are three important historical issues relevant to the understanding of the development of police forces and police – public relations in Nigeria. First, colonial conquest of Nigerian nationalities took place disconnected over a long period (1861-1903). Nigeria's constituent nationalities were conquered at different period. As a nationality is conquered British colonial presence is established by establishing a police force for the territory (Tamuno, 1970). The second reason is that violence and fraud were employed in the conquest of the nationalities. Consequently, the colonizer feared resistance and police forces under various names were established and employed as instrument of violence and oppression

against the indigenous population. Third, given the character of colonial rule, police forces were the instrument used to sustain the alien domination. The colonial police were not accountable to the colonized but to the colonizers. By 1862 according to Onyeozili (2005), the British government had increased the constabulary to 100 and by the following year, there were 600 men on the nominal role of the constabulary.

The establishment of police forces in colonial Nigeria also reflected administrative policy and concerns. One of the noticeable features of early colonial police is that too much emphasis was placed on maintenance of law and order. Much emphasis was placed on suppression of riots to the detriment of prevention, detection and prosecution of crime. For this reason no attention was paid to educational standard of the recruits, as a police recruit only needed to pass test of physical fitness before being considered as a fit and proper person for recruitment to the police (Onoge, 1993).

Tamuno (1970) argued that:

The police powers given to the Native Authorities after the 1914 amalgamation were therefore of greater relevance to Western and Northern Nigeria than to the south-eastern parts of Nigeria. As Native Authorities, the Chiefs had their police powers extended and consolidated under the laws of 1916 and 1924. The Native Authority Ordinance conferred on the Native Authorities the responsibility for maintaining order in their respective areas. Under it, they were allowed to prevent crime and arrest offenders by employing ‘any person’ to assist them in carrying out their police duties. Their police powers were increased under the Protectorate Laws Enforcement

Under these laws, according to Alemika (2010), ‘palace messengers’ - *the akodas* - of the Yoruba kings were recognized and reformed as olopas, while in the Emirates of the North, the palace *dogarai* also were recognized and reformed as *yan/dan doka*. In both cases, these traditional ‘police’ constituted the nucleus of local police forces of the colonial era (Ahire, 1993). However, the contact of the Yoruba’s with the colonial police must have greatly influenced the Yoruba’s in organizing the local security men along that of colonialist. Accordingly, the Egba

united government established an Egba police on the 27th of July 1905 (Adedeji, 2012). The membership of this police was largely drawn from 'ode' called native hunters and their original assignment was to combat the menace of armed robbers considered to be on the increase then. Ibadan and many other Yoruba towns subsequently copied the initiatives of the Egbas (Alemika, 1993).

Be that as it may, the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorate to form Nigeria in 1914 did not follow a similar pattern. It was not until 1st April 1930 that the Nigeria police became unified under the command of an inspector general whose office was at the force headquarters in Lagos. This pattern was maintained by the colonialist till 1st October, 1960 when Nigeria gained independence and survived till few years after i.e. 1966 (Alemika, 2010).

POLICE IN NIGERIA'S POST-COLONIAL ERA

Nigeria joined the comity of independent States from Britain on the 1st October 1960. Not until the termination of the democratic rule by the military on the 18th of January 1966, the politicians of the 1st republic maintained the policing arrangement bequeathed to Nigeria on the eve of independence. Until 1966, the local police forces in Northern and Western Nigeria coexisted with the federal police force which is also known as NPF. It appeared as if the politicians of the newly independent Nigeria had no temperament that can sustain multiple police forces. The local forces were disbanded as recommended by a panel set up in 1966 by the military regime of JTG Aguiyi Ironsi. The Panel headed by Gobir, was requested to consider the desirability of dual (Local and National) or centralized (unified) police and prisons service. The Gobir Panel submitted its report to the military regime led by General Gowon and recommended the abolition of local police forces and prison services. The Committee condemned the local police forces of poorly trained, corrupt and used for partisan political purposes, including the repression of opponents, by traditional rulers and politicians in Northern Nigeria as well as by political parties and governments in power in the Northern and Western Regions (Ohonbamu, 1972).

The experience of the NPF under the military rule according to Alemika and Chukwuma (2012) may be characterized as sweet from 1966 -1979 and bitter from 1983-1999. The military rule under General Gowon may indeed be viewed as the sweetest period of police-military

collaboration in governance. Between 1966 and 1979, the police were co-opted into governance by the military as state governors and members of the national ruling council. More importantly, the police were respected as partners by the military rulers. However, during the period of 1983-1999, the police lost its high profile and prominence in government, although it continued to be incorporated as junior partner as state governors (Alemika, 2010). However, the Force as an organization was neglected in terms of funding and equipping. This was attributed to the fear of the military that a strong police force may constitute a threat to the Armed Forces, especially by acting as a counterforce during military coups. Instead of equipping the police to serve as the primary tool for promoting and protecting internal security, the military governments resorted to establishing special task forces with army and police personnel (Alemika, 2010). Each unit of such was led by a soldier, often junior in rank to the police on the task force. This demonstrated the subordinate role assigned to the police, the impact of which is still felt thirteen years after military rule i.e. 1999 - 2012.

Of the entire problems facing the Nigeria police as an institution, none is more pronounced than corruption, leadership crisis and high centralization of power. All these and more shall be discussed in the subsequent section – missing link. This conclusion can hardly be faulted, considering the manner by which the rank and file usually extorts money from drivers of commercial vehicles and motorcycles. Little wonder that one of the first steps taken by the current leadership of the NPF was the cancellation of checkpoint, believed to be the Achilles heel of the NPF.

THE DEBATE FOR AND AGAINST STATE POLICE IN NIGERIA

It is no longer news that Nigeria is ravaged with high rate of insecurity and other social malaise. These have brought about different schools of thought about the high rate of insecurity and how to properly suggest a lasting solution to it. Be that as it may, some people have opined that the only solution to the security threat of Nigeria is to embrace the federating principle of state police. While on the other hand, some have argued against state police, citing that Nigeria is not ripe for it. According to Jonathan, (2011) “State police may be theoretically good, but looking at our political environment, it could be abused to the detriment of the country”. The opposing camp on the issue of state police system gives a clear indication on their various views on the

need for constitutional amendment particularly the clause that attends to the police as the sole function of the federal government. Would the police be adopted as stooges by top state officials to defend their criminal activities, as insinuated by the antagonists of state police? Or will state police serve as an antidote to the country security challenge as anticipated by the protagonists of state police? This is the crux on which this segment is based. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand the two points of views for us to appreciate the missing link before proposing the way forward.

THE ARGUMENT FOR STATE POLICE

The strongest argument in favour of the establishment of a state police is that it accords with the principle of federalism on which Nigeria styles its constitution. As a federal state, the power of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is divided between the central government called the federal government and the 36 states of the federation (see section 2 subsections 2 of 1999 Constitution). Law making function in the centre is the responsibility of the national assembly while the states houses of assembly perform similar function subject to the limit permissible by the legislative list contained in second schedule to the constitution (section 4 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria). More so, the executive powers of the federation are by virtue of section 5(1) of Nigeria 1999 constitution vested in the president while that of the states are vested in the governors. The exercise of these executive powers on both cases extend to the execution and maintenance of the constitution and all laws made by either the national or state assemblies, as may be appropriate. However, the continuous existence of state police in Nigeria is the historical imbalance in Nigeria federalism

One of the advocates of state police is Governor Babatunde Fashola of Lagos State. He argued that every state that has the power and can give judgment through its state high courts and magistrates and make laws through its state assemblies and legislators must have the concomitant powers to enforce its law and police its state (Onwuzuligbo, 2012). This is an extension of the principle of federalism to which Nigeria's federal and state courts exist (section 6 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria). Thus, federalism is not complete without the existence of state police. In more advanced federating societies, there are federal and state police. For instance, the American federal system has Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), State Police

establishments and City or County Police. Big institutions like Universities and Parks have their own Police outfits. A critical analysis of the constitutional provisions mentioned in this point reveal that each of the states constituting Nigeria is meant to be a complete government on its own with powers to make laws, enforce them and punish offenders through the judicial arm. Yet under the Nigeria legal system, the only institution saddled with the responsibility of enforcing law is the Nigeria police force, a federal agency (section 214 of the 1999 Constitution).

Besides, the role of the federal government towards effective policing is undermined due to politicking. The constitution makes no pretence as to whom really, is the overall boss of the Nigeria police. The provision according to section 215 (4) of 1999 constitution of Nigeria is unequivocal that a state commissioner of police shall be at liberty to refer a directive given by a state governor to the president before acting on them. In Nigeria where most government decisions are influenced by politics, a governor's directive to the state commissioner of police is prone to constant veto. A classical example of the usage of presidential power to undermine the state, among several others, was the murder trial of Nigeria former senate majority leader, Teslim Folarin in 2011. Without waiting for the legal advice to issue on the murder charge brought against him (Teslim Folarin), the police believed to be acting the script of the federal government of Nigeria, unilaterally withdrew the charge against the accused person (Sahara Reporters, 2011). Another clear example of the powerlessness of the states can be seen in the unilateral disbandment of Bayelsa state security outfit by President Goodluck Jonathan (James, 2011).

It is fallacious and exigent to ascribe the managerial capability of an institution like police to a particular tier of government in Nigeria. It is expedient and essential to revisit the creation of state police. The decision to completely cede policing to the federal authorities in Nigeria was premised on the wrong assumption that the federating states in Nigeria lack the power to maintain a disciplined force, especially against the backdrop of the experience of the first republic, which has been initially mentioned in this piece. But experience has shown that the federal police are not immune from the malaise that afflicted the local police while it existed. Corruption, indiscipline, oppression etc, all factors that contributed to the demise of the native

police still hinder federal police in the discharge of their constitutional role. There is need to decentralize the federal power on the issue of security to avoid been overburdened. After all, the laws that abrogate state police are not immutable.

Another argument, relating to the above, in support of state police, is that Nigeria is too large and heterogeneous for its security matters to be over centralized. In a country that is usually quagmired by administrative bottlenecks and unnecessary bureaucracies often waste time on simple matter like deployment of troops to quell insurrection, the effectiveness and efficiency of local militias like Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Bakassi boys, Egbesu boys, Vigilante Groups etc have lend credence to the belief by many that security is a local problem and only those who understand the terrain can manage it.

Accordingly, security these days, in Nigeria, is seen as protection of Abuja the seat of power alone. It is the individual states that now spend heavily to subsidize the operation of policemen deployed to their domains to ensure that lives and properties are secured. For instance, Lagos State has in place a Security Trust Fund which is used to fund the operation of the state Rapid Response Squad. Arms and ammunitions are purchased from this fund while officers and men serving in the outfit are also paid special allowance. Ogun State and Oyo State to mention but few also have ad hoc security agencies funded from money in the States Security Fund. If a state spends heavily on matters relating to security, then it must be able to exert some form of control, after all he who pays the piper dictates the tune (Adedeji, 2012).

THE ARGUMENT AGAINST STATE POLICE

At this juncture one would naturally begin to consider the option of State Police judging from the above argument. As attractive as that option is, one must tread that path very cautiously. Truly, in more advanced societies, there is Federal and State Police existing independently, that should not form the basis of state police in Nigeria. One of the major arguments against state police in Nigeria is the problem of misplaced priority or abuse of office. It is believed by the antagonists that Nigerian State Governors would without doubt convert State Police outfits under their control to instruments for pursuing and executing their political whims, nuances and caprices. The establishment of state police may be theoretically good, judging from the advanced

countries, but it could be abused to the detriment of the country looking at the political environment of Nigeria (Jonathan, 2011). The argument against state police opines further with a clue from what is happening in the local government level, which supposed to be independent third tier of government, has been hijacked by the state governors. Local government chairmen in Nigeria are mere glorified ‘houseboys’ or ‘hallelujah boys’ of the Governors. The Governors care less about Local Government autonomy and also care less about the people’s right to elect their leaders. It is against the background of the roles played by the state governors in the local government that wisdom is needed in allowing the states to keep their own police institutions.

Yet again to be considered is the problem of conflict of interest and challenges that is likely to be fallout of multiple security agents. Although the police as presently structured are guilty of most, if not all allegations leveled against local police the issue is whether or not Nigeria should face the challenge of a single police instead of having to fight many battles at the same time. It is equally doubtful whether Nigerian politicians have the temperament to resolve amicably the jurisdictional problems that are likely to arise from operation of multiple police forces.

Besides conflict of interest is the problem of funding. The establishment of state police in Nigeria of today may not be feasible because of the problem of funding. Virtually all the states depend largely on federal allocation for survival in Nigeria. This is already challenging the feasibility of many states whose incomes are hardly enough to meet their expenditure. To add police responsibility to the affairs of states, most of which are still battling issues relating to the payment of minimum wage appears to be overkill (Adetumbi, 2012). Even Lagos state which, has been assisting in the funding of policemen deployed to the state have been doing so through the means of a trust fund specifically set up for that purpose.

Another reason while the clamour for the establishment of state police in Nigeria is likely to be seriously resisted is that, going by history, nothing has changed in the condition that initially led to the demise of native police in the first instance. Native police of Nigeria’s first republic was a most abused public institution (Adedeji, 2012). Therefore, any attempt to examine again the issue of native or state police will amount to mere repetition (Rotimi, 2001:129-197). For the sake of emphasis, it suffices to state however, that native police in pre 1966 Nigeria symbolized

absolute powers by local authorities which powers were recklessly used by politicians of that era for selfish political gains. In both the northern and western politicians freely utilized native police to oppress political opponents and rig elections (Adedeji, 2012). For instance, in the west, the involvement of the thugs in native police uniform by politicians led to operation *wet e* (see Soyinka, 2001). The case of operation *wet e* coupled with some other factors served as the remote causes of the 15th January, 1966 military takeover in Nigeria. As argued by Adedeji (2012), states and local governments might have been outlawed from creating state police, their recourse to ethnic militias like Bakasi boys, Egbesu boys, the O.P.C and so on to inflict havoc on political opponents surely foretell how dangerous it would have been to legally allow state and local authorities to control the use of force. The revelation that members of the dreaded Boko Haram have sponsors among prominent politicians in Nigeria is an issue that must be of serious concern (Aleyomi, 2012; Businessday November 23, 2011).

SECURITY THREAT IN NIGERIA: THE MISSING LINK

The poor performance of the Nigeria police has necessitated the clamour for state police to be or no to be. Many people have argued that state police is a global practice where strange movements, suspicious characters and micro crimes are easily nipped in the bud before they blossom. One may be tempted to be part of this call giving the current state of insecurity the country is going through. Uncontrolled kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery and so on are some of the crimes committed daily in the country where there is police force. The weaknesses of Nigeria's police, which have hampered its efficiency and effectiveness should be considered and addressed, first and foremost, before clamouring for the decentralization or centralization of the police force. The sobering reality, however, is that the police in Nigeria have not had great success in dealing with either urban or rural crime. A difficult environment; the police force's traditional disinterest in the poor; and lack of resources both in terms of personnel and in skills and equipment hamper its ability to be effective.

One of the missing links to high level of insecurity in Nigeria is shortage of manpower in the Nigerian Police Force. Too often police presence in the high-density locations where most city dwellers live is only sporadic and the number of officers available is very small. The NPF is highly understaffed. The ratio of a police officer to a Nigeria citizen is 1:722 (Baker, 2010). This

means that a police officer is estimated to secure and protect 722 people among other things. Most of those who are available are commonly undertrained and may even lack literacy skills.

Moreover, the federal government often severely lack or misuse resources, institutional capacity, and in some cases unwarranted control and interference of police discharging their duties culminate to the police ineffectiveness. The country's security votes and available resources have largely and commonly been tilted heavily toward the military over the police. This preference for the military has weakened the police, who lack management and technical skills, interagency coordination, communication equipment, transport, and even lighting, office space, filing cabinets, stationary, computers, uniforms and forensic laboratories. All these undermine the effectiveness of the Nigerian police.

There is limited success in the effectiveness of Nigeria Police Force despite the introduction of police restructuring, training and oversight bodies. Accordingly, citizens expect a rapid transformation of policing in Nigeria. Rather, many continue to doubt the federal government ability and willingness to finance the necessary steps that promise police availability, accountability, integrity, effectiveness, and community partnership. The people's skepticism is reinforced by continuing media accounts of police abuse and collaboration with criminals and citizens' daily encounters paying bribes to police to allow them through traffic check points or to investigate crimes (Blueprint Newspaper, September 03 2012). This experience has driven many citizens to look elsewhere for protection (Baker, 2005). The situation is worse in Nigeria, because, people are vulnerable to attacks. There is need for an extra arrangement for security beyond what the state provides (Leach, 2003). In short, the present federal structure of policing in the official police protection is insufficient to address the growing violence experienced in Nigeria majorly the northern states.

Compounding these challenges is a long history of police neglect, corruption, and culture of impunity common in Nigeria, having its roots in part in coercive colonial policing practices. Police corruption has been defined according to Goldstein (1975) as the misuse of authority by a police officer in a manner designed to produce personal gain for himself or for others. According to IDASA (2007), the police in most African countries are significantly brutal, corrupt,

inefficient, unresponsive and unaccountable to the generality of the population. Indeed, multiple reports from Amnesty International, the International Bar Association, the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, and other respected international research institutes have frequently documented and criticized police behavior across the continent of which Nigeria is not exempted (see IDASA, 2007; Amnesty International, 2009; Baker, 2010). Although, corruption is endemic in all segments of the Nigerian society, it is particularly objectionable among the police because it is their occupational responsibility to prevent and work at its elimination and not to be responsible for its spread, entrenchment and legitimation as a norm of social and official interaction

Without a shred of doubt, the Nigeria police are really enmeshed in corruption like several other state institutions. But the degree of corrupt practices in the police appears too deep into the ‘fabrics and hearts’ of the organization (Adeyemi, 2001). If personnel of other institutions engage in corruption at all, they do it perhaps with caution while that of the police is done obviously more in the full glare of the public. The police have always been found wanting and incapable of stemming the crises most especially because of the disdain for them by members of the public. It is recognized that the police force has tried to ‘purge itself of bad eggs’ but this is not adequately made visible to the public, thereby creating the perception that the force always protect its errant officers. This manifestation of corrupt practices in the Nigerian police has really gone too far to mar the image of the police in the eyes of the public (Adebayo and Ojo, 2009).

The Nigeria police is an institution that no Nigerian loves to come in contact with, despite the fact that it is supposed to be a friend of the society, because of the high rate of corruption inhabited in the organization. Though, on the surface, the job of policing appears to be inherently corrupt on the ground that offenders will do everything possible and could also go to any length to escape, the long hands of the law both legitimately and otherwise. Corruption has a very dilapidating effect on police and the society at large. Indeed, a corrupt police is as good as having no police at all. Where law enforcers are law breakers, the society becomes worse-off. For the police to be effective and attain effective policing it must be on the positive rating of the society. A police with negative public perception is already hindered *ab initio* from being effective. Citizens are cynical about giving policemen information because it could result into

extorting money from the suspect. In short, the police is dysfunctional in Nigeria because of the culture of corruption that has eaten deep into its marrows. Until the culture of corruption is addressed, effective and efficient policing in Nigeria, be it federal or state police, will be a mirage.

Another important missing link or weakness of Nigeria's police is that Policing in Nigeria is plagued by several institutional problems that undermine the effectiveness and legitimacy of the NPF. According to Alemika (2010), institutional constraints of Nigerian police include:

a. Police Organization and Management - Organization and management of police forces in terms of vertical and horizontal decentralization and coordination of authority have implications for police behaviours, performance and image. The nature of rules of policing established by a police force, adherence to these rules, rewards or punishment for compliance or non-compliance influence police discipline, integrity, effectiveness, performance and legitimacy, including public estimation and support. The Nigeria Police Force needs to do a lot more in developing its organizational and managerial capacity to meet demands and challenges of policing in the country.

b. Police Personnel Management - In Nigeria, the aspect of the rules and provisions for recruitment, training, deployment, remuneration, promotion, discipline, pension and retirement are not given adequate and continuous attention. These affect police discipline, performance and image. Corruption, partisan and parochial considerations have contaminated the process and decisions relating to recruitment, deployment and promotion in the NPF, thereby dampening motivation and commitment to excellence, sacrifice and integrity in police-work. If staffing qualified people and given them leadership position is properly nurtured, development of a new Nigeria police is achievable and if not, the anti-intellectualism and anti-rationality that have long been embedded in the country's police forces may still extinguish the new light.

c. Information Management - The NPF has continued to neglect the critical area of information management, resulting in operational strategies being dependent on guesses instead of science or systematically produced and acquired knowledge. The ability of a police force to manage information relating to socio-economic and political trends and to relate such information to the

trend, pattern and severity of crimes will determine its capacity to plan and implement crime prevention and crime control policies, strategic plans and operations.

d. Personality of Police Personnel – The police is also careless about the recruitment process to test the emotional stability of a potential recruit in order to ensure that only those that can meet the challenges of police work in Nigeria, at present and in the near future are recruited. Personality of a police officer exercises influence on his or her behaviour, performance and relationship with the public. This is the reason why in many societies, potential recruits are subjected to a battery of psychological and other tests with a view to determining their emotional stability and social relation competence. The Police Service Commission and the NPF need to review the recruitment process in this regards. It will be a waste to recruit an individual who do not possess adequate academic qualification, strong emotional and moral qualities and a patriotic commitment to Nigeria, in an age or era characterized by computer crimes, sophisticated and technology assisted financial crimes, piracy, terrorism and espionage.

e. Police Culture - A collection of structural, institutional and personality factors create what has been variously referred to as police culture. Police ‘working personality’ and culture result from the elements of police-work, authority and isolation. Police-work breeds solidarity and occupational pathology characterized by ‘perceptions of the public as uncooperative, unsupportive and antagonistic toward the police’. In Nigeria, this engenders a tendency by the police to protect each other’s criminality and misconducts. As a result, the integrity of the police is undermined and a culture of impunity is thereby entrenched. These institutional problems are critical to the attainment and sustenance of an effective police force and deserve serious consideration and attention by the government and police leadership.

BETWEEN FEDERAL AND STATE POLICE: THE CONCLUSION AND WHICH WAY FORWARD?

The debate on whether the states should be permitted to recruit, train, fund and control own Police independent of federal government as obtains in the United Kingdom, Europe and United States of America is indeed very healthy for Nigeria’s democracy. However, the focus of the debate is despicable. For the discerning, it is clear that there has been a steady dangerous twist

with ethno-religious coloration (Aleyomi, 2012). But whichever side of the divide one finds himself, the ineptitude of the Nigeria Police is visible. Evidently too, the rising rate of crimes across the length and breadth of the country, stoutly support this point. Indeed, one does not need to hire a star gazer or a prophet before coming to the understanding that the nation is currently doddering on an untamed monster following the activities of religious extremists. The situation is even more precarious when one considers the evident failure on the part of federal security agencies to respond to such security challenges as the sustained pipeline vandalization in the Niger Delta region, kidnapping, high octane murders and assassinations, killings, among others (see Nigerian Tribune, October 05 2012; The Punch, October 10 2012). This lacuna may have further aggravated the call for state police as a remedial measure.

There are no misgivings that the security challenges in the country are getting worse every passing day. Instead of improving, it is further deteriorating to its lowest ebb. The state of insecurity has indeed affected socio-economic activities, especially in the northern part of the country where killings and destruction of lives and property is well pronounced. In fact, in the history of Nigeria, there has never been a time the country witnessed serious security breach such as now. There is need however to proffer adequate mechanism in addressing this menace. First and foremost, there is need to address some of the historical and structural imbalances in the federalism practiced in Nigeria, especially, as it affects key institutions of a federal or state government of which policing is a major one.

There should be structural changes to make policing more effective. In order for police and security reforms in Nigeria to be effective, key institutional reforms must be implemented. For community based policing to be effective, including decentralization of authority, a beat orientation, forward planning, performance evaluation, strategies to overcome officer resistance and sufficient funding. The existing structure is seen as a charade, creating division and discontent. For example, the appointment and dismissal of the Inspector General of Police by the President single handedly is anti-federalism, thereby need to be reformed or changed. The President should submit a list of qualified candidates to the national assembly for selection and also, the national assembly should be aware of any dismissal

As a country operating a federal system of government, all the basic tenets of federalism should be put in place. A functional federalism is necessary in a heterogeneous society, such as Nigeria, and not to be practiced partially. Therefore, the need for state police cannot be overemphasized. The concerns that state police could be misused by state governors or with the fear that this could become dangerous with a political history of witch-hunting and intimidation of political opponents, and by extension, the 'do or die' political philosophy, which successive leaders have passed down the line, can be constitutionally addressed. There is no practice without advantages and disadvantages. On the issue of establishing state police, judging from the argument for and against, it is clear that the good side of state police outweighs the bad side. Even at the federal level, there are pockets of cases where the government uses the police as agents of intimidation. This is not to say that the present police force in Nigeria is ineffective but there is need to unbundle police institution because of the multi-cultural and multi-ethnicity of Nigeria. To check the excesses of the state governors and other state officials when state police is established, there is need to construct the laws that would effectively recognize the challenges and put necessary safeguards in its operation to prevent abuse. More so, the fact that there is state police would not in any way abolish the federal police. It should be concurrently practiced and the constitution will spell out the duties of each police system and their limitations.

As one of the major imperatives for an enduring democracy in Nigeria, a better police is of utmost significance. Federal government which has exclusive powers over the Nigeria police need to act quickly to save the organization from its ruin. There is still large a portion of police officers that is barely literate. Entry qualification into the force should be at least holders of Ordinary National Diploma certificate or its equivalent. Those that were recruited long time ago should be advised within a specified period of time to update their knowledge. While United Nations recommends one policeman to 400 citizens, Nigeria has the ratio of one policeman to 722 citizens. This low strength level has occasioned a situation in which policemen are easily overpowered by criminals coupled with the fact that some of these policemen are not well trained. Thus, training should be a continuous exercise at regular intervals, to enhance the performance of the ranks and files of police officers. Training and recruitment of qualified personnel is *sine qua non* for checkmating crimes. In the same vein, motivation is of utmost

significance to productivity. Both officers and corps should be greatly motivated if the society has to be better protected. This can be done in terms of special scale outside the civil service rating because of the hazard involved in the work of policing. Not only that, appointment, promotion and discipline in the force should be a regular thing. This would go a long way in boosting the morale of policemen. It is obvious that poor funding, lack of welfare and logistics support as well as inadequate training are some of the major factors militating against the police force over the years, thus leading to recurrent abysmal performance.

As part of motivation, all necessary communication gadgets and mobility should be provided to ease their jobs. Likewise in this computer age, the job of policing should be well computerized with information technology. The present police lacks strong data base. As an internal control measure, there should be a forensic laboratory with qualified handlers. The detectives in the organization should be used to monitor the activities of those on the traffic patrols and station duties, so that those who may find it difficult to put off the garment of corruption can be shown the way out of the police. If this is done regularly and the names of corrupt ones dismissed are published quarterly it will go a long way to stem the tide of corruption in the Nigeria police.

For a better organization to be evolved, both the society and the Nigeria police itself need re-orientation. The mass media may assist here. The entire citizenry should be well educated as regards their basic human rights. It should be realized that to offer bribe for a bail able offence is wrong or to offer money to Policemen on the road even without soliciting for it is immoral. Above all, discipline is crucial to effective policing. If the officers are not self-disciplined, the corps becomes worse-off. It is only a well-disciplined police like the military that can serve as a catalyst to democratic sustenance not minding whether it a federal or a state police.

Conclusively, the police is the symbol of the state. The efficiency and disposition of that force determines the perception of law and order from within and without. As the argument for state police continues to gain momentum, it is imperative that the existing police structure should be well funded and equipped for better service delivery, especially now that the country is facing serious security challenges. There is obvious need to equip and reposition the force to checkmate acts of terrorism, armed robbery, kidnapping and other sundry criminalities which have all eaten

very deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society and threatening the country's existence. No doubt, the fact in practice is that decentralization encourages specialization and efficiency. Hence, a decentralized system of law enforcement agency must be regulated and understood. As such, there is the need to have knowledge of matters that affect multiple police in a federal system of government and also to hastily address the leadership crises and corruption in the society. If not, security threat is inescapable whether the proposed establishment of state police sees the light of the day or not.

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