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**AN ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATIONS  
IN INTERNAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA  
(1966-2019)**

***Abstract:***

*This article identifies different operational codenames adopted by the Nigerian military in special domestic operations from 1966-2019 and examined whether the operations were executed in line with the codenames. In Nigeria, the military has an established tradition of codenaming special operations, in both internal and foreign missions. Since 1966, the Nigerian military has been involved in internal security management and codenamed all the operations using both English and*

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*local language names. The aftermath of the first military coup d'état on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1966, was the beginning of military involvement in domestic security operations in addition to their constitutional responsibility of defending the territorial integrity of the country. The Effect Perspective (TEP) is adopted as the theoretical framework which gives proper nuance to the study. Methodologically, data were elicited through in-depth interviews. The findings explain why several military operations have failed to achieve the objectives of their codenames. It concludes that there is no correlation between the operational codenames and their outcomes of special military operations in Nigeria because the desired results of restoring peace have not been achieved within the specific time frame given when they were launched. The paper concludes that the majority of special military operations launched in Nigeria failed below expectations and unable to restore peace in their country in line with the operational codenames as a result of factors identified in the study.*

**Keywords:**

*Code-names; Evaluation; Internal Security Management; Military; Nigeria; Special Operations*

## **Introduction**

Military in Nigeria and other countries have been involved in the internal security management of their home countries and several foreign countries, particularly during peacekeeping missions of the United Nations, regional and continental organizations, with a panoply of operational names, meant to reflect the contexts of the expected outcomes of the operations. Major military powers within the international system often adopt such names for their military operations at home and in foreign countries. Equally, the special military operation includes operations carried out under the aegis of international organizations such as the United Nations, Economic Community of the West African States, and African Union in areas experiencing conflict and violence<sup>5</sup>. The code labeling of security operations has been an age-long practice in the security field. It has been more pronounced in Nigeria, especially since 1999 when the country metamorphosed from a military junta into democracy. In almost

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<sup>5</sup> J. L. H. E. Ehrensvärd, *Special Operations-Myths and Facts*, Copenhagen 2014, p. 6.

two decades of democratic experience, Nigeria has witnessed myriads of conflicts and armed violence, which necessitated the formation of security operations to address the security challenges.

The problem with the launched special military operations and their codenames was the inability of the military deployed to violent areas to end the cycle of violence. The earliest series of special military operations with unique code-names in Nigeria began in 1966 to curb political violence that erupted as a result of the first military coup in the country. Special military operations are designed or set up to achieve a specific target apart from conventional operations. The essence of special military operations is to address a security challenge at hand<sup>6</sup>. This sort of operation is characterized by unique tactics and maneuvers, carried out by special squads who obtain special training and are equipped with sophisticated weapons, which have either long- or short-term plans to achieve their aim expressed in their operational codenames and framework.

Similarly, it was observed that most of these operations were exclusively military due to the inability of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and other paramilitary personnel to sustain domestic security by conducting tangible clinical operations directed at ridding the Nigerian polity of violence and conflicts. This led to the formation of special military operations, whose methods include, but not exclusive to air and land operations in the designated areas of operation, special military operation also uses navy and collaboration with other security agencies in intelligence gathering<sup>7</sup>. The special military operation encompasses conducting timely surveillance and patrol to maintain stability during the post-violence period. Based on the above, the objective of this paper is to evaluate code-names and the outcomes of special military operations in Nigeria, assess the modus operandi adopted by the military in their operations, and examine whether the operations were able to restore peace in the areas that were established. The paper aimed to answer the following questions: What is the relationship between a codename and its outcomes? What are the methods of operation? Do the operations restore peace in their areas where they were established?

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6-7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 14.

## Special Military Operations: Review of Related Literature

This section aims to identify and assess the various special military operations that were conducted to tackle internal and external security challenges in various parts of the world. Launching a special military operation is a routine exercise within the security circle if the need arises. That was why, the Turkish military, in an attempt to protect the country from external bellicosity in January 2018, launched the operation ‘Olive Branch’ that was conducted along the corridors of the Syrian Northwestern area of Afrin. In satisfying the framework for the operation, the military deployed enormous aerial power, which comprised 72 combat air jets alongside ground forces into the Afrin areas. The Turkish government deployed a quarter of its total air force strength for this operation. It was an impressive force generation where principal fighter jets composed of F16 variants and F4 2020s were mobilized. Militarily, such an all-out aerial bombardment by the Airforce recorded a huge success<sup>8</sup>. This showed that the method adopted was strictly a warfare technique where military hardware and software were deployed to achieve the objectives of the operation. The method of the operation was able to suppress the uprising across the border shared by both Turkey and Syria. The major setback to the operation was that the approach adopted by the military had deviated significantly from the peaceful method as code-name, ‘Operation Olive Branch’ suggests. A year after the operation was launched, separatists’ fighters entered a ceasefire with the Turkish government. In light of the foregoing, however, the modus operandi did not sync with the operational codename; however, the operation was able to successfully restore peace and stability in the area.

In the Philippines, Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) or Operation Freedom Eagle was launched in January 2002 with Special Operation Forces by the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) to curb the recruitment, training, and operation of various domestic and transnational violent extremist networks in the country. The aim was to curtail the rising influence and threats of the Al-Qaeda as well as stultify the activities of its operatives and the recruitment of prospective foot-soldiers. This was because Al-Qaeda had alliances with Abu Sayyaf terror group and Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines, the

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<sup>8</sup> C. Kasapoğlu, S. Ülgen, *Operation Olive Branch: A Political-Military Assessment*, Istanbul 2018, <<http://edam.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Operation-Olive-Branch-01.pdf>> (20.12.2020).

military intelligence received from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and the technical prowess of the U.S. such as aerial surveillance, and a signal was used to weaken the strength of the terrorist groups in the areas. These were the techniques used for the success of the operation in the Philippines. This collaboration or synergy assisted Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines to detect the hideouts of the terrorist leader of Abu Sayyaf, in the place where American missionaries, kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf's organization were kept<sup>9</sup>. The OEF-P forces deployed different intelligent techniques of surveillance to track the movement and operations of the terrorist organizations in the areas covered. However, despite the military capacity available, the purpose of the operation was defeated because the Moro Islamic Liberation Front had not been cleared from the area. This showed that despite the long duration of the operation, its objective, which was the safety and freedom of residents, was not achieved between 2002 and 2015. The goal of the operation was to free the region from the activities of the Islamists' fundamentalists and terrorist groups. However, it was abortive because the activities of the terrorists within the zone were widespread and defied the measures adopted by the joint military task force between the Philippines and the U.S.

Furthermore, a special military operation named Operation Path to Deliverance or Rah-e-Nijat was launched in the Pakistani province of South Waziristan in June 2009 to combat terrorists' activities, especially Al-Qaeda and Taliban, and in neighboring Afghanistan<sup>10</sup>. The operation aimed to destroy the structures and operational base of the Tehrik-i-Taliban in Pakistan. However, the operation turned out to be catastrophic because the topography of Waziristan is mountainous and it was difficult for the Pakistani and the foreign forces to navigate the areas due to difficult terrain and the residents are warriors who harbor and assist Islamist terrorist group in their areas<sup>11</sup>. The Pakistani military recorded one of the biggest losses of forces after the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. During the operation, 60,000 soldiers and 45,000 special combative troops, as well as 15,000 troops on standby, were mobilized for the

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<sup>9</sup> J. Thomas, C. Dougherty, *Beyond the Ramparts: The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Washington 2013, <<https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/SOF-Report-CSBA-Final.pdf>> (20.12.2020).

<sup>10</sup> M. Jan, S. A. Paracha, M. Anwar, M. Imran, *Military Operations in Waziristan: Public Perceptions in Pakistan on Terra*, "Gomal University Journal of Research" 2011, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 93-109.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

military operation to weed-off the terrorists<sup>12</sup>. The outcomes of the operation showed that the forces were able to confiscate RPG-7 rockets, anti-aircraft machineguns, and SPG-9 rounds from the terrorists. However, the forces were unable to arrest top Taliban leaders like Mullah Fazlullah, Baitullah Mehsud, who was killed in a drone attack in August 2009, and Hakimullah Mehsud, who operated in Waziristan and who was killed in 2013. Operation Path to Deliverance was unable to rid the Afghan-Pakistan border of Taliban and Al-Qaeda terrorists. This was because it was erroneous to over-rely on aerial operations in mountainous areas and that people who had information about the hideouts of the wanted terrorists in the areas were not incorporated into the operation to give the troops' intelligence information.

In an attempt to stop the depopulation and destruction of the Albanian population in Kosovo, on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1999, NATO launched Operation Allied Forces to destroy the military structure of the then Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milošević. The allied forces used airstrikes on targeted areas in Kosovo and Serbia which lasted seventy-eight days. Nineteen NATO members contributed warplanes to the Operation Allied Force (OAF)<sup>13</sup>. The military campaign succeeded only where peace agreement conceived during the G-8 summit had been accepted by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Additionally, the OAF led to the signing of a military-technical agreement between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and NATO, through which the withdrawal of Yugoslavian forces from Kosovo was to be supervised by NATO personnel. The agreement made provision for NATO peacekeeping forces to take over Kosovo after the withdrawal of the Yugoslavian forces. However, the Operation Allied Forces of the NATO recorded only one setback. This concerned the death of two Apache helicopter pilots who were involved in an accident during training in Albania<sup>14</sup>. In this case, the military restored peace in the Balkans and justified the code-name of the operation.

Geopner evaluated the impact of military operations sent abroad by the U.S. from 2001 in Afghanistan to 2015 in Iraq<sup>15</sup>. The study found that

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>13</sup> S. Bowman, *Kosovo, and Macedonia: the U.S. and Allied Military Operations*, Washington 2002, <[https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20020108\\_IB10027\\_d78c629b46594db7faf87396db776206c7c98900.pdf](https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20020108_IB10027_d78c629b46594db7faf87396db776206c7c98900.pdf)> (1.12.2020).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> E. W. Geopner, *Learning from Today's Wars. Measuring the Effectiveness of America's War on Terror*, "Parameters" 2016, Vol. 46, No. 1, p. 111.

the military operations did not achieve their aim which was to stop the rise of terrorism and curtail terrorist activities in the targeted areas. An empirical survey that used a multiple regression statistical model revealed that U.S. military operations have increased the rate of terrorism worldwide. The findings further revealed that about 80% variation of recorded terror attacks from 2001 to 2013 can be attributed to how much money the United States spent fighting terror and how many military members were deployed to fight the war. Unfortunately, the results indicate that U.S. efforts have been correlated with a worsening of the terror situation<sup>16</sup>.

Geopner concluded that “between \$1.7 and 4 trillion dollars have been spent and more than two-and-a-half million military members have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. [...] Despite these efforts, the data indicate primary objectives have gone unmet and some areas have worsened (e.g., the number and strength of Islamist-inspired terror groups). Potentially, U.S. efforts may have inadvertently exacerbated conditions important for terrorist activity, conditions that increased the motivation to join terror organizations and the opportunity to carry out terrorist acts”<sup>17</sup>. Despite these efforts, the data indicated that the primary objectives had gone unmet and that some areas had worsened (e.g. the number, and strength of Islamist-inspired terror groups). In the same vein, the American foreign military campaigns have exacerbated conditions important for terrorist activity, conditions that increased the motivation to join terror organizations and provide them with soft targets and victims of terrorist attacks. However, Geopner identified the reason behind the failure of U.S. military operations against terrorism. The operations increased hatred against the USA and this was used by the terrorists who were Islamic fundamentalists to recruit more fighters and members.

The failure of the U.S. military to achieve its core mandate on counter-terrorism terror could be a result of faulty strategies implemented which motivated some people in affected areas to join terror groups and made terrorism more feasible. This is evident in Iraq where myriads of American-backed military interventions were unable to stabilize and unite the country which was united and peaceful under the leadership of Saddam. The American invasion aggravated longstanding creeds of difference between Sunni and Shiite Muslims which under Saddam were

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 116.

checked and feud controlled. Similarly, introducing a democratic system of government in countries that hitherto were used to monarchical and dictatorial regimes and leadership like Iraq and Afghanistan, would be extremely difficult. This is because Islam is against most of the features of democracy such as periodic elections, tenure for leaders, and freedom of religion and association. Therefore, Islamic fundamentalists saw the U.S. campaign for the introduction of democracy in the Arabian Peninsula as anti-Islamic. In this sense, the military campaign ended up creating religious hardliners and fundamentalists rather than cleansing the terrorists in the region. This is possible in a country with weak state institutions to fight religious fundamentalism and where the security agencies are unproductive. Corroborating this assertion, a study revealed that the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan failed to democratize the country which is was one of the major objectives of the operation<sup>18</sup>. This showed that the democratization of the country was part of the objective of the military operation. Therefore, the inability to institutionalize democracy also breeds and fertilizes terrorists in the region. Similarly, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda have strong membership in rural areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Garb systematically evaluated the outcomes of some selected special operations in the world<sup>19</sup>. These operations include the deployment of the European Union Police Advisory Team (EUPAT) to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission in Iraq (EUJUST LEX-IRAQ); the European Union Force (EUFOR) Democratic Republic of the Congo or Operation ARTEMIS in 2003 during the Ituri conflict, the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) with the aim of peacekeeping related to the Darfur conflict; the NATO Operation Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean; the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Additionally, the researcher assessed the success of some United Nations operations/missions such as peacebuilding mission UNMIT in East Timor (2006-2012); observer mission UNOGIL in Lebanon (June-December 1958); monitoring mission UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan (established in 1949); UN military observer mission UNOMSIL (1998-1999) and UNAMSIL (1999-2006) in Sierra Leone; observer mission UNAVEM I in Angola (1989-1991); support mission UN SMIH in Haiti (1993-1996); implementation mission ONUCA in Central America (1989-1992); and

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 120.

<sup>19</sup> M. Garb, *Evaluating the Success of Peace Operations*, "Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies" 2014, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 44-63.



UN Transitional Assistance Group UNTAG in Namibia (1989-1990)<sup>20</sup>. The study found out that these peacekeeping or military missions were well implemented and succeeded in achieving the aim of their operations. Specifically, missions spearheaded by the EU were evaluated as the most successful peace missions in the world. However, the UN and NATO peace operations were evaluated and assessed as the less successful missions. The EU-supported military operations had pragmatic objectives which they were able to achieve within the specified time frame. However, the UN military missions were unsuccessful due to a lack of commitment to the contribution of forces and paucity of funds.

Similarly, in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom, as well as Operations Iraqi Freedom have been relatively ill-defined campaigns with unrealistic strategic objectives. The assessment revealed that operational command located at the regional headquarters in Afghanistan required subordinate units with at least 400 soldiers for land surveillance and patrol<sup>21</sup>. However, the military operational base in the Afghan capital, Kabul, deployed 2,000 officers to the battlefield but failed to realize half of the targets in 2011 to end the activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in the country<sup>22</sup>. Similarly, Connable and Downes-Martin maintained that the lack of defined and clear objectives at the onset of the operations specifically for a strategy for non-conventional wars was one of the factors which accounted for an unsuccessful military campaign in Afghanistan. However, the military operation was unsuccessful because it over-relied on quantitative data alone for strategic planning and assessment of the war on insurgents. A similar failure misled the U.S. military in Vietnam because the results of the campaign assessment were inaccurate. This affected strategic decision-making and support during the war.

The United States of America coalition in Afghanistan launched Operation Enduring Force in October 2001 to support the then interim government in Kabul after the overthrow of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda to support the fragile peace in the country. M. Gaul, and J. Eric adopted a

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 56.

<sup>21</sup> B. Connable, *Embracing the Fog of War: Assessment and Metrics in Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica 2012; S. Downes-Martin, *Operations Assessment in Afghanistan is Broken: What is to be done?*, "Naval War College Review" 2011, Vol. 64, No. 4, pp. 103-125.

<sup>22</sup> B. Connable, *op. cit.*; S. Downes-Martin, *op. cit.*

different statistical tool to evaluate military operations in Afghanistan<sup>23</sup>. They used an inferential statistical tool (time series) with regression analysis from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012 to monitor the performance of the troops. Data were elicited from the base of ISAF (International Security Assistance Force's) Headquarters in Kabul. The study established that the mission was unable to achieve its codename objective, which was to end the activities of Al-Qaeda, Taliban, and hostilities of other clans against the coalition forces. The work further attributed the failure to the inability to raise funds to establish an operational database. The special operation lacked funds to acquire data that could be used for quality control and assessment as well as installed analytic software. In Somalia, for example, contradictory and uncoordinated strategy and policy resulted in poor operational planning and execution, reconstruction, and analysis.

Beech stated that the inability of the UN special operations to record success in Somalia was because the United Nations Security Council resolutions were not an acceptable replacement for the ousted Somali government<sup>24</sup>. The faction or clans' leaders refused to support the decision of Operation Gothic Serpent to deploy American troops in their country because of political and ethnic interests. This made it extremely difficult for the deployed troops to achieve their objectives of stabilizing the country since the fall of the central government in 1993. The effect was the abysmal performance of the foreign military operations and Somalia, a classic example of a failed state. The above studies reviewed identified different military operations with their codenames. The outcomes of the military operations were not commensurate with the operational codename in Somalia as they failed to restore peace and stability in the country. The assessments showed that the deployed forces underestimated the military capability and strength of the clans' warlords; this was apparent in the inability of Operation Gothic Serpent to arrest Mohamed Farrah Aidid who declared himself the Somali President and encouraged civilians to take up weapons against the foreign army.

The studies reviewed and discussed above reveal how different special military operations were launched and executed with different

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<sup>23</sup> M. Gaul, J. Eric, *Time Series Analysis in a Theatre Strategic Headquarter*, [in:] A. Williams, J. Bexfield, F. F. Farinaand, J. de Nijs. (eds.), *Innovation in Operations Assessment. Recent Developments in Measuring Results in Conflict Environments*, Norfolk 2015, p. 86.

<sup>24</sup> M. F. Beech, *Mission Creep: A Case Study of US Involvement in Somalia*, Fort Leavenworth 1996.

codenames. The methods adopted and their performances within the time frame for the operation have shown that most of the special military operations were not executed or carried out in line with their codenames due to the wrong methodology and techniques used. Said studies found a lack of an elaborated operational guide for the military personnel during field operations, lack of funds, and above all faulty operational contingency plan in case of an unforeseen circumstance. Similarly, some special operations failed to take into consideration the views or perceptions of the people who have a vital role to play in assisting the force with intelligence tip-off regarding the operation in the places concerned. Generally, the major issue in the special operations reviewed was theoretical (policy framework) and the techniques of operations which led to the inability to achieve what the codenames connote.

In Algeria, as part of a response to an insurgency by the National Liberation Front (FLN: Front de Libération Nationale), on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1954, the French military launched Grid Operation (quadrille). This special military operation aimed to eliminate members of the FLN in the Aurès and Kabylie regions of the country. The military deployed 300,000 soldiers, heavy weapons, particularly artillery, and occasionally aircraft were used for bombardment. Despite the military power of the French power, the operation was not able to eliminate the FLN insurgents who hid in the mountains<sup>25</sup>. This shows that the deployment of enough troops and military hardware is not enough to achieve the aim of the special military operation. There is the need for the military personnel deployed to the war front to understand the geographical terrain of the areas to enable them to know the hideouts of the opponents and discover them. This is similar to the war against Boko Haram insurgents in Northeastern States of Borno and Yobe, which are mostly desert areas and most of the military personnel deployed lacked knowledge of the areas and found it very difficult to adapt to the terrain. This has enabled the Boko Haram insurgents to survive a series of special military operations since 2009.

Operation Mistral in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was a United Nations-mandated deployment. The South African National Defense Force (SANDF) contributed immensely to the operation, which was created to protect unarmed civilians in the conflicts. A composite helicopter unit was established, five Oryx helicopters and three Rooivalk

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<sup>25</sup> M. S. Alexander, J. F. V. Keiger, *France and the Algerian War: Strategy, Operations, and Diplomacy*, [in:] M. S. Alexander, J. F. V. Keiger (eds.), *France and the Algerian War, 1954-62: Strategy, Operations, and Diplomacy*, London 2002, p. 15.

attack helicopters were deployed to restore stability in the country. Soldiers from Tanzania, Malawi, and South Africa performed beyond expectations and the operation was able to restore peace and stability in the eastern DRC<sup>26</sup>. The findings of Mlambo are relevant to this study; however, the special military operations in Nigeria did not mobilize forces from a regional bloc or organization. Nonetheless, Mlambo indicates that the deployment of both military hardware and software is integral in achieving the aims of military operations.

Operation Vimbezela was launched in the Central African Republic (CAR) to restore peace in the country. South Africa provided major support for the success of the operation in 2013. The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) agreed to assist also in the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) of the rebels and victims of the violence<sup>27</sup>. South Africa alone deployed over 200 soldiers in Bangui and 2013, Elite Units 7 and 8 of the South African Medical Battalion were deployed to CAR. However, Operation Vimbezela was not able to restore peace in CAR because the rebels possessed more ammunition and foot power than the deployed soldiers; from March 22<sup>nd</sup> to March 24<sup>th</sup>, at least 15 soldiers were killed by the rebels<sup>28</sup>. Like Operation Mistral in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Operation Vimbezela had armed forces drawn from a subregional organization The South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Unlike Operation Mistral, Operation Vimbezela due to lack of funding was not able to procure military hardware and software for the operation. This means that the deployment of military personnel without the procurement of the required operational equipment hindered Operation Vimbezela to achieve its goals in line with the codename.

Operation Sophia, headquartered in Rome, is a European Union-wide naval military operation to combat people smuggling from North Africa to Europe and prevent loss of life in the Mediterranean. Launched in June 2015, the operation reduced human trafficking, because of the training of Libyan Coastguards and Navy provided by the European Union, and implemented the United Nations arms embargo on the high

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<sup>26</sup> E. Mlambo, *International Peacekeeping Operations: SANDF and DIRCO*, Briefing, 02.03.2018 Parliamentary Monitoring Group, <<https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/25896/>> (25.11.2020).

<sup>27</sup> A. Seeth, *Battle Colours Presented to Units in Honour of Battle of Bangui*, <<https://city-press.news24.com/News/battle-colours-presented-to-units-in-honour-of-battle-of-bangui>>, (14.11.2020).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

seas off the Libyan coast in 2016. It has also increased the arrest of smugglers on the Libyan coast. However, the operation in an attempt to arrest traffickers and smugglers put migrants and asylum seekers at higher risk because those who were arrested are detained at Italian ports instead of being moved to Europe<sup>29</sup>.

In Mozambique, Operation Copper was launched in January 2011 after a Mozambican fishing vessel was hijacked by Somali water pirates in 2010<sup>30</sup>. The aim was to enhance the performance of the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces (FADM) in countering piracy in the Mozambique Channel. Similarly, the mandate of the operation was extended to include actions to target drug, arms, and human trafficking, as well as illegal fishing. To achieve the mandates, two South African Navy vessels were deployed in the northern Mozambique Channel<sup>31</sup>. This indicated that some military operations are launched to strengthen existing armed forces operations in a violent area. However, unlike most cases in Nigeria, Operation Copper focused mainly on waterways operation against piracy. Special military operations in Nigeria comprised both waterways operation against oil bunkering on the sea in the Niger Delta region and land operations in other parts of the country. However, the success or otherwise of Operation Copper has not been documented but it has restored some level of sanity in the country's waterways.

In the same vein, Operation Cordite in Sudan was established in July 2004 to implement peacekeeping agreements in the country. Many of the troops were mobilized by South African National Defence Force staff officers and observers to the Darfur region of western Sudan. The operation was designed to support the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS)<sup>32</sup>. Operation Cordite, an African Union (AU) peacekeeping force, operated primarily to perform peacekeeping operations related to the conflict in Darfur. The operation contributed to a hit-free referendum for the separation of Sudan: Sudan and South-Sudan. The forces of

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<sup>29</sup> European Commission, *EU Operations in the Mediterranean Sea*, <[https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/securing-EU-borders/factsheets/docs/20161006/eu\\_operations\\_in\\_the\\_mediterranean\\_sea\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/securing-EU-borders/factsheets/docs/20161006/eu_operations_in_the_mediterranean_sea_en.pdf)> (10.10.2020).

<sup>30</sup> *Mozambique: SA Navy Completes Patrols in the Mozambique Channel*, <<https://allafrica.com/stories/201808100620.html>> (8.11.2020).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>32</sup> *War in Darfur-Operation Cordite*, <<https://samillhistory.com/2016/07/27/war-in-darfur-operation-cordite>> (10.12.2020).

Operation Cordite were sent to Juba, the capital of South Sudan, to protect the country after its independence from Sudan in July 2011<sup>33</sup>.

Another factor that contributed to the failure of most of the special military operations in Nigeria and other developing countries is corruption and mismanagement of funds earmarked for the procurement of weapons and benefits for the personnel deployed to fight the criminals, terrorists, and armed bandits. Ladan-Baki stated that the level of destruction caused by Islamic insurgents and other criminal groups in Nigeria has compelled the Government to procure weapons<sup>34</sup>. However, the funds meant for the procurement of the weapons were siphoned by corrupt top military and Government officials. The resultant effects of the corruption and misappropriation of funds have aggravated the security challenge and security personnel deployed to the battlefield have been demoralized due to the lack of sophisticated weapons and fringe benefits. Examining the effects of corruption among the military and funds earmarked for weapons' procurement, Goh and Muravska observed that corruption in the military is among the challenges that contribute to the failure of military operations in different parts of the world<sup>35</sup>. Corruption leads to sabotage among the military personnel and damages the reputation of the military in the eyes of the public which they established to defend and protect. Goh and Muravska concluded that when the military is deeply into corrupt practices, it erodes public respect and support, as well as the integrity of the military as a system.

Furthermore, the International Crisis Group provided a holistic assessment and analysis of Nigerian military performance in the fight against insurgency in the Northeast part of Nigeria and criminals in other parts of Nigeria<sup>36</sup>. The findings revealed that Nigeria's security agencies are in turmoil which was hitherto one of the best in Sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, Nigerian Army has performed exceptionally in different peacekeeping missions in different parts of the world but at home, they are struggling at the hands of the Islamic insurgents, armed bandits,

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> I. S. Ladan-Baki, *Arms Procurement Mirage, Corruption, and Insurgency in Nigeria*, "International Journal of Politics and Good Governance" 2016, Volume VII, No. 7.3 Quarter III, pp. 1-7.

<sup>35</sup> K. Goh, J. Muravska, *Military-owned businesses: Corruption & Risk Reform. An initial review, with emphasis on exploitation of natural resource assets*, London 2012, pp. 1-28.

<sup>36</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), *Nigeria: The Challenge of Military*, "Reform. Africa Report" 2016, Vol. 237, pp. 1-33.

kidnappers, and cattle rustlers. Court cases against former military officers who superintended different military formations in the most troubling years of security challenge is an indication of mismanagement of resources and corruption in the military. There was evidence of some fraudulent practices within the military establishment such as payroll fraud where officers diverted money meant for their subordinates and other activities to their pockets. The study concluded that the majority of the top military personnel are more interested in their vested interests than their serving the interest of the country this is among the reasons why the Nigerian military is marred by logistic deficit and lack of maintenance of existing weapons. This correlates with the submission of former National Security Advisor to former President Goodluck Jonathan, General Andrew Azazi Rtd. who averred that Nigeria's military lacked sufficient weapons to tackle the Boko Haram insurgency and other security problems in the country<sup>37</sup>.

Ouédraogo assesses the military professionalism in Africa and the factors that led to their inability to restore peace in the continent found that weak operational capacity within many African militaries renders them unable to play this role, calling into question their very relevance<sup>38</sup>. The study established that among the multitude of reasons that could explain this inefficacy, the following issues stand out: gaps in the chain of command leading to indiscipline, inadequate oversight of procurement practices, weak resource management diminishing operational capacity, poor morale, and a misaligned or obsolete mission. The resulting weak oversight of procurement contracts by defense ministries enables widespread corruption and creates a governance problem. For example, in an assessment of 19 African defense sectors, Transparency International found 90 percent scored in the bottom two quintiles for transparency in the procurement cycle. Similarly, the researcher concluded that corruption at the top of the chain of command undermines the morale of the troops, making them increasingly prone to participating in or condoning corrupt practices themselves. In countries where pay is paltry and irregular, soldiers are tempted to extort money or in-kind payments from the local population or turn to profit-oriented activities to survive.

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<sup>37</sup> S. E. Udounwa, *Boko Haram: Developing New Strategies to Combat Terrorism in Nigeria*, Carlisle 2013, pp. 1-38.

<sup>38</sup> E. Ouédraogo, *Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa*, "Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Research Paper" 2014, No. 6, pp. 21-23.

Usman examined the impact of corruption in the fight against Boko Haram insurgents in Northeast Nigeria. The study found that the sum of 2.1 Billion U.S. Dollars budgeted by the Federal Government of Nigeria to procure weapons was diverted was shared by government officials, top military officers, and contractors. This left the security personnel deployed to the battlefield without the required weapons to dislodge the insurgents and tackle other internal security threats. Therefore, it has become apparent that corruption and mismanagement of funds can undermine the capacity of military or security personnel to achieve their operational tasks<sup>39</sup>.

The above literature reviewed showed how different authors assessed special military operations in some parts of the world; most of these studies concluded that some of the special military operations have not yielded the desired results. However, this study conducted in Nigeria has approached the problem from a different perspective, that is, the views of both Military personnel and some civilians were sought to corroborate the opinion of each other.

### **Theoretical Framework: The Effect Perspective (TEP)**

There are several theories and models for the evaluation of military operations and performances; these include Engagement Space Assessment, Combat Assessment, and the Effect Perspective. The Effect Perspective (TEP) is adopted for this study because it has more explanatory power to evaluate the performance of military operations in the area studied than the other perspectives. TEP focuses on the outcomes and effects of a special operation on a zone, people, or duration. It addresses questions such as whether the stated objectives or goals of a military campaign have been achieved. It equally assesses the unplanned outcomes of the military operations generated. Similarly, TEP is regarded as a goal-free evaluation because it includes MOE (Measures of Effectiveness) and BDA (Battle Damage Assessment) approaches, because of this, it is held that TEP is designed to assess the consequences of military operations<sup>40</sup>. In this paper, TEP is used to assess the security situation before and after the launch of special military operations in the

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<sup>39</sup> U. D. Usman, *Impact of Corruption on Insurgency in the North-Eastern Region of Nigeria*, "IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)" 2017, Volume 19, Issue 1. Ver. I, pp. 19-25.

<sup>40</sup> J. Frelin, *Purposeful Assessment: Assessing the Effects of Military Operations*, Stockholm 2009, p. 21.



violence-prone areas in Nigeria. It has enabled the evaluation of the operational strategies adopted, codenames used, and the results of the operations. Various special military operations were evaluated based on the situation before and after the launch of the operations. The time frame for the operation stated at the launch of the operation was taken into consideration. The theory has not enjoyed wide currency in military studies. However, it is popular among academics and researchers because it focuses on ex-post events.

### **Methodology**

This paper adopts a qualitative design where data were collected from primary and secondary sources. In-depth interviews (IDI) were conducted with some of the community leaders of the states/regions where the military special exercises took place, government officials working with the Defense ministry, and security personnel deployed to the areas in which the operations were launched. The interviews were conducted in English with literate participants while for the illiterate participants, they were conducted in local languages which the interviewees speak fluently (Hausa, Pidgin English). Literature ranging from relevant textbooks, scholarly journal articles, newspapers and news magazines, and relevant materials on the Internet was consulted. This research aimed to gather robust data, validate findings and conclusions about the evaluation of special military operations and their outcomes. The purposive sampling method was used to select civilian participants based on their age and knowledge of the phenomenon investigated in the selected areas; they are residents of the areas where the operations were launched, specifically the community leaders and other inhabitants of the areas. Similarly, the snowballing technique was used to get interviewees military personnel and participants who work with the Ministry of Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency). A total of twenty participants were interviewed, Ministry of Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency, military, police officers, and community members). Regarding the selection of special military operations, the researchers searched the military archives for the chronicles of the special military operation launched as part of measures for internal security management. Therefore, the researchers purposively selected all special military operations launched in Nigeria from the independence which Nigeria got from Britain in 1960. This paper used a thematic method of data analysis to analyze the recorded and transcribed interviews with the selected

participants. The data generated were coded based on the recurring themes in the participants' responses, analyzed and conclusions were drawn based on the analysis.

### **Data Analysis: Evaluation of Codenames and Performance Outcomes**

Armed violence and social conflicts are common social issues in Africa generally and Nigeria in particular. Conflicts of different causal factors are synonymous with countries like Angola before 2002, Central African Republic, Sudan, and South Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, the difference from one country to another is the management of these conflicts in the affected countries. The conventional response to these conflicts is the formation of a special military operation to handle the situation. In Nigeria, 1999 marked the beginning of the third phase of beleaguered democratic government with myriads of conflicts. These conflicts and violence were zoomed out of proportion and defined along ethnic and religious divides. Additionally, the upspring of militants in the oil-producing Niger-Delta and kidnapping of foreign nationals working with the oil companies and wealthy businessmen, communal clashes between adherents of Islam and Christians, and violence between pastoralists-farmers in Northcentral and Jihadist's' rebellion in the Northeast have combined to produce grave security challenge in Nigeria.

The conflicts have shifted from using small weapons to the application of assorted lethal weapons by the different parties to the conflicts. The intensity and the recalcitrant attitude of the combatants and sponsors are beyond the Police's capacity to handle. The glaring inability of the Nigeria Police Force to handle the internal security challenges has compelled the Federal Government of Nigeria to deploy the military for the internal security operation. These operations come with different names and objectives. However, most of the special military operations have not delivered the expected results in line with the operational codenames. It has been observed that giving a special military operation a codename is an old practice of security operation in Nigeria dating back to 1966 after the first military overthrow of democratic government. The coup leaders launched Operation Damisa, operation Giwa (Elephant), Operation Zaki (Lion), and Operation Kura (Leopard) to sanitize the military after the coup. These operations were not aimed at restoring peace in a conflict-affected area or country but to identify some targeted

officers and soldiers in the military who were not in support of the coup plotters. Since then, the use of catchy operational codename has become prevalent whenever the military was deployed to manage political, ethnic, and communal armed violence. The apparent failure of the Police and other security operatives to manage these internal security challenges paved the way for drafting the military outside their customary responsibility of defending the country against external aggression. Participants during IDI sessions observed that Operation Damisa was intended to be aggressive like Lion and Tiger as well as strong like Elephant but the outcome of the operation had not justified its codename. On the contrary, it polarized the military and civilians along ethnic and regional divides which led to a counter-coup in August 1966.

### **Operation ‘Restore Order’**

The military campaign to end the activities of Boko Haram insurgents led to the launching of a plethora of special military operations, each with different operational codenames. In June 2011, to halt the rampaging attacks of Boko Haram, JTF Operation Restore Order was launched by the military Chief of Defense staff to oversee the security situation in the States where activities of the insurgents were rampant. The Operation drew personnel from all the security agencies in the country: Nigerian Army, Air Force, Navy, Nigeria Police Force, and paramilitary agencies like Nigerian Customs Service and Immigration Service were also part of the operation. Despite the mandate of the operation which was to decimate the insurgents and render them incapable of unleashing havoc and annexing Nigerian territories, the insurgents became more powerful and continued to carry out their operations in the areas. A military officer during IDI stated that the operation had failed to restore peace in the States affected by Boko Haram because the Nigerian military was not used with the guerilla warfare style adopted by the insurgents. The military lacked training on how to detect locally manufactured improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers among the residents. Nonetheless, the operation confined the activity of the insurgents to only three states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe. However, one of the operational flaws of Operation Restore Order was the absence of a cordial relationship with the residents of the areas who would have assisted the security to identify the members of the Islamist insurgent group among the populace.

## **Operation ‘Lafiya Dole’ (Compulsory Peace)**

The inability of the Operation Restore Order to restore peace and order in Northeastern Nigeria led to the introduction of Operation Lafiya Dole. It was launched as a strategy to clear the Boko Haram fighters carrying out their activities along the international frontiers of Nigeria, Cameroon, and the Niger Republic. It was launched after the annexed 14 Local Government Areas in the States of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe were reclaimed by a joint military operation to ensure the areas were safe and free from insurgents. To sustain these achievements, Operation Crackdown, Operation Gama Aiki, Operation Deep Punch, and Operation Safe Corridor were also set up to consolidate on the achievements of Operation Lafiya Dole. The target was to clear the members of the Boko Haram hiding in riverine areas of Lake Chad, Cameroonian highlands, and the desert border with the Niger Republic. Furthermore, these operations served as a cordon off to block the terrorists running away from Operation Lafiya Dole, Operation Crackdown, and Operation Deep Punch. However, despite the presence of different special military operations, Boko Haram has continued to attack security facilities and civilians at the reclaimed Local Government Areas in Borno, Adamawa, and the Yobe States.

A participant who worked with Defense Intelligence Agency in Adamawa State stated during the IDI session that series of special operations in the Northeast are interlinked with each other to stop the insurgents from outsmarting the military and other security agents deployed. To substantiate the assertions of the military personnel, during interviews with the residents of the affected areas stated that there were series of attacks on military formations in the Northeast in 2019 launched by the Boko Haram insurgents. During the attacks, the insurgents targeted military arsenals where it was ransacked, several soldiers and officers were killed. According to the interviewees, the successful attacks on the military by the insurgents was an apparent failure of the operational strategies and tactics of the military stationed in the areas. Similarly, in Northern Borno and parts of Eastern Yobe, an interviewee who worked with the Aid Agency explained that the reason for the inability of the Nigerian troops to end the insurgency was due to the lack of efficient warfare infrastructure and inadequate welfare package for the troops deployed to the battlefields. He further narrated that the weapons of the insurgents were far better than those of the military and that they had numerical superiority over government troops. Additionally, the

majority of the participants were undivided on the view that the Nigerian military lacked the experience of guerilla fighting tactics adopted by Boko Haram. Deducing from the above discourse, several factors have contributed to the failure of special military operations to achieve their goals in line with the operational codename. This was corroborated by the nagging complaints from soldiers drafted to the war front. They complained about the lack of modern sophisticated weapons that can match or surpass the weapons possessed by the insurgents which were evident in several attacks on the military base. In several episodes of the attacks on security formations, the military failed to defend themselves against the rampaging insurgents.

### **Operation ‘Safe Haven’ (OPSH)**

The ethnic, political, and occupational armed conflicts in Plateau State reached a boiling point with the 2001 mass killings and wanton destruction of properties; this consequently made the Federal Government of Nigeria launch a special military operation tagged Operation Safe Haven. The military operation was established in 2010, and it covered the areas affected by the armed violence in northern parts of Plateau State. The military operation was however extended to Kaduna State, which equally witnessed similar communal violence, especially in southern Kaduna, where cases of recurring clashes between the Muslims and the Christians, and between farmers and herdsman became rampant. The OPSH divided Plateau State into nine zones for convenient coordination of the exercise, prompt response to distress calls, and intelligence gathering of information. The OPSH successfully restored peace in Jos metropolis where there has not been any major outbreak of violence since 2012. The exercise, however, failed to provide a haven beyond the metropolis; thus, unnecessary killings have continued sporadically in the rural areas of the State. Personnel operating at other zones that comprise many rural areas grossly lack the geographical knowledge of the terrain (mostly mountainous and valleys) and the necessary experience to address communal violence, which was mostly carried out at night. The armed forces deployed were on different occasions caught unaware by the attackers who used footpaths in the bush to unleash mayhem on the major highways where the military personnel had their checking points.

The expansion of the operation to Kaduna has by no means provided respite to the communities that have consistently witnessed armed

violence between the farmers and the pastoralists. The OPSH carried out ground surveillance in the areas identified as the hotspots, but the lack of motorable roads has prevented the military vehicles from accessing the remote villages which overtime have become killing fields. This resulted from the strict reliance of OPSH on ground surveillance, patrol as well as a customary technique of stop and search of commuters plying major highways. An IDI with a military officer in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armoured Division, Jos, stated that OPSH was unable to provide the needed protection in the rural areas whenever there was an attack because the areas are mountainous which makes it very difficult for military vehicles to enter the rocky landscape and respond rapidly. Similarly, there was no aerial surveillance to cover areas that could not be accessed by vehicles. It could be deduced that the restoration of relative peace in Jos Metropolis and some Local Government Areas covered by the operation showed that armed violence had reduced significantly because of the presence of the military in the city. Whereas in the areas where there was no presence of the OPSH due to insufficient personnel, people were left at the mercy of the marauding killers.

The operation which aimed to provide haven has failed in its major purpose of protecting the citizens that it was meant for. In addition to this, the deployed armed military was severely criticized for being lackadaisical in their responses to reports of attacks. The personnel of OPSH was only found in the urban centers, that is, the Local Government Headquarter and mounted checkpoints on highways leading to Jos, the state capital, while the villages were left unprotected. These are some of the reasons why the villages became a vulnerable and soft target for attacks and why killers flee after unleashing terror without arrest. Therefore, reliance on only land operation strategy without aerial surveillance and concentration of the operation on urban areas are some of the reasons why OPSH has existed in Plateau State since 2010.

### **Operation ‘Sharan Daji’ (OSD, Sweep the Forest) and ‘Harbin Kunama’ (Scorpion Sting)**

The OSD was set up to end killings by armed bandits, kidnappers, and cattle rustlers in the Northwestern zone of Nigeria comprising states like Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, and Kebbi. The criminals operating in the aforementioned states had earlier rendered the road which links Kaduna state with Niger State and Katsina to the Zamfara States unsafe. They also displaced several communities in Zamfara,

Katsina, and the Sokoto States. The heightened insecurity compelled the government to launch another military operation to strengthen the existing operation within the zone to tackle the activities of the criminals. In this regard, the Chief of Army Staff launched Operation Sharan Daji as a replacement for Operation Harbin Kunama which was launched in 2016 but was unable to decisively bring to an end the activities of the armed bandits, kidnapers, and cattle rustlers in the region. The cardinal objective of OSD is to clear the bandits from their hideouts in the Kamaku forest, which stretches from Kaduna State to Katsina and Zamfara States. The operation consists of aerial surveillance and ground patrol of the affected areas. The operational base of the personnel of the Nigerian Air Force, stationed at the Katsina Airport, is comprised of Katsina, Zamfara, and some parts of the Kaduna States, which are meant to provide assistance to the ground forces and ensure a rapid response when the need arises. Despite the deployment of a military battalion in the areas, the armed bandits and kidnapers have intensified their operations without any sign of reduction. Villages were burnt, some residents were killed and livestock was stolen. This paper argues that the forces deployed were not sufficient to cover the vast areas. Additionally, the Nigerian military is not familiar with combating crimes like kidnapping and cattle rustling. OSD and Harbin Kunama failed to achieve the aim of their codenames which was to sweep the kidnapers from the forests due to poor interagency collaboration between the ground forces and aerial surveillance patrol team. Ground troops were ambushed on several occasions in Zamfara State because of attempts to raid kidnapers' den without receiving emergency reinforcement or assistance from the Airforce operating from Katsina Airport.

### **Operation 'Egwu Eke I and II (Python Dance)**

The operation was launched in Southeastern Nigeria to check criminal activities in five states: Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Imo, and Abia. Operation Egwu Eke was launched in 2017 to consolidate the existing operation (Egwu Eke I) and to disband the secessionist movement which demands a sovereign country out of Nigeria called Biafra by the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB). The members of the secessionist movement vandalized properties belonging to people from Northern Nigeria who are residents within the South Eastern region of the country. This prompted the Nigerian government to take decisive military action because it may lead to civil war or the break up of the country.

During the exercise, the military mounted checkpoints on major routes and thoroughfares in the above five states of the region. The operation was meant to develop measures to combat kidnapping, armed robbery, and other criminal acts like gun-running, human trafficking, and illicit pharmaceuticals and psychotropic substances. During the operations, the army organized military drills, training and raided the hideouts of suspected criminals. Besides, cordon and search operations were carried out by the special operation team, which successfully stopped the threats to the lives and properties of the residents in the region. In the same vein, the military exercise was able to reduce the influence of IPOB under the leadership of their fugitive leader Nnamdi Kanu. Despite the above achievements, crimes such as the kidnapping of wealthy businessmen, government officials, and politicians have continued unhindered within the region. Given this, it is realized that the operations left more to be desired. This is because Python has neither danced nor swallowed the challenges that it was formed to address.

This study encountered some problems during the fieldwork which was the refusal of the military personnel to divulge information easily regarding the operational frameworks, tactics, and methods. The researchers elicited information through the use of the snowballing technique from personnel working with the Ministry of Defense (Defense Intelligence Agency) in Nigeria and the Nigerian Army. Interviews were conducted but the interviewees refused to allow their voice to be recorded, so they were conducted without audio recording. This helped the researchers to obtain information and assessment of various special military operations in Nigeria from the security personnel. This was achieved with the assistance of an acquaintance who works with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) under the Ministry of Defense and another Lieutenant Colonel working with the intelligence unit at the border between Nigeria and the Niger Republic in Sokoto and Kebbi States. Virtually all the participants responded to the questions in the IDI and KII Guides including probing questions that came up in the course of the interview. The participants were able to respond to all the questions because they were purposively selected with a help of a guide who knew the participants well.

It has been found that apart from operational and systemic impediments that led to the inability or failure of the majority of the special military operations could be attributed to the failure of the government and corruption within the military and military personnel. At the peak of Boko Haram insurgency in 2014, the then President of



Nigeria was accused of shielding the sponsor of insurgents who were in the Government for political reasons<sup>41</sup>. Similarly, Mr. Stephen Davis, an investigative Journalist revealed what is beneath the surface revolving around the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast. It was reported that some highly-placed politicians were the brain behind the activities of the insurgents. The report revealed that \$2 billion (£1.3bn) meant for the procurement of weapons was siphoned by the then National Security (NSA) during the Presidency of Goodluck Jonathan<sup>42</sup>. Furthermore, Dr. Davis found that the Central Bank of Nigeria was among the top financier of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria<sup>43</sup>. In the same vein, a member of parliament from Borno State and a former Governor of Borno State were accused of harbouring Boko Haram insurgents in the Northeast.

### Discussion of Major Findings

The present study revealed that the major expectation of the general public and security experts within the military circle is that special operations should produce results in line with their code-names and the specific objectives of the operation. The special operations identified in this study have introduced some effective military maneuvers to restore peace in the areas deployed in Nigeria but some of these measures have not produced a lasting peace which was the main reason for the launching of the special operations. This correlates with the mission of Operation Boleas in Lesotho by the combined South African and Botswanan forces which was to intervene militarily in Lesotho to prevent any further anarchy and to create a stable environment for the restoration of law and order. The forces were deployed to locate and identify, to destabilize opponents, to disarm and contain them, and to strike where applicable with the necessary force to eliminate the threats against the government of Lesotho<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Soyinka attacks Jonathan over Boko Haram, says President shielding sect's sponsors for politics, <<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/168109-soyinka-attacks-jonathan-over-boko-haram-says-president-shielding-sects-sponsors-for-politics.html>> (12.11.2020).

<sup>42</sup> Boko Haram Sponsors: Revisiting the Mr. Stephen Davis' Report, <<https://elombah.com/boko-haram-sponsors-revisiting-the-mr-stephen-davis-report/>> (20.11.2020).

<sup>43</sup> Exposing the CBN Boko Haram 'sponsor', <<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/09/exposing-cbn-boko-haram-sponsor/>> (16.12.2020).

<sup>44</sup> T. Neethling, *Military Intervention in Lesotho: Perspectives on Operation Boleas and Beyond*, "Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution 2006", Vol. 2, p. 2.

The findings of this study reveal that special military operations in Nigeria such as Operation Lafiya Dole in the Northeast and Operation Sharan Daji in the Northwest are yet to address insecurity in the areas deployed. This indicates a mismatch between what the codenames intended to achieve and the performance of the military deployed due to the lack of accurate assessment and planning before the deployment of forces. This is in line with the evaluation of Operation Boleas conducted by Neethling<sup>45</sup>, which found that the decision to deploy troops to Lesotho by the South African government was hurriedly taken. This has left the forces deployed without a proper contingency plan, especially in light of vagueness and uncertainty concerning the ambit of South Africa's foreign policy framework for peace enforcement. They were not fully combat-ready, as time was too short for proper planning, preparation, deployment drills, and rehearsals by the units involved. Besides, stock-level planning for operational reserves was not properly done, resulting in a strain on supplies of military hardware when the need arose.

The essence of a special operational codename is to achieve the set objectives, particularly through the display of diverse maneuvers that will enhance the achievement of the purpose within the shortest time possible. It was further realized that a plethora of special military operations has kept military personnel out of barracks for a long time, a situation that has significantly impacted both the military and the civilian population. The military personnel has gradually become acclimatized to the civilian population because of the presence of military personnel found on major thoroughfares in cities and villages that are confronted with security challenges.

It was further observed that some of the major reasons for the incoherence between the outcome of special military operations and code-names were that faulty operational methodology and operational logistics were employed. This was evident in the inability of the special operations to end the armed banditry, cattle rustling, and kidnapping in the country, hence the formation of new special operations. This implies that the outcome or performance of the special military operations assessed or evaluated in Nigeria has not met the expectations of their codenames. This correlates with the findings of Weber who argued that the failure of special operations in the Northeast lies in the army's lack of

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

interest in pursuing its mission<sup>46</sup>. Chad has sent troops to Nigeria and Cameroon which is an indication that awareness of the urgent need for stabilization missions has risen in the region. Several thousand Chadian troops are active in Nigeria, more than 1,000 in the area of Baga and Lake Chad, 2,500 in Cameroon. Some Chadian special forces are U.S.-trained and experienced in fighting jihadist organizations in the Sahel. It is within the context of the above discourse, that the Effect Theory evaluates the pre-and post-insecurity situations in the areas in which the special military operations were launched. It is shown that some operations were able to restore fragile peace but they lasted beyond their time frame and complex security challenges evolved.

The study has further established that despite the myriads of special military operations in Nigeria with catchy codenames which the citizens expect an end to security challenges, on the contrary, the security challenges have worsened which necessitate the establishment of new special military operations in addition to the existing ones that failed to restore peace and order in different parts of Nigeria. The failure of the several special military operations could be attributed to both internal factors within the military, and external factors, the failure of the government to provide funds for the procurement of weapons, and payment of security personnel benefits.

Similarly, there were accusations and counter-accusations on the involvement of some external forces that contributed to the continuation of the Boko Haram activities and the failure of the majority of the special military operations in Nigeria to achieve their objectives in line with the operational codenames. The mixture of misappropriation of funds and corruption between the government officials and top military personnel; which means that continuation of the security challenges serves as a conduit for siphoning public money meant for the execution of the operation or management of internal security in Nigeria.

## Conclusion

The conclusions are drawn from the analysis of the data elicited from the participants during interviews. The paper concludes that as of June 2019, more than ten special operations with varying labels were ongoing in different parts of Nigeria. So far, the outcomes, however, have

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<sup>46</sup> A. Weber, *Beating Boko Haram. Military Action Alone Cannot Defeat the Islamist Group. Northeast Nigeria needs a Share of the South's Wealth*, "The Security Times", 28.02.2015, p. 2.

not matched the desired objectives of the operations, which ab-initio necessitated the code-names. This shows that giving a codename to a military special operation in Nigeria was the adoption of catchy phrases by the military to create a positive impression in the minds of the citizens that they are capable of addressing insecurity in the country. However, the lingering security challenges in the country revealed that the different operational codenames have not justified the rationale behind the codename as part of measures to restore peace in the affected areas in which they were launched. Despite the failures of the special operations to achieve their mandates, the military deployed to handle security challenges which the Police and other paramilitaries can handle in Nigeria. That is why the military is more active and visible in the internal security management in Nigeria more than the Police whose constitutional responsibility is to manage internal security except in a situation that is beyond their capacity. It has become a usual practice now in Nigeria that whenever there is an outbreak of violence which is above the capacity of the police, the military is deployed to handle it. These deployments are often accompanied by an operational codename on how to deal with the security challenge; yet, without positive results; the operational codenames were at variance with the performance of the military personnel deployed.

Prolonged operation beyond the time frame has led some people to accuse the military of fueling the crises to benefit from the allowances and money for the procurement of weapons' contract. Specifically, Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) operating in Plateau State has been accused of taking sides in the ethnic and religious conflicts in the State which exacerbated and prolonged the conflict, hence, the continuation of the existence of Operation Safe Haven in the areas. The apparent failure of some special operations has made some Nigerians lose confidence in the capability of the military to address the security challenge in the country. Additionally, operational codenames no longer create hope in the minds of the citizens who in the past had high expectations of positive outcomes whenever a special military operation with a codename is was launched.

Corruption among the security personnel who benefits from the money meant for the security management and politicians who have vested interests have contributed to the failure of most of the special military operations in Nigeria. Revelations from the trial of former heads of security agencies in Nigeria have revealed the extent of graft among the security personnel. The direct consequence of corruption in internal

security management is that security deployed to the battlefield are left with obsolete weapons and without adequate payment of salary and allowances were often overpowered by the insurgents who possessed superior or sophisticated weapons. Similarly, politicians who want to use security challenges to woo votes to win elections during the electioneering campaign hence support the criminals or fan inactive antagonism to incite unrest or violence.

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