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[Engineering](#), [Aviation](#)



Introduction

The way the Nigeria government approaches the air security of the West Africa region has been hugely influenced by the role of the national leaders as far as international security is concerned. The conception of the role has become the basis for any international and foreign engagement of the policy. According to history, Nigeria has always been perceived as the West Africa leader which has had a strong destiny manifested and its perceived responsibility in protecting and promoting the interests of Africans globally in any ramifications. There is also a belief that the air security of the country is coupled to the security of other African states due to the historical and cultural experiences (Amoa, 2000).

This study explores the current state of the Nigeria's Air force power and gives a strong recommendation on how and what to invest on so that the country's air power merges that of first world countries such as USA, and Russia. The paper starts by giving a detailed description of current state of the Nigeria's air power and describes the various factors which make the air power vulnerable (Basse, 2011). It also explores the current security status and what the air force needs to do. It is also concerned about the anti-area/access denial and the projection of power intention is also deliberated on. In addition, the paper assesses the key security plans, initiatives and programs for planning of the country's air security. It also gives a detailed evaluation in regards to defenses and deterrence in the upcoming security environment. Lastly, the research gives an argument on how to build an air force that effectively supports and meet the present and the future air security needs.

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The current state of Nigeria's air security

There are various factors that have led to the current state of Nigeria's air security. Some of these factors are described to be "geriatric". For quite some time, the capacity of the Nigeria air force has reduced as a result of the potential threats and the latest land combat concentration against dangerous external forces such as Boko Haram. From the time that the air force had the highest number of soldiers UN. This was also the time when there was a cold war in Sierra Leone to, the number of air force machinery gradually declined. The strategic and fiscal factors also contributed to the shrinking of the air force (Wole, 2003). This made the government of Nigeria shift from quantity-based air force to quality-based air force. This also means that the Nigerian air force should not only make their air space-based machinery resilient and numerous, but also develop and field alternatives to system which are space-based to facilitate the fundamental C4ISR standards. This is based on the considerations of the country's reliance on space and cyberspace as a key facet of controlling and mitigating the attack against Nigeria's space based infrastructure (Dallaji, 2005). The country's air force strength is demonstrated by its ability to effectively stop and control the attacker even in circumstances where the attacker has tampered with parts of the assets. They preferred to use less aircraft which can do multiple tasks. The first aircraft of this kind was the F-4 series which is a fighter aircraft. Currently the most prevalent are the F-7/J-7 Airguard, MiG-21, Fishbed, and Jaguar fighter series.

This approach was the most appropriate for quite some time when the Nigerian air force in collaboration with the defense department gradually

modified their fighting machinery by introducing more sophisticated precision and sensor weapons. The aircraft that rolls off the production line currently is the F-16 built in late 1980s. However, it has been evident that the improvement of one airplane cannot achieve all the countries air security objectives such as the need for frequent rotations and distant theaters (Dede Brown, 2012).

When the cold war ended in most western African countries, there was a drop in the procurement of aircraft. There were no new aircraft bought to replace the fleet that already existed. This implies that the fleet that the air force has been flying since then was aging and hence creates a “ death spiral”. The government spends billions of money repairing old planes which were becoming increasingly weak and inefficient. According to Justin (2002), there has been a downward trend in less than a decade as far as the efficiency of the Nigeria air security is concerned.

If the Nigerian government should go to a strategic pause when the cold war ended, making it to aircraft acquisition generation, the air force and the stakeholder should be equipped with the resources for nurturing the air force legacy machinery while investing on development and research of the latest air security machinery which would have phase out the old machinery.

Research shows that for almost a decade now, the Nigerian air force has concentrated on continuous air patrol since the insurgence of the book harem (Ekiyor, 2008). The air war machinery has been patrolling the air three times the previous patrol frequency. This has been a key factor that contributes to premature aging of the air force machinery.

The world war against terrorist also impacted heavily on the planning of

Nigeria's air force, modernization, and the structure of the force. The precision strike and long range capabilities of the air force created notable impacts on the initial days of the war against the northern Islamic rebellion. Although their long term counterinsurgency in the last few years has rekindled the country's principle air force objectives, their enduring long-term strike, and ensuring superiority instead of the manpower-intensive method that tries to "find and fix" an exclusive adversary that is asymmetrical using armed conflicts which are unconventional (Daura, 2010). The Nigerian Air force adopted this tactic, and its advancements in combined control and command and ISR with abilities to track the targets with the help of air vehicle which are not manned. This unmanned air machinery has rapid response and precise targeting for precise air support, which definitely overcome the uncertain attackers in both urban and remote areas. However, the strategic concentration on uncertain conflicts in airspace which is uncontested stopped the Nigerian air force from formulating a convincing proposal to enhance and modernize the force to overcome the complex future air security demands. In this regard, most air force soldiers who supported the Nigeria's air mission of the army as the key mission in the past few years have fully integrated this practice. The objective of the long range strike an air superiority that gave birth to the air force notion find it unrealistic (Gambari, 2003).

In addition, the Nigerian air force has not formulated a strategic objective and vision which could uphold the roles of, principle competencies, and the missions of the air force. The air-land objective of the anti-terror war and the tactics-based air command entered the 21st century with an aim of

conventional war that focused on aiding the army by providing short-range air superiority and fighter aircrafts which are land-attack based (ECOWAS, 2008). This departmental power went on despite the informed observers' criticism and the direction from the top air force echelons. In the late 90s, the Nigerian air force started a "continental reach global power", a guideline which anticipated and compelled the Nigerian air force to focus on uncommon properties of range, speed, precision and flexibility which serves as a key foundation of achieving the country's air security objectives.

As the air force goes back to the key long-range planning strategy in 2004, the independent security analysts informed them to give consideration to the future requirements of air force and concentrate on the principle competencies of stealth, long-range precision strike, and world class surveillance and reconnaissance (FGN, 2006).

Despite the several recommendations made by the external security professionals, the general and the top commanders of the Nigerian's air force resisted the changes. The most senior personnel whose fighter background is dominated by the 1982 warfront considered the attribute partisan to their leadership. Out of more than a thousand operation bombers and aircraft which were fielded at the end of that period, only two were long ranger fighter aircraft. These two were specifically fielded to handle the external nuclear terrorism (Ashiru 2010). On the same note, less than five percent were designed to have low radar observability which can enable it to penetrate the enemy's air territory. In conclusion, it was very clear that the Nigerian's air force was still far from achieving the country's air security objectives.

There also other issues which directly or indirectly contributed to the crisis in the state's air force confidence resulting to the degradation of the influence that the Nigeria. The most prevalent was the loss of service acquisition authority due to the scandal that involved the attempted sale of some tanker aircraft. There is an endless blame game in the Nigerian air force currently. It is inherently important to say that this has been the key hindrance to the development of the country's air force (FGN, 2009).

Key security challenge facing the Nigeria's air force

- Endless radical Islamic attacks

The hybrid warfare way which the Muslims occupying the northern part of Nigeria with its merging do irregular and conventional forces has been a huge menace which is transferable to insurgents, non-state actors and terrorist whose interest o based on revolution and religious fanaticism in the country. The Nigerian government has put a lot effort trying to defeat and phasing out this radical Islamic movement for more than a decade. There is evidence that this Islamic movement has links to the notorious al Qaeda group which has been a global issue. The al Qaeda group is a very powerful terrorist group that has dominated Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The issue has been aggravated by the death of the al-Qaeda major operatives such as Osama bin Laden and the US successful strike against his government (Galadima, 2011). The force has then retreated from Iraq and is now launching and executing terror vengeance in different non-state countries especially those dominated by the Christian community. Since the death of Osama Bin Laden, there has been an increased attack by the al-Qaeda and

its affiliates such as Boko Raham, and Al Shabaab.

- Anti-access/area denial

Other developing countries such as China have built up and enhanced their security technologies threatening the western-based technologies. Their technologies are able to project a military power to any region, hence, protect its allies and interest regionally. This implies that the technologies used by the Nigerian military can be outsmarted by any non-state country that acquires and implement the military technologies used by the Chinese. In addition, China has been a major threat to the U. S security in different dimension. This implies that the US government may withdraw its support to the Nigerian government if it realizes that the Nigerian government associate with China (Danjuma, 2011). The impact of such a move can be detrimental to the Nigerian air force since most of its existing air force and military machinery at large originated from the United States.

Developing and building a full-spectrum air force

In the interest of overcoming the Islamic attack lays the uphill task to stopping and controlling the frequent Boko Hama attacks. The Nigeria's air force needs to develop and field more standoff and penetration to the attacker's territory using precision strike and ISR capacities. This will enable them offset any space-based vulnerability, ISR capacities, and capabilities, and communication by establishing high-emphasizing current and future interoperability and standardization of data structures, and ISR and C2 infrastructures. In addition, they should enhance cyber warfare defensive and offensive capabilities by acquiring and stationing directed air-based

energy weapon (Bassey, 2003).

The list below gives description of some specific recommendations for establishing an air force which can support the country's air security objectives.

Acquire bombers- acquiring the latest long-range bomber is the first step that the Nigerian air force can take toward achieving the core of air security operation that can overcome the Islamic insurgent attacks (Gambari 2010).

The future plans and budgets of the Nigeria's air force should include the cost and the establishment of the long-range bomber.

Acquisition of a state-of-the art unmanned combat air vehicle- the air force should enhanced their effort of establishing and deploying unmanned aircraft by appreciating the fact that the capabilities required to carry out the missions and roles in the airspace security is dynamic. As such, there should ensure that their unmanned combat air vehicle has all the latest properties which will overcome any emerging issue as far as air security is concerned (Ekoko & Vogt, 2010). In addition, the bureaucracy, and logistics for acquiring and deploying such machinery should be made simple so that the deployment team can achieve their objective within the shortest time possible.

Fortification of space and cyberspace- according to the china's department of defense report on the military states, the latest joint operation access concept states that " a logical opening operation to any anti-access campaign is to neutralize any space assets." This is an inherent demonstration of the capability of a nation to space-far which differentiates it from other nation. This implies that it is very crucial to adopt the airspace

security technologies which the Chinese have implemented (George, 2012). This also means that the Nigerian air force should not only make their air space-based machinery resilient and numerous, but also develop and field alternatives to system which are space-based to facilitate the fundamental C4ISR standards, considering the countries reliance on space and cyberspace as a key facet of controlling and mitigating the attack against Nigeria's space based infrastructure (Bamali, 2007). The country's air force strength is demonstrated by its ability to effectively stop and control the attacker even in circumstances where the attacker has tempered with part of the assets. This implies that resilience is a critical factor in air military machinery. The space and cyber space issue areas always bring forth the "militarization" of space issue and its resulting "weaponization". This implies that any space is militarized based on a diverse spectrum of missions and roles in the space. Space support is also a critical factor. This is where you launch assets which are space-based and manage an orbit-based satellite which are critical to world military communication and operation (Blair, 2002). They should also embrace force enhancement. This is the technique in which assets which are space-based enhances other domains' operation effectiveness.

Establish airborne capacity and activate counterterrorism operations- it has been every country's dream to have in place a comprehensive mobility research to lower y the tactical and strategic fleets of an air force based on the latest global military strategies which advocates for lower air mobility needs and smaller army forces. The Nigerian air force started a "continental reach global power", a guideline which anticipated and compelled the

Nigerian air force to focus on uncommon properties of range, speed, precision and flexibility which serves as a key foundation of achieving the country's air security objectives (Azazi, 2011).

Adjust the air force personnel capacity- the Nigerian air force should collaborate and expand the relationship reserve and guard fighters sections to take advantage of the experience that these unit has as far as tackling enemies and ensuring total force and to integrate the selected requirements of ensuring proficiency in preparation and maintenance of air security deployment.

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