Nigeria's Defence Policy, Strategy and Leadership Effect on DICON's Arms Production

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Abstract
The study set out to investigate Nigeria's leadership issues with regard to its defence policy and strategy in DICON's arms production for managing national security. Nigeria's defence policy prioritises counterterrorism, regional cooperation, maritime security, cybersecurity and modernisation of security agencies. Its goal is to protect its territorial integrity and interests, while its security priority is to address or counter the lingering internal security threats such as Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, separatist agitations, ethno-religious conflicts, Niger-Delta militancy, farmer-herder conflicts and other violent crimes. The implementation of the defence policy, which requires coordination among various stakeholders (leaders), has become a complex task with various challenges such as insecurity, resource allocation, coordination and limited technological advancement. The study adopted a qualitative approach with descriptive and exploratory types of case study research design, employing a purposive sampling technique to select informants. Findings reveal that DICON's production of arms for managing national security has been greatly affected as a result of leadership issues, lack of strategic thinking and planning, and lack of continuity in the government's defence policy. The study therefore recommends that the government should strengthen inter-agency coordination, thereby enhancing collaboration among security agencies. The government should equally increase defence budget allocation, boosting funding for modernisation and capacity building. Prioritising local content by developing domestic defence industries like DICON is equally important.

Key words: Nigeria, Defence Policy, Strategy, Leadership, DICON, Arms Production

1.0 Introduction

Countries around the world desire the protection of their national security from both internal and external aggressions, and the protection of this national security depends on their defence industrialisation. Policy framework or strategy guides the military's role in national development and security. Nigeria's defence policy aims to safeguard national interests, protect

sovereignty and ensure territorial integrity. Nigeria's national defence goal is to protect its territorial integrity and interests, while its security priority is to address or counter the lingering internal security threats such as Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, separatist agitations, ethno-religious conflicts, Niger-Delta militancy, farmer-herder conflicts and other violent crimes. In other words, Nigeria's defence policy prioritises counterterrorism, regional cooperation, maritime security, cybersecurity and modernisation of security agencies.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the defence policy, which requires coordination among various stakeholders (leaders), has become a complex task with various challenges. It faces the challenge of insecurity, such as terrorism, insurgency, communal conflicts and organised crimes; resource allocation with increasing spending but effectiveness questioned; coordination – need for inter-agency collaboration; and limited technological advancement in the defence sector. These have affected the production of arms for managing Nigeria's security challenges. It is on this basis that this study was undertaken to investigate Nigeria's leadership issues with regard to its defence policy and strategy in arms production by DICON for managing national security. In other words, the core objective of this article is to explore the effect of Nigeria's leadership on defence policy and defence strategy in DICON's arms production for managing the country's security challenges.

2.0 Literature Review on Defence Industrialisation and National Defence Strategy

The relationship between defence industrialisation and national defence strategy is intertwined, as a robust defence industry can significantly enhance a country's ability to implement its defence strategy. That is why Gansler (2019, p. 15) would say, *"a robust domestic defence industry ensures a secure supply of critical systems, reducing reliance on foreign sources."* Defence industrialisation enables a country to produce its own defence equipment, reducing reliance on external suppliers and enhancing self-sufficiency (Kibaroglu, 2020, p. 12). Also, a strong defence industry contributes to strategic autonomy, allowing a country to pursue its defence policies without external constraints (Gopaul, 2024, p. 263). Again, defence industrialisation fosters innovation and adaptability to evolving security threats (Armcor, 2024), indicating that there is a relationship between defence industrialisation and national security.

For instance, the relationship between defence industrialisation and national security in the United States is deeply intertwined, where the US defence industry is a critical component of national security, providing the military with advanced technologies and systems (Markusen, 2019, p. 12). The US defence industry drives innovation, maintaining a technological edge over adversaries (Oden, 2020, p. 25). Their defence industry contributes to economic growth, employment, and exports (Hartley, 2021, p. 10). The US faces its own challenges, which include intense global competition, requiring continuous

innovation and adaptation (SIPRI, 2021, p. 5) and fiscal pressures and budget constraints, which can impact defence spending and industrial base sustainability (CSIS, 2020, p. 20).

In Russia, defence industrialisation is a key component of its national security strategy, aiming to maintain a strong military presence and reduce dependence on foreign suppliers (Kovalev, 2020, p. 15). Russia prioritises domestic defence production, investing in advanced technologies like hypersonic missiles and nuclear-powered submarines (Connors, 2021, p. 20). Russia is a major arms exporter, with companies like Rosoboronexport driving sales to countries like India and China (Wezeman, 2021, p. 5). Russia's defence industry supports its strategic autonomy, enabling it to pursue independent foreign policy goals (Lo, 2020, p. 10). A major challenge of Russia's Defence industry is that Western sanctions impact it, limiting access to critical technologies and components (Frolov, 2021, p. 25). Russia equally faces challenges in modernising its defence industry, with concerns about innovation and competitiveness (Kovalev, 2020, p. 20).

In India, defence industrialisation is also a major component of its national security strategy, which aims to reduce dependence on foreign suppliers and enhance self-reliance (Mukherjee, 2020, p. 12). India's 'Make in India' initiative prioritises domestic defence production, focusing on advanced technologies like fighter jets and submarines (Kapoor, 2021, p. 20). A robust defence industry enhances India's strategic autonomy, enabling it to pursue independent foreign policy goals (Sethi, 2020, p. 15). India's defence industry aims to become a major exporter, leveraging its competitive pricing and technology (Wezeman, 2021, p. 5), but faces the challenges of still relying heavily on imported defence equipment, impacting its self-reliance efforts (SIPRI, 2021, p. 10) and developing cutting-edge defence technologies, impacting its competitiveness (Mukherjee, 2020, p. 25).

The United Kingdom's defence industrialisation is a critical component of its national security strategy, aiming to maintain a strong and innovative defence industry (Kirkwood, 2020, p. 15). The UK's defence industry drives innovation, focusing on advanced technologies like cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (HM Government, 2021, p. 10). It equally collaborates with international partners, like the US and European countries, to enhance defence capabilities (Chuter, 2020, p. 20). The UK's defence industry is export-focused, with companies like BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce driving sales globally (UK MOD, 2021, p. 25). The UK's departure from the EU (Brexit) poses challenges to defence cooperation and industrial partnerships (Whitworth, 2021, p. 12). Also, there are budget constraints where fiscal pressures impact defence spending, requiring efficient resource allocation (Kirkwood, 2020, p. 20).

In China, defence industrialisation is a major component of its national security strategy, aiming to achieve self-reliance and become a major military power

(Cheung, 2020, p. 12). The priority of China's defence industry is domestic production, focusing on advanced technologies like stealth fighters and aircraft carriers (Heginbotham, 2019, p. 20). China is a major arms exporter, with companies like Norinco and AVIC driving sales globally (Wezeman, 2021, p. 5). China's defence industry also enhances its strategic autonomy, enabling it to pursue independent foreign policy goals (Lieggi, 2020, p. 15). Although China's defence industry focuses on advanced technologies to drive its domestic production, China still lags behind the US in certain advanced technologies, impacting its competitiveness (Cheung, 2020, p. 25). Also, China's defence industry faces quality and reliability concerns, affecting its international reputation (Heginbotham, 2019, p. 30).

Defence industrialisation in Japan is closely tied to its national security strategy, focusing on advanced technologies and strategic partnerships (Hughes, 2020, p. 12). Japan prioritises technological advancements (defence R&D), focusing on areas like cybersecurity, space, and AI (Green, 2021, p. 20). It collaborates with countries like the US, UK, and Australia to enhance defence capabilities (Panda, 2021, p. 15). For export controls, Japan balances defence exports with strict controls to prevent technology leakage (Oros, 2020, p. 30). Japan faces a constitutional pacifist constitution that limits defence policy and export flexibility (Hughes, 2020, p. 25). It equally faces regional security challenges from North Korea and China, driving defence priorities (Green, 2021, p. 10).

Defence industrialisation in France is a cornerstone of its national security, emphasising autonomy and strategic capabilities (Tertrais, 2020, p. 12). The priority of France in its defence industrialisation is defence autonomy, investing in nuclear deterrence, cybersecurity, and advanced aerospace (Kiefer, 2021, p. 20). France engages in collaboration where it drives European defence initiatives like FCAS and MGCS to boost competitiveness (Béraud-Sudreau, 2020, p. 10). Even though France is a top arms exporter, with companies like Dassault and Naval Group leading sales (D3E, 2021, p. 15), it faces the challenge of global competition and EU market dynamics, which challenge France's defence industry (Tertrais, 2020, p. 25). Also, it suffers budget pressures, whereby balancing defence spending with economic priorities is an ongoing challenge (Kiefer, 2021, p. 30).

Germany's defence industrialisation is shaped by its history, EU partnerships, and security priorities, focusing on advanced technologies and collaboration (Kempin, 2020, p. 12). European integration is an integral part of defence industrialisation in Germany, where it prioritises EU defence cooperation, like PESCO and EDF, to boost competitiveness (Fiott, 2021, p. 20). Germany invests in cybersecurity, AI, and Future Combat Air System (FCAS) partnerships (Biscarini, 2020, p. 15). Germany balances defence exports with strict controls, reflecting its security and human rights priorities (Wezeman, 2021, p. 5). Germany has suffered historical constraints where its past impacts defence policy, limits certain exports and roles (Kempin, 2020, p. 25). Germany shares in

NATO's burden as it faces pressure to increase defence spending and contributions (Fiott, 2021, p. 10).

The defence industrialisation of South Korea is a key driver of its national security, with a focus on self-reliance and advanced technologies (Chun, 2019, p. 10). South Korea places its priorities on domestic defence production, reducing dependence on US imports (Lee, 2020, p. 25). South Korea exports defence products like K9 howitzers and T-50 trainers, boosting its industry (Wezeman, 2021, p. 5). It collaborates with the US, which enhances its defence tech and interoperability (Kim, 2021, p. 15). Tensions with North Korea drive South Korea's defence priorities (Chun, 2019, p. 12). South Korea faces challenges in developing cutting-edge defence tech (Lee, 2020, p. 30).

North Korea's defence industrialisation is a critical component of its national security strategy with a specific focus on self-reliance and asymmetric capabilities (Hecker, 2020, p. 12). North Korea prioritises domestic defence production with emphasis on nuclear and missile programs (Kim, 2021, p. 20). North Korea employs an asymmetric strategy where it uses defence industrialisation to counter conventional weaknesses (Panda, 2020, p. 15). It exports defence products, often illicitly, to gain revenue and influence (Wezeman, 2021, p. 5). International sanctions severely impact North Korea's defence industry (Hecker, 2020, p. 25), and it faces challenges in developing advanced defence tech (Kim, 2021, p. 30).

In Turkey, defence industrialisation is a key driver of its national security, and it focuses on self-reliance and advanced technologies (Kibaroglu, 2020, p. 12). Turkey prioritises domestic defence production, reducing dependence on foreign suppliers (Gürcan, 2021, p. 20). Turkey's defence priorities are shaped by regional security challenges (Kibaroglu, 2020, p. 15). Turkey exports defence products like drones and armoured vehicles, boosting its industry (Wezeman, 2021, p. 5). Turkey seeks defence industrialisation to enhance strategic autonomy and regional influence (Kibaroglu, 2020, p. 25) but still relies on foreign tech for some defence systems (Gürcan, 2021, p. 30).

3.0 Methodology

This study utilized qualitative research approach, which is the process of understanding a problem through exploratory research with the use of small cases or samples. It involves collecting in-depth information from a relatively small number of cases or a sample. It is usually carried out through data techniques such as interviews, participant observation and documents. Among other qualitative research designs, the study adopted both descriptive and exploratory case studies, which involve an in-depth examination of the phenomenon under investigation, to provide a detailed description using multiple data sources such as interviews, observations and documents. Adopting purposive sampling as a technique for the selection of informants, the researcher selected a small number of important cases that are likely to yield the

most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge. This is in line with Khalifa (2016). The informants selected using purposive sampling include DICON staff, expert academics and ex- or serving military personnel. The sample size in this study was projected at fifteen (15), five (5) for each category of informants – DICON Staff, expert academics and ex- and/or serving military personnel, but considering that the number may either increase or decrease depending on data saturation, the researcher has approached and reached their saturation point at thirteen (13) informants.

The participants were informed that their responses would be treated with absolute confidentiality and would be strictly utilised for academic purposes. As such, DICON staff are classified as DICON 1-5, academic experts are classified as ACE 1-5, and military experts are classified as MILE 1-3.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Lack of Strategic Thinking and Planning

In an age of global information networking, one must develop approaches that allow strategic decisions to be made on a specific event in a short amount of time. This calls for high-level decision-makers to stay closely connected with the military and to be able to apply a systematic approach. Strategic theory guides how to manage the complexities of using force to achieve policy ends and comprises thoughts about making an effective strategy (Caliskan, 2021). Unfortunately, apart from the lack of political will on the part of the government, there is equally the challenge of strategic thinking and planning on the part of the government or leadership. The defence industry of Nigeria suffers from strategic thinking when Academic Expert (ACE) 3 said, *"My recommendation is that we have to have a strategic look at it. Unfortunately, what I have seen our government... up till now, we do not think strategically."*

Another informant, ACE 4, went further to say;

> "I believe we should know how to manage and meet all those things. It's about strategic planning. The DG with his management team knows how to go about meeting the demand needs of the Armed Forces and other security operatives, with the Federal Government's support."

In the same vein, ACE 2, while talking about utilising our best brains in Diaspora, said;

> "Honestly speaking, if you go abroad and bring back Nigerians to the universities, in NASA, Nigeria will achieve a lot, but we don't have strategic thinking leaders. Our leaders think only about their pockets; they don't think about the next generation. Our leaders are not patriotic."

The lack of strategic thinking and planning can have far-reaching consequences on organisations. According to Mintzberg (1994. P. 107), organisations without strategic thinking and planning often become reactive, focusing on short-term fixes rather than long-term goals; failure to anticipate and adapt to changes leads to missed opportunities and competitive advantage; and resources are misallocated, leading to waste and inefficiency.

The lack of strategic thinking and planning has significantly hindered Nigeria's defence industries. For instance, Ogbeidi (2012, p. 123) asserted that the absence of a clear defence policy and strategic planning has led to inadequate resource allocation – poor prioritisation and misallocation of resources, hindering development and modernisation; and dependence on foreign arms imports as a result of failure to develop domestic capabilities, which exacerbate security vulnerabilities. Defence industries like DICON face underutilization due to a lack of strategic direction.

4.2 Leadership Issues

Strategic leadership is key to the success of every organisation. Responses from twelve informants out of the thirteen interviewed reveal there is a problem of leadership which affects Nigeria's defence industry. That is why ACE 1 asserted.

> "If you have a leadership that is so cold, so reactive, that is not proactive, it could be a problem. It is a leadership issue. If successful leaders have recognised the fact that it is better to produce than to import arms and sell rather than depending on other nations, they would have been able to devote much attention to DICON."

Military Expert (MILE) 1 categorically stated that the problem with DICON is that of a lack of foresight on the part of leadership when they said;

> "It is a lack of foresight from the leadership because one thing about us in Nigeria is that we just go there to make it a routine work or look for what we can get. And even when money is given partially, they do not even use it well. Everybody wants to go away with it. So, it is a lack of leadership."

The findings equally reveal there is variation in leadership style and a lack of continuity, which makes it easier to assert that strategic thinking and planning are lacking in mass production. For instance, DICON 4 asserted;

> "The leadership, to me, every leader has a style of management, and as you know, our head is always the DG. And the other aspect is a lack of continuity. Some may wish to continue with the previous, while others may believe in the new product. So that is just the thing, but I think for every DG brought, he has his own style of management."

Therefore, findings in this study indicate that bad leadership can have a significant effect on DICON's production capacity, and previous studies have shown or corroborate these findings that the problem in leadership can significantly impact production in industries in different ways. For instance, Bass (1985, p. 12-20) asserted that poor leadership can result in decreased productivity, as employees may become demotivated and disengaged. Similarly, Avolio (2007, p. 25-30) opined that bad leadership can lead to low morale, as employees may feel undervalued and unappreciated. As such, investing in employee development and training can enhance skills and knowledge (Avolio, 2007).

Poor leadership may result in high turnover rates, which is why Kotter (2001, p. 10-15) asserted that industries with poor leadership may experience high turnover rates, as employees may choose to leave due to unsatisfactory working conditions. Bad leadership can equally result in poor decision-making, which can negatively impact production and overall industry performance (Yulk, 2010). That is why Yulk (2010, p. 15-50) went further to state that, to mitigate this effect, there is a need to encourage decision-making that prioritises industry goals and objectives.

Poor leadership can lead to inefficient use of resources, resulting in wasted time and materials (Bass, 1985). It can equally stifle innovation as employees may feel discouraged from sharing new ideas (Avolio, 2007). Again, Kotter (2001, p.10-15) asserted that poor leadership can result in decreased product quality as employees may not be motivated to meet high standards. Therefore, there is a need to foster a leadership style that inspires and motivates employees in the industry.

4.3 Government's Defence Policy

Since there is a difference in leadership and a lack of continuity, the findings reveal that government policies change when there is a change in government. Some may give DICON the necessary attention, and others will not. For instance, DICON 1 asserted;

> "…you need to ask the government because a lot of it has to do with government policies. This government will come, and another will not look at DICON." The informant went further to say, "There is a transition, as I said, one will support and another might not. Every government has its own area of focus. We've been seeking the DICON bill to be signed into law, nobody is saying anything until this government came and it's signed."

Similarly, Discussant 1 in a Focused Group Discussion attributed one of the challenges of DICON to government policy when they asserted that *there is a change in government policies, as there is in the government of which some do not prioritise DICON.* For Discussant 3 in their Focused Group Discussion, *"no policy frameworks are dictating local buys."* Discussant 5 in the Focused Group

Discussion simply puts it, "there is a policy vacuum." And according to DICON 3, in highlighting the challenges of DICON, *"The third aspect is government policies. When the government does not have a policy in place to be able to discern what should be, it is going to be a problem."*

Government policies can impact either positively or negatively on the production capacity of any industry, including defence industries. Trade policies, for instance, such as tariffs or quotas, could impact production by affecting the availability of and cost of raw materials or imported goods, which some of the informants identified as a challenge to DICON's production capacity. In other words, governments' export policies can influence production volumes and profitability. For instance, in Comparative Study of Defence Industries (2023, p. 16), Japan's restriction on exporting certain products overseas under Implementation Guidelines of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology limits its defence industry's growth.

Subsidies and incentives provided by the government can equally encourage domestic or local production of defence equipment. For instance, in Comparative Study of Defence Industries (2023, p. 15), the United Kingdom has put forth a "strategic approach" to selectively possess critical manufacturing infrastructure with a focus on "strategic imperatives" and "operational independence." Strict regulations can increase production costs, thereby leading to a decrease in the supply chain. Again, in Japan, strict foreign export curbs have contributed to small-scale demand and low profit margins for defence equipment manufacturers (Comparative Study of Defence Industries, 2023, p. 6).

The government's policy on research and development could either enhance or reduce production capacity. Governments often invest in research and development to promote innovation in defence industries. The United States' Defence Innovation Unit (DIU) and Other Transaction Authority (OTA) are examples of initiatives that invest in Research and Development and rapidly introduce products in non-traditional companies (Comparative Study of Defence Industries, 2023, p. 12).

The government can equally promote a policy on industrial restructuring to enhance its competitiveness. For instance, the government of the United Kingdom has allowed mergers and restructuring in its defence industry, which enables it to gain international competitiveness (Comparative Study of Defence Industries, 2023, p. 9). As such, good government policies are very important to any industry, including defence industries, particularly DICON.

5.0 Conclusion

The study set out to investigate Nigeria's leadership issues with regard to its defence policy and strategy in DICON's arms production for managing national security, and it established how strategic leadership is to the success of

every organisation. Unfortunately, DICON's production capacity has been greatly affected as a result of leadership issues. The study reveals that the leadership of the country lacks foresight and is reactive, rather than proactive. As such, Nigeria depends on other countries for arms rather than devote attention to DICON. Again, the reveal that there is variation in leadership style and lack of continuity, which makes it easier to assert that strategic thinking and planning are lacking in mass production. Since there is a difference in leadership and a lack of continuity, government policies change when there is a change in government, thereby affecting DICON's performance in arms production.

6.0 Recommendation

This study recommends, among others, that the government should strengthen inter-agency coordination, thereby enhancing collaboration among security agencies. The government should equally increase defence budget allocation, boosting funding for modernisation and capacity building. Prioritising local content by developing domestic defence industries like DICON is very important. Therefore, the government should develop and implement a strategic defence policy that enhances local production and ensures there is continuity in leadership.

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