

POLICE REBELLION AND COUP D'ETAT IN WEST AFRICA: THE CASES OF SENEGAL AND NIGERIA

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Abstract: Rebellion against the state in Africa has been a common phenomenon since most African countries became independent but it has been confined to ethnic separatism or secession and military mutiny or coup de 'tat.

However, talking of police rebellion or coup d'état against the state, as it recently took place in one of Nigeria's provinces, is a new and dangerous dimension to police and policing activities in Africa. Senegal and Nigeria in particular are two typical countries in West Africa where clear evidences of these have been recorded. How they happened and the aftermath of their occurrence is the subject of this paper

Keywords: Coup d'état, Police, Policing, Rebellion, Security

INTRODUCTION

Senegal and Nigeria are West African countries and, to that extent, members of Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS) but while one is a Francophone country the other is Anglophone. These different colonial backgrounds impact on their police and policing structures. The security system in Senegal is modeled along French military set up that comprises mainly the army and the gendarmerie. However in between these two are many paramilitary forces such as the police with their infamous GMI (Groupements Mobile d'Intervention) and the anti riot police¹In fact Senegalese police relationship with the military is a complex one. While Senegalese policemen are essentially civil servants they are answerable to military courts but do not enjoy the same status in terms of ranks and privileges. The Gendarmerie, on the other hand is a smaller unit but highly trained, fairly well equipped and paid. Like the police, they are also sworn

officials². Thus, while in Senegal seven security services -army, air force, navy, gendarmerie, GMI (anti-riot police) and police can be identified, in Nigeria not less than ten security agencies exist throughout the country .The State Security Services (SSS), the Police, Anti riot police, Road Safety Corps and Traffic Police constitute the internal security agencies while Army, Navy, Air Force, Customs, Immigration officers and National Intelligence Agencies (NIA) constitute the external security³. However, unlike in Senegal where security forces play overlapping role, the role expected of each of the ten security outfits in Nigeria is mutually exclusive though not so in the areas of information gathering and sharing that are the most important and the only unifying factor. Internal security is ensured mostly by the police while the external ones may require the assistance of other security agencies such as the Army, Air Force and Navy to complement and supplement that of the police⁴. But in grave cases of serious threat to cohesiveness of the two countries, military were often called in to assist the police in joint patrol (especially in Nigeria) due in part to inadequate police personnel and, most importantly, sophisticated weaponry to combat such threat. For instance, in Nigeria, the Odi and Benue massacre of 1999 and 2000 respectively, as well as the April 2003 general elections, called for the deployment of the military to assist the police in policing matters. But there are times when these unpopular forces, especially the police and the army disagree, and in Gueye's terms, beat one another. For instance, the two day police riot in Senegal in 1987 not only pitched them against gendarmerie, an arm of the country's military, it in deed saw the gendarmerie taking over the whole police stations in the country⁵. In Nigeria, such forces disagreement was partly responsible for the military putsch of December

1983. The then president of the country, Alhaji Sheu Shagari, was accused by the military of over equipping the police to take over their (army's) traditional role. On coming to power, the immediate concern of the military was to withdraw from the police all military equipments considered too much for their (police) traditional role and in the process further depleted police equipments. Granted that over equipping the police with highly sophisticated weapons could engender unbridled rivalry between the police and the armed forces, as was the case in Nigeria in 1983, lack of sufficient and sophisticated equipments could as well slow efficiency in the police services of the two countries already bedeviled by inadequate recruitment exercise. In Senegal, with a population of less than 6 million as at 1986 but now 10 million (July 1999 est.), only 6, 265 men and women of all ranks are policemen, as at 1986 and they are made up of 94 commissioners, 14 superior officers of the peace, 201 police officers and 42 peace officers, while in Nigeria, the police strength of 121,594 as at 2000, cater for not less than 120 million Nigerians⁶. This issue of inadequate personnel, among many others, led to the Call for policing decentralization in Nigeria.

Of all the negative reactions of the police, the worst and unthinkable: the resort to insurrection and mutiny by doing the unthinkable: the call on the forces in Senegal and Nigeria, out on strike against the letters of the Trade Union Act of the two countries, against the constitutions of the two countries and against their loyalties to the governments of the two countries which they voluntarily swore to uphold, make the study of the situations in the two countries interesting. It is going to be the concern of this paper to compare the police situations in these two countries, examine the extent of their rebellions against their respective states and, especially the recent police coup attempt on a provincial government in Nigeria. It would also examine the various reforms these police mutinies have engendered in the two countries especially the new concept of policing- community policing.

CONCEPTUALIZING POLICE OR POLICING

Conceptual analysis of security, police, policing and community policing, is essential here not only to highlight the differences among them but also to show their relationship and interdependence.

Security and Police

Security and police are inter-related and interconnected. If the society is absolutely free from threat of danger, there would be no need for the establishment of police force. But since there is no such security-free society (the disintegrated communist government in the Soviet Union

attempted this through communism but failed) every society or community takes it upon itself to ensure the security of life and properties of its members. But food security should be an essential component of the over all security. Without abundant food supply at affordable prices to the citizenry coupled with gainful employment, security agencies themselves may turn out to aid and abet security undermining⁷. Security of life, food and properties are thus essentially responsible for police formation in whatever form throughout human societies, communities or governments. Security is therefore necessary for internal and external threats.

Police or Policing

What is "police" or "policing"? Afe Babalola in his weekly commentary on the police that spanned roughly three months provided a working definition of police. "Police", according to him, is defined by Chambers' dictionary (new edition) as (1) a body of men and women employed to maintain order etc; (2) its members collectively; (3) the system of regulations for the preservation of order and enforcement; (4) the internal government of a state. On the other hand, Babalola goes further; Black's dictionary (seventh edition) defines the "police" as (1) the governmental department charged with the preservation of public order, the promotion of public safety, and the prevention and detection of crime; (2) The officers or members of this department. In sum, the above definitions and, taking into cognisance the modernisation of the "police" "the word can mean, generally, the arrangements made in all civilised countries to ensure that the inhabitants keep the peace and obey the law. It also denotes the force of peace of officers employed for this purpose⁸

These definitions of modern police were further elaborated by Babalola to include the duties cum functions of modern police. According to Sir, Richard Peel that Babalola paraphrased, nine duties cum functions that the police in any civilised society perform are (a) the basic mission for which police exist is to prevent crime and disorder; (b) the ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions; (c) the police must secure the willing co-operation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public; (d) the degree of co-operation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity of the use of physical force; (e) police seek and preserve public favour not by catering to public opinion but by constantly - demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law; (f) police use physical force to the extent necessary to secure observance of the law or to restore order only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be

insufficient; (g) police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent of every citizen in the interest of community welfare and existence; (h) police should always direct their action strictly towards their functions and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary; (i) the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it⁹

Worthy of note in these principles, as enunciated by Sir Richard Peel, is the first principle above which accords with first duty of the police as contained in section 4 of the police Act, Cap 359, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990 which provides: "The police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged, and shall perform such military duties within or without Nigeria as may be required by them or under the authority of this or any other Act¹⁰ "Thus the prevention of crime and disorder as the basic mission (and reason) for the existence of the police, according to Sir Richard Peel, and "the prevention, and detection of crime" according to the Police Act of the Federation of Nigeria are one and the same."

AGENTS OF STATES IN REBELLION AGAINST THE STATES

Police and Policing issue in Africa has come under heavy criticisms in the last two decades. Principals among such criticisms are failure in service delivery, lack of disciplines in their ranks and files leading to armed disobedience and confrontation with the government they are trained and paid to defend. But the police countered that their poor service delivery in most African countries is attributed to inadequate manpower, insufficient operational equipments that expose them to attack by criminals and rioters during civil disobedience and, above all, poor salary structure and motivation from the government and even the general public. In South Africa, since the collapse of apartheid regime, not less than 150 policemen have lost their lives¹¹ and in Nigeria, not less than twenty six soldiers and fifty-five policemen have been killed by ethnic militias and armed robbers since the advent of democratic government in 1999¹² But a strange phenomenon in policing attitude in Africa is the observed rebellion of these critical agents of the states in Senegal and Nigeria against the governments they swore to protect. The two states, Nigeria and Senegal, equally reacted in a manner

unheard of elsewhere in Africa and indeed third world countries, by their dismissals of the ring leaders of these rebellions. Although other grave offences for which policemen are sometimes dismissed include, murder, stealing and bribery, never before has it happened in any country the world over, for the entire police to be sacked or a large proportion to be dismissed as were the cases of Senegal and Nigeria respectively. For stealing, bribery and extortion from motorists, in 1988, 33 policemen were sacked in Ghana, in Nigeria 10 policemen were dismissed in Kwara state, 15, apart from 7 demotions and an additional 10 arrested for extortion on highways, in Lagos state, 42 in Osun state, and 10 awaiting verdict of their dismissal for similar offences in Ogun state¹³. This on going purge of the police in Nigeria in fact started earlier in the military when the new President, retired General Obasanjo, barely a week in office in 1999, compulsorily retired 97 senior military officers considered to have taken political appointments during the military regimes and had therefore become political soldiers rather than professional ones. Again, in March 2000, the most far-reaching retirement of army officers took place when in one fell swoop, not less than 349 officers were retired¹⁴. Regarding police rebellion against the state, police in Senegal and Nigeria may not be the first ones in the world and in deed, third world countries, to have done so. But so far, they remain the only countries in Africa to lay this unprecedented example and for which they faced an equally unprecedented reprisal from their respective governments. Other known countries that the police had rebelled against the state were Philippines and Argentina" though not African countries, they are third world countries like their African counterparts'. Surprisingly the reaction of some governments to police abnormality is also often shocking. Just like in Philippine recently where the President of the country, Gloria Arroyo threatened to sack police leadership following the embarrassing escape two weeks ago of self confessed Indonesian terrorist Father Rohman al-Ghozi, so did Senegal under President Abdoul Diouf government sacked not only the Interior Minister, Ibrahima Wone, together with his top security staff who was in charge of police affairs and whom the rebelling police had even called for his removal because of his indifference to their grievances, but the entire police that mutinied on April 13 and 14 for jailing of their seven colleagues alleged and found guilty of torturing and beating a robbery suspect to death in Darker police station in 1983¹⁵. Similar indictment of the police repeated itself in 1995 and 1996 when seven and five policemen respectively were charged.

Within the country's police therefore, 1,246 of all grades, close to one-third of the force, were sacked.

Some voluntarily withdrew from service while those that returned did so after a case by case study. In fact, the reform started with definitive reinstatement of 71 senior officers with another 71 cases pending while an order was placed by Jean Collin, Secretary General at the Presidency and acting Interior minister, for recruitment of additional 400 junior policemen. For security reasons that bordered on trained armed men turning into armed robbers for lack of jobs, the state re-constituted the willing sacked ones into local police whose duty was mainly collection of taxes for provincial and local authorities. They wore the same uniform like the regular police but on their shoulders are insignia PC that is, civic police. They are also ranked but while they are controlled by the national police their maintenance are carried out by the provincial or local authorities and their functions are strictly limited to collection of local taxes for the local councils¹⁶. Jean Collin is a phenomenon in Senegalese security circle. For years, Mr. Jean Collin, a Christian and French citizen, was, under Senghor and Diouf, Interior minister in the Interior ministry under which police is. After some time under Diouf, Collin was replaced with a Muslim, Ibrahimia Wone¹⁷. When Ibrahimia was consumed by the police riot of 1986 and had to be dismissed, Collin who was then Secretary-, General at the Presidency had to be re-drafted back as minister of state in the Interior ministry and thus held two posts of Interior minister and secretary-general cumulatively¹⁸.

In Nigeria too, like in Senegal, the minister of police affairs, retired General David Jemibewon, was removed from office but whether this had to do with the police matter or a motor accident he had was not clear. Other heads of the state's security agents in Nigeria that lost their jobs included the Chief of Army staff, Victor Malu and the Inspector-General of Police, Alhaji Musiliu Smith, together with his six deputies and junior military/police officers for the police strike of February 1, 2002. Arrest and dismissal of about 153 police mutiny ring leaders from many of its commands were also made. The grievances of the junior military/police officers included huge salary arrears, non promotion of personnel for a long time, lack of automatic promotion to the officers' rank of those who stole time to acquire un-authorized varsity degrees, even some of the disgruntled officers, according to an editorial comment, stole into the Force with false declaration of academic qualifications. But measures were later taken to placate the restive junior police officers. Such measures included the release of five billion naira to attend to police grievances, promotion of three thousand sergeants and twenty thousand police corporas, sixty Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACPs), increasing the total number of policemen from 170, 000 as at year 2000, to 250,

000, in year 2003, out of which 100, 000 of all categories have been promoted. Other measures were upgrading the welfare of men of the Nigeria Police Force and the recruitment of 40, 000 policemen annually for a period of five years until the target of 577,000 policemen is met. The goal is to meet the United Nations recommended ratio of 400 people to one policeman. But as recently as August 8, 2003, junior policemen in Ondo and Osun states/provinces police Commands protested again by carrying placards for non payment of their special duty allowances and exorbitant financial returns that were being demanded of them daily by superior officers respectively¹⁹.

A totally new dimension in police rebellion against the state is what happened recently in Nigeria when a state or provincial elected governor of Anambra was unconstitutionally removed from office. An Assistant Inspector-General of police, Raphael Ige, working in concert with some people headed by Chief Chris Uba who is also the sponsor of the coup, led a band of well armed 200 policemen to abduct the governor²⁰. The plan was to arrest the governor, force him to resign, swear in the deputy governor and then banish the governor to his village, under a protective custody. But four hours after the deputy governor had been named and a directive sent to the state Chief Judge to swear him in the coup failed and the plan also failed automatically. As usual, this failed coup attempt by the police also led to the purging of the police again. While the coup leader, Assistant Inspector-General of the police, Raphael Ige, has been forced to retire, a retirement that is just a matter of week away anyway, his boss, the Inspector-General of the police is under investigation now²¹. Following calls by a cross-section of Nigerians and editorialists for the removal of the Inspector-General of the police, Alhaji Tafa Balogun, an investigation panel has been set up by the Federal government but he, as a suspect, is not allowed any freedom to participate in the investigation. This incident is referred to as coup because of similarities it shared with Sao Tome and Principe where coup took place on the 16th of July 2002. That of one of the provinces in Nigeria took place on July 10th of 2003. Nigeria and Sao Tome are neighbours and members of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Besides, the President of that county was on a state visit in Nigeria when the coup incident took place in his country. The country itself is less than 200,000 people in population while Anambra state or province in Nigeria is made up of a little more than two million people. These similarities in the incidents in both Sao Tome and Anambra province in Nigeria made the press to refer to Anambra incident as coup de tat too. On a wider scale, the last April general election in Nigeria is seen

as a civilian coup in which the police, assisted by a sprinkle of the army, serving and retired, spearheaded the victory of Peoples Democratic Party believed to be the party of the retired army generals. In all these, the motive of the Nigerian police rather than being power-driven is basically bribe-driven. To execute Anambra coup the AIG Ige was said to have demanded 15 million naira while his boss was equally given undisclosed amount of bribe²². For the role the police was expected to play in the civilian coup of April general election, the presidency was said to have provided the police with 2 billion naira for logistics. The Inspector-General of the police was said to have distributed it this way: Lagos State Police Command, which is the largest in the country, with 18, 000 policemen, got 6 million naira; other states -35 in all -got 5 million naira each. Each of the 12 zonal command got 1 million. In all, the amount disbursed to all the commands amounted to a little over 200 million naira, leaving the Police/civilian coup leader, the Inspector-General of the police, Alhaji Tafa Balogun, with a net profit of 1.7 billion naira although the Inspector-General of the police has denied this magazine report²³.

POLICE REFORM

Four important events have more than any other ones necessitated police reform in Nigeria and Senegal in particular and Africa in General: (a) increasing wave of criminal activities, (b) ethnic and/or religious domination of the Police force (c) police rebellion against the state as are the cases of Senegal and Nigeria and (d) police coup de tat as it recently happened in one of Nigeria's provinces. Prior to this time, there had been not less than four police re-organizations or reforms in Nigeria: 1987, 1992, 1994 and 1996. However, reasons for the reform of 1996 were not clear to the general public. While that of 1987 established a zonal arrangement, as Guardian puts it, to combat more effectively the menace wave of crime nation-wide, especially, armed robbery as well as religious fanaticism and intolerance, that of 1992 witnessed the emergence of five Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, necessitated by the need to reflect federal character principle. But the rationale for that of 1994 and 1996 reforms was neither mentioned nor clear if stated at all²⁴. In 1994, General Abacha set up a panel to review the Nigerian police force. It had as members all former retired Inspector General of Police: Alhaji M. D. Yusuf (headed the panel), Alhaji Gambo, Sunday Adewusi and others with retired Deputy Inspector-General Parry Osayande, as secretary .But since submission of the report by the panel to the government, it has not been made public up till now. Surprisingly however, the 1996 reform, without any rationale for its exercise, began to dismantle the five

administrative directorates and replaced them with five departments that was the old structure of 1992²⁵.

Other far reaching consequences of the 1996 police re-organization were, besides the elimination of multi-layer of Deputy Inspectors-General of Police and instituting only one DIG, compulsory retirement before or having attained the maximum service years of 35 for many senior, middle level and junior officers as well as constables and, the dismissals, for all kinds of reasons. According to Guardian, no fewer than 600 officers were separated from service in 1993 and, 52, in the previous year. All put together, no fewer than 1,500 middle level and junior officers had been removed²⁶. What however gave out the intention of the government was the resultant re-shuffle and re-assignment of officers to the office of Deputy Inspector-General (DIG), the eight zonal offices, five departments, the state police commands and other sensitive and critical duty posts in the NPF. The federal character and geographical spread principles at the national and local levels respectively emphasizes evidence of balance, justice, fairness and sensitivity to the ethnic, sectional and religious diversity of Nigeria. But this was not only desecrated ethnically and sectionally but, more importantly, religiously²⁷.

As at 1996 Nigeria police reform, the structure was: the Inspector-General, Alhaji Hassan Coomasi, from Katsina state; his deputy, Alhaji Abdullahi Jika, from Adamawa state. The Assistant Inspectors-general were Lima Shettima (Borno state), G.M.H. Ali-Jos (Kano state), Sanni Ahmed Daura (Katsina state), Inusa Isa (Kaduna state), Baapah- Jama're (Bauchi state), Lawal Bawa (Kebbi state), B.A. Albasu (Kano state), Mohammed Abubakar, Zakara Malherbe (Kwara state) and Mrs Rachael Iyamabo (Edo state). The creation of the Assistant Inspector-General (AIG) post, according to the Inspector- General of the police, Alhaji Tafa Balogun, is to decentralize authority and the workload at the force headquarters. "At AIG level, you can take decisions" without clearance from the headquarters. Presently therefore, an AIG covers three states/provinces and by extension has three commissioner of police under him. Commissioner of Police is a constitutional post while Assistant Inspector General (AIG) is just an administrative post²⁸. Thus, of 10 AIGs then (but now 12) who were zone commanders and provided maximum security for zones that they commanded, only one from Edo state was from the southern part of the country she is even a Christian woman in the midst of men whose religion does not permit women headship or leadership. As at 1996, there were 30 states in the country and in the spirit of true federalism, three states ought to have jointly produced an AIG. What was even more shocking was that, of the 12 most senior echelons of the Nigerian

Police, 10 were from the North and ONLY two were from the southern parts. The IG was from Katsina state and so was AIG Sanni Daura. Bauchi, another northern state, had two. The DIG was from Adamawa, a northern state as well. The zonal commanders were Alhaji Musiliu Smith (Zone 1 from Lagos state); Ali-Jos (Zone 2, from Kano, a northern state); Yisa Ojibara (Zone 3); Inusa Isa (Zone 4 from Kaduna, a northern state); CP Bukar Alli (Zone 5 from a northern state); AIG Shettima (Zone 6 and 7, from Borno) Kaltungo CP (Zone 8)²⁹.

This lopsidedness applied to command postings too. Not many people could remember, for instance, when was someone who came from the South, to just cite one example; last headed southern states police commands. Thus, given the deliberate misapplied federal character and geographical principles at the national and local levels respectively in command and administrative re- structuring, appointments, posting, retirement and dismissal of the Nigerian Policemen between 1994 and 1996, ethnic, sectional and religious domination of the rest of the country by the northern part was the main motive. But the coming in of retired General Olusegun Obasanjo as civilian head of state in 1999 has corrected most of this lopsidedness. Initially, the minister of police was a Yoruba Christian from the North, retired General Jemibewon, while the Inspector General of police was a Yoruba Muslim, Alhaji Musliu Smith, from Lagos state in the South West. Mid way in the first term of his administration, re-organization of police structure at the federal level witnessed replacement of the northern Christian Yoruba minister of police with another northern Christian but Tive tribe, Stephen Akiga, while a new Inspector-General of the police, though a Yoruba Muslim, Alhaji Tafa Balogun, from Osun state in the South West, replaced Alhaji Musiliu Smith.

The latest police structure reform in Nigeria is the proposed establishment of certain Security Forum at all the political levels: Wards, Area Units, Local Governments, Senatorial Districts, States, Zonal and National Security Committee Forum. Using Local Government as an illustration, the proposal suggests that the Security Committee Forum could be made of Local Government Chairman, Councilors, a Traditional ruler, and a representative of the business community, a youth leader, a community leader and a religious leader³⁰. But where there are religious problems as a result of multi-religious presence, representatives of the various religions may have to be co-opted into the Security Committee.

It is interesting to note those agents of religious bodies and that of the state does clash or confront each other over policing issues. In Nigeria for instance, the federal police have had cause to clash

with Sharia police in all the Muslim northern states of the federation that have adopted Islam as their states' religion and Sharia as their civil and criminal legal systems. Because of the need to enforce Sharia laws in their states and since they disagree with the position of the federal government that Nigeria is a secular state, they decided to establish Islamic police called Hisba that could enforce Sharia laws but it has always caused policy and operational clash between them and the federal police on a number of occasions, especially in Kano where Sharia police intercepted a truck loaded with alcoholic drinks and made attempt to destroy the content which is outlawed under state's Islamic legal code³¹. While the Islamic police were in the process of destroying the beer, men of the Nigerian police from Gwale Division Kano came to the scene and made attempt to stop them. The headquarters of Mounride brotherhood in Senegal, Touba, is equally seen as a state within a state because neither police nor gendarme stations exist there but an Islamic police called Baye Fall. Baye Fall provides security for the area most of the year .Baye Fall Islamic police are young men with rasta-style haircuts and colourful patchwork tunics who are the foot soldiers. Their policing role in Touba often overlaps to Senegal's towns and villages collecting charity money for the brotherhood coffers³².

To avoid incessant Islamic police clash with the federal police in Nigeria federal government warned the Islamic police (Hisba) to keep off federal governments' establishments such as military, police barracks and other sensitive areas like Christian dominated areas, in the enforcement of Sharia laws and their other policing activities. In Senegal on the other hand, what the central government did was to simply ignore the activities of these religious police, since; unlike Nigeria they have not been confrontational to the government.

OBSERVATION

It is curious why Nigeria and Senegalese governments have, in their reforming the police and policing structure and philosophy, not considered adoption of Community policing that is the current global methodology of policing especially in the Western world. To date, in Africa, South Africa is the known country that has, more than four years ago, adopted this new methodology .Ironically in Nigeria under the military regime, Col. Mohammed Marwa, the then Lagos state administrator, established a community- oriented civil security system tagged "Neighbourhood Watch". This was the closest thing to Community policing. Its conceptualization, according to the Guardian editorial, acknowledged an urgent need to adopt an approach that is more affordable and involves residents in a neighbourhood in the responsibility to curb crime³³. The project was

expected to involve some 3,000 persons of "sound character" to be selected in collaboration with the 15 local councils. Members of the group would wear uniforms, bear identity cards and some "traditional" arms for self defence: Specifically, they were volunteer group charged with acting as Informants and supervising vigilante activities across the city but they were expected to work under the supervision of the police with a special unit christened "Operation Sweep", an anti-robbery team put together by his predecessor. The unit was "rejuvenated with no fewer than 105 vehicles and 180 walkies talkies were given to the squad for the assignment. Also #2 million was given on a quarterly basis to the 3000 member-strong Neighbourhood Watch". Within few months of their establishments and operations the effort of the Military Governor, Col. Marwa, paid off as the state witnessed drastic drop in armed robbery cases³⁴.

Under the present democratic dispensation Lagos state civilian government continued the programme for a while but later abandoned it because of "unruly behaviour of some members", behaviour such as hooliganism and destabilization. However, the programme has been resuscitated but limited to the Lagos Island for now. According to the Commissioner for Rural Development, Dr. Tola Kasali, under whom the outfit is now placed, it is to check "crimes in conjunction with the Nigerian police" and their activities, according to the Commissioner for Rural Development, are expected to include patrolling, surveillance, vigilance and report of suspicious elements within the neighbourhood to the police.³⁵

But the new Inspector-General of the police, Alhaji Tafa Balogun, who took over from his predecessor, Alhaji Musiliu Smith, indicated interest in formulating national policy on Community policing and to that end presented eight-point strategy. First, he provided a working definition of Nigeria's version of community policing which the Federal government instantly approved. In listing his eight-point strategy on assumption of office he gave the Nigeria police a focus and made community partnership in policing his seventh strategy. Others were (i) anti-crime posture (ii) decisive crisis management (iii) comprehensive training (iv) anti-corruption crusade (v) robust public relations (vi) inter- service co-operation and (viii) general welfare. But the Nigerian variant of community policing has two distinct aspects: checkpoints (CP) and Police Community Relation, Committee (PCRC). According to him, checkpoints are crime-nipping points. They are stop and search points that also serve as deterrence purposes rather than the public perception of it as toll "cheque points". They are "a way of bringing policemen and policing closer to the community. It is also a way of making mobile police

stations readily handy so that everybody will not be too distant from where you get the assistance of the police"³⁶. But public and some newspapers editorial criticism of this is scanting. A Daily Times editorial for instance sees the check points as "cheque points" because the over 115 of such "cheque points" between Abuja (the new capital city) and Lagos (the old capital but now commercial and economic capital) not only serve as spots for extortion of money from commercial vehicle drivers who ply cities and states across the nation but also that bus drivers in cities such as Lagos, Warri, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Abuja, Aba, Jos, Enugu, Jebba, Zaria and Benin are given numbers and names by policemen after "settlement" with incredible names "like carry go, January, February, Why? Any of the letters from A to Z or mere numbers are also given to the drivers - after forcing them to pay illegal tolls, called egunje" (Yoruba slang for bribery) as a way of guaranteeing them to work or ply the roads Unhindered³⁷. PCRC, which is the other aspect, is available at divisional level, that is, in all the 774 local government councils in the country, state or provincial level and national level, Air and Sea ports³⁸. A minimum of two local governments constitutes Area Command. Representatives of Divisional PCRC converge at Area Command level just as the representatives of Area Command converge at the state level every month respectively.

At the Divisional level, the chairman of the PCRC is a civilian, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) is a member, and Public Relation Officer (PRO) and Secretary of the PCRC are also policemen. It meets once in a month and every community, associations, trade and motor transport unions etc. that register with them pay #500.00 monthly for the fuelling and servicing of police patrol vehicles³⁹. Similarly the Air and Marine units of the police already abandoned for decades have not only been revived but PCRC units have also been established there too. The objectives of PCRC in ports include (a) assisting to stop unlawful export or import of strategic/sensitive items such as Arms and ammunitions, cocaine, heroine and minimize other ports corruption and organized crimes, (b) to support the police at the ports by way of information, logistic and co-operation to unmask the army of bandits who make daily living out of crime and insecurity at the ports. Therefore, To enhance the operation of this new federal government concept of community policing in the country, already despised and abandoned policemen with degree certificate on grounds that those certificates were illegally acquired, and were therefore prevented from being placed on their rightful positions, have been asked to present themselves for screening. About 1,300 of them that passed the screening exercise have been selected as cadet Assistance

Superintendent of Police (ASP) and have been sent for training at the Police Staff College, Jos, irrespective of their states of origin⁴⁰.

To sharpen the operation of this new police innovation, seasoned operators of this concept of community policing like the United States of America, Britain, Japan and South Africa were invited to commence regular training and retaining of men of the Nigerian police⁴¹. Listing the achievements of this new philosophy of policing in the last one year, the Inspector-General of the Police stated that 189 robbery-prone routes had been identified, 626 armed robbers were killed by the Police nationwide and 1,482 arrested. Besides, 872 firearms were recovered, 7,739 ammunition recovered and over 1,173 stolen vehicles recovered. Above all, the Seme border between Nigeria and a neighbouring country, Republic of Benin, was recently closed down for cross-border criminal activities and other related matters. One, the country is believed to be serving as dumping ground for stolen vehicles of which about 2,000 of them between year 2000 and 2002 alone were traced there by the police. Before the advent of civilian regime, one of the most powerful traditional rulers in Nigeria, the Ooni of Ife, had his Limousine car snatched in Lagos and was to be traced later to this same place. Recently too, the official car of the President of Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), stolen in far away Edo state was traced to republic of Benin. Two, the country

was accused of serving as haven for both countries' criminals such as armed robbers, smugglers and political fugitives e.g. Amani Tijani, who carried assassination attempt on President Obasanjo's daughter, Dr. Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello in April 21, 2003, and a couple, Dr. Adesegun Banjo and his wife, Ngozika Iwuaze, of National Liberation Council of Nigeria (NALICON) that terrorized General Abacha's regime during the period of civil resistance to the military annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election.

Thirdly and finally, Benin republic is also accused of serving as outlet and inlet for human trafficking and thousand of rifles and pistols that find their ways in and out of Nigeria⁴².

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Any police reform in Africa today that does not consider adoption of community policing as a new philosophy of policing is embarking on futile exercise. Be that as it may, there are four characteristics of community policing which except South Africa, other African countries have been adopting either half heartedly or totally unconsciously. The first element of community

policing according to Lampe, is its possibility only in a largely democratic society where the rule of law prevails, the laws they are called upon to enforce are just and serve communal interest. There is no doubt that Senegal, South Africa and Nigeria are large democracies in Africa but more than any of these mentioned democratic countries, Senegal police appear to often trample upon the rule of laws especially in defying the rulings of the court of law. On three occasions- 1983, 1985 and 1995 – when the courts ruled against the police and sanctioned them for improper treatment of criminals in their custody they had always rebelled against the state⁴³.

Secondly, the community must have influence over policing priorities and practices. However, most African countries are lacking in this element. Even in South Africa where the new philosophy of policing is already in place, having civilian representation in police forums, not to mention contributing to their policy formulations, is uncomfortable with them partly because of their organizational policy and also unwillingness to share their job secrets with community people⁴⁴.

Thirdly, policing must be visible and the police must be with their communities, patrolling both on foot, on bicycles, motorcycles, and in cars, and cultivating friendly relationships with members of their communities. To succeed in this, the police need to be highly motivated and this is what is lacking in most African countries especially in Nigeria and Senegal where lack of proper treatment of the police led to their revolt against the two states.

Fourthly, community policing entails area specialists, by which we mean police and community people they serve should have reciprocal intimacy of one another that could enhance the job of preventing, controlling and punishing crime. Senegal is in good direction here because her policemen and women live among the communities as against Nigeria where they live in the barracks. In Ghana where the police also live in the barracks attempt was made as far back as 1982 to bridge the gap between the police and the people by developing a concept termed "People's Police". Ghana's concept of people's police is a 24-hour emergency Call Service in Accra at that time to aid those in distress. It meant any member of the public could call the Police Information Room for prompt action by teams of policemen who would be on stand by duty around the clock⁴⁵.

Adoption of this new concept of policing would not only improve the efficiency of African policemen and women but would bring her into the club of World community policing practitioners for further sharing of information on this new policing philosophy.

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