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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE DEVIL'S THEORY OF IMPERIALISM AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALW) IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The causes, extent and preventive methods of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria have been the subject of significant studies on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It has been found that the literature lacks the use of the devil theory of imperialism in analyzing the political economy of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. The methodology was based on content analysis of extant literature on uncontrolled arms, illicit arms, and conflict and insecurity from textbooks, magazines, the Internet and other sources. The results of this study show that international and local partners are all involved in the proliferation of illegal firearms in Nigeria, making it impossible for the government to control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The study also shows that the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria is slowing due to the nature of the people involved in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria, as well as the limited capacities of the Nigerian states due to a lack of political will to curb the country's growing insecurity. Finally, this study suggests that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as insecurity, will continue uninterrupted until arms dealers and their collaborators are caught and prosecuted.

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Introduction:-

Before colonialism, Europeans used the illegal slave trade to smuggle small arms, firearms, and other armaments to African states. Following that, Europeans utilized guns and other armaments, ammunition, and weapons to crush African resistance to European incursion, conquest, and colonialism. Gunboat diplomacy was used by the British to persuade African monarchs to sign a spate of treaties with them. The British government established the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) to carry out the British-Anglo War of 1901-1902 and other types of African resistance. With the support of the British government, the Royal Niger Company (RNC), later the United African Company (UAC), used force to oppress opposing African settlements (Chuma-Okoro, 2011). During colonization, these weapons or guns may have fallen into the hands of Africans who used them for customary hunting in rural villages.

The proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weaponry has been a rising issue since the end of the Cold War. When it comes to selling, trading, and creating these weapons, states and foreign firms no longer have the strategic links that once united them. The Cold War succeeded in dividing much of the world into tightly defined

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groups of politically associated countries and their allies, requiring governments to strategically share weapons and technology for a common goal. Another problem occurred with the dissolution of the Soviet bloc after the Cold War ended. Formerly Soviet Union-controlled countries became independent states with formidable conventional and nuclear military arsenals. These newly autonomous republics were often financially insecure and in desperate need of funds. The arsenals left in their possession by the Soviet government were unsuitable for the smaller-scale conflicts or civil unrest that these countries were likely to face in the future, so maintaining or housing them was unnecessary.

It's worth noting that many countries and non-state entities paid a lot of money for the weapons and the technological know-how needed to make them. The fear of these weapons falling into the hands of rogue individuals or state actors who might use them for more sinister purposes ushered in a new era of global issues in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, with the proliferation of conventional and non-conventional weapons, as well as the rise of clandestine and terrorist groups. While international efforts to combat proliferation tend to focus on the development and supply of new weapons, the ex-Soviet Union, the United States, and their allies pumped SALW into Africa in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s to fuel proxy intrastate and interstate wars remain a major source of SALW. Rogue arms traders, private military corporations, dubious airlines, and local smugglers have smuggled these leftover weapons across the continent, worsening ongoing hostilities and facilitating the launch of new ones (Abdel-Fatau, 2011).

In the 1990s, the threat of proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) was first acknowledged on a global scale. Since then, worldwide debates have moved through five somewhat overlapping stages: Defining the problem and raising awareness (the mid-1990s); nascent international negotiations (before the turn of the previous decade); UN multilateral diplomacy in a deadlock (2006); Multilateralism beyond the UN (after 2006); In a global public policy framework, issue diversification is important (since 2000). In light of this, a plethora of international and regional agreements and conventions the United Nations Security Council in 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, and 2007 issued Presidential remarks on small arms. In 2013, it enacted Resolution 2117 on small arms and light weapons 2013, focusing on illicit transfers, destabilizing accumulation, and abuse of small arms and light weapons. Additional in 2015, Resolution 2220 put in place measures targeted at enhancing international collaboration, ensuring the effective execution of UN arms embargoes, and supporting the Arms Trade Treaty (<https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/>).

Again, the UN System-wide Internal-Agency Coordination Mechanism on Small Arms, the Arms Trade, Ammunition, and Armed Violence (CASA) has evaluated the diverse and specialized expertise of 24 UN partners from a variety of perspectives, including economic and social development, human rights, disarmament, organized crime, terrorism, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, public health, the environment, gender, and children, since its inception in 1998. CASA intends to reposition itself as the primary hub for coordinating comprehensive UN operations aimed at assisting states with the aforementioned issues. CASA has lately shifted its focus to aiding country-level programming by leveraging deeper collaboration inside the UN, as well as with regional actors and civil society (<https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/>).

In Africa, the African Union's flagship campaign "Silencing the Guns in Africa" was the subject of a resolution adopted in 2019. The resolution makes frequent references to the effective execution of essential arms control instruments and regimes, particularly those about small arms and light weapons, emphasizing the importance of combating illicit armaments in attaining a conflict-free Africa (<https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/>). The joint African Union Commission in partnership with the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs was funded by Germany and Japan, which took place in seven African nations in 2020. The Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Côte d'Ivoire were among them (<https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/>).

The Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA) was chosen as the implementation partner for the 2020 Africa Amnesty Month to develop regional and national ownership. RECSA's principal mission is to assist its 15 East and Central African member states in implementing the Nairobi Protocol. The Africa Amnesty Month seeks to contribute considerably to the achievement of SDG Target 16.4 on the major decrease of illegal arms flows, which is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (<https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/>).

Nevertheless, in a bid to curb to spread of small arms and light weapons the Firearms Act of 1959 was enacted. It aims to control the ownership and deals in firearms and ammunition, particularly muzzle-loading rifles, as well as matters related to them. Nigeria is also a signatory to the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ammunition, and Other Related Materials, as well as the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, and Related Materials, which is an addendum to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (GIABA, 2013).

Moreover, the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) is the primary government organization in charge of overseeing the implementation of anti-SALW measures. It also offers several types of licenses under the Firearms Act and prosecutes those who break the law. The National Commission on SLW serves a supporting role in combating SALW proliferation and illicit trafficking. Nigeria is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol against Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Parts and Components, and Ammunition, the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Financing, and the African Convention against Terrorism. The Nigerian National Assembly passed the Terrorism (Prevention) Act in 2011, which ensures the successful execution of the 1999 Convention as well as other international agreements.

However, the Nigerian government's failure to conduct a comprehensive disarmament and arms destruction program following the civil war (1967-1970) has aggravated the spread of guns and illicit arms trafficking since then and the conflicts in West and North African countries, especially Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, and, more recently, Mali and Libya, have exacerbated the proliferation of small arms and light weapons into Nigeria. Today, SALW is used in Nigeria, among other places, in crimes, revolts, sabotage, religious crises, communal conflicts, social agitations, internal insurgency, terrorism, insurgency, riots, militancy, electoral violence, political violence, social interest, ethnic tensions, cross-border smuggling, and black marketeering.

On the whole, in the literature of small arms and light weapons, a lot of research has been undertaken on the causes, dimensions and implications of small arms and light weapons on national security. However, less attention has been given to research on the use of Hans Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism in the understanding of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially in Nigeria. In the light of the above, this study seeks to make contributions to this research area.

Literature Review: Small arms and light weapons

There are various definitions of the concept of small arms and light weapons in Strategic Studies literature. According to the Best Practice Guidelines for the Implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and Nairobi Protocol on Small Arms and Light Weapons define small arms as weapons designed for personal use and include light machine guns, including machine pistols, fully automatic rifles and assault rifles, and semi-automatic rifles (Best Practice Guidelines, 2005).

According to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, (UNIDIR) cited in Edeko, (2011:59) categorized small arms to include revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, submachine guns, assault rifles, light and heavy machine guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank guns and rocket systems, anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars with calibres less than 100mm. It also involves weapons designed for personal use, including light machine guns, sub-machine guns, including machine pistols, fully automatic rifles and assault rifles, and semi-automatic rifles. It is pertinent to note that 'Small arms' also include: firearms, guns, Ammunition and other associated materials.

Article 1.2 of SADC Firearms Protocol, (2003) categorized the following revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, submachine guns, assault rifles, and light machine guns as examples of small arms. While, heavy machine guns, automatic cannons, howitzers, mortars with a calibre of less than 100mm, grenade launchers, anti-tank weapons and launchers, recoilless guns, shoulder-fired rockets, anti-aircraft weapons and launchers, and air defence weapons as examples of light weaponry (cited in Edeko, 2011:59). On the whole, small arms, are weapons intended for individual use. They are mainly in the lower calibre range (4.6–40 or 66 mm). Handguns (self-loading pistols and revolvers) and shoulder arms are examples of small arms (rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns and light machine guns, and grenade launchers).

There has been increasing research into the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, such as Ayissi and Sall, 2005; Thom-Otuya, 2009; Olufemi, 2010; Yoroms, 2010; Christopher, 2011; Edeko, 2011; Alimi, 2011; Onuoha,

2013; Ibrahim, 2015; Small Arms Survey, 2015; Moses and Ngomba 2017. These scholars attributed the proliferation of small arms and light weapons to the following factors such as high poverty, poor governance, terrorism, militancy, ethno-religious violence, competition for limited resources and competition for economic and/or political power among elites, and oil theft, Money laundering, corruption, exploitation, the pursuit of resource control and other willful violence. However, there is a vacuum in these studies' application of Hans Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism to the understanding of small arms and light weapons spread, particularly in Nigeria.

Edeko (2011) investigated the factors that contribute to the spread of small guns and light weapons in the Niger Delta. According to an Edeko assessment, militant organizations in the Niger Delta are primarily responsible for the spread of small arms and light weapons. Again, international arms dealers provide the majority of the armaments. Furthermore, criminal organizations employ these weapons to execute crimes. He stated that the government's current efforts must be sustained to stop the spread of small guns and light weapons in the Niger Delta. However, there is a gap in the use of Hans Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism in the understanding of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially in Nigeria.

According to Abiodun, Ayo-Adeyekun, Onafowora, and Nwannenaya (2018), small firearms and light weapons proliferation area threat to Nigeria's national security. They further state that Nigeria's failing economy, instability, high unemployment rate, poverty, government's failure to provide necessities of life, and corruption, operate as roadblocks to praiseworthy efforts and policies intended at countering the threat. They stated that, in addition to security agencies' crucial role in sustaining the nation's peace and security, collaborative activities at all levels of government in Nigeria are essential to solve the problem. However, there is a gap in the use of Hans Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism in the understanding of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially in Nigeria.

Small Arms and Light Weapons sources were explored by Jacob, Ishaya, and Ado (2019). They also looked into the link between the spread of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria and insecurity. The government and other stakeholders will address the threat, according to the research, ensuring national stability. However, there is a gap in the use of Hans Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism in the understanding of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, especially in Nigeria. Therefore, it is safe to say that researchers have paid less attention to the use of Hans Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism in the understanding of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons especially in Nigeria in the literature reviewed. It is against this background, this study seeks to make contributions to this research endeavour.

Theoretical Framework

Scholars in the fields of security and strategic studies have devised some theories to explain the spread of small arms and light weapons. Some of these theories include radical structural conflict theory, which Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels developed in the "Communist Manifesto" and "Historical Materialism" (Marx & Engels, 1977). Regime theory according to Krasner (1982) is "...explicit or implicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area." In a nutshell, regimes are used to explain how international cooperation systems develop and operate. Security dilemma theory postulate that mere possession of armaments can increase tensions between groups to the brink of conflict. It is pertinent to note that despite the significance of the radical structural conflict theory, Regime theory and security dilemma theory to our understanding of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. These theories do not take into account the political and economic benefits of small arms and light weapons to arms manufacturers and marketers.

Nevertheless, Morgenthau distinguishes three types of imperialism: the Marxist theory of imperialism, which assumes that all political phenomena are reflections of economic forces; the Liberal theory of imperialism, which arises from maladjustments in the global capitalist system (e.g., surplus goods and capital seeking outlets in foreign markets); and the 'devil' theory of imperialism, which postulate that manufacturers and bankers plan wars to enrich themselves (Morgenthau, 1948).

However, we will modify Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism, which is the third version of Morgenthau's theory of imperialism, to fit the environment in which we will be using it to explain the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. Arms manufacturers and bankers, according to Morgenthau's devil's thesis of imperialism, organize wars in advance to benefit themselves. In Nigeria, despite strong attempts by the government, insecurity and all its ramifications have persisted, because armaments manufacturers (both international and local)

will go out of business if there is relative calm. Therefore, the greater the insecurity, the more arms and ammunition are sold, and vice versa. As a result, arms manufacturers (both international and domestic) and their local marketers will work to maintain instability to maximize profit, regardless of the impact on human lives and other sectors of the economy.

To reduce instability in any country, the government must prohibit the sale of arms and ammunition. This explains why arms manufacturers (both international and domestic) and their local marketers will support any leader or individual who will represent their interests in governance, and in some situations, will elect leaders who will encourage instability to benefit themselves. Finally, Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism, as modified, is appropriate for understanding, prescribing, and predicting the spread of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria, based on the country's ongoing instability despite the implementation of different preventive measures. In light of this, we adopted Hans J. Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism.

The Devil's Theory of Imperialism and the Political Economy of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in Nigeria

Arms trade is contradictory in that it is a vastly globalized activity that operates almost entirely beyond the control of international institutions. It has the greatest risk of being abused, although it is almost completely unregulated on a global scale. Besides, arms trade has significant ramifications on issues such as poverty and development, peacekeeping, geopolitics and strategic alliance formation, geo-economics, international terrorism among others. Arms are a fundamental precursor for armed confrontations, and they can even be a driving element. In contemporary times, mere possession of armaments can increase tensions between groups to the brink of conflict. Despite this, the global armaments business is nearly completely unregulated (Saldner 2013).

It's difficult to make precise calculations, but by all accounts, the globe has a massive arsenal of weaponry. According to Saldner (2013), the overall number of SALW is around 875 million, with 650 million of them in civilian hands. Each year, roughly 12 billion bullets are produced. GIABA (2013) report shows that an estimated yearly worth of \$53 million, the illegal firearms trade earns large sums of money both directly and indirectly. This commerce has an incalculable human cost all across the world. In the West African sub-region, an estimated 8 million small arms and light weapons (SALW) are in the hands of state and non-state actors. Because of the strong demand and relative simplicity with which illicit weapons are imported into the sub-region and transported throughout ECOWAS Member States, illicit trafficking in SALW is considered a lucrative business.

Again, online Vanguard Newspaper 22rd February 2018 states that out of the 640 million SALW in circulation worldwide, 100 million are thought to be in Africa, 30 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, and eight million in West Africa. The majority of this SALW are in civilian hands, with 59 percent belonging to citizens, 38 percent to government armed forces, 2.8 percent to police, and 0.2 percent to armed organizations (<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/08/un-nigeria-accounts-for-70-of-500m-illicit-weapons-in-west-africa/>).

Reinhide (2005) asserts that countries such as Ukraine, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic have developed a reputation for being cutthroat traders who sell weaponry to anyone who can afford them. The Nigerian government founded the Defence Industries Corporation of Nigeria (DICON) in 1964, which is constitutionally permitted to manufacture weaponry and ammunition in the country, primarily for military and police use. The production of firearms is banned under Section 22 of the Firearms Act 1990. This does not represent a large supply of illicit small guns, given the legal status of its mandate. Today, a collection of unlicensed local craftsmen strewn around the country produce a huge number of illegal guns in contravention of section 22 of the Firearms Act 1990. Due to the hidden nature of their acts, due diligence and effective regulation are not followed under international norms making tracing of firearms more difficult and obscuring Nigeria's Small Arms and Light Weapons status (Chuma-Okoro, 2011).

According to the UNODC survey, unlawful small and light weapons accounted for 70% of all small and light weapons in the West African sub-region, or 350 million people. According to the Office of the National Security Adviser to President Muhammadu Buhari Maj. Gen. Mohammed Monguno (retd), a similar survey suggests that ten million small guns and light weapons are in circulation in Africa, one million of which are in Nigeria. Maj. Gen. Mohammed Monguno (retd) further states that more than 90 countries produce various types of small arms and light weapons. Aside, from the 12 billion rounds of ammunition manufactured annually, it is believed that over 857 million firearms are in circulation. Africa is projected to have 10 million small guns and light weapons, one million

of which is in Nigeria (cited in Aluko, 2019). In a similar vein, Abdulsalami Abubakar, a former Nigeria military leader, estimated that over six million small guns are in the hands of non-state actors, while the Nigerian Armed Forces and law enforcement agents only have 586,600 guns (<https://punchng.com/effective-control-of-illegal-weapons/>).

Trade-in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are trafficked into Nigeria from many sources such as domestic arms produced or proliferated within Nigeria; Sub-regional arms produced or proliferated from any ECOWAS; continental arms produced or proliferated into West Africa from other parts of Africa; and international arms produced or proliferated from other parts of the world in Nigeria (GIABA, 2013). Today, there are a variety of techniques to deal with the causes and solutions of arms-related concerns. The issues of arms proliferation are not restricted to or driven solely by guns or their lack of regulation. Of course, several social, political, and economic elements contribute to the "demand for armaments," both at the international level and the domestic level. Arms proliferation is conceived within the purview of state political motivations, military industry commercial interests, or societal issues like poverty and inequality, criminality, nationalism, and so on (Saldner 2013).

Over the years, Nigerian manufacturers have produced a substantial amount of both legal and illegal Small Arms and Light Weapons. This is not peculiar to Nigeria alone as a country like Ghana, has many arms manufacturers, and a locally built pistol can be purchased for as little as \$2.00 to 30. Ghana had between 35,000 and 40,000 illegally made guns in five of its ten regions in 2004, based on the output of 500 blacksmiths known to be active in firearms production (GIABA, 2013). Small arms and ammunition exports from Nigeria are estimated to be worth US\$211 annually by the Nigeria Customs Service. Nigeria has a transfer control act that limits the importation of guns and ammunition. According to research from Gun Policy, Nigerian legislation restricts the activities of arms traders and transfer intermediaries. Furthermore, only the Nigerian Defence Industry is permitted to manufacture small weapons, ammunition, and/or their components. In Nigeria, however, there is a high incidence of illicit craft, or "home-made" firearm making (<https://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/nigeria>).

Besides, serving and former, politicians, including but not limited to legislators, federal ministers, state commissioners, local government chairmen, state security officers, Nigerian military commanders, and senior members of federal government statutory bodies, have all been linked to the circulation of illegal firearms in Nigeria (Edeko, 2011:70). In Nigeria's Niger Delta region local and state officials, local oil racketeers, international oil merchants, and security officers are significant players in the trade-in Small Arms and Light Weapons. It is important to note that the presence of Nigerian security officers is even more significant. For example, in 2008, 15 army officers, including three Colonels, two Lieutenant Colonels, one major, and nine non-commissioned officers, are facing a court-martial for the mysterious disappearance of weaponry and ammunition from the armoury. The weapons were taken from the Nigerian Army's Central Ordnance Depot in Kaduna and later tracked to Niger Delta militants (GIABA, 2013).

A Delta state police squad apprehended a Warrant Officer (WO2) of the Nigerian Air Force 33 Logistic division in Makurdi, Benue State, on July 9, 2007, about 4.30 p.m., while transferring armaments to a site in the Niger Delta. Assault rifles, 449 rounds of AK47 live ammunition, four brand new live jackets, and empty magazines were found in his Toyota Corolla automobile with the registration number AJ41 MKD. When the authorities investigated the former air force officer turned arms dealer, he named a senator as the weapon's owner and stated that the guns were from the Republic of Chad. Again, six Nigerian soldiers were convicted and sentenced to life in prison in 2008 for illegally supplying to Niger Delta insurgents about 7000 firearms of various varieties worth over 100 million Naira. Similarly, after the Federal Government of Nigeria received around 20,000 small guns surrendered by Niger Delta militants under the Amnesty Program, 13 containers loaded with 107mm rockets, 120mm, 80mm, and 60mm mortars and small arms ammunition were intercepted at the Nigerian seaport in October 2010. This indicates that additional weapons are in circulation beyond the Nigerian authorities' ability to collect or destroy them (GIABA, 2013).

In addition, millions of Nigerian naira have been connected to the accounts of a Nigerian soldier charged with arms trafficking and supplying arms to armed groups in the Niger Delta. In 2010, a small guns dealer in Onitsha, Nigeria's south-eastern region, alleged that he financed the sale by moving money across borders. Given the size of the sum, it's logical to assume he drew or "borrowed" the funds from a bank (GIABA, 2013). In light of the personalities involved in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria, as well as the Nigerian state's limited

capacity as a result of a lack of political will to stem the country's rising tide of insecurity, the fight against small arms and light weapons proliferation in Nigeria has become politicized.

In Nigeria, the illegal use of small guns has become a common characteristic of day-hire armament used by military and police forces. For example, the cost of hiring automatic weapons in 2006 ranged from N5,000 to N20,000 a day, depending on the mission and the operation's success. According to research, hiring a "trigger finger" with a handgun cost between N10,000 and N20,000. According to President Obasanjo, who stated in December 2002 that "the majority of small arms and light weapons circulating in Nigeria were either sold or rented out by, or stolen from, the country's security agencies," studies have shown that "the majority of small arms and light weapons circulating in Nigeria were either sold or rented out by, or stolen from, the country's security agencies."(Edeko,2011:70).

Nigeria is a source, transit location, and destination for trafficked SALW, according to research. Security operatives also detained a Ukrainian jet, fully loaded with firearms and ammunition, when it made a problematic landing at Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport at around 2:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 17th, 2009. The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) intercepted a shipment of pump action rifles allegedly coming from China via Turkey along the Mile 2 – Apapa Road in Lagos, and the State Security Service (SSS), Enugu State Command discovered an illegal arms factory in Agbada, Nnewi in the Aninri Local Government Area of Enugu State in the first quarter of 2011. Furthermore, in October 2010, the Nigerian secret agency seized a cargo of 13 containers containing rocket launchers, grenades, and other explosives and ammunition(<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/08/un-nigeria-accounts-for-70-of-500m-illicit-weapons-in-west-africa/>).

Furthermore, given the financial benefits of small arms and light weapons proliferation in Nigeria to persons involved in the illegal arms trade, there is significant cooperation between security agencies and arms dealers in the country. Most small arms and light weapons, for example, passes through the Nigerian borders and are then transported by road to other states in Nigeria, where there are clandestine arms markets in Onitsha, Aba, Akwa, and Asaba just to mention a few. Agboton-Johnson, Ebo, and Mazal (2004: 21) and Edeko (2011:69) has identified three major entry points for illicit weapons during the 2003 general elections in Nigeria to include Idi-Iroko in Ogun State and Seme in Lagos State are in the south-west; Warri in Delta State is in the south-east, and the border with Niger and Cameroon is in the north-east. Today, not only the three entry points identified by Agboton-Johnson, Ebo, and Mazal (2004: 21) and Edeko (2011:69), but the entire country's border is porous, to the point where the inflow of small arms and light weapons into the country has taken on a frightening dimension as a result of the country's growing insecurity.

Nonetheless, one of the difficulties in combating the illegal arms trade in Nigeria is that criminal prosecutions are frequently kept hidden from the public eye. This is presumably due to the extensive network of people involved in the illegal arms trade in the country. For example, the Nigeria Customs Service apprehended two Nigerians in Niger State while attempting to import two hundred thousand rounds of special-purpose cartridges meant for use in multi-loading pump-action rifles into the country(<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/473489-illegal-firearms-reps-move-to-tighten-gun-control-laws.html>).

Oyekola (2021) states that in Adikpo Junction, Benue State, the Nigeria Customs Service's Joint Border Patrol Team, Sector 3, North Central Zone, allegedly intercepted 550 pump-action pistol cartridges. Similarly, Okafor (2020) posits that in Onitsha, Anambra State, a bus passenger was arrested for being in possession of a police firearm. Sunday Onyema, 35, of Orlu, Imo State, was apprehended at Onitsha's Upper Iwaka neighbourhood. He was allegedly travelling in a commercial bus from Asaba, Delta State when he was stopped by police officers on stop and search duty. One Chris Ndudi Njoku, a 45-year-old businessman and European who specialized in importing forbidden firearms into Nigeria and supplying them to arms groups in the Niger Delta region, was detained by the Rivers State police command in October 2006 (CEHRD, 2006). The conclusion of these cases and many more are unknown.

Overall, the use of Hans Morgenthau's devil's theory of imperialism in understanding the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, particularly in Nigeria, comes out strongly in the above research. We discovered that the 'devil' theory of imperialism, which states that manufacturers and bankers plan wars to enrich themselves, is correct in the context of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria, because illegal arms traders (both local and

international) will continue to profit from sales of arms as long as there is insecurity in the country, and some local and foreign banks will continue to support the laundering of such illegal arms.

Conclusion:-

From the above analysis, it is impossible to determine the amount of revenue made by illegal arms trade, thus scholars and researchers have estimated the total number of illegal arms in circulation. Furthermore, the lack of ability to determine the number of arms in circulation and revenue made is due to the secrecy surrounding the illegal arms trade and the individuals involved. To this aim, Nigeria will undoubtedly continue to be a source of illegal armaments and a transit point. Furthermore, revenues from illegal SALW trade in Nigeria are typically deposited in local and international banks and utilized to acquire high-quality commodities, as well as invest in real estate and fast-moving retail firms. However, it is suggested in this study that preventing the spread of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria has been difficult due to the lucrative nature of the illegal arms trade and the personalities involved, particularly security officers and high-profile public figures. Finally, Nigeria's legal and institutional measures to combat unlawful SALW trafficking are inadequate. Despite being parties to the ECOWAS Convention on SALW, Nigeria's weapons laws from 1959 are obsolete and contain inadequate measures for regulating SALW in modern times.

Recommendations:-

To begin with, the National Assembly should study enact President Muhammadu Buhari's bill on Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons Bill 2021 to solve the country's security problems. Because the 1959 Firearms Act is out of date, and relying on it to address 21st-century security issues is futile.

In addition, considering the vast sums of money involved in the guns trade. Established government agencies in Nigeria, such as the National Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Crime Commission (ICPC), Department of State Security Service, Nigeria Police, Central Bank of Nigeria, and Correctional Service, must collaborate closely if the investigations are to be successful.

Furthermore, Nigeria's security officials should be more alert once again. They should make certain that any weapons they obtain are legitimately purchased to avoid abuse, and legal sellers should be tracked to ensure that weapons do not fall into the wrong hands.

Finally, the National Assembly should pass legislation mandating that illegal arms importers face a minimum of ten years in prison if convicted.

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