

The Making of another Fruitless Search in the Special Committee on National Security Call for Memoranda

This text was part of my private conversation with one my acquaintance that took keen interest in my work. It was my response to his drawing my attention to the Special House Committee on National Security memoranda in the hope that I might contribute. I edited the text for inclusion on my Facebook page.

I am certain that members of the public have seen the Call for Memoranda of the House of Representatives Special Committee on National Security on various media outlets.

I think and i know that the content demonstrate that this is going to be another fruitless effort. My conviction derived from the part of the advert that stated the "COMMITTEE IS FOCUSED ON SOLUTIONS ONLY".

As I later asked after I sent the correspondence to my acquaintance, "solutions only" when we do not know the problem called national security?; what is the problem called national security?; does the legislature has security and national security philosophies that govern its intervention in governance?; how do we contribute solutions to security and national security that we do not know?

Part of the note on the advert advised that "...an analysis of Nigeria's security problem will not be necessary..." What is security in Nigeria? What is security in Nigeria under democratic governance of the last twenty years? What then is Nigeria's security problem? To butt has there ever been and is there anything called Nigeria's security problem? Has there been a security philosophy ever in Nigeria? Has there ever been a conscious attempt to teach Nigerians this security philosophy assuming one exists?

To tag issue security problem require the existence and knowledge of security by members of the public based on security philosophy and policy anchored on legislation. This security philosophy should have asked and answered the questions what was security, whose security and what was a security issue. Only then would Nigerians be directed to providing answers to how can security be achieved or "solutions only." If the first three questions of security philosophy and policy did not capture the history, experience and reality (HER) of most Nigerians, even the foray into the fourth question of strategy or "solutions only" would be an exercise in futility.

Let pause for a moment for the sake of giving this folks in government the benefit of the doubt. Assuming there were narratives called security and national security in Nigeria. These

narratives might have developed and were associated particular framework. The framework in question was military rule. If the narratives of security and national security worked while military rule lasted, these narratives failed in the last twenty years of another framework. The framework is representative rule.

It is only the people in government – the executives and the legislatures – that did not SEE, FEEL, SMELL, HEAR and TOUCH the failed and failing narratives called security and national security in the last two decades and spectacularly so in the last six years. Where are the elected executives and legislatures narratives of security and national security to which Nigerians were asked to contribute “solutions only”? Have the military rule type narratives not failed enough to register on the executives and particularly the legislatures with the task to bring forth novel ideas, review and amend old ideas for the governance of everything in Nigeria?

Can the House and Senate Committees on National Security and the House Special Committee on National Security tell Nigerians that these questions have been asked and answered to warrant the marching order to limit intervention to “solutions only”? Can the Senate and House Committees on National Security and the Special House Committee on National Security tell Nigerians that since the inception of representative rule in 1999 they have given the issue of security the inside out outside in combing that security deserved and in tandem with democracy philosophy? Have they not consistently competed with the executives in the single-minded FUND, FUND and more FUND “solutions only” interventions when as the two bodies representing all Nigerians they have the mandate to review, amend and evolve ideas into policy for the governance of the entire realm?

The Committee, in putting out this limitation, assumed plenty things about this their “national security” – and there is not any security and/or national security bearing their imprimatur including the *Standing Orders of the House of Representatives* on the Committee on National Security and Intelligence which barred members from inquiring into what is national security.

The Committee assumed that every Nigeria knew “national security”; the Committee assumed that the “national security” popularised under military rule framework to which they were schooled into applied under civil rule framework; the Committee was unaware that national security had contexts, contents and spaces and the Nigerian version, if there was a Nigerian version of security and national security, was yet to create context, content and space of its own; the Committee was unaware that national security had history, sociology, geography and politics; the Committee was unaware that national security was exogenous

from where it all began with theories and practices and not endogenous where countries imitate/borrow ideas blindly without reference to their history, experience and reality (HER) and the history, sociology and politics of the imitated/borrowed ideas.

The Committee was unaware that the semblance of "national security" practice in Nigeria related to the institutions of the military, intelligence and law enforcement under military rule and came in the mistaken context of the use of security to refer the name and work of these agencies – a fact popularised by international media and taken up uncritically by local media; the Committee was unaware that what was "national security" practice in Nigeria was hierarchical and relative to one's place on the power structure and thus subject to manipulation; the Committee was unaware that "national security" lacked Nigeria-wide conceptualisation and thus application; the Committee was unaware that of the two words – national and security – security precede national and it is the independent variable of the two and national the dependent variable and to determine national security, it was necessary to tackle security first and; lastly the Committee did not provide its own conception of security and national security within the representative rule framework to guide its call for SOLUTIONS ONLY from Nigerians.

Since the enthronement of democracy in 1999, the operators of democracy and in particular the LEGISLATURES saddled with reviewing, amending and/or evolving ideas for governance or the effective and efficient utilisation of human and material resources for the benefit of most Nigerians, failed to come up with their concept of security and national security within democracy framework to enable the conceptualisation of issue as security and/or national security issue. The operators instead reified the existing faulty practice lacking philosophy, policy, and legislation frameworks and foundations that associated security and national security as name and work description of the military, intelligence and law enforcement agencies of the executive.

In the last two decades that security and national security, for reasons anchored on sophistry, hit the roof in terms of currency, the authorities concentrated solely on strategy and/or SOLUTIONS ONLY as the Committee's preference demonstrated, to an undefined, uncharted and ungoverned issue called security and national security. The solutions failed, are failing and continue to fail hence the current clamour for another round of destined-to-fail set of solutions.

No document defined security or national security in Nigeria. Not even the 1999 Constitution – the supreme law of the country – where security and/or national security

appeared in fifteen places. The first reference to security in the Constitution was as national security and it is contained in Section 5 subsection 5. The second mention of security was in Section 14 subsection 2b. None of the sections defined national security and/or security. When I alluded to context, content and space and history, sociology, geography and politics, I had these first two citations of national security and security in the 1999 Constitution in mind.

Assuming one is to interpret the two sections, the reference to national security and security relates to the popular but erroneous association of the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) in name and work as security from where national security derived. This reference is context, content and space bound and the Nigerian experience is different in its entirety to imitate another country's experience without grasping the subtexts. Is this national security and/or security? Is this the problem called national security and/or security? Is the Committee confusing and/or clarifying issues before Nigerians in the area it called security and national security? Does the Special Committee on National Security expect contribution on an issue the Committee and Nigerians have not the foggiest idea on and have never agreed on its constituents?

It would be assumed that the association of the MILE during military rule with security produced the practice of security on the one hand and national security on the other hand. Thus these two understanding are time-bound. It is not discernible that civil rule engendered its practice of security in order to evolve its national security within the civil rule framework in the last two decades. In the last twenty years, Nigeria transited into civil rule and all things military rule was jettisoned. Nigerians, in their wisdom, did not feel SECURE or SECURITY with the security type associated with the military and military rule. They decided to entrust their elected representatives with the construction of a new security away from the narratives of the past.

Has civil rule and in particular the legislatures ever asked Nigerians the type of security they wanted when they voted for civil rule following the repeated successful failure of security in the last twenty years and in particular the escalation of this failure in the last six years? Did Nigerians ever inform civil rule operators that the security they need is the type the send packing with military rule in 1999? Is the failure of this security not enough for the operators of civil rule to begin to ask and answer the question what is security rather than limiting people to providing "solutions only" to a problem the legislatures and Nigerians have never defined?

If the Committee is focused on SOLUTIONS ONLY, did they provide reasons for the failure of past solutions of the last twenty and in particular the last six years? Or were there not solutions proffered? Did the Committee provide working definition of national security to which they invite Nigerians for "solutions only"?

If one takes away the security and/or national security practice most Nigerians including members of the legislatures were socialised into during military rule, what is civil rule's conception of security and national security to which they socialised Nigerians to enable those that will respond to their call for memoranda assist them with fresh and untried solutions?

There is nothing out there that asked and answered the questions what is security, whose security, what is a security issue FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CIVIL RULE OF THE LAST TWENTY YEARS. Yet the memo had the effrontery to confine contribution to SOLUTIONS ONLY!

This confinement to "solutions only" of the call for memoranda is with the conviction that Nigerians know security and/or national security within the context of civil rule of the last twenty years. This is blatantly FALSE.

The confinement to SOLUTIONS ONLY memoranda belong to a country like the United States of America with legislated philosophy of national security theory and practice that goes back to the last seventy years. Put this confinement to SOLUTIONS ONLY memoranda to Peoples Republic of China that only recently passed its national security philosophy and legislation and systematically followed this up with the teaching of its nationals what is national security, whose national security, what is a national security issue from the kindergarten level, one would be right.

To confine Nigerians to SOLUTIONS ONLY in a discourse they know nothing on and the legislatures themselves KNOW NOTHING about is taking most Nigerians for a fruitless ride. We have had too many of the fruitless rides in the last twenty years, in the name of security and national security, costing Nigerians billions of dollars that lined the pockets of the political, bureaucratic and professional managers of security and national security in order to secure their livelihoods and lives. This is SECURITY that secures – money in the pocket through the creation of economic opportunities for most if not all the demographic categories in Nigeria.

The latest is the unanswered question from Governor Nyesom Wike on what happened to the \$1 billion from the Excess Crude Account (ECA) in the name of security and national security. Without the consciousness of the practice of securitisation, the Committee's work falls into the beginning of the clamour for fresh fund to deal with the so-called existential threat confronting Nigeria using the only strategy or solution for the undefined, uncharted and ungoverned security ever known to the ruling class in the last twenty years. This strategy or "solutions only" is more money.

This is the beginning of the failure of the SOLUTIONS ONLY quest in the security and national security discourse initiated by the Special House Committee on National Security.

The question the National Assembly must provide answer for Nigerians and that should be put to a referendum is: what is security under civil rule? What is national security under civil rule? These questions have never been asked under civil rule framework.

This is the approach required from all the legislatures in Nigeria and not the stale "solutions only" approach of the Special Committee on National Security.

Somewhere in the article I argued that "solutions only" meant more fund for security and national security and that in the last twenty years and in particular the last six years, the request for more fund represented the "only solution" of the interventions of the executives and legislatures on the problem called security and national security. I also noted that fund or money is security because it secure and the creation of economic opportunities for most if not all Nigerians to earn good money is security because it secure.

Let me buttress the thesis of money is security because money secure with a personal note. I had this chat with my maternal grandmother. Until she was compelled to convert to Christianity, my grandmother was a practitioner of the one of the African Traditional Religions (ATRs). She came on a visit to the family in Jos in the mid-1990s shortly after she became a Christian. We sat under the mango tree one sunny afternoon chatting over her conversion, the difference between her past and present religious life etc. Arising from the course of the conversation, I asked her this question: if you were given two options made up of a bag of money and Jesus Christ to choose, which would you choose? With a grin on her face, my grandmother told me she would chose the money. Any reason for choosing money and not Jesus Christ, I asked. She calmly answered that it was money that solved problems. My grandmother noted that Jesus Christ was consolation.

There is every bit of the bag of money and Jesus Christ in the security and national security monologue of the last twenty years of democratic rule. On the one hand are the narratives of guns, fighter aircrafts, warships and booths on the ground as security and national security to consoles the rest of Nigerians and on the one hand the money, money and more money to solves the problems of the managers of security and national security - political class elected and appointed, bureaucrats and the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) officials.

We have been asking questions of the colossal fund for security and national security in the last two decades and in the last six years (visit www.adoyionoja.org.ng). The latest high profile person to ask this question was Governor Nyesom Wike. What happened to the \$1 billion for guns, warships, aircrafts and booths that was taken out of the excess crude account?

The Special House Committee on National Security should not waste the time of Nigerians with their de ja vu call for memoranda. They should withdraw the call and apologise to Nigerians.