

Asking Questions of "SECURITY" in Nigeria

It is important to define and codify security in Nigeria. Defining and codifying security provide platform for every engagement with security by all and sundry. Security is not and should not be an ordinary word. Security is not a given. Security carries the weight of securing everything that concerns human being. Security can and should be loaded with context specific issues agreed on by groups. Security should be used to reflect the needs of the society. Thus each society should and must provide its philosophy of security within the issues it considered insecurity that security should address.

Defining entails providing security with nature, meaning and purpose or philosophy. A security philosophy answers these questions: what is security, whose security, what counts as security issues and how security can be achieved. The security philosophy shall cover three aspects. They are legislation, policy and strategy.

However, to arrive at security philosophy for Nigeria, I have argued and urged that the nature, meaning and purpose of security should emanate from the History, Experience and Reality (HER)¹ of Nigeria. I equally noted that adopting the HER approach to constructing security is incumbent on Studying, Thinking, Observing and Comparing (STOC)² the philosophy of security of other countries – particularly those we seek to imitate such as the USA and Europe – to enable us appreciate Nigeria's peculiar condition.

Of these three, security legislation is matter for the STATE while policy and strategy are matters for the GOVERNMENT of the day. The state is the amalgam of the constituents i.e. the PEOPLES that make up the country. What constitute security for the people – the sovereign state – is agreed and enshrined into law. This security law guide the conduct of the government elected to express the will of the sovereign within its term limit.

The security legislation answers the questions what is security, whose security, what counts as security issues and how can security be achieved. To give security firm foundation, it is necessary to enact security law for the country. These questions constituting the philosophy of security must pass through the process of legislation in order to create the security law of the country. In particular, the first three questions cut across legislation and policy and should be enshrined in the law providing for security for the country.

The law specify the focus of security and ensure that every aspect of human endeavour has security objective taken from the security law for attainment. Once the security law is

¹ Visit <http://adoyionoja.org> for the article "security based on History, Experience and Reality (HER)" on the sub-link "STRIPPING"

² I recently rearrange the concept to read Study, Think, Observe and Compare (STOC) in my inaugural lecture titled "Security: Framing a Middle Belt of Nigeria Perspective" scheduled for 17th April 2019. The rearrangement is necessary because the concept is a work-in-progress. The previous edition did not have the "compare or comparison" part. For the previous edition – visit the sub-link "ADONOSTRA" for the article "growing security and security studies: resource person – reading/studying, observing and thinking" on [Http://adoyionoja.org](http://adoyionoja.org)

passed, the law becomes enforceable. Once legislated into law, security, considered a realm of politics in some countries - a function of the history, experience and reality (HER) that enabled the construction of security in these countries - should be beyond politics since it is a law of the country. However, the courts are available to intervene and interpret whenever the letters of the security law becomes contested.

The second area that should be covered by security philosophy is security policy. The question how can security be achieved is policy-oriented. As a policy oriented question, it is the domain of politics. Even as this could be politicised, the letters of the security law should guide the policy put in place to enforce the law. As Bill Clinton once noted, effective governance is the result of getting the politics and policy right. For the security policy, the law is there to guide the policy. In coming out with security policy, every government must ensure it is in tandem with the security law.

The third area covered by the security philosophy is the question of strategy. It is the government that come up with policy and strategy and government is term-restricted and transient on the basis of the will of the sovereign. Therefore strategy and policy will not only come and go. Policy and strategy on security would also vary. However, both policy and strategy should and must adhere to the letters of the security law. Every policy area must have its security objective to accomplish within the security law.

The preceding becomes the compass for engagement with security at all levels and by individual, group and community. Security is then used in precise and definite manner and known to all and sundry and not just the confusion and/or the esoteric exercise it is for people in authority in Nigeria.

One example of a country without a codified security philosophy is Nigeria. The single reference to security in the Constitution appears in Chapter II section 14 subsection 2b: the "'security' and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". This reference to "security" is subject to myriad of interpretations by anyone and everyone. However, the first of the interpretations that comes to mind is the footprint of the military, the framers of the constitution. The provision of "security", for the military, represented the perception of their role in the constitution and in governance. They have since held to this and socialised most Nigerians into believing that this "security" is their role.

However, the constitution is clear on the role of the military. Section 217 sub section 2a-d spell these roles out. The sections did not define the role as "security". Sub section 2a clearly specifies their role as "defending..." The closest word to "security" available was in sub section 2b where "... 'securing' its borders from violation on land, sea or air" was mentioned.

Nigeria does not sell "security" in its minimal international engagements in the absence of any security philosophy. Even in the security type Nigeria imitates and commits to pursuing, Nigeria was unable to broker alliance with its neighbours in the fight against Boko Haram. The United States and Europe, from whom Nigeria imitate security, had to step in to create alliance with its neighbours. Their intervention advanced their – the US and Europe – interests more than the interest of Nigeria and those neighbours.

I present a sample of instances of the use of "security" in public discourses. The security type referenced Nigeria's imitation of the United States and/or the meaninglessness and confusion this represent for official and ordinary persons:

What does it mean when government officials claim there is "security crisis"? Or there is "national security crisis"? What does it mean when they say Nigeria's "security relation with..."? What does it mean to call the National Security Council in the absence of national understanding and consensus on security? Has the government any sense of a National Security Team? What is the relationship between the National Security Council and National Defence Council? What is the difference between "security" and "defence"?

When a news caster says the "security agencies..." what and who comprised security agencies? When in the same news, the caster called on "security agencies" to provide "protection", "security" and "safety", what is the meaning of "security" within "protection" and "safety"?

When the Police PRO in an interview noted there was "...improved and up-scaled version of security arrangements in place..." What is "security arrangements"?³ When the FCT police boss said it will deploy sufficient "security personnel"⁴ for the election, what does security personnel mean? Or the news report that the "commissioner of police told us that over 4,000 'security personnel' have been dispatched..."⁵ When a new anchor referred to "the armed forces, security agencies and intelligence ..." in one fell swoop, what does this mean? More importantly, when the Chief of Defence Staff noted that "military, paramilitary cause 'security breaches'", what in the world does this mean?

I will end this conversation by quoting the statement of the US Ambassador to Nigeria on a courtesy visit to the Governor of Katsina state recently. This is because all these statement aped the American conception of security as Nigeria has none of its own. The Ambassador told his host that "'security' was not the responsibility of the 'security forces' only..."⁶

³ FRCN Interview with Police PRO on lesson learnt in previous election for today's election 09/03/19

⁴ FRCN News with Maria Okesonjo, 09/03/19

⁵ FRCN Yobe correspondent 09/03/19

⁶ TVC news, 03/03/19

I noted in the article "Asking Questions of Security in Nigeria: the United States Version" that America's security was founded on the *American Dream* which was firstly economic before other issues – political, diplomatic, culture, intellectual, geopolitics, geo-economics, geo-strategic etc came in to complement the economic centrepiece. America's security moved into the second phase with the enactment of the National Security Act of 1947 aimed at the sustenance and continuation of the *American Dream* using America's military might.

National Security which fuses national interests goes beyond America's traditional areas in the pursuit of the *American Dream*. America's entering into the theatre of the Second World War changed the dynamic and reality of power. Since then the concern of US security worldwide is physical safety in order to facilitate its economic objective everywhere in the world.

The security the Ambassador referred to is the American type security. When the Katsina Government and by extension the Nigerian Government that have no philosophy of security beyond the American type they imbibe move in the direction the Ambassador urged them, they help accomplish America's security interest in Nigeria. America's interest and not Katsina and Nigeria's interests is served.

The United States has long been concerned about its security interest in the Gulf of Guinea should Nigeria implode and divide. The prospect for this implosion is real for discerning nationalities inside Nigeria and others outside. This prospect of implosion is not real for Nigeria's complacent officialdom. The war game on Nigeria by the Pentagon in 2015 was an expression of America's concern with her interests in Nigeria and the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria's existence as it is serves America's security interest better. However, America is preparing for when Nigeria will no longer exist in order to safeguard its security interests.

What is Nigeria's security interest? What is security for Nigeria?