

Major General Muhammadu Buhari's Chatham House Gaffe

When President Muhammadu Buhari was campaigning to become the president of Nigeria, one of the places he visited was the Chatham House in London. This was in the middle of the violence orchestrated amongst others by a section of the state opposed to the Jonathan presidency, the unwieldy coalition called the All Progressives Congress (APC) and key individuals with interest in the unfolding development of the time.

Major General Buhari promised the Chatham House audience that if he was elected president of Nigeria, the world would have no cause to worry about Nigeria as it had so recently. There was applause from the audience for the man that described himself as a General. No doubt if you had asked Major General Buhari to describe in one word the cause of the worry, I bet it would be "security".

Arguably, Major General Buhari's conception of security was different from his mostly white audience's conception of security. The audience needed Major General Buhari to use his conception of security which they approved to served their interest to hold off the persistent threat undermining their ability to access their conception of security or economic and strategic resources in and around Nigeria. Economic and strategic resources and not the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) is security for the organisers of the Chatham House address.

For Major General Buhari, security is the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) that ward-off these threats against his developed audience security or economic and strategic resources. Their applause for Major General Buhari was for his willingness to hold the horn to enable his developed audience milk the cow.

Major General Buhari publicly pledged his willingness to serve as the lackey of the west in the Chatham House address over their increasing concern that Nigeria was no longer safe for them to access their security. The security situation was worsening, they complained. Their security situation and not Nigeria's security situation was what they meant. Nigeria had not the foggiest idea or conception of security of its own construction.

As a retired Major General whose entire life was spent in the "security" profession, Major General Buhari had only one version of "security" on his mind: it was the type he was trained to uphold and the type that represented the visible security the West promoted globally and to which most of his kind accepted as canon. Since this security was a sine qua non for a democratising Nigeria to attract foreign investment, there was added advantage for candidate Buhari that was seeking Western endorsement to be seen as investment friendly for making that solemn commitment on security. Major General Buhari promised to hold the horn of the cow or as the Hausa would say "rike kahon saniya" to the utter delight of the West.

Beginning in 2015, the administration of Major General Muhammadu Buhari unfolded and/or took advantage of existing condition of "security" inside Nigeria to replicate its version of the duality of the security enacted at the Chatham House address for the Nigerian audience. The ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and their military, intelligence and law enforcement collaborators have since found reasons to consolidate on the-not-so-clear role security evolved under the previous Party and Government.

There are two securities out there inside Nigeria just as there are two securities at play on the international space. The one security is sold out as the military, intelligence and law enforcement projecting power everywhere on the globe and the other security is the not-so-sold-out but that is truly security that secure to which the MILE project power everywhere on the globe to protect and advance.

The APC and the MILE are exploiting the false consciousness of security socialisation of most Nigerians engendered by years of military rule on the one hand and on the other hand the one-off perception of international security practice copied by Nigeria's government to serve their own interest. They are exploiting this to push the narrative to most Nigerians that security is boot, tank, warship and aircraft that require plenty money to purchase, maintain and deploy for there to be security for most Nigerians. For the managers of this security, they are cornering two-third of the money proposed for this type of security into their pockets for the sole purpose of the security i.e. wellbeing in all of its forms that truly secure.

If there was one thing that united the All Progressives Congress (APC), it was their resolve to wrestle power from the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). They accomplish this. With political power in their hands, the APC resolved to pursue "security" or boots and guns for most Nigerians and security or wellbeing in all of its forms for themselves, their families and friends for the duration of their keeping this power.

To this end, there has been grand theft of public fund by functionaries - elected/appointed/technical - in the ministries, departments and agencies. Their signature efficiency in the theft of public fund is their creative conversion and utilisation of "security." As I noted in the article on "Political Violence and Thuggery and Security and Peace as the Siamese Twins of Nigeria's Democracy", their pursuit of "security" for their security is sacrosanct under the framework of the 1999 Constitution.

The Chatham House should organise a stocktaking visit for Mr. President after over six years on the saddle. I wonder where the Chatham House audience would place Major General Buhari vis-a-vis their security and the security his ruling coalition and their MILE perfected for selves, families and friends.

As for most Nigerians and in the matter of delivering this "security", President Muahmmaḍu Buhari is an equal opportunity administrator. All sections of Nigeria are covered in his administration's nondiscriminatory administration of this "security".