

## Scrap the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) Now

The Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) should be scrapped without any delay. This is because the ONSA has outlived its usefulness if ever it has been useful to the interest of most Nigerians.

The singular reason is that the ONSA knew and knows nothing on security. In its entire existence, the ONSA is about defence. There is light and darkness difference between security and defence. Security, to use a metaphor, is the forest. Defence is one of the trees in the forest.

In its place, the office of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) should be reactivated, restructured and strengthened to meet the needs of Nigeria's growing and evolving internal public order issues. Or if it is necessary, a new Office of the National Defence Adviser (ONDA) should be created to take over the assets and liabilities of the ONSA.

The new Office of the National Defence Adviser (ONDA) should be strictly about advising the President on the political side of defence or public order. The ONDA should not duplicate the function of the Office of the Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) or involve itself in the operational side of defence and public order.

The current Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) lost direction when it was taken over by the military few years after it was created in the Second Republic. Its functions, beginning with the Babangida administration in 1985, were transformed to duplicate and/or complement the defence orientation of the military. There was nothing security about the ONSA. The military's mindset of security defined its activities subsequently.

Since the commencement of the present Republic in 1999 and in particular beginning with the Jonathan and now Buhari administrations, the ONSA dabbled in the political and operational side of defence in name of security. The ONSA has not the foggiest idea of security and is not in any disposition to learn and/or create one for Nigeria.

The suggestion to scrap the ONSA is based on the examination of the experience of the United States, the birth place of security, national security and national security adviser. The suggestion is also based on Nigeria's experience in imitation without domestication, localization and/or indigenisation.

The idea of the National Security Advisor is principally that of the United States of America. The NSA has history and content meant to address concerns peculiarly American. The

National Security Advisor began with the United States Congress passing the legislation creating National Security in 1947. The United States had just emerged victorious and the dominant power in the world after the Second World War. The War convinced Americans and America that land, markets, resources or security – that which it requires to secure itself – can be found beyond its borders. The War confirmed the words of its founding President George Washington that if you want peace prepare for war on the one hand and on the other hand rearrange these words to read if you want security or land, markets and resources anywhere and everywhere in the world, arm your military, intelligence and law enforcement.

America's idea of security as lands, markets and resources and the pursuit of these are embedded in its founding history. The first sets of individuals to leave England to established Virginia in 1607 were motivated by the quest for security or lands, markets and resources as Williams Appleman Williams describe it. In the entire journey from this point on, security or lands, markets and resources governed the conduct of America everywhere beginning with the colonisation of all of the United States; the colonisation of the entire American continent; America's venture into the pacific; America's intervention in the First World War and eventually the Second World War and; America's enterprises everywhere else in the world since the end of the Second World War.

The passage by Congress of the National Security Act and its signing into law by President Harry S. Truman in 1947 creating National Security was confirmation of this founding ideal. National Security resided in America's enterprises abroad hence the symbiotic relationship of national security and foreign affairs. To attain national security or the continuous unhindered flow and access to economic and strategic resources from anywhere and everywhere in the world, it is important to have formidable military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE). The MILE is the vehicle that facilitated the superlative performance of the United States in the Second World War creating the basis for Pax Americana. The United States military is everywhere advancing and protecting America's national security or economic and strategic resources. National Security Act is America's war infrastructure use in accessing economic and strategic resources beyond the borders of the United States.

Unfortunately for Nigeria, what its officials and their initiates interchangeably called security or national security – the military, intelligence and law enforcement – is the logistics of National Security for the United States. Nigeria has not paused to investigate and interrogate the circumstances behind the creation of national security idea and institutions in the United States; Nigeria has not paused to investigate and interrogate what the military, intelligence and law enforcement of the United States is doing everywhere in the world in the name of

security or national security; Nigeria has not paused to investigate and interrogate the reasons behind the huge investment on the creation of creative destructive capacity of the military, intelligence and law enforcement of the United States with the latest defence budget standing at over \$700 billion; Nigeria has not paused to investigate and interrogate the reason America is within distance of every country and region of the world with its aircraft carriers complemented by cruisers, destroyers and submarines; all these is to access economic and strategic resources that SECURE and is the NATIONAL SECURITY of the United States.

Therefore what is security, whose security, what is a security issue and how can security be achieved or the four fundamental questions of security for the United States is thus; security or national security as America prefers is economic and strategic wellbeing; the United States and its people; anything and everything that enhance or hinder the economic and strategic wellbeing of the United States anywhere and everywhere in the world and; security is achieved through the deployment of the military, intelligence and law enforcement anywhere and everywhere in the world and through alliances.

In a concept note on the utility of Peter Ekeh's theoretical postulation of the Two Publics in explaining security, I not only drew attention to the Two Publics of Nigeria's Primordial and Civic "security". I also noted its significance to explaining the Two Publics of America's Primordial and Civic security and the impression it leaves on the ground for most countries of the world. The exercise of America's national security leaves two impressions on the ground.

The first or Civic Public security and the leading impression that formed the basis of the so-called security for most if not all countries of the world is the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE). I regarded this as the logistics of national security for the United States. The second or Primordial Public of security and the purpose for the existence and use of the military, intelligence and law enforcement is the economic and strategic resources anywhere and everywhere in the world. The countries of the world that are fascinated by America's MILE might ignore the rationale behind this might.

The National Security Act of 1947 baptised the indispensability of the MILE in acquisition of security or economic and strategic resources anywhere and everywhere in the world for the United States. The National Security Act put the United States in a war footing by locating security or national security outside the United States. The indispensability of the MILE or the NSA that created this has not changed. What has changed and is changing is the strategy or how to attaining this security or national security. President Trump is pursuing this with

his America First National Security Strategy. The trade war with China, renegotiating trade deals including the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), the North Atlantic Free Trade Association (NAFTA), the withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal etc. represent the pursuit of economic and strategic resources or national security.

The military, intelligence and law enforcement is not known by the name security. The Constitution and other enabling laws did not name the executive institutions of the military, intelligence and law enforcement security. Their – MILE – use of security to describe their name and work is a matter of convenience. This is similar to the descriptive use of security in the Constitution. The name security is not supported by any administrative regulation. They are simply known as the Military comprising the Nigeria Army, Nigeria Air force and Nigeria Navy; the Intelligence comprising the Department of State Services, National Intelligence Agency and Defence Intelligence Agency and; Law Enforcement comprising the Nigeria Police Force, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps etc.

Where did Nigeria get its idea of security as the military, intelligence and law enforcement and thus the basis – from practice at least – for the Office of the National Security Adviser and the National Security Adviser? Not in a Nigerian idea. Not in a Nigerian history. Not in a Nigerian sociology. Not in a Nigerian politics. Security did not come from a Nigerian etymology, epistemology, ontology and philosophy as the United States type did. Security or national security in Nigeria is bereft of content and therefore empty. The idea comes from the imitation of the American version.

The idea of security and the Office of the National Security Adviser is an imitation gone wrong. Nigeria has not been able to distinguish what is security, what is defence, what are their schedules respectively and to this extent where to draw the line in the function of the ONSA, NSA and the CDS. The American version did not suffer any of this ambiguity as the National Security Advisor and the Chairman Joint Chief of Staff have their separate work cut out for them even as they work cooperatively in the pursuit of National Security. This is because they know National Security. The NSA advises on where the national security of America could be enhance or threaten in the world. The Chairman Joint Chiefs provide the muscle to ensuring that the said objective for or against national security is attained.

As I noted Nigeria has never had security policy legislation or the sets of experiences as in the United States that resulted in the construction of national security. Nigeria has no idea of what is security, whose security, what is a security issue and how can security be achieved.

Nigeria's "security" is the imitation of the Civic Public of America's security i.e. the military, intelligence and law enforcement. The purpose for which this MILE is deployed is to suppress dissent and dissatisfaction among the populace. As I argued in my concept note, it is becoming very clear since 1999 that there is purpose to the pursuit of this security by the political and MILE elite thus playing out the Two Publics for two different Nigerians.

In my submission and from the point of view of the four fundamental questions, security is wellbeing; security or wellbeing is on human being and being human; security is anything and everything that promote or hinder wellbeing; wellbeing or security can be achieved when public institutions and policies have wellbeing or security as the purpose of their activities and pursue this actively.

On the basis of this definition and using Eke's Two Publics, the pursuit of "security" since 1999 leaves two impression on the ground. For the elite of politics and the MILE, they pursue security using the resource they garner from this to enhance and advance their wellbeing. For most of Nigerians, the elite of politics and MILE offer boots and guns, if and when they actually use the money for these, as security.

This is the role the Office of the National Security Adviser appropriated and represented particularly under the Jonathan and Buhari administrations. Under the Jonathan administration and in particular under the National Security Adviser Colonel Sambo Dasuki, over \$2billion was so-called appropriated for the purchase of arms or "security". Nigerians courtesy of President Buhari's selective anti-corruption now know that the money was paid out for the wellbeing of certain individuals in politics and in the MILE. We may have to wait until this administration live out its term in 2023 to begin to know the scale of money taken out in the name of "security" by the incumbent ONSA, NSA and his minions.

In their – the ONSA and the NSAs – perception of security, there is significant distinction with that which obtains from the United States where they imitated the idea. In coordinating the agencies of military, intelligence and law enforcement, the ONSA took over the statutory task of the Chief of Defence Staff. Those close to the ONSA told tales of service chiefs groveling before the almighty National Security Adviser as their traditional roles of defence and law enforcement were emasculated by the Office.

Clearly, Nigeria does not have the history, sociology and politics to operate this National Security. The version in Nigeria is bereft of Nigeria's history, sociology and politics. Nigeria's "security" duplicates existing roles of institutions foremost of these is the office of the Chief of Defence Staff. In imitating the idea of the NSA, Nigeria did not study the history,

sociology and politics behind the United States' NSA and succeeded in creating an institution lacking purpose and legitimacy.

In search of purpose and legitimacy, the ONSA has since developed beneficial relationship between the political elite and the MILE elite. This is part of the politics of accommodation evolving between the civil political elite and the MILE elite in and out of service. The purpose is to assuage and compensate the MILE for the loss of its vast infrastructure of power following the abrupt end of military rule in 1999. For the political elite, the purpose is to assuage the eternal fear of the MILE's ability to truncate the civil process.

Both parties also benefit financially as they seek to secure themselves with the largesse of the office. Beyond this purpose, the ONSA is one unnecessary bureaucracy impeding the understanding and evolution of security under representative rule system and the work of statutory institutions of defence and law enforcement including the CDS in their effort to tackle crime, criminality and public order in the country.

Should there be any need to retain the bureaucracy of the ONSA staffed as it is with people with military, intelligence and law enforcement background and their civilian counterparts with little or no independent thinking on security, the designation should be changed to the Office of the National Defence Adviser (ONDA). This is because defence and law enforcement is all that the present ONSA is about.

The process of creating and/or evolving security philosophy is the responsibility of the legislature which is itself ignorant and/or benefitting from the existing structure to begin to think that the failure of that which transpired as "security" since 1999 is because there is no functional difference between security under military rule and security under civil rule.

As I noted, national security and foreign relations in the United States are Siamese twins. Thus every country and region has desk and experts in the National Security Council that work round the clock assessing the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of the area to advancing and impeding the United States national security. When the United States of America's National Security Advisor advises Mr. President, it is within the vision and mission of security enabled by the fundamentals underpinning the National Security Act of 1947. The NSA and his staff monitor countries and regions of the world and keep Mr. President, the chair of the National Security Council (NSC) informed to enable decision making to safeguard national security or economic and strategic resources.

There is nothing indigenous about ideas and institutions such as Security, National Security, National Security Council, National Security Adviser, and National Security Agencies Act etc. in Nigeria. They did not derive from Nigeria's history, sociology and politics. They are imitations from the United States of America. These imitations have not been domesticated and indigenised to suit Nigeria's history, experience and reality (HER).

Is there a Nigerian equivalent of the relation between security and foreign affairs? There is none. Nigeria has no sense of security beyond the military, intelligence and law enforcement. The MILE is what I described as the logistics of security for the West especially the United States. The MILE was globalised as security after the Second World War. It is the availability of made in Nigeria security philosophy that will enable the determination of relationship between security and foreign or internal affairs or both. There is none for now.

What does the Nigerian NSA advise Mr. President on and about "security"? Where is the vision of security? On what security VISION is the MISSION called the *National Security Strategy (NSS)* recently re-compiled and re-launched by the ONSA anchored? Does the National Security Adviser and the National Security Council (NSC) consult the *NSS* in its administration of "security"? What is the schedule of the National Security Council (NSC)? The Third Schedule Part I of the Constitution describes the schedule of the NSC as PUBLIC SECURITY.

Of the two, security precedes public. What is public security? What is SECURITY? What is PUBLIC? How often does the NSC meet, if it meets at all, to consider public security? What is the agenda on the NSC's table if and when it meets? The only item on the agenda of the NSC if and when it meets to consider public security is to request for FUND. The infrequent meeting of the NSC is an indication that the lack of security philosophy ensured the NSC is bereft of issues to discuss.

Whereas Nigeria has little or nothing to do with foreign affairs affecting its yet-to-be determined security philosophy making foreign affairs a significant drain on Nigeria's resources, a fact admitted by Mr. President early in his first term where he promised to rationale missions all over the world, Nigeria prevailing "security" has everything to do with internal affairs. Under representative rule and borrowing from that which drives national security for the United States i.e. economic and strategic resources and anchored on the yearnings of most Nigerians in enthroning representative rule in 1999, it is possible to construct security policy legislation based on Nigeria's history, experience and reality (HER).

With this security philosophy in place and driving every public policy, profile will be created for every state of the federation with something to contribute to growing this security. With a philosophy of security in place, the ONSA will have vision and mission to give it purpose and legitimacy. A purposeful ONSA will have desk and experts for every state and region working round the clock to growing and assessing each state's strength, weakness, opportunity and threat to this security for Nigerians and Nigeria. This will gradually evolve and incorporate the West African region, Africa and the rest of the world.

The ONSA may have been created by the civil government of the Second Republic for particular purpose. This purpose did not see the light of the day because of the scourge of the anthill of the savannah. They did not allow the Republic to survive in order to unfold and imbue security with its vision and mission. The persistence of military rules converted the ONSA to its own use by growing and developing the place as we know it.

There are two options confronting the ONSA in view of the foregoing. Option number one is to scrap the ONSA since it has no idea of security etymologically, epistemologically, ontologically and philosophically and therefore rudderless. The ONSA, from precedence and from fillers is one major drain on the resources of this country. Option number two is to reinvent the ONSA under the elected administration with the legislatures taking the lead in settling the issue of security philosophy or what is security, whose security, what is a security issue and how can security be achieved through policy legislation.

As a bureaucracy created by the elected Second Republic administration before it was taken over by military rule, the present elected rule enabling environment since 1999 has another chance to rediscover the original intent for its creation and/or create a philosophy for security in tandem with Nigeria's history, experience and reality (HER) if it is to continue as the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA).

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