

The Acronym MILE or AFILE in the Discourse of Security in Nigeria

The concept of security has not been turned upside down and inside out in Nigeria. We have yet to grasp security intellectually to establish what it is from its place of origin, indigenous knowledge base and what it should be within what I described as Nigeria's History, Experience and Reality (HER).¹ Nigerians use security and defence interchangeably as if the two words mean one and the same thing. The prevailing confusion owes much to the influence of the military in its defence role in the socialisation of most Nigerians.

Security is unidirectional in Nigeria. Security bore the imprimatur of the military. With this mentality in mind most Nigerians have taken and given security the military stamp. Nigeria's military's conception of security originate from its defence role within the constitution. This defence role was politicised when the military subverted the constitution and took up the role of the governing class for the better part of Nigeria's independence until 1999.

The result was emergence of conflict of interest in its dual defence and security roles. In choosing between the two roles of defence and security, Nigeria's military as the governing elite opted for the familiar terrain of its defence role. Defence therefore superseded security role as this became the face of security in Nigeria. The military's perception of security is physical safety and nothing else. Most Nigerians were socialised into this tradition. Thus seeing security from any other perspective other than this became anathema to most Nigerians.

This is the mindset among government officials, members of the different arm of the state and, among most academics. But should this be so? Should this be so even with the academics that should be the mirror of the society? The academics rather than investigating security in Nigeria took to giving the existing perception of security stamp of academic approval. They burnished and promoted the military's defence perspective of security as the be-all and end-all of security.

In other word, academics have not grasp security intellectually in order to be in the position to examine the state of security theory and practice in Nigeria and whether it meets the criteria of what I described as Nigeria's History, Experience and Reality (HER). We need to begin by understanding Nigeria's history, the history of security itself and the beginning of the use and misuse of security in Nigeria. Each of these has a history that becomes the

¹See sub link "Stripping" for "the concept of Security Based on Nigeria's History, Experience and Reality(HER)" on <http://adoyionjoa.org>

building blocks of the construction of first nation, interest, security and national security in this order.

To this extent, my view is that what we considered as security i.e. the role of the armed agencies, in the entire portfolio of security, represents less than five percent of the constituents of security. This is thus the focus of my discourse of the concept of MILE within the security portfolio. MILE is my acronym for the less than five percent components of what should constitute the security portfolio if and when Nigerians decide to construct security.

Defining MILE or AFILE

The acronym MILE or AFILE represents the arms of the state in charge of the instrument of violence. The letter M stands for Military, the letter I stand for Intelligence and the letter L E stand for Law Enforcement. It could also be AFILE. A stand for Armed, F stand for Forces, I stand for Intelligence and L stand for Law and E stand for Enforcement. Whether viewed as MILE or AFILE, these represent the coercive arms of the state that gives effect to decisions taken by agencies of the state in line with the constitution, acts and those that represent policies of the governments. The MILE also control and monopolise the instruments of violence. In looking at the MILE or AFILE, I shall attempt to differentiate them in their role, training, methods and the symbiosis of their goals.

Military or Armed Forces

The military or armed forces are made up of three components. They are army, air force and navy. Section 217 subsections 1 and 2 of the 1999 constitution stipulate the composition of the armed forces and define their role. Their role is to defend the country against external attack, maintain its territorial integrity and secure its borders from violation on land, air and sea, to suppress internal revolt and act in aid of the civil authority when requested by the president or national assembly and perform other functions as may be prescribed by the act of the national assembly.

The training of the military is therefore targeted at their function. They are trained to kill enemies of Nigerians. Ideally these enemies are non Nigerians. Thus they especially the army – the most ubiquitous of the military arms – are expected to operate outside the borders of Nigeria. This is however not the case as diverse examples demonstrate. Their persistent deployment within the borders of Nigeria could be justified by subsection 2c. The methods of the military derive from their constitutional role and training. They employ and use

maximum force to defend the country. The goal of the military is to defend the state and the people in this order against its external enemies.

Nigeria has not experienced and is not under threat from its neighbour since it became independent in 1960. With the exception of the period Nigeria played frontline role in the struggle against apartheid, there was never any threat requiring the use of the military. The military has not been used in this instance. The military was used during the civil war of 1967-1970.

However, Nigeria's inability to resolve its governance challenges i.e. its inability to use of its immense human and material resources to benefit most of its people in order to create security of the first type initiated a role reversal for the military. The only enemy the Nigerian military is trained to deal with is Nigerians. The military is thus the constant face of "security". They have become an aberration to the point that they have lost or are losing their essence or edge i.e. their preparedness to defend against external attack.

Intelligence

This is the agency charged with the collection of information of all types and in this case of law enforcement, military and/or political value. The information when processed becomes intelligence. This intelligence is deployed for operation and policy to address political and military issues.

The National Security Agencies Act designated three types of intelligence agencies in Nigeria. The first one is charged with domestic intelligence. The second type is charged with external intelligence. The third type deals with military related intelligence within and outside Nigeria. The agencies responsible for these three types of intelligence are the Department of State Services (DSS), the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA).

All arms of the military (army, navy and air force) and law enforcement (police, civil defence, prison, drug enforcement, immigration, customs etc) have their own intelligence unit that collate information in order to enable them accomplish their task optimally.

Intelligence is important because it is use for policy and for operation. Indeed intelligence is not unique to these arm bearing agencies alone. It is a tool that should be employed by individuals and organisations. The prolong influence of the military in its socialization of most Nigerians made intelligence to be seemingly associated with them only.

Law Enforcement

There are several agencies under the designation of law enforcement in Nigeria. Of these agencies, the Nigeria police lead the pack. Others include the Civil Defence, Road Safety Corp, Prisons, Immigration, Drug Enforcement, Customs, and EFCC etc. Sections 214-215 of the Constitution of 1999 establish the police. Other laws of the federation define the role of the police in Nigeria.

The police have sole responsibility for what is described as internal security as it is the first line of defence. The police, in the not-too-distant-past supported other agencies with its enforcement arm prior to the creation of enforcement units in these agencies. The police are charged with the preservation of law and order, protection of life and property, enforcement of all laws and regulations under their jurisdiction and performance of military duties inside and outside the country as required of them by the enabling laws.

Other agencies that constitute the law enforcement arm emanated from the police. Thus the customs, immigration, road safety, drug enforcement, prisons, financial crime etc were units in the police force. They have been enabled by the various laws to perform specialised task of the type described as law enforcement in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Until Nigerians insist that security is imbued with philosophy (nature, meaning and purpose) taken from Nigeria's History, Experience and Reality (HER) and anchored on legislation from whence security policies and strategies will derive their legal framework, security will be viewed essentially and continuously from the defence perspective with the MILE or AFILE in the lead.

A social and psychological enabling environment exists supportive of the MILE or AFILE security framework that I described as failed and failing. Years of military rule ingrained this security type and conception into most Nigerians. The civil rule in place since 1999 has, for personal and group interest, converted this illegal security perspective to protect and advance their interests. In doing this, the political class struck up beneficial working relationship with the ruling elite of the MILE to continue this security perspective.

The solution to creating security devoid of the dominance of the MILE content is simply and squarely getting governance right and working at all levels. It is, as I argued, adopting the first

two routes of the three routes to creating security.² The first route is creating security through the governance or the governance route to security. The second route is creating security through the security route. These two routes have not been recognised let alone attempted in any systematic way. At the moment, what prevails is the failed and failing route to security which is the MILE or law and order route to security.

Nigeria is ailing economically; this ailing economy translates into ailing politics; as a result of ailing politics, the society is ailing sociologically and psychologically. These represent the two routes – security and governance – to attaining security. The failure to use these routes results in triggering the MILE sector – parts of the ailing society – to provide solution to the security ill-health of the country. This has not worked. This is not working. This will not work. This is not the security diagnoses and solutions Nigerians and Nigeria are yearning for. Security begins from the economy moving into the politics and thence to the entire society. The MILE component of security is the most insignificant and only complements the security that begins with the economy

The best enabling environment for creating security is the prevailing democratic system in place since 1999. It is necessary to try the first two routes – governance and security routes to creating security. This will deepen democracy through the democratisation of persons and institutions. In the absence of democratisation, there is the reinforcement and persistence of the law and order security route directed at supporting this failed and failing system.

²For the routes to creating security, see the sub link “Stripping” for “Defining and Charting Routes to Security”, on <http://adoyionaja.org>