

The Law Enforcement/Defense Establishment and the Illusion of Being the Custodian of Security and Security Policy Making for Nigeria

I posted this article to my PhD students of security studies today 26:07:18 entitled "Response to a study tour issue". One of the student responded to the article. Find below the student's response and my response to the student's response.

The Student

Good morning Prof.

It's always interesting reading your logical interrogation of security for Nigeria.

The nexus between defense (sub-set of security) and security is real and can not be contested.

To my mind, if it has taken many of your students such a long time to come to the realisation of the wrong conceptualization of appropriate security for Nigeria (there are some who are yet to come to terms with this reality); you can only imagine the confusion out there.

To what extent are our elected leaders aware of this wrong concept of security in Nigeria? Same question goes for the public, including the academia and civil society organisations, whose responsibility it is to advocate for this change that is so very central to our very continued existence as a nation state. This level of ignorance truly constitutes an existential threat to our nation.

I was the initiator of that debate at the NDA. I stated the facts and called on the faculty to see the need to commence a reorientation of the cadets towards this new consciousness, for a better Nigerian military for the future.

The respondent started with an attempt at countering the narrative but ended up accepting the inadequacies of any existing document to be referenced as national security policy.

Time was of essence so the debate could not continue. We however exchanged contacts to ensure a follow-up with the possibility of an academic debate on the issue between NSUK & NDA. Alternatively, on second thought, a conference involving other institutions including the legislature and some strategic executive organs, to interrogate this issue.

I can't recall the NDA faculty annexing onto themselves the responsibility of resolving this issue.

The ball is in our court now to take the lead by initiating the process of a national dialogue on Nigeria's security. I guess it is a burning issue that will elicit lots of interest

from the various sectors of national interests. With strategic partnerships including the NDA academia, funding should be the least of problems.

It is most gratifying benefiting from your fountain of knowledge. It will be a great honor to be a part of your team in this great potential historic legacy project for Nigeria. May God bless you with continued wisdom and guide our aspirations.

My Response

You are one of the few persons that engage the issue from the point of view of interest and commitment and for me it is always exciting reading and learning from you, sir.

There is a world of ignorance out there that embraces most if not all Nigerians! The task to begin an assault on this ignorance is gargantuan to say the least.

A most depressing fact is the lack of willingness on the part of the knowledgeable in Nigeria to interrogate security beyond the received wisdom. The academia and the civil society ought to represent the community in the forefront of this. However, they are lost. The extent of my disagreement with my colleagues on issues of security and their unwillingness to invest time and resources on security studies speak to their clinging to this received wisdom. To think that security and insecurity is constructed and can be deconstructed and yet we forget this fact demonstrates how far behind we are in terms of moving this country forward using our knowledge.

I appreciate the fact that you initiated that conversation during the tour. It is one step in the direction of spreading the knowledge. I hope others including the unconvinced among the students will have the courage to speak out against a security perspective that is clearly a falsehood, outside Nigeria's history, experience and reality and the source of insecurity for most Nigerians.

As to collaboration, I am open to this. Recalled when we first talk in the office we jointly discussed the possibility of writing proposals and engaging the funding agencies out there. As for conference, I had worked on a template for a possible conference sometime this year. I had to put this in the cooler because not only will I end up doing it alone. There was disagreement between my perspective and that of my partner. It is still open.

Thanks.