

Thinking "Security" Post Covid 19 Nigeria

The Covid 19 Armageddon starring Nigerians and Nigeria in the face and directly and indirectly instigating changes in their lives is the ideal opportunity to begin reflection on the practice called "security" in Nigeria.

I am suggesting security for two reasons. The first is to direct attention to "security" in terms of the resources poured into this narrowly practiced and ungoverned space in the last twenty years of civil rule and to ask whether it has secured Nigerians and Nigeria. The second is to draw attention to this "security" capacity in the face of Covid 19.

These two reasons offers the chance to examine security from the origin of the word(etymology), theory of knowledge(epistemology), theory of existence(metaphysics) and historically to determine its true construct as opposed to the selective-imitative practice in Nigeria.

It was Professor Stephen Hawking that identified greed and stupidity as the two human factors that will destroy the world. Both greed and stupidity are at work on the issue of "security" in Nigeria. In the last twenty years, we have watched a select few of the elected and appointed political and MILE elite convert an idea into avenue to feed their greed from the commonwealth of the country. This goes on right before the eyes of most Nigerians as we stupidly urged them on in their vision and mission of "security" in spite of the overwhelming evidence.

I chose to focus on "security" and not any other issue because of the attention "security" has garnered among elected public officials, the MILE elite and most Nigerians and because no other public sector portfolio enjoyed first line funding in the last 20 years and in particular the last 13 years.

Yet this "security" is undefined and ungoverned in all the enabling laws of the country including the Constitution. Yet the legislatures did not see anything wrong with "security" to begin to deconstruct and reconstruct security in tandem with the mandate they have received from Nigerians. Yet the legislatures, with the goading of MILE elite, see no reason to distinguish what is security and what is defence.

The fund – budgetary, extra-budgetary and non-budgetary – appropriated for "security" by governments in the last ten years dwarf fund budgeted for infrastructures of education, health, transportation, housing, science, technology, environment and on family and employment creation at all levels of governments.

These infrastructures have the potential to secure the lives of most Nigerians in different ways

to produce security for most. Yet most Nigerians are not questioning the "security" type dear to the select few that not only denied them these infrastructures but cannot "secure" most of them?

What is security then?

As the Covid 19 pandemic unfolds, is Nigeria's undefined and ungoverned first line fund guzzling "security" that is dear to the pocket of the political and MILE authority ready to "secure" most Nigerians? Where is "security's" response so far?

Where are Nigeria's infrastructures in the face of the seeming collapse of the developed countries' infrastructures as they grapple with Covid 19?

What should security be in post Covid 19 Nigeria?

While the re-examination will depend on the extent of devastation wrought on the people and country by Covid 19, most discerning countries in the world have begun looking at their world post Covid 19. I thought Nigeria should not be the exception.

As Nigerians watched the mightiest of the world whimper before Covid 19, they have long concluded that their survival does not rest in the capacity and competence of Nigeria's infrastructures and authorities. Both - infrastructures and authorities - are hopelessly inadequate and unprepared.

Most Nigerians' rest their survival in the hand of an unseen deity - call it GOD - to see them through this Armageddon.

My name is Dr. Adoyi ONOJA. I am a professor of African history. I studied history and has taught history in the Nasarawa State University, Keffi since [2002](#). My areas of interests are security, security studies in Nigeria, history of security, comparative security, governance, media and Middle Belt of Nigeria.

I have taught "security" courses at the graduate programme - MSc and PhD - of the Institute of Governance and Development Studies since [2015](#) using modified western intellectual resources on security and security studies. I use the resources with the two theories/concepts I developed. They are history experience and reality (HER) and studying, thinking, observing and comparing (STOC).

I am not one of the archetypal Nigerian experts on "security". I have argued that in the absence of policy legislation on security that provide the Nigerian state answers to the four fundamental questions of what is security, whose security, what is security issue and how can

security be achieved, it is not possible for experts to emerge. There has to be the platform and this platform does not exist yet.

One of the areas suffering as a result of the lack of policy legislation platform on security is the ability of scholars and scholarships on security to emerge in Nigeria. This is because scholars will only be able to hold government to account, investigate and interrogate security on the basis of the state's policy legislation on security. There is none. There has never been any before.

Therefore the so-called experts on security in Nigeria are people knowledgeable in defence and law enforcement and not security. Security is different from defence and law enforcement. To put it in the language they (so-called experts will understand), security is the war. Defence is the battle - one of the battles. Security is not battle. To win the security war, one needs to engage the battle on different fronts. Unlike war that comes and goes, security is an unending warfare as new frontiers keep cropping up.

The experts have not studied security in Nigeria because few tertiary institutions offer security as course at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Even the few that offer courses in security approach it from defence and law enforcement perspectives. They relied on western intellectual postulations and lack the policy legislation cum curriculum basis that addresses security from the Nigerian history, experience and reality. In the absence of indigenous intellectual outputs on security using security studies, for those who bothered to study at all, they relied on western books, journals and theories, concepts, methods, methodology and issues to speak on "security". This approach come with immense limitations in the face of Nigeria's history, experience and reality.

Thus Nigeria's so-called security experts emerged from diverse fields and experiences to include those with postgraduate degrees in defence studies, diplomatic studies, international relations to self-taught and experienced watchers of defence/law enforcement/"security" issues internationally and ex-MILE officials.

However, I bring my interest, creativity and above all else my backgrounds in history to research, teach, speak and write on security. In my view of security, human beings' end-state on earth is security. Thus every discipline and occupation has something to offer in growing this security because every discipline and occupation's end-state is security.

What I am offering is a personal reflection based on my history background and my engagement with security and security studies in over a decade.

My views on security are easily accessible on my webpage <http://adoyionoja.org> on the sub links stripping, aoviews, buzzing in town and adonostra.

It is essential for this conversation to remember the words of Professor Stephen Hawking. "The greatest impediment to knowledge is not ignorance. It is the illusion of knowledge". One area where this illusion of knowledge exists is the practice called "security".

I argued that security is the end-state of every human being on earth. I also argued that every discipline and human enterprise has something to offer to growing security. What then is this security?

It would be easier to start by making a determination of what is the ungoverned "security" practice in Nigeria using the four fundamental questions(4FQs). The 4FQs are the framework created by P.D. Williams. The framework is adaptable to addressing any issue. The 4FQs are: What is security? Whose security? What is security issue? How can security be achieved?

What is security? Security is the name and role of the military, intelligence and law enforcement.

Whose security? The state. In Nigeria, the state is transient and embodies the government represented by the ruling party/ethnic/religious/business and MILE coalitions in power at any given time.

What is security issue? Security issue is anything and everything that affect the state.

How can security be achieved? Security can be achieved through the use of the military, intelligence and law enforcement in protecting and advancing the cause of the state.

For two related reasons, this "security" became the be-all and end-all of security in Nigeria. The first reason is the prominence of the military in political governance of Nigeria almost immediately after independence. The second reason is the Cold War inclined globalisation of the vehicle of security - the MILE - and Nigeria's dubious reputation for imitation. Nigeria imitated the globalised face of security that put the MILE in the lead. In this instance, Nigeria is either impervious of the reason behind the MILE presence anywhere and everywhere in the world or knew this and adapted this to suit its enterprise inside Nigeria.

When I described security as an ungoverned space, I mean there is no policy legislation that provide for the four fundamental questions on security in Nigeria. Not even the Constitution of [1999](#) as amended raised and provided answers to these questions. There are references to security in the Constitution ([15-17](#) mentions) beginning with section 14 (2)b where it was stated that the "security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government." There is no explanation/interpretation/note on the security in question.

This security is vague and open to manipulation. The other mentions of security in the Constitution were associational e.g. the National Security Council etc. The Constitution did not refer to the military, intelligence and law enforcement as security in name and work. Sections [214-216](#) for the police and [217-220](#) for military described the police as maintaining public order and protection of persons and property and the military or armed forces (navy, airforce and army) as defending Nigeria's borders on sea, air and land.

Other enabling laws of the MILE including Decree 19 of [1986](#) or the National Security Agencies act creating the Department of State Service, Defence Intelligence Agency and National Intelligence Agency did not designate them as security. These three agencies are charged with specific type of intelligence operations that defend the state within, defence related (inside and outside) and without. They are all agencies of defence, intelligence and law enforcement and not security.

The choice of security to refer to the military, intelligence and law enforcement as name and work was borne of convenience and the internationalisation of security post-Cold War post 9/11. However, this is where the convenience of name and work as security ended between Nigeria that prefers the name/work convenience and the developed and discerning developing countries that use security for the pregnant meaning it carries.

The United States of America is one country that globalised the search for security and the use of security as name and work. The United States unlike Nigeria that looks within for security goes out in search of security. Like the glocalisation of security in Nigeria in the last 20 years from [1999](#), the USA and Nigerian versions leaves two impressions of security on the mind. For the USA, the security that is visible globally is America's role of policeman. However, not-so-visible is the security or economic and strategic resources for which America police the world. For Nigeria since [1999](#), security is boots and guns for the sake of protecting most Nigerians on the one hand and on the other hand and for the elite of politics, economics and the MILE security is the fund to purchase the boots and guns.

To get to the bottom of security, I shall provide two concept notes: the first will deal with security from the beginning and the second will address the 4FOs from three perspectives - the USA, Nigeria and personal.

These will provide context to offer my take on security in Nigeria post Covid 19.