

Time to Investigate and Interrogate the History of this Failed "Security" in Nigeria¹

"Security" is a spectacular and successful failure in Nigeria. There is no other fitting adjective to describe this "security" other than failed, failing and destined to continue to fail unless Nigerians investigate and interrogate the history of this "security". Every idea including security has history. The Nigerian version of "security" cannot be an exception.

There is the feeling of *déjà vu* in the calls for national security summit and the declaration of emergency on security. There was a time the executive and legislature competed in convoking summits on "national security". These summits' outcomes did not achieve "security" for most Nigerians. The present clamours are destined to follow the failed paths of previous summits.

The issue before the previous summits was always "how" can security be achieved and not "what" is security. The origin of the word and meaning of security has never been investigated and interrogated. The impression was that the conveners knew this "security" and as such the issue was not "what". It is not possible to label and treat an ailment that has not been diagnosed. This is the case with "security" which is arguably still a mere word in Nigeria.

Nigeria is yet to create security and imbue this security with meaning. Thus every intervention on this "security" stresses strategy since this "security" is purportedly known. Yet this known "security" failed and is failing demonstrating that this "security" is the known unknown. The meaning of this "security" did not originate in Nigeria. In pursuing this "security", Nigeria is assisting the west – the owners and originators of this "security" – fulfill their security objectives in Nigeria.

This is clearly a wrong and failing approach since this "security" stemmed from borrowed "practice" named "security" without the compliment of philosophy i.e. nature, meaning, purpose and culture conceived within Nigeria's History, Experience and Reality (HER). Nigeria's History is that of over three hundred (300) nationalities cobbled together by the British into one entity to serve the British security interest; Nigeria's Experience since independence is that of failed and failing governance resulting in the inability to transform the house called Nigeria into home for most Nigerians; and Nigeria's Reality is that of poverty of all types producing mass exclusion rather than inclusion to make for the emergence of Nigerians.

This "security" to which Nigeria subscribe to is the product of the history, experience and reality of the west. This Globalized Western Security Philosophy (GWSP) prioritise the

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state using the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) in order to advance western interests on the ungoverned international space. This interest is first economic before it is political, diplomatic, cultural, strategic etc. To the extent that this "security" made sense in Nigeria, it is strictly to safeguard the narrow base and interest of the state at every-time controlled and composed of coalition of ethnic-regional-religious-MILE interests anchored on the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) and not in the interest of most of the people of Nigeria.

This "security" has not answered the questions what is security, whose security, what is security issue and how can security be achieved. Not even the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 provides an unambiguous direction on this "security" and the role of the MILE. Chapter II Section 14 2b holds that the "security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". What is this "security"? The Constitution and other enabling laws did not define the role of the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) as "security". Their roles include defending and ensuring law and order in Nigeria. The state, in not seeing the need to construct security based on HER, is therefore the source of the crises in Nigeria.

If under military rule, "security" was conceived as guns and tanks, what is security under representative rule after 1999? This is the question confronting the elected legislatures primarily and the executives secondarily. This question is essentially that of the legislatures to address because they represent the people of Nigeria with the mandate to make policies into laws that will improve the wellbeing of their people or sovereign. The legislatures more than the executives have what it takes to examine the history of this "security" and to determine if it is in tandem with the mandate from the sovereign and within the History, Experience and Reality(HER) of Nigerians.

The executives view its primary responsibility as fostering law and order. For the executives, the breakdown of law and order becomes "insecurity" and when confronted with "insecurity", the executives' first and perhaps only recourse is to invoke the instruments of the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) that defined its attempt to restore "security". This is the crux of the task before the legislatures in Nigeria.

As I once argued, there are three routes to attaining security once the philosophy of security is constructed from Nigeria's History, Experience and Reality (HER). The first route is security route to security; the second route is governance route to security and the third route is law and order route to security. The third route which is the stage Nigeria practices at the moment comes only after the failure of the first two routes – security and governance. Nigeria's fixation with imitating alien security model has not only left the country unaware that it can construct its own security. Nigeria is unaware of

the first two routes let alone trying them and has instead resorted to the third route to security.

Most if not all Nigerians were socialized into the prevailing "security" driven by the MILE and thus knew no other perspective of security. The MILE driven "security" is alien to the governing framework in place since 1999. The time has come for the construction of security philosophy fitting the representative rule framework that answers the question what is security, whose security, what is security issue and how can security be achieved within the History, Experience and Reality (HER) of Nigeria.

The Nigeria legislatures must rise to this occasion. Unearthing the history of this "security" and proceeding to constructing Nigeria's own security under representative rule enabling environment is the beginning of solutions and the foundation of everything security for most Nigerians and Nigeria.