

Governor Abdullahi Sule and the Consolidation of the philosophy of Strategic Insecurity in Security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Although, Nigeria has been battling what it called insecurity actively in the last fifteen years of the twenty-five years of civil rule democracy governance, we do not have agreement on what constitute insecurity. This simply translate into the lack of policy on insecurity. The policy set out to ask and answer the question what is insecurity, whose insecurity and what are the issues of insecurity.

Closely aligned with the preceding observation is that we do not also have agreement on how to tackle insecurity. This also translate into the lack of strategy. The strategy question asks and answer the question how can insecurity be addressed. This is even as both policy and strategy work hand-in hand on every issue should we seek a clear and unambiguous path to the resolution of public issues in public governance.

The use of "insecurity" resonated widely in most of the reports carried by the media and credited to Governor Abdullahi Sule. Governor Sule was reported to have said that governors should quit passing blame on fighting insecurity since they now have enough money to tackle it. This remark was made at the 2025 Northern Nigeria Investment and Industrialisation Summit in Abuja.

If the 1999 Constitution's provision on security, which I assumed should be opposite of insecurity, is to serve as a guide to addressing the nagging question of policy, the security in reference describes and/or is associated with the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement. Therefore, and by deduction, insecurity is also describe/associate with the work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement.

Circumstantial evidences supported this deduction. The first of the evidences is that the entire fifteen (15) places where mentions or references to security are made in the 1999 Constitution are to the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement. The second evidence is that the Constitution was drafted by the military under military regime. The Constitution was a military decree number 24. The third evidence is that the operationalisation of this security is with these executive agencies. The fourth evidence is the socialisation into this security culture and the widespread acceptance and recognition of these agencies by most members of the public as security.

According to Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State, "for the first time in our history, all tiers of government are sharing more than they ever imagined." He noted that "over N2.2 trillion was shared this month alone. When I became governor in 2019, we were sharing between N590 billion and N620 billion. Today, it is four times that amount." The clincher, in the Governor's remark came when he noted that "every state now has the resources to secure its people. We should stop blaming anybody, blame ourselves."

There are two angles to viewing Governor Abdullahi Sule's remark. These angles derived and are driven by the operational word "secure" contained in the statement. The first angle of viewing the remark is that it leaves questions begging to be asked and answered. Of the questions, the most important one, for this piece, was contained in the statement "every state now has the resources to secure its people..." The contentious word in the remark is SECURE.

What does Governor Sule mean by "secure"? What is secure? Whose secure? What are the constituents of secure? How do you secure? Where are the policy and strategy that define secure? Did the soft and hard media that carried and reported his remark read the "secure" in order to birth the "insecure" and thus "insecurity" interpretation widely applied to the Governor's statement? To this end, does this secure translate to security? And if it does, whose jurisdiction, is it? Is it that of the civil political authority? Or the authority of the agencies of the military, intelligence and law enforcement?

What does the 1999 Constitution say in respect of security in relation to these questions? Did the 1999 Constitution's security saddle this task on the political authority? Did the 1999 Constitution saddled the task on the military, intelligence and law enforcement? Or did the 1999 Constitution saddle this security on both the political authority and the military, intelligence and law enforcement? Where do you draw the line between the two authorities in terms of securing, security and thus insecurity?

The second angle of viewing the remark is from the content and context of the coverage it received from the media. The soft and hard media outlets interpreted and carried the statement credited to Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State thus: "governors have no excuse not to fight insecurity" in their domain. In other words, the word "secure" in the statement was interpreted as security by the media. Therefore, the opposite of security is insecurity.

There are several implications to this statement arising from past, present and future efforts towards tackling insecurity as reported by the media. The first implication is whether the

governors had once and/or perennially complained that they lacked funds to battle insecurity in their states. From the perspectives of the governors, what is the type of insecurity? Is it limited to the insecurity type that is the opposite of security as contained in the 1999 Constitution? The second implication is whether there is a consensus amongst governors on what is insecurity. These includes whose insecurity and what are the issues driving insecurity. The third implication and arising from the second implication is whether there is a collective or individual policy of the state on insecurity. The fourth implication is what happened and is happening to the monies all the governors drew and are drawing from diverse sources including security vote, allocation to the detachment of the military, intelligence and law enforcement in their domain and/or diversion of fund from other sectors for security and insecurity over the course of the last fifteen years.

The most important implication of Governor Sule's position is that it opened and deepened the ungoverned space and the governed ungoverned space called security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The ungoverned space refers to the need to construct and/or reconstruct security in the image of civil rule democracy for the first time in the history of Nigeria. The governed ungoverned space refers to the continuation of security governance in the image of the military, intelligence and law enforcement under civil rule democracy framework.

As far as tackling governance of security is concerned, under the civil rule democracy framework, what the political class seek is to remain ensconced in unclear and ambiguous path. This is the strategic insecurity created and maintained by the ungoverned and governed ungoverned spaces of security to benefits the political classes on the one hand and on the other hand to disadvantaged most Nigerians.

Nigeria must first settle security in philosophy, legislation and policy under civil rule democracy governance framework and Nigeria's history, experience and reality (HER) in order to understand and tackle insecurity.

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