

Matters Arising for Nigeria in President Trump America First National Security Strategy (3)

In my second submission which focused on President Trump's note to "My fellow Americans", I noted that "governments and populations can visualise and can feel the impact of *America First Strategy* in action everywhere in the world..." This began during Mr. Trump's first term as president from 2017 to 2020.

America First Strategy is most embedded in programmes of the economy that centred on protectionism, economic nationalism and unilateralism. There were dimensions that included trade tariffs, renegotiated deals, tax, deregulation, energy dominance, "buy American, hire American", supply chain and manufacturing "reshoring", standing up to international organisations and immigration restrictions as economic policy amongst others. All of these were aimed at prioritising United States workers and industries over global cooperation. As consequences of these measures, President Trump led the way in announcing record investments and reinvestments into the American economy by countries, regional economic groups and corporations.

America First Strategy included ridding America of the spectre of immigrants and elements considered ideologically and culturally incompatible and thus dangerous and detrimental to Americans wellbeing; the borders of the United States are being strengthened the Trump way and no thanks to Israeli experiential weapons, surveillance and artificial intelligence technologies developed in what one analyst called the Palestinian laboratories and; the Trump transactional passion for reestablishing peace all over conflict areas – the Abraham Accord, Israel-Hamas, Cambodia-Thailand, DRC-Rwanda etc.

America First Strategy enacted the Trump Corollary to the 1823 Monroe Doctrine. The "Trump Corollary" seek to recalibrate the erstwhile Roosevelt Corollary by putting regional powers on notice including staying-off South/Latin America and for Europe to watch its ways. The Monroe Doctrine is associated with the presidency of James Monroe which warned European powers against further colonisation or interference in the Americas and pledging America's non-interference in European affairs.

To this end, the Trump Corollary is reenacting the pledge contained in the original Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary not to interfere in European affairs by ensuring Europe take care of its affairs. This, it is accomplishing, by putting Europe and European governments on their toes in several ways. President Trump insisted that European governments must shoulder the burden of their defence and under the Hague Commitment they increased their contribution to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's collective defence fund from two percent to five percent. President Trump showed his angst with European immigration policies and programmes when he warned that Europe faced civilisational erasure.

In Latin America, the Trump Corollary is marked by the transition and redirection of politics from the largely Left-leaning governments of the past to Right-Leaning governments in countries across the region. Although the development is largely autonomous and driven by the poor performance of Left-leaning governments, there is no doubt that the emergence and policies of President Trump is contributing to the move towards the Right.

The deteriorating relation between President Trump and President Nicholas Maduro is another phase in the pursuit of America's national security in Latin America. This is translating into regional crisis with potential for dividing the region. The ultimate intention of President Trump is to cause regime change in Venezuela.

President Trump is not sparing any means in his campaign of villification against President Maduro. The administration is in the middle of manufacturing and convincing the world of the existence of Iraq-era type dodgy dossier in the Cartel de la Soles – an alleged criminal network within the armed forces of Venezuela involving high-ranking officers and political officials – who are said to be involved in the international drug trade and purportedly headed by Maduro. In the last couple of months, dozens of boats and hundreds of persons purportedly trafficking in drugs have been killed in military strikes ordered by the Department of War and executed by the America military. At the same time, *America First Strategy* is ramping up pressure on President Maduro's regime by targeting ships carrying Venezuelan oil. The larger implication of the actions is to put the remaining Left-Leaning regimes such as Brazil and Colombia on notice.

In pushing the means to defending, protecting and advancing national security, *America First Strategy* focused on all areas and not just the world stage at large. Thus, "a strategy must evaluate, sort, and prioritise. Not every country, region, issue, or cause—however worthy—can be the focus of American strategy."

There is an internal version of the *America First Strategy* playing inside the United States of America. It is directed at the former regime of the Democrat and persons that have slighted President Donald Trump. This included purging officials associated with the Democrats and prosecuting individuals such as the former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director, James Comey. The National Guards are being deployed to states and cities mostly controlled by the Democrats which the administration thought were crime-infested and thus unsafe for Americans. This, according to the administration, is in order to make them safe from crimes, immigrants and un-American activities.

The spectre of un-American activities is often associated with the large swathe of immigrants from Muslim majority countries that President Trump accused the Democrat administration of allowing into the country. It is the case with the Somalis in Minnesota. It is also the case with Afghans allowed into the country following the collapse of the American-backed

government in Kabul in 2021 and the return of the Taliban. Officials of the State Department were not spared as evidenced by the recall of career ambassadors and staff from embassies worldwide. This, no doubt, are part of the missions of *America First Strategy* in its bid to defend, protect and advance America's national security.

Can any Nigerian, barring some select administration officials, admit that he/she visualised and felt the *National Security Strategy* 2014 of President Goodluck Jonathan and his National Security Adviser, Colonel Sambo Dasuki, in action in the manner the *America First Strategy* of President Trump has been and is being visualised and felt in Nigeria and the rest of the world? Can any Nigerian, barring some select administration officials, admit that he/she visualised and felt what was left of the Jonathan-era *National Security Strategy* and the *National Security Strategy* 2019 edition, under President Muhammadu Buhari and his National Security Adviser, Major General Babagana Monguno? Will Nigerians, with the exception of select administration officials, admit they felt what was left of the Buhari-era *National Security Strategy* 2019 under President Bola Tinubu and his National Security Adviser, AIG Nuhu Ribadu, prior to its expiration in 2024?

There are other fundamental questions for most Nigerians to ask and answer for themselves. In the prevailing lacuna of the lack of *National Security Strategy* since 2024, what have most Nigerians gained and/or lost individually and collectively since the unveiling of the first version in 2014? Would most Nigerians, with the exception of the administration officials particularly those in the Office of the National Security Adviser and the military, intelligence and law enforcement – this is assuming national security, security or both is the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) – say that the lack of *National Security Strategy* since the 2019 edition expired in 2024 impacted their lives positively and/or negatively? This is in view of the inability of President Bola Tinubu and his National Security Adviser, AIG Nuhu Ribadu, to compile their own *National Security Strategy*.

With the lived reality where most Nigerians have not the foggiest idea of the philosophy of national security, security or both, as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution and, under civil rule democracy and governance frameworks, do most Nigerians need the *National Security Strategy*? What would most Nigerians lose, if the ill-fated tradition of the five yearly *National Security Strategy*, is discontinued?

America First Strategy is not only handy. It is explicit enough for comprehension and for the purpose of learning, should Nigeria's fraudulent rent-seeking officialdom wish to learn. *America First Strategy* does not seek to explain national security. This is because the nature, meaning and purpose of national security has been tackled by Americans in the years from 1617 to 1947.

This is unlike the Nigerian version of national security, security or both. Owing to the lack of a Nigerian-wide and accepted philosophy or nature, meaning and purpose of national security, security or both, most Nigerians constantly battled with the contradictions of national security, security or both and making meanings and distinctions of national security, security and defence. This was not an issue under military rule. However, it is an issue and a fundamental one at that under civil rule democracy and governance. This issue requires resolution.

America First Strategy only bothers about how to accomplish national security for Americans and America in the four years of President Donald Trump. For instance, the Table of Contents begins with an introduction. The introduction is entitled "what is American Strategy". Underneath this introduction are: one, "how American "strategy" went astray" and two, "President Trump's necessary, welcome correction."

In answer to "what is American Strategy", the text opined thus:

To ensure that America remains the world's strongest, richest, most powerful, and most successful country for decades to come, our country needs a coherent, focused strategy for HOW (emphasis mine) we interact with the world. And to get that right, **all Americans need to know what, exactly, it is we are trying to do and why** (emphasis mine).

There is no ambiguity in "what is American Strategy". *America First Strategy* noted that "America comes from a position which it intends to maintain and strengthen for decades to come" and the *Strategy* set out a "coherent, focused strategy for how America interacts with the world."

The world is America's theatre. The world has been the theatre of the United States since the end of the Second World War. The National Security Act of 1947 established the philosophy or nature, meaning and purpose of national security and the legislation to govern this world in order to ensure and assure the national security of the United States.

The *American First Strategy* enlisted all of Americans' understanding of the *Strategy* in the belief that there is no ambiguity in their understanding of national security. The *Strategy* averred that "all Americans need to know what, exactly, it is we (the administration under Trump) are trying to do and why". Even if one has not read the *Strategy*, one can feel the *Strategy* in the conducts of the administration in the areas as I demonstrated in the early part of this essay.

To leave no person in doubt, *America First Strategy* defined a strategy thus:

A "strategy" is a concrete, realistic plan that explains the essential connection

between ends and means: it begins from an accurate assessment of what is desired and what tools are available, or can realistically be created, to achieve the desired outcomes.

America First Strategy proceeded to argue that “a strategy must evaluate, sort, and prioritise. Not every country, region, issue, or cause—however worthy—can be the focus of American strategy.” The purpose of foreign policy is the protection of core national interests; that is the sole focus of this strategy.”

Since the world is the playground of America’s national security, foreign policy is the medium for engaging the world in order to enhance national security. This is why national security and foreign policy are Siamese twins. The doctrine of national security would have been useless without the world. National Security is the logical outcome of America’s focus on the world. National Security evolved from Pax Americana following the Second World War world. Thus, foreign policy is the means to govern this world in order to safeguard national security because to ensure and assure national security, there should be unfettered and unhindered access to the world for the United States. The military, intelligence and law enforcement are the backbone of ensuring and assuring unfettered and unhindered access to the world in the quest for national security. Thus, there is a symbiotically organic relationship between the pursuit of foreign policy and the attainment of national security.

There are several foundation stones laid down along the road of the construction of the United States to the birth of national security doctrine in 1947. Of these foundation stones, the first was the establishment of the settlement of Virginia in 1617.

Thus, for the United States of America, the pursuit of prosperity confers national security and the pursuit of national security confers prosperity. In this and across all political parties and administrations, the mantra has been and will always be economic security is foundationally fundamental to national security.

- Dr. Adoyi ONOJA is with the Department of History, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. He can be read on <https://www.adoyionoja.org.ng>