

Matters Arising for Nigeria in President Trump America First National Security Strategy (4)

The essence of this serialisation is to enable the establishment of parallel between the United States experience of National Security and *National Security Strategy* which enables the attainment of National Security for Americans and Nigeria's copying and imitating streak of National Security, Security or both which has been unable to attain whatever is National Security, Security or both and the worthless paper called National Security Strategy.

Nigeria's National Security, Security or both is bereft of history, bereft of philosophy and bereft of policy. Above all else, they are bereft of enabling-environment under civil rule democracy. They thrive on what I called the political economic relation between civil rule political elite and the elite leadership of the military, intelligence and law enforcement. The political economy of security has been in place in the last sixteen years of the active regime of national security, security or both. Consequently, Nigeria's civil rule democracy's prospect of creating meanings in the lives of most Nigerians graduate from hope powered by rationality, to faith driven by religiosity and is now firmly ensconced in fate based on powerlessness.

In series number 3, *America First Strategy's* conceptualised strategy as "concrete, realistic plan that explains the essential connection between ends and means..." This is straight talk that can be assessed and evaluated. *America First Strategy* is of the view that strategy "begins from an accurate assessment of what is desired and what tools are available, or can realistically be created, to achieve the desired outcomes." Again, this is not ambiguous.

America First Strategy argued 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."

What should Nigeria's *National Security Strategy* learn from the three strands arising from *America First Strategy's* conceptualisation of the concept of strategy? Does Nigeria view strategy as "realistic plan" connecting "ends and means"? If Nigeria do, was this evident in the *National Security Strategy* 2014 and 2019? Does Nigeria understand strategy as beginning from an accurate assessment of what is desired, the tools available or can be created to achieve desired outcomes? Were these evident in the *National Security Strategy* 2014/2019? Do we possess the most important tool of all – National Security, Security or both philosophy – within civil rule democracy worldview? If we do not, have we considered creating one? Does Nigeria consider the place of evaluation, sorting and prioritisation in strategy? Even in the absence of a National Security, Security or both philosophies to drive the *National Security Strategy* 2014/2019, has Nigeria ever evaluated the *National Security Strategy* 2014/2019?

In the prevailing conception of national security, security or both as the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement, how and where do we locate and identify these

three perspectives of strategy? In other words, what is the realistic plan that connects ends and means in national security, security or both centred on the name and work of the MILE under civil rule and democracy frameworks? What is the accurate assessment of what is desired, the tools available or can be created to achieving desired outcomes in national security, security or both centred on the name and work of the MILE under civil rule democracy and governance frameworks? How do we evaluate, sort and prioritise national security, security or both centred on the name and work of the MILE under civil rule democracy and governance frameworks? In a national security, security or both centred on the name and work of the MILE, what are Nigeria's core interests under civil rule democracy and governance frameworks?

All this is possible and seamless for the United States of America because the United States of America is the birth place and home of National Security.

This is not so for Nigeria. Nigeria has never had its Nigerian-wide agreement on national security. Nigeria has never had its Nigerian-wide agreement on security. This explained the presence of national security, security or both in the 1999 Constitution reflecting the worldview of the executive agencies of the military, intelligence and law enforcement based on their mandate and not the mandate of civil rule democracy. This underscored the hopelessly rudderless conditions of most Nigerians and Nigeria.

National Security and Security are not and do not mean one and the same issue. There is etymology, history, philosophy and territoriality unique to security and to national security – security and national security because security came first before national security. Security is local to its place of birth. National Security is local to its place of birth. Security's etymological meanings of *free from care, something which secure, condition of being secure* and *feeling no apprehension* is the binding thread of security and national security.

Nigerians need to create their own value. Nigerians can choose to adopt either security or national security – Nigeria's Security or Nigeria's National Security. Whether they create a new value or adopt one from the existing two values from Europe and the United States of America, they should endeavour to ensure they ask and answer the questions what is Nigeria's Security or Nigeria's National Security, whose Nigeria's Security or Nigeria's National Security and what are Nigeria's Security or Nigeria's National Security issues. The answers most Nigerians provide for these questions will become the core nature, meaning and purpose of Nigeria's Security or Nigeria's National Security. Nigeria's legislatures will codify these three questions and answers of philosophy into legislation. The fourth question which is how can Nigeria's Security or Nigeria's National Security be achieved will be the responsibility of government elected by most Nigerians to handle. Thus, this will become the basis for the creation of Nigeria's Security Strategy or Nigeria's National Security Strategy. On the strength of the first three questions, the elected government will draw up its strategy or how to implement in programmes the

attainment of Nigeria's Security or Nigeria's National Security. The strategy will cover its term in office.

In "how American Strategy went astray", *America First Strategy* observed that "... since the end of the Cold War, American strategies have fallen short – they have been laundry lists of wishes or desired end states; have not clearly defined what we want but instead stated vague platitudes; and "have often misjudged what we should want".

This was the view of one administration over past strategies. *America First Strategy* was of the view that "after the end of the Cold War, American foreign policy elites convinced themselves that permanent American domination of the entire world was in the best interests of our country." The *Strategy*, in stating this wholesale ambition of the foreign policy elites, sadly noted "yet the affairs of other countries are our concern only if their activities directly threaten our interests."

In view of this, the *America First Strategy* promised to "evaluate, sort, and prioritise" as "not every country, region, issue, or cause – however worthy – can be the focus of American strategy." As a departure from what is arguably the wide and unrealistic ambitions of past foreign policy elites about the world, *America First Strategy* declared "the purpose of foreign policy is the protection of core national interests" and for President Trump's *America First Strategy*, "that (the protection of core national interests) is the sole focus of this strategy."

Accordingly,

"our elites badly miscalculated America's willingness to shoulder forever global burdens to which the American people saw no connection to the national interest. They overestimated America's ability to fund, simultaneously, a massive welfare-regulatory-administrative state alongside a massive military, diplomatic, intelligence, and foreign aid complex. They placed hugely misguided and destructive bets on globalism and so-called "free trade" that hollowed out the very middle class and industrial base on which American economic and military preeminence depend. They allowed allies and partners to offload the cost of their defense onto the American people, and sometimes to suck us into conflicts and controversies central to their interests but peripheral or irrelevant to our own. And they lashed American policy to a network of international institutions, some of which are driven by outright anti-Americanism and many by a transnationalism that explicitly seeks to dissolve individual state sovereignty.

America First Strategy concluded that "not only did our elites pursue a fundamentally undesirable and impossible goal, in doing so they undermined the very means necessary to

achieve that goal: the character of our nation upon which its power, wealth, and decency were built.”

In all of the issue areas highlighted in “how America went astray”, President Trump has moved with the speed of light to addressing them – the foreign aid complex has been demolished with distressing revelations; the destructive globalism and the so-called free trade that hollowed the middle class and industrial base are being dismantled via renegotiation of trade deals and the tariff programmes with all countries of the world; Europe and other countries are picking the bill in the cost of their defence as America under Trump winds down on involvement in conflicts of no tangible benefit for national security and; there is dogged pursuit of the reinstatement and reassertion of America’s sovereignty almost akin to neo-isolationism all over the world.

After identifying the flaws of the previous attempts by *National Security Strategies* to attain national security for Americans, the *America First Strategy* proceeded to asking “what do we want overall?” in “what should the United States want?” The lists of what *America First Strategy* want and set out to accomplish under President Trump disjointed presidencies were outlined in clear and unambiguous terms.

The lists begin with “first and foremost, we want the continued survival and safety of the United States as an independent, sovereign republic whose government secures the God-given natural rights of its citizens and prioritises their well-being and interests; we want to protect this country, its people, its territory, its economy, and its way of life from military attack and hostile foreign influence...; we want full control over our borders, over our immigration system, and over transportation networks through which people come into our country—legally and illegally...; we want a resilient national infrastructure that can withstand natural disasters, resist and thwart foreign threats...; we want to recruit, train, equip, and field the world’s most powerful, lethal, and technologically advanced military to protect our interests...; we want the world’s most robust, credible, and modern nuclear deterrent, plus next-generation missile defenses—including a Golden Dome for the American homeland—to protect the American people, American assets overseas, and American allies; we want the world’s strongest, most dynamic, most innovative, and most advanced economy.”

The list contended that “the U.S. economy is the bedrock of the American way of life, which promises and delivers widespread and broad-based prosperity, creates upward mobility, and rewards hard work. Our economy is also the bedrock of our global position and the necessary foundation of our military; we want the world’s most robust industrial base. American national power depends on a strong industrial sector capable of meeting both peacetime and wartime production demands. That requires not only direct defense industrial production capacity but also defense-related production capacity...; we want the world’s most robust, productive, and innovative energy sector...; we want to remain the world’s most scientifically and

technologically advanced and innovative country, and to build on these strengths. And we want to protect our intellectual property from foreign theft...; we want to maintain the United States' unrivaled "soft power" through which we exercise positive influence throughout the world that furthers our interests..."

In the final analysis, the *America First Strategy* lists concluded that "we want the restoration and reinvigoration of American spiritual and cultural health, without which long-term security is impossible. We want an America that cherishes its past glories and its heroes, and that looks forward to a new golden age. We want a people who are proud, happy, and optimistic that they will leave their country to the next generation better than they found it. We want a gainfully employed citizenry—with no one sitting on the sidelines—who take satisfaction from knowing that their work is essential to the prosperity of our nation and to the well-being of individuals and families. This cannot be accomplished without growing numbers of strong, traditional families that raise healthy children."

One implication stands out from the lists of *America First Strategy* roadmap to accomplishing national security: Americans. Beginning with the first item on the list down to the second to the last item, one will observe that they are all geared towards the fulfillment of what is contained in the last item on the list. This is that National Security and National Security Strategy is about the American people. Thus, national security is of Americans by Americans and for Americans.

In Nigeria, national security, security or both is of the elite leadership of the military, intelligence and law enforcement by the elite leadership of the military, intelligence and law enforcement and for the elite leadership of the military, intelligence and law enforcement and their civil rule democracy collaborators. The elite leadership of the military, intelligence and law enforcement first invented and second reinvented national security, security or both as their post military rule strategy of remaining relevant and solvent in the absence of political power and thus access to power and resources. In planting into the socio-psychology of the civil rule democracy governing class that they are the only credible threat to their continuation in power, they enlisted the civil rule political class into their scheme of what I called the political economy of security where their shared interests, centered around getting and keeping power, ensured they continuously pursue what they called national security, security or both, in their collective interests.

Comb the administration of President Trump from 2017 to 2020 and from 2020 to date and tease out the implementation of *America First Strategy* on each of the issue contained in the lists. President Trump has been WALKING the TALK on each of the areas he set out to accomplish in order to attain national security for Americans.

Come back to Nigeria and use the two surviving National Security Strategy 2014/2019 and tease out – if there is – the relationship between national security, security or both within civil rule democracy and the programmes of the governments for the attainment of national security, security or both.

Or better still use the 1999 constitutional association/description of national security, security or both as the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement and tease out, bit by bit, the programmes of the governments (President Jonathan, Buhari and Tinubu) on the areas in the schedules of the military, intelligence and law enforcement – insurgencies, terrorisms, banditries, herder onslaughts and kidnappings – in the last sixteen years and tell Nigerians where they are. After this, juxtapose the attainment of national security, security or both with the Christmas gift the United States of America delivered to these elements amidst the narratives of Nigeria collaborated with the United States and the United States infringed on Nigeria's sovereignty.

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