

The Military, Intelligence and Law Enforcement (MILE) as Nigeria's Unseen and Unspoken Half of the Political Classes in the Fourth Republic

It is about time that we admit that the Nigeria's military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) is part of the political establishment. To this end, they – the leadership elite of the MILE – are members of the political class. This is the case in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Not to admit this and treat them in this light is to continue to gaslight most Nigerians in relation to their deepening and expanding roles in the affairs of Nigeria.

The MILE, as part of the political establishment, is not new. In the defunct communist system, the MILE were members of the political bureaus. This was because political education was not only important. Political education was a patriotic task. In what is left of the Peoples Republic of China's one party two systems, the MILE is part of the political bureau. This is also the case with the regime in North Korea. Political education is mandatory for members of the MILE in these ideologically governed countries. What differs is how they put their political education to use in the service of their countries.

Outside the socialist worldview, there are countries where the MILE is involved in politics. The Pakistani armed forces are embedded in the politics of Pakistan. They are part of the political establishment. For Pakistan, its geopolitics could not have dictated otherwise. This is understandable. The Myanmar military is part of the political establishment. In the Myanmar case, there are seats reserved for members of the military in the parliament.

Unlike the Pakistani example, what is not so understandable, in the Myanmar and Nigerian cases, are the rationale for their presence. One explanation – and the most plausible – is their long involvement in political governance of their countries. Consequently, the virus of power, fame and fortune has infected the Nigerian variety enough for them to want to remain permanently in politics in whatever capacity.

In the case of Nigeria, it is time they quit pretending and own up to what may have been their unspoken and unwritten motivation for joining the MILE particularly the military wing. These unspoken and unwritten motivation are the quest for power, fortune and fame or whatever is left of the three particularly fortune, under civil rule system, following the end of military rule.

It is almost axiomatic to say that the leadership class of the military, intelligence and law enforcement that constitute elite are members of Nigeria's political class. The circumstances of their making and remaking did not condition thinking otherwise. They are only professionals and technocratic in name as their choice by the different civil political class, beginning from the heads of military, intelligence and law enforcement, are informed by political and not professional considerations.

Within the ranks of the MILE and in their membership of the political class are the military made up of the army, navy and airforce; the intelligence made up of the domestic, external and defence and; the law enforcement beginning with the police. Both the civil political class and Nigeria's MILE are still playing the ostrich in wanting the rest of Nigerians to believe that each side is sticking to its schedule as provided in the enabling laws and mandates.

As a corporate body, the military, intelligence and law enforcement are not unaware of what they are, whose they are and what are the issues that drives them in Nigerian project. Consequently, they have their ways and means of accomplishing this. They not only have the strategies. They have a lot in place for them to achieving their objectives. In the first place, they know what they want i.e., they have the policy to which they apply their strategies. They made the 1999 Constitution and they strategically place national security and security as items that preceded all other items in governance. In this, they put themselves first before others. Security/National Security, for most Nigerians, is the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement. So, when most Nigerians including the civil political class echo and re-echoed the preeminence of this security/national security and thus these provisions of the Constitution, they are putting the MILE first before others.

In the second place, the MILE manufactured the civil political class as most of them cut their political teeth under military rules. To this extent, they have them in their pockets. Both parties are all interested in power and all it has to offer and thus they have common ground on which to operate. In the third place, the MILE'S long hold on political power ensured that in terms of socialisation of most Nigerian using ideas, their ideas predominate in the society. The education of most Nigerians on the issue called security/national security derived from the MILE ideas. Most Nigerians cannot think of security and national security outside the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement.

In the fourth place and arising from the third point, the booming industry called security consequent on the permanent condition of insecurity is anchored on their ideas. There are myriads of specialists, experts and authorities on security, national security, conflict, defence etc. whose knowledge is limited to the security defined within the MILE worldview including the defence, intelligence and law enforcement mandates of the MILE. Outside the MILE worldview, these specialists, experts and authorities know nothing else on security and national security. There are myriads of programmes in the universities offering degrees whose curriculum on security is all things the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement. These experts, specialists and authorities have become potent advocates perpetuating the vision of the MILE under civil rule system.

Most Nigerians and Nigeria have been so infected by the MILE worldview that certain words do not have meaning for them outside this worldview. Take intelligence as an example. We know intelligence is important in shaping ideas, persons and institutions and in the every

human endeavour. Intelligence is important for the making of policies at all levels particularly the legislature and executive and for the execution of operations of all kinds. In the climate described in the preceding, intelligence cannot be gathered outside the purview of the MILE. Indeed, for the civil political class and most Nigerians, the mention of intelligence conjures up the images of the military, intelligence and law enforcement. With this hold on their mindset, the MILE generates and manipulate the intelligence it produces to drive policies and operations. This support the vision of Nigeria post-military rule where national security and security (the military, intelligence and law enforcement) is the preeminent item of governance. What we have is the overmilitarisation of intelligence and to this extent, the over-prioritisation of the MILE'S national security and security in policies. This ensures that the MILE'S preferences take precedence over other issues of governance.

Arising from the shared interests of the political class now comprising the civil and the MILE in national security and security, there is a quiet partnership between the civil political class and the MILE political class. The partnership is centred on security. I described this partnership as the Political Economy of Security. This is Nigeria's version of the American Deep State. The political class identified security as their mutual quest in life. This security is also the quest of most Nigerians. However, there are two sides to this security. For the members of the Political Economy of Security, their security lives up to security's founding etymologies, history and philosophy of *freeing persons from care, providing something which secure persons, creating condition of being secure for persons and reducing or eliminating feeling no apprehension for persons in all spheres.*

The security, for most Nigerians, is the reverse of the type for the political class. It is the type defined by the constitutional mandates of the members of the political class i.e., the civil political class and the military political class. Their mandate is governance. The civil political class is task with governing all aspect of Nigeria and the MILE political class is task with governing the fallouts or consequences of the failure of governance by their civil political counterparts. Thus, the civil political elite govern in a manner that ineffectively and inefficiently utilise the human and material resources which did not benefit most Nigerians in all spheres. The consequences are endlessly endless crisis generating conflicts.

The MILE political class govern the fallouts and consequences of the former's deliberate bungling of the effective and efficient utilisation of human and material resources for the benefit of most Nigerians. Both parties, in the interest of their side of the security coin which delivers wellbeing in all of its forms, complement one another. They create the enabling environment that facilitate the Political Economy of Security. The Political Economy of Security is a partnership for and about the political classes' interests and no other. For this reason, they constitute the political class in Nigeria.

The effective commencement date for the Political Economy of Security and thus Nigeria's all-encompassing political class is 2009. This is because beginning from 2009 in Nigeria, what is called SECURITY does not frame the story. SECURITY is the story. To this extent, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo opined, during the launching of General Irabor's *Scars: Nigeria's Journey and Boko Haram Conundrum*, "after 15 years, Boko Haram has virtually become part of life in Nigeria". This translates to crisis generating conflicts is now the permanent face of most Nigerians' lives and living. The political class's project security began with Boko Haram before it included high selling brands such as terrorisms, banditries, insurgencies and kidnappings.

So, how did Nigeria get to this point? The last time quasi professionally minded members of the military, intelligence and law enforcement were appointed into vacant positions in the services under the presidential system of government began and ended with the Second Republic. From the Chief of Defence Staff to the chief of the airforce, navy and army down to the Inspector General of Police and the Head of intelligence agencies, the choices were driven by all else except politics, ethnicity, regions and loyalty to persons.

The rot within the military ranks and the infighting that occasioned the annulment of the elections of 1993 ended whatever claim to professionalism that informed the choice of the service chiefs. While General Babangida maintained some modicum of following the rules, this was undermined by the appointees' sworn loyalty to the appointer. The ranks of the military had been completely polarised between General Babangida's boys and General Abacha who was the secretary of defence and thus commander-in-chief since Chief Ernest Shonekan-led Interim National Government stewardship was denied the commander-in-chief tag.

The post-annulment conditions of the country and the rift between these two personalities further reduced whatever semblance of the pretense of professionalism in appointments. The crop of officers that were appointed as chiefs of the services, corps commanders, general officers/air officers/flag officers and in the intelligence and law enforcement owed their positions to politics and loyalty.

Politics was written into the Nigeria military's deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA six years after independence. From the early 1980s, following the toppling of the Second Republic government, military rule became the new normal. Young men and women that joined the military from the mid-1980s onward were influenced by the military political class of the period. They were their role models. They were motivated by the desire to feather their political and pecuniary nests as they looked forward to serving in different capacities in the government and in the MILE. They were not motivated to joining the MILE because they wanted to defend the father land.

It is worth reinstating that then and now Nigeria has never ever been under any threat – real or imagined – to warrant the motivation of enlisting into the military to defend the fatherland.

This was the condition that prompted Mr. Alozie Ogbubguaja, the former police spokesperson, to argue that the military's lack of productivity left them with too much time on their hands to indulged in pepper soup consumption and coup making. They consumed plenty pepper soups and made many coups. This apt characterisation not only fetched Mr. Ogbubguaja early exit from the police. It perhaps caused the military to reinvent itself by taking over police duties not only in the name of security/national security but also via Section 217 subsection 2c. of the MILE, the military in particular self-invited itself into aiding civil authorities on a permanent basis. The Nigerians treasuries have not stopped bleeding daily in this respect.

In spite of the gale of retirements and purges embarked on first under General Abacha and later under Chief Obasanjo in the Fourth Republic – retirements and purges informed by their exposure of members of the military in particular to politics and their suspect loyalties – and their repeated assurance that they remain professional and subservient to civil authorities, their interests in politics remained concealed. It would take the rearrangement of their DNA – and this will include that of most Nigerians – to remove politics from their makeups.

In the course of the Fourth Republic, Chief Obasanjo was alone amongst the presidents produced by the Peoples' Democratic Party that pretended to adhere to merit, competence and professionalism in the appointment of service chiefs. Under Presidents Yar'Adua and Jonathan, it was a mixture of these and other political consideration. This was owing to what I called the transition inside transition and because they were clones of the military regimes-era political breeds. Their administration was the first time Nigeria transitioned from one civil rule regime to another. For the military elites, the Obasanjo presidency clipped their wings, in pursuit of fortune and thus, served as the preparatory ground for their reinvention in the new transition.

As an elite, they waited for the strategic moment to reinvent themselves. The Yar'Adua and Jonathan presidencies provided them with the chance to demonstrate their adeptness to doing this in the unfolding Fourth Republic. The Boko Haram problem had just commenced and President Yar'Adua had ordered their destruction prior to embarking on the trip that would change the trajectories of numerous issues and birth new ones including security. The birth of security would replace defence in conversation amongst Nigerians.

The Jonathan presidency horned the military's skill in managing the emerging "security" problematique. Both Yar'Adua and Jonathan were products of the military's political schools and knew next to nothing of the military's machinations as they proceeded to reinvent themselves as a class with keenly disguise interest in the management of resources devoted to this security. Of the segments of Nigeria's so-called elites, the leadership class of military and to some extent the intelligence have always been an elite to the extent of their conducts particularly their ability and willingness to use their position to shape the society for their own benefit.

Of the MILE, the military part comprising the airforce, navy and army, has distinct elite sense. They have defined what the military is, whose is the military and what are their issues and they know how to achieve this. The military is followed by the intelligence. The comprised the internal, external and the military type. Of these, the first two – internal and external – have distinct elite sense. Like the military, they have asked and are answering their questions of policies – what they are, whose are they and what are their issues and they know the how to achieving these.

However, this is not the case with their counterpart responsible for the military variety of intelligence. Prior to the Defence Intelligence Agency's emasculation by the military (airforce, navy and army), it was on the verge of accomplishing its elite personality as testified by its foundation members following the 1986 reorganisation. The Defence Intelligence Agency is now completely at the mercy of the combined assaults of the army, navy and airforce with its identity finally subsumed. It has lost out in the elite project.

For the law enforcement side of the MILE, the police, as the lead agency is mired in a quagmire of identity crisis much like the rest of Nigeria. The police have no sense of what they are, whose they are and what are their issues let alone the how to achieving this. The police are the whipping child of the political class comprising the civil and military wings. The police are distrusted by most and trusted by few. The police have had its gargantuan powers whittled away in the power chessboard presided over by civil political class and the military political class. This is in spite of the equally gargantuan powers left in the kitty of the police to which it has been unable to utilise in order to reassert and assert itself under civil rule. The police are victims of timing, politics and circumstance.

The military was prepared for second phase of the Fourth Republic. The legal, intellectual and societal support base had been put in place. They included the 1999 Constitution which designated security and national security as the primary purpose of government; this security construct is in the image of the military's defence mandate; with most Nigerians socialised into knowing no other conception of security other than the military's and; a civil political class, in pursuit of their own interest and aware of the destabilising potentials of the military, joined forces with the military in order for each to be his brother/sister's keeper. Thus, years of socialisation under the military's governance type created an enduring socio-cultural environment moulded off their ideas and ideals. This is one fit the civil rule type has so far been unable to match after 25 years in power

However, the only consensus between the MILE, political class and most Nigerians is that this security must be tackled at all cost. The trio's conception of security differed. While they all agreed on the civic type security akin to the work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement, there is the primordial type that they – MILE and political class – shielded from and excluded most Nigerians. This is the primordial security or the type that conferred

wellbeing in all of its forms. This primordial type belonged to the MILE and civil political class and is the basis of the Political Economy of Security. On the strength of this consensus, the governing political class permanently kept the treasuries open in order to address this security problematique. The source and basis for the assault on the treasuries by the political class is insecurity which according to Chief Obasanjo has become the staple of daily life for the last fifteen years.

The military, intelligence and law enforcement leadership have the ears and attention of the governing political class on the issue of security. What followed was the provisions of documents to support this security beginning with the hurried and non-creative compilation of the first *National Security Strategy* by the Office of the National Security Adviser in 2014. This Office, staffed by its members in retirement, is the secretariat that manages this security on behalf of the members of the political class with no questions ever asked.

Ironically, it was during the presidency of Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, a retired major general that the enabling environment for the military's strategic reinvention was sealed. The role of the military in security became existential. While Boko Haram did launch the process during the Yar'adua-Jonathan presidencies, it was under the watch of Buhari that terrorisms, banditries, insurgencies and kidnappings skyrocketed. Buhari and his Party made this possible with the importation of Fulani from all over the subregion and beyond in their quest for regime change. If hitherto there was not enough justification for the military's role in law enforcement, this changed under this administration.

The military may have been forced to cede political power and in the process lost power, fame and fortune, in the name of their carefully crafted constitution that amongst others positioned security first before all other issues in governance, initial investment in moulding crops of non-military persons and communities with military ideas and socio-psychology in their DNA and playing out its mastery of strategy, the military has succeeded in gaining all it lost except actual political power. Even in this, they exercise veto in their chokehold on the psychology of the civil political class and most Nigerians.

The civilian political class and their military, intelligence and law enforcement counterparts have found accommodation in the Political Economy of Security. Their resolute missionary pursuit of security for most Nigerians ensured they cater for their specific and collective needs with no questions asked. The military has come to the realisation that they could exercise power unseen while their partners in the business take the heats.

Thus, and in the Fourth Republic, the tradition of jettisoning professionalism for politics in the appointment of service chiefs has come to stay. Since the military cannot be trusted to remain loyal and to stay away from politics whatever and no matter the provocation even with the unspoken and unwritten pact in the Political Economy of Security, it is best the civil political

class enlist persons sharing the same religion, language, region and politics into what is left of the so-called professional positions in the military, intelligence and law enforcement. Their loyalty cannot and will not be questioned as they are members of the political class.

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