

## The Untravelled Road of Nigeria's Security Problematique

Whereas the United States of America settled the first three policy questions of its national security – what is national security, whose national security and what is a national security issue – in 1947 and since then individual administrations beginning with Eisenhower have concerned themselves with improvising strategies for accomplishing national security for Americans, Nigeria is yet to first choose from national security, security or both as its framework and second, answer the questions of policy for national security, security or both and has proceeded to rolling out strategies with five years lifespan beginning in 2014.

President Donald Trump released his National Security Strategy less than one year into his second term while Nigeria under the aegis of the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) is still at a loss what to include in its Strategy over one year after the expiration of the 2019 edition. The prevarication dogging the release of the Strategy has everything to do with the lack of policy framework on national security, security or both and the confusion in the house of the ONSA.

Should the ONSA eventually find what to include and decide to bring the Strategy out, it is certain that there would be no relationship between its content and the extant programmes of the administration in power since May 2023. This has been the norm of all the Strategies since the debut of the first National Security Strategy in 2014. This is unlike the Trump America First National Security Strategy which not only reflected the programmes of his less than one year in office but also reconnected with his efforts during his first outing as president from 2017 to 2020.

Until and unless Nigeria settled the policy questions on national security, security or both, the strategy to fulfilling this national security, security or both will continue to be a stand-alone and archive-bound instrument that will continue in the tradition of been shunned by the ONSA itself let alone ministries, departments and agencies in Nigeria.

What should security be under civil rule democracy and governance is the untravelled road of Nigeria's security problematique. This is the unasked and unanswered question in Nigeria's fruitless conversations on security in the Fourth Republic. What should security be under civil rule democracy and governance? Whose should security be under civil rule democracy and governance? What should the issues of security be under civil rule democracy and governance? How should security be achieved under civil rule democracy and governance?

In all the attempts made to tackle Nigeria's self-inflicted emergency of "security" crisis including the current exercises, no attempt has ever been made to ask and answer the question what should security be under civil rule democracy and governance frameworks. Neither the governments, the non-state actors and other Nigerians particularly the elites have bothered to

tackle the genesis of the idea of security, national security or both and the frameworks under which the ideas operate around which the search for solutions have been anchored.

In all of these attempts to solutionise the crisis, the governments, non-state actors and Nigeria's elites assumed they knew this "national security", "security" and/or both. To some extent, their assumption may be correct. This is partly explained, on the one hand, by the decades long associational and descriptive connotations of "national security", "security" or both with the work of the executive agencies of the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution. The long-term socialisation of most Nigerians i.e., those currently in leadership positions and those old enough to have experienced military rules, on the other hand, to the "national security", "security" or both traditions hued from the mandates of the MILE under military rule.

This has been the basis of the knowledge and grounding on "security" to which most efforts at tackling "insecurity" have been devoted to solutionisation only. These solutions failed, are failing and shall continue to fail every time they are invoked whether by the governments, non-state actors and/or eliciting the interventions of Nigerians as the Senate is currently doing all over the geopolitical zones. This failure owed to the proverbial voice of Jacob and the hand of Esau. In other words, this "national security", "security" or both and the failing solutions were made in the image of the military and unleashed in a civil rule democracy enabling environment.

This leaves the unasked and unanswered question that should guide the search for solutions. What should national security, security or both be under civil rule democracy and governance frameworks? Every material reality begins as an idea and the idea is conceived within a particular environment and/or moulded to fit into this environment in order to serve it. The reason the seemingly dogged and determined search for solutions to "national security", "security" or both crises failed and will continue to fail is because the conceptions, if any, of "national security", "security" or both as ideas did not fit into the prevailing governance framework.

The resignation of the minister of defence, Mohammed Abubakar Badaru, capped weeks of the intensive scrutiny from outside and inside Nigeria over the governments' handling of the persistent killing, maiming and kidnapping/abductions of Nigerians. The killings, kidnappings and abductions were orchestrated by the elements the governments described as insurgents, terrorists, bandits and herders all over Nigeria. The scrutiny is in respect of the present administration's handling of the crisis.

Prior to this resignation and the nomination and confirmation of retired General Christopher Gwabin Musa as the new minister for defense, Nigeria was assailed by three interrelated developments. They were the rumoured coup attempt, the sacking of some service chiefs and

the threat by President Trump to launch military strike against Nigeria. The nexus of these developments is the vexed and vexing question of the enveloping "insecurity" in Nigeria.

The Trump threat seemed to have enraged the insurgents, terrorists and bandits. Consequently, there was reinvigoration akin to surges of kidnapping, abductions and the rumoured movements of these elements all over the country. In what is arguably an attempt to be seen to be doing something to addressing the conditions, the government held rounds of consultations with the service chiefs and came out with numerous pronouncements. They included increasing the strength of the police and army, withdrawing police details from politically exposed persons/very important persons, declaring emergency on security and the resignation of the defense minister and the nomination of new defense minister.

Of the government's actions, the president's pronouncement of emergency on security seemed hollow to the extent that the development may have leverage on the word emergency only. The declaration of emergency on security should have included revisiting previous efforts and above all else putting security under scrutiny in its etymological, historical and philosophical foundations within the context of the Fourth Republic framework. Alas this is not the intension of the pronouncement of emergency on security. The pronouncement is a *de ja vu* and anchored on the failed and failing solutions of old.

The Senate convened a security summit across the geopolitical regions. The purpose was to find solutions to "insecurity". The Senate did not bother to look into the previous exercise carried out by the House of Representative in 2021 which not only limited the contribution of Nigerians to solutions only. The exercise produced the document called the National Security Summit Report. What happened to the Report? What will be different in the Senate's exercise from the one the House did in 2021? Would the exercise include taking on the question of what should national security, security or both be under civil rule framework?

Nigeria's regional blocs were not left out in traversing the familiar road in search of solutions to "security" crises. The southwest governors convened their own security summit. The summit was arguably to come up with solutions on the spiralling insecurity. The northern governors and traditional rulers also met to deliberate and come up with solutions on insecurity. While there has not been any security summit from the southeast governors, individual governors worked to bring forth solutions for their states. The Enugu State government showcased the purchase of surveillance drones for the purpose of covering the State.

All of these conversations are within the framework of a conception of security anchored on two sections of the 1999 Constitution. They are section 5 subsection 5 and section 14 subsection 2B. Of these two sections, section 14 subsection 2b is the most ubiquitous for the subnational governments. These are ideas constructed within the framework of military, intelligence, and law enforcement and military rule. In other words, the conversations excluded the framework of civil rule democracy and governance in the conceptualisation of what is

security, whose security, what is a security issue and how can security be achieved. Nigeria's civil rule system has been driving a process that completely excluded them from conceptualisation to execution. This is the genesis of the failure of the exercise.

I joined issues in calling attention to the failed and failing search for solutions to "insecurity" in Nigeria inside the safe box that has taken the country nowhere. I argued for tackling the phenomenon of "insecurity" outside the unsafe box that has never been attempted before. This will begin with combing outside inside and inside outside of the ideas called national security, security or both. I wrote articles which can be found in <http://www.adoyionoja.org.ng> drawing attention to the fundamental issue of ignoring the foundational concept that birthed other concepts associated with security. This concept is security. This security is within the civil rule framework.

Some of the articles are "making security the centre of governance and rationalising strategic think tanks", "over-militarisation and privileging the military, intelligence and law enforcement in the governance of ideas, institutions and persons in Nigeria's civil rule/democracy", "the CURSED security in section 14 subsection 2b of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria", "security's losing run is the 1999 Constitution" and "the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) as Nigeria's unseen and unspoken half of the political classes in the Fourth Republic" and "Governor Abdullahi Sule and the consolidation of the philosophy of strategic insecurity in security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic".

The central thesis of the articles is the subject of this article – what should security be under civil rule democracy and governance frameworks. This question encapsulates the road that has never been patronise in the governments, non-state actors and elite Nigerians search for solution to "insecurity" in the Fourth Republic.

The article "making security the centre of governance and rationalising strategic think tanks" questioned the concept of "strategic" in the schedule of the think tanks prevalent in the country. This is particularly under civil rule democracy. These think tanks' major objective is the national security and security defined in the context of the vague constitutional provisions of section 5 subsection 5 and section 14 subsection 2b. The article argued that this national security and security were no longer strategic to the civil rule and governance frameworks in place since 1999. Since Nigeria was no longer under military rule whose framework this national security, security and constitution was built and to which these strategic think tanks honed and pursued their strategies, there was need to construct and pursue national security, security and its infrastructures including strategies in tandem the civil rule framework.

The article "overmilitarisation and privileging the military, intelligence and law enforcement in the governance of ideas, institutions and persons in Nigeria's civil rule/democracy" drew attention to the eternal failings of the civil rule system in their unwillingness to grow and

nurture civil rule ideas, institutions and persons over a quarter century down the road of democracy. In their persistent subtle appeasement of the military, civil rule operators manifest their inferiority complex by continually allowing military rule era ideas to dominate and govern the thoughts and conducts of most Nigerians. One such all-encompassing idea is national security and security. To overcome this negative condition, civil rule operators must be deliberate in the need to begin to lay the foundation of democracy's infrastructures. This should be the concerns of the legislatures particularly the senate intervention in the current round.

In "the CURSED security in section 14 subsection 2b of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria", the article perceived this section as a cursed place on Nigeria's civil rule by the departing military. The military did not wish the incoming civil rule system well. To this extent, they had envisioned a system that would be riddled with crises generating conflicts. They strategically build the basis of the crisis in the structures they put in place by factoring Nigeria's complex conditions and fault lines. Of the structures, the constitution stood out. In the constitution, they carved out a pivotal section for themselves by inserting security - their type of security - as "the primary purpose of government". Nigeria's civil rule operators have focused on the attainment of this "security" first before any other matter and to this extent called and devoted resources to the MILE for this accomplishment.

In "security's losing run is the 1999 Constitution", I drew attention to the contradictions of the constitution's position on security and the governance that generated the security problems. If security, as implied in the constitution, is the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement and in its founding etymologies and philosophies, security is the feeling of being secure for people, something which secure people, conditions of being secure for people and/or reducing or eliminating feeling of apprehension of people, civil rule's distinction was not to follow the dictate of the constitution written in the image of the military and military rule. Civil rule should have created its construct of security from its mandate much as the military did after it usurped political power. Unless security, in its etymologies and philosophies, takes on the image of civil rule democracy through the wholesale discarding of the 1999 Constitution, there would be reprieve for most Nigerians from "security" problems.

Nigeria's civil rule operators are not willing to follow the route of discarding this security and by extension the constitution that support this because as Falana noted their interests have been accommodated in this security. This accommodation was the handiwork of the elite leadership of military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) who are Nigeria's unseen and unspoken half of the political class in the Fourth Republic. This is to the extent that they are handpicked not because they are the best but because they are the safest hand in which to insulate the ruling civil political class at every time from power's shifting vagaries often orchestrated by the military through coups.

The article "Governor Abdullahi Sule and the consolidation of the philosophy of strategic insecurity in security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic" was occasioned by the comment credited to the Governor that Governors in Nigeria had no excuse not to fight insecurity since they now had enough money. The Governor's comment demonstrated the lacuna in the governance of security under civil rule democracy.

In the article, I questioned Nigeria's governors understanding of insecurity and whether they had collective perspective on insecurity and thus unified perspective of solutions to insecurity. This insecurity was from the point of view of their mandates and tasks of governing their states. I was of the view that this was not the case as they, in their individual and collective enlightened selfish interests, chose an understanding of insecurity derived from their socialised understanding of security and their constitutional mandate as provided in section 14 subsection 2b. This section associate/describe security in relations to the name and work of the MILE and their honorific designation as chief security officers. Since their schedules, in their socialised and constitutional understanding of security, were not described as security, they did not take them as security. In other words, they did not align with the view that it is prosperity, attained through their mandate of governance that confers security, if this security is of the name and work of the MILE. Instead, they aligned with the view that it is security of the name and work of the MILE that create the ground that enable their governance mandate to confer prosperity.

As elected governors, under civil rule democracy and governance frameworks, their perspective of security and insecurity should be anchored on their constitutional mandate. Their constitutional mandate empowered them to govern the entire space of their States. The perspective of security for the MILE derived and is driven by their enabling laws mandates. Their enabling laws mandates are defence, intelligence and law enforcement. In order to drive home this point, I resorted to using the metaphor of forest for security under civil rule democracy and governance. The forest contains trees – different types of trees. The health of the forest is determined by the health of most if not all the trees. The health of the forest is not determined by one or few trees.

When situated in the context of the difference between civil rule and military rule perspective of security, civil rule perspective of security represents the forest. Military rule perspective of security represents few trees comprising defence, intelligence and law enforcement. Under civil rule governance type, elected officials comprising the president, governors, local government chairpersons and legislatures preside over the forest-type security. Security is attained from the performance of most of the trees inside the forest.

Thus, security under civil rule democracy is not and should not be about the health of few trees least of all the trees associated with the work of the MILE as is the overwhelming preoccupation of elected officials today. They are inclined to this perspective because their interests as Falana

argued have been accommodated under the prevailing constitutional provision on security thus their holier than thou disposition to matters affecting the MILE. They have abandoned their own work that should reduce if not eliminate all the tendencies that create the conditions for the work of the MILE. This is because the manifestations of insurgencies, banditries, kidnappings and other crimes that is the MILE trees is the consequences of the condition of the health of the forest generally.

As I argued in the piece arising from Governor Sule's statement, the most important implication of Governor Sule's position is that it opened and deepened the ungoverned space (under civil rule system) and the governed ungoverned (operating military rule security-type under civil rule system) space called national security and 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 their self-serving 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.

It is futile to continue in the failed and failing path of seeking solution only to what the security problems in Nigeria. We have tried this path repeatedly without enduring and sustainable success. There is need to take on the combing outside inside and inside outside of the idea called SECURITY under civil rule democracy and governance frameworks. It is simply to ask and answer the questions that would constitute policy and strategy. What is security under civil rule democracy and governance? Whose security under civil rule democracy and governance? What are security issues under civil rule democracy and governance? How can security be achieved under civil rule democracy and governance?

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