

The Adams Oshiomole Prayer, the Rejected Senate Motion and the Validation of the Political Economy of "Security" in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

The need to revisit what is arguably the historic development that occurred on the floor of the Nigerian Senate came to me courtesy of the presentation made by Dr. Francesca Essien and the resulting questions and answers session that followed. It was at the instance of the contribution of Dr. Francis Okpo that Dr. Essien used the motion tabled on the floor of Nigeria's Senate by the Senate President to buttress her point. The motion in question sought members support to compel the military to be accountable in the use of appropriated funds.

Dr. Okpo's contribution to Dr. Essien's presentation leverage on the perennial refraining instrument of "national security" used to justify the refusal to divulge information. This was as it related to what he called "gate keepers" and thus the complex complexities of "security". Dr. Essien's reference to the motion compelled me to revisit the fundamental underpinnings of the events leading up to the motion. I had earlier referenced the incident, in the preface of my monograph 11 entitled "the making of a political economy of "security" in Nigeria's Fourth Republic" which is in the press, to draw attention to the unspoken and unwritten deal between the elites of politics and the military.

The incident in question began with Senator Ali Ndume's motion on the suicide attacks in Gworza and the urgency to stem the tide of the ugly menace and Senator Adams Oshiomole's concern and prayer. Senator Oshiomole moved for an additional prayer that while he was not contending with the call for more funding for the military, it was equally important for the Senate to be alive to its constitutional responsibility of oversight to investigate the judicious utilisation of previous funds appropriated for the Nigerian military on operational matters.

By the way, I have my doubts about the prevailing concept of "security" and "national security" in Nigeria. I have argued that what is security is undefined, uncharted and ungoverned not only under the military and thus military rule era but also and particularly so under civil rule and governance frameworks. Of the two frameworks, the civil rule framework should set the tone on what is security, whose security, what is a security issue and how can security be achieved for other governance framework to emulate should there be other governance framework at all. To this extent, national security which emanated from security fell within the category of the undefined, uncharted and ungoverned terrains. As a result, national security remains a target in constant motion that has not, cannot and will not be pinned down at any point.

It is my contention that "national security" is not only vague. This "national security" is a black hole and a blank cheque that engenders blank cover for nefarious malfeasances in

governance. This "national security" defer to hierarchy particularly hierarchy within the military, intelligence and law enforcement where this worldview was seeded, grew and developed under military rule type. This "national security" is yet take hold in the civil rule framework of the political world to which it is deployed and used in Nigeria.

The preeminent meaning of "security" and "national security" in Nigeria is that it is the name (noun) and work (verb) of the armed bearing agencies. Beyond this perspective, nothing else except the blank cover matters in the use and deployment of "security" and "national security". Not even the civil rule operators have any conception of their perspective of security and national security let alone grow, develop and deploy this in their affairs. Most Nigerians have no other knowledge and/or do they even think that it is possible to define security and national security beyond its association with the military, intelligence and law enforcement.

Most Nigerians including those in the so-called world of "security" and/or "national security" – military, intelligence and law enforcement – did not learn this "security" or "national security" in the four walls of any school beyond their forced immersion into these world against the extant mandates of their agencies in the course of their enlistment into the military, intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Yet and surprisingly too, so many Nigerians including those in the "security" and "national security" profession believed there is an entity called "security" and/ or "national security". For reasons of this so-called "security" and/or "national security", so many issues have been swept under the carpet and would never be known in what is arguably a scam that has enlisted most Nigerians into the core-periphery relationship with the core leading the esoteric world of "security" and "national security".

I have spoken and written about the existence of an unspoken and unwritten understanding between Nigeria's political classes particularly the genre beginning in 2007 and the leadership class of Nigeria's military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE) particularly the military comprising the army, navy and airforce. Of recent, I conceptualised this understanding into what I called a political economy of "security".

Senator Adams Oshiomole's additional prayers on the floor of the Nigerian Senate and the resulting motion that was turned down twice by the overwhelmingly majority of the members confirmed this unspoken and unwritten understanding delineating the terrains belonging to the civil and military sides of the aisle in Nigeria's power configuration since the return to civil rule in 1999.

Senator Adams Oshiomole's contribution on the floor of Senate was the genesis of the motion which the Senate President, Senator Godwill Akpabio, put before members of the senate. Senator Oshiomole had raised concerns on the lack of transparency and accountability in the use of funds appropriated for the military for operational effectiveness

and efficiency. Consequently, he called for the proper use of the funds for that which it was originally designated.

The concern and prayer which was seconded by another member and the motion touched deep into the insane lack of transparency and accountability of the military in its affairs. The military, comprising the army, airforce and the navy, had this legendary reputation of the lack of accountability. Their decision to hurriedly quit power following an unspoken and unwritten compromise with the political class only made their lack of transparency and accountability even worse under the civil rule dispensation underway since 1999 but beginning in 2007.

In the nearly quarter century of their absence following their relinquishing political power, they have deployed their strategic thinking into creating and expanding their sub-economy to enable their disproportionate representation in the annual budgets of the country. Within the defence sector is the army, navy, airforce and defence sub-sectors each with coterie of subsidiary businesses often overlapping into the core mandate of sister agencies and veering off their mandates completely in some cases.

It is important to make this statement in an unambiguous manner. The military comprising the army, navy and airforce's mandates as contained in the enabling laws is to defend Nigerians and Nigeria on land, sea and air against external attacks and to suppress insurrections in aid civil authorities in the maintenance of internal order when called upon to do so by the president. By my recollection, Nigerians and Nigeria, with the exception of minor border skirmishes with its neighbours and the once-upon-a-time threat from the defunct apartheid state during the anti-apartheid struggle, has never been attacked on land, sea and air, to warrant the deployment of the army, navy and airforce, in fulfillment of their traditional mandate. If there was and is any threat or threats against Nigeria's sovereignty from outside Nigeria, it was and is in the strategic imaginations and creations of the military. This has been the developments since the military became a permanent feature in Nigeria's politics.

In terms of its mandate to aid civil authorities, the military, by my recollection, was not invited by the traditional civil authorities, if by civil authorities one refers to first the elected administration of the First Republic under Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and secondly the Second Republic under Alhaji Shehu Shagari to stay permanently. Unlike in the First Republic and prior to the introduction of the Police Mobile Force in the 1960s, in the Second Republic, the Nigeria Police was formidably trained and resourced enough to manage whatever developments within its mandate as the first line of defence in internal law and order maintenance. The Police was so resourced and motivated by the civil authority of the period that even the military particularly the army felt threatened to amongst others warrant

the intervention in the coup that ended the Second Republic in 1983 and the subsequent degrading and asset stripping of the police.

The point should be noted very clearly that it was therefore the Nigerian military under military rule from the early 1980s and not civil elected rule that saw the need albeit the strategic need to invoke Section 217 subsection 2C of the Constitution. Using this section, the military government extended an invitation to itself to assume the role of the police. Consequently, the section gave the military the blanket invitation to aid the supposed civil authorities headed by the military. This laid the foundation for the rivaling and eclipsing of the police in its primary mandate as the first line of defence in internal law and order maintenance.

The military particularly the army, it should be noted, has since turned this temporary self-invitation into permanent residence in the internal affairs of the country and in the role of the police. With the advent of civil rule in 1999 and with the deliberately poor governance records of successive elected officials at all levels, resulting in unending crisis creating new and exacerbating old conflicts, what should have been an occasional invitation by civil authorities to the military became permanent. Under civil rule, the military has progressively, creatively and imaginatively combined this role by tweaking terrorism, insurgency and banditry to fit its primary mandate of defence against external adversaries in its overarching strategic ambitions in what I called the emerging political economy of "security" in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. In this all-encompassing development, they have the support of significant clan members of the political class. This underscores the unending production of the raw material fueling the political economy of "security" to the eternal benefits of the parties.

It is within this context that one would understand the growing expansion of their traditional portfolios and the creation of additional portfolios by the military. This is reminiscence of what is the vogue in the militaries of countries such as Egypt, Pakistan and Myanmar to mention a few. Nigeria's military crave the position of the military of Egypt and Pakistan and to a lesser extent Myanmar. The militaries in these countries have veto power in the politics and political directions of these countries. The lack of a geo-political and geo-strategic environment, of the types found in these countries, amongst other issues, is the limiting check on this ambition.

Since the commencement of the Fourth Republic particularly the transition within transition from 2007, Nigeria's military witnessed significant expansion creating the emerging military economy encompassing defence, army, navy and airforce sub-economies. Their heads are not only administering what should have been strictly professional agencies committed to their professional tasks had they stayed with their roles. They are now emerging as the chief executive officers/chief financial officers of the business wings of their agencies. Of this development, the army leads the way in this expansion in its traditional role on the one hand and on the other hand in its attempt to manage the type of economy it envisages for itself.

The army's expansions particularly in its traditional mandate and role fly against the much-talk about interagency synergy and cooperation, if the argument for interagency synergy and cooperation, matters at all to these organisations.

The development in the military did not go unnoticed as evidenced by the series of interventions in the National Assembly. One of the interventions culminated into the motion tabled by the Senate President on the floor of the Senate which sought to curtail the deviation of the military from its traditional role. Again and in the context of the emerging political economy of "security", the National Assembly roles in the affairs of the military were curtailed ab initio by its own ground rules.

The National Assembly did incapacitate itself, in the committees on the army, navy, airforce etc. using its rules which limited their interventions significantly in the affairs of these agencies. Their oversight functions, if they are conducted at all, is reduced to sight-seeing of military facilities, peripheral questions into their affairs and the corresponding insignificant answers often couched in classified and restricted languages and, to primarily soliciting and receiving favours and their shares of the "security" largesse, in the ever expanding budgetary allocation to what is arguably a first line governance charge called defence or in its civilianised preferred nomenclature, "security". The clause for this restriction is "national security" reasons – limiting access to the so-called sensitive and classified material in the "national security" assets.

In the emerging business portfolios of the military is the sector called defence and managed by the chief of defence staff who is also the chief executive officer/chief financial officer. Under defence are myriads of agencies managing affairs of the three arms of defence – army, navy and airforce. Of these, there are other agencies such as Defence Industry Corporation, Defence Space Agency etc.

There is the army sector comprising outfits like the resources centre, university, ranch, properties, automobile manufacturing, engineering and additional wings such as land war simulation centre, air wing, naval wing, war college, heritage and future centre, space command etc. to mention a few. The chief of army staff is chief executive officer/chief financial officer of the army and its investment portfolio. There are similar but less subsidiaries in the navy and airforce. The chiefs of navy and airforce are the chief executive officers/chief financial officers respectively. However, the army, amongst the three services, has the largest subsidiaries and arguably one of the biggest budget allocations of all the services.

It was therefore surprising when recently the chief of army staff and the chief executive officer/chief financial officer complained about poor funding in order for the army to be able to discharge its tasks of defending the country. For the army to be able to expand into different sectors, as it has over the last couple of years, was an indication of the availability of

funds and/or the misplacement of priority on the part of the army leaderships over the years in expanding into sector that has little to do with its primary mandate. I had wondered why the army should complained about lack of fund with all of the subsidiaries under its wings when it should plough back the profits from its commercial ventures into supporting its core mandate of defending the country against external attacks and/or supporting civil authorities in internal defence duties. Perhaps, Senator Oshiomole's prayer and the resulting motion were directed at the development that took these services outside their core mandates including aiding the civil authorities in internal defence.

The first of the history of the official and hegemonic narrative of "security" is the product of military rule and therefore the creation of military rule socialisation of most Nigerians. The second of the history of the official and hegemonic narrative of "security" is the joint making of the elite leaderships of politics and the MILE since the enthronement of civil rule in 1999 but particularly with the transition of 2007. This joint enterprise is what i described as a political economy of "security" which manages the competing interests, claims and understandings of the parties.

The Ndume matters of urgent concern, the Oshiomole additional prayer, the ensuing motion by Akpabio and the overwhelmingly rejection of the motion twice by senate members sealed the political economic relationship between the elite of politics and the military. Therein rest the gargantuan implications for governance moving forward and for the resolution of the intractable self-imposed and self-inflicted "security" challenges in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

- Dr. Adoyi ONOJA can be reached at onojaa@yahoo.com and read on <http://www.adoyionoja.org.ng>

This paper contributes to literatures by raising the issue of the lack of governance for security and particularly within the civil rule democracy and governance framework. The prevailing security derives from the worldview of the military under military rule. The continuation of this security under civil rule democracy seeks to accommodate the vast infrastructure of governance the military hurriedly left behind following the turnaround to democracy.