

Intelligence, National Security Management and National Development in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects¹

In Nigeria, intelligence and national security are domiciled in the executive arm of government even as they straddle all the three arms of government. They are part of the ideas and institutions of governance. In the context of the military and civil rule types prevalent in Nigeria since independence, intelligence and national security have grown and developed as ideas and institutions significantly under military rule.

Intelligence and National Security, under civil rule democracy governance framework, have yet to grow and develop. They are constrained by teething problems. Of these teething problems, the major one is the lack of civil rule democracy and governance ideas and institutions.

In the discourse of intelligence, national security management and national development, under civil rule governance, we would be borrowing a leaf from the military rule framework of intelligence and national security management in order to tease out national development and their challenges and prospects in governance.

Often when references are made to intelligence and national security, the image that comes to the minds of most Nigerians is the affairs of the military, intelligence and law enforcement (MILE).² The MILE is an acronym for the military comprising the navy, airforce and army, intelligence comprising domestic, external and defence and law enforcement comprising the police, civil defence, custom, drug enforcement etc. In other words and for most Nigerians, intelligence refers to the name (noun) and work (verb) associated with agencies of the MILE. This is evidently the consequences of military rule and military rule socialisation of most Nigerians.

As I noted, civil rule have yet to begin the process of demilitarising, civilianising and democratising ideas, institutions and persons in Nigeria. Beyond the focus on the affairs of the MILE, intelligence and national security transcend their affairs to embrace every facet of

¹ Dr. Adoyi ONOJA is a professor of African history in the Nasarawa State University, Keffi with interest and expertise in security, history of security and security studies, comparative security and security studies, governance, law enforcement, media and Middle Belt of Nigeria. He has published widely and edits a website <http://www.adoyionoja.org.ng> and can be reached on onojaa@yahoo.com. He is currently on sabbatical leave at the National Institute for Security Studies, Bwari, Nigeria.

² See Adoyi Onoja, *Methodological Issues in Security and Security Studies in Nigeria* (Monograph 4), Jos, 2020

human endeavours particularly in the context of providing alternative ideas of reality (AIR). What are intelligence, national security and development?

As a multifaceted concept applied in various fields of human endeavours, there are three perspectives of understanding intelligence. They include intelligence as cognitive ability which involves capacity for learning, reason, problem-solving and adapting; intelligence as information processing ability to acquire, analyse and apply knowledge and; intelligence as adaptive behaviour which includes ability to adjust to new situations and environments. Of the three perspectives, intelligence as information processing ability to acquire, analyse and apply knowledge, is the issue at stake in this paper.

As a verb or work, intelligence within the mandates of the agencies of intelligence involves the gathering, analysing and disseminating of information to support operations, strategic thinking/planning and decision making. Intelligence enables informed decision-making, effective operations and strategic planning in military, intelligence and law enforcement spheres. In the case of the three agencies of intelligence in Nigeria established by Decree Number 19 of 1986 which later metamorphosed into the National Security Agencies Act under civil rule - the State Security Services (SSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) - saddled with different spheres of intelligence operations, they not only use this intelligence for operations. Ideally, they (SSS, NIA and DIA) supply government, at all levels, intelligence that will aid strategic thinking/planning and decision-making, for governance. The SSS now self-styled as the Department of State Services in particular play this role significantly in driving governance which aid what they call national security management and thus national development in the country. What is national security prior to talking about the management aspect of national security in this paper?

National Security derives from two words. They are national and security. Of these two words and for Nigeria, security is first the independent variable and second national is the dependent variable. This is because until and unless we know security, we cannot and should not talk about national security.

In origin, philosophy, legislation and culture, National Security is American.³ Until 1947, there was no word called national security in the lexicon. Similarly in origin, philosophy and culture, security is European. Until the 15th century, there was no word in used called security anywhere in the world. Both security and national security are products of European and American history, experience and reality (HER)⁴. The rest of the world including Nigeria borrowed and used these terms as it fit their worldviews and particularly politics. Security and National Security's use in Nigeria fits this characterisation particularly the one that drew on their application to the affairs of Europe and the United States in the pursuit of their interest on the global space.

As I argued, the concept of security and national security have an almost exclusive association with the world of the military, intelligence and law enforcement for Nigeria. Nigeria's statutes⁵ did not define security or national security but rather describe and associate security and national security with name and work of the executive agencies of the MILE.⁶ In the world of Europeans and Americans, security and national security have deeper philosophical, ideological and cultural constructs and owe their beginning to histories, experiences and realities that is uniquely European and American.

On the whole and for these cultures, security and national security is *free from care, something which secure, conditions of being secure and feeling no apprehension* and applies to all spheres of their lives. European and American application of these ideas to their affairs on the international scene, as I noted above, in the pursuit of their national interests which occasioned the frequent and persistent use and visibility of the military, intelligence and law enforcement became the foundational cornerstone of what is security and national security, whose security and national security, what is a security and national issue and how can

³ For the histories of national security, read Douglas T. Stuart, *Creating the National Security State: A History of the Law that Transformed America*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2008 and Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State 1945-1954*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008

⁴ Originally developed and use to describe the Nigerian condition in the application and use of ideas including security and national security, the concept applies here to underscore the rationale behind the emergence of security in Europe and national security in America when they did. On the concept of history, experience and reality (HER), read Adoyi Onoja in *ibid.*

⁵ Comb the laws creating the military, intelligence and law enforcement and one would find scant mention of security or national security as their mandates. In the laws, what are evident are defence, intelligence gathering and law and order maintenance. For instance, in the 1999 Constitution, Nigeria's grundnorm, there are fifteen (15) mentions of security and/or national security. None of the mention defines security or national security and all the mention were descriptive and associational to the work of the executive agencies of the military, intelligence and law enforcement. Read Adoyi Onoja, *The 1999 Constitution and the Fifteen (15) References to "Security"* (Monograph 7), Jos, 2022

⁶ For perspectives on security and national security in Nigeria, read Adoyi Onoja, *What is Security? Perspectives of Nigerians* (Monograph 1), Jos, 2018 and Adoyi Onoja, *What is National Security in Nigeria* (Monograph 2), Jos, 2019

security and national security be achieved for Nigeria. Thus in Nigeria's borrowed tradition of security and national security and with the disproportionate intervention of the military in political governance thus shaping this view, security and national security is overwhelmingly the name and work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement.

The prevalence of the military regime type in governance determine which of the two – security and national security – becomes prevalent in its association with their mandates as enshrined in the enabling legislations creating the military, intelligence and law enforcement. Thus national security is preferred for the MILE particularly the military while security and to a lesser extent national security straddles the affairs of the intelligence and law enforcement. Section 5 subsection 5 of the 1999 Constitution provides an idea of national security and in relation to the work of the military. Section 14 subsection 2B references the intelligence, law enforcement and the civil political authorities particularly in its usage.

With the self-created and self-imposed emergencies described as security⁷ challenges that characterise governance and that began with military rule and exacerbated under civil rule of the last a quarter century, Section 217 subsection 2C equally privileged the military to intervene in the spheres thought to be the exclusive preserve of the law enforcement agencies beginning with the police. National Security is thus viewed firstly as the safety of the country from the point of view of the work of the military, intelligence and law enforcement and secondly in relation to other affairs of the state in this order with the government in power as the defacto state⁸ to be protected. Most Nigerians come last⁹ in the scheme of priority of security and national security.

⁷ In my latest monograph entitled *The Making of a Political Economy of Security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic*, I advanced the thesis of this self-created and self-imposed "security" challenges. The purpose is to advance the political economy supporting the relationship between the leadership elite of politics and the leadership elite of the military, intelligence and law enforcement in order to safeguard civil rule system. See Adoyi Onoja, *The Making of a Political Economy of "Security" in Nigeria's Fourth Republic* (Monograph 11), Jos, 2024

⁸ The state in Nigeria differ from the type that combine ideas to drive institutions and thus to govern physical base. The state in Nigeria comprised institutions and physical base only. This state is bereft of idea or ideas. This coheres with the argument that Nigeria lacks philosophy or nature, meaning and purpose which is the idea or ideas that should drive the state. For the concept of state as idea, institutions and physical base, read chapter 2 "national security and the nature of the state", Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-Cold War era*, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991

⁹ For now, security is MILE-centred/inclined and prioritises the state comprising the government in power and its associates. This security targets their wellbeing and needs in all spheres. Most Nigerians are at the bottom of the ladder of this security come last and are in fact canon fodders feeding the requirements of what I called the political economy of "security". In my model of security construct for most Nigerians and Nigeria, I drew up what I called hierarchy of security needs based on civil rule democracy and governance frameworks and Nigeria's history, experience and reality (HER). Read Adoyi Onoja, *Hierarchy of SECURITY Needs (hSn)*, (Monograph 9), Jos, 2023

In terms of intelligence as name and work of the three agencies representing the three wings of intelligence, national security is the safety of state in the specific jurisdictions of these agencies. For the Department of State Services, saddled with counterintelligence and aspects of law enforcement inside Nigeria, national security is gathering information in all facets and processing and analysing the information into intelligence for its operations in the areas of countering intelligence and law enforcement and making the intelligence available to governments for strategic thinking/planning and policy decision-making. This is to facilitate governance or the effective and efficient utilisation of human and material resources for the benefit¹⁰ of most Nigerians.

In effectively and efficiently accomplishing the task of intelligence governance for operations and for policies and thus facilitating national security, the agencies particularly the DSS enable development to take place. This is where the aspect of management of national security comes into play. To this extent, management begins at the level of gathering information and processing information into intelligence and its application to operations and policies. The proper management of intelligence is what engenders national security.

What is development? In this context, development could only mean the effective and efficient functioning of persons and institutions for qualitative and quantitative progress of the country. In government and governance perspectives, development would be as Dudley Seers' defined it. Development, Seers argued, is the reduction and/or elimination of poverty, unemployment and inequality. When the trios of intelligence, national security management and national development synchronises and work effectively and efficiently, the net gain would be the progressive reduction and/elimination of the ailments of poverty, unemployment and inequality. This would mean the significant functioning of most sectors of the economy and society.

As a name and work of the executive agencies of the military, intelligence and law enforcement, each service has its perspective of intelligence. In the case of the Department of State Services (DSS), their primary role is gathering information and processing them into intelligence for operations and for policies. The DSS has the premier task of generating intelligence in all spheres of Nigeria's public life to facilitate the work of governance which entails making policies. Policies are the live wire of programmes and to make good policies, it is important to access and have intelligence.

¹⁰ Read World Bank, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, Washington DC: The World Bank, 1989

Across all the tiers of government and governance, the Department of State Services' role is to feed policy makers in the legislatures and executives with intelligence to enable their works. Ideally, they should solicit for intelligence as it affects their work and the Department has the responsibility to provide intelligence to these institutions whether they solicited for this or not.

The DSS perspective of national security arose from its statutory role within the executive arm of government. The role of the DSS is generating intelligence through the collation and analysis of information in different areas. The Department enhances national security through its background work in all spheres of Nigeria, its operations in the areas of counter intelligence and law enforcement and, in the insight and advice it provides the executive and legislature on myriads of issues that affect public governance.

Arguably and in a clime where there is a security and national security philosophies and where governance reflect the yearning of majority of the people, intelligence should be in the driving seat of policies in every spheres. However, with Nigeria's MILE-ensconced, vague and transient conception of national security and security, with the absence of civil rule democracy and governance perspective of national security and security, and with the myriads of development challenges confronting the country, it is debatable the contribution of intelligence in growing national security and engendering national development.

Nigeria became a civil rule democracy in 1999. The question to ask is to what extent has intelligence, in their interventions in strategic thinking/planning and policies, driven the prevailing thinking on national security and the yet-to-be conceived civil rule democracy conception of national security and thus unleashed development, in all spheres of the lives of Nigerians, under civil rule?

I talked about the prevailing thinking of national security and this also includes the prevailing thinking on intelligence. The prevailing thinking on intelligence is as an agency responsible for countering all types of threats against the state and government. The state is represented by the government in power and thus it is regime survival centric first and most Nigerians second. In this instance, the agency supply the government the type of intelligence it needs for the kind of policies that would promote its agenda as oppose to the agenda it has for the people.

The prevailing thinking on national security is hierarchically centred on the state and represented by the government in power. National Security not only defers to hierarchy, power and authority. National Security, as a consequence of this, is transient and fluid. National Security is thus safety of the state personified by the government in power first and continues in this descending order to prioritising anyone and everyone associated with the regime in this order. This is derivative of the tradition of the military, intelligence and law enforcement where wisdom and knowledge is based on rank, office and authority.

Since civil rule democracy is yet to add its footprints to the security and national security narrative in terms of philosophy, legislation and policy and derive from civil rule and governance ideas anchored on Nigeria's history, experience and reality (HER), the conditions of governance, in most if not all spheres, is reflective of the absence of civil rule and governance type intelligence in mediating national security management and engendering development. Indeed a civil rule democracy and governance security and national security framework should be the driving ideas behind intelligence in all spheres. Since this is lacking, the conditions of governance or the effective and efficient utilisation of human and material resources for the benefit of most Nigerians has worsened in the last fifteen years and in particular the last nine years of civil rule democracy. It has equally worsened the crisis of governance which the World Bank declared as the number one problem bedeviling sub-Saharan Africa.

This development has all the hallmark of the absence of intelligence in driving strategic thinking, planning and decision making in Nigeria. Or how else would one explain the fact that Nigeria made the most money in the last a quarter century of the whole of its 64 years existence as a state and yet made and is making headlines occupying the worst governance indexes locally and internationally?

The extent to which intelligence drives policies and operations are reflected in the challenges confronting government interventions on the one hand and on the other hand the counter intelligence and law enforcement work of agencies saddled with this task. Of the myriads of challenges in the way of intelligence one of which the agencies will argue is finance is the place of politics and interests in the use and/or misuse of intelligence in policies and operations.

In the first place, it is difficult to discern the kind of intelligence made available to the political authorities and/or driving their specific operations as the country battles what they

called insurgency, terrorism, banditry and kidnapping. In the second place, it is a matter of conjectures if the political authorities utilise or do not utilise the intelligence made available to them. In the third place, the extent of the politicisation of the intelligence by both those that generate them and those that use it is anyone's guess. In the fourth place, the prevalence of conflicts and crimes is an indication of the challenges confronting intelligence in policies and operations. Of the last point, Nigeria has battled, at the level of policies and operations, what has been described as terrorism, insurgency, banditry and kidnapping to no avail in the face of the combined work of the intelligence agencies. What roles politics and interests played to thwart this effort is a story that only those involved that can tell most Nigerians.

The challenges of politics and interests aside from a flaw and/or a lack of civil rule democracy and governance conception of security and national security have limited the contribution of intelligence in driving national security and development in Nigeria.

The way to go is to construct a security and national security philosophies in tandem with civil rule democracy and governance frameworks to give intelligence purposes in order to drive national security management and national development. For now, the purpose of intelligence is ensconced in a national security framework that is atavistic to Nigeria's realities of the past a quarter century.

Once national security is cloth in the prevailing governance philosophy, the prospect of intelligence equipping national security with strategic thinking, planning and decision making is immense. Whatever constitute the challenges confronting the agencies of intelligence are the products of the failure of their policy interventions in tackling the challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty on the short, medium and long terms. There is therefore a direct link between resolving challenges of governance and the resulting consequences of crimes and criminalities in the polity. There are unending positive prospects for most Nigerians in intelligence equipping national security management in order to unleash national development in the short, medium and long terms.

It is arguable that there is a tendentious relationship between intelligence, national security management and national development in Nigeria. This explains the prevalence of crises creating conflicts in most spheres of Nigeria's public life. There is not only a transitional vacuum in ideas, institutions and persons that should be filled in Nigeria of the last a quarter century.

The vacuum itself is the product of the lack or absence of a Nigeria philosophy or nature, meaning and purpose of Nigeria whose existence should guide the conduct of governments regardless of types. Thus, whatever strategy or strategies there are in the country operates in a vacuum in the absence of a Nigeria philosophy. It is interesting to note that Nigeria's existence as a state rest on juridical and not empirical sovereignty.¹¹ This is underscore by the multiplicity of agitations in the country. There are strategies for ministries, departments and agencies that drive their individual and collective mandates. All of these strategies pale into insignificance and thus constitute motions without movements in the absence of a Nigeria purpose or philosophy to serve as the confluence of the strategies.

Intelligence can only support national security management where national security prioritises human being and being human¹² and drive national development or reduction/elimination of inequality, poverty and unemployment if and where Nigeria has a philosophy or purpose.

¹¹ Robert H. Jackson and Carl C. Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood", *World Politics* 35 (1): 1-24, 1982

¹² The thesis of human being and being human constitute the theory of world security. Read Ken Booth, *Theory of World Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007