

Security-Their Security: And the Killing Goes On

What else does Nigeria's elected government and most Nigerians need to call security FAILED in Nigeria! Nigeria's failed and failing security has failed again. The killing on the Plateau is yet another stark reminder that what is called security in Nigeria is NOT working. Security is not working because it is not security. Nigeria's failed and failing security will continue to fail because it is programmed to produce failure.

It would seem that beyond issuing orders and lamentations after every incident, the responsible authorities have not the political and intellectual – the thinking and learning variety – where Adler and Barnett define learning as an active process of redefinition or reinterpretation of reality on the basis of new causal and normative knowledge – will to address the situation. Those responsible are the executives and the legislatures at the states and central levels. These are the people elected by Nigerians to provide them security. They have not the idea of the security Nigerians elected them to provide. The security in question is not the narrow type the elected representatives called security that has failed and is failing every other day.

The helplessness and lack of knowledge of what should constitute security were exemplified by the conducts of Mr. President and Mr. Dino Melaye following the killings on the Plateau. The former represented the executive and the latter the legislature. Following the killings in Plateau state, Mr. President proceeded to issue what has become the usual order to what he called the security services to fish out the culprits and to remind them that the security of lives and properties of Nigerians were in their hands. On the floor of the senate, Mr. Dino Melaye begged, shouted and screamed at the executive to provide security for Nigerians. Between these two institutions rest the solution to the insecurity in Nigeria. Yet both had not the foggiest idea of what to do. They had not the foggiest idea of security because they either refused to think beyond the elementary knowledge of security they were socialised into understanding or for the sake of their interest refused to go beyond that understanding.

The executive whose responsibility included superintending the type of security Mr. Melaye begged them to provide Nigerians had run out of tactics – tactics because this security type is a strategy. Indeed the only tactics available in this failed and failing security is the deployment of armed personnel from state institutions such as the police, civil defence and military after the incident. In this security type, intelligence plays no role at all. We have witnessed this tactics repeated over and over without success. It was not a question of strategy because there was only one strategy in this security type. The strategy was the tactics and the tactics was the strategy. Both tactics and strategy have been

politicised. There was nothing new in this security type from the point of view of strategy and tactics as has been demonstrated repeatedly.

What are the nature, meaning and purpose of the security type that has failed and is failing all the time in Nigeria? What should be security in Nigeria?

The failed and failing security type is the intervention in crisis, conflict and disorder by agencies of the state – police, civil defence, military etc. Of recent, there are two novelties in the conception and execution of this security type. The first is the absence of and the lack and/or suppression of the use of intelligence to engender proactive law enforcement. The second is the reactive wait-until-there-is-outbreak-approach before the deployment of personnel. This is what is understood as security by the executive, legislature and most Nigerians. As security, it is the statutory role of agencies such as the police, civil defence, Department of State Services and the military as provided for in the different enabling laws of Nigeria.

As far as the control and deployment of these agencies is concerned it is the responsibility of the executive. Thus the extent of Mr. Melaye's knowledge of the vexed issue called security served him well in appealing to the executive to do its job. However, it is not only clear to the executive that this security is not working. The mere fact that the legislature is bothered is indicative that they are aware this security has failed and is failing. How have they – executive and legislature – intervened to address this failure?

Both the executive and legislature have convened conferences/workshops/seminars/summits/meeting service chiefs at different levels to examine and re-examined the situation in order to provide solutions. Both have quarrelled and jostled (they quarrel and jostle all the time but especially about security since it is BIG business with plenty MONEY and to further hoodwink Nigerians the proceed to securitise (securitisation) their security by adducing "national security" dimension to it which then justify emptying the state treasury (security vote) to address the condition – their condition) over what was clearly the pecuniary benefit that followed their intervention on security. Both their efforts have failed so far. Nigeria is continuously bleeding as a result of the failure of this security – their security.

These interventions were bound to fail because they did not factor into consideration the NATURE, MEANING and PURPOSE of SECURITY as opposed to security as the role of statutory agencies of state saddle with keeping and maintaining law and order described as security. Even from the literal meaning of security, SECURING connotes something deeper and all-encompassing than the narrow and restrictive application given to security in Nigeria. This narrow and restrictive perspective of security is the outcome of the role the military played in governance over several decades and in classical security – the type

projected by Euro-Atlantic security model based on country to country relation. It is a perspective of security that require reconstruction in tandem with the democratic process underway and the security type Nigerians voted their representatives to provide.

In order to make progress, Nigerians need sober realism on the vexed question of security. What is lacking in Nigeria is a Nigerian security philosophy. This security philosophy should be enshrined in a policy. The policy should contain the followings; what is security? Whose security? What counts as security issue(s)? How can security be achieved? The first three questions addresses philosophy and constitute policy and the last question address strategy.

Let me construct a hypothetical security philosophy/policy for Nigeria on the basis of the four issues:

What is security? Security is being free and protected from all types of harms.

Whose security? Security is for individual Nigerians. Security i.e. being free and protected from all harms is for individual Nigerians.

What counts as security issue(s)? All the issues that harm individual Nigerians constitute security issues. The issues evolve and thus they keep changing with the passing of time. There is therefore the inclusion and exclusion of issues depending on their assessment and evaluation. Nigerians need to be free and protected from these harms – unemployment, declining opportunity, poor health care, inadequate qualitative education, inadequate social and economic infrastructure, physical attack on person and property, porous borders etc.

We should note that every area of human endeavour generates security and insecurity. Every area of human endeavour should be made to produce security and not insecurity. Thus the search for security is in every area of human endeavour. The foundation of security is the ECONOMY. It is the organisation of the economy that conditions the response of other areas of human endeavour. The economy is primary as without the economy other areas are secondary and irrelevant. The economy determines the social, political, cultural, environmental, defence, foreign affairs etc organisation of the society. What counts as security issue(s) therefore is generated by the state of economic organisation of the country.

These three questions (what is security, whose security and what counts as security issues) and their answers constitute security philosophy and policy. This security policy should be the CENTRE OF GRAVITY for all other policies. This is because all other policies in the public sector aim to SECURE Nigerians in their different areas of specialisation. In other words, their – each policy's goal – is the security of Nigerians in the area of speciality. In

defining security as being free and protected from all types of harm, in singling out individual Nigerians as the referent of security and in identifying what constitute security issues, a sign post for every aspect of public life to key into in the provision of security in its area of specialisation has been provided.

Is this what the executive and legislature called security?

How can security be achieved? Security can be achieved when the different sector of public life charged with different responsibility device their strategy toward fulfilling their responsibility in line with the security policy that defines security, security referent and security issues. Sectors include health, education, youth, women, economy, defence, law enforcement, foreign affair etc. Each of the sectors should have security objective taken from the security policy to be attained in their policy. Thus the department of education should have a security objective in the education policy taken from the security policy to accomplish in the provision of education. The strategy it employed to attaining this objective is entirely its own responsibility. The end state is that Nigerians should be educated to free and protect them from harm engendered by the lack of education. The police, military, civil defence etc should each have security objective in their policies taken from the security policy for attainment in their respective schedule. Their task is not only to secure Nigerians from physical harm. It is to preserve and protect the state in Nigeria.

Going by this sketch, what Nigerians know and called security should be the objective/strategy of the police, civil defence, military etc taken from the security policy in pursuance of their role in the attainment of the end state called security. This is because every other sector of public life is in the business of providing security as well. It is the collective work of all sectors of the public life that constitutes security. The role of the uniformed and armed bearing agencies should NOT be the be-all and end-all of security as is the case today. Their role is NOT the be-all and end-all of security. This perception of security is NOT in tandem with Nigeria's History, Experience and Reality (HER). This perception of security did not come from any legislation or policy. This perception of security was contrived into existence by the practice of the uniformed and arms bearing agencies of the executive.

Thus no tactics or strategy devised by the uniformed and arms bearing agencies will produce any security without the compliments of other sectors. Indeed as indicated by singling out the economy as the foundation of other sectors and the foundation of security, all other sectors precedes those of the police etc in activating the trigger for the production of security. The police etc in their security objective represent the last bastion of security – the sector that picks the pieces in the event of the non performance and/or failure of other sectors.

Indeed when other sectors fulfil their security objectives to Nigerians, the uniformed and arm bearing agencies will have little or no work to do in their area of specialisation. It is because security was narrowed down to just the uniformed and arms bearing agencies alone with the neglect of other sectors that they have been overwhelmed. No wonder, it has failed and is failing all the time. It will continue to fail except the executive and the legislature begin to think outside the box of their interest.

Talking about thinking outside the box, the lead agency of this security – their security – as of today appears to be the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA). The ONSA is merely compounding the security situation in the country. The ONSA is an impediment to security and the search for security in Nigeria especially under a democracy. In its present shape and composition, the ONSA has given vent to the failed and failing security practice in Nigeria. The ONSA is a hindrance to the search for security as it has not the slightest inkling of what should constitute security for Nigeria let alone devising strategy for its attainment. Or if it has any inkling, it is not in its evolving interest under a democracy to proffer this solution.

Indeed it would appear that the ONSA's advisory role has hindered the emergence of a constitutional/policy solution from the elected representative of the Nigerian people on the vexed issue of security. It is most likely that the Office capitalises on the ignorance and/or interests of the executive and legislature on the prevailing perception of security on the one hand and the socialisation of most Nigerians to this perception of security on the other hand to begin the progressive transformation of the military that it represents into the lead agency on security under a democracy. As I argued elsewhere, the Office has laid and is consolidating the foundation for its continuous relevance in a democracy on the matter of security even as the institution it represented – the military – has lost political power. The ONSA has transformed into the one-stop-shop coordinating all the service chiefs – the so-called security – buttressing this failed and failing security.

In the event of the emergence of a security philosophy and policy in tandem with the hypothetical case sketched in the preceding, the ONSA should be reorganised and saddled with the monitoring and evaluation of the compliance of agencies of government in their adherence to the security policy and the attainment of their security objectives. The ONSA should be decentralised to include offices in all the states of the federation. Its mandate should include re-educating, re-enlightening and deepening the knowledge of Nigerians to the all-encompassing philosophy of security in tandem with Nigeria's History, Experience and Reality (HER). In this state, the administrative head will not be retired uniformed personnel. There will be the progressive civilianisation of the institution in tandem with the all-encompassing focus of security as freeing and protecting Nigerians from all types of harm in a democracy and democratising environment.

In its present shape and role-function, the ONSA should be renamed the Office of the National Defense Adviser (ONDA) as its role is defense and not security. Security precedes defence. Security is the umbrella which houses every issue including defence.

How have the other sectors that collectively constitute this ideal security performed to compliment this narrow objectionable perception of security – their security?

This is the failed and failing security that Mr. President (executive) and Mr. Melaye (legislature) rely on to secure Nigeria. This security will continue to fail regardless of past and future attempt by the executive and legislature to make it work.