

"SECURITY THREATS – SABOTAGE AND SUBVERSION"

BY

**PETER A. ESSOH
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY/ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF UYO**

BEING A PAPER PRESENTED

**IN A SEMINAR/TRAINING WORKSHOP ORGANIZED BY TREASURE
GUARDS AND SERVICES LIMITED
UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
SERVICE COMMISSION**

**ON THE THEME "THE ROLE OF SECURITY PERSONNEL IN A
DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM"**

HELD AT

THE SUMMIT COMPLEX, UYO

ON FRIDAY 12TH JANUARY, 2001

INTRODUCTION:

In presenting this paper, I wish to express profound gratitude to the organisers of this workshop for inviting me to give a talk on one of the cardinal issues which any democratic system ought to give attention to.

In addressing The Role of Security Personnel in a Democratic System, care is taken to delineate the concept of government and democracy.

As an institution, government specialises in the management, direction and control of public affairs of a given state, society and or group of people. It is also the exercise of political authority, direction and restraint over the actions of the inhabitants of communities, societies or state. In every organised community or society, the power of control, direction and or administration through governance is vested in the Executive, Legislature and Judicial arms.

As for Democracy whose origin is traceable to the Greeks and Romans, and as encapsulated in modern times spearheaded by a former US President – Is the government of the people, by the people and for the people.

This definition embraces the whole range of political culture, **power, authority, legitimacy and social control of the sovereign (the state) i.e. government over the human and material resources under the state control.**

THE ROLE OF SECURITY PERSONNEL IN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS

Having operationalized our conceptual frame, one readily sees that life in a democratic setting such as we find ourselves makes meaning only within the context of some normative adherence of citizens to the spirit and letters of democratic norms and values. Among such values is the whole range of freedom which the Supreme document of the state – the constitution – guarantees citizens e.g. Chapter Two of the 1979 and 1999 constitutions of Nigeria, state the Fundamental Objective and Directive Principles of State policies which among others enshrines the rights of citizens to speech, movement, action, associations, etc, and the ends of state in directing the lives of citizens for the greatest good in line with the utilitarian spirit.

In enhancing Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian spirit by the state which in this paper include the sovereign at the Local Government (i.e. The Chairman and his apparatus of government), the issue of security becomes of paramount importance. For governance in a democracy to make meaning, the government must necessarily fulfil the ends of the state and the ends of the state is service and protection. Government services to the people that elected it are wide ranging e.g. education, health, road, local, national, international relations, army etc.

Residents in a democracy require protection which form part of the social contract– and is like the voter saying “I give you my vote, you win, convert my vote to service and protection for me and mine”.

THE NEED FOR SECURITY

The problem of order, obedience and good governance is at the heart of democracy. To obtain orderliness and compliance to the executive action (decisions) became a central organising force in the desire for nations to bring peace to bear within their frontiers. This made the agreement of Westphalin in 1648 inevitable.

The thrust of that agreement was on the need for security – to preserve life and property of the citizens that agreement became part of the Defence system of modern nation states. The need for security in a democracy becomes imperative. In our life and time, we have seen the rise of ethnic militia in Nigeria and within the state – region – West Africa Ethnic groups which felt marginalized in the sharing of spoils and gains of democracy decided to group together and constitute not only pressure groups but militia that tend to confront the security systems put in place in the state. While the constitution collectively put in place sang the chorus of unity, the principle of federal character, the need for rotation of executive offices those who assisted the ascension of political colleagues to power base become disaffected in attempting to withdraw

support thus constituting themselves into security threats – engaging in the process sabotage and subversion. It was, ladies and gentlemen, the need for security which informed the United Nations in 1945 to constitute the Security Council – to advise the General Assembly on World Security. We have seen the trickling down of the operations of the Security Council in ensuring world peace having a direct impact on our national lives. Here in Africa, under the auspices of the OAU, EAC and ECOWAS, we have seen the role these regional bodies have played in ensuring the protection of life and property in Africa. In our own Nigeria, the role which the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Police, Current Mobile, The SSS and other Vigilante Groups have played in ensuring that Nigeria as our business survives.

SECURITY THREATS – SABOTAGE AND SUBVERSION

At the global and continental levels, the military has been the easiest tool employed by political leaders to achieve the success that elude them through diplomatic means. The consequences of the use of military power put at test the survival instincts of the soldier.

The peace keeping initiative developed and practiced as shown in the examples of WARSAWPACT, NATO, the Gulf Council aimed at putting on hold Iraqi irredentism in the Gulf region, the 1982 OAU Peace moves in Chad, UN moves in Zaire (Congo), Somalia, Ethiopia,

Mauritania/SADR, Sudan, Liberia and South Africa. The OAU participatory role in the UN military supervision of the Namibian march to independence and above all the ECOMOG – Peace Initiatives which we all see the fruits. All these are security measures aimed at diffusing tension and threats to security and survival of democracy in world avowed to globalization or of common goal.

The Charters of the UN, of OAU, The Authority of ECOWAS and the constitutions of Nigeria are all tending to bring about universal peace, harmony and the thriving of democracy.

From the foregoing, it becomes discernible that in a march to sustainable democracy, the role which security operatives must play stand out and call attention to the need to avert threat to security which the founding fathers of our modern world dreamt or conceived of a world imbued by peace, loving, understanding one for another.

Arising from our submissions thus far, we see that the potential threats to security in our nascent democracy who carry with them subversive tendencies are:-

- (1) The Political elite who lost out in a competitive struggle for elective office – i.e. politicians
- (2) Non-performing executives who on being elected shut doors against the electors e.g. use of tinted cars.

- (3) Ethnic militia – that group, gang up and press for recognition in the share of the spoils of office/politics
- (4) Youths who dissipate energy on good and frivolous demands.
- (5) The use of political thuggery
- (6) The lack of application of the letter and spirit of the Constitution
- (7) Inappropriate location of projects/programmes
- (8) Intra and inter communal conflicts.
- (9) Boundary disputes between communities
- (10) Intolerance
- (11) Unnecessary display of affluence and abuse of power by elected and politically appointed officers.

THE WAY FORWARD

To avert governance as if by a Relay Race – a situation in which poor performance on the part of elected officials and overbearing display of ethnic chauvinism thus inviting the extraneous variable of unconstitutional intervention in power play – it is suggested in this paper that

- (i) There should be accommodation for opinions that tends towards development of the local or state even if the opinion comes from an ideologically opposed camp.
- (ii) The spirit of dialogue should be embraced by all in and out of governance.
- (iii) Equitable distribution of social services by the party in power.
- (iv) The development of competitive spirit/enterprise
- (v) The security operatives should be properly oriented towards the democratic norms and values. The security operatives should be made to serve the people and de-learn the "shoot at sight" syndrome or incarcerate them at the slightest opposition which characterized military life or militocracy.
- (vi) Widespread consultation before policies are implemented
- (vii) The spirit of tolerance should be embraced so as to make Nigeria as business of all in Nigeria and Akwa Ibom as the business of all resident within or the local government as the concern of all within its jurisdiction a success.
- (viii) Adequate political and moral education by way of effective mobilization of individuals will serve to avert security threats e.g. a good communication network, - intercom, telephone, radio message, walking talkie, and GSM that is virtually around our corners.
- (ix) *The evolution of political culture that will shape the attitude of all who live in a democracy.*

- (x) Effective Incorporation of the security operation into governance of patrol, surveillance, etc.

CONCLUSION

The attempt in this paper has been to address this auspicious audience on an aspect of the theme of this workshop which is "The Role of Security Personnel In A Democratic System" with my focus on Security Threats – Sabotage and Subversion. We have in the process taken you to a global, continental, regional and national efforts geared at an effective surveillance and protection of the rights of citizens by political elites especially the leaders.

At the level of the organizers we have indicated the potential threats to security in any given democratic dispensation as well as the way forward.

In all, we bow to the supremacy of the Omneity in averting security threats in the form of sabotage and subversion. This we do by reference to Psalm 127:1

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain and unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

Security is of God, and man should help God in His work by conforming to the vision of the founders of the idea of Democracy.

Thank you.

REFERENCES

1. Zakari, Danladi (1996): African Defence Security: The Dilemma of Peace-maker and Peace-Keepers in Journal of Defence Studies Vol. 6 No. 2 Kaduna.
2. Apparadoi, A. (1972): The Substance of Politics OUP, New Delhi.
3. Essoh, P. A. (1999): Government for Senior Secondary School Certificate.
4. Essoh, P. A. (2000): Lecture Notes on Political Sociology, University of Uyo, Uyo.