

Nigeria's federal republic of insecurity

Written by Chido Nwangwu, Publisher of USAfrica & USAfricaonline.com, based in Houston, Texas
Friday, 23 December 2011 14:35



USAfrica, December 20, 2011: As the year 2011 draws down and we embrace the promise of 2012, a recurring concern for Nigerians and the international communities remains: are we safe going about our every day lives or investing to do business in most parts of Nigeria?

First, is your quiet, unspoken prayer as you head to your village or run a small business in Maiduguri, Kano, Aba, Damataru, Yobe, Kaduna, Yenagoa, Bayelsa, Port Harcourt, Onitsha, Uyo, Jos one of the following: may the evil eyes and bazooka of kidnappers not see me; and, may the lethal bombs of the violent agitators of Boko Haram, MEND and others set their gps in the same zone I may go... Amen!

Second, amidst all the palaver, Nigerians continue to wonder if their federal state of insecurity would continue into 2012, despite the fact of a whopping federal government budget of N4.749 trillion (Naira) — the equivalent of \$30.64 billion — with the security and defense allocation bagging the lion's share of N921.21 billion (Naira) — the equivalent of \$5.9478 billion.

Third and sadly, the official allocation of security votes/budget and the personal, discretionary set aside slush funds also called "security" votes have not given Nigerians reasonable "security" from kidnappers, common criminals, terror brigands, radical fundamentalists like the brazen Boko Haram and a rag-tag ethnic armies, area boys and area girls, and so on and so forth.

Fourth, Nigerians, from all sections and faiths and economic status, have expressed their displeasure at the evident incapacity of the federal government led by President Jonathan and state governors to perform the most basic function of providing security and safe environments

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for the citizens. The unrelenting bombs and violent attacks and kidnappings from the Niger Delta (specifically, Bayelsa State – Jonathan's home state) to the middle belt Plateau State areas of Damaturu/Jos and now more dramatic in Maiduguri/Borno State, have combined to make life and movement much more dangerous for families, millions of unemployed youths and investors in Africa's most populated country of almost 110 million people.

Fifth, I believe and have made the political economy point that lawlessness and insecurity affect domestic production and international business worthiness of any country. The recent, very bold attacks on the Nigerian Police headquarters and the United Nations building in Abuja (Nigeria's federal capital) on Friday August 26, 2011 by the radical Islamic group Boko Haram left a weak profile of the President Jonathan and his team — in the eyes of the local and international communities. I wrote the USAfrica special report 10 years ago— on October 17, 2001 – warning that some radical Islamic groups in Nigeria have some level of inspiration and informal links to international terror organizations. Nigeria's bin-Laden cheerleaders could ignite religious war, destabilize Africa.

Sixth, this special extraordinary budget item, in itself, a remarkable mockery and Orwellian twist called "security vote." For the rookie and uninitiated in Nigeria's political business, "security votes" are not accounted for; you spend and use it for whatever you decide as an elected official or political appointee as rising to the level of "security" interest. They are Not part of the accounting for Statutory security allocations to the Police and related security agencies. Nigeria's President, the Governors and the key national parliamentary leaders (Senate President & Speaker of the House), from my sources, in that order — get the highest allocation of "security" votes/budget. Note, too, that the President, Governors (and USAfrica learned a long time ago that local government officials and ministers and some legislators) have juicy budgets/allocations of several monthly millions for this famous and much sought after "security votes."

Finally, if any of the President's 100 advisers has the polite courage for the extraordinary task of reminding His Excellency of his foremost, sworn, constitutional obligation to the national interest about security and safety of Nigerians and all who sojourn in Nigeria, please whisper clearly to Mr. President that I said, respectfully: Nigerians, at home and abroad, are still concerned and afraid for living in what I call Nigeria's Federal Republic of Insecurity! Nigeria, we hail thee.

Dr. Chido Nwangwu, Founder & Publisher of Houston-based USAfrica multimedia networks, first African-owned, U.S.-based newspaper published on the internet USAfricaonline.com and recipient of several journalism and public policy awards, was recently profiled by the CNN International for his pioneering works on multimedia/news/public policy projects for Africans and Americans. He worked previously for the Nigerian Television Authority, Platform magazine, and the Daily Times of Nigeria; and has served as adviser on Africa business to Houston's former Mayor Brown. USAfrica, CLASSmagazine and USAfricaonline.com are assessed by the CNN and The New York Times as the largest and arguably the most influential African-owned, U.S.-based multimedia networks. USAfrica established May 1992.