**EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR NIGERIA’s**

**SECURITY CHALLENGES**

**BEING A LECTURE DELIVERED**

BY

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FORMER HON. MINISTER OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

ON

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GOVERNOR’S HALL, LEISURE SPRING HOTEL OSOGBO

DURING CELEBRATION OF

OSUN STATE POLYTECHNIC IREE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

AND 2013 ALUMNI RE-UNION

ORGANISED BY THE

OSUN STATE POLYTECHNIC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NATIONAL BODY

**INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman of the occasion,

The Rector, Osun State Polytechnic, Iree,

The Lecture Reviewer,

The President of the Alumni Association

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Gentlemen of the Press

Great Nigerian Students

I always start my assignments by thanking God Almighty for His mercies. I thank Him today for making it possible for me to be physically present as the distinguished Lecturer for the 20th anniversary of Osun State Polytechnic, Iree. I also thank Him for making it possible for all of us to be here today, especially because, as I learnt, this occasion marks the reunion of alumni members. I wish you all a happy reunion.

Similarly, I want to thank the organisers of this Alumni Association reunion for inviting me to speak on the theme: Education; a tool for Nigeria’s Security Challenges. Generally speaking, education is a subject matter I am very passionate about. One journalist recently asked me to list my first three priorities if I am given opportunity to govern this state. I said to him, the first shall be education. The second shall be education and the third shall be education.

Please permit me to go off the main topic a little and speak on two important topical issues of concern in Osun State. One, I want to sympathise with our Lecturers in tertiary institutions in Osun State. As I speak, I learnt that the Lecturers have downed their chalks for more than two weeks because of issues that should not be difficult to resolve by a government that cares for an arm of its important workforce. As I gathered, the Lecturers are demanding for the following:

* The elongation of the service of academic staff from 60 to 65 years. (Most tertiary institutions in the country have already adjusted to this).
* Remittance of their contributory pension; they allege that since February 2012 when the scheme was adopted in the state, their 7.5 per cent contribution had not been remitted by the state government despite deducting same from their salaries.
* The lecturers are also complaining of the 20 per cent tax deducted from their salaries.

It is my prayer that these issues are resolved as quickly as possible so that peace can return to the campuses and workers given their due.

Two, I want to comment about the distribution of ‘E-learning tablets’ tagged ‘Opon Imo’ to some secondary school students in Osun State. I noticed that the government has been trying to make a big issue out of this. But I have not read anywhere that the distribution of this item went beyond the 385 students in SS2 of Ataoja School of Science Osogbo in the last two and a half years of this administration. The parents, the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) and other stakeholders in the education sector should ask this government what is the cause of the delay in distributing this ‘e-learning’ tablets to all the schools in Osun State in spite of all the media hype, which is now turning to the usual propaganda in the intangible achievement of this government. Available records, show that we have 581 Junior and Senior Secondary Schools, with 283,826 students in Osun State.

The government also said the State would be saving N8.2billion by switching to these ‘e-learning’ tablets from the purchase of text books. The question is when are we going to see this savings in concrete terms? We are yet to see to see the benefit of this savings despite spending almost N300million on this project. Beyond the propaganda of overstating what it is doing, or has done, which has become the trademark of the Aregbesola’s administration, the question is: How would ‘Opon Imo’ redress the poor performance of students in SSCE? Rather than start with ‘Opon Imo’, which is more about contract and patronage, one would have expected the government to identify the development needs of teachers so that appropriate interventions could be made to improve their competence and ultimately boost students’ performance.

Also, worrying is the unilateral decisions of the government to close some schools and introduce Mega Schools. In almost three years of this administration not one Mega School has been completed and delivered. These are ill-conceived decisions that do not serve the best interest of Osun State indigenes. They have been greeted with protests and the people are not relenting yet.

With these policies, access to secondary education will be seriously and negatively affected. It is my considered opinion that our emphasis should be geared towards upgrading facilities, improve the supply of basic teaching and learning materials and equipment, to take advantage of the new curriculum developed and introduced by the Nigerian Research and Development Council (NERDC) which emphasizes the teaching of trade subjects/entrepreneur studies.

I hope the government would listen to the voice of reasoning and the voice of the people, if truly, it holds firmly to the tenets of democracy. If the government does not, I can assure you that the PDP government, once voted to power in 2014 would reverse the legion of unpopular policies of the present government.

That was just a quick intervention for which I once again crave your indulgence.

Back to our business of the day, the topic before me is: Education; A tool for Nigerian Security Challenges. I will attempt in this short paper (as requested by the organizers) to define the operative words of education, tool, security and challenges. From there, I shall proceed to examine the importance of education and its different types. I will also look at Nigeria’s different security challenges and then examine if education could be a tool for resolving or mitigating these security challenges.

Therefore, rather than make a conclusive statement that Education is a tool for Nigerian Security Challenges, I want to seek the indulgence of the organizers of this auspicious occasion and indeed this audience to rephrase the topic into a question: Is Education a tool for resolving Nigeria’s Security Challenges?

**EDUCATION**

The word education comes from the Latin word **‘*educere’*** which means ‘to lead out’. Different dictionaries have defined education as ‘ the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life’. Some also defined it as ‘the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills’. It could also be defined as ‘the wealth of knowledge acquired by an individual after studying particular subject matters or experiencing life lessons that provide an understanding of something’.

Encyclopedia Britannica defines education as the ‘discipline that is concerned with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environments as opposed to various non formal and informal means of socialization (e.g. rural development projects and education through parent-child relationships). Going further, education could be defined as ‘the wealth of knowledge acquired by an individual after studying particular subject matters or experiencing life lessons that provide an understanding of something. Education requires instruction of some sort from an individual or from composed literature. The most common forms of education result from years of schooling that incorporates studies of a variety of subjects.

Let me also take some practical definitions of the word education. The sage, Nelson Mandela, our cherished and adored former South African President defines education ‘as the great engine for personal development’. That great theoretical Physicist, (He developed the general theory of relativity) Albert Einstein says ‘education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think’. And, a one-time Director General of UNESCO, Dr. Federico Mayor says ‘education is not only instilling knowledge but also awakening the enormous creative potential that lies within each of us, enabling all of us to develop to our fullest potential and better contribute to the societies in which we live’

I believe the foregoing definitions are adequate for the purpose of this paper and I would not want to bore you any further with more definitions. But suffice to say that there are still several definitions of the word ‘education’ which this paper has not explored.

**SECURITY**

Security could be defined broadly, as the ‘activities’ involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack, danger etcetera. It could also be defined as a state of being free from danger or threat or the safety of a state or organization against criminal activities such as terrorism, theft, and espionage often captured under a nebulous term called “National Security”.

A very simple and common definition, however, would describe security as ‘self preservation’, which we often say is the first law of existence. Therefore, simply put, security is the quality or state of being secure. That is to say, when we feel secure, we have freedom from danger, attack, harm and damage. Consequently, having security is a feeling of confidence and safety, or a situation in which you can feel confident and safe.

The foregoing, to me, appears to be the border limits for the framing of the topic of this paper by the Organisers. But there is a more fundamental definition that would aid further, the understanding of the broad concept of security. This recognizes that human security, which is protecting and empowering people at the individual and community levels, is essential to national and international security. Consequently, many factors ranging from inter-ethnic conflicts, regional instability, terrorist attacks, poverty and disease shape the meaning and content of security.

I shall be relying on this definition of ‘human security’ in drawing some of my conclusions in this paper.

But before then, what are the types of security challenges that are confronting Nigeria? Indeed, what is a challenge? The new Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language International Edition (2004) defines challenge as ‘a calling in question (of the truth of statements, rights, authority etc) of something which tests a person’s qualities’.

A much simpler definition says challenge is a new or difficult task that tests somebody’s ability. Flowing from this dictionary definition, the following are some of the security challenges facing Nigeria in recent time.

* Youth Unemployment
* Terrorism/Insurgency
* Niger Delta Militancy
* Kidnapping
* Illegal Bunkering
* Pipeline vandalisation
* Armed robbery
* Porous border
* Child-trafficking
* Ethnic and Communal clashes

Let me now go into a brief definition of the individual nature of some of these challenges. But due to time constraint, I will limit myself to only six of the challenges highlighted above which I consider the most topical in Nigeria today.

**Youth Unemployment**

Most crimes are often associated with the youth. As you may well know I had the privilege of serving the people of Nigeria, in two distinct capacities. One, as a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2003-2007) and two, as the Minister of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2007-2011) saddled with managing the youth sector.

Statistics have it that Nigeria has a predominantly youth population with one third of her estimated One Hundred and Sixty (160) Million people being youth from the age of 18 to 35 years. That is to say approximately, 54 million of our population are youths.

The huge youth population, no doubt, poses enormous security challenge to the leadership of the country. This manifests in youth restiveness and unemployment. This also accounts for the migration of some from rural areas to urban cities in search of greener pastures.

Some of them, after getting into the cities and discovering that they cannot make the necessary in roads, are introduced through friends, accomplices or through peer influence, to other negative vices. Some become bus conductors, Okada riders, and area boys or may even end up in the hands of politicians who engage their services as touts or thugs for political brigandage. For the girls, they easily take to prostitution as a way to make ends meet.

Some of them have a mind set on white-collar jobs and have forgotten that the essence of their education is not only instilling knowledge but also awakening the enormous creative potential that lies within them. Putting this creativity to work has become a difficult task for many of our youths.

I know many of you would ask me how and what has the government done? The focus of government was on implementing measures to facilitate the creation of business enterprise for youth with emphasis on how to foster an entrepreneurship culture among the young people, facilitating access to finance, poverty reduction and encouraging innovation as key to wealth creation. What we did at the Ministry of Youth Development under my leadership was to design eight policies and programmes interventions, to serve as instruments of facilitating youth employment during my four-year tenure as Minister. The policies and programmes are:

* A review of the National Youth Policy
* Established National Youth Development Centres in all the six geo-political zones. As many of you are aware, the South West Youth centre is located in Osun State.
* Initiated the Youth Employment Action Plan
* Introduced the Nigerian Youth Parliament
* Started the Youth Mainstreaming
* Reinvigorated the National Youth Council of Nigeria
* Established the National Youth Development Index
* Reformed the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)

Details of all these could be found in my paper titled The Nigerian Youth and the Challenges of National Development which could be found on my website: www. **akinlabiolasunkanmi.com**

There are still other schemes that the government has introduced to stem youth unemployment. The most recent is the SURE-P programme which I believe most of you should be familiar with and would therefore not bore you with its details or *modus operandi* in this paper. I have no doubt in my mind that if the economy improves and some of these schemes germinate and have firm roots, more jobs would be generated and there is a likelihood that we would witness a drop in the high rate of crimes in the country if more members of the increasing youth population are gainfully employed.

**Terrorism**

There is neither an academic nor an international legal consensus regarding the definition of the term "terrorism**"**. Various legal systems and government agencies use different definitions of "terrorism". Moreover, the international community has been slow to formulate a universally agreed upon, legally binding definition of this crime. These difficulties arise from the fact that the term "terrorism" is politically and emotionally charged. Simply put terrorism is the use of violence and threats to intimidate or coerce, especially for political purposes.

Terrorism is the systematic use of terror often violent, especially as a means of coercion. As I stated earlier, terrorism has no legally binding, criminal law definition. Common definitions of terrorism refer only to those violent acts which are intended to create fear (terror); are perpetrated for a religious, political or, ideological goal; and deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants (civilians). Some definitions now include acts of unlawful violence and war. Studies have found over 100 definitions of “terrorism”. The concept of terrorism may be controversial as it is often used by state authorities (and individuals with access to state support) to delegitimize political or other opponents and potentially legitimize the state's own use of armed force against opponents (such use of force may be described as "terror" by opponents of the state).

In Nigeria today, terrorism poses the one of most difficult security challenge to the leadership of the country. Hitherto, terrorism was unknown to the Nigerian lexicon. Terrorism in Nigeria appears to be of two variance; religious and political. It started initially in the Niger Delta where some militants formed the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND). They claimed to be fighting for the economic interest of the South South region as the cash cow, feeding the whole of Nigeria. The act of terrorism has since been taken over by an Islamic fundamentalist group, popularly known as Boko-Haram. The sect whose English interpretation of the name means ‘western education is sin’ is based in the Northern part of Nigeria. Its roots are traceable to Maiduguri in Borno State and it is more dominant in the North East zone. Their latest terrorist act was the bombing of five luxurious passenger buses in a Kano Motor Park about two weeks ago in which several persons (officially put at 22) lost their lives and scores of others severely injured. May God console the relations of all those that have lost their loved ones.

**KIDNAPPING**

Kidnapping is the crime of unlawfully seizing and carrying away a person by force or fraud or seizing and detaining a person against his or her will with intent to carry that person away at a later time.

In criminal law, kidnapping is the taking away or transportation of a person against that person's will, usually to hold the person in false imprisonment, a confinement without legal authority. This may be done for ransom or in furtherance of another crime, or in connection with a child custody dispute.

The law of kidnapping, according to experts is difficult to define with precision because it varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Generally, kidnapping occurs when a person, without lawful authority, physically abducts (i.e., moves) another person without that other person's consent, with the intent to use the abduction in connection with some other nefarious objective.

Kidnapping occur when any person is unlawfully and non-consensually abducted and held for certain purposes. These purposes include gaining a ransom or reward; facilitating the commission of a felony or a flight after the commission of a felony; terrorizing or inflicting bodily injury on the victim or a third person; and interfering with a governmental or political function.

Kidnapping started in Nigeria initially, as part of the methods used by the Niger Delta militants to attract attention of oil companies and the government to their struggle for resource control. Niger Delta militants have since abandoned the crime but criminal elements, especially in the South- Eastern and Northern parts of the country have adopted the kidnapping strategy believing that kidnapping is less risky and a more lucrative venture than armed robbery. One of the most recent cases of kidnapping happened in Bauchi State where some foreigners working with a foreign company, were kidnapped. Photographs were posted on the internet that the kidnapped persons may have been killed but the government is yet to confirm this as it is yet to locate their bodies thereby suggesting that some of them may still be alive.

The Boko-Haram sect is currently holding seven French nationals hostage in Cameroun and they have given conditions for their release. They want the government of Nigeria and Cameroun to release imprisoned members of their sect as one of their conditions.

**Illegal Bunkering**

The Niger Delta has been a source of illicit international business deals. Today, a new form of syndicated criminal tendency is threatening the very foundations of Nigeria’s petroleum industry, and by extension, the Nigerian economy, as well as putting tremendous pressure on the government. That problem is the *"illegal bunkering"* of crude oil and/or its derivatives.

Today, many companies operating in the Niger Delta complain that they have been sabotaged by youths stealing oil to process in rudimentary home-made refineries - a process called **bunkering**. Even communities where pipelines pass through have several of such refineries and depots. And, this has accounted for several fire incidents leading to deaths and massive destruction of lives and properties. Reports have it that billions of Dollars are lost to illegal bunkering annually.

According to a scholar Kombo Mason Braide, the term ***"****bunkering****",*** *(whether legal or illegal)* has been thoroughly abused, demonised, and misused in Nigerian parlance, so much so that the mere mention of it readily evokes, connotes, or triggers subliminal suggestions of grand *illegality* in the Nigerian paradigm. For example, when petroleum products pipelines get cannibalised, the Nigerian mind very effortlessly visualises *"illegal bunkering"* in progress. When shiploads of crude oil *(from refineries)* get stolen, and are routinely sold off as low-pour fuel oil (LPFO) - a relatively *cheaper* commodity in the international oil markets - Nigerians simply smile, and *know*  that *"illegal bunkering"* has definitely taken place.

While in the Nigerian worldview, *"bunkering",* *(whether legal or illegal),* is synonymous with stealing petroleum *(or/and its derivatives),* inOxford English*, "bunkering"* is a legitimate process whereby a duly licensed operator provides fuels, water, and lubricants *(bunkering services)* for marine vessels on request. Simply stated*, "*bunkering" is the *fuelling* of ships. It is like having a floating fuel service station on the high seas, or at coastal jetties, to fuel, or/and supply provisions for ships.

It is more worrisome that security agents are accused of complicity in this crime. While touring naval formations and facilities in Warri on Monday, this week, the Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Dele Ezeoba warned Naval Officers and ratings against complicity and called for a change of attitude by his Officers and men.

An Abuja-based oil industry analyst estimates that at least 100,000 barrels of oil are stolen every day through the process known as illegal **bunkering,** while Human Rights Watch says it could be as much as 300,000 barrels a day.

Is education a tool for addressing this kind of security challenge? The answer cannot be a straight-jacket yes or no. Whilst the kingpin, the big man behind the crime is well educated and has international networks to dispose of his illicit products, his hands-on guys or operatives are a mixture of well educated people and illiterates. In fact, illegal bunkering has been labelled as a ‘white-collar’ crime.

Armed Robbery

Armed robbery is theft committed while the person is armed with a dangerous weapon. Robbery (sometimes referred to as an aggravated form of theft or larceny as it implies the use of force) usually attracts a greater punishment in the criminal codes where it is accompanied by the use or presence of a dangerous weapon. Robbery is feloniously taking personal property belonging to another without his consent by force or threat of force from the immediate presence of the victim with the intent to deprive the owner of its value.

A person commits armed robbery when he or she violates, carries on or about his or her person or is otherwise armed with a dangerous weapon other than a firearm; or he or she carries on or about his or her person or is otherwise armed with a firearm; or he or she, during the commission of the offense, personally discharges a firearm; or he or she, during the commission of the offence, personally discharges a firearm that proximately causes great bodily harm, permanent disability, permanent disfigurement, or death to another person.

In Nigeria, armed robbery is not localized to any part of the country. It happens anywhere and everywhere. Armed robbery became a phenomenon after the 1967-70 civil war when arms became widely available in the country. It has become a long standing security challenge in Nigeria even up till today.

The first set of Nigerians publicly executed for armed robbery was Ishola Oyenusi and company in the 1970’s while some more dreaded dare devil robbers like Lawrence Anini emerged after that. Ironically, Ishola Oyenusi was not an illiterate. Indeed, nowadays it is common to see graduates being caught among gangs of Armed Robbers.

**Ethnic and Communal Clashes**

Another security challenge in Nigeria today is ethnic and communal clashes. As I was rounding off this paper, a story came in that a communal clash in Plateau State has just claimed 35 lives. The other time, it was in Kwara state where neighbours, the citizens of Offa and Erin-Ile, who should in fact, be kinsmen were fighting. For many years, we can all recall the story of Ife and Modakeke who were locked in battle until a political solution was found.

At various times the issue of indigene ship and settlers have threatened peaceful co-existence among communities. This has even prompted a national discuss with the National Assembly’s listing it as one of the clauses to be amended in the ongoing constitution review. At other times the issue is reduced purely to land ownership. And, we all know how people can fight the issue of inheritance.

But guess what? The people who in most cases champion these communal clashes are the ‘educated’ elites who are indigenes of these communities. They constitute the intelligentsia of these communities and the fulcrum and rallying point for these clashes. They use their education to dig up both the positive and negative histories and stories. They are never in the forefront of the battles but they incite and ignite them. They use their education to galvanise their people into taking up arms against one another. What am I saying? I am saying that education is an unlocking key to so many situations.

Having defined the six major security challenges that I have identified, I shall now go back to the topic of this paper which I told you that I will rephrase:

**Is Education a tool for Addressing Security Challenges?**

In defining and explaining those six security challenges above, I have provided casual answers to this question. I shall now attempt to provide those answers in full. In doing this, I shall rely on only six out of the several definitions of education which I had earlier given. And after my brief explanation, I shall be throwing the question back to you (the audience) to make up your mind.

I said the word education from its original Latin etymology *‘educere’* means ‘to lead out’. If education is to lead out then it presupposes that educated people should not be found in any criminal act, they are expected to lead. But that is far from the case. The application of that education is the issue here. As we used to say, ‘don’t just pass through the university/polytechnic; let the polytechnic pass through you’. How does your school pass through you? The school trains you to become leaders when you graduate. In the school environment, certain conducts are not permissible and you obey the rules and regulations. In fact, the certificates we carry states that we are ‘worthy in Knowledge and Character’. Why can’t you then continue with the standard the school has implanted in you? Why do you deviate from doing that which is good when you leave the school environment?

I also defined education as an ‘act or process of imparting or acquiring knowledge’. The kind of knowledge our Lecturers impart and which we acquire does not include armed robbery, or kidnapping, or illegal bunkering. Our kind of education is such that shows us the good from the bad. Education should, therefore, be a tool for us not getting involved in all these crimes which constitute security challenges to our nation. Our education should define our personae; it should give us a different identity from the illiterates.

Another definition of education describes it as ‘developing the power of reasoning and judgment and generally preparing oneself or others for mature life’. If education truly helps to develop the power of reasoning and judgment, then why do we have educated people getting involved in most of the crimes highlighted above or shall we blame their action on judgmental errors? Education tells us how to think, how to work properly and how to make decision.

‘Education requires instructions of some sort from an individual or composed literature’, that is true. But I don’t know of textbooks on subjects like the A-Z of Armed Robbery or illegal bunkering. So it is safe to conclude that these crimes are not taught by any composed literature and or in any formal institution. Some of the people involved in these crimes simply learn on the job. In fact, people are recruited in some unconventional ways including from our various campuses.

Dr. Nelson Mandela defines education as the great engine for personal development. With education, Dr. Mandela expects the individual to apply what he/she has been taught to develop himself without necessarily looking forward to any hand-outs from the government. With further development an individual is faced with the sense of competition and desire and other such emotions and feelings which one must learn to control. If educated people imbibe this, they would not be giving flimsy excuses such as ‘I joined the crime because of unemployment’ when they are caught engaging in crimes.

Lastly, Albert Einstein’s definition of education is that, it is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think. Education is not just restricted to teaching a person the basic academic subjects like mathematics, computers, geography and history. Education is a much larger term that should train the mind to think about the implication of his criminal acts on families and the nation and the international community.

Back to the micro definition of human security which states that human security is protecting and empowering people at the individual and community levels. If this is done, many factors ranging from inter-ethnic conflicts, regional instability, terrorist attacks and poverty which shape the meaning and content of security would have been drastically nipped in the bud.

What the foregoing means is that the burden shifts back to the government. There is no denying the fact that there is an intrinsic nexus between education, employment and security. The success of the Asian Tigers present examples of the benefits of investing in young people for sustainable development as a way of tackling security challenges. Government must provide an enabling environment for the individual to thrive and be able to fulfil its own obligation to the Society through employment and job security.

Education has always played a pivotal role in the socio-economic life of nations. Investment in education would ultimately culminate in economic growth which in turn would engender a peaceful society.

Studies abound to show that countries with the most highly educated citizens are also some of the wealthiest and most peaceful in the world. Examples are countries like Canada, Finland, Japan, United States of America, Norway and Australia with lower unemployment rate. During the last Presidential Elections in the US, President Obama was not apologetic when he said he wanted to tax the rich the more in order to be able to put more money towards social issues including quality education, so that the American youth/students can be more competitive, design and make good American products through manufacturing noting that doing this, more jobs would be created in the US, and that would bring back jobs that have been shipped abroad to China for economic reason. All the successful countries in the World (G-7 and company) have one thing in common- they invest aggressively in education.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I have in this short paper defined education as well as some of the crimes that constitute security challenges in Nigeria. I have no doubt in my mind that education is the greatest asset that any nation can bestow on her citizens. The degree of access that young people of any nation have to education facilities measures to a large extent the potential of that country for development and national security.

Consequently, I have attempted to see if education or the lack of it has any direct bearing on Nigeria’s security challenges. Unfortunately, and probably due to the so called Nigeria factor, I have not been able to absolve the educated folks from any of the crimes reviewed in this paper. On the contrary, it appears there is a preponderance of educated people in the conceptualization and execution of some of the different crimes earlier mentioned, such as illegal bunkering and armed robbery. However, let me confess that there are no recorded statistics yet to come to empirical judgment on this matter.

My candid opinion is that, although, we may be well educated, but if we lack the meaningful combination of thought and feeling for our fellow citizens, our lives would be incomplete and non-meaningful. Education definitely helps us to develop a meaningful outlook on life. Therefore, critical attention must be given to the education sector so that our schools do not continue to turn out half-baked or unemployable products with its attendant consequences on national security. And that is why I would posit that education is a tool for addressing some of our security challenges because without it, our situation could have been worse. It is an incontrovertible statement that those youth who dropped out of school are more vulnerable to poverty, drug abuse, thuggery, prostitution, and armed robbery amongst others. Consequently, we can reasonably conclude that sound education enhances opportunities, promotes critical and creative thinking and problem solving skills.

Informed decision making which is also a product of sound education is a pre-condition for community participation, food security, healthy lifestyles and peaceful co-existence in societies. The personal development of individuals along with the development of the immediate environment is inseparably linked to the quality of education that a person received. It is the most important factor contributing to the ability of our young ones to live a productive and responsible life without uncompromising allegiance to the sectional interests of their local communities.

Similarly, citizenship education (which is another form of education) will promote and enhance patriotism and allegiance to Nigerian State as opposed to tribal, community or religious interests.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, please permit me to end this lecture with a popular cliché often used in academic environment which says: if you say education is expensive, why not try ignorance.

I thank you for your time listening to me.

**Senator Akinlabi Abdul-Rasheed Olasunkanmi**