

**NOTHERN AGENDA: A CATALYST TO NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION IN
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The paper took a closer look at the negative and clandestine role which the northern part of this country had been playing right from the conception of this country Nigeria to date with the intention of perpetuating their leadership position in the country. The paper also looked at how our Colonial Master (Britain) had not helped matters in the past while a feasible solution to this timed bomb is also proffered.

Introduction

Federal Nigeria had never since her independence had never showed the distinctive mark of a united nation. It had been impossible for her to silent tribal rivalries to achieve that mixture of ethnic/cultural blend required to maintain national unity (Duvalier, 1969). The above quotation is a time honored statement that aptly described Nigeria since 1947 till date. It is important to note that Britain had programmed to grant independence to the ðBabelö they created and the north of Nigeria must be appeased by ensuring that they (the Northerners) control power over the British Babel called Nigeria. This venture was actualized in October 1st 1960.

However, it is imperative to note at this juncture that the ðdo or dieö election of 1959 did not give the north the required majority to form government until Eastern Nigeria (todayö South-East and South-South) came to the rescue.

The writer is therefore convinced that the reason behind all these killings, bombings, civil strifeö and Mayhen is just because the Fulani leaders of the North are not happy and they must be pleased.

On the 15th of September, 2010 the same day President Good luck Jonathan (GEJ) declared his intention to seek the mandate of his party and Nigerians to steer the ship of state for an additional four years. A group described as the Northern Elders forum/Assembly took an advertorial in a national daily addressed to the President and Commanderóin-Chief captioned ðAs you declareö. They proceeded to threaten him. These great Elders who signed that advertorial were mostly awardees who claimed to be honest, dispassionate and deeply care about the continued existence of Nigeria as one indivisible, harmonious and peaceful country. The great Elders saw President Goodluck Jonathan declaration on the platform of PDP (a Northern party) as a signal of danger that could undermine the peace and tranquility

of the nation. They believe that GEJ's candidature would open old wounds of primitive politics where sectional, ethnic, religious and other undesirable primordial sentiments will assume centre stage with attendant displeased consequences. They said quite a lot and warned the president that the peace, harmony and progress of the country or otherwise are in his hands and he would be answerable to God and humanity for his deciding to declare to run for the office of President. All they said plus the threats of Lawan kaita, Adamu Ciroma, Prof. Arigo Abdulahis interviews, the threat of the Director- General of Buhari campaign organization before the election that they would not accept the results of the elections if CPC loses are all happening and nobody is looking in the direction of these so-called Northern Elders Tankyo Yakassi & Co. and all those who laid the foundation for the violence we are witnessing today in Nigeria belongs to the Fulanis of the North as Ahmadu Bello said, "They can say or do anything they please and nothing would happen rather we would all be scared not to offend their sensibilities by complaining". Meanwhile, not a single Northerners (Fulanis) was recorded in history as having been part of the Nigeria they so ardently love to control. In the words of Sir Ahmadu Bello, "The mistakes of 1914", he claimed he saw papa Awolowo in heaven laughing because papa Awolowo fought so hard to convince Zik and others at the constitutional conference of 1957 in London to stand with him and demand that a succession clause be inserted in the constitution (for the independence) so any tribe that is not satisfied with the union could leave. It failed because Zik refused and the colonial secretary ensured that the Northern delegation refused also. (Northern Star Newspaper, Oct. 1959).

Northern Agenda

In April 1952, Sir Abubaka Tafawa Balewa addressed the Northern House of Assembly thus, "the Southern people who are swamping into this region daily in such large numbers are really intruders. Since 1914, the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country. But the people are different in every way including religion, custom, language and aspirations. The Northerners take it that Nigeria unity is only a British intention for the country they created and not for them. In the same year, Sir Ahmadu Bello approached the colonial secretary and said that the northerners would be part of Nigeria on the condition that 50% of the membership of the National Assembly would be given to them. It was accepted by the British and the 1963 census figures were manipulated to justify the concession given. With majority in the National Assembly whatever the North says because lawi of course the ever vulnerable South-East and South-South people (the only true Nigerians) would always be trickily used to achieve this objective.

When in 1956 after the Northerners defeated the motion for independence moved by Chief Anthony Enahoro and were jeered by their Southern colleagues, Sir Ahmadu Bello expressed the disgust of the northerners for associating with the Southern people by saying "what kind of trouble have we let ourselves in for associating with these Southerners? Lord Lugard and his amalgamation are not for us. We shall set up our own and cease to have anything more to do with the Southern people". Just two days later, serious trouble broke out in Sabon Gari, Kano and southerners mainly Igbo's were slaughtered. The Yoruba's of the South.-West who jeered at them in Lagos oddly enough were out of it. Papa Awolowo's reaction to these happenings was in his evergreen speech excerpts of which is "Nigeria is

only a geographical expression to which life was given by the diabolical amalgamation of 1914, that amalgamation will ever remain the most painful injury a British government inflicted on Southern Nigeria. According to Zik "Nigeria is now a political reality, let us bury our differences and build it together"

On October 12, 1960 just eleven days after independence, Sir Ahmadu Bello said that "the new nation called Nigeria should be an estate from our great-grand father Othoman Dan Fodio. He encouraged the northerners to ruthlessly prevent a change of power. The minorities of the North were used as willing tools and the south as conquered territories which will never be allowed to have control of their future". (Parrot magazine 12 October, 1960). Note that southerners were not allowed to join the NPC, the political party of the North then.

In 1964, the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa wanted to whittle down chief Awolowo's influence in the Western Region and found a willingly tool in Chief S.L Akintola. The Prime Minister gave Akintola all the supports to recklessly breach the constitution as it pleased him. That gave birth to the crisis in the Western Region followed by "Operation wet eee" which led to the first military coup of January 1966 that was quelled by General Aguiyi Ironsi, then the pogrom of May 29th, 1966 and a counter coup in July, 1966 in which General Ironsi and Lt. Col. Fajuyi (innocent men) were brutally murdered by the then Capt. T.V Danjuma. The leadership mantle then fell on General Yakubu Gowon. Part of his maiden speech to the nation was "it suffices to say, putting all considerations to rest; political, economical as well as social, the basis for unity is not there or it has been so badly shaken not once but severally".

Winike Briggs, J. Umoren and another Niger Delta person rushed to the North in 1966 to plead with the northerners not to break away after Nzeogwu's coup. The arrogant statement made by former Governor Kures in 2006 about the South-south daring to dream of becoming President of Nigeria was still as clear as a noon day. Dr. Dikko said to Abiola in 1993 that the presidency is not for sale. The Yoruba seem to be a smart tribe in Nigeria with a focus on development for their land and their people only.

The ignorance of the South-East and South- South people who are very forgiving people with enormous liberal hearts ignorantly would be prepared to die for a Northerner who they call their friend and brother but who sees them as instrument to be used to acquire power and then killed whenever they feel unhappy.

Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was right when he said "we are different in too many ways". Our sense of judgement and justice is just not the same and may never be reconciled not with the hopeless unitary constitution dashed to us by Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar. What about the drama when the late President Yar'Adua was ill. History would record that never had a seat-in-head of state been so embarrassed for tribal reasons. History would also record that those who never really fought for the development of Nigeria but have enjoyed her more and held her captive for long are today in the fore front of the struggle to break up Nigeria.

However, if the Fulanis want a national conference, it would be held if they wanted true federalism, so it shall be. The day they decide that Nigeria will become a heaven on earth, so it shall be. At times like this, we must remember the words of our Elders, the Rt. Hon. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe frustrated by the activities of our Northern brothers in 1964 had

this to say, "If this embryo republic of ours must disintegrate, then in the name of God, let the operation be a short and painless one." (Onwudiwe, 2010).

Colonial Intrigue in Nigeria

Our colonial masters came and saw that Africa is a continent made up of divergent cultures, clans, ethics, traditions, religions etc. instead of governing African nations on the basis of established norms, traditions and culture, they used ethnicity as a mechanism to divide and colonize them thereby maintaining dominance over them perpetually, (Blitz, 1965).

In Nigeria, the British colonizers did more than that as they left. On independence, they handed over power to the conservatives from a certain ethnic group in Northern Nigeria which they considered to be brighter and more intelligent than other so called less important ethnic group of the South and this culminated to civil strife, crisis and ethnic clashes in consequence. The non harmonization of African states along ethnic clans had been the architect of coup d'état wars, uprisings and revolutions in Africa (Blitz, 1965). The man Harold Smith is not new in Nigerian history. He was of the architects of colonial foundation that facilitated Nigerian independence in 1960. He emphatically said that their agenda was to completely exploit Africa Particularly. When we assessed Nigeria, we found in the southern region- strength, intelligence, determination to succeed, well established history, complex but focused life style, great hope and aspiration but it was a pity we planned our agenda to give power at all cost to the northerners who seemed to be submissive but somehow silly. Our mission was accomplished by destroying the opposition at all fronts.

The West that initiated the move for the independence was punished for asking for freedom by making it impossible for them to rule Nigeria. Harold Smith confessed that the census results were announced before they were counted. Despite seeing vast land with no human but cattle in the north, they gave the north 55 million instead of 32 million. This was to be used to maintain majority votes and future power bid. He stated that the west without Lagos was the most populous in Nigeria at that time but we ignored that. The north was seriously encouraged to go into the military. According to Smith, they believed that the south may attend western education but future leaders will always come from military background. Their traditional rulers were to be made influential and super human. The northerners were given accelerated promotion both in military and civil service to justify their superiority over the south. Their good plans for their future were truncated. The colonial masters planned to destroy Awolowo and Azikiwe, the West and the East by sowing seed of discord among them. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was tricked into accepting to be the President having known that Balewa will be the main man with power. Awolowo has to go to jail to cripple his genius plans for a greater Nigeria.

However, Harold Smith justified the British agenda of colonialism in Nigeria which he believed was originally to help build Africa after the ruins of slave trade but lamented that the British only looked after themselves and not after Nigerian interest, (Smith, 2010).

A mere observation shows that the British has not yet let go of Nigeria - her wealth, potentials and future. (Smith, 2010). The Caucasian people now assert themselves as the keeper of the "New Age" keys. He therefore said that it is only logical for Europeans to maintain their position of power, scientific superiority, economic exploitation e.t.c. They must continue to perpetuate their lies and falsehood in a bid to destabilize Nigeria.

Nigeria, a great nation was crippled not because of military juntas or corrupt leaders alone but by the British and American who fear for Nigerian great future. Smith confessed that the fear of the place that will be our dumping ground really occupied our mind, (Smith, 2010). He finally submitted that the colonial masters caused a lot of havoc while they were in Africa and planted time bombs when they finally left.

Since Nigeria's independence, the administrations of new internal colonial masters by the fellow Nigerians holding sway in power are doing damage to Nigeria. Instead of detonating the time bomb planted by the British, the north is planting mines. Harlod Smith added that he was loyal to his country and urged Nigerians be loyal to their country leaders and followers alike. "Love your country, you have got the potentials to be great again and the whole world knows this. I profoundly apologized for the above evil done to Nigeria. I can't say sorry enough," (Smith, 2010).

Way Forward

It is obvious that the lack, absence and neglect of the basic conditionalities necessary for the establishment of a true federation, in the fashioning of the Nigeria federal system by the British colonizers had left with it various consequences in the politics of Nigeria.

Based on the findings of this study, it is hereby recommended that the time has come for Nigeria to start seeing the recent spade of bombings, financial inadequacies especially from the federating states, mass unemployment and general insecurity as a national clarion call for return to the drawing board via a national conference that is devoid of any form of political foreign or military interference or bias. Where the issue should be to draft and approve a new democratic Nigerian constitution that will eventually establish a true federation and not amending the existing constitution which was conceptualized by our colonial masters and perfected by the military Juntas and imposed on Nigeria. A constitution that would where possible outlaw the military from unnecessarily interfering in Nigerian politics and finally would reduce the mega power of the central government to a bearable and conventional standard as to allow the federating states a breather.

Besides, we should by now start giving a serious thought to the establishment of a confederation as an alternative should this fragile federal system fails us. To this extent, we should adopt the six geo-political zones as the structure of the new political system of the federation, (Onyejekwe, 2009).

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