

The Condition of the STATE of Nigeria in the Last Seven Years of the All Progressives Congress Government

The health of the STATE in Nigeria is B A D. The health of the state has degenerated in most if not all of its functions that it is at the level bound for the intensive care unit.

The state of Nigeria, using most index measuring its health including and especially the Fragile State Index (FSI) failed, failing and will continue to fail. Accordingly, Nigeria is a FAILED state.

Of the available indexes, the Fragile State Index (FSI) is the most comprehensive. This is in relation to the four Indicators and within the Indicators the twelve areas of the roles of the state in the determination of the health of the state. The four indicators are cohesion, economic, political and social plus cross cutting.

In the Cohesion Indicator are security apparatus, factionalised elites and group grievance; in the Economic Indicator are economic decline, uneven development and human flight and brain drain; in the Political Indicator are state legitimacy, public services and human rights and rule of law and; in the Social Plus Cross Cutting Indicator are demographic pressures, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and external intervention.

With the possible exception of the All Progressives Congress (APC) government functionaries and its supporters, most Nigerians would agree that the health of the state of Nigeria, on the basis of these indicators, began its regressive deterioration in the preceding seven years.

The buck for the deteriorating health of the Nigerian state, assuming the "state" can and should be described as "Nigerian", stops on the desk of the ruling All Progressives Congress and Government led by Muhammadu Buhari GCFR beginning in 2015.

I questioned the "Nigerianness" of the STATE owing to the perspectives that exist on the state. To this extent, it is important to briefly examine the state, within these perspectives, in order to situate the Nigerian genre.

In blaming the APC and its Government as responsible for the failed condition of the state in Nigeria, I will draw attention to an article I wrote few days to the inauguration of the winning party stating my thinking on the Party's antecedence and what would likely occur it took control of the government.

There are three perspectives of the state. The first of the perspectives describe the state as composed of three components or constituents. The three constituents or components that make the state are idea(s), institutions and physical body.

The Idea(s) is the founding ideals and ideas of the peoples constituting the country and thus giving birth to the state. The idea or ideas are the beliefs of the peoples, the visions of the peoples, the country and missions for the attainment of the visions of the country. The idea or ideas, as the collective will of the peoples, is the HEART of the state containing the blood which circulates into the institutions and the physical body in order to give vent to the will of the peoples as one nation under one rule.

The Institutions include the bureaucracies which derive its strength to function from the visions contained in the idea or ideas of the state. The Institutions include the executive, the legislature and the judiciary and within these are the ministries, departments and agencies and/or other institutions that may emerge in the course of the unfolding and unending efforts to provide for the needs of most of the peoples. The Institutions must constantly ensure that in the fulfilment of their mandates they remain within the vision or visions contained in the Idea or Ideas governing the State. The Idea or Ideas is the compass of the Institutions of the state.

The Physical Body is the constituent parts of the country. In the case of Nigeria, the constituents are the seven hundred and seventy four (774) local government councils, the thirty six (36) states and the federal capital seat of Abuja. This is the physical body called Nigeria.

The Idea or Ideas governs the Institutions and the Institutions in turn govern the Physical Body. In an ideal situation – and most situations ab initio are not ideal for Nigeria – the constituents must agree on the Idea or Ideas of the State. In the absence of such ideal, deliberate steps could and should be taken – lots of countries in their effort at nation building have embarked on this journey – in bringing the constituents together to agree on the idea or ideas of the state.

Nigeria did not belong to countries with carefully constructed and constituted Idea or Ideas of the state within which Institutions are built or being built and hence the Physical Body is governed. There have been attempts to reconstitute the state through the construction of idea or ideas. Some of these attempts were partially implemented. Others have been completely jettisoned because of the resistance of entrenched interests. To this extent, the refrain, for the stockholders amongst the stakeholders in the Nigeria project have always been Nigeria-is-a-work-progress.

The failed and failing health of the State in Nigeria is the result of the absence of agreed Idea or Ideas amongst most of its nationalities. The absence of agreeable Idea or Ideas constrained the governance of Institutions in furtherance of the mission or missions of from the vision or visions contained in the State. Consequently, there is systemic and sub-systemic failure of the Institutions' abilities to govern the Physical bodies.

This is about the most comprehensive intellectual discourse of the state available. Other discourses are variants of the state as idea, institutions and/or physical body. For instance,

there is the perspective that views the state as the willingness of its constituents to live together under one roof and one rule. There is another perspective albeit the most popular and dominant perspective that view the state as strictly the coercive arm of the military, intelligence and law enforcement. Other subsidiaries from this perspective are other arms that enforce the decision of the government.

Assuming that Nigeria has one or all of the three types of state, which of the three still exist and perform its function in the Nigeria of the last seven years? Assuming Nigeria has the first type of state comprised of idea(s), institutions and physical body, are all the three working today in symphony? Nigeria has not this type of state in the first place. Therefore there is no talk of this state let alone its health in Nigeria.

Of this type of state, Nigeria has Institutions and Physical Body. Of the Institutions and Physical Body, we have fair knowledge of their health conditions today owing to the diseases inflicted on the Institutions and thus the Physical Bodies, in the last seven years, of the present administration. Most of the Institutions are in the intensive care unit owing to the ravaging diseases affecting them. Of the Physical Bodies, their responses to the ministrations of the Institutions are testaments to their wellbeing.

Arising from the second perspective or the willingness to live under one roof and under one rule, which is a chip off the availability of Idea or Ideas as contained in the first perspective, the events amongst the nationalities, in the last twenty three years of representative rule and, in the debasement that characterised the last seven years of APC rule, are indicative of the contrary. Nationalities would want to check out of Nigeria the Andrew's way. It is ironical to think it is Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, the man presently presiding over the demolished of what is left of the state in Nigeria, as Major General Muhammadu Buhari, that patriotically admonished the likes of Andrews wanting to check out, to stay back in the country so we can salvage it together!

What is left of the third perspective and arguably the most popular perspective of the state - the coercive arms - particularly the military, intelligence and law enforcement are in the conditions of the orchestrated failures making them pitiable and shamelessly shameful in their schedule of defending and ensuring safety of most Nigerians, their properties and in gathering intelligence to facilitate this smooth operations and in the making of policies and programmes. These functions which are performed by most of the hard working men and women of the military, intelligence and law enforcement at huge cost for selves and families have been completely privatised to serve the interests of their elite managers and their political colleagues.

The pains and deaths of most Nigerians occasioned by this orchestrated crises and conflicts are now the pots of wealth from which the elites of the military, intelligence and law enforcement benefit in the name of their preferred nomenclature and work called "security". "Security" is a major growth industries profiting from the pains and deaths of most Nigerians. The state, from this perspective, seldom enforces rules, protect persons

and ensure that the conditions that enable normal life and living exist. Indeed most Nigerians, in the last seven years, have dispensed with this function of the state. They have been advised by those in the know and by their own experience to look elsewhere for salvation.

The functions of the state's coercive and non coercive arms are being outsourced to non-state and non-state armed groups. The Nigerian National Petroleum Company awarded pipeline protection contract worth over N40 billion to Government Tompolo even as the Niger Delta is swimming in the pool of the military, intelligence and law enforcement as Nigeria's number one cash cow. There are swathes of Nigeria's territories under the control of non-state armed groups performing the traditional function of the state including levying and collecting taxes and offering forms of protection for economic activities to go on.

In the last ten months and aside from the numerous thefts that characterised the oil industry, Nigeria is losing over seven hundred thousand barrels of crude oil worth billions of naira daily in the face of the military, intelligence and law enforcement. Thus Nigeria has been unable to fulfil its daily obligation to the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) of contributing one million eight hundred thousand barrels of crude oil into the market. There are daily reports of cases of missing millions and billions of naira in the hands of officials in ministries, departments and agencies of government often attributed to monkeys, snakes and termites. This is even as the agencies of government charged with containing these thefts look on.

The progressive failure of the state, in the last twenty three years, attained grandest scale yet in the last seven years of the APC government. The APC had hitherto promised to wreck the state by making the country ungovernable should the Party not win the 2015 elections. They had put in place machineries to accomplish this threat. What is playing out should not surprise anyone. Even after becoming the government, the varied intentions of coalition partners that formed the APC and their need to carry this out ensured that the state was decimated. The result is the inability of the state to meet up its numerous obligations in the different areas including and especially containing the scorched earth-like theft by its numerous functionaries in the different spheres.

This brings me to the article I cited in the preceding forecasting the direction of the APC government that was about to be inaugurated in 2015. I present excerpts from the article in order to understand the condition of the state of Nigeria in the last seven years of Muhammadu Buhari GCFR and the All Progressives Congress.

In the article I titled "Muhammadu Buhari: Change Lone Wolf?" I argued in part that "the party was supposedly voted into office on the platform of change. The Party's trump cards were Muhammad Buhari, Nigeria's vanquished tribe of opposition parties and the large swathe of disaffected members of the now defeated Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP)..." It was my view then that "beyond the personal triumph of Muhammadu Buhari to which

he admitted to Al Jazeera's Yvonne Ndege and perhaps the clan of disaffected former opposition and ruling party members, nothing else matter. *Not even the Nigerians who supposedly ushered in the new era. Or so it seem.*"

I argued in the article that "the rash of defections from the defeated PDP to the APC demonstrated the reality of this 'change' on the one hand and on the other hand the ideals and motivations of Muhammadu Buhari and those of the individuals he teamed up with to effect the first of the change, wresting power from the ruling party. The defections pointed to the endangered species that is opposition politics in Nigeria. These collectively represented the pull and push factor that will shape the shape of the not-so-clear 'change' Nigerians ushered in with the new 'team'."

I noted that "the use of 'team' was cautious since Muhammadu Buhari carried the lone wolf toga among the team he paired himself with. Buhari was Nigeria's anti-corruption leader of the mid 1980s who was unceremoniously removed from office by the yearnings of those he was purportedly trying to rescue from the throes of corruption."

"By the way, the definition of corruption that resonated in Nigeria is the misuse of funds. Corruption goes beyond the misuse of funds to include all acts that voids public trust for private gain. To this extent, the article's view of corruption chimed with Transparency International's definition."

"Muhammadu Buhari, change's number one advocate, has a clear job description. It is to reinvent governance as the first step to fighting corruption. Reinventing governance means reinstating the contract between people and government. It is important that governance deliver basic needs to most people on a short, medium and long term basis. Governance can only work when institutions begin to function."

"At the moment, institutions in Nigeria are weak and rely on strong personality to make them work. When Barack Obama visited the continent, he admonished its leaders to build institutions and not strong individuals. This is because institutions outlived strong individuals. Muhammadu Buhari's emergence owe to this archaic process that needs to change. Buhari needs to change in order to begin to rebuild and reinvent institutions to make them deliver on their mandate. This is sine qua non to fighting corruption."

"Buhari's credential in fighting corruption may have been enhanced by what transpired in governance since he was removed in August of 1985. What happened since he was ousted from power significantly hardened the terrain for his style of leadership of the 1980s. In the first place, he relied on the ballot box and not the bullet to get his mandate to implement his programme. The process reveals the personality, politics and policies of Buhari. It is no longer the military fiat of the past."

"Getting vital legislations passed takes negotiation, compromise, arm twisting and bargain... The process of legislation takes time. The era of proclamation is over. Buhari did not succeed as a military officer with all the powers that accompanied this. Domestic opposition built around the few non state actors of the period and a dissatisfied if favourable international community was responsible for his ouster in the mid-1980s. What is the indication that he will succeed in the days, weeks, months and years to come followings his inauguration? The institutions scrutinizing his every conduct have widened. We have non-state actors locally and the international community. Even if the national assembly has APC majority, what on earth says that his vision will be shared by other members of his party?"

"Buhari's first impediment is the lack of shared vision between him and his team. One way out of this is to shop for capable men and women outside the cycle and blend them with the 'team' to pursue his vision for Nigeria."

"In the second place, Muhammadu Buhari's view on issues is not different from the bulk of politicians in Nigeria where canvassing votes is not on policies but on sentiments. It is difficult to lay hand on his pronouncement on policy areas such as the economy, corruption, power of the centre, insecurities, military, infrastructures, job creation, diversification, states, local governments and dwindling revenue from oil. It would seem everything that will provide clue to his policy direction has been deferred to when they will unfold themselves on the job. The refusal of his party to field him for the presidential debate did not mask this reality to Nigerians."

"In any case the debate was insignificant to the outcome of previous elections. Without a clear cut policy direction other than the change mantra, what is Muhammadu Buhari going to change? Assuming he identifies the areas, how is he going to do this? Supposing it is corruption, his trade mark, what is his view on corruption? How would he tackle corruption in this new enabling environment?"

"Considering the federal status of Nigeria, Buhari's commitment is to the federal component first. Elected officials in the states and local governments will steer their areas differently. The legislature, judiciary, media and non-state actors are closely watching and monitoring developments. Making the federal component work is a herculean task let alone influencing the rest of the component parts."

"In the third place, Muhammadu Buhari does not have the advantage of age not to talk about the fullness of health. There is a connection between age and health. When Buhari began to wrestle corruption before corruption wrestled him down in his first outing, he was in his 40s and full of health and energy. Nigeria is now a cesspit of problem so overwhelming it requires age and health to stand the rigour of addressing them."

Muhammaḍu Buhari has not the age and health advantage. To this end, he is going to rely on aides whose intentions he does not know and who judging from their antecedents are in it for reasons different from his own. It takes a healthy and energetic person to coordinate characters of this nature."

"Buhari's relationship with his aides even prior to inauguration can be described as a triple entendre. It is their (Buhari and the aides or party co-travelers) ability to leave two impressions on the ground while retaining a third inside them. It is, to say the least, dishonest. The relationship will remain this way even after inauguration. Governed by distrust, it will set the stage for heating the polity and the eventual rancour it will characterise. Governance will take a backseat as each side manifest the third aspects of triple entendre. Nigerians desire for 'change' will suffer. It will create the momentum for the next big unwieldy coalition that will wrestle power from the ruling party. A vicious cycle would have been born then."

"Nigerians mandate is to Muhammaḍu Buhari and for some Nigerians, barring religion, ethnicity, regionalism and other sentiments that were crucial to his winning the election, the vote is for change. When Buhari fails to make the impact, the hammer will descend on him much as it did on Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. The expectation on him is no less high. And indeed Nigerians have been wrongly oriented to expect so much from the federal government, a legacy of military rule's appropriation of powers, making states and local governments mere appendages. It is one slice of corruption foisted on Nigeria by military rule that needs to change. It is a slice of corruption that Buhari's definition of corruption is impervious of."

"Nigerians should be made to know that the states and local governments must work in order to complement the effort of the federal government. It is part of what needs to change among Nigerians. This is not happening now hence the argument about governance. Unless this happens, Buhari's federal government alone cannot rescue Nigeria. The vote against Jonathan and the PDP that brought Buhari and the APC should represent the demand for accountability. The same should also be the case in states and local governments. In other words, Nigerians in states and local governments should demand and hold their elected representative to account. The vote for 'change' did not appear to represent this type of clamour judging from casual and unscientific analysis of the votes."

"One can therefore discern three angles to the process that brought APC's 'change' to Nigeria. The first is Muhammaḍu Buhari, the second is the motley crowd that joined the power platform called the APC and the third is the varied intentions of Nigerians who voted in the new 'team'. In all these, triple entendre is at work."

"Buhari's card for Nigeria is the glimpse of him that few Nigerians had in the 1980s. It is also the glimpse of him that most Nigerians read or were told as he canvasses for their support beginning in 2003 when he joined partisan politics. The glimpse in question was his no nonsense stance on corruption and the war against indiscipline. Nigeria and Buhari have since metamorphosed. The extent that this glimpse of Buhari holds in the new environment for the next four years in satisfying the clamour of the few Nigerians interested in change remains to be seen. For Muhammadu Buhari, barring his true intention in vying for the office, the odds seemed stacked against him."

"For the motley crowd that formed the coalition call the APC, their antecedents tell Nigerians where they truly belong in the clamour to sweep the past of Nigeria away. Indeed if their intention is to sweep the dirt from Nigeria, we have not been told how they intend to do this and where they will bury the dirt. Is their clamour representing policies, personalities or both? Are they in the 'change team' to change the fortunes of most Nigerians for the better or to change their own personal fortunes? Will they support Muhammadu Buhari to do the sweeping and installation of change? Or will they battle and deter him if their visions of change differ? In the event of the latter happening which seems likely considering their antecedents, where will Nigeria be?"

"This brings us to the third angle, the varied intentions of Nigerians. The March 28 vote for Muhammadu Buhari represents different intentions. To truly discern the vote as reflective of change in governance for the better is to claim to have insight into the minds of all the voters. To say it did not reflect a clamour for change is to insult the sensibility of Nigerians who saw in Buhari a chance to reinvent governance. This condition applies to those who voted for religious, ethnic, regional, peace and other factors. To these groups of persons, the clamour for change should not necessarily be material. It should also be emotional and psychological. Therefore regardless of what transpire at the end of the four years contract, the expectation of the varied Nigerians may or may not have been satisfied."

"For the record, Nigerians will agree or disagree about what the future holds for them in terms of qualitative and quantitative change. This is directly linked to the type of change they individually wanted and how soon they wanted this. Muhammadu Buhari is becoming a realist as is typical of most politicians when he warned Nigerians not to expect miracle."

"Nigerians living have booked "an amazing front seat to history", to use CNN's Hala Gorani's word, as they witnessed first the demystification of the Peoples' Democratic Party that once boasted that it will rule for the next one hundred years and second the

beginning of the process that will demystify Muhammadu Buhari and the 'change' pack in the next four years."

"One thing they should agree on is that Muhammadu Buhari is the lone wolf in the elected pack purportedly voted to 'change' Nigeria."

"Time will tell."

Since the All Progressives Congress took the rein of power in 2015, time did indeed tell. After seven years of Muhammadu Buhari GCFR's All Progressives Congress government in which most Nigerians occupied what is truly an "amazing front seat to history", we have witnessed history in the making in the progressive destruction of what was left of the weak and shaky state he inherited in 2015 courtesy of the "change" or "changes" he advertently or inadvertently introduced. We have witnessed history where most things we did not think will ever happen, in the process of governing the country, did happen.

Most Nigerians will hold and bear witness to the fact that Muhammadu Buhari GCFR and his fellow travellers, in the All Progressives Congress executives and legislatures, and the numerous opportunists that plied their trades within the all-too permissive enabling environment they created, in their policies and programmes, ensured that the weak and shaky state they inherited in 2015, spectacularly and successfully failed, in its ability to fulfil its numerous roles for most Nigerians as at August 2022.

Muhammadu Buhari GCFR will hand over a state stripped of any significance, in terms of institutions and physical bodies, willingness to live under one roof and one rule, decimated of the effectiveness of its instruments of coercion and thus failed, to whoever will succeed him come May 29th 2023.

Muhammadu Buhari GCFR will go down in history as the president most Nigerians wished they never had and/or hope to have again.

This is the State of Nigeria, seven years down the road of Muhammadu Buhari GCFR's eight years "change" administration.

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