

BEING TEXT OF SPEECH BY PASTOR ‘TUNDE BAKARE

AT THE STATE OF THE NATION BROADCAST

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THEME: UNVEILING THE TRUE ENEMIES OF NIGERIA.

Protocols

Introduction

Today’s State of the Nation Broadcast is aimed at unveiling the true enemies of Nigeria. Please lend me your ears as we separate chaff from grains, tares from wheat, villains from heroes, and perverts from patriots.

Turn your Bibles with me, if you will, to **Isaiah 5:20-24 (NKJV)**, a text of Scripture that, in my opinion, captures today’s theme, “Unveiling the True Enemies of Nigeria,” in its entirety:

²⁰Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

²¹Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

²²Woe to men mighty at drinking wine,
Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink,

²³Who justify the wicked for a bribe,
And take away justice from the righteous man!
²⁴Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble,
And the flame consumes the chaff,
So their root will be as rottenness,
And their blossom will ascend like dust;
Because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Fellow Nigerians, I welcome you to a new decade in the 21st century. About a hundred years ago, our founding fathers began the quest to build a great nation. The 1920s ushered in the decade of Nigerian nationalism when, for the first time, Nigerians began to embrace the possibilities of nationhood. The frameworks of the Nigerian state had been laid with the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914. However, six years post-amalgamation, our forebears still regarded themselves not as Nigerians but as Edos, Ijaws, Igbos, Kanuris, Hausas, Yorubas, and so on. They still viewed themselves as diverse local tribes under the rule of colonial masters. However, a shift began in the 1920s as the policies of the colonial masters brought economic and social hardships upon the people.ⁱ Under the leadership of patriotic founding fathers, the Nigerian people began to craft a sense of national identity.

In 1923, one hundred years apart from 2023, our next election year, the first Nigerian political party, Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), was established by an illustrious son of a priest, Olayinka

Herbert Macaulay. For those who may not be aware, Herbert Macaulay was the grandson of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, an Anglican bishop from Osoogun (in today's Oyo State) who translated the Bible into Yoruba. Herbert Macaulay took the first steps towards forging a nation in which Nigerians, no matter the part of the country they hailed from, and no matter their tribe or religion, would identify themselves first as Nigerians.

By so doing, Herbert Macaulay became the first of the founding fathers of the would-be Nigerian nation. Spurred by the movement pioneered by this man, a coalition of Nigerians from across the nation came together within one decade to begin the cause of wresting the soul of Nigeria from the stranglehold of colonialism on the path to forging a new nation. Following the leadership of Macaulay, one source states:

The forces unleashed against the British were now diverse, including soldiers who had served in World War II, the media, restless youth, market women, educated people, and farmers, all of whom became committed to the anticolonial movement. Political leaders resorted to the use of political parties and the media to mobilize millions of Nigerians against the continuation of British rule.ⁱⁱ

In the course of traversing the nation and mobilising Nigerians under the aegis of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons

(NCNC), Herbert Macaulay fell ill in Kano and later died in Lagos but not without passing the torch to coming generations of patriots. Notably, the creation of the NCNC in 1944 was a joint effort between the then eighty-year-old Macaulay and the forty-year-old Nnamdi Azikiwe who would go on to become Nigeria's first president in an independent Nigeria Macaulay did not live to see.ⁱⁱⁱ

Where Herbert Macaulay stopped, the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe, H.O. Davies, Ernest Okoli, Margaret Ekpo, Eyo Ita, Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, Tafawa Balewa and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti picked up the mantle. But our founding leaders were subject to like passions just as we are, and they had their moments of doubt. From the young Tafawa Balewa who dismissed the concept of Nigerian unity as “only a British intention,”^{iv} to the equally young Obafemi Awolowo who described Nigeria as “a mere geographical expression,”^v our founding fathers were initially far from convinced about the prospects of nationhood. However, at some point in their respective trajectories, our founders encountered the possibilities of Nigerian nationhood. In those defining moments, they embraced the promptings of destiny and it came into their hearts to build a nation.

It was why Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, as Nigeria's first Prime Minister, would later recall a strong impression from his visit to the United States of America:

“In less than 200 years, this great country [America] was welded together by people of so many different

backgrounds. They built a mighty nation and had forgotten where they came from and who their ancestors were. They had pride in only one thing – their American citizenship.”^{vi}

He would subsequently write to a friend: “Look, I am a changed man from today. Until now I never really believed Nigeria could be one united country. But if the Americans could do it, so can we.”^{vii}

It was why Sir Ahmadu Bello would declare:

“Here in Northern Nigeria...we have people of many different races, tribes and religions who are knit together by common history, common interests and common ideals. [...] Let us forget the difference in our religions and remember [...] the common brotherhood before God.”^{viii}

It was why Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, whose Pan-Africanism earned him the title “Zik of Africa,” despite the challenges he encountered in his quest for a detribalised Nigeria, went on to say:

“Each of our three Regions is vastly different in many respects, but each has this in common: that, despite variety of languages and custom or difference in climate, all form part of one country which has existed as a political and social entity for fifty years. That is why we believe that the political union of Nigeria is destined to be perpetual and indestructible.”^{ix}

It was why Chief Obafemi Awolowo, years after his much-referenced scepticism, became convinced that Nigeria was more than a mere geographical expression, and stirred up the nation with his poetic challenge:

It is a duty that we owe
To our great dear motherland
To enhance her and to boost her
In the eyes of all the world
Egalitarianism is our national watchword
Equality of good fortune
Must be to each sure reward
Liberty and brotherhood
Are the goods for which we'll strive
Plus progress, plus plenty
And all the good things of life

Up, up Nigeria
And take thy rightful place
It is thy birthright and thy destiny
Africa's leading light to be!^x

Unfortunately, the generation of our founding fathers, after laying constitutional foundations, was forced to hand the nation unceremoniously and without proper succession to the next generation following the January 15, 1966 coup. From that time, our quest for nationhood took an even more uncertain path with twists

and turns. History gave us one administration after another: some military, some civilian, and some recycled, but history also gave us one inescapable fact of life – chances, choices and consequences.

Each administration had opportunities to make unique contributions to the emerging nation. There were those to whom history bequeathed the responsibility to preserve the union and to keep the nation together through the test of a civil war. There were those who had the opportunity to map out national development plans and kick-start a transnational infrastructure agenda. There were those who fortune favoured to lead the nation at times of boom and who had the responsibility to make decisions on the best ways to manage our seasons of plenty; there were those who mounted the stage of power at times of austerity and had the onerous task of steering the ship of state amidst fierce economic winds; there were those who had opportune moments to lay the groundwork of Nigeria's foreign policy and to make our nation a force to reckon with on the continent of Africa. Then there were those who were propelled in messianic militancy against the cankerworm of corruption that had begun to consume the fabric of nationhood, and they handed over to those who had, and still have, the opportunity to repair the breaches and rebuild stable democratic foundations. Each generation of leaders inherited a unique set of chances, and, through their policy, governance and value choices, they each crafted their respective legacies. In some instances, they made wise and patriotic decisions; in others, they

made mistakes and misjudgements, some so severe that our nation is yet to recover decades later.

Consequently, one hundred years after the first promptings of nationhood, even as we attain another milestone on this journey, our nation is still in the grip of antagonistic forces. Every Nigerian child who hawks for a living, every Nigerian family in the throes of poverty and generator fumes, every Nigerian who dies moments away from a hospital bed, every Nigerian who is unjustly incarcerated without hope of freedom -- every single short-changed Nigerian is a reminder that we still have hydra-headed challenges to surmount. However, the new decade kick-started by this year 2020 provides us with another opportunity to once more rewrite our national story and shape our trajectory. Therefore, we must learn from our forebears and once again come together as one people to salvage our common patrimony from the grip of the enemies of Nigeria. At this point, you may be asking: "Who or what are the enemies of Nigeria?" Very shortly, I will respond to that cogent question; but first, I would like to make unquestionably clear who the enemies of our nation are not.

Make No Mistake: These are Not the Enemies of Nigeria

A hundred years ago, when the coalition for nationhood brought together a diverse pool of Nigerians, the common foe at that time was the oppressive rule of colonial masters. However, nearly sixty years after our independence, we can no longer blame the colonial masters

for the state of our nation. As a matter of fact, in relation to Nigeria, Britain has long transitioned from being a master to a partner. Therefore, we must not be ambushed by the neo-colonial posturing that former colonialists acting in their national interest are the enemies of Nigeria.

Furthermore, through the decades of our national existence, we have had agitations for self-determination from different tribes; we have seen the Movement for the Actualization for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB); we have seen the Afenifere Renewal Group (ARG) and Ohanaeze Ndigbo; we have seen the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) and Arewa People's Congress (APC); we have seen the Egbesu Boys, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Middle Belt Forum (MBF), and a host of other sectional agitators. As nationalists and patriots, the tendency is to describe sectional agitations as counterproductive to the nation-building imperative. In some cases, we have even gone ahead to proscribe some of these groups because of their methods, but sectional agitators, so long as their activities are for the public good and within the ambit of the law, are not enemies of our nation. They become threats to national stability only when they take to subversive tactics. Otherwise, those sectional groups calling for better representation in the context of true federalism, and for self-determination within the provisions of international law, are not the enemies of Nigeria.

In addition, throughout history, we have seen governments deploy their monopoly on the use of force to silence dissent. We have seen dictators unleash their unique versions of Napoleon's dogs in *Animal Farm* to eliminate opposition and mute criticism. In the defunct Soviet Union, we saw the activities of the KGB; in Germany, we saw the Gestapo in action; amongst various African dictatorships, we saw elite squads terrorise the citizenry. Here in Nigeria, we were witnesses to the atrocities of General Sani Abacha's co-butchers. History records how Abacha's junta assassinated some heroes and heroines of the June 12 struggle – heroines like Kudirat Abiola, who became the lead advocate for the release of her husband, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, and for the actualisation of the June 12 mandate; heroes like Alfred Rewane who was a staunch backbone of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). We witnessed how that oppressive regime terrorised the champions of democracy like Pa Abraham Adesanya, Chief Gani Fawehinmi, Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti and Chief Anthony Enahoro, all of blessed memory; champions of democracy like Pa Ayo Adebajo, Lt.-General Alani Akinrinade (rtd), Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi, Rear Admiral Ndubuisi Kanu (rtd), Dr Amos Akingba, Chief Frank Kokori, and several others. The rationale behind such violent suppression of opposition and dissent is the notion that those who challenge the government are the enemies of the state.

However, let me establish unequivocally that the champions of our democracy are not the enemies of the state. Those who fight for our

freedoms are not the enemies of our nation; they are our heroes as even President Muhammadu Buhari acknowledged when he conferred two of the highest honours in the land: GCFR on Chief M.K.O. Abiola and GCON on Chief Gani Fawehinmi.

Fellow Nigerians, it is in this regard that I sounded a note of warning to the law enforcement agencies over the repression and harassment of journalists and advocates of governance reforms, including the case of Omoyele Sowore. You may dislike their methods, you may not like their politics, they may be thorns in your flesh, but mustering the apparatus of governmental force against those who criticise the government by the words of their mouths or the strokes of their pens is nothing but a petty path of vengeance that will eventually boomerang.

If these are not the enemies of the state, who, then are? I will let the cat out of the bag shortly as there are still others who must be vindicated. In keeping with the opportunities in an interconnected globalised world, millions of Nigerians, old and young inclusive, but predominantly the teeming young population of Nigerians, are connected through mobile telephony and the internet. In the process, they form strong bonds – social bonds of friendship and fun on platforms such as Facebook and Snapchat, collegial and professional bonds on networks such as LinkedIn, conversational bonds on platforms such as WhatsApp, pictorial bonds on platforms such as Instagram, and advocacy and knowledge bonds on platforms such as Twitter.

At any point Nigerians can afford access to data, social media offers them a direct channel through which they can unleash their creativity, express their expectations, and release their frustrations. Beyond these, millions of our young people have turned to social media to engage in profit-making ventures that are legal and moral. This is what living in the 21st century globalised economy entails. With the possibilities inherent in telecommunication, the mobile phone has become a mobile city and we cannot afford to lag behind.

These developments have also provided platforms for unprecedented citizenship engagement. Lest we forget, in 2012, before Save Nigeria Group (SNG) mobilised Nigerians in their multitudes to Gani Fawehinmi Park in Ojota, young Nigerians under the aegis of Occupy Nigeria had deployed social media to highlight the issues and to mobilise early protests in different parts of the country. Lest we forget, in 2013, using #ChildNotBride, young Nigerians, as well as influential Nigerians in the entertainment industry, the likes of Stella Damasus,^{xi} passionately called attention to the plight of our daughters, particularly in the northern part of Nigeria, whose lives and destinies are being wasted by the primitive practice of child marriage. Lest we forget, in 2014, using #BringBackOurGirls, young Nigerians, under the inspirational leadership of patriotic citizens like Dr Oby Ezekwesili, deployed social media in getting the world to mount pressure on the Nigerian government to see to the release of our Chibok schoolgirls who were kidnapped from their dormitories by Boko Haram terrorists. These social media advocates have

maintained the Bring Back Our Girls campaign to press for the release of the remaining Chibok girls as well as Leah Sharibu and other captives who are still being held by terrorists.

Lest we forget, using #EndSARS, young Nigerians succeeded in calling attention to the inhumane and abusive operations of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), thereby compelling the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to commence reforms on the unit. Lest we forget, young Nigerians, the likes of Japhet Omojuwa, Yemi Adamolekun, Chude Jideonwo, Cheta Nwanze, Oluseun Onigbinde, Oluwaseun Osowobi, Nedu Ekeke, Gbenga Sesan, Hamzat Lawal, Bukky Shonibare, Samson Itodo, and a host of others, have aggressively deployed social media to start or support causes that have tilted the balance of power in the direction of the so-called ordinary Nigerian. Lest we forget, some present-day officeholders were once on the other side of the citizenship engagement spectrum. Tolu Ogunlesi's active engagement on social media as a conscientious citizen earned him the trust of President Muhammadu Buhari whom he now serves as Special Assistant on New Media. Malam Nasir el-Rufai, before he became the governor of Kaduna State, led a community of young activists on social media and christened himself a "certified ruffler of feathers."^{xii}

Fellow Nigerians, the fact that some persons have deployed this tool in ways that have been less than honourable does not justify the attempted clampdown on freedom of speech by some legislators who major in minors. I, too, have been a target of social media vitriol. I

have been misrepresented, maligned and falsely characterised by mischief-makers on social media, but I will not support the suppression of the most potent tool for citizen engagement in the 21st century through a misguided Social Media Bill.^{xiii}

Lest we forget, the 1985 locus classicus case of *Arthur Nwankwo v The State* already removed sedition from our laws and instead reiterated that a suit of defamation of character can be brought against those who abuse the right to freedom of expression.^{xiv} Rather than clamp down on expressiveness, which is the lifeblood of innovation, what we ought to do is pass laws that will further empower our teeming young population to not just be constructive users of social media platforms, but to be creators of homegrown solutions able to compete globally in a technology-driven world. To combat abuse, what we ought to do is provide incentives for the proper usage of this tool through reward systems that will encourage the honour code, promote responsible conversations, and discourage dishonourable use.

I, therefore, state without equivocation that these young Nigerians who have found their voices on social media are not the enemies of Nigeria. They are the hope of our nation. They are simply expressing the character of our DNA and the virtues that gave us independence – virtues such as the audacity to assemble as communities, including online communities, and to voice their opposition to corruption and oppression. I assure you that if social media had been invented in the days of our founding fathers, they would have deployed the tool in

resisting colonial rule and fighting for our independence, just as they effectively deployed conventional media such as newspapers to achieve these objectives. Against this backdrop, let me now unveil to you the true enemies of Nigeria.

The True Enemies of Nigeria

A few days from now, on January 15, we will observe Armed Forces Day; a day earmarked to honour Nigeria's fallen heroes in commemoration of the end of the Nigerian Civil War. The same day also reminds us of a sad event in the history of our nation, when, in 1966, young army officers abruptly brought the First Republic to an end through a violent coup d'état and the murder of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa.

Nevertheless, in describing the motivations for the coup, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu made a statement which could just as well have been about present-day Nigeria. In his words:

“Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand 10 per cent; those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as Ministers or VIPs at least; the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles; those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds.”^{xv}

Fellow Nigerians, the true enemies of our nation are found at every level of government, from the local to the state to the federal levels, and in every arm of government. They can also be found on the streets, in households and in the marketplace. The true enemies of Nigeria are those who, paraphrasing the words of George Washington, seek to build their greatness upon their country's ruin.^{xvi} John Addison had earlier foreshadowed this sentiment when he asked the vital question: "Is there not some chosen curse, some hidden thunder in the stores of heaven, red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man who owes his greatness to his country's ruin?"^{xvii}

As it is with the leadership, so it is with the citizenry. Leaders and citizens have their citizenship in common; they are drawn from among us and are a reflection of our basest instincts or our highest ideals at every level of government. In Nigeria, the vast majority of our people regularly take turns perpetuating the cycle of corruption either as beneficiaries or benefactors. These enemies in citizens' clothing are those who choose to be spectators while the nation goes down the drain on their watch; those perverts on the pulpit who hide under togas of godliness to manipulate the vulnerable; those economic behemoths who window dress their underhandedness with *filth*lanthropy; those who are perpetually "not on seat" because they can't "come and go and die;" those who rob, rape, raze, pillage, abduct, murder, dismember in the name of hunger or misguided rage; those who sell their votes or connive with political bandits to short-change their children's children; those who partake of loot and celebrate looters

from the same ethnic group or religious organisation; those who say of the looters, “We know say na thief, but this thief na our thief.” These are the true enemies of Nigeria.

At the local level of government, the true enemies of our nation are those agents of oppression who place excruciating multiple tax burdens on often defenceless Nigerians – the petty traders, okada riders, keke drivers, bricklayers, pepper grinders, carpenters, vulcanisers, mechanics and other artisans – not because they want to amass the proceeds for the benefit of the people, but because they must make remittances to their morally bankrupt political benefactors. These are the true enemies of Nigeria.

At the state level, the true enemies of Nigeria are those state governments that feed fat on unaccounted-for security votes; those who deploy the paraphernalia of office in their selfish interests rather than in the service of the people; those who connive with zonal political oligarchs to personalise and privatise the state; those who deploy the force of state to quell dissent; those who paralyse local governance structures in such a manner that discredits genuine arguments for restructuring and devolution of powers; those who give critics an excuse to postulate that if state governments are already abusing the little power they currently wield, what will they do if we devolve yet more powers to them? These power-drunk state officials are the true enemies of Nigeria.

At the zonal level, the enemies of Nigeria are those who have perverted their influence and turned the states within their zones of influence into personal estates. They are the political puppeteers who rig the system to enthrone their stooges and use them to corner resources and opportunities. They are the political bandits and pseudo-democrats who are maniacal in merchandising the will of the people, from masterminding vote-buying to engineering seemingly spontaneous outbreaks of political violence. These are the true enemies of Nigeria.

At the federal level, the true enemies of Nigeria are in every arm of government. In the judiciary, they are judges who pervert justice and auction judgements to the highest bidder.^{xviii} In the legislature, they are those legislators who rob the nation “under the guise of constituency projects”^{xix} and are quick to pass laws that undermine our national freedoms, thereby threatening our national stability. In the executive arm of government, the enemies of our nation are those who deploy the machinery of state against hapless citizens; those who serve self rather than the people; adversaries clad as advisers who could inadvertently destroy the legacy of any president through fabricated facts and contrived counsel in a bid to protect their political careers.

These are the true enemies that we must stand up against, not the angry young fellow who throws salvos at Mr President hoping to get a few retweets, not the journalist who stares the government squarely in the face, and certainly not the dissenting voice in the midst of

sycophants. Like it was with our founding fathers who began to converge one hundred years ago as one powerful voice of freedom, the thrust of the new decade that commences this year 2020 must be to, once again, come together as one people, to wrest the soul of Nigeria from the jaws of the bear and the mouth of the lion, and to begin to build a great nation.

The Thrust of Nation-Building in the Decade of the New Nigeria: Crafting the Buhari Legacy

Fellow Nigerians, this is the decade of the New Nigeria. In this decade, we have an opportunity to turn the tide of our nation and actualise the dreams of our founding fathers if we make the right choices. I believe it is no coincidence that President Muhammadu Buhari has the privilege of presiding over the nation at the turn of the decade, one hundred years from the rise of Nigerian nationalism. I believe a rare opportunity has been thrust upon his shoulders to make history in the service of the fatherland. Therefore, in the first three years of this decade, which coincide with the last three years of his administration, the president must take the lead in building a legacy that will facilitate the emergence of the Nigeria of our dreams. In this regard, three focal objectives must drive governance in the appropriate balance.

First, this government must be driven by strong leadership. In July 2009, addressing the Parliament of Ghana in Accra, Ghana, President Barrack Obama stated, “Africa doesn’t need strongmen, it needs

strong institutions.”^{xx} Whereas this admonition was channelled against the scourge of oppressive dictatorial governments that plagued Africa after the end of colonialism and oversaw the mismanagement of the fortunes of the continent, it has been taken out of context.

A strongman is different from a strong leader. The dictionary definition of a strongman is “a leader who rules by the exercise of threats, force, or violence.”^{xxi} The likes of Sudan’s Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe, Uganda’s Idi Amin Dada, Zaire’s Mobutu Sese Seko – these were strongmen. While some of them played notable roles in freeing their countries from colonial rule, their records of governance leave little to be desired. However, Africa *does* need strong leaders; men and women who will build strong institutions. Therefore, **providing strong leadership** must be the first pivotal agenda of President Muhammadu Buhari’s government in the next three years.

Providing strong leadership means determining the most pertinent objectives of nation-building and, like a laser beam, converging all the energies of state onto those critical areas. It means results-oriented governance in which **people, policies, programmes** and **processes** are retained in government only to the extent that they contribute to **productivity**. It means now, more than ever, being not just the Commander-in-Chief but also the Unifier-in-Chief of an increasingly fragmented and disillusioned populace; to offer hope, inspiration, compassion and pathways to new possibilities; to invoke

the spirit of unity, faith, peace and progress codified in our Coat of Arms. Strong leadership also means accepting dissent and listening to contrarian views while making decisions in the best interest of the Nigerian people. To cultivate strong leadership, the leader must surround himself or herself with the best, brightest and most competent, particularly those who are more intelligent than oneself. The leader must also be willing to take the blame for failure and share the credit for success. Very importantly, providing strong leadership means that the Nigerian government must be ready to confront the true enemies of our nation headlong and to free the Nigerian people from the grip of her oppressors. We must stop calling treasury looters generous and noble. They are not. They are economic terrorists and the true enemies of Nigeria.

Indeed, the need for strong institutions cannot be overemphasised. Therefore, upon the foundation of strong leadership, the second focal objective in these last three years of the Buhari administration should be to **strengthen institutions**. We must strengthen institutions of justice by adherence to the rule of law and respect for court judgements. Those who desecrate the courts must be brought to book to restore the sanctity and independence of the judiciary. We must also strengthen institutions of accountability by enforcing transparency in government revenue and expenditure. Furthermore, we must strengthen institutions of human development by laying the groundwork for effective education and healthcare policies. Finally, we must strengthen institutions of economic growth through geo-

economic re-organisation^{xxii} as well as pragmatic fiscal and monetary policies. To strengthen these institutions, we must codify best practices while embracing innovation. We must also run inclusive structures that bridge transgenerational and gender gaps to ensure that the baton of success is passed on from one generation to another.

Finally, as the government of President Muhammadu Buhari ushers us into the second decade of the 21st century, the third pivotal objective of governance should be **to build a strong post-Buhari legacy facilitated by accurate succession**. In this regard, Nigeria must learn from some of the best succession examples in recent history. Of note is the legacy of Deng Xiaoping, a second-generation Chinese leader who laid the foundation for today's China. Xiaoping flagged off the "Four Modernizations"^{xxiii} programme, which searched around the country for leaders who, in his words, were "revolutionary, younger, more knowledgeable, and more specialized."^{xxiv} In three decades, that programme gave China a succession of leaders who piloted China's economic transformation, including the current president, Xi Jinping. Without their foresight, we would not be running to China today to finance our short-sightedness.

We must also learn from Nelson Mandela who stepped aside after one term, but not without positioning the likes of Thabo Mbeki and Cyril Ramaphosa. We must learn from the success story of Singapore, whose former prime minister, Goh Chok Tong, once said:

“Mr Lee Kuan Yew has always emphasised political succession, and when I took over, likewise, I planned for succession...Prime Minister Lee is also working very hard to plan for succession.”^{xxv}

Therefore, even as we build institutions of democratic governance, a key responsibility that history has bestowed on President Muhammadu Buhari at this turning point in our journey to nationhood is to institutionalise systems of accurate succession that will build and sustain the Nigeria we desire. THIS IS A TASK THAT MUST BE DONE.

Conclusion

Fellow Nigerians, our founding fathers’ dreams must keep us awake to our responsibilities as co-builders. As they rose to the occasion one hundred years ago, we must rise from our slumber at the turn of a new decade to become architects of a new coalition that will facilitate the emergence of a New Nigeria. We must decide whether we belong to the camp of true enemies or true patriots; enemies who engage in counterproductive blame games; who succumb to the forces of division; who yield to the primordial sentiments of ethnicity, religion or even partisanship; or patriots, people “who love and support”^{xxvi} their native land; who, one hundred years since the first building blocks of a coalition for nationhood were laid, will take it upon themselves to salvage the vestiges of national unity and forge a common patriotic front against the enemies of Nigeria.

Now is the time to put aside religious, zonal, ethnic and other differences and to speak with one voice against the enemies of our common patrimony. Now is the time to come together, from Lagos to Maiduguri, from Oyo to Bayelsa, from Aba to Abuja, from every nook and cranny of our nation, to build a New Nigeria, a New Nigeria that works for every Nigerian – a Nigeria where no child goes to bed hungry and no child is left out of school; where our homes, schools, streets, villages, highways and cities are safe and secure; where our hospitals are well-equipped life-saving institutions; where no youth is unemployed and our young men and women are job creators; where businesses thrive on innovation and ideas are facilitated by functional infrastructure and cutting-edge technology; where no part of our nation – North, South, East or West – feels marginalised, and every Nigerian is proud to say “I am a Nigerian.” I firmly believe we are at the cusp of winds of change that will usher in the New Nigeria; a New Nigeria that will lead Africa to greatness, until the once upon a time Dark Continent becomes the world’s leading light.

Thank you for listening; God bless you, God bless our beloved nation, Nigeria, and God bless the continent of Africa. Happy New Year to you all.

Pastor ‘Tunde Bakare

ⁱ See, for instance: Williams, Gavin. "Garveyism, Akinpelu Obisesan and his Contemporaries: Ibadan, 1920–22," in: Ranger T., Vaughan O. (eds) *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 1993. Accessed December 24, 2019. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-349-12342-1_4

ⁱⁱ "Nigeria as a colony." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Accessed December 24, 2019.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria/Nigeria-as-a-colony>

ⁱⁱⁱ Shillington, Kevin. *Encyclopedia of African history*. New York [N.Y.]: Fitzroy Dearborn. 2012. See pg. 200.

^{iv} "NIGERIA: The Black Rock." *Time*. December 5, 1960. Accessed December 24, 2019.

<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,895071,00.html>

^v Awolowo, Obafemi. *Path to Nigerian freedom*. London: Faber. 1947. See pg. 47.

^{vi} See iv

^{vii} *ibid*

^{viii} Harnischfeger, Johannes. *Democratization and Islamic Law: the Sharia conflict in Nigeria*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag. 2008. See pg. 61

^{ix} Azikiwe, Nnamdi. *Zik a selection from the speeches*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press. 1961. See pg. 20.

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