

Hope '23 & the Gathering Storm
Tim Akano,

"I am eager to go, it has been tough ruling Nigeria".... President Mohammed Buhari.

"We don't want money. President Buhari knows what our demands are" Terrorists, the Abuja-Kaduna train (April 7th 2022)

"Boko Haram & Fulani Bandits are Northern Nigeria FREEDOM FIGHTERS"- Adamu Garba, Youth Progressive Party

"2023 Elections may not be held in Nigeria due to heavy tension"..... The UK

"Terrorists are planning to attack FCT, Lagos and 3 other states"... NSCDC

"President Buhari was not aware of the terrorist plan to kidnap him until I told him"... El-Rufai

"I cannot implement the 2014 Constitution Conference report due to political exigencies".... President Goodluck Jonathan

Nigeria is on the brink again. This time, the stakes are higher, with human lives, born and unborn on the table. The wages of indecisiveness, indifference and inertia is death. The greatest demographic disaster in the history of the world happened to the Native Americans who first settled in what is today the United States some 15,000 years ago. Their pre-contact population of about 112 million in 1492 has been reduced to less than 7 million or 2% of the US population today through warfare, enslavement, societal disruption, targeted viruses and Dawes Act. The Red Indians have become an endangered species, rendered into ghosts in limbo, caused by Caucasians who stole their land, limbs and lives. Price of inertia.

Similarly, inertia was the reason why 6 million European Jews were exterminated in the Shoah (holocaust) from 1939-1945. Rumours of Hitler's secret plan against the Jews tagged "The Final Solution" was rife, but most of the Jewish elites were indifferent. By the time WW2 ended, the Jewish population in Europe which stood at 15.3 million had been halved and was now about 9.5 million.

Evil exists in the world. And evil is presently dancing 'o lo, lo, lo Buga' in Nigeria. He who is crouched is on his own. The lesson of history, if any, is that if you don't take timely actions to neutralise evil, evil will have you for dinner. It is a dog-eat-dog world where only the paranoid survive, people with a 'Pascal' mentality.

Pascal, an MKO Abiola loyalist, posed a poser on the 8th of June 1998, the day Abacha kicked the bucket: "Now that General Abacha had mysteriously expired inside Aso Rock, what if Abacha's killers go ahead to balance the equation by killing Abiola's, too. What should be our plans A, B and C?"

Pascal Law is about the art and science of identifying risks, mitigating factors and taking appropriate actions to get your desires and prevent what you detest from happening. Sadly enough, Pascal's gang dismissed the question as juvenile thinking. Someone in the group opined that if MKO died in prison, the CIA and America would neutralise the government! Really? As it were, the worst happened exactly a month later on the 7th of July, 1998, MKO

Abiola mysteriously died in captivity. Pascal's friends regrettably remembered Pascal's poser— but it was too late— the egg had been broken, their sorrow irreversibly sealed and delivered. Had MKO Abiola himself even reasoned like Pascal, the outcome of Hope '93 presidential election would have been different. A former president stated that he had a private meeting with candidate Abiola before the election and requested from MKO an actionable plan to overcome the maradonic President IBB. But MKO dismissed the idea that IBB could become his Achilles heel. By the time MKO Abiola realised the import of “Pascal-mentality”, it was too late. Again, the price of inertia.

A perfect storm is gathering in Nigeria as I write. I can almost smell it. If the elites remain indifferent or fail to put on the “Pascal hat”, Nigeria may become a combination of Afghanistan (politically), Venezuela (economically), Somalia, (socially) and Lebanon, (religiously). Anyone who still underestimates the capacity of the terrorists or what one Adamu Garba now called Fulani Freedom Fighters (FFFs) to cause mayhem in Nigeria is delusional. FFFs are “threats –keepers”: they say what they will do and do what they say. Today, Pascal would like to ask: what if FFFs carry out their new threats, what are the plans A, B, & C- for you, your family and Nigeria”?

Gathering Perfect Storm... .

Nigeria's political horizon is fraught with irreconcilable differences: the Fulani ethnic plans to continue to rule Nigeria for another 8 years after 8 disastrous years of the greatest Africa's Fulani hero of all time: PMB. The South and Middle Belt leaders consider this a red line. The BAT's South West strongly believes it is their turn based on the unwritten gentleman's 'agreement' they had with PMB in 2014. Similarly, PO's Igbo ethnic group considers the two options above as sour grapes and feels if PO is not crowned anyhow, then Nigeria can go to blazes. The die has been cast, the tripod is crumbling, and each of the three major ethnic groups has crossed the Rubicon. Each wants her own “bastard” installed as the next Nigeria's captain in 2023.

Economically, Nigeria's debt service ratio is currently the worst in the world, the excess crude Account that could boast of \$43 billion during the OBJ regime is now in pepper red, The Naira value is going south per second while prices of energy have hit the rooftop with diesel selling for N820 per litre and all essential commodities are fast disappearing from the shelves in the malls. Nigeria is owing close to 50 Trillion and has no sufficient revenue for repayment of interest not to talk of the principal.

Nigeria's golden hen, the NNPC is technically bankrupt. In a word, if Nigeria is an American corporation, it would have filed for Chapter 11 (bankruptcy) by now. This looks like “Venleb colour”: a convergence of Venezuela and Lebanon crises in one country.

To compound the situation, the CBN Governor submitted that 81% of FDI left Nigeria in the last three years. This explains why CBN probably was unable to pay Emirates Airline just \$85 million of her funds awaiting repatriation from Nigeria. Meanwhile, UAE issued 24,662 new business licenses in Q1,2022 alone representing 58% increase over Q1,2021. Nigeria's loss is UAE gains. Dollar, too, has JAPA or so it seems!

“JAPA Epidemic”: is the new slang for the exodus of youths overseas. 99% of the educated youths desire “Japa” today. Worse still, adults are not excluded from the Japanisation agenda I was told of a man who has acquired 4 citizenship and residence permits: UAE,

Grenada, Canada and America. According to him, he is just being "PASCAL-WISE". How do we re-industrialize Nigeria without the youth's energy? In all this, public treasury looting is not abating as close to N200 billions fraud had been traced to 2 Ahmeds a case of Ahmedgate : Ahmed Idris, the former AGF and Ahmed Saleh the Registrar of the Supreme court. Which is about 30% of what the universities lecturers need to end the ongoing strike and get the students back to school after almost 200 days of idleness. Also, what the two Ahmeds stole is enough to create 50 millions Tech Start-ups at \$10k per youth. The multiplier effect would have removed the fear of the outbreak of #ENDSARS2 completely.

Nigeria's case is as complicated as water, as different as 144, as miserable as sin, as tragic as possible and as hopeful as a smile.

Water is complicated. Physicists tell us that under certain conditions, colder water could heat up faster than warm water and conversely, hot water freezes faster than cold water. Nigeria is just as complicated. However, at the same time, Nigeria is as unique as 144. Aside from the fact that 144 is a perfect square, the sum of its digits is also a perfect square (9), the product of its digits is also a perfect square (16), and its reverse is also a perfect square (441). Furthermore, concerning the reverse, while $144=12^2$, $441 = 21^2$.

Nigeria has everything required to become the most successful nation on earth but she is suffering from constant miscarriages of dreams and hopes. Nigeria's situation is miserable as she is the only country in the world whose resources have built 9 countries while remaining unbuilt. If you repatriate all the Nigerian money from the UAE, the Emirates will go bankrupt. Ditto Switzerland. Saudi Arabia, Israel, the UK, the USA, China, Lebanon and India among others also feed on Nigeria's resources directly and indirectly. Nonetheless, a breakthrough is not impossible if we wear our "Pascal-Hat".

The 7 Pascal Questions today :

1 What if Hope '23 turns out to be like Hope '93 (Annulment), or Hope '15 (stagnation/retrogression) or Hope'83 (a military or a terrorist take over) or Hope'66 (a civil war/secession) The next Council of State Meeting needs to interrogate PMB to hear from the horse's mouth respectfully: where is Nigeria headed under his watch.

2 What if PMB flees the villa like the former Afghanistan President, Ashraf Ghani, or what if Buhari and el-rufai get kidnapped by FFFs and Abuja and Aso Rock fall under the control of FFFs, a new Caliph takes over as Nigeria's President? What if the new Abuja Caliphate government is immediately recognised as Nigeria's de-facto government by Afghanistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the UK? Then what if this begets the simultaneous declaration of independence by hitherto autonomous republics that made up Nigeria pre 1914 amalgamation like what happened in the defunct USSR where 15 republics declared their independence simultaneously from the collapsing USSR in 1992?

3 What if elections cannot take place in 2023 as envisaged by the UK and an interim government is installed, led by a popular Pentecostal Pastor as a placeholder for Nigeria's 16th President? What are the implications of postponing the 2023 elections on the economy, FDI, businesses, education, and national stability? What if there is an #ENDSARS2?

4 What if FFFs carry out their threat and invade Lagos? What if the terrorists are already in Lagos/Ogun forests awaiting the "hour-zero" to unleash Dante's inferno? The population

displacement rate judging by the Syria and Ukraine experiences is about 20%. 50 million Nigerian refugees will collapse the entire West African economic infrastructure. The total population displacement of 72 million in both WW1 (12 million) and WW2 (60million) refugees would pale in comparison to what will happen if Nigeria implodes. Consequently, every country that will be over- flooded if Nigeria's dam bursts, should intervene now by compelling PMB to arrest the looming danger.

5 What if it is true that PMB was not aware of the FFFs threat to kidnap him until El-Rufai told him? What does that say about the C-in-C's capacity to protect lives and property vis-a-vis his entire security architecture? Why has PMB refused to unleash Tuncano jets on the terrorist as admonished by El-Rufai? Or, is someone or are both, playing a chess game with 220 million lives? Or is it a case of blood being thicker than water?

6 What if it is true that the President is truly tired as he said? What if the Bandits are right that they had a pact with the PMB government? But what kind of MoU could the President have with terrorists?

7 And what if common sense prevails: what if the critical stakeholders wake up from their apathy, and call for a peaceful NATIONAL EMERGENCY ELDERS DIALOGUE (NEED) to hold the first week of October 2022 in Aburi, Ghana to thrash out the Nigeria Question? Celebrating independence day in Abuja this year is a game whose stakes are worth N100 million, provided you are lucky to get the old rate from the kidnappers!

The Bermuda Triangle Theory

The Bermuda Triangle, also known as the Devil's triangle located in the southern coast of the USA, has been the location of strange disappearances of ships and planes since the mid 19th century. While some suspect supernatural forces as the reason, others think there must be some magnetic fields that interfere with the compass and positioning devices. Besides swallowing ships and aeroplanes, the Bermuda triangle sometimes makes captains go mad like in the case of Captain Donald Crow Hurst in 1969. Nigeria is the second Bermuda triangle: while the first Bermuda swallows ships, planes, captains and passengers, Nigeria swallows dreams, and visions and wastes her citizens' potential. The same way ship captains turn mad in the Bermuda triangle is the same way Presidents turn mad once they enter Aso Rock.

As the nation's ship is warming up, preparing for yet another landmark voyage, we need to critically interrogate why the past 15 voyages ended in monumental shipwrecks. In the Bermuda triangle, the problem is neither the captain nor the ship, but something structural is fundamentally wrong with the triangle.

The reason why there has been stagnation in Nigeria in the last 40 years is that in a multi-ethnic, multicultural, post-colonial democracy like Nigeria where what is at stake is an Elephant, not a bush-rat, a presidential candidate needs to win a percentage of the votes cast in 2/3 of the states of the federation together with securing colonial masters backing i.e. the BAG-F (Britain, America, France and Germany). This compels the winner to go into an unthinkable pact with multiple power bases internally and externally which requires having breakfast with Mr Devil in the morning, lunch with his first cousin in the afternoon and dinner with his eldest son in the night to get their endorsement and block votes. This renders the President and commander-in-chief impotent. Why was OBJ unable to compel certain retired

military Generals to appear at the Oputa panel when invited and why was he helpless when Sharia law was introduced in some states in the North which was a violation of Nigeria's secular constitution? Why did BAG-F withdraw their support for GEJ's 2nd term election plan? Why is PMB unable to call the terrorists to order although they have embarrassed him openly by attacking his convoy and Brigade of Guard? To win the KKKL (Kano, Kaduna, Katsina and Lagos) states, for instance, the price to pay to the power broker is one kidney plus three right fingers! To get BAG-F full backing, it is one right eye. Therefore the President is no longer the person you used to know as a friend, uncle and even husband; behold!! he is a new creature, and the PRICE he paid for his enviable PRIZE is stupid: 2/3 of his body organs have been harvested to procure the victory, but they don't tell! Even though he has eyes he cannot see when Britain's interest conflicts with Nigeria's core interest! Ask GEJ to explain the meaning of "political exigencies".

The 4 immutable Building Blocks in nation-building

Building Block 1: Homogeneity .

Homogeneity + Democracy + visionary leadership = transformation. The Biblical Tower of Babel building under Nimrod was made possible to an extent when the people spoke just one language- Chaldaic. But when God turned the languages into 72, there was confusion galore. The Tower of Babel city which stood at the heart of the vibrant metropolis of Babylon in what is today Iraq remains unbuilt due to a lack of elite consensus arising from multiple languages and worldviews. There are four major variables: ethnicity, religion, language, cultural affinity or nationality. For reasonable transformation to occur, homogeneity in at least two variables is required. All the smartest nations worldwide are configured around this theory. Take Japan, for instance: 99% are culturally polytheistic, 98% have Japanese ethnic extraction, 70% are Shinto religiously, and 100% speak one language: Japanese.

China: Han ethnic group represents 92% while religiously, the Buddhists comprise 18% while the atheists or unaffiliated persons are 52.2%. Consequently, the 5.1% Christian and 1.8% Muslims are not strong enough to form a quorum on national matters.

Regarding Russia, 77.7% are ethnic Russians who are culturally 100% of European descent, while religiously, about 70% are either members of Russian Orthodox Churches or Christians.

Germany is 86.3% Germans. Spain is 84.7% Spanish. Saudi Arabia is 60.7% Bedouins and 93% Muslim. South Korea is 99.99% Koreans ethnically and linguistically. India is 72% Indo-Aryan and 80% Hinduism religion-wise. Almost all the 44 nation-states in Europe are structured along this law, Christianity (especially and essentially, Catholicism) was the state religion and the homogenous building block around which Europe civilization was built.

Mr Peter Obi failed to put things in perspective when he travelled to Egypt to study how General Sisi has transformed Egypt in 7 years. Egypt is 99% Egyptian both in ethnicity and nationality, 95% are Sunni Muslims, and 100% speak Arabic.

This made "Arab spring" possible and successful in Egypt and "#ENDSARS" impossible in Nigeria. General Sisi has done for Egyptians in 7 years what 8 Generals/ Heads of States have not been able to do for Nigerians in 60 years. Building elites' consensus is possible in Egypt, unlike in Nigeria where Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution, Vision 2000, Vision 2010, Vision 2020, 7-Points Agenda, 2014 Constitutional conference and Almajiri School among others – all failed due to lack of elite consensus. Senator Kashim

Shettima merchandised his wholesale ignorance on nation-building when he arrogantly dismissed conversation on restructuring Nigeria as madness. This shows how intellectually malnourished Shettima is. The last time the North witnessed rapid transformation was under Sir Ahmadu Bello's regional government. Since 1966, the North has been going down, and today it is the poorest region in the world. Why has no leader (Shettima inclusive) delivered good governance in the North in 50 years, if all Nigeria needs, according to Shettima, is "good governance". Good governance and functional structure are like Siamese twins, you cannot have one without the other.

Building Block 2 :

Heterogeneity + Democracy + 70% Veto Power by one ethnic/nationality or religious Group i.e. the Malaysia Model.

Malaysia, like Nigeria, is standing on a tripod: Malaya, Chinese and Indians. But Malaysia managed to build consensus around Islam as the official religion. More importantly, during the first reign of the autocratic Mahathir as Prime Minister, he introduced the Hak Keistimewaan Orang Melayu law which indirectly put Malaya in the driver's seat permanently with veto power over land and political matters. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle than for a Chinese or an Indian to become the Prime Minister of Malaysia today or forever. Though legally possible, technically impossible. Without a doubt, what is going on in Nigeria today is geared toward replicating the Malaysia model where one ethnic group is deliberately empowered with a veto power politically, economically, religiously and militarily. The "brilliant minds" that authored the proposal for the establishment of the Cattle colony, Ruga, Livestock Program, and Waterway Bill for PMB's implementation are looking for a way to achieve the 70% Veto power in favour of a particular ethnic and religious group, similar to the unfair advantage which the Malaya enjoy in Malaysia. But Nigeria is different: that agenda has failed and the "masterminds" don't have an exit plan as the indigenous ethnic groups are awake. There is an ORDER in the emerging CHAOS: either the bandits have penetrated the government or they are the government or they have the government in their pocket. The terrorists and their sponsors mean business but it is a monkey business!

Building Block 3 :

Heterogeneity + Democracy + Decentralisation = sustainable mega transformation .

In a situation where pure homogeneity or 70% veto power is impossible, as we have in the USA, UK, Canada, and Switzerland, mega transformation can only happen when power is generously decentralised either in a loose federation or confederation. For transformation to happen, it must be owned by the people who see themselves as one nationality or ethnic group or nation-state. Consequently, the people are willing to power their progress with their sweat, blood and kidneys.

The Nigeria Model is Democracy + Unitary governance + heterogeneity =

Underdevelopment + circular crisis. This is why Nigeria has remained ungovernable and unbuildable like the Tower of Babel city. If Nigeria's problems were economic and not structural like PO once opined, the brilliant Dr Ngozi who was the de facto Nigeria President under GEJ (de jure) could have solved the economic challenges. If Nigeria's problem were a lack of honest leadership, the worst enemies of Tafawa Balewa, Shehu Shaghari and Umaru Yar'Adua would testify that they were incorruptible leaders. If Nigeria's problems were lack of visionary leadership, OBJ had a vision, capacity and patriotism. If you think Nigeria needs charismatic leadership to develop, no one can be more charismatic than IBB- someone who

foiled Dimka's coup without carrying a weapon- just ordinary smiles from his gap-toothed lips!

Building Block 4 :

Heterogeneity + Benevolent Dictatorship + Visionary Leadership= Unsustainable transformation.

This was the Yugoslavia and USSR model. Yes, a nation can make modicum progress in a heterogeneous society under a dictator, visionary leadership who uses maximum force to get citizens to fall in line, but it is unsustainable. President Tito did this in Yugoslavia but as soon as he died, Yugoslavia broke into 7 antagonistic countries. USSR too was kept together by sheer force, it failed despite the strong threat from Russia that USSR was indivisible (sounds familiar?). Libya under Gaddafi made progress but the LIBYAN QUESTION immediately re-surfaced after Gadhafi's tragic death. Libya has since remained a lawless country. This is why the NIGERIA QUESTION is better tackled when the remnants of CLASS '66: OBJ, Gowon, TY Danjuma, IBB, Buhari, Ebitu Ukiwe, Alani Akinrinade, Gausau etc are still alive, if not, Yugoslavia's experience will be child's play. The CLASS '66 are the architects of Nigeria's dysfunctional structure, and if they desire a peaceful stay at the departure lounge, they must be bold enough as soldiers to admit their mistakes: the house they helped design is leaking, falling apart and no longer habitable, as every Nigerian wants to "JAPA"!

CONCLUSION :

Peeping through the window from the Re-Work Nigeria train station, where there are only a few of us left, I can see that about 105 million Nigerians have purchased the lottery tickets at the Hope '23 train station, queuing behind their respective favourite presidential candidates. I see the "Batists", the "Obidients", the "Atikulators". Wishful thinking and quick-fix mentality victims! The noise is so massive that one begins to wonder if Nigeria's much-awaited Messiah has suddenly appeared from Jupiter. Hope '23 is the modern-day Tower of Babel, a 21st-century stairway to heaven.

In 1945, after WW2, some Americans, seeing the frustrations, hopelessness and helplessness of the Jewish people after the holocaust, came up with a recommendation for the creation of a separate state in America for the Jewish people as a solution to their homelessness and statelessness. The Jewish leaders thanked the promoters of the idea but respectfully rejected the offer. The Jews insisted that even if it took another 50 years they would continue to struggle for the establishment of their own country in their ancestral home in Palestine rather than accepting a Greek Gift. Behold, three years later, on the 14th of May 1948, the State of Israel which is now the world's 5th strongest Military power was created from the ashes of the holocaust. Nigeria has remained stagnant for 40 years and we still recommend the same medication: "no be juju be that? The truth is, the captain that would drive Nigeria's ship across the Bermuda triangle successfully has not been born. It is not if, but when, will Nigerians eat the FROG of Decentralisation . However, the sooner we swallow the frog the better because every four years, the frog gets fatter, becoming more complicated to swallow! Can anyone mention just one plural country among the 193 countries that make up the UN, structured the way Nigeria is, practising democracy and a unitary system of government that is prosperous and peaceful? There is none. Elections under the 1999 Abacha's constitution is a Greek Gift that ties the hands of whoever is sworn in as President and C-in-C from moving Nigeria forward. Insisting on a people's constitution and a peaceful restructuring of Nigeria where the 6 or 8 new Regions move at their

respective pace appears more sensible than taking the Abacha's bypass, which takes Nigeria closer to Dante's inferno.

PMB the 2nd and OBJ the 2nd both prepared for 30 and 20 solid years respectively for their second coming to fix Nigeria. Yet, Nigeria remains the world's poverty capital and the only country where 99% of the educated youths are planning to JAPA. Except Nigeria is comprehensively re-worked and clinically re-calibrated, all hope, aspirations and excitement at the Hope'23 train station will lead to tomorrow's frustration and disappointment.

Consequently, Nigeria needs NEED (National Emergency Elders Dialogue).

A 2nd Aburi dialogue where the 'NIGERIAN QUESTION' will be dissected is necessary, critical and urgent.

A stitch in time, saves nine.

And to you, my reader: Be "Pascal-wise"!

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