

MEANING BUSINESS THIS NEW YEAR

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Bisi Ojediran, the head of Business and Economy at the Guardian was the catalyst for the decision to make this contribution. After reading him on page 13 of the Guardian of December 22, 1993, I know I must give vent to thoughts that had been gnawing at me.

It is trite that the first step towards solving a problem is to identify it, then find solutions; even after identifying the solution, the most vital ingredient in the battle against that problem is a sincerity of purpose otherwise known as the will.

Essentially, the political problem that is Nigeria will take some time in solving this led to the aggregation of all shades of interest constituting the Federal Executive Council which has been described by politicians who know better like Dr. Olusola Saraki as "A National Government". To an extent a lot of frayed June 12 nerves have been placated, other respected individuals have commended the composition of the Abacha Cabinet, like every political situation, it remains in flux and the forthcoming Constitutional conference which Dr. Olu Onaguruwa has described as "the only programme of this administration" is expected to further tackle the political and social questions of the day.

The only aspect of the Nigerian life where there is a complete consensus is that the National Economy is very distressed thus "the economy" remains the issue. That Nigerians require order and good Government is because they expect this to engender a healthy economic climate which translates to the real better life; any other thing is Dongon Turenci".

The Provisional ruling Council being the highest policy and lawmaking body in the Country today is incomplete without the presence of the Minister in charge of the Nigerian Economy needs representation if the provisional Ruling Council were to be properly guided. The absence of the Minister of Finance from the membership of the Provisional Ruling Council questions the determination of that body to tackle the economic questions of the day. I believe that the Provisional Ruling Council as presently constituted cannot be primed to handle issues relating to the economy in a manner that will enjoy the confidence of Nigerians and assure all and sundry that this government means business without the inclusion of the main Manager of the Economy in the highest law and policy making body.

If anyone sees this as a campaign to get our respected Minister of finance into the Provisional Ruling Council, that person is right as the New Year sets in, one hopes to witness a more articulate and coordinated Abacha Regime; the tunes of dissonance lacking rhyme and rhythm must give way to an orchestra of flowing symphonies. Let that be the New Year resolution.

Every new Government has its teething problems, false steps this Government has had more than its fair share in every respect; viz:

a) A Recapitulation on the decision to appoint civilians as State Administrators, and as I write this one wonders if deputy (Governors) Administrators will still be appointed.

- b) A quashing of the dissolution of the board of five parastatals in the Finance Ministry; giving very wrong signals to outsiders about the autonomy and responsibility of Key government functionaries in decision taking and raising issues of communication flow between the Ministry and the (Secretary to the Federal Ministry Government).
- c) Enactment of Decrees with ouster Provisions leading to Dr. Onaguruwa committing a Ministerial blunder by undertaking to expunge the ouster provisions and making statements implying that our Minister of Justice (himself) was not properly seised of the contents of decrees emanating from his Ministry. Appropos of Onaguruwa, why can't his erstwhile radical constituency and Otunba T.O.S. Benson let him be and settle down to doing his job. Allow the man to work.
- d) A revision of Xmas Public Holidays by the Internal Affairs Ministry.
- e) Different signals from the Ministry of Information and Defence Ministry Spokesman on the commencement date for the Constitutional Conference.
- f) Thus the Presidency, finance, Justice, Secretary to Federal Government, Internal affairs and Information Ministries have at one time or the other been involved in the discordance which must not recur in the new year.

Indeed the aforesaid Ministers are manned by some of the best men around and they enjoy our confidence, the dissonance can only be as a result of limited consultation or too much haste in going to the public over positions that might not have received the final approving stamps.

Anyone who knows our lobbying culture will pity political appointees for the too many voices they must hearken to; but his is the challenge of high office and one's ability to chart a definitive course makes the difference between the men and the boys.

I do not agree with Dr. Onaguruwa that "The only programme is the Constitutional Conference" because some of us agree with the highly reverend Alao-Bashorun that the problems of this country have not been the constitutions indeed no constitution has been fully tested. But since we must carry on, then the Government must again be reminded that "Conquest of poverty is the ultimate goal of Government" and one prays that the advice of Benjamin Franklin that we should "beware of little expenses because a small leak will sink a great ship"; will be heeded.

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