

CREATING ALLIANCES FOR NATION BUILDING.

Being a Speech Delivered by Mark Nzamah Jacob Esq* at the MIVE

LEGALS/HOUSE OF JUSTICE DINNER & AWARDS EVENING ON 15

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Let me commence this little conversation with an apology, that there will be no paper circulated containing what am about to say because gradually one is getting happy just talking without reading from a paper, it makes life easy and you know whatthere will be no hard evidence of what you say that could be given to either the EFCC or DSS.{smile}

I also suspect that the conveners of this meeting wanted us to come eat and have a good time and not get bored by academic speeches. Otherwise they would have selected one of the many Professors in town to give this dinner speech.

I have listened to many dinner speeches and God, I have enjoyed some while many have made me lose appetite. I hope you won't lose appetite at the end of my small talk here.

I was asked to address the topic CREATING ALLIANCES FOR NATION BUILDING. Looking at the audience here and reviewing the events around our nation today, I am tempted to ask whether we truly have a Nation and whether we want to build that Nation.

What is the state of our Nation today, Boko Haram, Shite Movement,Bands of Fulani Herdsmen killing and sacking communities in the middle belt,IPOB, Inconclusive elections,sCorruption allegations and trial by the media.

When you look at all these and especially read the contents of media coverage of these issues, you are left with no other assessment than the sad fact that Nigeria is a fragmented Nation waiting to disintegrate;tsshus the urgent need to build Alliances if the Nation will halt its current drift towards disintegration.

Some months ago an Islamic sect took charge of a high way and prevented other Nigerians from using the road from Kano to Zaria/Kaduna. Besides the fact that the military did not intervene to clear the road, we were divided in our assessment of the situation, some applauded while others condemned. The result is that the sect got emboldened and went to the extent of blocking the road on a day that the Chief of Army Staff was in transit; my heart bleeds because whether Shiite or sunni....it is Nigerians that have been killed in an unnecessary show of power. Even in the face of these unfortunate deaths, we have not built an alliance on the issue.

I am convinced that these lives would have been saved if all citizens had long before now formed an alliance to condemn the blockade of public highways by anyone.

The notorious Boko Haram started in the same fashion, and grew into what it is today because Nigerians refused to align against what was visibly threatening the

stability of the whole nation. As at today, the financial cost of curbing the menace is enough to rebuild the entire North East of Nigeria. While the human lives lost and being lost are too many to count.

Recent data reveals that diseases hitherto unknown or ignored are now very rampant killing our people in the hundreds without any conscious alliance to combat such diseases. Except for individual efforts I have been greatly disturbed by the near silence of past and present Governments to the scourge of Cancer. I salute young people like Bavo Gloria Nyan for their effort in raising awareness on Cancer. It baffles me that while they are left alone to finance their activities from charity our Government can afford to create a platform for dancers and singers.

ANTI CORRUPTION WAR AND IMPENDING ECONOMIC DISASTER.

More than ever before, there is so much hype about the war against corruption but painfully the current effort has been beclouded by partisan, tribal and religious fault lines.

Go through our mainstream or social media and your head will swim from the headlines therein. Besides the concoctions and mutilations by armchair private “journalists” in the social media, who miraculously get information from Dasuki during EFCC interrogation, his response to questions and the expose or implication of more heavyweights.....etc etc you find PDP and APC media goons punching holes at each other with humongous billion dollar figures.

In our State of Kaduna, we have serious challenges and it does appear that the epidemic at the National stage is well replicated here. When sleeping communities are aroused by gunshots, slaughtered in their hundreds it is not headline news, but when cattle rustlers attack, kill and steal cattle the media is awash with the story. No wonder therefore that several state Governments formed an alliance and put together millions of Naira to combat the cattle rustling menace.

While all this is on going, the economy of the nation is on reverse gear, the Naira now goes for N260 to \$1.00 an all time high in over 20 years. We are not forming alliances to profer a way out either for the whole country or even for our households. Rather you find our young men and women spending all their time in the social media. No attention is paid to how we can leverage on Agriculture instead of depending on Oil.

ALIANCES

History is replete with different forms of alliances, from the relationships between country and country we vividly recall the era of the cold war with big conglomerate relationships like NATO and the Soviet Union. These were alliances built to provide both military, ideological and economic protection for member countries. These alliances ensured a lot went well between member countries and surprisingly there was also a balance of terror between the two blocks. The world was relatively at peace because both blocks were scared and suspicious of each other. No single nation had the liberty of isolating one tiny country and attacking it without the fear of having all members of the alliance to which that small country belongs to protect

that small country. The formation of the OAU the evolvement of ECOWAS and similar blocks in the world are all proof that in international relationships, alliances are not just necessary but mandatory.

Amongst men, alliances abound; some are for Political reasons while others are for socio economic purposes. In all these it is clear that where an alliance is derived from or built around a personality, chances are that such alliance dies with the person. We remember the charismatic personality of Aminu Kano and the followership he commanded? It swept from Kano found acceptance in Kaduna State and others, that is how a Balarabe Musa of the PRP could win election as Governor in an NPN controlled State. And the man died..... upon the demise of Aminu Kano, his movement was swallowed up and we can only see flashes of a spent remnant. In his home state Kano, except for the effort to copy his red cap, the Kwankwaso group has no bearing with the ideals and or ideology of Aminu Kano.

In all humans, there is a deep wish to be independent “to do my thing for myself and by myself”, but practically it has been proven that absolute independence is a myth. The richer, the older, the bigger you get, the more dependent you become on others to make your world go round. This applies to Nations too.

Therefore, as a Nation, as an Association, a Professional body, a tribe, a sect, a union, or even a family no one is an island, the whole world revolves and survives on alliances. Even the elements of nature align perfectly that is why we have day and night, morning, afternoon and evening. We have spring time and summer, we have rain and dry seasons. It is the seamless, harmonious alliance between these elements that allows us to plan our lives, our travels, farming seasons etc.

In recent times, alliances in Nigeria that were built around political parties have with a simple quarrel been dissolved, thus Politicians have danced from one Political Party to the other with ease and while they are at it, the Nation suffers because it is never in the interest of the nation that most of these alliances are forged.

Therefore alliances are inevitable for Nation building
However what kind of alliances do we need in today's world.
We need alliances around ideas, issues and programs with set goals and targets.
Persons can and should inspire us but as stated earlier, the alliances that have been founded and planted around men have always been consumed with those men

Since Nation Building is so wide, let us break it down into simple elements and build alliances around those elements. For instance, take child education as an element of this nation building and get all professional bodies like the NBA, NMA, ASSU, FIDA and other NGOs form an alliance whereby all their literature, advocacy and programs will be centered around the same subject for six (6) months. I know the practical and even foundational challenges that may hinder this kind of synergy but if we want to build this nation we must think of doing the near impossible. If we can

experiment on this even in a Local Government and assess the impact, we would be shocked as to the great impact of alliances.

- Mark Jacob Nzamah Esq is a former Attorney General of Kaduna state and former legal adviser Peoples' Democratic Party.