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The Jonathan administration in Nigeria: A postmortem study and lessons for dictators in Africa

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of this paper is to conduct a post-mortem study of the Jonathan administration in Nigeria. The specific objective is to identify the aspects of the administration that facilitated the progress of democracy in the country (at this period). The study is significant because, the evidence of democratic progress in Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa, would send strong signals (profound evidence) to despots in weak African democracies that after all, there are sound alternatives to despotic and malevolent governance-tendencies in such problematic polities. In such countries, coup plotting and other undemocratic practices are still highly attractive and the need for deterrence arises.

Keywords: Jonathan administration, democracy, Nigeria, dictatorship, dictators

1. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian nation obtained political independence from Great Britain in October 1960. But the post-independence civilian regime in the country was short-lived. Thus, by January 1966, the military had sacked the democratically elected government and formed its own administration. A civil war was subsequently fought in the country. The war ended on 12 January 1970 but the military remained in power, up to October 1979 when a handover took place and the civilians came back. By 1983 however, the military returned to power by

sacking again, a democratically chosen government. And sometime in 1993, the Nigerian military politicians attempted another handover to their civilian counterparts but mid-way into the democratic experimentation, the military autocrats aborted the democratic process. It was only in 1999 that the military usurpers of the national political processes in Nigeria seemed to have finally handed over power to their civilian compatriots. Africa's most populous country and the dominant state of West Africa, Nigeria, has a population of over 170 million people and is the world's seventh most populous country [1]. Therefore, this humongous population continued to demand the exit of the military political interlopers from the governance process in Nigeria.

The 1999 post-military government was led by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (former Military Head of State, 1976-1979). He served for eight years, comprising two, four-year terms and was in 2007 succeeded by Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, who unfortunately died in office, on 5 May 2010. Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was the Vice President in the Yar'Adua dispensation. Jonathan therefore completed the tenure of late President Yar'Adua and at the end of this period in 2011, stood for election in his own right, won the election and became President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He subsequently campaigned for re-election in 2015 but was defeated by Muhammadu Buhari (Military Head of State, 1983-1985). This has made Jonathan the first sitting president to be defeated in a Nigerian election [2]. And so, in this study, the Jonathan administration in Nigeria, commenced in May 2010 and ended in July 2015, when Muhammadu Buhari took over the reins of Nigerian Government from former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan.

2. EX-PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN OF NIGERIA: A PRESIDENTIAL PERSONALITY SKETCH

According to Lawson [3]:

Dr Jonathan was born on 20 November, 1957 into a Christian family at the rural and sleepy riverine community of Otueke in Ogbia Local Government Area of the then Rivers State [4]. He was enrolled into St. Stephen's Primary School, (now State School Otueke) at the age of six. He later moved to St. Michael's Primary School, Olosirii, where he completed his primary education in 1968. Jonathan's paternal grandmother nick-named him Zik; in reference to the exploits and influence of the late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, first President of Nigeria. Two years after his First School Leaving Certificate, he gained admission into Mater Dei High School, Imiringi. He graduated from the school in 1975 and two years later, he was admitted as one of the pioneer students of Zoology at the new University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) and graduated with a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) Degree, Second Class Upper Division in 1981. After five years of interlude from further studies, Jonathan pursued his post-graduate programme, whereupon in 1985, he received a Masters Degree (M.Sc) in Hydrobiology and Fisheries Biology at the same University of Port Harcourt and a Ph.D in Zoology, still from the same institution in 1995 [3].

Jonathan entered politics in 1998 and subsequently became Deputy Governor of Nigeria's Bayelsa state. Prior to this period, he had worked as an education inspector, lecturer,

and environmental-protection officer [2]. Above all, Mr Joseph Ilagha, from President Jonathan's home state of Bayelsa is quoted in Ezeamalu [5] as having described Jonathan as simple, unassuming and humble to a fault. Ilagha added that none of Jonathan's friends, colleagues and associates ever expected him to jump into the rough waters of Nigerian politics. But that was exactly what he did. Essentially, Ilagha's assessment of the worldview of Jonathan is in synch with his own account of how he (Jonathan) became a politician. Speaking at a civic reception in his honour (in Bayelsa state) when he vacated the office of president, Jonathan recalled how his political journey started; when the former Bayelsa State governor, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, invited him to join his campaign team. He said he joined the campaign team, not because he was interested in any elective office [6].

According to Jonathan, what drove him into joining Alamieyeseigha's team was that those of them from very small communities always had problems and sometimes had to go to government for solution. He then reasoned that probably, if he worked with Alamieyeseigha and he won the election, Jonathan would then know some of the people in government [6] in the event of such occurrences that necessitate government's intervention. He subsequently became deputy governor in that dispensation and later reached the pinnacle of political positions in the Nigerian state as president. However, let us begin to relate the Jonathan tendencies to core governance issues. And so, we review in particular his mode of settling on Attahiru Jega, as Chairman of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Obi [7] consequently highlights:

Attahiru Jega, Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), came highly recommended. President Goodluck Jonathan whose job it was to appoint him never met him before. And never spoke with him. He appointed him based on what he had heard and read about him. Only a Jonathan can take such a risk. Others would have appointed their friends or those recommended to them by their very close friends and/or allies, especially if they would be part of that election process. But that is Jonathan. Clean heart. Confident and at times, too trusting. Jonathan refused to take interest in who occupies what post in INEC. So, aside from Jega, a (core) Northerner, both the INEC Secretary, and Director of Operations were also (core) Northerners.

Politics in Nigeria has largely remained a north vs. south contest. Thus, Obi prophetically insinuates here that if Jonathan had been politically sagacious enough to choose those officials from his southern section of Nigeria, at least the chairman, Jega; his electoral fortunes in the subsequent 2015 elections could have been different. Obi's comment was actually made when the 2011 elections were abruptly rescheduled by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) under Jega and his northern brethren.

3. A SCORECARD OF THE JONATHAN ADMINISTRATION

3. 1. The Good

The Jonathan administration's scorecard is actually an amalgam of the good and invariably certain grave deformities. On the side of the good attributes and good contributions, under the Jonathan administration in Nigeria, political assassinations were

evidently not part of the culture of national politics. In comparative terms, under the Obasanjo administration, there were a number of such crimes, suspected to be usually politically motivated. Ogbah [8] gives a germane recap of such murder-cases. A further outcome of this positive political development is that freedom of expression which is integral to strong democratic practices was full-blown in the country, under President Jonathan. As a matter of fact, in August 2012, Jonathan described himself as the most criticized president in the world and prophetically added that before leaving office; he would have become the most praised president [9]. And indeed, Jonathan left office as a very popular man, not in any case, because of his stellar performance in office but by the fact of his conceding defeat as a sitting president in Nigeria - the first time in the history of this West African state that such an electoral incident would be recorded.

This attitude of Jonathan (to public office) was indisputably uncommon among African leaders, who usually refused to vacate presidential positions when defeated in elections. They stay put to engender cataclysms in their own countries. Consequently, electoral violence remains a common unfortunate feature of the electoral struggle in Africa [10-12]. During Jonathan's presidency however, he repeatedly declared that his presidential ambition and indeed the political ambition of any other politician in the country, was not worth the blood of any Nigerian. Jonathan did not only preach this political philosophy but by freely accepting defeat at the 2015 presidential election and quietly leaving office, he dutifully practiced what he preached.

Furthermore and indisputably, democracy is immensely contingent on the continuing independence of the electoral umpire. And as matter of fact, African leaders are not famous for permitting such independence for their states' electoral referees. And so, a democracy legacy of the Jonathan administration is also in the area of the president's evident non-interference, in the affairs of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Earlier in this study, reference was made to the suggestion of Obi [7] that in comparative terms, the overt independence status accorded to the electoral umpire by Jonathan smacked of naiveté. This apparent political unwariness has incidentally also become a matter of positive input to the democratization processes in the Nigerian state. Hence, according to Siollun [13]:

Previous Nigerian presidents were too cynical to expose themselves to the unpredictable risk of a fair election. The election victories of PDP presidents during the past 16 years have been partially "assisted" by electoral malpractice. That changed when Jonathan nominated Professor Attahiru Jega as the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in 2010. Jega vowed to reform Nigeria's electoral process to ensure free and fair elections. The former university lecturer exuded calm authority and integrity. He painstakingly prepared for the task over the past four years by studying the rigging methods used in previous elections, implementing an elaborate system of voter registration, training thousands of electoral staff and introducing biometric readers to identify voters by reading their thumbprint. Jonathan created the environment for the emergence of these changes and gave Jega the freedom and authority to conduct reforms that led to a credible election. But by giving Jega a free hand to play fair, he allowed Jega to craft the weapons that were used to oust him from power.

Ousting Jonathan from power however, also meant profound maturation in electoral tendencies in Nigeria. Furthermore, it needs to be highlighted that Jonathan's unprecedented

method of handling his ousting from power placed Nigeria's democracy on a very promising political and democratic pillar. Before the completion of collation of results, President Jonathan had called the opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, who was about to emerge victorious, and congratulated him on his yet-to-be-announced election victory. Indeed, according to the President-elect (as at then), Muhammadu Buhari, the telephone call put across to him by President Goodluck Jonathan, congratulating him even before the final result of the presidential election was announced, had changed the course of the nation's political history. Buhari acknowledged that the incumbent president was capable of using the power of incumbency to make things difficult on the outcome of the presidential election, at the expense of the lives of poor Nigerians. But he chose to tow the path of selflessness [14].

Addressing Jonathan at the handing-over ceremony, preceding the inauguration of the new president, Muhammadu Buhari further declared:

For that (by that call), you have earned yourself a place in our history, for stabilizing this system of multi party democracy and you have earned the respect of not only Nigerians but world leaders. All the leaders that spoke to me and congratulated us for arriving at the point we arrived, mentioned this and I could understand a lot of relief in their voices that Nigeria has made it after all, and this is largely owed to a situation you made possible. If you (Jonathan) had attempted to make things difficult, you could have made things difficult and that would have been at the expense of lives of poor Nigerians, but you chose the part of honour and may God help all of us. Thank you very much your Excellency [14].

Consequently, after the general election, no life was lost on account of President Jonathan's own losses [15]. We further emphasize that what Attah [16] describes as contests for and contests against exclusion in the Nigerian political system, had remained a relapsing issue in the Nigerian polity. And it continued to give cause for anxieties about the continuing survival of the Nigerian state as a united entity. According to Attah, there were high expectations that the election of southern presidents would mitigate the contest for (against?) exclusion in Nigeria but events have proved otherwise. For example, he continued; the election of Olusegun Obasanjo from the Yoruba south-west between 1999 and 2007 and that of Goodluck Jonathan from the Ijaw Niger-Delta since 2011 could not stymie the contest for (against?) exclusion. Therefore, given the many structural pathologies and violent conflicts that plagued Nigeria as a multi-ethnic polity, the re-enacting of the Rwanda or Darfur crises should not be allowed to be replicated in Nigeria; hence the quest to accommodate multiple identities should not be trivialized [16].

The rotation of the Nigerian presidency, from Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the Yoruba south-west, to Dr Goodluck Jonathan from the Ijaw Niger-Delta (south-south) and the victory of Muhammadu Buhari of North Western Nigeria, must be seen in the context of the accommodation of multiple identities in Nigeria's democracy. Invariably, non-accommodation of multiple identities would have worked against the desire for further democratization (and inclusion) in Nigeria. In Rwanda and Darfur, the combustible issues have been matters of non-accommodation of multiple identities. The fears expressed in Attah [16] were accordingly representative of the feelings of the observers of democracy trajectories in Nigeria, particularly as the 2015 presidential election became imminent. However, these intense fears were finally rendered unfounded by Dr Jonathan's handling of the outcome of

the elections. This was good for democracy and also amounted on the part of Jonathan to a monumental good governance contribution. And so, the Jonathan example begins to seemingly debunk the notion such as in Yimer [17] that Nigeria, a country which has the largest population in the continent of Africa, has a dearth of genuine leaders.

3. 2. Deformities on the scorecard

Despite the ostensible great contributions of the Jonathan presidency, the administration also apparently suffered from massive performance deformities. These deformities in the Jonathan administration's portrait, succinctly translate to failures on the part of the administration. In the first place, it was an administration that tended to be devoid of profound developmental focus (despite all the pretences to the contrary). For this reason, the Jonathan administration is truly describable as a regime that came, saw and was interminably planning to conquer. It was a government that delighted in the mouthing of acronyms such as SUREP and YouWiN. SUREP actually stands for Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme, created after the partial removal of subsidy on petroleum products in 2012, so that the funds realized from the subsidy-removal could be utilized in judicious manner. YouWiN on the other hand stands for "Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria." It is said to be an "innovative business plan competition" aimed at job creation, by encouraging and supporting aspiring entrepreneurial youth in Nigeria to develop and execute business ideas [18].

Many Nigerians did not know the meaning of these acronyms and contractions. They also considered whatever they stood for, quite irrelevant to their personal lives. In Aba, Abia state, South East, Nigeria, this researcher asked a group of about fifty persons in an informal gathering, the meaning of SUREP and none of the people knew the meaning. Then by the time I was through with my explanation of the meaning, none of the members of this group was listening to me again. And in another development, an interviewee told this researcher that YouWiN was one of the jackpots in town. On my further enquiry, he said he knew YouWiN as "one of those things they inaugurate in Abuja." (Abuja is the seat of the central government in Nigeria). And so, a leading Nigerian political economist, Professor Pat Utomi, in Falodi [19] says this about the Jonathan administration in particular and the Nigerian condition in its wider context:

I was clear in my mind right from the inception of Jonathan's administration that there was no framework for progress or development of the country. Nigeria is confronted by power, possession and predation. What is required is purpose, but we are obsessed with power, possession and predation, which are parts of the impunity that we see around. I saw these very early in the life of the Jonathan's administration. The people complained correctly to an extent that Nigeria's politicians are not good for administration, but are only good in winning elections and that professionals are needed to run the country...What I saw very early in Jonathan's administration was that there were a lot of people who were obsessed with power, possession and predation. There were not too many people who were leaders or managers with the heart of service in the administration.

Ibekwe [20] further presents some of the critical issues as follows:

After sweeping to power with a vast majority of the votes during the 2011 presidential election, it didn't take long before the Goodluck Jonathan presidency began to unravel. Mr. Jonathan, who had endeared himself to majority of ordinary Nigerians with his "I had no shoes" speech, promised a break from the old ways of doing things. His campaign slogan which was tagged "A Breath of Fresh Air" promised a break from the old and mostly retrogressive way the country had been governed in the past. Like all the country's past leaders before him, Mr. Jonathan kicked off his presidency with a string of promises. But this was not just another member of the country's navel-gazing elite, promising to be the messiah of the long-suffering common man. This was a person they saw as one of them; someone who had experienced their pains and hardship, promising to alleviate those pains. Therefore, nothing could be more reassuring.

In his inaugural speech, Jonathan promised a transformative government. He promised to grow the economy, create jobs and to provide overall happiness to Nigerians. "The urgent task of my administration is to provide a suitable environment, for productive activities to flourish," the president said. He promised to improve electricity and medical-care for all, provide efficient and affordable public transportation and first class education for every Nigerian. But it soon became clear that these were merely sound bites, as the Jonathan administration couldn't deliver on most of its promises [20].

On power generation, Mr. Jonathan said four years was enough to solve the endemic power generation problem in the country. In this regard, on 31 January, 2011, speaking to diplomats of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNECA, and the African Union, AU, in Addis-Ababa, Mr Jonathan said: If I'm voted into power, within the next four years, the issue of power will become a thing of the past. Four years is enough for anyone in power to make a significant improvement and if I can't improve on power within this period, it then means I cannot do anything [20]. But after several interventions, including the privatization of the power sector and several billion naira spent on power reform, power generation actually dropped to less than 2,000 megawatts. Only five megawatts was available to the country's capital, Abuja, and just five out of the country's 23 power plants were functional. But in January 2011 when Mr Jonathan promised to "make a significant improvement" in power supply, the country was generating over 3,000 megawatts [20].

Then at a particular period in the Jonathan presidency, one of the issues that the pro-government canvassers pointedly tabled as a high point in the performance credentials of the regime, was that the previously intractable "fuel scarcity" that troubled the Nigerian economy, had become a thing of the past. According to Agbakwuru [21] a group of professionals working on the umbrella of Jonathan Shall Lead Again, JOSLA (2015- 2019) had called on President Goodluck Jonathan to hearken to the voice of reason by contesting the 2015 presidential election in the country. The group which said its membership of professionals from all walks of life cuts across the 36 states of Nigeria, at the inauguration of its new national officers in Abuja, said the achievements of President Jonathan in different sectors of the economy qualified him for a resounding victory in 2015 [21].

National Coordinator of JOSLA, Mr. Friday Suleiman Ojealaro opined that Jonathan had been able to make petroleum products available nationwide and he had stopped the

perennial long queues at filling stations, which persisted in the country for decades, due to the reforms he put in place in that sector [21]. As a matter of records, President Jonathan also personally declared: We have also succeeded in eliminating the long queues that previously characterized our filling stations, through regular and sustained product supply [22]. Then, a highly curious development occurred. As the Jonathan administration was about to come to an end, the Nigerian state witnessed the worst energy crises in its history as a nation-state. The long queues returned unprecedentedly.

Hence, Engineering Network [23] narrates: The recent wave of fuel scarcity being witnessed in the country remains the worst in history as the debacle of the unavailability of the nation's most sought liquid after water, has continued for more than a month with the government not being able to proffer a solution to it, talk less of a lasting one. Ndibe [24] adds: Nigeria is beset by one of the worst fuel shortages in its history. And in a country where something as basic as refined fuel frequently becomes scarcer than gold, the current crisis is Olympian in scale.

In addition, among the engineering deficiencies, subsequently identified by Engineering Network [23] is that the nation's refineries were not working: the present fuel scarcity and every other fuel scarcity in the country, Engineering Network declares, simply serve as a means of telling Nigerians that the country's refineries are not working. While the government may have formed a habit of telling Nigerians over the years that the country's refineries were working to certain capacities, this present fuel scarcity has revealed that the refineries are not working [23]. Then to some citizens who had claimed that Jonathan was Nigeria's best president, on the grounds of having solved the recurrent fuel problem, Ndibe [24] reacted: if Mr. Jonathan became Nigeria's "best president" because he supposedly fixed the fuel snafu, what does it mean that his presidency is ending on a note of one of the worst fuel crises in years?

We underscore the fact that each time Nigeria experienced its persistent fuel shortages; the topic of fuel subsidy invariably reverberated. A subsidy is any measure that keeps the prices consumers pay for a good or product below market levels for consumers or for producers [25]. Petroleum has fed the Nigerian State since production started in commercial quantities in the 1960s. The initial corollary was increased government revenue, robust foreign resources, strong currency and high standard of revenue [25, 26]. But the boom days did not last forever. The oil boom experience led to major increases in prices of petroleum products, resulting in huge dependence on oil revenue for basic infrastructural projects in the country [25]. This also led to profligate expenditures, particularly in the area of mind boggling importations.

Citing Ogundipe [27], Anyanwu [28] highlights that by 1983, Nigeria's short-term trade arrears, amounting to over N4 billion had accumulated, while unemployment was aggravated and serious balance of payments deficits incurred. Therefore, Nigeria, under the Shagari regime (1979-1983), had to apply to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a three year extended facility (loan) of US\$2.3 billion. The IMF made seventeen conditions for such a loan and negotiations dragged on through the Buhari regime (1983-1985), to the Babangida regime (1985-1993). In 1985, through public debate, the loan was rejected. Prior to the rejection, agreement had been reached on some conditions, but not the bitter pills of trade liberalization, the removal of petroleum subsidy and the devaluation of the naira.

Following the rejection of the IMF loan, coupled with the traumatic economic crisis being witnessed by the economy, the Babangida administration introduced the economic

recovery programme, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in July 1986 [28]. The adoption of a Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) threw the system of relative prices out of balance. Then among the prescriptions of SAP was the phasing out of subsidies, an issue that has remained a bone of contention, between the government and multi-lateral lending institutions for several years. This introduced new pressure regarding the question of petroleum products subsidies [25].

In this study, we take petroleum products subsidy to mean the difference between the price a consumer in Nigeria pays for the pump price of the product and the actual total cost of producing or importing it (Nkogbu and Okorodudu 2015, 38). In this regard, the stories pertaining to this subsidy is surrounded by immense mysteries. According to Nkogbu and Okorodudu [29], subsidizing petroleum products amongst other key commodities had its origin when government in the late 1980's took the decision to cushion the effects of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which initiated the deregulation of the monetary system, thereby decreasing the buying power of majority of ordinary Nigerians [29]. But the stoppage of this same subsidy was part of the IMF conditions for availing Nigeria its bail-out facility. It was after the IMF loan and its conditions were rejected that the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced.

And so, Deputy President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Peter Adeyemi, cited in Uzodinma [30] opined that government had never subsidized petroleum products in Nigeria. The Labour leader lamented that the bane of the petroleum sector in Nigeria had been corruption, pointing out that past governments had tried without success to address the issue. The Jonathan administration also wished it could address the issue [30]. Invariably, the major policy concern on fuel subsidy reform in Nigeria is its adverse effects on the poor [31]. This is because, over the past decades, the oil subsidy patchwork has been allegedly bedeviled by criminal tendencies of oil importers and sharp practices in the distribution of import allocation, approval of subsidy payments and actual release of subsidy cheques [25]. Clearly, subsidy has basically benefitted oil cabals, including Multinational Oil Corporations (MNOCS) that are not interested in building refineries or transforming the poor state of the Nigerian economy [25].

Therefore, under despotic military and civilian democratic regimes, Nigeria offered an archetypal example of the paradox of oil, by which vast oil wealth begets extravagant corruption, deep poverty, and polarized income distributions and poor economic performance [25]. Hence, despite the earlier claims of the Jonathan regime to the contrary, Nigeria remained a major oil-producing country that often could not find fuel [24]. The perennial fuel crises, occasioning confrontation between government and Labour, remained a deformity in the capacity of democracy in Nigeria to accommodate the interests of the Nigerian masses. In the midst of immense oil wealth, trillions of naira would be yearly remitted to the oil industry cabal, while life-threatening poverty remains the lot of scores of millions of Nigerians. Consequently, poverty in Nigeria remains significant despite high economic growth [32].

The average Nigerian is accordingly; far worse off than he was 54 years ago when the country achieved political independence [33]. We further highlight the demonstration of Kpessa, Be'land and Lecours [34] that post independence nationalist leaders in Sub-Saharan Africa, used health, housing, and education programmes to foster a sense of national unity that transcended the existing ethnic divisions created by the arbitrary drawing of state boundaries during colonization. But several decades after decolonization, it remains largely unclear, how the social policies of the successor post-independence leaders have contributed

to national unity. In the Nigerian case, beginning from the rebirth of democracy in 1999 to the regime of Goodluck Jonathan, 2010- 2015, there seemed to have remained a chasm between the ostensible social policies and national aspirations. Consequently, some Jonathan detractors believe that the Jonathan presidency was a total failure and perhaps the worst since the inception of democracy in 1999. And that the Nigerian economy remained in grave condition under Jonathan's watch [35]. According to Ademoyo [36], historically speaking, that the Jonathan presidency represents one of the worst and disappointing moments in Nigerian democracy is beyond debate. But the Jonathan presidency ended as a long whiff of bad air, as the Nigerian economy which was presumably the "largest" in Africa generated only 1327 MW of power. Consequently, the largest African economy (under Jonathan) which generated 1,327 MW of power, was surely a bad product.

4. RELATING THE JONATHAN SCORECARD TO DEMOCRACY CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA

We truly wish to situate this study within the context of democracy consolidation in Nigeria. When therefore Siollun [13] declares that for the first time ever, a Nigerian president has failed to win the popular vote and it's a landmark for democracy, he was alluding to democracy consolidation. However, the entire suppositions are still at the precincts of electoral democracy. In generic terms, democracy has to embed what became known in the Nigerian democracy lexicon as dividends of democracy. Consequently, in the Nigerian political vocabulary, the expectation of deploying democracy to cater for human welfare became known as the provision of stomach infrastructure. These are allusions to the effect that democracy as a system of government has to translate to the absence of hunger, availability of employment opportunities, access to functional health facilities, access to shelter, education and the other basic necessities that make life worth living. The allusions are essentially to the specter of economic insecurity in Nigeria, which if the truth must be told, was not fading away under the Jonathan presidency. Thus, despite the existence of abundant human and material resources, majority of Nigerians still groaned under the yoke of poverty [37].

Oluwatusin and Abolarin-Egbebi [33] therefore, highlight that large segments of the population were demanding the dividends of democracy as the incidence of poverty continually grew throughout the nation. Geo-political zones were also crying out against impoverishment, deprivation and marginalization. Countless ethno-cultural associations and pressure groups were being formed to articulate interests for a better share of the national cake, even when such interests threatened the very basis of democracy in the country. It was a fact they further argued, that the rising incidence of poverty in Nigeria posed a serious threat to the democratization process in the country. Consequently, many people were concerned more about their daily struggle for economic survival than the abstract term, "democracy", which they felt could not feed them [33]. The irony is that this unbecoming situation was being witnessed in a major oil-producing country. Hence, it is validly believed that Nigeria's oil and gas wealth has done little to alleviate poverty by way of creating employment for the populace [38]. Under this scenario, democracy begins to look like a pastime of the elite. The effects of its dividends are not easily experienced by the average citizen. And this remained the reality of democracy in Nigeria, even under the Jonathan administration.

Essentially, good governance in Nigeria should entail the dislodging of the oil cabal that holds every regime by the jugular. The intransigence of the cabal indeed frequently renders the Nigerian economy comatose. Thus the unending fuel crises in the country are intricately interwoven with the manipulations of the cabal. In the dying days of the Jonathan administration also, the cabal proved to President Jonathan that “he came, saw but could not conquer them.” The fuel crises they precipitated then, also served for the group, the other purpose of indicating to the president-elect, Muhammadu Buhari, that the intractable group had the capacity to mess up matters for his regime. Politics and the economy therefore would sometimes relate positively and at other times correlate in the negative direction. It is only democracy that has an awkward position in these configurations. With the unrepentant clique in the petroleum sector in Nigeria for instance, continuing to short-change the masses, from the military era to the current democratic dispensations, democracy matters in Nigeria have truly remained quixotic.

5. THE MONSTROUS BOKO HARAM PHENOMENON AND THE JONATHAN REGIME’S RESPONSE

Numerous numbers of studies have already been conducted on the Boko Haram monstrosity in Nigeria [39-50]. More recently also, studies have been conducted on the Boko Haram misfortune in the country [51-55]. A detailed re-examination of the viewpoints, insights and prognoses of these studies is conceptually outside the focus of the current investigation. However, a common ground on all the contributions is that Boko Haram is a deadly group of people. We squarely posit that Boko Haram is a terrorist amalgam of issues with the group’s original operational focus on Nigeria. But these are where the scholarly findings and the attendant diagnoses and projections have so far ended. Boko Haram is a monstrous amalgam of complex issues. The group does not have an easily identifiable command structure. It does not even call itself Boko Haram. The appellation was given to the nucleus of the current monster by observers who derided the weird ways of the group. They were then derisively referred to as people who forbid Western education (Boko Haram).

What Boko Haram wants is unclear. The members’ motivations are variegated. The true interests they represent remain cloudy. Every interest they are said to represent is speculative. Boko Haram members abhor negotiations. They detest ceasefire. They even condemn amnesty. They have bombed churches and mosques in equal proportion, killed Muslims as well as Christians in similar numbers, and targeted public and private property for total destruction. Boko Haram has bombed schools, markets and motor parks, empty buses, other buses loaded with goods, media houses, the United Nations building in Abuja, Nigeria; Nigeria’s Police Headquarters and bombed centers where citizens congregated to view soccer matches on television sets. Boko Haram has abducted school children. The group has murdered school children that were asleep in their dormitories. The group or groups that make it up has targeted traditional rulers, Muslim religious leaders and Nigerian security personnel.

In addition, Boko Haram could not have been fighting on behalf of Northern Nigerian Muslims because; its destructive activities are all carried out in Northern Nigeria, the predominant Muslim section of Nigeria, except at the initial stages when it penetrated the Capital city of Abuja. Boko Haram indeed, represents terrible contradictions. The group uses modern communication facilities to disseminate information on its atrocities but it was the

very civilization the members are purportedly fighting to destroy that gave rise to these communication modernities. Boko Haram again, does not fight with cutlasses and machetes as groups of the wretched of the earth. They fight with expensive arsenals of modern warfare. The atrocities of the group have become internationalized, extending to the Republic of Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

This was accordingly the group that President Jonathan was expected to confront and dismantle. It was the most notable challenge of the Jonathan administration. The Jonathan regime essentially, did not win the battle against Boko Haram but there was a battle it won in that regard. The government of Jonathan actually dealt as many blows on Boko Haram as the amorphous group dealt on the Nigerian nation and her national psyche. But the battle that was won by Jonathan is that Boko Haram in his regime did not lead to a conflagration that might have enveloped the entire Nigerian state and possibly dismembered it. Technically presented, if Jonathan from south-south Nigeria, had undertaken a full, unrelenting, combatant response to the Boko Haram terrorist conundrum in north-east Nigeria, it would have logically led to a national combustion of egregious dimension. Historically and currently, politics in Nigeria thrives on ethnic belligerency usually exhibited in the North versus the South confrontations. Many a time too, these sectional hostilities came under the colour of (northern) Muslims and Christian (south) confrontations [56-]. It has to be particularly highlighted that some observers squarely identify Boko as an agendum of radical Islam. The work of Collier [60] is highly instructive in this regard.

In essence, President Jonathan's unassuming traits as already identified in this study came into play in his handling of the Boko Haram imbroglio, even in its apparently deadly extremities. Jonathan has been severally and severely criticized for being unable to confront Boko Haram. But he has also been highly eulogized for furthering the course of democracy in Nigeria. His successor, Muhammadu Buhari (ex-Nigerian Army General and Military Head of State, 1983-1985), hails from North-West Nigeria. He has a reputation of being highly revered by the easily identifiable and publicly acknowledgeable radical wing of Islam in Nigeria. Under the ethnic context and religiously charged imperatives of Nigerian statecraft, Buhari is in a superior position to Jonathan, to embark on the full counter attack being awaited by the international community, against the highly heinous Nigerian challenge known as Boko Haram. It is arguably a mark of President Jonathan's strong political intelligence that he recognized these realities and never fought to retain the seat of president, even via covert electoral victory.

6. A RUNDOWN ON DICTATORSHIP IN AFRICA

Dictatorship is unassailably, a worldwide phenomenon of historical trajectories. We shall not go as far back as Hitlerism or Stalinism for our illustration. But let us still say that the man named Francisco Paulino Hermenegildo Teódulo Franco Bahamonde, but fortunately for everybody (in terms of how his name was to be called) the name became minimized to Francisco Franco Bahamonde, was not an African. He was a Spanish autocrat. Manuel Antonio Noriega Moreno (they always have long names) also was not an African dictator. He belonged to Panama. Pol Pot also, was not an African human tragedy (that he was). He was a Cambodian dictatorial character. However, of the world's 30 dictators who have most successfully held onto power, 14 are of African identity [61]. These despots are listed as

follows: Idriss Déby Itno, Chad, 24 years 3 months in office; Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Sudan, 25 years, 11 months; Blaise Compaoré, Burkina Faso, 26 years, 1 month; Yoweri Museveni, Uganda, 29 years, 4 months; King Mswati III, Swaziland, 29 years, 1 month and Denis Sassou Nguesso, Republic of the Congo, 31 years, 2 months. Others are, Paul Biya, Cameroon, 32 years, 7 months; Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe, 34 years, 5 months; Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, Angola, 35 years, 8 months and Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Equatorial Guinea, 35 years, 8 months. While these self-serving characters remain in office in perpetuity Lawal [62] would contend that corruption has ravaged the entire African system, causing the continent to be the most corrupt in the world.

The situation in Guinea under President Alpha Condé is also considered perilous. The country was ranked 179th out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index [63]. In the tiny West African state of Gambia, Yahaya Jameh (not yet disgraced out of office via electoral defeat, when this research was conducted) also succeeded himself by civilianizing into a plain-cloth head of government [64]. He consecutively influenced the national parliament to amend the country's constitution, especially in relation to tenure limits which continued to make it possible for him to contest, manipulate and consolidate his grip on state power [64]. In Burundi, President, Pierre Nkurunziza was prepared to tear that country apart, except the constitution was amended to enable him perpetuate himself in office. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the constitutional amendment gamble was also in the template of President Joseph Kabila to extend the tenure of his presidency beyond 2016.

Allison [65] singles out Equatorial Guinea and highlights as follows:

In a continent infamous for repressive dictatorships, Equatorial Guinea is among the very worst. Its president, Teodoro Obiang Nguema, has been in power for 34 years, making him Africa's longest serving dictator...Most Equatorial Guineans remain in crushing poverty, with little or no access to decent healthcare or education. Opposition to the status quo, meanwhile, is virtually non-existent: torture and intimidation of the government's critics is common place, while any attempts to organize outside official government channels are crushed.

These despots indeed rule, not govern, and in doing so become so focused on their own self-interests and embroiled in corruption that the duty to react to the anguish suffered by their citizens become alien to them [66]. When the citizens attempt to react to their dictatorial tendencies, they unleash death and mayhem on them. Under this scenario therefore, Africa continues to be largely characterized by the incidence of irresponsible, self-appointed, self-opinionated and irrational leaders, who usually take coercion and military option as alternatives in responding to the questions of the governed and to calm popular resistance [17]. Democracy in Africa thus becomes "a one step forward, two steps backward" phenomenon [67].

7. THE JONATHAN SCORECARD IN NIGERIA: LESSONS FOR DICTATORS IN AFRICA

In all objectivity, the Jonathan scorecard does not present the narrative of a first-grade presidency. Indeed, it entails the story of current African challenges, the types that also

confront the current African dictators (in their various polities). Yimer [17] argues that one of the major challenges that have faced African states since the advent of political independence has been that of establishing and sustaining appropriate governance institutions and practices, which would engender democratic practices and promote sustainable development on the continent. It is not even “one of the challenges” as opined by Yimer; it is the summative challenge of leadership in Africa. However, in place of facing this challenge, what the dictators among the African leaders have continued to do is to face the challenge of transforming into perpetual presidents.

A major lesson from the Jonathan’s performance in Nigeria therefore, for the current African dictators and their budding acolytes, is that invariably, there are problems that a president would be technically incapable of tackling decisively, while his successor may be in a stronger position to deal with such challenges. The Boko Haram monstrosity in Nigeria is evident of this contention. It is notable that there are these messianic assumptions (perhaps more of illusions) that usually drive the tendencies of autocrats. African autocrats are no exceptions to these delusions (of eternal relevance). To curb this messiahism of African dictators therefore, there is this lesson learnable from the Jonathan administration in Nigeria, that an elected president must not masquerade as the messiah that has come to solve every problem.

Among the lessons also, is for the African leaders to begin to take decisions in their domestic political matters, in an overall African context. In specific terms, President Jonathan personally stated that he conceded defeat to Muhammadu Buhari in the March 28 presidential election in Nigeria, because of his desire to keep the country away from conflict. Furthermore, he fundamentally highlighted that having been involved in solving many problems in African countries for more than five years; he knew the enormity and cost of such conflicts and would not want Nigeria to witness such imbroglios [68]. On the contrary, the African dictators tend to replicate in their own domains, the exact problems they claim to be solving in the other counties, as part of the political leadership in Africa. Consequently, violent political conflicts have remained central to national politics in Africa.

There is also the lesson of building strong democratic institutions, through noninterference by the president, as opposed to the dictatorial attempts at building such strong institutions, through presidential Machiavellian manipulations. We refer in particular to President Jonathan’s non-interference in the affairs of Nigeria’s Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) which supervised the election that actually ousted him from power.

We saw in the Goodluck Jonathan-Muhammadu Buhari handover in Nigeria where an outgoing president, after a fiercely contested presidential election, definitely merits the immediate eulogies of his successor. And what remains of the motivations of dictators when eulogies are subtracted from what they represent? The remainder is absolute inhumanity. In this case of Buhari-Jonathan, President Buhari also took the opportunity of his first appearance at an African Summit (upon his election) to continue to acknowledge the statesmanlike role of former president Jonathan in the peaceful handover of power in Nigeria, as he declared to the body of African leaders: I cannot fail to acknowledge the very positive role played by my predecessor, President Goodluck Jonathan, in averting the feared crisis in our country, and in facilitating the peaceful transition of power between the two parties [69].

8. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we agree with Yimer [17] that the immediate task of leadership in Africa is to restore hope. Hence, when this generic denotation of hope is disambiguated, it is integrative of hope in the electoral process. Furthermore, we opine that leadership in Africa has the additional challenge of proving that Africans can on their own (as Africans) resolve conflicting issues of governance and politics in their national domains in particular. Dictators in Africa must begin to realize that the perennial rule of the 'Big Man', once an African norm, is increasingly becoming unfashionable [70]. And indeed, the tendency towards the outmodedness of despotism and presidential tenure “sittightism”, has been strongly demonstrated by President Jonathan in Nigeria. We further project the maxim (even in its trite nuances) that Rome was not built in a day. Africa, like Rome, is under serious construction. Despite the despotic distractions of some unrepentant autocrats therefore, Africa is “work in progress.”

The examples of African leaders such as Nigeria’s Jonathan, politicians who would willingly accept defeat at the polls, are accordingly, constituent forms of the building blocks of the emergent African edifice. And inversely, despots who are devoid of all accountability tendencies are the weak points in the new African socio-political and economic architecture. We prognosticate further that from freely conceding defeat at elections, there will later emerge from Africa, politicians who would easily accept not to even contest the elections in the first place, when every earlier prediction had pointed towards their conceiving subject-election as a do or die affair. We finally, pointedly acknowledge in this study, the example of Jonathan in Nigeria, in promoting the course of the sanctity of the ballot box in Africa and strongly appeal to current African despots, not to permit the lessons learnable from this experience to become unlearned.

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