

Lessons from Libya and Others.

The fall of Libya strongman and the inhuman treatment, was not because he did not buy weapons to shoot down some hostile planes. Those who sale weapons to third world countries, however friendly, and however oil rich the country might be, they never sale the state of the art. They never sale weapons they cannot jam, or destroy. Even the experts who come to install them are more loyal to their countries and fellow developed countries than us; the wretched of the earth, who produce what we don't consume and consume what we don't produce and feel proud.

But before we learn from Libya, let us look at just three African success stories.

The first is Ivory Coast. It became independent from France in 1960 and was led by Felix Houphouet - Boigny from then till his peaceful death in 1993. He started well by joining African planters protests against discriminative French settlers by forming the African Planters Syndicate in 1944, which was against the policies of the Vichy regime.

Later he headed a democratic party which was influenced by Marxism. He joined the French Assembly. As President he was fondly called PAPA.

At the peak of his regime, the country was conspicuous for its ethnic harmony and well developed economy leading in the production of cocoa and coffee. It was referred to as the IVORIAN MIRACLE. He had strong ties with the west especially France. But Boigny ruled with the Iron fist. He built the world's largest church, the Basilica of our Lady of Peace of Yamoussoukro at a cost of \$300 million.

He participated in the overthrow of Nkrumah and later the killing of Sankara. Suffering from prostate cancer, he had arranged for his life support system to be turned off at dawn of December 7th 1993 the 33rd anniversary of Independence Day.

At the time of his death, he was Africa's longest surviving ruler. Just 33 years only. Though he died peacefully, ethnic harmony turned into Zen phobia and the miracle into ruins and chaos. Things fell apart.

The Second is Ghana. Rawlings ruled with an Iron fist. But he heeded good manners to obey the term limits that had been put in the constitution under his rule. His party lost the election. The outcome was accepted. Recently the party that took over from him, lost in the Presidential elections by the thinnest of margins. There was no vote recount, no petition, no cries that where will Ghana be without the party that ushered in civilian rule.

Both Rawlings and Akufo are in Ghana. There has been change of Leaders peacefully and democratically. Ghana has not, only discovered oil, it is producing oil.

The 3rd is South Africa. ANC is the oldest party in Africa. It will be 100 years next year. Nelson Mandela, when he won elections with a real landslide, he stepped down after one term. He was and still is hugely popular. He demystified the syndrome of "I sacrificed" "the country still needs me to stabilize"; "without me there will be chaos". His supporters did not threaten that they would take him to court, if he did not stand again. He proved that the Country is far more important than any individual, that the African strong man syndrome rather than the strong Nation was false. Mr. Mbeki took over the leadership of the Party and Country. He was removed from the leadership of the party and hence the country's Presidency. He stepped aside. Many speculated that he was going to split the party and form his own. A new President is in power. Mandela and Mbeki are respected former Presidents. Mbeki proved that the party is more important than its sitting leaders. In addition, a very popular and strong leader of the party's Youth League did some wrong. He was submitted to the party's disciplinary committee, proving that institutions are meant to work even where the untouchables are involved.

Western powers however friendly, have their interests to serve. It is the duty of our leaders to provide no cracks to be exploited by having Governments that follow the law, are accountable, that change peacefully. That are not only quoted for good growth figures in Gross Domestic Growth (GDP) terms, but that, I propose, should consider the Gross National Happiness (GNH) of its population, where Public Safety Units and Safe Houses are never heard of. That not only sing and Sectarianism and teach patriotism but do actually separate State from family resources and family from the State. I quote the late Professor Samwiri Rubaraza Karugire,

“I also submit that you have a vicious circle here: you have committed crimes in order to stay in office and therefore you have to stay in office because you have committed crimes so that you are not called to account. What this will mean for the future, I leave to those who have a flair for regressive analysis and to our distant younger cousins, the political scientists.”

He continues,

“In tandem with this numbing corruption, or indeed because of it, the continent is also saddled with nepotism. Because of these gross malfeasances, our rulers become insecure in their sumptuous offices and therefore they surround themselves with their own relatives with whom, of course, they loot the national treasury.”

He concludes,

“You wonder, do you not, how such a country composed of plural societies, could be held together when its public offices are dominated by members of one family. If you remove such a family, then you have also removed the country’s government.”

This was during his inaugural lecture as Professor of History at Makerere University entitled, *Wind of Change or Merely a Change in the Wind.* On 18th June 1986. I was present. I could not imagine that gruesome killing of

Gadaffi would awaken me, to what he said then that looked so distant and ephemeral.

The main lesson is that Africa should eschew the strong, indispensable leader mentality. We need strong system and institutions that serve the national interest. After all cemeteries are full of indispensable men, if they are lucky.