

# viewpoint

## Can this APC cure Nigeria's headache? (2)



■ **Chido Onumah**  
conumah@hotmail.com

*Continued from last week*

I have no illusions about the challenges (some of which are beginning to manifest) and limitations of the new mega party being proposed by the country's main opposition parties. The reality is that the All Progressives Congress can only go so far in the quest to lift our people from needless poverty, misery, disease, unemployment and other problems associated with a neo-colonial capitalist economy like ours. The reasons are quite clear.

However, it is important to state that in the midst of the general chaos that has enveloped the country and the rudderless leadership of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party which threatens the very survival of the country, there are very few options open for us to push back the country from the brink.

In general, there are three likely scenarios that could play out in the next two years. Incidentally, none of the scenarios is capable of addressing the urgent crisis confronting the country. What are these scenarios? One, the opposition abdicates the political space and allows the current charade to run its full course. Two things are possible here: first, the implosion of the PDP which seems quite imminent could prove even costlier for the nation. Second, President Goodluck Jonathan is "reelected" in 2015. By 2019, he, like his predecessors, hands over to a governor of his choice and the cycle continues while we groan and complain ad nauseam.

The second scenario is the military option. This option looks menacingly real and tantalising for some. Many of the people who would

lampoon the effort to confront the PDP and its despicable rule are salivating at the prospect of a military coup. They are readying themselves, like their forebears, in the spirit of "service to the nation" to be part of the process. It does not matter to them that such an action will take us a one step forward and twenty years backward.

The third scenario which looms large is anarchy or civil war. The mindless bloodletting and general insecurity in the country could get out of control and precipitate anarchy or civil war; and like Somalia, the country could become the poster child of failed states. These are scenarios that should not be viewed lightly or dismissed with a wave of hand.

So, what is the way forward? In this regard, two scenarios appear feasible. One, the prospect of a social revolution or what Edwin Madunagu, in his article titled, "The Hugo Chavez Revolution", *The Guardian* (March 28, 2013), describes as "a fundamental, non-sectarian and mass-engineered rupture in the structure and content of the Nigerian state". Even though the objective conditions are present and the fact that in most cases such "mass-engineered rupture" do not "give notice", Governor Chibuike Amaechi of Rivers State, a chieftain of the PDP, in his wisdom, has ruled out this option because according to him, "Our elasticity (for suffering) has no limit".

The last option would be a popular and broad-based coalition to unseat the PDP in 2015. This is where the APC comes in. Of course, the APC is not necessarily the only option here.

The Labour Party/ National Conscience Party coalition, as a friend suggested, is another. However, if the opposition is really serious about unseating a behemoth like the PDP, it will do well to close ranks.

These are the only viable options. Every Nigerian would have to decide where they fit in. There is no room for vacillation or "siddon look". How then do we get out of the current cul-de-sac? Which of the preceding options is meaningful and achievable (before things get out of hand) within the context of the current bourgeoisie "democratic" order? I would say the last option.

I understand the "fierce urgency of now" in relation to ending the suffering and deprivation of citizens. At the same time, we need to save and secure the country before we can move forward. Unfortunately, the PDP which has been in power since 1999 has foreclosed any meaningful debate about the future of the country and the possibility of change. For us to start any real discussion about the future of the country, we need to get rid of the PDP which has elevated misgovernance into a religion.

The PDP is in the throes of death and it looks like it wants to drag the rest of the country with it. With the PDP, we are dealing with a collection of megalomaniacs. Currently, we can identify three centres of power within the party: The Presidency, the Nigerian Governors' Forum, and the Northern Governors' Forum. The ambition of the men who control these centres of power, namely, President Goodluck Jonathan, Amaechi of Rivers State, and Governor Babangida Aliyu of Niger State, as well as that of other tangential gladiators will, undoubtedly, sink the party.

The question is: Does the nation want to sink with the PDP? Now is the time to confront the arrogance and egregious folly of the PDP. When former president Olusegun Obasanjo, and the party's national chairman, Bamanga Tukur, say the PDP will rule for 100 years, we should not see it as mere political-speak. The PDP cares for this country, to paraphrase American political journalist, DeWayne Wickham, in much the same way that pimps care for their whores: Just what they can get out of them.

How then do we defeat Jonathan and the PDP in 2015? There is no other way than for the opposition to come together and show that it is capable of this urgent task of national reclamation. If the APC succeeds, and I hope and pray it does, it will be "a marginal improvement over where we are coming from". If the country can once in its history have a leader elected by popular will — not installed by the incumbent or the military — it is a step forward.

I shall end this piece by going back to Madunagu who noted in his piece, "Reflections on Party Combinations", *The Guardian*, March 7 & 14, 2013, "Someone has referred to the newly-formed APC as the "new" SDP. Yes, there are a couple of elements in common. But there is at least one more requirement for the APC: It has to show that not only is the status-quo totally bankrupt (which is the case), but also that the APC is a historically progressive way forward at this moment, and that it is the only one".

This is the battle progressives in the APC have to wage in the weeks and months ahead.

*Concluded.*