

**TEXT OF SPEECH**  
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**THEME: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN POLITICS**  
**AND GOVERNANCE**

**Salute to Our Heroes**

Fellow citizens, as we mark this year’s Armed Forces Remembrance Day today, let me begin this address by saluting our gallant troops who, from the creation of the Nigerian state over a hundred years ago, have played a pivotal role in our journey to nationhood. It was Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd president of the United States of America, who once said:

Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them.<sup>1</sup>

Decades after Roosevelt, Barrack Obama, the 43rd president of the United States of America, speaking at a Memorial Day

service on May 30, 2011, reminded his nation of the need to honour its fallen heroes. In his words:

Our nation owes a debt to its fallen heroes that we can never fully repay. But we can honor their sacrifice, and we must. We must honor it in our own lives by holding their memories close to our hearts, and heeding the example they set.<sup>2</sup>

Still on memories and memorials, the words of Romanian-born writer, Holocaust survivor, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel ring eternally true:

Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no future.<sup>3</sup>

In keeping with this noble tradition of honouring the past while creating the future, as we begin the Year 2023, a year in which we, the Nigerian people, once again have an opportunity to decide our nation's preferred future, let us, on this Armed Forces Remembrance Day, honour the memories of those who laid down their lives, as well as those who put themselves in the line of fire, to get us where we are today. From the Nigeria Regiment of 1914 to the exploits of members of the Nigerian Armed Forces who subsequently fought to keep the peace across

Africa and the world, signalling Nigeria's undisputed potential and unquestionable readiness to emerge as a regional great power, we remember the unquantifiable contributions of our men and women in uniform.

Even as we speak, our troops are on battlefields and at garrisons across the nation, raising high the banner of courage and the flag of patriotism as they fight against the forces of terrorism, insurgency, banditry and other forms of violence against the Nigerian people and the Nigerian state. In the words of Andrew Jackson, "Every good citizen makes his country's honor his own, and cherishes not only as precious but as sacred. He is willing to risk his life in its defense and is conscious that he gains protection while he gives it."<sup>4</sup> With profound gratitude, let us salute these heroes who have put their lives on the line in the defence of our fatherland. To all the fallen heroes who have paid the ultimate price, and to the families they have left behind, we owe a duty to build a truly great nation that is worthy of their sacrifice. (Please rise as we observe a moment of silence. May the souls of all our gallant soldiers rest in peace. Amen. You may be seated.)

### **Sober Reflections**

The truth is incontrovertible that building a great nation begins with healing from past grievances and gangrenous wounds,

some of which have continued to fester more than six decades into our journey as an independent nation. This is why, even as we celebrate the heroic deeds of our soldiers on this Armed Forces Remembrance Day, we also remember the grievous events that occurred on this day exactly 57 years ago, on January 15, 1966, when our democratic development was disrupted by young military officers in their twenties and thirties; who had become impatient with the excesses of the political class, especially the older generation of politicians. We remember with deep sobriety the subsequent devastating consequences of that intrusion, including the violent and vengeful reprisals, the near break-up of our nation, and the gruesome civil war that ended on this day 53 years ago, on January 15, 1970, after claiming the lives of irreplaceable Nigerians.

### **2023 Elections, Memory Joggers, and a Convergence of Divisive Forces**

As we brace ourselves for the 2023 elections, we are confronted with memory joggers that bring us face to face with the lingering effects of these and other dark chapters of our history. When one takes a close look at the presidential race, one cannot but observe how the divisive forces that have defined our past have converged, as though reminding us that we, as a nation, are yet to fix the broken foundations.

First, we are confronted with regional and ethnic memory joggers. For the first time since the First and Second Republics, our political process has thrown up three, rather than two, major contenders for the presidency. As it was in the First and Second Republics, each of the three has his support base in one of the three main regions that constituted the geopolitical foundation of our country, namely the North, the West, and the East, mirroring the ethnic origin of each candidate. With support bases largely regional and with drum beats of ethnic confrontations sounding loud and clear, we are faced with a stark reminder that we have merely papered over the cracks of the regional and ethnic fault lines in our political history.

Secondly, five decades after the end of the Civil War, unanswered questions that border on national reintegration continue to stare us in the face even as the true political inclusion of the South East remains a strong imperative in our quest for nationhood. The momentum around the candidacy of the Labour Party's Mr Peter Obi has further brought this to the fore, reminding us that, as a nation, we cannot face our future with the structural imbalances and inequities that defined our past. Moreover, the 'Obidient' movement has also become a memory jogger in the generational context, reminding us of how the undesirable state of the nation and the inadequacies of the old political order can push the youth to the wall, provoking a

younger generation that does not pull punches in confronting whoever appears to represent the old order. Unfortunately, nationhood has historically been the casualty and Nigeria has been the loser in such inter-generational wars.

Furthermore, the growing support for the candidate of the Labour Party by Nigerian Church communities is worthy of note. However, while the awakening of political consciousness among Christians is commendable, in a religiously diverse polity, the optics of a political strategy<sup>5</sup> that is identified more with one religion than the other is a sad reminder of the lingering divisions clogging the wheels of our journey to nationhood. The messaging and mannerism of some church leaders<sup>6</sup> in this regard is also a pointer to the failure of the ecclesiastical order to recognise that, in Nigeria's nationhood equation, you cannot wish Ishmael away. Just as you cannot successfully clap with one hand, you cannot build a logical Nigerian narrative around one religion to the exclusion of the other.

This divisive and illogical religious rhetoric also has its propagators among Muslim clerics who seek to rally their congregations in support of the Muslim-Muslim ticket of the All Progressives Congress (APC) simply because it gratifies their quest for the domination of one religion by another.<sup>7</sup> Those who adopt such a retrogressive religious paradigm that relegates

development and good governance to the background have failed to see the link between the massive poverty and underdevelopment in Northern Nigeria on the one hand and their brand of Islam on the other hand which is different from the type practiced by forward-thinking nations like the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

Indeed, the 2023 general election is coming thirty years after the June 12, 1993 elections that proved to be a watershed in our journey to nationhood. That election, thirty years ago, laid the foundation for our current democratic dispensation upon the sacrifice of Chief M.K.O. Abiola. Thirty years on, the Muslim-Muslim ticket of the APC has become a memory jogger reminding us of the intrigues of the 1993 election. Even as the candidacies of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a Muslim, and his running mate, Senator Kashim Shettima, another Muslim, have heightened the religious tension in our polity, the annulled June 12, 1993 election has become a reference point for the 'BATified' who are defenders of the same-faith ticket. Meanwhile, their opponents are quick to remind them that 2023 is a generation away from 1993 and presents different circumstances.<sup>8</sup> The proof that 1993 and 2023 are a generation apart is the fact that the young have since grown. This is evident in the fact that thirty years after 1993, Kola Abiola, the son of Chief M.K.O. Abiola, is on the ballot as a presidential candidate

of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) in 2023. However, the sad reality is that, while the young have grown, we, as a nation, have not grown in national unity these past thirty years but have rather become more divided by religion.

Meanwhile, the candidacy of former Vice President Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has brought to the fore the unresolved North-South dimension of the National Question. Despite the 'unifier' messaging of the 'Atikulated,' and despite the religious balancing that defines this ticket, the power rotation conundrum is a memory jogger pointing to our failure as a nation over the decades to revisit foundational issues and carve out governance structures that can harness the best of the North and the best of the South.

In addition to the memory joggers presented by these three frontline political leanings, the 2023 election also brings class divisions to the fore. The candidacy of Dr Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) has been cast "in the mould of [Mallam] Aminu Kano."<sup>9</sup> However, the 'Kwankwasiya' momentum among the 'Talakawas' or so-called ordinary people in Northern Nigeria is also a reminder of the history of bad governance and the weaponisation of deprivation that has left 86 million people in the region wallowing in multidimensional poverty.<sup>10</sup> There is no greater



proof of the widening gap between politics and governance in Nigeria than the fact that 40 years after the disruptive politics of Aminu Kano, Northern Nigeria remains overwhelmingly poor despite the dominance of that region in our politics since independence.

This gap between politics and governance, which has been further widened by the polarising convergence of ethnic, generational, religious, regional, and class divisions, is what we, the Nigerian people, are confronted with in 2023. Nigeria is again at a pivotal crossroads. The divisive campaigns of the frontline candidates of the four major parties have turned logic on its head such that no matter the optimistic permutations, there is palpable fear all around us as to what Election 2023 has in store for our fragile nation. It appears that, whichever choice we make among the leading candidates, we will still be confronted with unresolved divisions. However, this is no time to be paralysed by divisive and debilitating fear; rather, this moment beckons on us to look in faith to the one God by whose help we can build one great and united country. With this faith, we can rest assured that the New Nigeria will be established and that the verdict of the 2023 election will be: NIGERIA WINS.

Nevertheless, we are left with the following lingering questions: Who among these candidates offers the best guarantee of a

Nigeria that works for every Nigerian? Is there perhaps a dark horse among those not considered main contenders who offers the best path to our aspirations as a nation? Still, is there any Nigerian out there who possesses the qualities that our nation needs at this time but who, due to the kind of politics that is prevalent in Nigeria, does not have his or her name on the ballot? While I leave you to reflect on these questions, let me state that the purpose of this address is to equip you as Nigerians with tools to assess any politician who has offered himself or herself for an elective position in 2023, as well as those who will do so after 2023.

### **From Democratic Transition to Democratic Institutionalisation**

With this background, let us now proceed to what I call ‘The Politics and Governance Laboratory’ where we will conduct a diagnosis of the governance capabilities of the politicians who are vying for political offices, especially the presidency, in 2023. In the meantime, permit me to round off my thoughts on the convergence of divisive forces by pointing out one more historically divisive force that we must manage carefully as we approach the 2023 elections. By this, I am referring to the historical contentions between the military and the political class which, in the past, brought the military out of the barracks,

disrupted the democratic process, and imposed military dictatorships on the Nigerian state.

This year's presidential election will be the first since the return to democracy in 1999 that will not have a retired general or a former military head of state on the ballot. Indeed, apart from Major Hamza Al-Mustapha of the Action Alliance Party, none of the presidential candidates has had a military career. Without prejudice to the rights of retired military personnel to contest elections as civilians, for a country with a history of almost three cumulative decades of military rule, this shift in the domination of the political space from ex-military to civilians is a milestone as it speaks to the progressive development of a democratic culture in Nigeria. However, in what appears to be a proxy clash of power, we have also seen speculative reports<sup>11</sup> of retired generals and ex-military heads of state throwing their weight behind one candidate or the other. This has the makings of a showdown between the former military leaders on the one hand and veteran politicians on the other. Nevertheless, as the last of the ex-military heads of state bows out of the presidency this year, the fact remains that an era of democratic transition is giving way to a new era of democratic institutionalisation. An enormous responsibility rests on the shoulders of the political class at this time to preserve our democratic gains while

providing leadership to the military and keeping it content with its responsibility to defend our territorial integrity.

This era of democratic institutionalisation calls for not just any type of leader -- not just politicians who seek power for the sake of power, not leaders whose legitimacy can be questioned -- but leaders with character, competence and capacity, emerging through free, fair and credible elections, and possessing the capacity to translate political capital to governance outcomes. Please bear this in mind as we now proceed to the Politics and Governance Laboratory to conduct our diagnosis of the political landscape.

### **By Their Politics, You Shall Know Them**

In the Politics and Governance Laboratory, our diagnosis will not be targeted at individual politicians but at the kinds of politics we have observed in the Nigerian political landscape. This diagnosis will be based on what I call the ‘Good Tree, Good Fruit, and Bad Tree, Bad Fruit’ principle. This principle is inspired by the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples in **Matthew 7:15-20**:

<sup>15</sup> Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. <sup>16</sup> You will know them by their fruits. Do

men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

This principle of detecting the veracity of processes from outcomes, or of predicting outcomes from processes, is applicable not just in the prophetic but also in the political context. It is based on the idea that a destructive means cannot bring about a constructive end. From the kind of politics practised by those offering themselves for public office, we can predict the governance outcomes they will output if and when they obtain power. In other words, by their politics, we shall know them. This is the principle by which we will subject the 2023 elections to scrutiny in the Politics and Governance Laboratory. First, let us take a brief look at the difference between politics and governance.

### **The Difference Between Politics and Governance**

In simple terms, the *Oxford Learner's Dictionary* defines politics as “the activities involved in getting and using power in public life, and being able to influence decisions that affect a

country or a society.”<sup>12</sup> Governance derives from the word ‘govern,’ which means to “legally control a country or its people and be responsible for introducing new laws, organizing public services, etc.”<sup>13</sup> While politics refers to a set of activities geared towards obtaining and retaining power, governance refers to the deployment of power through policies, institutions and investments.

The difference between politics and governance could be likened to the difference between courtship and marriage. Courtship is the wooing while marriage is the doing; courtship is the profession of love while marriage is the hard work of selfless, sacrificial love. In the same manner, politics is the process of wooing voters, power blocs and other stakeholders towards backing a candidate, a party, or a course of action, while governance is the rolling up of the sleeves to fulfil the promises made in the quest for power. This is what Mario Cuomo, the former governor of New York, meant when he said, “You campaign in poetry; you govern in prose.”<sup>14</sup>

Politics, however, does not end with campaigns. Even after campaigns, politics and governance coexist as an overlapping and reinforcing loop. This overlap of politics and governance is reflected in the classical definitions of politics by political scientists David Easton and Harold Laswell. While David

Easton described politics as the authoritative allocation of values,<sup>15</sup> Harold Laswell saw politics as the mechanism that decides who gets what, when and how.<sup>16</sup> This overlap of politics and governance is what plays out when governments seek to balance competing political interests in areas that fall under the purview of governance, such as how much should be allocated to different sectors or constituencies in the budget. However, for the purpose of this address, we see politics as the process of securing power and governance as the output of power; that is, politics as the tree and governance as the fruit.

### **Two Types of Politics and Their Governance Outcomes**

Based on the ‘Good Tree, Good Fruit, and Bad Tree, Bad Fruit’ principle, there are two broad types of politics, namely, ‘Good Politics,’ which translates to ‘Good Governance,’ and ‘Bad Politics,’ which translates to ‘Bad Governance.’ We will begin our analysis with the latter.

### **Bad Politics, Bad Governance**

Bad politics is politics for politics’ sake. Its dominant aim is to secure power and it seeks to do so at all costs. Governance is secondary to this kind of politics and may be altogether absent from its list of priorities. Even when promises of good governance are present in the manifestos of the practitioners of bad politics, such promises are merely a smokescreen

concealing their true motivations. When bad politics achieves its power-grabbing aim, its governance decisions and priorities are motivated by the desire to retain and consolidate power. This motivation is what drives policies, investments and the management of institutions. Bad politics could take any of the following 10 forms:

**1. Politics of Division:** The politics of division or divisive politics is adopted by politicians who capitalise on the polarisation in our polity to achieve their political ambitions. Rather than seek to build a bridge, such politicians use ethnic, regional, religious, partisan, generational and class divisions to build dams between the people in order to appease political support bases. The agents of divisive politics do not hesitate to throw equitable representation and inclusion out the window because politics is a game of numbers to them, while a sense of inclusion is secondary. They do not take a stand on issues of nationhood when they sense that taking a stand could infuriate their extremist support bases. Fellow Nigerians, you may be wondering what kind of governance outcomes the politics of division outputs. This kind of politics can extinguish the dying embers of patriotism and further intensify the feelings of marginalisation. It will nurture nepotism in political appointments and sectionalism in the allocation of projects and



resources. In a nutshell, divisive politics attacks the foundations of nationhood and fosters underdevelopment.

**2. Politics of Deception:** The politics of deception is defined by an attempted mixture of good tree and bad tree characteristics. The purveyors of this kind of politics thrive on false premises, including forged identities, contrived statistics, deliberate misinformation, propaganda, and such post-truth anecdotes that became known as “alternative facts” in the government of former US president Donald Trump.<sup>17</sup> In addition to false premises, deceptive politicians also deploy false promises; promises they have no intention of fulfilling designed to lure unsuspecting voters. It was such politicians that former French president Charles de Gaulle referred to when he said, “Since a politician never believes what he says, he is quite surprised to be taken at his word.”<sup>18</sup> The governance implication of the politics of deception is a lack of accountability and transparency, as well as a legacy of failed promises, because deceptive means cannot bring about a credible end.

**3. Politics of Manipulation:** If you have ever wondered why some political leaders have their countries, regions or states in the palm of their hands as though such territories were their private estates and the people their zombie subjects, then welcome to the workings of the politics of manipulation.

Manipulative politicians are masters at the art of mind control. They deploy various means, from the hypnotic to the philanthropic, to maintain loyalty to such an extent that defies rationality. Such politicians are adept at state capture and the weaponisation of poverty. They loot the treasury and use the looted funds to win loyalty through acts of generosity. One cannot but agree with Joseph Addison who posited: “Is there not some chosen curse, some hidden thunder in the stores of heaven, red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man who owes his greatness to his country’s ruin!”<sup>19</sup> The governance outcomes of the politics of manipulation include a descent into dictatorship, human rights violations, grand corruption, lack of accountability, and the perpetuation of poverty.

**4. Politics of Merchandise:** Also known as transactional politics, the politics of merchandise is practiced by politicians who buy delegates and candidates during primaries, purchase endorsements from power blocs and influencers during campaigns, and buy voters during elections. The governance that results from this kind of politics is characterised by a lack of accountability to citizens. When politicians get to power through vote buying, they do not think that they owe us, the citizens, any obligation. As a result, they have no business with us until the next elections. Fellow citizens, in 2023, we must reject political merchants and vote buyers.

**5. Politics of Exploitation:** The politics of exploitation is practiced by incumbents who divert state resources to re-election campaigns or to fund anointed candidates. These politicians also exploit otherwise non-partisan institutions such as security agencies to carry out their political shenanigans. It is also common to find exploitative politicians denying the opposition legitimate use of facilities. The politics of exploitation erodes confidence in institutions. It depletes patriotism, fosters corruption, and sabotages critical sectors of the economy.

**6. Politics of Betrayal:** The politics of betrayal is a brand of transactional politics deployed by candidates who lack a sense of loyalty. Politics of betrayal is what is at play when political leaders sell out members of their political party for political gain. For instance, when, in a bid to win a particular state at the presidential elections, a presidential candidate of a given party makes backdoor deals with the governor of that state who is from an opposing political party in such a manner that throws the governorship candidate of his party under the bus, that is the politics of betrayal at play. Politics of betrayal amounts to what Mahatma Gandhi describe as “Politics without Principle,”<sup>20</sup> and it will ultimately produce unprincipled leaders who will not hesitate to betray the citizens when they are faced with difficult choices.

**7. Politics of Slander:** Also known as gutter politics, the politics of slander deploys character assassination. Whereas transparency and accountability mandate that those who offer to serve the public good must come clean before the public, politicians must realise that you don't rise by destroying others. The politics of slander will produce mafia-type rulers who lack decency and who can go to any length, including Watergate type of extremes, to dig out dirt on opponents. Such politics can breed incivility in governance as well as stall development. In the words of Samuel Griswold Goodrich: "Abuse is the weapon of the vulgar."<sup>21</sup>

**8. Politics of Intimidation:** The practitioners of the politics of intimidation use violence and scare tactics to undermine opposition and disenfranchise voters. The result of such politics is voter apathy and the avoidance of the political landscape by competent and credible candidates, especially women. Such politics will produce leaders that lack legitimacy and who have no genuine sense of accountability to the people.

**9. Politics of Elimination:** When we think of the politics of elimination, we remember our nation's unresolved political assassinations and the lingering questions they elicit. Who killed Funsho Williams? Who Killed Bola Ige? Who killed Marshall Harry? Who killed Victoria Chintex? By eliminating opponents,

the practitioners of the politics of elimination deprive the nation of leaders who are, more often than not, better than themselves.

**10. Politics of Entitlement:** This is the “emi lo kan”<sup>22</sup> type of politics that insists on one’s turn even if circumstances do not align. Politics of entitlement also manifests as perennial candidacy, not with the intent to serve, but to gratify long-term personal ambitions. It could also manifest as insistence on a given political office as a reward for what one considers a lifetime of sacrifice to the nation. Politicians with a sense of entitlement evade political debates and do not consider it imperative to communicate with the electorate. Entitlement politics will breed an imperial presidency that is distant from the people and has no sense of responsibility or accountability to the people. Such imperial governance will slide towards dictatorship and will be intolerant of dissent. Entitlement politicians set low performance benchmarks for themselves when they secure power and are content with projecting molehills as mountains of achievement.

### **Good Politics, Good Governance**

Fellow Nigerians, having completed our analysis of bad politics and the bad governance it outputs, let us now take a look at good politics and its output of good governance. Good politics is pragmatic politics in the interest of the people. It is characterised

by a pragmatic approach to distributing value and it seeks to improve the lives of the people in a manner that ensures that no one is left behind.

Pragmatism in politics entails compromise and trustful give-and-take. Such pragmatic politics was what German statesman Otto von Bismarck meant when he famously said:

Politics is the art of the possible, the attainable—  
the art of the next best.<sup>23</sup>

In such politics, everyone gets a seat at the table through representation. Even if no one gets all they want on the negotiation table as individuals, the collective satisfaction more than makes up for the trade-offs. This characteristic of good politics reminds us of the words attributed to Mahatma Gandhi:

The world has enough for everyone's need, but not  
for everyone's greed.<sup>24</sup>

Through equitable representation, good politics results in good governance, which executes policies, plans and programmes in such a manner that ensures that citizens have access to public goods, including education, healthcare and infrastructure. Good

politics translates to good governance because it has the following 10 major characteristics:

1. **It is principled and values-guided:** Good politics may make compromises on its demand in the interest of the nation, but it will never compromise on principles and values;

2. **It is realistic:** It does not avoid reality but rather confronts it. While admitting the problems and paradoxes plaguing the nation, it acknowledges what has worked and gives due credit to its predecessors;

3. **It is inspirational:** Good politics does not dwell indefinitely on the problems; instead, it recognises the nation's potential and, based on an accurate and systematic analysis of the state of the nation, it lifts the people above the problems and shows them the possibilities of a great nation;

4. **It is vision-driven:** Good politics encapsulates the nation's possibilities in a clear picture of the preferred future;

5. **It is issue-based:** Good politics focuses on salient issues of development rather than resorting to slander, character assassination or mudslinging;

6. **It is data-guided:** The practitioners of good politics build their campaign promises on evidence. They are not unduly sceptical of data but they endeavour to use statistics and qualitative data accurately;

7. **It is communicative:** Politicians who practice good politics talk to the people they intend to govern; by communicating, they allay fears, restore hope, and assure the citizenry;
8. **It is engaging and interactive:** The practitioners of good politics are open to interrogation and they do not avoid debates or evade difficult questions;
9. **It is inclusive:** Good politics gives a sense of belonging to historically excluded or vulnerable groups, including women, young people, the elderly, and persons living with disabilities;
10. **It is nationhood-oriented:** Good politics builds bridges across divisive lines and unites people towards a common cause of national greatness. The practitioners of good politics esteem nationhood above ethnic, religious, partisan and other sentiments; their motto is “one nation under God.”<sup>25</sup>

Such politics with the aforementioned noble features will produce the governance outcomes identified by the United Nations as characteristic of good governance.<sup>26</sup> Governance in such a state will be participatory, consistent with the rule of law, transparent, responsive, consensus-oriented, equitable and inclusive, effective and efficient, and accountable.

Furthermore, the governance output of good politics will be characterised by increase or sustainable growth, peace, order, establishment, good judgement or effective policy-making,



justice, and patriotic zeal. These qualities are contained in the framework of government described in **Isaiah 9:6-7**:

<sup>6</sup>For unto us a Child is born,  
Unto us a Son is given;  
And the government will be upon His shoulder.  
And His name will be called  
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> Of the **increase** of His government and **peace**  
There will be no end,  
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,  
To **order** it and **establish** it with **judgment** and  
**justice**

From that time forward, even forever.

The **zeal** of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

[Emphases mine]

### **Bridging the Gap Through the Politics of Substitution**

Fellow citizens, to bridge the gap between politics and governance, we must press the eject button on the bastions of bad politics. Wherever we have unwittingly thrown our collective weight behind such purveyors of the kind of politics that produces bad governance, we must now activate the politics of substitution and give our support to persons who, from their

politics, we can tell will serve the public good using the power we confer on them by our votes. Now is the time to make up our minds and make that choice. In the words of William James: “When you have to make a choice and don’t make it, that is in itself a choice.”<sup>27</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Fellow Nigerians, our history as a nation has been characterised by contention between polarising forces: between the North and the South; between the Igbos, Yorubas, Hausa/Fulanis, and the over 250 additional ethnic groups; between Christians and Muslims; between the old and the young; between the military on the one hand, and statesmen and politicians on the other. But now is the time and this is the moment for a new breed of leaders to emerge; a new breed of leaders that can situate themselves between polarising forces and bring every constituency together on the table of brotherhood; a new breed of leaders that can reconcile past grievances, end marginalisation, and give every constituent part of our nation a prominent seat at the table; a new breed of leaders that can shift our national focus from the divisiveness of bad politics to those common grounds where politics cannot divide us -- the common grounds of our shared aspiration for Peace, Progress, Prosperity and Possibilities; the common grounds of our shared need for security, nutrition, education, healthcare, jobs, success in

business, access to electricity, good roads, and other functional infrastructure; the common grounds of our shared desire for national glory and achievement across endeavours, and to be recognised and celebrated as citizens of a great nation among the nations of the world. Now is the time to make that shift from politics for politics' sake to politics for the sake of governance.

When we make that shift from viewing politics merely as a vehicle for grabbing and retaining power, to politics as a vehicle heading towards good governance; when we make good governance the central focus of our politics; when we jettison bad politics in its various forms and embrace the kind of politics that outputs good governance, then, and only then, will we welcome the New Nigeria: a nation that can become the Peace, Progress, Prosperity and Possibilities capital of the world. Let us, therefore, resolve to make governance the driving force of our politics as we approach the polls in 2023, knowing that whoever wins in the end, the verdict will be: NIGERIA WINS!

Thank you for listening, God bless you, and God bless our beloved nation, Nigeria.

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