

Fol: If it's free, why do we pay for it? (II)

Written by JK Randle

Tuesday, 22 November 2011 00:00

Saturday Sun" newspaper (October 29, 2011)

Headline: "EFCC, ICPC Incompetent, Compromised"

- Senator Arthur Nzeribe

"The Freedom Of Information Act should be utilized in this must-win fight. After all, President Goodluck Jonathan through his spokesman, has given Nigerian the hope that one can utilize the opportunity offered by the Act to cross-check fact, as regarding his indictment by EFCC, when he reacted to allegation making the rounds then that he was actually indicted by MallamNuhuRibadu-led EFCC. For avoidance of doubt, Reuben Abati, the Special Adviser to the President, Media and Publicity said: "Finally, let me state that, President Jonathan remains committed to press freedom and freedom of speech, which is why he signed the Freedom of Information Bill into law. With the passage of this bill into law, the expectation of the President is that such a law could be utilized by the press to thoroughly investigate allegations before they are released into the public arena as truth. The FOI law allows reporters to request for records from the EFCC which when perused would establish the truth."

(v) "Sunday Mirror" newspaper (October 30, 2011)

Headline: "HOW NIGERIAN JUDGES ARE BRIBED

- UWAIS PANEL

"The JusticeMuhammedLawalUwais Panel sitting in Abuja is sad upon discovering that some serving Nigerian judges have descended so low to accept underwear for their wives as bribe from either litigants or their counsel appearing before them, Sunday Mirror has authoritatively learnt.

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An impeccable source who is a member of the Justice Uwais panel also told our correspondent that the painful discovery by the panel also indicated that even justices of the Supreme Court are not exempted from the malaise.

“The issue of corruption in the judiciary was discussed for a long time with both lawyers and judges exposing how articles of bribery are passed on to judges.

“Although the focus is on judges, senior legal practitioners including Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs) were heavily indicted.

“Don't forget that the Uwais Panel is peopled by practising lawyers and judges who have either experienced first-hand, or, watched this corruption in its basest form being perpetrated.

“It was revealed at the sitting of the Justice Uwais Panel that many SANs today seek the favour of judges of the High Courts and justices of both the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court by giving them cash, hampers and Sallah rams during festive periods.

“Even senior lawyers who want to become SANs by all means also engage in all these dishonourable acts.

Justice Kayode Esho who said judges were like demi-gods during his time was almost crying at the point all these were being discussed. He felt very strongly that all these maladies must stop and that the recommendations of the Uwais panel must capture them,” the source disclosed.

Although the source would not want his name in print, President of the Nigerian Bar Association and member of the panel, Mr. J.B. Daudu (SAN), however, confirmed it in Lagos while brainstorming with members of legal service organizations including Legal Resource Consortium (LRC) on what should be the position of the bar and the civil society to Justice Uwais Panel.

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According to Daudu (SAN), the development in the legal profession is sad in that brilliance no longer matters to win a case but the ability of a lawyer to parley with a judge.”

(vi) “Sunday Vanguard” newspaper (October 30, 2011)

Headline: “SANUSI: WHY NIGERIA MAY REMAIN UNDERDEVELOPED”

“If the governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, MallamSanusiLamidoSanusi, has his way, the nation would jettison the states, local governments and ministries which, according to him, are not viable.

To him, it has come to a time in the life of Nigeria that it must overhaul the structures that make the states spend about 96 per cent of their resources paying salaries and allowances as against making capital investments.

He also did not see the wisdom in the establishment of nine new federal universities when existing ones are crying for funds.

The CBN governor spoke yesterday during a book presentation in Kaduna, saying to retain the status quo is for Nigeria to remain underdeveloped.

“Ultimately, we will have to be confronted with the task of taking the difficult step of overhauling the political structures that we have”, Sanusi said while delivering a paper entitled, “Reinvigorating education in Nigeria: An essay in honour of Professor AdamuBaike.”

He added: “Do we need 36 states? Do we need the number of ministries that we have? Is an economy where states spend 96 per cent of their revenue paying civil servant an economy that is likely to grow in the long run? These are difficult questions that we need to ask.

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“We have created states and local governments and ministries as structures that are economically unviable and the result is that we do not have funding for infrastructure, we do not have funding for education, we do not have funding for health”.

Speaking on the government's expenditure portfolio, Sanusi said: “I don't know how many people know that 70 per cent of the revenue of the federal government is spent paying salaries and over-head; leaving the rest 30 per cent for 150 million Nigerians”

What this means, according to him, is that there no money for the provision of infrastructural facilities by the various tiers of government, pointing out that in an emerging economy like Nigeria, a well designed educational policy should be an integral part of its development strategy. According to him, the present development strategies should include measures to invest in human capital that facilitates the upgrading of industries and engender the economy to attain optimal resource utilization.

Noting the growth in the number of federal, state and private universities in the country in recent times, Sanusi said that “the recent decision of the federal government to establish nine additional universities will further increase the number of federal universities by 2011.

“It is not the place of the Central Bank governor to comment on education policy. But one wonders the wisdom behind creating new universities when the ones we have built are still suffering from underfunding.”

(vii) “Nigerian Pilot” newspaper (October 30, 2011)

Headline: “DEADMAN RESURRECTS IN ONITSHA

- CAUSES PANDEMONIUM

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“Residents of Onitsha, a legendary commercial town in Anambra State, were jostled at the weekend by what some people described as ‘miracle’, or ‘apparition,’ while some others called it ‘abomination,’ or mere coincidence, when a man pronounced dead suddenly resurrected back to life under a strange circumstance.

The “Nigerian Pilot” learnt that the man, whose identity could not be ascertained immediately, was one of the street hawkers who display wares along Sokoto Road area of Onitsha Main Market.

Earlier, he had a rough encounter with members of the dreaded Mpiawazu Task Force, who were out to enforce an order restraining traders and hawkers who loiter and litter the streets, roads, parks and market places, thereby causing vehicular traffic jam. As traders were gathering their wares so as to run away from the task force, the man was caught and thoroughly beaten and his wares seized by one of the members of the task force.

But while he was being beaten, some of his colleagues mobilized themselves and determined to rescue him from the hands of his captor, who would not let him go. Hence, they attacked the task force man to save their fellow hawker, which they did. They were also able to retrieve some of his wares.