

Anthony Enahoro Foundation

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"Mr. President, sir, I rise to move the motion standing in my name, that this House accepts as a primary political objective the attainment of self-government for Nigeria..." (Anthony Enahoro 1956)

When people talk about Nigeria, there is a large elephant in the room that all seem desperate to ignore. This elephant has a large question written across its side. That question is, "Is Nigeria viable?"

Up to this point, political minds and those of Nigerians going about their daily business, have asked the question, "Why doesn't Nigeria work?"

Perhaps the real question is not, "Why doesn't Nigeria work?" but, "Can Nigeria work?"

Let me put it this way...there are thought to be 170 million Nigerians (though I doubt the accuracy of this figure...it's too high) of which the Igbos for example, are thought to represent 18%, or 30, 600, 000. If this figure is accurate, that gives them a population greater than or equal to that of 38 independent European nations!

I chose the Igbos, but I could have chosen the Hausas, Yorubas, Edos and several others, as all have populations larger than several European nations.

Why are peoples this numerous not in possession of their own homeland and nation? The European nation of Luxembourg has a population of 524, 000 and it is a self governing nation! There are many distinct people groups in Nigeria with larger populations!

In reality, Nigeria is many different nations crammed within common borders and expected to co-operate despite different languages, cultures, world views, religions and histories. Several of these nations are historical and current enemies, and yet are expected to live together in a way that Germany, Britain and France; long established democracies and developed nations; are incapable of doing!

I am not arguing for the dissolution of Nigeria, but I am advocating a frank and honest discourse on the nation's viability and future. There is an old adage that says, "If we can't live together in peace, then we must live apart...in peace."

Nigeria is thought to have up to 250 different ethnic groups and languages. Is it any wonder that ethnic strife and the issue of Internal Colonisation have plagued the nation since its inception?

Bearing all this in mind, why has there not been a National Conference, involving the chosen representatives of all the Nigerian "nations", to discuss and agree on the matter of Nigeria's viability in its present form?

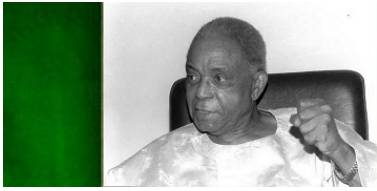
Can Nigeria as it is now...work? If not, how does it need to be remodelled in order to have the best chance of success? Should any remodelling make provision for those people groups who want to leave and form their own nations?

This discourse requires honesty, courage and foresight...touching as it does, the very possibility that Nigeria as we know may need to be consigned to history as a new structure or several different nations may emerge.

I reiterate, I am not arguing for the dissolution or break-up of the nation, but I am saying that hard questions must be asked and answered. The answers arrived at must then be backed up with courageous and forward-looking actions.



"...we too have a dream, a dream and a vision of what Nigeria can be and what our peoples should be in the long-term. That is what idealism is about. But, we must also appreciate what we are, where we are, and what is attainable in the short-term. That is what realism is about. I would define one of the tasks of the current generation of Nigerians as the reconciliation of idealism and realism." (Anthony Enahoro)



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The liberty, safety and prosperity of all those currently counted as Nigerians is my foremost and overriding concern, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

Gabriel Enahoro
(Chairman – Anthony Enahoro Foundation)



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