

Issues of Promoting Good Neighbourliness in Igbominaland: A Historical Analysis

Presented

At the 60th Annual Conference of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) in Collaboration with
the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, University of Abuja

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Theme: **"Historical Society of Nigeria @ 60: A National Experience"**

Date: **11th-14th October, 2015**

Abstract

The nexus of this paper bothers on some dilemmatic issues of promoting good neighbourliness, with particular reference to the Igbomina-Yoruba. It argues that both in the past and present, the Igbomina have constantly fallen casualty of their peaceful disposition and suffered the boomerang effect of their good neighbourliness; being victims of the very people they had showered hospitality and displayed magnanimity upon. They have often received folks and foes they could have successfully repelled, in the first instance. The paper adopts the historical, narrative and analytical approach, with a combination of primary and secondary sources of data collection. The findings of the study point to the fact that Igbomina, today, is a product of three significant factors: geography, history and the character of her people. These made her susceptible to series of foreign attacks and impostors, from local (Nupe, Fulani/Ilorin, Ibadan) and British imperial onslaughts. This study is an extrapolation of the interplay of history and the esoteric law of 'Cause and Effect' on the Igbomina. How and why the hospitable Igbomina have often been subjected to such a harrowing and protracted ill-treatment by hostile neighbours and aliens they have been magnanimous to, undoubtedly deserve some attention. Concisely, this study elucidates the traumatic experience of the Igbomina vis-à-vis her many neighbours. It recommends among others, a symbiotic concerted commitment of all communities towards embracing the traditional ethics and universal principles of good neighbourliness as enunciated by the United Nations. It, therefore, concludes that for the Igbomina, with the unabated Bororo-Fulani infiltration and menace, the past is in the present. This portends a serious danger-signal and the thrust of the present dilemma.

Key words: Igbomina, Good neighbourliness, Dilemma, Hospitality, Attack.

Introduction

The recent abduction and incarceration of Chief Olu Falae, one time Secretary to the Government of the Federation, (SGF) by alleged Fulani herdsmen on his farm in Ilado village, Akure North L.G.A of Ondo State only raised a national alarm of the reality of insecurity challenge that many local obscure farmers have been long subjected to.¹ Unfortunately, however, in spite of their loud wailings, their cries hitherto seem to have either gone unheard or fallen into deaf ears. It is in the light of this that this paper considers the spate of national insecurity in Nigeria generally, but with particular reference to the insecurity deriving from the *unneighbourly* acts of the Fulani-Bororo among the Igbomina.

Undoubtedly, the greatest challenge to the Goodluck Jonathan-led administration came in the area of national insecurity, which manifested in different forms across the different regions of the country. The Movement for Unification and Creation of Igbomina State² has argued that the Jonathan-led administration witnessed more violence than any other due to the unresolved issue of Minority Question. Such crises include, though not limited to the Boko-Haram insurgency basically in the north, herdsmen menaces particularly in the south and the prevalence of abductions and kidnappings all over. The exasperating insecurity experience of the Igbomina on her own land vis-à-vis the menace of Fulani herdsmen is a serious danger-signal and siege on both regional and national security.

Indeed, nothing happens by chance. Everything we are actively conscious of presently can be said to have been in the past already, distinct and complete in itself. Hence, each one should be viewed as a cohesive continuity; as a link in a chain. This is because, when history is lost, tradition is lost and a society without tradition has no existence. To know one's past is to know one's root. He who does not know the past will never appreciate the present; and if you cannot grasp the meaning of the present, how can you plausibly prepare for the undiscerned future? If a child does not witness the object of History and does not make conscious efforts to dig deep into it, he will surely become a subject of history.³ It is against this backdrop that the words of the National President of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Professor C.B.N. Ogbogbo became particularly noteworthy that without the knowledge of history, we would only be struggling to re-invent the wheel.⁴ This paper is therefore most apt at this time in our national history when we

decide areas of 'Change' and 'Continuity'. It is however, most particularly pertinent for the Igbomina, to avert the imminent doom of repeated history.

Aspects of Physical and Human Geography of Igbomina

An awareness of certain aspects of the physical and human geography of the Igbomina area is indispensable to a proper understanding of her historic and economic experiences. The geography of eastern Yorubaland has always been conducive to human habitation. Asonibare suggested that prior to the incursion of the various foreign influences of local and external overlords into the area, Igbominaland might have been a single territory stretching from Share, headquarters of the present Ifelodun LGA of Kwara State, to Ila-Orangun and Ora, presently in Osun State.⁵ However, consequent upon external intrusions into Igbominaland and the attendant ripple effects, notably through the instrumentality of the British appointed Boundary Adjustment Commission in the early 20th century, the people of the northern Igbomina territorial district now found in Kwara State were ceded from their southern counterparts.⁶

The term, Igbomina refers to the people, the language they speak and land they occupy.⁷ Igbomina falls between Longitude 8⁰ and 9⁰ North and Latitude 4⁰ and 6⁰ East and is located on the south-eastern side of Ilorin with an area of land covering about 66, 709²kms.⁸ Igbominaland is bounded to the west by Ilorin; to the north-east by the Yagba; to the south-east by the Ekiti; to the north by the Nupe; and to the southwest by the Ibolo, while she shares her northern boundary with the Yoruba of present Osun State. The Igbomina people such as Share, Oke-Ode, Oro-Ago, Igbaja and Ajase were close neighbours of the Nupe while the Igbomina people of Ganmo, Ogbondoroko, Afon, etc have very close affinity with the Ilorin-Fulani. Before the Fulani invasion, the Igbomina were said to have occupied some 900 square miles between the south-west boundary of the province, to the Yagba District on the East, and a few miles of Ilorin town on the north.⁹ Johnson noted that:

*Before the advent of the Fulanis, the powerful [northern] Igbomina sub-tribe ... virtually occupied some of hundred of a square miles reaching from the southern Nigeria border on the south of the Yagba Districts, on the east, and to within a few miles of Ilorin on the north.*¹⁰

The former northern Igbomina country under the Nupe constituted the Ifelodun L.G.A while the then southern Igbomina under Ilorin constituted the Irepodun L.G.A,¹¹ from which Isin L.G.A was carved in 1996 under the Abacha administration, which brought

LGAs in Nigeria to 774. **Aboyemi** revealed that one major factor that led to the formation of most of the settlements in the region, was the desire for safety.¹² The Igbomina country was extensive, having streams, forests, rocks and hills, with many curious and beautiful things. **Adeyemi** particularly noted that hill-settlements were usually resorted to for protection during the pre-colonial eras of slave raids and wars.¹³ **Temple** also confirmed that the southeast of Ilorin province was extremely hilly, with precipitous rocks.¹⁴ Obayemi noted that hills exceeding 600 meters (2, 000 feet) were found in northeast Yorubaland. The hill country, although difficult, was inhabited. This area was well noted for its many hills, some of which stretch in long range for many kilometres, culminating in the adoption of hill-settlement styles by the people.¹⁵

The exigency of the era of insecurity dictated the geographical settlement pattern of the Igbomina. For instance, **Aiyedun** revealed that, whereas the towns on the hills relied on the hills enveloping them for defence, with no tradition of wall-building, settlements on the plains such as Igbaja, Adanla, Ofarese and Agunjin, built walls round themselves for defence and also relied on bushes surrounding them.¹⁶ Considering the sites of many Igbomina settlements such as Alabe, Oreke, Oke-Oyan, Afin, Owode Ofaro and Ikosin, one would better understand what prompted **Bowen's** alarm that: "*Nothing but the terror of war could have planted these villages in such places as these.*"¹⁷

Generally speaking, therefore, Igbomina had a relatively strategic and advantageous position to both benefit economically from trade with and also suffer from the more belligerent and hostile potentates from the north and south. Igbomina was thus, like the *Plimsoll Line*,¹⁸ which cuts across vegetational belts, economic zones, linguistic borders and ethnic boundaries. Her strategic location among different and often distinct neighbours has thus rendered Igbominaland an area of multiple cultural interactions over the years.¹⁹

The Igbomina Culture

The Igbomina are not cowards. They are the direct descendants of valiant personages such as the legendary Orangun of Ila and Eesinkin Olusin, renowned in history for their particular bravery and heroic gallantry. Colonial accounts often described them as the 'powerful' Igbomina. For instance, Hogben and Kirk-Greene noted that the '*powerful*' Igbona (i.e. Igbomina) predominated in the area to the south and east of Ilorin town.²⁰

One can plausibly say that Igbomina, as it is today, is a product of three significant factors: geography, history and the character (peaceful disposition) of her people.²¹ Her geographical location which strategically situates her as a lineal settlement in the middle-belt as gateway between the North and South, made her particularly vulnerable to series of foreign impostors, attacks, dominations and influences. The historical antecedents-cum-experiences therefrom, particularly the foreign influences from local (Nupe, Fulani/Ilorin and Ibadan) and Western European imperial onslaughts only seems to have re-cloned the present generation of Igbomina into a new species of *weaklings* quite different from the pre-domination era *powerful* Igbomina. The character (peaceful disposition) of the people as open-armed, hospitable people made them to receive with open arms folks and foes they should have successfully and sternly resisted. But they became victims of the very people upon whom they had showered hospitality and displayed magnanimity. In furtherance, the long protracted stay under subservience and servitude apparently culminate in the third, to speak of the character of its people, today.

Today, as it was in the past, the Igbomina live among hostile neighbours, contrary to the universal declarations and resolutions to imbibe principles of good neighbourliness and live in tranquillity on our planet as good neighbours.

Igbomina Relations with Her Neighbours: A Historical Analysis

It is a truism that there are monumental unresolved problems in Nigeria, but the siege on national security has gained the centre stage. The harm it has wrecked to the polity is indeed astronomical.²² Today, the national security question seems to top academic as well as informal discourses in Nigeria, in particular and the world over. The resonating effect of insecurity and violence within the shores of Nigeria is becoming increasingly worrisome. The rhythms and rhymes they produce are nothing but nauseating; the prevalence of which has produced gargantuan harmful inter- and intra-ethnic-cum-religio-political impasse to the traditional ethics of good neighbourliness, which had hitherto sustained the diverse cultural groups in Nigeria. This has led to the emergence of cracks, which have often consequently degenerated, into bloody communal conflicts between and among ethnic, political and religious groups. The tones of violence in Nigeria have thus got to the point of demarché.

National security, adopting **Maiyaki's** concept of it, may be best described, here, as the safety of the territory and population of a state as well as policies adopted for its preservation; the whole range of measures affecting the economy and social welfare of a population as well as provision of protection against aggression from within and without the state.²³ This section hereby attempts an analysis of the foreign relations between the Igbomina and her neighbours in the past and present. Relations between the Igbomina and her neighbours might have been initially cordial. However, the later relations which turned sour seemed to have beclouded that initial cordiality today to the extent that it is often thought that socio-political relations and interactions with her neighbours hardly have been exciting or favourable. This is because her history has been preoccupied with that of constant military molestations. Hitherto, economic inclinations have served as prelude to the chains of unending raids, conquests and political hegemony on Igbomina.²⁴

Afolayan²⁵ noted that the Igbomina's peaceful established order came under considerable stress in the 18th and 19th centuries when they became subjected to incessant military pressures from their more belligerent neighbours. Meanwhile, **Gege**²⁶ has revealed that it appears from traditions prevalent in Igbominaland that military encounters had begun to take place between the Igbomina and their neighbours by the 17th and 18th centuries. Nupe raids in the 18th and early 19th centuries occasioned the movement of some people from Òbà homeland in Igbomina to Osogbo area where they founded another Òbà.²⁷ The recurrent conflicts with the neighbouring Nupe were said to have occasioned series of desertion and reoccupation of the Òbà motherland.²⁸

Traditions prevalent in Omupo, Ajase and Omu-Aran claimed that by the 17th century, military encounters had begun to take place between the Igbomina and their neighbours. **Afolayan** recorded claims of hostilities, which began probably with the **Ijesa** who were harassing and enslaving the Igbomina people around present day Ajase-Ipo. However, these Ijesa marauders were said to have been repelled by the allied forces led by the Olomu of Omu and the ruler of Bagidi who eventually became known as the Olupo (i.e. Olu (Head) of Ipo) and over the years, his state became known as Ajase-Ipo.²⁹

Following the Ijesa, similar attempts were reportedly made by the warriors from **Benin** Kingdom to penetrate into Igbomina, passing through the Akoko and Ekiti countries but thwarted through local cooperative residents in affected areas, from the 17th century.

These attempts, from the 17th century, proved unsuccessful until later in history when a handful of **Edo** warriors reportedly got a hold, very briefly though, of the frontiers of Igbomina.³⁰ Sometimes, along the line, in their history, the people of **Lagos** were also said to have constituted another upheaval for the Igbomina,³¹ probably during the inglorious epoch of slave raid and slave trade. However, the more successful of the invaders of Igbomina were the **Oyo**, who perhaps were the first to establish military and political control over the Igbomina. By the 17th century, the Oyo had been able to establish a military control over some parts of the Igbominaland.³² In the 18th century, Oyo, under the belligerent Alaafin Ojigi subjected Igbomina to incessant military pressure.³³

Evidently, by the mid-18th century, Oyo's grip over Igbominaland had waned considerably. This was not unconnected, on the one hand, with the constitutional upheavals within the Oyo Empire itself, and the power-shift occasioned by the rise to power of Nupe as the predominant super power in the north-eastern Yoruba region, on the other hand.³⁴ **Nadel** had portrayed Tseode, the acclaimed prince and progenitor of the Nupe as a warlike king who waged "big and victorious wars" against neighbouring peoples,³⁵ including the Igbomina. **Johnson** also reported traditions of the neighbouring states and kingdoms concerning Nupe militarism prior to 1800.³⁶ **Afolayan** provided a synopsis of the invasions the Igbomina suffered under the Nupe (1744-1795), Fulani (1823-1897) and the Ibadan between the late 1840s through the 1860s. These constant military pressures from their more powerful neighbours brought their indigenous traditional system under considerable stress in the 18th and 19th centuries.³⁷

Although, there were other foreign imposters on pre-colonial Igbomina, that of the Fulani was so pervasive and enduring that more than a century later, the devastating ripple effect was described by Burnet after his tour of parts of Igbominaland, that since the Fulani invasion, the area yet remained somewhat unsettled and concerted. Igbomina delegates in the 2014 National Confab described the Fulani hegemony on Igbomina, Ekiti and Ibolu as a misnomer. It should be noted that all Nigeria's imperial overlords, except Luggard acknowledged and maintained this same position.³⁸ **Burnet** particularly noted the so enormous physical dislocation, which resulted that by 1900, no Igbomina village was on its pre-18th century site.³⁹

Fulani Infiltration of Igbominaland: The Oro-Ago Example

International relations, according to **Smith**, constitutes an inexorable element of the duties of any government. He maintained that the essence of international relations and diplomacy, which apparently evolved independently by peoples across the globe is to enable men to cohabit peacefully with their neighbours. One basic requirement is the ability to accommodate the interests of others. But since there will always be clashes of interests within our social milieu, resulting into conflicts at different levels and scope, diplomacy also plays the role of mediator and arbiter of peace between and among the warring parties. Hence, ultimately, the more detailed ends of diplomacy, which is a universal phenomenon, are the questions of peace and war.⁴⁰

From the 1980s or thereabout, till date, there has been an unabated infiltration and harassment of the Fulani-Bororo herdsmen all over Igbominaland. The incessant sporadic attacks of Fulani herdsmen on the Oro-Ago community in Ifelodun L.G.A. of Kwara State are, simply put, abysmal! Media report records that not less than two people died while properties worth millions of naira were destroyed following a clash between the Yoruba natives of Oro-Ago and Fulani-Bororo merchants on Wednesday 15th April, 2015.⁴¹ The mayhem allegedly broke up as Fulani-Bororo settlers allegedly flouted a standing rule in the area, which forbid settlers from bringing arms, fighting sticks and ammunitions from their settlements to the market on market days. The vigilance team boldly accosted them and had their weapons seized and kept for flouting a grand rule. However, the Serikin Fulani (i.e. leader of the Fulani-Bororo settler community) reportedly stormed the place where the seized weapons were kept, carted away with them and gave them back to the Fulani traders. A violent and fatal clash ensued as the irate youths, hunters and vigilance team, slighted by this action and embittered by the outright breach of agreement and gross assault on law and order attempted to retrieve the recaptured weapons from the Fulani group.⁴² Concisely put, weapons were allegedly freely used following the institution of the state of anarchy that ensued.

Two people, one Fulani and an Oro youth named Sogo Babarinde, a phone repairer, were reportedly killed in the clash. Four others were said to have sustained different levels of injury. Although security operatives involving military and police personnels were reportedly drafted to restore tranquillity in the area, residents of the area were enveloped by legitimate palpable fear of resumption of hostilities. Even though the Ifelodun L. G. A.

constituted a committee, comprising of natives and Fulani, to restore peace and tranquillity,⁴³ another brutal, provoking and pathetic outburst occurred again barely two months after, on Friday June 12, 2015.

Following the April 15 incident, while the Oro women were protesting the arrest of their men, an Oro woman, Mrs Bolatito Balogun, was said to have been shot while five other members of the community were arrested by a set of police officers allegedly dispatched from the Inspector General of Police's office, Abuja on May 12, 2015. Oro community, through the Oro-Ago Development Union (ODU) has thus specifically accused the police headquarters in Abuja of taking sides with the Fulani herdsmen to attack its members and destroy their farmlands. President of the ODU, Chief Richard Olushola addressing news reporters in Ilorin, Kwara State capital in connection with the atrocities of the Fulani-Bororos in Oro-Ago, following the June 12 fracas, relayed his own side of the story:

*Another set of police officers, just like that of April from IGP's office, Abuja, fully armed, stormed the community as early as 7:00 am and started shooting indiscriminately and arrested our people. The action was contrary to what they told our monarch Oba Johnson O. Dada the previous day that they were in the community on a peace mission and to visit places where the incident occurred as well as the place where one Seriki Bamo, who was the complainant to the office of IG on the first incident was killed about a week ago. The indiscriminate shooting led to our people running helter-skelter and scampering for safety. The police went away with at least five of our men. We say five men because some people are still missing after the incident and their whereabouts still unknown. The names of the five we can identify are Oladele Ponle, Chief Asanlu Salawu, Karimu Aremu, Rasaki Illa and Tunde Abolaji...Unfolding developments show that the police are in cahoots with the Bororos. This is because on that Friday, two of our men were tied down on their farmlands by the Bororos; the Bororos told them that the police were coming from Abuja to arrest them and other members of the community and that they would be killed. Our monarch has written two separate letters to both the State Commissioner of Police and Director of Department of State Service (DSS) for their intervention because we don't want to take laws into our hands. But sadly, there has been no response from the duo.*⁴⁴

In his appeal to the IGP to order the immediate release of their men in police custody in Abuja, he described it as "trite law for our people, acting on self-defence, to be caged while the Bororos, who perpetrated the fracas, are walking freely on the streets".⁴⁵

Again on Sunday, August 16, 2015, Elder Dave Oniyide, a retired School Principal and respected Elder statesman in Oro-Ago, with his wife narrowly escaped being killed by the Bororo-Fulani on his way to Ilorin from Oro-Ago, only through divine intervention.⁴⁶ Evidently, Fulani harassment in Igbominaland has become a recurrent matter. In the

recent past, there were reports of Oro-Ago women who were subjected to frequent rape on their way to streams or farms.⁴⁷ The impregnation of Oro women and procreation of 'bastard' children from such relations has not only created untold psychological trauma for the people, it has also produced a new breed of Oro-Fulani, like the Mestizos and Mullatoes of ancient Latin America. A rather over-bloated account claims that today, there are more of such hybrid Fulani-Oro than the pure-blooded Oro people.⁴⁸ In Isanlu-Isin, Esie and several other Igbomina communities, tales of Bororo harassment have often been different episodes of the same saga. Worse still, Igbominaland, today is almost completely enclaved and encircled by the Fulani-Bororo. This is a serious danger-signal for the Igbomina and our governments at their different levels.

Igbomina's Dilemma of Promoting Good Neighbourliness

Ajase-Ipo, an ancient Igbomina-Yoruba town in Irepodun LGA, Kwara State, located at Latitude: 8° 13' 60 N Longitude: 4° 49' 0 E as displayed on the World Map,⁴⁹ sometime in the turn of her history, had a tradition of purported hostility to strangers. But as there is no smoke without fire, at least traditionally, an excavation of the factor responsible for that would, however, be quite revealing. Iya Sawo, Ajase, relay two versions of the episode. The first has it that a long time ago, someone in Ajase housed a stranded stranger. At dawn, the stranger was found dead! The second also speaks of a stranger who was accommodated by someone in Ajase, who however, eventually carted away with valuable traditional and sacred items. Both cases threw the community head and the entire community into serious pandemonium, which resulted into their purported tradition of hostility towards strangers. Iya Sawo, Ajase however, made haste to add that the tradition was an ancient one.⁵⁰ Ajase-Ipo, today, is as hospitable as any other Igbomina community.

However, it should be reiterated that although the Igbomina have a high sense of hospitality and tolerance, they are not cowards. Hitherto, the Igbomina have demonstrated a high commitment to the universal pledge and principles of good neighbourliness. Prompt intervention is needed so that the elasticity of her tolerance would not be pushed beyond its limit, as is almost the case in Oro land (Oro-Ago) presently. The ODU President, while calling for prompt intervention, has warned rather tacitly, "...we *don't want to put laws into our hands*".⁵¹ Afenifere, the Yoruba socio-cultural group, in reaction to the recent incarceration of Chief Olu Falae, has demanded the outright stoppage of

nomadic cattle rearing in the southwest region (Yorubaland) of the country. Following the recent alleged Fulani-Bororo saga against one of her elder-statesmen, the group seems to have suddenly developed a zero-tolerance to the Fulani herdsmen in all parts of Yorubaland.⁵² Meanwhile, former Minister of Aviation, Femi Fani-Kayode, in his own reaction to the same incidence, in a Facebook post titled 'Herdsman from hell' accused President Muhammadu Buhari, a Fulani man, of being unfairly sympathetic towards Fulani herdsmen.⁵³

It suffices, at this juncture, to bring to mind the words of the Late Gani Fawehinmi, commenting on his commitment to the actualisation of a new Nigeria:

*"I have been in this struggle all my life, till my heart is attacking me, till my pressure is high, till my eyes are almost blind. I just finished another operation. I've been in and out of detention more times than any other person in my life...just to see a new Nigeria. But I don't know if I want to continue fighting!"*⁵⁴

The dilemma of the Igbomina may perhaps be best summarised in these and myriads of questions which are urgently begging for answers: Should the Igbomina continue to uphold and respect the principles of good neighbourliness while some hostile tenant-turned terrorist-neighbours incessantly perpetrate all manners of hostility and cruelty, with impunity, often leading to a total breakdown of peace and order? (Worse still, as alleged by the ODU, they enjoy the immunity of the IGP). Should the Igbomina begin to demonstrate that they are not cowards but descendants of valiant legendary personages as they recently demonstrated in the Oro-Fulani fracas, where human lives and properties worth millions of Naira were wasted? (That of course, is against both traditional ethics and universal declarations and resolutions of good neighbourliness.) Should only a sect respect the principles of good neighbourliness while others palpably flout it without recourse to sanctions?

Principles of Good Neighbourliness

Intolerance and *unneighbourly* conducts on our planet had twice plunged humanity into the scourge of war (1914-1918 and 1939-1945) in total defiance of the maxim "Once beaten, twice shy"! But having experienced the horror of human barbarity and warrior instinct at the height of 'man's inhumanity to man',⁵⁵ which culminated into two global conflagrations, the old thinking about warfare seemed to have changed as war became no longer fashionable or desirable. The entire world under the auspices of the United Nations was moved to pledge to live together in peace and tolerance with one another as good neighbours. This year (2015) commemorates seventy years of the declaration of the clear

and unequivocal determination of the global community, through the respective governments that assembled in the city of San Francisco in 1945, where the United Nations Organisation was established and its present charter adopted. It states, in the preamble of her Charter,⁵⁶ *inter alia*:

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS
DETERMINED

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

AND FOR THESE ENDS

to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors, and
to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

HAVE RESOLVED TO COMBINE OUR EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH THESE AIMS.

A decade later, on 24th April 1955, 24 Afro-Asian countries adopted a more global and universal proclamation of ten principles of good neighbourliness at Bandung, Indonesia⁵⁷ viz:

Free from mistrust and fear, and with confidence and good-will towards each other, nations should practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors and develop friendly cooperation on the basis of the following principles:

1. *Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;*
2. *Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations;*
3. *Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small;*
4. *Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country;*
5. *Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations;*
6. (a) *Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers;*
(b) *Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other country;*
7. *Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any countries;*
8. *Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations;*
9. *Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation; and*
10. *Respect for justice and international obligations.*

The UN General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV) adopted by acclamation, without a vote on 24th October, 1970 equally contains seven basic principles of International Law which bothered on friendly relations and cooperation among states under the Charter of the United Nations.⁵⁸ The United Nations and other bodies have thus developed and adopted principles of international law conducive to good neighbourliness. Lamentably however, as decried by Sucharitkul,⁵⁹ *"we, the nations of the world, have barely begun the learning process of how to live in peace with one another as good neighbors."* Although very resolute, in practice, the determination still falls far short of its wholesome implementation.

Today, seven decades have elapsed after the UN proclamation, yet it has become more obvious that among the indispensable principles of international law increasingly ripening for codification, the principles of good neighbourliness deserve our utmost and urgent consideration. At the international, national and local levels, the world today has deteriorated so badly that many now fall victim of intolerance as they succumb rather too conveniently to series of *unneighbourly* conducts. What is the way out of this debacle?

Recommendations

Fulani harassment in Igbominaland has become a recurrent matter, which undoubtedly needs to be laid to final rest. These four pragmatic recommendations appear feasible:

1. The Fulani-Bororo should learn to embrace and respect both traditional ethics and universal principles of good neighbourliness. Sequel to Principle 4 of the Ten Afro-Asian Proclamation of Principles of good neighbourliness, we forthwith recommend the total abstention of Fulani intervention or interference in the internal affairs of the Yoruba country. This is also in consonance with Principle 2, as the Yoruba, who see themselves as a nation, have through the Afenifere Group, requested respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity by insisting an end to Fulani herdsmen activities throughout their territory.
2. The Igbomina should continue to exercise tolerance. The once acclaimed *powerful* Igbomina are enjoined to beef up with their peaceful disposition and never to ever consider the option of being forced to embrace the extreme alternative which painfully enough, possesses the capacity to turn our God-given habitation of tranquillity into the den of cruelty. They should never take laws into their hands as the ODU President might have contemplated; after all, two wrongs do not make a right.

3. There is the urgent need for prompt incorruptible Government intervention, if (1) or (2) or both (1) and (2) above fail or are not forthcoming. 'Jaw Jaw' is definitely more enduring and rewarding than 'War War'. Mutual respect for the universal declaration as well as a symbiotic concerted commitment of all communities towards promoting and enjoying good neighbourliness is required. A mutual resolve to uphold the above principles would definitely provide the required synergy that is capable of making our planet a haven of warmth rather than an abode of qualm.
4. A Joint-Igbomina alliance against the Bororo-Fulani assaults as a rider to the Afenifere resolution may be recommended as a last resort, if (3) above fails or is not forthcoming. Sequel to Principle 5, we demand the full respect of the right of the Yoruba nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. This paper therefore reiterates and sturdily supports the resolution of the Yoruba Pan Socio-Political Organisation, Afenifere in relation to the abduction of Chief Olu Falae, that the nomadic system in the rural communities of Yorubaland should be stopped forthwith, in order to end the criminality often perpetrated by the Fulani herdsman.⁶⁰ To therefore avert the imminent doom of repeated history, all Igbomina Obas, elder-statesmen and concerned people need to declare a state of emergency on the dastardly acts of the Fulani-Bororo on their land to forestall a repeated episode of the Fulani hegemony. The Oro-Ago experience should be seen and treated as a joint-assault on the once 'powerful' Igbomina, if at all they have learnt from their history.

Conclusion

This study is an extrapolation of the interplay of history and the esoteric law of cause and effect on the Igbomina. Precisely, it elucidates the traumatic experience of the Igbomina in relation with her hostile neighbours, particularly the Fulani. Recollecting reminiscences of that era, Oyedepo wrote:

*The [Fulani] Emirs of the pre-colonial Ilorin Emirate, were in all senses typified absolutism in governance and administration of punishment. Absolute rulers,...were above all, and were then subjected to none and the Emir of then that maintained fearsome army could only be disobeyed at the peril of those that chose to be destroyed.*⁶¹

Meanwhile, the Igbomina experience could, by and large, be described as a synecdoche of the entire Kwara State, which Iyiola Oyedepo in his twenty-seven self-acclaimed iconoclastic *rhetorical* letters to the Emir of Ilorin, sees as nothing more than an

experiment in political engineering. To him, it is the experiment of how a Fulani caste subjugated her host to establish an enduring political hegemony in a largely Yoruba community through Islamic learning and militarism.⁶² The argument above may then suggest why the Oloro's appeals to the Kwara State Commissioner of Police and Director, Department of State Service (DSS) for intervention have apparently been swept under the carpet, and why the highly exalted office of the IGP had allegedly condescended to turning deaf ears to the yearnings of the people against the aggression, barbarity and unneighbourly conduct of the Fulani-Bororo.

This could also be the premise upon which the Fulani-Bororo have been perpetrating unwarranted atrocities against the peaceful, hospitable and open-armed people that have hitherto hosted them, with impunity. This apparently corroborates insinuations that the Fulani-Bororo's unruly behaviours among the Igbomina is in connection with their biological tie with the ruling Fulani caste in Ilorin, headquarters of Kwara State. Exacerbating the fear is the fact that the country is now headed by a Fulani man. People have kept their fingers crossed to ascertain whether the Fulani-led Presidency under President Mohammadu Buhari would swing in favour of his Fulani kinsmen in the continued perpetration of this unfair treatment of their host communities. The menace of the Fulani-Bororo, most of who live in the wild and are freely displaying their wildlife in a cultured society is not just a misnomer; it is likely to constitute a major Litmus Test for the present administration. Whether this would constitute one area of *continuity* in a government of *change* is yet to be determined.

It becomes plausible to conclude, at this juncture, that perhaps the worst thing that can happen to a people is the fallacy of repeated history. For the Igbomina, this is increasingly becoming a reality of the past in the present. Both in the past and present, the hospitable Igbomina have always fallen victim of their sense of good neighbourliness in the hands of ingrate tenants and hostile neighbours. The increasing barbaric wild life of the Fulani-Bororo on the land and people of their host-communities in Igbominaland in particular and Yorubaland in general, portends a serious danger-signal to local, regional and national security. Should the Igbomina simply fold their arms and continue with their sense of good neighbourliness, while being constantly harassed and molested on their own land or adopt Tunde Bakare's position that "Resistance to tyrants and tyranny is obedience to God"?⁶³ This constitutes the thrust of the present dilemma.

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