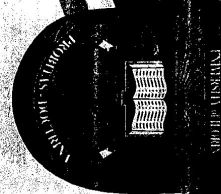




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Unsafe at any Margin: Interpreting the SWOT Analysis of  
President Jonathan's Political future in Nigeria.

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**Abstract**

The struggle for the most coveted office in Nigeria has made the political environment to be somewhat tensed. The dimensions of the socio-political events being witnessed make it difficult for analysts to project what will happen after 2015 general election. It is in light of this that this paper attempts to analyze the re-election chances of the incumbent president amidst the tensed political terrain and events which characterized the build up to the election. The paper used the unfolding trajectories to interpret the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) of the president Jonathan's political future identifying the driving force behind his political actions in recent times. The chances of the opposition party- APC- at dethroning the ruling party is also sized up with calculation and permutation that could enhance the upsurge. It is strongly recommended that the responsibility of saving the country from threading the line of failed state lies on the shoulder of every Nigerian, by genuinely making their thumb prints to count and not allow the politicians to jeopardize and truncate their hard earned democracy. The paper adopts qualitative method of analysis.

**Introduction**

It is incontrovertible that the 2015 general election will represent a watershed in the history of Nigerian government and politics. The socio-political and economic events being witnessed depicts the fact that the forthcoming election may make or mar the peace and unity of the country. Nigeria as an entity is presently sitting on a keg of gunpowder waiting for ignition. As Nigeria moves towards the 2015 general



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elections, several factors could influence and determine the country's leadership, 'growth', and politics. These include: Jonathan's political future, ethnic oriented politicking, intra and inter party struggle, the emergence of a mega almighty APC, the Boko-Haram insurgency, ongoing national confab to mention a few.

It is pertinent to note that all these issues boiled on one agenda i.e. who become the president of Nigeria in 2015'. While the north strongly believes that they are yet to exhaust their turn which was truncated by the death of former president Umar Yar'Adua, the minority south wish to tap into the coincidental opportunity which the death of Yar'Adua gave to them to have their son as the president for two terms. Though it is widely believed and acknowledged that former President Obasanjo's plan was to make Jonathan the president, and only used the ailing Musa Yar'Adua to hold forth and secure electoral victory knowing that his health cannot see him through the life span of the 4-year tenure. The contents of the open letters from Obasanjo to President Jonathan and the president's response breathe life to this assertion (see Obasanjo, 2013 and Jonathan, 2013). The Iboes (eastern Nigeria) on their end is threatening that if they are not allowed to produce the next president by 2015, the issue of Biafra secession will be revisited in full scale. However, the Yorubas (west) are sitting on the fence looking at the possibility of harvesting the bounty of the conflict of interests having ruled for eight years (1999-2007). The South-West is already keeping their joker close to the chest with the choices of their popular candidates Asiwaju Bola Tinubu (a former Governor) and Babatunde Raji Fashola (the incumbent Governor) both from Lagos State as possible Vice-Presidential candidate to any popular Northern presidential candidate especially on the platform of the newly formed All progressives Congress (APC).

With these caveats in mind, there is a possibility that the much celebrated centenary anniversary of the amalgamation of Nigeria may be the last ceremony to be organized by a unified Nigeria. The dream of the pro-Nigerian disintegration may come to pass in the year 2015 if urgent and corrective measure is not put in place. The threat issued by Mujahid Asari Dokubo that there will be war if Jonathan is not re-elected as Nigerian president cannot be discountenance owing to the sophisticated weaponry in his disposal coupled with state support he and his cohorts are enjoying in the name of amnesty. On the other hand, there is high

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tendency that there will be an increase in the lethality of Boko-Haram insurgency if a northerner does not emerge as the number one citizen. This is because, the current trend of operation of the terror group have made it incontrovertibly dawn on the world that the insurgency is not religiously inclined rather politically motivated toward the realization of the 2015 dream of some desperate northern power-mongers. The question is: which way do Nigerians go? Whichever zone (north or south) produce the president may spell doom for the country. Hence, 'cui bono?' i.e. who benefits?

The present Nigerian political environment shows that the struggle for the most coveted seat in the country is between the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Party (APC). However, it is difficult for any political analyst to authoritatively predict the party that will emerge as winner in the election. We can only present a possible winner if a particular condition prevails which this paper intends to do by presenting the plausible conditions that can crop up out of the permutation and calculation of political events. It is on this background that this paper seeks to analyze the trajectories of events and activities to the build up to the 2015 election with reference to the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis of the President Jonathan chances during the election as well as that of the major opposition party.

**The Jonathan's Chances under the PDP**

It requires no special or professional analytical skill to project that President Jonathan's political future of staying in power beyond 2015 can be likening to swimming against the tide. The realization of this dream will not come on a platter of gold. It is observed from the political history of Nigeria that the past Executive Presidents emerged through three ways. Some were elected through ethnic consideration and via zoning arrangement - notable is Olusegun Obasanjo who came to power by virtue of compensation to the South-West on the death of his fellow *egba* man- Chief M.K.O. Abiola, some others were voted along religious sentiment (for example Alhaji Shehu Shagari), while others won election and/or came to power via popular voters' sympathy and shared luck (Chief M.K.O. Abiola who won the June 12, 1993 election but never sworn-in and Goodluck Jonathan in 2011). It is pertinent to note that these three factors are working against the incumbent President. This



is responsible for his reluctant declaration of his decision ahead of the forthcoming election

However, the recent political posture of President Jonathan has overruled the skeptics on whether or not he will run for second term. Any moment from now, formal announcement for his intention to run for presidency in the 2015 general election can be made public. It should be noted that the president's alleged plan to run again has been at the heart of the festering crisis within the PDP which led to the defection of five governors, several lawmakers and a number of party chiefs. It was one issue that formed the content of former president Obasanjo's open letter out which he corroborated the Niger State Governor, Babangida Aliyu's allegation that Jonathan signed a pact to spend only one term in office (Andrew et al, 2014). Jonathan in his open response rebutted this claim and has since started strategizing on how to win the election despite all odds. In a document produced by Goodluck Jonathan's political advisers and strategists titled "2013-2015: Political power and governance road map" (cited in Gamawa, 2014), the chances of Jonathan to win the 2015 general election, the obstacles to the realization of his dream as well as how his team will tackle the obstacles using SWOT analysis was outlined. The Jonathan strategists acknowledged the fact that the obstacles are enormous and weighty stemming from the newly emerged political order, the negative public perception of his government, the tension and contradictions within the PDP, extremist insurgencies and grave national security concerns. The desperation by the opposition parties to cobble together a mega-party are concrete indications of the struggle between an old and a newly constituted national power arrangement backed by forces that are critically entrenched in the key organs of the PDP, in the National Assembly, among the ranks of the party's governors, in the media, within dominant ethnic and regional political formations and violent non-state actors is also acknowledged as a threat. Below is an excerpt from the document.

#### The SWOT Analysis of Jonathan's Chances in the 2015 Election:

##### Strengths:

- Power of incumbency and utilization of governance machinery, especially the careful and legal deployment of its propaganda and coercive apparatuses

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- Secure financial resources base and leveraging on strategic media assets
- Formidable political apparatus—a reformed, disciplined and tightly controlled PDP—with significant presence in all the 36 states and dominant control over 23 states
- Deep-rooted, nation-wide support structures in the shape of GSG, N2G and literally speaking, hundreds of youth, women and regional affiliates controlled and supervised by the more dominant support structures
- Effective and efficient implementation of the transformation agenda in critical national sectors
- High personal likeability rating which has to be further strengthened and deepened
- When chips are down immense support will be secured from the National Council of State by ex-leaders who value continuity and order over instability and chaos

##### Weaknesses:

- A less than forceful Presidential presence and ineffective deployment and application of presidential power
- The perceived appropriation of presidential advocacy space by exuberant partisans and fanatical supporters who project a wrong image of the presidency as a regional agenda. This situation tends to alienate moderate political forces across the country whose sense of co-ownership of the presidency appears diminished
- A perceived sense of distance between the Presidency and the PDP that has opened the space for internal dissent and outright rebellion by party stalwarts. This sense of disinterest and disengagement has engendered a culture of apology among Presidential spokespersons whenever matters connecting Mr. President and the party appear on the public sphere

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- Following on the above, the reality of Mr. President being the leaders of the nation and the LEADER OF THE PARTY is not sufficiently grounded
- A technocratic cabinet that is not fully politically engaged, especially in media advocacy and community-wide outreach programmes. This unhelpful situation out burdens handful regime insiders in their constant defense of The Presidency and the Transformation agenda
- A presidential communication strategy that is weak on proactive propaganda and rapid response
- Inability of Presidential power strategists to manage the relationship between The Presidency and the NASS to the degree that the later, particularly the HOR, which is dominated by the PDP, appears as an outfit and mouthpiece of the opposition
- Problematic relationship between the Presidency and some former heads of State when, in actuality, they should constitute the bedrock of his support

#### **Opportunities:**

- Exploiting the current fractured state of the NGF for maximum political advantage by strengthening the co-operative faction and sustaining the pressure on recalcitrant PDP governors
- Exploiting the opportunities inherent in the putative fracturing of the Northern Governors' Forum by strengthening co-operative governors and sustaining pressure, directly and through different front organizations, on the recalcitrant governors
- Playing on the political ambitions of regional champions, especially in the North, to the degree and extent that no unanimity of political purpose and cohesive agenda is ever achieved
- The APC may appear as a formidable threat initially but substantive opportunities will abound when ambitions and egos clash among its principal promoters. Strategic planning should factor in the scenario in the designing of intervention blueprint

- Exploiting the immense public opinion opportunities in the current war against terror in the North, especially given the steady successes thus far recorded by the NSA, and the military high command through the JTF
- Utilizing the social and economic empowering and inclusive space provided by SURE-P, particularly its integrated community empowerment schemes, to advertise and show case the populist and pro-people orientation of the government

#### **Threats:**

- There are sufficient grounds to believe that the NASS continues to pose a threat to the effective exercise of Presidential power in the areas of budget-making processes and the on-going amendments of the constitution with specific reference to devolution of power and tenure of elected officials
- Formidable forces in both the NGF and the NNGF continue to pose significant threat to the political calculations and choices open to Mr. President
- Regional alliances among dominant ethnic blocks may constitute a threat to the political choices open to Mr. President
- If the APC does not implode along the way, it will constitute a real threat to the PDP and Mr. President
- Extremist insurgencies in the North and the burgeoning oil theft in the Niger Delta are already sources of concern and worry; the way and manner these issues are dealt with will determine the degree to which they will pose a threat down the line
- Regrettably, the current, crisis-ridden state of the PDP poses significant threat to the realization of the party's political ambition in 2015, including that of Mr. President.

#### **Interpreting the SWOT Analysis**

This document shows the desperation on the part of the president to remain in office beyond 2015 by adopting series of strategies and machineries such as changing perception of Nigerians through propaganda, establishment of a political intelligence unit, reforming



PDP, fund mobilization strategies, causing political division in the North and South West, appointing politicians with grassroots support as ministers (as witnessed recently: Sen. Obamkoro, minister of state for security disrupting Lagos State government development programmes and former Kano State governor, Ibrahim Shekarau as minister of education amongst others), deploying SURE-P for political purposes, using the civil society organizations and professional organizations, increasing the number of registered voters in South-South, North-central and South-East, and reducing the number of voters in the North and South West, etc.

**With regard to Strengths:** There is no doubt that the power of incumbency will go a long way should the president be able to optimally maximize it. Going by the way Nigerian government and politics is structured, it will be extremely difficult if not impossible to defeat an incumbent president as a result of the governance machinery at his disposal. The president also control a number of government agencies crucial to electioneering activities and politicking. Such include the power to nominate INEC chairman, federal control of the security agents and above all, the economic power. While the opposition parties will rely on INEC funding and self generated revenues, the ruling party will not only have the lion share of the INEC funding but also access to public funds. It is widely alleged and believed that the missing \$20bn oil fund that the president could not account for is reserved for the 2015 election. On July 21, 2014 the president requested the National Assembly to approve a \$1bn loan to equip the military in the ongoing war against *Boko Haram* insurgency. In response, the All Progressives Congress described the request by President Goodluck Jonathan for a loan of \$1bn as dubious on the ground that N968.127bn had already been budgeted for security (NigerianEye, 2014). Going by public comment on social media, it is widely believed that the money is meant for 2015 election preparation. However, since this perception cannot be proven, the National Assembly may have no choice other than to approve the loan. Whichever the case, the points identified as the strength of the president in the SWOT analysis point toward the truthfulness of the argument of the opposition party and the public.

The president and his aides are doing everything politically possible to upturn the weaknesses as identified in the analysis to strength, tapping into all available opportunities and suppressing all forms of threat with state power. The president who can be said to have faith in appointing technocrats to man major ministry had suddenly turned a new leaf. He has almost fired all the technocrats in his cabinet and replacing them with grassroots politicians that can deliver their respective states for him especially those under the opposition party- APC. The president is also changing tactics through the use of media propaganda. There are series of advertorials in the print and electronic media been sponsored by NGOs traceable to the president amongst others. The PDP national publicity secretary, Olisah Metuh is now seen as the chief image maker of the president, blindly praise singing the president and libeling the opposition as perpetrator of any bad event in the country.

**On the aspects of Opportunities:** Contrary to opposition's belief, the emergence of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM) on the political scene may boost the fortunes of the president at election time. If both opposition political parties present Presidential candidates from the North, as it is likely to be in the 2015 elections, then PDP would benefit from the division and gain more strength. The two northern candidates will share the votes from the region giving the president opportunity to have edge over them. Though, the fact that the two political parties serve as threat to the political future of the incumbent president is strongly acknowledged by him and his aides but they believe that the opportunity abound therein outweigh the threat. The Special Adviser to President Goodluck Jonathan on Inter-party Relations, Ben Obi, confirmed during an interview that neither Jonathan nor the PDP was greatly worried about the seeming threat of PDM and APC in 2015 because "PDM's registration will help PDP in 2015 by splitting the opposition which consequently becomes an inadvertent boost to the strength of the ruling party" (Akipe and Akinwumi, 2014).

Another great respite for the president is the possibility of APC fielding unpopular candidate. Onumah (2014) noted that it would be scandalous and a grave mistake for the opposition – All Progressives

Congress (APC) – to look toward any of the gladiators in the current war of attrition in the People's Democratic Party, such as Aminu Tambuwal, Babangida Aliyu, Sule Lamido, etc., as a candidate for the presidency in 2015. He observed that PDP elements in the APC are also people without track record in the face of Nigerians and fielding any of them would not only be a smack of unseriousness, but would leave voters with no choice other than to vote for Jonathan in 2015.

*By Threats:* Some serving top aides to the president confirmed that the registration of both the APC and PDM by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) recently posed a great threat to the PDP. They described the emergence of the PDM from PDP as "a sophisticated masterstroke" against the ruling party and Jonathan's ambition to get re-elected. They opined that 12 PDP state Governors, about 60 per cent of the 360 members of the House of Representatives and 35 per cent of the 109 Senators were likely to join the PDM and that with such a clean-sweep, the PDP will be left breathless whether the party leaders accept it or not. One of the aides (name withheld) was quoted to posit that:

In spite of any bold face anybody tries to present, there is no doubt that we are rattled at this stage because politics is all about followership. It is clear that PDM is out to divide our ranks and poach our followership. But the true followership of PDM will only emerge after the PDP nomination. You must understand that the PDM has come as a show-spoiler for the PDP. It is formed to serve as an alternative party to the PDP. Whoever is aggrieved in the PDP now has a new haven to run to (*Akpe and Akinwumi, 2014*).

The crack in the PDP which led to the decamping of the five governors has started working against the president. Anybody willing to win election in the north cannot afford to lose in Kano State which according to official result of the 2006 census is the most populous state in Nigeria. The Governor of Kano State, Rabiu Kwankwaso, who claimed to have undertaken a survey of northern states has said President Goodluck Jonathan cannot win any of the 19 northern states in a free and fair contest come 2015. He explained that his findings showed that none of the states would be willing to vote in favour of the current state of affairs in the wake of ongoing internal insurgency, lack of basic services, ethnic and political sentiment of the president among other negative factors (Alechemu, 2014). In view of this, he has signified interest in contesting the Presidency in 2015 on the platform of the All Progressives Congress.

However, this claim has been refuted by the PDP stalwarts. Chief Joe Edionwele, formerly chairman Eban West Local Government Area, Ekpoma, between 1999 and 2003, who is currently the zonal secretary of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, in the South-South dispelled the fears that the recent defection of the five PDP governors to the All Progressive Congress (APC) will affect the re-election chances of President Jonathan in 2015. He premised his position on the fact that the governors cannot vote beyond their individual polling unit and that using the state's resources to sway the outcome of the election is not as easy as they think (Ewepu, 2014).

Whether or not the PDP see the emergence of mega opposition parties especially the APC as threat or not, a number of high placed and formidable personalities from the North have lined up as possible contender for the most coveted seat. Some will slug it out with the president within the PDP while others will jostle among themselves for the ticket of the APC. Prominent amongst them include: General T. Y. Danjuma (former Chief of Army Staff), General Muhammadu Buhari (former head of state and CPC presidential flag bearer in 2011), Nuhu Ribadu (former EFCC chairman and ACN presidential flag bearer in 2011), Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso (current governor of Kano state), Aminu Waziri Tambuwal (current Speaker of the House of Representatives), Mallam Nasir El Rufai (former Minister of the Federal Capital Territory), Atiku Abubakar (former Vice President), Senator David Bonaventure



Mark (current Senate president), Chief Audu Ogebe (former National Chairman of the PDP now a bigwig of the APC), Iyorchia Ayu (former Minister of Internal Affairs under Obasanjo's civilian administration), Sule Lamido (current governor of Jigawa state).

### The APC's Chances of Becoming the Ruling Party in 2015

The possibility of power shift at the federal level of government from the PDP to the APC cannot be ruled out by any political analyst. The newly formed mega party is growing in membership on daily basis at the expense of the ruling and crisis-ridden PDP. Aside the decamped five governors, there are strong indications that more governors elected on the platform of the PDP will follow suit as hinted by the Kano State Governor, Musa Kwankwaso, while playing host to some stalwarts of the defunct Congress for Progressives Change, CPC, at the Government House, Kano who said his own defection alongside four other governors of the PDP last November 26, was merely "a tip of the iceberg," compared to the impending gubernatorial defection (Owete, 2014). This is corroborated by the current wave of political happenings in the PDP. There is a new trend by which the first lady now has power to influence who become the party national chairman, minister, governor or legislator. It is recently alleged that the first lady is already strategizing on choosing the successors of some state governors including Abia, Bayelsa, Delta, Bauchi, Kwara, Akwa Ibom, Rivers and this has already led to cold war between her and the affected governors who have vowed to resist such move (The Nation, April 14, 2014).

Since November 26, 2013 there had been a political alignment and realignment in favour of the APC when five PDP governors stunningly decamped from the PDP. These are Rotimi Amaechi- Rivers, Rabiu Kwankwaso- Kano, Murtala Nyako- Adamawa, Aliyu Wamako- Sokoto and Abdulfatah Ahmed- Kwara (The Punch, November 27, 2013). Shortly after, 37 PDP lawmakers in the House of Representatives followed suit (Thisday, December 19, 2013) and 11 senators led by Sen. Bukola Saraki also- defected amidst purported blockade by the Senate President (Osun Defender, January 30, 2014). The Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuywal, is reportedly under pressure from the APC to also quit the PDP and his body language attest to the fact that he will yield the call any moment when the coast is clear.

Similarly, the efforts of the APC leaders, in their recruitment drive, have been materializing as a result of the support they are harvesting from senior members of the PDP whom they visited to formally invite them to join the opposition party. Among those visited were former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, Ibrahim Babangida and Abdulsalam Abubakar; and former vice president Atiku Abubakar who had already decamped to the APC. However, political analysts opined that even as the APC remains the major beneficiary of the crisis in the PDP, there is every likelihood that conflict of interest will soon erupt among the strange bedfellows moving daily into the self-styled progressive party during its forthcoming national convention.

Aside the decamping gale, the APC has tremendously increase its membership through its recently concluded nation-wide membership registration using all the INEC polling units. Most people unconsciously registered and became card carrying members while some see it as opportunity to participate in partisan politics. The fact that these members of the public who have become members will identify with and have sympathy for the party in voting all its candidates during elections cannot be discountenance.

The Nigerian politicking along ethnic delineation is a plus for the APC. Going by the 2011 presidential election result, one will see that Gen. Buhari garnered most of the votes in the north while President Jonathan swept the southern and eastern regions. The president could not have won the election if not for the solidarity support of the west as delivered by Asiwaju Bola Tinubu. The permutation that can be derived therein is that if the south votes for Jonathan, the north will definitely give the APC a bloc vote as it is certain that the party will field a northerner as flag bearer. There is likelihood that there may be a spoilt vote in the east as some minority parties may field easterners to harvest solidarity of the region. Even if the easterners vote Jonathan, the support may not suffice to save him from the large population of northern voters. The APC will enjoy home advantage from the westerners and the candidate of the APC will definitely emerged winner. This permutation can only go otherwise if the PDP field a northerner which is unlikely to happen.

## Conclusion

There may be a Kenyan-like crisis looming as politicians are desperate for power not minding the implications on the national security and integration of the country. This is corroborated by the Atienfere, a pan-Yoruba socio-cultural group, which submitted that Nigeria is preparing for war not elections going by the utterances of political leaders in the build up to the 2015 polls (National Mirror, April 14, 2014). The fact that Nigerian democracy has moved beyond nascence and is already consolidated might be proved wrong, should the military decide to intervene in the politics as witnessed severally in the past. Who knows if the military had already put the card of intervention on chest waiting for appropriate time to play it on the table? Who knows whether the current trend of violent protest going on as a result of the Arab spring may crop into Nigerian scene if the 2015 election should go out of hand? What if it leads to another civil war as almost happened after the 2011 election in the northern part of the country? What if the Ibos under the aegis of the MASSOP bring afore their threat of secession? What if the south-south under the aegis of Movement for the Emancipation of Niger-Delta (MEND) and other militant groups wreak havoc against the country if Jonathan should lose the election? The simple answer to these posers lies in the hands of our political elites. Should they decide to shun desperation of personal gain to that of national interest, Nigeria will move as an integrated entity beyond 2015 and all the looming crises will be averted. If Chief M.K.O. Abiola can pay the ultimate price for the entrenchment of democracy in Nigeria, why can't Jonathan sacrifice his political ambition for the safety of all Nigerians after all he said his political ambition does not worth the blood of a Nigerian. Nigerians should arise and never allow the greedy politicians to truncate their hard earned democracy. If not, the blood of M.K.O. Abiola and other activists that fought for the entrenchment of democracy in Nigeria will also stain their hands as it already stained the hands of the good-for-nothing gluttons ruling the country.

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