

South Sudanese leader will not be re-elected

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By Isaiah Abraham

September 11, 2012 - Mr. Ateny Wek Ateny, a columnist with the Citizen Newspaper, Juba wrote a spirited piece challenging Mr. Mabior Garang Mabior, the son of the founding father of this nation about the later dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs. Mr. Ateny called Mr. Garang junior names including that of a 'prodigal' son. He fumed and argued until he gets to why this author couldn't take it anymore.

I had picked three enigmatic lines from his article written on Citizen Newspaper dated September 4th 2012, Vol. 7, Issue No. 234. One line reads thus: "Garang boys still control everything...". I will be open and general though because the author in question has attacked Mr. Garang unfairly when it shouldn't be the case.

Before we argue much as to why such a statement (s) is/are terrible and uncalled for, allow me to briefly rehearse your memory about key words from Alan Boswell of the McClatchy Newspaper publicized and politicized interview with Mr. Mabior Garang outside the country the country couple of weeks ago. Mr. Garang was reported to have said that the government is doing little about corruption drive/fight. Recall we have had that situation of 75 people adversely mentioned by the president to be his prime suspects, people who are responsible for the lost of 4 billion United States dollars. So far, no arrest was made or investigation done despite Parliament request on the same.

Mr. Garang again was allegedly heard to have said that the current leadership has abandoned the path charted forward by his father. He was referring to services to the people. He was further quoted to have thought the need for a change through people and not through the army. Lastly Mr. Garang quizzed and squared Mr. Kiir's security for the death of a Kenyan worker on a bus related to Mama Rebecca Nyandeng, the mother of Mabior Garang Mabior.

As natural as everything else opinions are subject to different interpretations; each of us will slice part of Garang argument differently. Some will go by his statements the way they appear to the public, while others will go beyond it before jumping to anything concrete; yet there are people who would opt to dismiss him and take the matter personal or apply association to anybody around Garang. The big deal to all remember is that the said jabs are from the mouth of the son of a great man call John Garang de Mabior.

There is confusing for many about Kiir and Garang. To this author the father of Mabior and Kiir are one and the same thing. The two in fact are joined at the hip; one is the other. The two have come a long way and no point should the two be separated because one is dead. It is death that has separated the two leaders, and hence sinister for anyone to go between the two.

In that particular case, Mr. Ateny finds himself on the category of those who see Kiir and Garang as different and distinct. Kiir to them isn't Garang and the opposite is true. I agree. But their past and present has shown no difference. Going over therefore to stretch Kiir on the expense of his colleague Garang is benightedly unnecessary. Majority of Kiir home boys are pushing hard to anoint Kiir that way, but Mr. Kiir has kept away from such a school, at least publicly. That is another argument another day, but the extension of that argument has spilled over to this topic, and I shall reference it as we go along.

Anyway, we still have a long way to go given our patronage tendencies and allegiance that must not be wished away overnight. The strings are being pulled and normally it goes that way until at a certain time when chicken comes home to roast. To this author it will be callous to give undue credit to Kiir when he is struggling to get near what was laid down by Garang. It would be unfair for my colleague from Aweil to downplay the current pathetic state of affairs, and blame the young Garang for voicing them. As things stand, Mr. Kiir is responsible for our mess. Garang was in charge and after him is Kiir, thus the two shared failures and successes of the SPLM. But SPLM has rotten further under Kiir, the excuse shouldn't be that it was first bad under Garang and therefore must not be corrected or change under Kiir.

Garang boys vs Kiir boys

Now let's look briefly the sentence above "Garang boys are still controlling everything", especially the word "still". What was it this author wanted to convey when he used the word 'still'? To him it seems as if the continuation of "Garang boys" in the system was a mistake after Kiir ascension to power. "Garang boys" have no business being again there after Garang death, he has reasoned. This is Kiir government why should "Garang boys" be allowed to hold positions, Mr. Ateng argued. Well, I have no problem with anyone instinctive understanding of who was who then and now; whether it is in place to have "boys" here and there. It is his business and I respect him. The trouble is the girth from which my brother Ateny is taking us. I fear him now than any other time before.

What about “Garang boys” vs “Kiir boys”. His choice of these words didn’t just come out while he was writing, the man had earlier consulted his conscience and concluded that for him to raise the bar, he must dredge something up to settle a score against people whom he sees are anti-Kiir. Remember we have been hearing these maundering statements every now and then, specifically during Kiir’s time. At Garang there were no ‘boys’ or ‘girls’ of anyone, but ‘boys’ of South Sudan. The coined thing was designed by people who were/are interested in separating Kiir from Garang. Please Ateny, there are no Garang or Kiir boys. Kiir himself was one the boys under Garang if you want it said that way. He made him who he is, wrong/right? But Kiir and whoever else after Garang are leaders on their own right, and we must respect them, and not to insult them.

“SPLM rooted in the way it was designed”

I find the second enigmatic statement from Ateny more confusing; It partly reads like this: “ the culture of the SPLM rooted in the way it was designed. If Mabior sees the failure of the SPLM led government, which is system with its fluctuating political culture from communist to capitalist”

The composition of this passage was wrong, the intent was also wrong as do the phrasing. If the culture of the SPLM was faulty, then what does that do with Mabior reminding you and me about them? You one moment attempted to say failure of the system to push the bug to someone else, yet in another split second you put a blanket on the face of Mabior as if he was Kiir/Garang. If there are failures from that time to date, because of that ‘design’ who has stopped Kiir from correcting the wrong ‘design’?

How about changing ideology from communism to capitalism, what relevance does the author wants to attach to Mabior’s expression to the state of our affairs? If Mr. Ateny intention was to charge Garang Sr of having erected a wrong foundation, then his attempt to exonerate Kiir is off the mark. Corruption, mismanagement and lack of vision aren’t ideological, but methodological or means under poor governance. Ideology isn’t responsible for failures; it is the policing of these ideas and how they are translated that make a difference.

Therefore, it is just rude to try to gag Garang junior because he is the son of Dr. John Garang. Mr. Mabior openness is good for us all; this is self criticism and shouldn’t be thrown out of the window. After all he is a South Sudanese like everyone else in this land, and has every right to express himself. If he says things aren’t going people’s way, who is this Ateny to say that they are? Majority of our people are dissatisfied, save for a few around the corridor of power. What will he say about Kiir hands on glove in addressing corrupt practices in his government? Is that not a concern? I think it is so! To me there is a huge concern and a weakness from the top man in our land. He must do things differently to prove to many his worth being there. People might conclude that perhaps he wasn’t serious in the first place to fight corruption when he mentioned 75 government officials in the graft.

Second, Mr. Garang has voiced what we all know, very alarming trend indeed and not anymore a secret, this is it: there is total leadership deficit and this must be corrected sooner or later, probably next year during party Convention, otherwise the country what head to unstoppable abyss-failed state. I must be open to everyone here; if it goaded anyone then he/she got to bear. That is our job to say things the way they look. There are manageable crisis such as insecurity in some part of the country, lack of basic services, insecurity menace, lack of infrastructures as well as the diplomatic dirt for not being proactive and visional. The list however goes on.

The so-called post outstanding differences between the Sudan and South Sudan are by products of our failure to appreciate situations before they actually occur. The government acts haphazardly and impromptus and not on a laid out one, two and three strategic plans. No guidance, no supervision and no evaluation, and thereby no nothing. That is exactly what Mr. Garang Junior lamented about. We must not burry our heads in fear because security people will torture us, people of this land are to be free from ineptitude and poor guidance from Kiir camp.

Soon after the visit of the United States Secretary of State, Ms Hillary Clinton earlier last month, one of her envoys (Ms Hala Faustino Roro) summed everything up in the following lines:

“...you can’t just do things on your own accord and leave the multitude of your people suffer. This is not politics, this not human, this is not wise. You might have a fantastic long term option but no long term option is achievable without the short term option paving the way for that”.

Piecing everything there, you will find that Mabior wasn’t alone or wrong as do any elsewhere who actually cares about our situation. That sounds pessimism, yeah? But the dynamic of things is against us; there is no assurance that our government and the leadership of Mr. Kiir will indeed deliver. It stumbles from one area to another with nothing insight to hope for. As things stand our social and economic situations are getting worse each passing day. Short term remedies from the government aren’t at everyone sight, that is the crux of why this pessimism and an open outcry from Mabior.

Simple things matter a lot to the people. The government must engage people when there are concerns. Khartoum is doing it better than us, and you wonder why. For example the enemy sent our own brothers to kill soldier in Lukuangulei in Pibor-Jonglei State few weeks ago, and no press statement was made by anyone including the Chief of Staff or Commander in Chief

or our army. How safe are we if our men are killed by Khartoum agents and the government keeps quiet? The men in uniform expected their moral to be boasted, alas those in charge decide to go mum. What amnesty are these people talking about when the country is under threat from Lam's militiamen. May be we have people within the system who are saints in suits but devils in another dresses.

How about shortage of fuel; who cares that there are no more fuel available to the people? Mr. Stephen Dieu of the Petroleum must swallow his pride and be counted for his ministerial mess. It is not about fuel shortage in Kenya but about his long and short term services to the people of South Sudan as to fuel. Fuel is own by foreign, a dangerous group by way, and no one thought about such an anomaly. How do one give such an important service to such group. If we had capital problem we would have try it out through Petroleum Association of South Sudan. They are organized and could have allowed foreigners limited space when the group gradually prepare our own to manage fuel in the country.

The National Legislative Assembly on the other hand isn't any longer an oversight body, but rubber stamp from the Executive. They allowed salary cuts for civil servants and made no explanation as to what will that mean to an inflated ridden country. Salaries are delayed and no clear word from anyone. Aliens are everywhere with their accompanied crimes. Kenyans are becoming horrible in that field and now they have the face to call us monkeys. Silly! The list goes on and you wonder where does all this lead the country? Is that not a concern Mr. Ateny? I belief so sir! The bug stops with Kiir. He must own it.

Garang was undisputed leader

Ateny if Garang was alive we won't have been at this state, I must say this with certitude! That man was gifted, he knew what step to take, why to take and what it would take to take it. Of course he wasn't god, but his developmental agenda fit our fertile grounds. May be you don't know him, and only heard from FORUM instigative and negative onslaught against him in London. Of course we know the turn coats that are becoming hard cores and inner circles of the system currently in Juba. Time is coming when you will be accounted for the mess you have done against the people of this country. South Sudan can't be led like that and someone step up to try to hush anyone.

Garang junior wasn't whistleblower but truth teller-change is inevitable

The third enigmatic statement from Mr. Ateny Wek Ateny on his dying line goes like this: "the prodigal son of the former leader is a whistleblower for something yet designed to come". Mr. Ateny, Mr. Mabior wasn't a whistleblower about any impending coup de tat or anything similar to that school. Look, no one will remove President Kiir through any violent means. He is an elected leader and our people are law abiding ones. The army you see are disciplined; they were brought up by descent man. Kiir will be president until election time in 2015, be assure of that. But take this from this little author; Mr. Kiir will not be the president of this republic beyond 2015.

The man has lost his base, and has since resigned to that situation. He still holds on the skeleton anyway, but the reality is that the SPLM, which should have been his very base, is infiltrated and not anymore standing united the way we came in-2005. The true cadres of the party have no courage to market Kiir the same way they did it few years ago. They aren't closer to where the national matters are discussed. Some people have already found their way, and are running the show.

But to be exact, the trouble started when Kiir formed his first cabinet after election in 2010. The party should have been on the fore front to nominate who should be the Minister, Deputy Minister, Undersecretary and so on. Mr. Kiir sat in his villa house in Juba and called his two men (Machar and Wani) and the trio divided the seats among their cronies from their respective three regions. This has alienated so many able people. You see, the party regionalize its own regional slots and not the executive. Executive is about specialists, a group of people with specific and technical knowhow.

The Magayas, the Agnes of the NCP and the Betty are the like that should not have been in the Cabinet in the first place. Their political backgrounds are murkier and shoddier than one could imagine. Can anyone dream of appointing turn coats, straight to the heart of the system, as if SPLM has no men/women from the bush who could run the government? If we had managed then to run the movement for many years without anything and under difficult challenges circumstances, how about now when we have everything in place to manage things? Gen. Obote could have been the right man in Interior not the Magaya if the position was the preserve of the Equatorians.

I cease this opportunity to request His Excellency the President to return Ms Awut Deng Achuil to the Cabinet. She was in the bush and knows the pain of the people. She wasn't with Arabs in Khartoum. Madame Awut is an achiever and shouldn't be left in the cool. His problem was with some busybodies in the Council of Ministers who were resisting her ghost names fights in the payrolls. She a fighter, has a character and not corrupt. Please sir, make use of this lady talent; don't listen lies, overturn her resignation letter and reappoint her in another production ministry such as Commerce. I'm talking about people who actually been in the fire who are now the rejects of President Kiir.

Kiir should consult his party on grave national matters

Kiir had no time consulting his party secretariat on serious national decisions. Yes once the president is elected he ceases becoming partisans, but policies are always generated by the party. The party initiates and forms any part of his move. Our

President casually connects with his party and that shouldn't be the case. He made all his big decision around Council of Ministers and in his house. Take for example the shut down of the oil production; the decision was made elsewhere or by a few without careful study about its economic repercussions. Literally exerts weren't consulted and here we are in an economic quagmire, whom do we blame? Of course the Chief Executive who felt short of making use of his base.

People thought there are plans after that, but to date they are in distance future or in pipe dream/nowhere. The President and his small kitchen cabinet emotionally made so many decisions on behalf of everyone else, even that of a party. Though the decision to shut down oil production has become a blessing in disguise and Khartoum was wrong to have stolen our money at gun point, it wasn't careful thought out. That is exactly what the young Garang was trying to say. We should have learned by now how the work works!

Kiir will not be re-elected again

Mr. Ateny must be reminded that Kiir re-election bid will be a daunting task. If it happens it will be with a price. In essence the party will divide into pieces. Some people are quiet now because time hasn't yet come, but once that time arrives, you will hear power struggle issue coming up everywhere; that is if Kiir insists of running again for another term. If he cares for the party he will have to give others the chance. The big has tried and must rest. The SPLM Chairman is walking under tied rope, very exposed and must be left to retire. Dr. Machar moreover is angling around and will not wait longer until 2020. Then he will be 68 or so years, an age bracket not suitable for this generation. I love him! Others are also coming up. It is good to go when people still love you than to go down through a push.

Unity and the Promised Land

I hear elsewhere that Mr. Ateny erroneously beat a confidence chord that Mr. Kiir will be re-elected president for few more years, because he has united the people of South Sudan and had actually brought about independence of the country. Well, Ateny shouldn't be carried out. We all know his achievement and everyone is proud of him being there. Everyone appreciates our leader patience and humility in the face of problems, but you are overstated things for nothing. Kiir is the first president of the Republic of South Sudan period, nothing will erase this accolade for anytime to come, but for him to go Ghanaian first president way won't be nice. Dignity is critical. The earlier he retires the better for him and for the country. He ahs failed.

Unity of South Sudan is faulty

Mr. Ateny, we are not yet united, we are not near there; instead we are closer to polarization. In which way did he unite the people of this republic brother? His unity with miliatiemen in 2006 and in between was bound to happen regardless and irrespective of who/what approach he uses; they had no choice after the CPA was signed. But what we now see as unity of our people is faulty; it is on sand ground and likely to crumble anytime. Mr. Mabior didn't mention it, but this is my generalization about Kiir poor records.

True, sharing of national cake is one of the elements that bring about unity, but that arrangement is ephemeral in substance and in nature. Representation is materialist, unrealistic and can not bring the real unity. That arrangement isn't sustenance and lasts for a short period of time. The unity we truly yearn for therefore is the very one that would be in our minds.

Today we have a government with almost all the faces, but still we didn't reach the unity of our people. The question is why? Unity goes beyond inclusiveness, it has to be in our behavior towards one another. Someone does it in Rwanda and in few centuries to come, the issue of Tutsi vs Hutu will be history. He cleverly crafted a system where anyone is anyone, anywhere and everywhere in the 20 or so provinces of the Republic of Rwanda. He isn't yet there however but on a right course for his people.

Mualimu Julius Nyere of Tanzania did it two centuries ago, and it is paying off today; he did it for his diverse ethnic groups, and now he must be a proud man on heaven. Once a leader finds himself in such situations, the best way to go is to carefully erect a short term foundation for a longer term solution. If we are united we won't have people running away from one another-federation quest or people crying for autonomous. We would have been comfortable with who is our neighbor irrespective of his tribe. We won't have sniff over our shoulder as to who is in power, because power to us is short cut means to wealth.

I still hope that time will come when we shall have a Juba Commissioner from Murle, or a Toposa becoming a governor in Upper Nile State. I long for a situation where our people shall embrace one another and not in lens of tribes, classes or groups. Kiir didn't do enough there, and will leave it that way. Garang Sr was on the way to mould us into something. He started well but Kiir and Machar threw it out immediately after his death. Wani was appointed governor in Upper Nile, Machar was appointed governor in Western Equatoria, Lam was in Western Bahr El Ghazal etc, that was clear manifestation of a vision. That is a difference. There would have been election yes, but it would have been done in 2010 after some strides. Kiir missed it, because those who were after power never gave him time to do things right.

On the journey to the Promised Land, no single person can brag about having brought us freedom. Even Garang with all his extraordinary efforts couldn't say he had singlehanded freed this country. But also under the CPA foundation it was possible

for anyone to bring people out of the bondage. That agreement was too grounded on rocks. Kiir had even failed to use it properly. He has been reclusive and never stayed longer in the presidency in Khartoum. He shied from making himself heard. The today issues such as the Disputed Areas or the problem in two areas of South Korfofan and Blue Nile would have been heard. People were surprised when Panthou became a disputed land. No one said it, if Kiir didn't say who else could have said it?

Mr. Ateny must not make mistake that Mabior family is jealous about Kiir presidency. Dr. John Garang family is hardworking family. They are doing it for their self-reliance. Mama Rebecca is a woman of steel heart, so tough. She is building her own live like everyone else and this is encouraging. The young Garang moreover has been careful, quiet and his timing is right. If he isn't talking who will voice the concern of the people of this republic. We must be accommodative to constructive criticism. This author is an SPLM member who is not leaving the party yet but is not happy that Khartoum is allowed to laugh last that we are becoming a failed state. I love this party because of its history, I love him as a person but not anymore as the president, and our big brother John Garang de Mabior, and many more who participated in the struggle of the people of South Sudan. The SPLM must reform; the Chairman must listen and do what is best for his people.

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