

DESIGN TO TAKE OVER NIGERIA BY THE FULANIS

BY

PROF. B.I.C IJOMAH

DESIGN TO TAKE OVER NIGERIA BY THE FULANI'S

First, let me say that the plan of the Fulanis to subtly take over Nigeria has been an old plan. Let me also say that, the cattle Fulanis are one ethnic group in Nigeria. Not all the Fulanis are cattle rearers. Only the cattle Fulani are. There are other Fulanis in the Fulani ethnic group who are not cattle rearers. They are called the Town Fulanis. They are not the ones who are asking for the grazing rights. It is unfortunate that Mrs. Kure used her dignified position to take a lead in writing a law that could enable the cattle Fulanis take over Nigeria. We also remember that the Federal Government set up the Nomadic Commission to assist the cattle Fulani on how to go about their business. I served on this Nomadic Commission for more than 3 years in Kaduna. It is equally strange that Mrs. Kure was writing a law on cattle rearing and grazing in the country without reference to the existence of the Nomadic Commission set up by the Federal Government.

This Nomadic Commission is in Kaduna. Let me caution, that cattle rearing is an occupation of one ethnic group. Any attempt to legislate, so that the cattle Fulani be given a legal authority to move into every town in Nigeria and acquire land against the wishes of the people will back fire. This legal backing might bring Nigeria to an end. It is an attempt to give the Fulani grazing rights in every part of Nigeria, inspite of their condemnable atrocities in different parts of the country. As a member of the Nomadic Commission for sometime, we did everything to

domesticate the cattle Fulanis. We even wrote books in Fulfude language which we used to teach this nomadic Fulanis in schools set up by the Nomadic Commission. The school is a success so far but the nomadic Fulanis do not want to settle down in one place, so that they can go to school and be domesticated.

The attempt to have grazing field in every part of Nigeria, shows that the Federal Government is sponsoring one occupation as a national occupation. Federal Government should know that it is wrong to throw its weight behind one profession. The cattle Fulanis by their nature cannot settle in one place, and therefore cannot be domesticated. And Federal Government has no right to back one profession among many professions in the country. We have the migrant fishermen in the South and also in the North. The government has not considered it necessary to acquire strategic waters in the country so that fishermen could carry on their job.

DANGERS TO NIGERIA

I see the move to acquire land compulsorily for only one profession (cattle rearing) as dangerous. Will the Federal Government also acquire rivers and streams wherever necessary so that fishermen in the North and in the South can have fishing rights? No. I think this is another step by the Fulanis to expand to other parts of Nigeria. I recall the struggles of the Fulanis with the Birom people in the North, in Plateau State; they struggled with the indigenous population in Nasarawa, now by their current record they have occupied Bukuru and driven away the indigenous settlers. What happened in Agatu is planned to drive away the indigenous settlers and take the whole place in the name of cattle rearing.

THEIR HORRIBLE BEHAVIOUR

Let me draw attention to their method of operations. They have come as far as to Ndokwa, Balyesa, Enugu, and their method of operation is to kill the indigenous settlers and take over the land. It is a tragedy that the president of Nigeria has not opened his mouth to make a statement condemning the massacre of

innocent citizens by the Fulanis. We know that the President is a Fulani man but that is not the reason for him to condemn the Boko Haram and not condemn the massacre of innocent citizens by his own ethnic group, the Fulanis. Many people have been massacred. The President was belatedly forced by the public outcry to make a feeble condemnation.

Nigerians are watching to see the next move to acquire land compulsorily. This cannot happen. We are in a Federation and you cannot force cattle rearing on communities by force. In Enugu they massacred more than 46 persons in Nsukka, this shows that the Fulanis want to move into locations by force. Let us warn the Fulanis that no ethnic group has a monopoly of violence. Their method of operation is an insult to Nigeria, and all Nigerians must open their eyes and watch the activities of the Fulanis. The President must show a sense of nationalism. He cannot keep silent and pretend that he does not know what is going on. Other ethnic groups in the North, in the Yoruba communities, in the Igbo territories, in the Ijaw territories are watching and will react accordingly very soon.

Let me draw Mr. President's attention to a reality. He has his hands on many things in Nigeria. Adding the Fulani problems is not in his interest. The Fulanis want to acquire Nigeria by force. It is the first step towards destroying this nation because neither the Yorubas nor, the Igbos nor, the Ijaws nor the Biroms will close their eyes and watch the cattle Fulanis take over Nigeria. Perhaps there is wisdom in what the American said years ago "*that Nigeria will be soon break up*". Prophet Ayodele a few weeks ago had predicted that *Nigeria might disintegrate into about six autonomous nations*. Let me caution that over the years the Igbos, have been massacred in the North in 1945, 1953, 1960s. These massacres forced Ojukwu to declare that he was going to stop sacrificing the Igbos in the name of Nigerian unity. But let us go back to history and recall the statement made by Ahmadu Bello just the very month of our independence. He said;

"This nation called Nigeria shall be an estate to us from our great grandfather Othman Dan Fodio. Will shall resist any change. We shall manipulate the minorities of the North and declare the South as a conquered territory"

This was published in 1960 in a magazine. Perhaps the Fulanis are trying to implement of this statement by Ahmadu Bello. The Fulanis are stressing the need for the Northerner to take over the whole country. It is not by massacring the existing population and moving in with their cattle. No.

While we encourage the Government to modernize cattle rearing, and encourage the Fulanis to develop grazing in the savannah area of the North, Federal Government can assist them to have professional cattle rearing. This requires heavy investment in the savannah where suitable grass can be cultivated.

But let me also remind Mr. President that those who rear cattle in America, Brazil and other places are industrialists who have bought land with their own money. They may be assisted by government to buy lands. Mr. President is well advised to send people to America and Brazil to see how to modernize cattle rearing and do so in Nigeria. In the North grass is abundant. Rearing cattle in the tropical area of Rivers State, Bayelsa, Delta State is a wrong venture because very soon tse-tse-flies will engulf this area and the cattle will begin to die natural death. We are aware that the drying up of the desert is pushing them down South. The situation must be handled with care not by force

The Fulanis will not force Nigerians to react accordingly. If the President does not talk, people will talk. And when people begin to talk tension will begin to rise; the problem Nigeria will face will be more than the fuel scarcity which Mr. President has not been able to handle. If he has the intention of the Fulanis to forcefully acquire land, something is wrong.

The Yorubas certainly will not watch the Fulani's invade their county, with the impunity with which the cattle rearers enter other states to kidnap and destroy farms calls for national resistance. The Yoruba's are meeting. Other ethnic groups will meet and will give the cattle Fulanis an appropriate response if Mr. President does not step into the matter and defend Nigeria.

Finally, I want to invite Mrs. Kure and all those who are drafting the said laws on acquiring grazing land compulsorily to refer their case to Nomadic Commission of the Federal Government. I served on the Nomadic Commission Board. Books were written to domesticate the cattle Fulani and send them to school. The Nomadic Commission has registered some successes. But I do not think that the Nomadic Commission has ever recommended that the migrant Fulanis should acquire land compulsorily or settle in the areas compulsorily, by massacring the indigenes of the place. Such a move will lead to a massive resistance. It will also lead to various states expelling the cattle Fulanis from their state unless Mr. President does something that is noble and just.

Mr. President swore to protect Nigeria. He should be seen protecting Nigeria. He must not be seen keeping silent and allowing his ethnic group the cattle Fulanis to move into various states and kill people at will. This cannot happen. Nigeria is a Federation. One profession, the cattle rearing, cannot be legislated to be a National profession for which land must be compulsorily acquired. We need lands for agriculture. As cattle rearing is important to the Fulanis, so Agriculture is important to the Yorubas, to the Igbos, to the Balyesa, to Edo people, to Anambra people, to Kogi people. And nobody will fold his hands and allow this massacre to continue. Let the massacre of people at Nsukka be the last. If Mr. President cannot protect Nigeria from his own ethnic group then Nigerians must protect themselves from the Fulanis. Enough is enough.

We fought the civil war because the Igbos were massacred several times in the North and the last massacre led to the civil war, Ojukwu declared that this should be the last time the Igbos will make supreme sacrifice in the interest of one Nigeria. I call on Mr. President to rise up as a President of Nigeria not as a Fulani man and condemn what the Fulanis are doing before it destroys Nigeria.