

I HAVE NOTHING PERSONAL – ENVY, BITTERNESS OR ANGER - AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OR THE PRESIDENT BY THE GRACE OF THE ALMIGHTY GOD: BY MARTIN A. B. K. AMIDU

“Apart from his being a team player, Mr. Amidu is also bold and fearless, and a fighter when necessary.” – Vice-President (Prof.) John Evans Atta Mills, 5th September 2000

Conflict does not reside in the person but in the interaction so it should never be personal

Conflicts do not reside in persons, they reside in the interaction or what we say in communication – in conflict studies, the conflict is in the between and not in the persons in conflict. Unfortunately while conflict is a pervasive and inevitable phenomenon of social life, very few people have the learning and training to disaggregate the human emotions generated by conflict from the real issues in controversy. So we call a violent conflict in the north, “a guinea fowl war”, forgetting the underlying basis of an intractable conflict.

I normally try to be informed by matters of principle, belief, values and norms in waging conflict with anybody. I consciously engage in reflective thinking and practice in my conflict dynamics and the practice of law. I therefore get surprised when I am accused of hating or envying anybody in conflict. Of course it is trite in conflict studies and research that blaming is a dynamic of conflict which satisfies emotions and escalates conflicts. Unfortunately, constituents of people in conflict worsen and escalate them with unproductive tacit interventions than the persons in direct conflict.

I do not allow emotions to becloud my judgment of conflict analysis and dynamics. As a matter of history and fact there is no basis for the blame and attributions ascribed to my disagreements on principles and/or values with the NDC Government.

Working for John Mahama’s interest without his knowledge

Former President Rawlings had a few days before the 2007 Christmas asked his then personal assistant, Victor Smith, to invite me for a conversation. We discussed amongst other matters the prospects of the NDC in the coming Presidential and Parliamentary elections. The then Hon. John Dramani Mahama, was the preferred choice but there were doubts whether Candidate Mills had indeed formally spoken to him about being his running mate and made any offer. We concluded that former President should speak to Mr. Mahama directly on the matter to clear the air once and for all.

I was assigned the task of going abroad as an emissary of former President Rawlings to reiterate to a longstanding friend of mine who had assumed the Presidency of another country that Mr. Mahama was a preferred and competent candidate. With a return ticket arranged by Victor Smith

which I picked up at the airport on the day of my departure, 26th December, 2007, I went abroad and returned on 30th December 2007.

I did not meet former President Rawlings on my return because of the season's festivities. When we eventually met close to the middle of January 2008, I learnt that things had not gone well on the former President's visit to Mr. Mahama's residence in my absence. Nonetheless my mission for going abroad had been accomplished. I learnt from the President abroad that Candidate Mills had himself visited and mentioned Mr. Mahama as a possibility which I confirmed as instructed by President Rawlings. It was subsequent to this return meeting that the former President bounced Mrs. Betty Mould-Iddrisu's name on me for the first time as a potential running mate.

As I was not available to attend the burial and funeral ceremony of Madam Memunata, Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu's very respectful, irreplaceable and beautiful deceased wife on 30th December 2007, I had to look him up upon his return from Wa to explain my absence. I informed him about the mishap that had taken place when former President Rawlings had sort to hold a conversation by visiting Mr. Mahama's residence and asked him as a senior brother to have a word with Mr. Mahama to render an apology to former President Rawlings. I also spoke to Mr. L. K. Molbila to team up with Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu to find a way of bringing harmony between the former President and Mr. Mahama. I relayed the same message to Hon. Moses Asagah (at the Veterans Club House opposite the Ghana Immigration Service) whom I learnt was a classmate to Mr. Mahama at Ghanasco.

I agreed to run with Candidate Mills on 3rd September 2000 only after he had secured Alhaji Mahama Iddrisu's personal concurrence for me to run with him. Alhaji Iddrisu knows the full facts and story of how I behave strictly in accordance with our customary tradition in this matter at the time. I had no ambition to be Vice-President or President since I lost the elections with Candidate Mills in December 2000. The NDC had decided at a meeting Chaired by Dr. Obed Asamoah in Kumasi that Candidate Mills' next running mate must be both a northerner and a Muslim. I am Roman Catholic by baptism and confirmation. It would not have been feasible with me, for Candidate Mills to have nominated me again as his running mate for the 2008 elections even if he had decided to pick a northern Christian again.

President Rawlings if he wishes may confirm that when Dr. Tony Aidoo and I were invited to meet him in London, arriving the morning of 10th to 16th May 2002, I had no ambition to be running mate to Candidate Mills. Former President Rawlings made efforts in December 2002 for me to take up an international appointment for four years beginning 2003 which could not materialize because of my other very personal family commitments that did not permit me to leave Ghana for that long.

Election 2008 and Government 2009- beyond

Eventually Candidate Mills nominated Mr. Mahama as his running mate over Alhaji Mohammad Mumuni. I played my part in the 2008 campaign by leading the team to the Upper East Region's campaign as Mr. Molbilla was unavailable at a point in the campaign. I contributed financially to each constituency and the regional party headquarters for the campaign as well. The results in the Upper East Region were exceptional for the NDC.

When I reluctantly joined the Mills/Mahama Government in 2009 I had no problem with the Vice-President except the manner in which he and Oteng Adjei sought to push my hand in agreeing not to prosecute the E. O. Group case by getting President Mills to grant an executive consent to the Group to sell their shares and for me to grant them indemnity from prosecution. I stood my ground and refused to grant the indemnity as the Attorney-General. Any other disagreements were on professional grounds and never personal. I always told Prof. Mills that: "I will never do anything today which I cannot defend tomorrow when I am out of office." When I appeared before the National Reconciliation Commission I was alone.

Out of Government in January 2012 I declined all persuasions to go abroad at Government expense for the impasse to blow over. After Mr. Mahama succeeded President Mills in July 2012 I received Sule Gariba on 23rd August 2012 as an emissary from President Mahama inviting me to the Kumasi congress ostensible upon the advice of former President Rawlings. On 24th November 2012 I received Alfred Mahama, the President's senior brother, who was led by Chris Dugan to my house with a message from the President. I have also received other emissaries who claimed to have been sent by the President after the 2012 elections.

On Monday 1st July 2013, to give but one example, Chris Dugan again brought one Ali Seidu to introduce to me as an emissary of the President who was to liaise with me when necessary. It turned out that Mr. Seidu whom I had not known until then was from Bawku. (A quick cross-check by telephone on his identity after they had left established that he was the son of my late very bosom friend generally known as Seidu "Country" of Bawku-Natinga with the addition that his mother, whom I knew, was at that moment living with Alhaji Awudu near the Rev. John Teye Memorial Institute on the Achimota-Pukuasi road). I never saw him again.

On each occasion I was candid on the need for the President to run a transparent and accountable government in accordance with the core values of the NDC as condition precedent for my unflinching support and participation in his Government. I saw President Mahama's Presidency as icing on the cake after the contributions of Mohammad Mumuni and myself to the NDC's efforts to come to power and wished him to uphold the values of the NDC and not let our collective efforts to be in vain.

Being my true self

I disagree and I have disagreed with the NDC Government on matters of constitutional principles, beliefs, values and policy issues but never on personal matters. I served the PNDC from February 1982 to 7th January 1993 before serving under the NDC1, 2 and partly in NDC3. I have been unable to discard principles, and values I have internalized and lived with since my childhood and through my adult socialization over the years including the 31st December Revolution to adapt to the new disvalues of the NDC Government since 2009.

Dr. Ambomaje, in a recent article on the internet reminded me of the character testimonial that then Vice-President Mills who had been a personal friend of mine for over 30 years at the time gave me on 5th September 2000 when he introduced me to the public at the NDC Headquarters thus:

“Prof. Mills described Mr. Amidu as someone who shared his personal values, adding that his nominee has character, integrity, experience and sound judgment.

‘Apart from his being a team player, Mr. Amidu is also bold and fearless, and a fighter when necessary,’ he said.

Prof. Mills said he saw in his former student as ‘someone who will work for the ordinary people of this country, not the powerful with a high sense of social justice, fairness, and above all truthfulness.’”

Cows do not beget goats. My late (English basic education illiterate) father, GC 13131, Sergeant-Major Amidu Kanjarga, then of The Gold Coast Regiment was described as follows when he was awarded the Military Medal on 10th June, 1948:

“During the period under review, 16th November, 1944 to 15th February, 1945, Sergeant Amadu (sic) Kanjarga, whilst acting as Platoon Sergeant in the Arakan, displayed powers of leadership, and initiative far above average....His conduct in all respects demonstrated African leadership and gallantry at its highest.” – Citation in respect of the award of the Military Medal to GC 13131 Sergeant-Major (then Sergeant) Amadu (sic) Kanjarga, 81st (WA) Division, Reconnaissance Bn. (The Gold Coast Regiment: Ceremonial Parade and Investiture, 10th June, 1948.)

Everybody who has known me from childhood through Half Assini, Takoradi, Lawra, Bawku, where I attended primary and middle school to Tamale Commercial Institute, later known as Tamale Commercial Secondary and now Tamale Business Secondary School, to Navrongo School and the University of Ghana will attest to the fact that I have not changed in my leadership role of always insisting on justice and fair play for the ordinary person at all times. I am just living out my character. I am informed that President Mahama was also fortunate to have

followed my steps to Commonwealth Hall and if he has done his homework well he should know from V-Mates that Martin Amidu is tenacious in his principles, beliefs and values, no matter whose ass is gored.

I served former President Rawlings dedicatedly throughout the years of the Revolution and democracy because whatever his human faults and failings he was committed to and enforced ideals to which I was also committed. His pluses were more than the minuses. Even though I knew Professor Mills long before I met former President Rawlings, I did not get to know Mills' disagreeable side or our friendship blinded me from seeing them until I joined his Government.

As for President John Dramani Mahama I did not know him until he joined the NDC 2 Government after the 1996 Elections and became Deputy Minister of Communications. My attention was drawn to him when he almost privatized the Graphic Corporation and I had to write a very strong memorandum calling the Government's attention to the fact that if we commercialized and privatized all the State Owned Media Houses as he had championed the letter and spirit of provisions of the Constitution on State Owned Media and their role under the Constitution will be rendered nugatory. I did not press the point as was my usual style and forgot about the whole matter because I believed sincerely that he did not intend to violate the Constitution deliberately.

Conclusions

In my whole life I have never courted praise or approbation in playing out my character. I would rather stand for what I believe to be the truth even if it means I stand alone. No insults or name calling will change that after more than 64 years of my existence. I should be able to tell my maker when I get out or up there or wherever it may be, that I served Him or Her to the best of my ability; I served the Holy Catholic Church to the best of my human ability; I served my nation truly and served my people.

I shall not commit the major sin of envying or hating or being bitter against any creature of God Almighty or Allah. Always Grant me that Grace oh Lord!

Martin A. B. K Amidu