

STOP OFFERING APPOINTMENTS ON THE BLIND SIDE OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT: BY MARTIN A.B. K. AMIDU

I believe sincerely deep down in my heart that the change of Government brought about by the people of Ghana at the just ended elections portends hope, expectations and anticipation in each of us who put Ghana First at the ballot for good governance, the rule of law, probity, accountability and transparency in the coming four years of the administration of the President Elect, his Government and the Parliament Elect. One of the fundamental guarantees of a true representative democracy is freedom of speech and expression which includes freedom of the press and other media that creates a free market place of ideas from which governments can distil and make choices for the preamble objectives of our constitution for good governance.

I have followed the expressions of expectations and anticipations of the mass of our people in the media and social media as to their wishful choices for the consideration of the incoming Government. However, the free market place of ideas for expression of personal opinions appears to have carried some away to assume the President-elect's prerogative of whom he may appoint into his Government by trying to stampede him with choices for several positions within his administration. This democratic process allows citizens to release tension and express their wishes and desires, leaving the ultimate responsibility for choices to the incoming Government at the appropriate time.

What has been and is worrying for me is that some citizens are using this natural democratic process of citizen free expression of expectations and anticipation to telephone or speak face-to-face with individual citizens to suggest that they have, are recommending or intend to recommend them to the President-Elect for particular appointments. I have received a number of such telephone and direct face-to-face suggestions both from some alleged friends, acquaintances and complete strangers in which they profess to have written to, recommended, or spoken to the President-Elect or persons close to him about a public appointment for me. I have had to exercise considerable restraint and patience in dealing with such ingratiating callers and visitors because their attitude and behavior is annoying, nauseating, demeaning, and embarrassing to me.

Let me elucidate. I have been an advocate against graft, patronage, cronyism, greed and corruption of all kinds from my earliest school and college days. My history in public office since 1982 has been a history of fighting against plundering of the public purse. This is how come for almost five years Chairman Rawlings made me the Chairman of the Public Agreements Boards with personal attendance at PNDC meetings to ensure that no public agreement was approved unless it met the national interest.

My one-man citizen vigilante crusade stems from my inherent sense of purpose in standing for equality and accountability, as those who went to school, college and who have worked with me in the public service can all attest to. I do not do these public spirited things in consideration for material reward in any form. I retired on my own volition after my bitter experience of January

2012 without a salary because I had declined on principle to accept a nomination in 1999 that would have allowed me to subsequently retire on a salary. Mrs. Justice Joyce Bamford-Addo, former Speaker of Parliament, and Mr. Justice W.A. Atuguba are two living witnesses to this because they were asked to speak to me on the matter. Many friends have disagreed with what they consider my stupidity of sacrifice without expecting any reward. The fact is that I am purposefully and spiritually satisfied to always Put Ghana First.

I am pleading with those professed friends, acquaintances and strangers who do not know me well or who hope to cultivate my gratitude by informing me of efforts, submissions, recommendations, or supplications they are making on my behalf for any appointment to please desist from doing so. What they are really doing is what is called in conflict studies “ingratiation”, which has within it the seeds for the potential of corruption. I suspect what is happening to me is happening to other patriotic citizens. It is not in the interest of the President-Elect, his Government or the incoming Parliament. Such actions are inevitably a harbinger of cronyism and corruption in the body polity.

We should as Ghanaians support the President-elect and his incoming Government in his efforts in building a robust economy and a vibrant constitutional democracy. It is not patriotic for seemingly decent citizens to go round offering appointments to persons they suspect of meriting them on the blind side of the President-elect even before he has had time to exercise his prerogative of forming his Government so that such opportunists may claim credit in case of coincidence with the President-elect’s independent decisions. This portends corruption, pure and simple!

Martin A. B. K. Amidu
Accra, 14th December 2016