

Dear Editor,

Tinubu: A Tyrant in the Making

President Tinubu's self-serving speech--which basically sang his own praises, said he'd heard the people's anguished cries but won't do anything about the cries and then threatened that the people shouldn't cry for much longer or they'd be crushed-- signposts the making of an unfeeling tyrant. If the people close to him don't stop him and the masses of the people let him get away with it, he'll transmogrify into a terrifyingly ruthless monster that may end Nigeria as we know it. A famous Arabic proverb goes: "They asked the Pharaoh, 'What made you a tyrant?' He said, 'No one stopped me.'" The proverb tells us about the psychology of power that I've written about in past columns. Subordinates flatter people in power, copy their ways, and shield them from the harsh truth about them. This sycophantic drooling by subordinates makes leaders lose touch with reality. The truth Tinubu must know is that the current hardship in Nigeria is not survivable. This is not an issue of political partisanship. There's no alternative to restoring petrol and electricity subsidies. Energy security is national security. He should give another speech to restore the subsidies whose removal created the conditions that power the protests. Simple.

By Farooq Kperogi

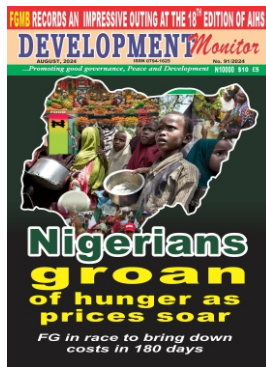
Dear Editor

This whole issue on Dangote is shocking and creating bad waves for Nigeria globally.

Monopoly often exists where there are high barriers to entry or high capital costs.

How many individuals or companies can do railways? How many can do refineries of the scale of Dangote Refineries? In a nation that has been importing refined petroleum products for several decades; the abnormal simply became very normal.

No smart investor would make a \$19.5 billion investment and want it to be undermined by importers. To manufacture is extremely expensive and risky. This is even more so in Nigeria, given the very challenging business and economic environment, fraught with policy uncertainties and policy reversals, and where the self-defeating default mode of "simply import it" is always so easily rationalized and chorused to solve any problem. Competition is good for everyone. But is Dangote refineries anti-competitive? What is the evidence? Has Dangote refineries



prevented any other company from setting up refineries? Why have others not done so? How come they have not done so for several decades? Was it Dangote that held them back? But Dangote refineries surely cannot be asked to 'compete' with importers of petroleum products. That is not competition. Let the importers set up local refineries and compete by refining in Nigeria. That is fair and justified competition. We cannot and must not undermine, disparage or kill local industries, talk less of one that is of this scale — a jewel of industrialization in Nigeria.

It is more than simply delivering the cheapest product to the market. It is about domestic supply security, driving (and yes, protecting) globally competitive industries, maximizing forward and backward linkages in the local economy, job creation, reducing forex expenses and shoring up the Naira. We must not be myopic. This whole disparaging of Dangote is uncalled for. It is self-defeating. And it is very bad for Nigeria. Who will want to come and invest in a country that disparages and undermines its own largest investor? Investing is tough. Pettiness is easy. It sadly sends a signal that the price for sacrificing for Nigeria is to get sacrificed.

By Akinwunmi Adesina President African Development Bank

Dear Editor

What kind of Democracy are we practicing?

Ndume criticized the president and the government rather than listen, Tinubu has brought out his whip to whip the Whip. Then Ganduje asked the Senate to remove Ali Ndume as Chief Whip of the Senate. That must be Tinubu's decision. And the senators not being grown independent minded men didn't hesitate. They quickly removed and replaced Ndume. But the party didn't stop there. In an unprecedented pugnacious move. The APC asked Ndume to resign from the party. This is utterly shocking. Ndume has been asked to resign and join another party. This is a bad omen. If a senator cannot criticize a president from his party then the country is in trouble. So, where is the internal democracy in the ruling party? Is this how its internal disciplinary mechanism now works? In the last Government, we had senior party officials who criticized Buhari endlessly. Buhari never flinched. So, what's happening here? So, Ali Ndume will now join El Rufai in the swelling ranks of APC politicians bitter with the President. Ndume's sin is that as a senior senator, he spoke the truth publicly

Dr. Ugo Egbujo