

## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*You are, of course, aware that I am on a number of committees, all of which are engaged in charity works. The Betty Charity, of which I am the Chairlady, for instance, is designed to raise money for orphans and underprivileged children of Hongkong. It is a charity that is very near to my heart because, if you recall, I used to be a nurse before I married Bo-Bo. I was planning to start another charity in Hongkong in order to assist The Federal Republic of Nigeria where the expected life of a person is about 47 years and where at least 5.40 percent of the 132 million human population (about 7,128,000 people) suffers from HIV/AIDS. I telephoned the Consulate General of Nigeria in Hongkong in order to try to ascertain how best to explore the establishment of my proposed new charity. Well, after a little investigation, I dropped the entire project. These are the 2 main reasons for my determination:*

- 1. **Living in Luxury:** I discovered that the Consul General for Nigeria in Hongkong is Mr Usman A. Baraya and what could be described as his Number Two is Consul Raymond Ezeh. Consul General Usman A. Baraya lives at House 46, Black's Link, Hongkong. Consul Raymond Ezeh lives at Number 36, Bellevue Drive, Repulse Bay, Hongkong. These 2 residences are among the most desirable on Hongkong Island and are worth a huge amount of money. The Black's Link residence has a market value in excess of \$HK200 million. As for the Bellevue Drive flat, it is worth upwards of \$HK60 million. These 2 diplomats, therefore, are living in absolute luxury in Hongkong. I did a little research only to discover that both properties are owned by the Government of Nigeria. They were both purchased in July of 1981. That was about 21 years after Nigeria won its independence from Great Britain.*
- 2. **Corruption:** Nigeria is one of the most-corrupt countries in Africa. The President is Olusegun Obasanjo, at this time, but a General Election is scheduled for April, this year. President Olusegun Obasanjo has been in power since May 29, 1999. Not only is he President of the country, but he is, also, Chief of State and Head of the Government. In other words, he can do anything that he likes to whomsoever he likes. Nigeria is the largest exporter of crude oil in Africa, but the country is poverty stricken, for the most part. The indigenous people of the Niger Delta are, literally, up in arms at the fact that corruption is so widespread, throughout the country, and that they are kept in abject poverty – while the Governors of various provinces live in luxury. You will recall that it was only less than a month ago that the Government of China negotiated the release of some 5 Chinese workers who were abducted by Niger Delta insurgents. All that these Nigerian people want is to share in the wealth of the country. Meanwhile, many of them are starving to death.*

*I talked to my girlfriend, who is close to the Americans in Hongkong, and she came up with some very interesting facts, all of which were drawn from the archives of the US Government's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Nigeria is a little larger than the State of California, measuring about 923,768 square kilometres. The country is suffering from continuous soil degradation, deforestation, pollution of all sorts and serious damage, due to oil spills. In short, the country is in a mess. The infant mortality rate is about 9.71 percent. That means that for every 1,000 live births, 97.14 babies die, on average. The dominant religions of the country are Muslim (50 percent), Christian (40 percent) and indigenous beliefs (10 percent). The literacy rate for females is about 60 percent, compared with males whose literacy rate is up to about 76 percent. The Judicial system of the country is said to be based on English Common Law, Islamic Shariah*

*Law and traditional law. The President appoints the judges. The unemployment rate in Nigeria is, officially, about 6 percent. About 79 million Nigerian people are known to be starving. Inflation is running at about 11 percent. Industrial growth is retracting at the rate of about 1.60 percent per annum. The exports of the country comprise petroleum and petroleum products (95 percent), cocoa and rubber. The proven oil reserves of the country are about 36.25 billion barrels. About 60 percent of the country's oil has been nationalised. Nigeria is listed by the US Government as being one of the most active transit points for heroin and cocaine, all of which is destined for Europe, East Asia and North America. It is known to be a safe haven for narcotraffickers, operating worldwide. It is, also, a base for money laundering as well as being a base for international criminal activities. The US Government continues to keep the country under its microscope.*

*Having learned the above and having read the evidence for myself, can you blame me for not wanting to invest my time and my followers' money in such a country? It would be unfair for me (or anybody else for that matter) to blame Consul General Usman A Baraya for the actions, or lack of the action, of his corrupt government, but look at where he lives! My God, he is living almost next door to members of the Stanley Ho Hung Sun Family as well as living in the vicinity of some houses, belonging to New World Development Company Ltd! Also, from where did the Government of Nigeria get the money to purchase a house in Black's Link and a luxury flat in Repulse Bay? A loan from the World Bank, perhaps? The external debt of Nigeria is at least \$US37 billion with little likelihood of it ever being repaid. The Israeli Government's Consul General to Hongkong only lives in rented accommodation, you know.*

*This situation is, really, shocking.*

*Talk to you next week.*

*Chief Lady*

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