Africa Unchained

ALSO BY GEORGE B. N. AYITTEY
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Africa Betrayed (1992)
Africa in Chaos (1998)

ALSO BY GEORGE B. N. AYITTEY

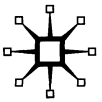
Indigenous African Institutions (1991)

Africa Unchained

The Blueprint for Africa's Future

George B. N. Ayittey

palgrave
macmillan



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DEDICATIONS

ALGERIA:

Abdelbaki Djabali, a correspondent of the daily *El Watan,* who escaped "death by road accident" on December 7, 2000, when his car was rammed off the road by a careening truck. His crime? Unrelenting exposés on corruption.

Lounes Matoub, a Berber singer, gunned down on June 26, 1998, at a roadblock on the road to his village in Beni Douala, for his outspoken criticisms of the government and Islamic groups. The Armed Islamic Group claimed responsibility.

BURKINA FASO:

Norbert Zongo, a popular journalist, playwright, and human rights activist, whose investigations into official corruption earned him both a widespread audience and numerous death threats. He was gunned down in an ambush on December 13, 1998.

CHAD:

Souleymane Guengueng, who after being unjustly imprisoned and tortured for two years in the late 1980s by the brutal Hissène Habré's regime, fought back courageously. He founded the Association of Victims of Political Oppression, and spent the next decade gathering testimony from fellow survivors and their families—over 700 people in all. The evidence provided critical material for Chadian and international human rights organizations to pursue a case against Habré, who fled to Senegal with $11 million in loot after being overthrown in December 1990. In January 1999, an indictment was brought against Habré in Senegal's Supreme Court. Although the case was thrown out in March 2001, Guengueng should be honored for bringing about Africa's first "Pinochet case."

EGYPT:

Salaheddin Mohsen, whom the authorities made a "martyr of free speech" (*Index On Censorship,* March 2001; p.132). He was sentenced to three years in prison with hard labor on January 27, 2001 for the crime of writing a book, *Shivering of the Lights,* which the authorities claimed "defamed Islam."

Saad Eddin Ibrahim, an internationally acclaimed sociologist and founder of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies. He is a courageous and strong advocate of independent judiciary review of voting to counter electoral fraud in Egypt. He has spoken against religious intolerance and the rising tensions between Egypt's Muslim majority and Christian minority. In a crass attempt to hunt and silence the sociologist, Ibrahim was put on trial and government prosecutors accused him of harming Egypt's image with exaggerated reports, of accepting foreign donations without government permission, of using donated money for personal enrichment, and of bribing newscasters to report favorably on the center's work. But as it turned out, "the government had infiltrated the center and planted evidence, framing Ibrahim" (*The New York Times,* April 22, 2001; p.5). On May 21, 2001, he was sentenced to jail for seven years. "This is politically motivated and the sentence is politically dictated," Ibrahim told the Associated Press on a mobile phone as the police escorted him from the courtroom. "It is a struggle and it will go on. I do not regret anything I stood for" (*The New York Times,* May 22, 2001; p.A7).

ETHIOPIA:

Israel Sboka, publisher and editor-in-chief of the weekly *Seife Nebelhal,* and Samson Seyoum, former editor-in-chief of *Ethiop,* both of whom, under persecution, fled the country in December 2000. Professor Asrat Woldeyes and Ato Tesfaye, gunned down by Tigrayan Peoples' Liberation Front assassins.

Ato Assefa Maru, an unrelenting advocate of freedom of association and individual rights, shot in cold blood by security forces in May 1997.

Alebatchew Goji, beaten and tortured to death while in police custody in July 1994.

Mustafa Idris, who mysteriously disappeared in 1994.

GHANA:

Tommy Thompson, the intrepid publisher of the newspaper, *Free Press.*

LIBERIA:

J. Milton Teahjay, who mysteriously vanished in 2001.

Opposition leader Togba-Nah Tipoteh and human rights activist James Verdier, whose lives have been under threat (*Africa Insider,* April 15, 2001; p.5).

MOROCCO:

Mehdi Ben Barka, a Moroccan exile who vanished in Paris in 1965. Ahmed Boukhari, a retired member of the secret police unit known as CAB–1 (created in 1960 to intimidate, torture, and kill members of the opposition), claimed that "Ben Barka was killed on the orders of those at the top of the Moroccan secret services, with the approval of cabinet ministers" (*The Economist* February 16, 2002; p.44).

MOZAMBIQUE:

Carlos Cardoso, an investigative journalist, who was murdered in November 2000 for uncovering a bank scandal in which about $14 million was looted from Mozambique's largest bank, BCM, on the eve of its privatization. The official in charge of banking supervision, Antonio Siba Siba, was also murdered while investigating the banking scandals.

Salamao Moyana, editor of the independent weekly, *Savana,* and its senior reporter, David Kashweka, who were placed on a death list on December 14, 2000. Anonymous callers had threatened them with death because they "talk too much" and "stick their noses into things" (*Index on Censorship,* March/April, 2001; p.109).

NIGERIA:

Kamsulum Kazeem, a security man at the newspaper *City People,* who was shot dead when armed persons attacked the offices of Media Techniques Limited, publishers of the paper, in the early hours of January 10, 2001.

Tunde Oladepo, a senior editor of *The Guardian,* who was gunned down in his Ogun state home in front of his wife and children on February 27, 1998.

Tunde Salau, a prominent student activist who was hacked to death on February 13, 2002, at Lagos University just after he had appeared for an examination. Salau, president of the Lagos state university students' union, was attacked with machetes by unknown assailants. He died of severe wounds. Salau had recently led a student protest against the murder

of justice minister Bola Ige by unknown gunmen in the southwestern town of Ibadan.

RWANDA:

Hon. Burakiri Evarist, a progressive politician from Commune Rutare and a member of Parliament for the Liberal Party, who was murdered in cold blood by one of the soldiers in President Paul Kagame's military intelligence squad and buried in a mass grave at commune headquarters.

Former Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) Minister Seth Sendashonga, who resigned and fled to Nairobi, where he was assassinated because he had evidence concerning deliberate killings. Hon. Col. Lizinde Mugabushaka, who also resigned his RPF Parliamentary seat and fled to Nairobi via Kinshasa, where he was similarly assassinated to destroy evidence.

SUDAN:

Yousif Kuwa Mekki, who for 16 years led a guerrilla division of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in the Nuba mountains of central Sudan and was the figurehead of the Nuba people's struggle for survival against the repression meted out by the Islamic government in Khartoum. His life was dedicated to raising the Nubas' awareness of and pride in their own culture. Before joining the ranks of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) he was a teacher and cultural activist, and served as an elected politician in the regional assembly. He grew up in a milieu in which to be Nuba was to be regarded almost as a slave. As a Muslim from the geographical north, but dedicated to a tolerant, multicultural Sudan, he was the embodiment of the "New Sudan" philosophy of the SPLA leader Colonel John Garang. As a governor, Kuwa always sought consensus and democracy, insisting that sound civil administration, functioning courts, and religious tolerance were the foundation of liberation. Mekki, teacher, soldier, and politician, died on March 31, 2001 in Norwich (*The Independent,* [UK] April 4, 2001).

TUNISIA:

Sihem Bensedrine, Mohammed Bechri, and Omar Mestiri, members of the Committee for Rights in Tunisia, who have been threatened, harassed, and assaulted in their campaign to improve human rights in Tunisia.

UGANDA:

Jimmy Higenyi, who was shot dead on January 12, 2000, by armed police who also injured ten others during a rally organized by the opposition against global terrorism and dictatorship. "'By ordering police to use live ammunition to disperse a peacefully demonstrating crowd, President Museveni has demonstrated he does not support our international struggle against global terrorism and dictatorship,' said Dr. James Rwanyare, chairman of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). Dr. Rwanyare was later arrested with one of his female aides and taken to an unknown destination" (*New African,* February 2002; p.15).

ZAMBIA:

Ronald Penza, former finance minister, who was named in 1994 by *Euromoney,* a World Bank and IMF publication, as the world's second-best finance minister and was gunned down at his home on November 6, 1998. Police claimed he was killed by "armed robbers" but his family accused the government of complicity and cover-up.

ZIMBABWE:

Shepherd Ndungu, a schoolteacher, beaten to death by Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) thugs for leafing through the pages of the *Daily News,* a newspaper critical of the government. The thugs accused him of supporting the opposition, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), marched him to his house and ransacked it. Finding no evidence linking him to the MDC, "they dragged him to a crossroads market where, before startled shoppers, they hammered him with iron bars and lashed him with chains until he died" (*The Economist,* February 23, 2002; p.28).

Acknowledgments

In my travails, various people, both Americans and Africans, and foundations, institutes, and agencies have provided me with support and encouragement. I owe each one of them a huge debt of gratitude. David B. Kennedy, president of the Earhart Foundation in Ann Arbor, Michigan, provided me with funding to support field trips to Africa and research. The Lynne and Harry Bradley Foundation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, also provided funding for the editing of this book. I am also grateful to Richard Gilder of the Gilder Foundation in New York and the Matt Essieh Family Foundation.

During my tenure at American University, I have been fortunate to receive critical reviews and encouragement from Professors Robert Lerman, Alan Isaac, Walter Parks, Robert Feinberg, and Jon Wisman, and excellent secretarial support from Sheila Budnyj, Sharon Childs-Patrick, and many others in the economics department.

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A special gratitude is owed to Emmanuel Odamten, an administrative assistant at The Free Africa Foundation, for his diligence, steadfast support, and research assistance, and Alberta Amoaning-Yankson, who painstakingly made the stylistic and punctuation changes requested by the copyeditor.

In the final analysis, however, the views expressed in this book are my own and any errors or misstatements are my sole responsibility.

George B. N. Ayittey, Ph.D.
Washington, D.C.—November, 2004

PROLOGUE

In the battle of ideas and the campaign to push Africa in a new direction, certain experiences become memorable. They may come as innocent, everyday, run-of-the-mill events but have profound import.

One memorable experience occurred in July, 2003, when I was writing this book. I had been invited to Ghana by Dr. Charles Mensa, executive director of the Institute of Economic Affairs, to participate in a three-day workshop at Elmina. My task was to give a series of lectures on globalization and rent-seeking activities to a group of young African graduates. There were about 30 of them from Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and, of course, Ghana.

These young African graduates were quite energetic and intellectually agile. What made my day at the workshop was a young Sierra Leonian called Mustapha—about 24 years old. He had told his friends that he was going to take part in a workshop in Ghana. Thereupon they asked him who were going to be the speakers. When he mentioned Professor Ayittey, his friends became "ecstatic" (his own words) and demanded "proof" that I would indeed be speaking. They insisted that Mustapha record every word I said.

Upon arriving in Ghana, Mustapha went to town and purchased a small tape recorder but lost it just before he got to the workshop. Thinking that he would be in "big trouble" (his words) if he returned to Sierra Leone without the tape, he rushed back to town and scrounged for hours before finding another tape recorder to purchase. By the time he got back, my lectures were over. Poor guy. To save his neck, he got me to repeat "I am Professor George Ayittey" over and over on the tape recorder. I also gave him copies of my lectures.

I may have saved his neck but he left a deep impression on me. Mustapha comes from a new generation of young African graduates and professionals, who look at African issues and problems from a totally unique perspective. They may be classified as the *cheetah generation*—Africa's new hope. They do not relate to the old colonialist paradigm, the slave trade, nor Africa's post-colonial nationalist leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Kenneth Kaunda, or Julius Nyerere. The cheetahs know that many of their

current leaders are hopelessly corrupt, and that their governments are ridiculously rotten and commit flagitious human rights violations. They brook no nonsense about corruption, inefficiency, ineptitude, incompetence, or buffoonery. They understand and stress transparency, accountability, human rights, and good governance. They do not have the stomach for colonial-era politics. In fact, they were not even born in that era. As such, they do not make excuses for or seek to explain away government failures in terms of colonialism and the slave trade. Unencumbered by the old shibboleths over colonialism, imperialism, and other external adversities, they can analyze issues with remarkable clarity and objectivity.

Their outlook and perspectives are totally different from many African leaders, intellectuals, or elites, whose mental faculties are so foggy and their reasoning or logic so befuddled that they cannot distinguish between right and wrong. They see a Western imperialist plot in every African adversity and would rally to the defense of such African leaders as Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, who fought against colonial rule. Having liberated their countries, such leaders have been transformed into semi-gods and can do no wrong. This is the *hippo generation*—intellectually astigmatized and stuck in their colonialist pedagogical patch. They can see with eagle-eyed clarity the injustices perpetrated by whites against blacks, but they are hopelessly blind to the more heinous injustices perpetrated—right under their very noses—by the Mugabes, the Ghaddafis, the Eyademas, the Obiangs, and others against their own people. The hippos only see oppression and exploitation when perpetrated by Westerners or white people. The cheetahs are not so intellectually astigmatized. Perhaps a mention of a few *cheetahs* besides Mustapha would be appropriate.

The Ghana Cyberspace Group (GCG), led by Yaw Owusu, is a pack of cheetahs, who mobilized young Ghanaian professionals in the diaspora to effect political change in Ghana in 2000. Subsequently, after the defeat of the tyrannical Rawlings regime in Ghana, they transformed themselves into an "investment club" (Ghana Investment Club, GIC) to mobilize funds for investment in Ghana. They were not waiting for the World Bank to do it for them. Nor are they globetrotting, begging for foreign aid.

Paul Sunwabe, a Liberian, styles himself as "Ayittey's number 1 fan." He and Chantelle Abdul, a Nigerian, mobilized a group of young African students at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., holding a series of conferences and seminars to push a different perspective on Africa. They have vowed to work tirelessly to expose the crimes committed by African despots and to block the grant of political asylum to any such despot.

James Shikwati, the executive director of the Inter Regional Economic Network (IREN), is a Kenyan cheetah. I have been much impressed by the

activities of IREN, and participated in a conference James organized in November 2003. Most of the attendees were young—under 30 years old—and represented all walks of Kenyan life. There were journalists (from the *East Standard,* and the *Daily Nation,* among other papers) and also reporters for the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). I told them at the conference that our generation has failed Africa miserably and has left a horrendous trail of chaos, instability, destruction, and vapid corruption across Africa. And, instead of taking full responsibility for this sordid record, our generation is constantly inventing new excuses to defend our failures. For this reason, only Africa's young professionals can take Africa in a new direction. Their minds are not polluted with all this anticolonial rhetoric and garbage. As such, they are capable of clear thinking, can see things with acute clarity, and can understand that the leadership must be held accountable for the mess in Africa.

This new breed of young African professionals I met in Kenya impressed me greatly. They are not into the blame game. Blaming colonialists and imperialists does not cut it with them. These young Africans do not just sit there, expecting Western colonialists to come and fix Africa's problems. Nor do they call upon the government to come and do everything for them. Three cases impressed me greatly. The first was a presentation by Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE)—a group of young university students that are involved in community-based entrepreneurship projects in the Marurui and Kibera slums in Nairobi. They teach petty traders, hawkers, small artisans, market women, and those in the informal and traditional sectors about simple accounting techniques, how to secure microfinance, how to secure a job, and how to improve the productivity of their businesses, among other things, so as to make these self-employed artisans self-sufficient. Among their projects are Jitegemee Project (*"Jitegemee"* is a Swahili word meaning "self reliability") and Msingi Was Biashara (basic money-making). They also teach people in the informal sector how to find skills that the community could use to profitably earn a living. For example, making beads, household decorations, and leather items; identifying markets; marketing goods; and plowing profits back into the business.

The second was a young Kenyan man, Jackson Kyengo, the director of Distance African Tours. Frustrated after years of working in government as a civil service employee, he quit his job and started his own safari touring company. His mini-buses, which were clean and efficiently run, provided transportation for the conference.

The third was Akinyi June Arunga, a female cheetah who blazed a trail across Africa—from Cairo to Cape Town—and produced the BBC documentary *The Devil's Footpath.* Displaying tremendous courage and determination,

she traveled through Egypt, Sudan, Congo, Angola, Namibia, and South Africa, coming face to face with deprivation, the unspeakable horrors of war in the Congo, collapsed infrastructure, and devastated economies. She captured the misery endured by the average African and a remarkable spirit of resilience that allowed Africans to remain undaunted in their daily struggles.

I will relate one last story, which illustrates the difficulties this new generation faces. Strive Masiyiwa is another cheetah; he has been hounded and persecuted in Zimbabwe for refusing to submit to President Mugabe's corrupt rule. In 1993, Masiyiwa challenged Mugabe, demanding his right to start a cell-phone business. For almost five years, the president tried to prevent him from setting up his company, fearing the establishment of any telecommunications network outside official control. But Masiyiwa was not deterred and fought back through the courts, arguing that the behavior of the state telephone monopoly violated the constitutional right to free speech.

In 1995, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Masiyiwa, and he started setting up base stations around Harare, with the help of Swedish telecommunications giant Telefon AB L.M. Ericsson. It was then that Mugabe entered the fray. "Mugabe issued a presidential decree, making it illegal for any private business to build a cellular network. Offenders faced two years in jail" (*The Wall Street Journal,* April 24, 2000; p.A24). Ericsson abandoned the project at one point and Masiyiwa had to hide in the trunk of his car to avoid arrest. But the Supreme Court struck down the decree as unconstitutional and Mugabe backed down.

In June 1998, Econet Wireless Ltd. hit the microwaves, which were by this time also being used by two other cellular operators: one owned by the government and the other owned by a group of ruling-party loyalists, including Mugabe's nephew, Leo Mugabe. Within weeks of coming online, Econet captured 45 percent of the market, a number that by February 2000 had grown to 60 percent, with more than 100,000 subscribers. Econet's market capitalization on the Zimbabwe stock exchange rose 2,000 percent, making it the country's second-largest company. International investors snapped up shares of Econet. But Mugabe's government grew suspicious of growing foreign interest in the company.

The turning point came at a February 15, 2000 referendum, when opposition activists used Masiyiwa's telecommunication network. Zimbabwe's economy was in tatters, wracked by mismanagement and shortages of fuel and commodities. To divert attention from his economic woes and unpopular involvement in Congo's war, Mugabe asked for draconian emergency powers to seize white farmland in a referendum. The opposition retaliated, transmitting a simple digital text around Zimbabwe from cell phone to cell phone, hundreds of thousands of times. All it said was: "No fuel. No forex.

Vote NO.'" Masiyiwa's offense was that it was his company that carried the messages.

According to newspaper reports and government insiders, a furious Mugabe brought the subject up in several cabinet meetings, cursing Masiyiwa and accusing him of being behind the message campaign. Masiyiwa pointed out that he had conducted an investigation, ordering overnight billing and system-diagnostics records, and discovered that the messages originated from subscribers themselves, mostly youngsters, who are the biggest users of the free short-message service. But Mugabe was not convinced. That Econet was the only cell-phone company with no ties to the government only heightened his suspicions.

"Making me responsible for the messages sent on my network is like holding me responsible for the contents of private conversations," said Masiyiwa. "I was told that the president was so angry that he actually said I should be eliminated" (*The Wall Street Journal,* April 24, 2000; p.A24).

Though the government denied the president made such a remark, shortly after the referendum, which the opposition won, the Zimbabwe Africa National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)—dominated parliament passed a bill granting the government sweeping powers to intercept and monitor all telecommunications and internet traffic, as well as the authority to force telecommunications companies to suspend certain services. Many observers and diplomats said the bill was aimed at Econet. Fearing for his life, Masiyiwa fled to South Africa, where a pride of cheetahs is growing strong.

Zulu musician Bonginkosi Thuthukani Dlamini, who calls himself Zola, has become a celebrity in South Africa. Ten years after the dismantling of apartheid, Zola's musical career has rocketed, making him a household name in South Africa. As *Washington Post* correspondent Lynne Duke described:

> His music is *kwaito,* the hard-pumping South African style that is the soundtrack of the harsh lives and pastel dreams of a black township generation that came to adulthood after apartheid's fall. In the black township slang called *isicamtho,* kwaito (pronounced KWAY-toe) means "cool, wicked talk," though some say it takes its name from an old township gang, the AmaKwaitos. It's akin to rap, but its rhythms and languages are distinctly African, along with the music they call Zulu hip-hop, which is filling the airwaves here. (*The Washington Post,* April 14, 2004; p.C1)

Zola grew up in an impoverished place down in Soweto, one of the nation's largest black townships, which is still mired in squalor and poverty. Though

the post-apartheid government has brought some telephone service and electricity to the township, other basic services are lacking. He grew up among the humble, the powerless, and the frustrated. Now, he says he is of those young-generation people who need to be heard. Most of South Africa's black heroes hail from the old South Africa—from the struggle against white minority rule in the 1970s and 1980s. But Zola did not come from that era. Born a year after the 1976 police massacres of the bloody Soweto uprising, he appreciates and respects what the black heroes struggled for. But as he sees it, the younger generation is striving to reach far beyond the struggle of their parents.

> "We're still connected with that apartheid umbilical cord thing. We don't look at the old generation—our moms and dads—as ignorant but as a deprived nation. They [apartheid's leaders] did not give them [the old generation] education or gave them wrong education. And we have to go back to them and explain the things we learn of the world. We live in a global village, from which they were excluded and we need to tell them that this is how life is now." (*The Washington Post,* April 14, 2004; p.C1)

Zola is not yet ready to cut the umbilical cord completely but his music conveys a certain kind of message: Life is what you make of it yourself, and people, millions of people, are listening.

This is the basic thrust of *Africa Unchained:* unleashing the entrepreneurial talents and creative energies of the real African people—the peasants, affectionately called the Atingas in Ghana because of their loyalty, dependability, and trustworthiness. The Atingas do not sit in some government office, dressed in "zoot and tai," pushing pen and pencil on paper. They are found in the informal and traditional sectors, weaving mats and making *garri.* The old paradigm, whereby the West took center stage in every African problem, is now obsolete. Kaput. But many African leaders, scholars, and intellectuals in the West still cling to it. My most vociferous critics come from this group, the *hippo generation.* Some have accused me of "bashing Africa," of "washing Africa's dirty linen in public," and called me such names as "Uncle Tom," "a sell-out," and "a traitor." If only they would make a distinction between African *leaders* and the African *people.* The leaders are the problem, not the people. When I challenged them to name just 10 good postcolonial African leaders—out of 198—since 1960, they could not come up with 10 names! When one accused me of being an "imperialist lackey" because I do not criticize the West, I wrote this response and posted it on many African Internet discussion forums, including Mwananchi (mwananchi@yahoo.com) and Naijanet (naijanet@e-groups.com) on August 13, 2003:

As an African, I know from historical experience that the West has committed atrocities and exploited my people. The West does not give a hoot about us (Africans) and the West is not alone. The Arabs don't give a damn about Africans; neither do the French, the British, the Russians, Japanese, or Koreans. Certainly, the Chinese don't come to Africa because they love black people. Every foreigner or entity who visits Africa comes to pursue *their* interests, not ours (Africans).

As an African, I also have a *leader* who is supposed to pursue our interest. But he pursues only his own selfish interests and does not give a damn about me. He has oppressed me, brutalized me, beaten me, and stolen my money to accumulate a huge personal fortune in Swiss banks. After only four and a half years in power, the late General Sani Abacha ("The Butcher of Abuja") amassed a personal fortune worth more than $5 billion. General Ibrahim Babangida did better, accumulating more than $7 billion. He walks freely, thumbing his nose at the people. More than $400 billion in oil revenue has flowed into Nigerian government coffers since 1970. Nobody knows where that oil money is. Explain to me why Nigeria, an oil-producing country, has gasoline shortages and must import refined fuel.

I also have a *politician* who is supposed to represent me. After I voted for him, his first act was to grant himself and fellow legislators hefty salary increases and allowances to furnish their offices and purchase cars. Remember Senator Chuba Okadigbo?

"As Senate President, he controlled 24 official vehicles but ordered 8 more at a cost of $290,000. He was also found to have spent $225,000 on garden furniture for his government house, $340,000 on furniture for the house itself ($120,000 over the authorized budget); bought without authority a massive electricity generator whose price he had inflated to $135,000; and accepted a secret payment of $208,000 from public funds, whose purpose included the purchase of Christmas gifts" (*New African,* Sept 2000; p.9).

I also know that as an African, we have very fine intellectuals and professionals but many of them act like intellectual prostitutes, selling off their conscience and integrity to serve the dictates of barbarous military regimes. In fact, according to Colonel Yohanna A. Madaki, when General Gowon drew up plans to return Nigeria to civil rule in 1970, "academicians began to present well researched papers pointing to the fact that military rule was the better preferred since the civilians had not learned any lessons sufficient enough to be entrusted with the governance of the country" (*Post Express,* Nov 12, 1998; p.5).

Nigeria's Senator Arthur Nzeribe once declared that General Babangida was good enough to rule Nigeria. When pressed, he confessed: "I was promised prime ministerial appointment. There is no living politician as hungry for power as I was who would not be seduced in the manner I was to invest in the ABN, with the possibility and promise of being Executive Prime Minister to a military president" (*The Guardian,* Nov 13, 1998; p.3).

Now, let me ask a practical, not academic question: If I have a very sharp cutlass (machete) whom should I go after?

George B. N. Ayittey,
Washington, D.C.

Now, some hippos want to borrow "Ayittey's cutlass." The cheetahs already have theirs.