UMAR BIN ABDUL’AZIZ’S LEGACY OF ADMINISTRATION: LESSONS TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This write-up is an attempt to study the brief his history of the fifth caliph Umar bin Abdul’Aziz of the Ummayyat dynasty, his achievement and the factors that were responsible for his success, with a view of drawing some lessons for the newly sworn in administration of General Muhammadu Buhari Rtd to lean from, so that the this new administration will live up to the expectations of the masses who confidently elected them. Moreover, it has been leant that the two personalities shared some common qualities of public recognition and trustworthiness. Apart from that they had a previous administrative skills; Umar was a governor of Medina before he become the caliph, Muhammadu Buhari is a retired Army general who had a lot of administrative experiences that includes being the Nigerian head of the State, and before that he was ance a petroleum minister, NNPC chairman, GOC, PTF chairman and the rest. However, they both have the knowledge needed for the position. All these making it to some extent easy for the new administration of Muhammadu Buhari to copy from the great leader Umar bin Abdul’Aziz. The write-up finally assert that maintenance of the good qualities he is well known of is the main factor for the success.

Introduction
There is no doubt leadership has been given a tremendous place and a key positioning in Islam, Qur’an, Sunnah and the consensus of Ulama’u (Muslim scholars) have made it apparent about the necessity of leadership among the Muslim community. Thus, Allah in the Glorious Qur’an attached obedience to Him and His Prophet SAW with that of the leaders of the community in one verse: Allah the Almighty says: “O you who believe! Obey Allah and the messenger (Muhammad SAW) and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Prophet SAW with that of the leaders of the community in one verse: Allah the Almighty says: “O you who believe! Obey Allah and the messenger (Muhammad SAW) and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Prophet SAW, if you believe in Allah and in the last day. That is better and more suitable for final determination. Q: 4:59. The above verse had made it so clear about the importance of leadership in Islam; associating the obedience to Allah Himself with the obedience to leaders. However, a number of traditions of the Prophet SAW have equally indicate the vitality of leadership and that it is the bedrock for sustaining of the setup of a nation, following are few examples of such traditions: In a narration by Imam Ibn Majah and others, the Prophet SAW says: “I urge you to fear Allah and to listen and obey, even if (your leader) is an Abyssinian slave”. (Ibn Majah p15). Moreover, Islam does not allow in anyway a protest against constituted authorities so long as they do not call their
subjects to an act of disobedient to the Almighty Allah. Upon this, Imam al-Bukhari in his famous collection narrated that the Prophet SAW says: “Anybody that experiences something unwanted from his leader, should bear with the condition because nobody will separate himself from the majority of the Muslim *Umma* unless he dies like the dead of *Jahiliyya* (days of ignorant) (al-Bukhari, Vol 9, 62). However, it is reported from Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri that the Prophet Muhammad SAW says: “If three people embarked on a journey, the must appoint one of them who will preside over their affairs as a leader” (Ahmad, Vol 8, 100). The place of leadership in Islam, is a very important one which must not be taken for granted in any way.

An Overview on The Caliphateship After the Prophet Saw to the Ummayyat Dynasty

Allah the Almighty sent the Prophet Muhammad SAW during a period known as the *Jahiliyya* Period or days of ignorant, the period was much characterized by anarchy, oppression and a general social disorder, within his twenty three years of mission as a Prophet and the Messenger of Allah, he has achieved a lot in terms of establishing good governance, unity and social development which was not witnessed for a long period of time. Moreover, this phenomenon was past to the following generation which was the generation of his pious companions. The era of the companions was known as the guided caliphate which started with the leadership of Abubakar al-Siddiq followed by Umar bin al-Khattab who first carried the title of *Amir al-Mu’minin* the leader of the faithful, it was followed by that of Uthman bin Affan then Aliyu bin Abi Dalab who is a cousin brother to the Prophet SAW. These four leaders are the four guided caliphs; their era was much similar to that of the Prophet terms of good governance, social welfare, provision of human right and equal treatment to all. Their era was also characterized by wide expansion of the territories of Islam to other neighboring parts of the world like Asia, Africa, Spain and other places. Moreover, the last part of the caliphate had experienced a lot of political crisis emanating from the killing of the third caliph Uthman bin Affan, that crisis involved Aliyu bin Abi Dalib and Mu’awiya bin Abi Sufyan the first leader of the Ummayyat dynasty. (Sa’eed, 351-380)

The Ummayyat Dynasty from 661 – 750 AD.

A point worthy of mentioning here is that the crisis that engulfed the last part of the previous caliphate had finally consumed the life the fourth caliph Aliyu bin Abi Dalib, thereafter his son la-Hasan bin Ali step down for Mu’awiya bin Abi Sufyan to take over as the caliph. This marked the official beginning of the Umayyat dynasty, thus it could be clearly said that Mu’awiya was the first ruler if you like of this great empire of the faithfully followers of the companions of the Prophet SAW. ([www.saylor.org/courses/hist101/#9.2](http://www.saylor.org/courses/hist101/#9.2))

As earlier mentioned, the last potion of the guided caliphate was dominated by unwanted sociopolitical instability the situation continued and even got worst during the beginning of the Ummayyat rule as a lot conflicts and killings continued militating against recording a reasonable developmental activities more especially the mission of expansion of the Islamic empire throughout the reign of Mu’awiya and his son Yazid but when
Abdulmalik bin Marwan came in, a lot of positive changes were recorded, the empire was expanded and consolidated to a certain reasonable extent. The development continued until the reign of Sulaiman bin Abdulmalik then it started getting harder to the empire to continue the expansion. (ibid)

Although Sulaiman was a good leader he did his own best in running the affairs of the Muslims as a caliph but historical accounts hinted that Sulaiman was somebody who loved luxury, he therefore lived a luxury life, though, it is however established that his opponent more particularly the shi’ite had played a vital role in painting his personality black though not his administration. (Muhammad, Vol 1, 90. Sulaiman was succeeded by his cousin Umar bin Abudul’Aziz in the year 717 AD.

Umar Bin Abdul’aziz, A Brief Biography
He is Umar bin Abdul’Aziz bin Marwan bin al-Hakam bin Abi al-As bin Umayya bin Abdushamsin bin Manaf, he is from the Quraish and from the clan of banu Umayyat. Hia father Abdul’Aziz bin Marwan was among the pious people of Banu Ummayyat, he was once in charge of Egypt for more than twenty years. (ibid). According to some historical account, Umar was born in the 61 AH in Medina and he grown up there, and got a proper upbringing under his father and later study from the great scholars of Medina. However in the 87 AH, Umar bin Abdul’aziz was appointed the governor of Medina by caliph Walid bin Abdulmalik, his power was later in the year 91 expanded to cover the area of Ta’if; Umar sat down some three condition for accepting the appointment as the governor of Medina, those conditions were as follows: application of full justice to the people he was going to rule, he would be allowed by the caliph to perform Hajj in the following year and finally that he would be giving some certain gift to his people in Medina. The then caliph conceded to his conditions and approved his request, and Umar accepted the offer while people become so happy with his administration. Upon his acceptance of the duty he first constituted his administrative parliament known as Majlis al-Shura which was made up of ten most senior Medinan jurists or Fuqahah like Urwa bin Zubbair, Ubaidullah bin Abdullahi bin Utbah, Abubakar bin Abdurrahman bin al-Harith bin Hishm and the rest of them; he used them as advisers and coworkers at the same time, the help him in decision making and gathering useful information for the use of his administration. (ibid).

Umar Bin Abdul’aziz As A Caliph
One of the meritorious decisions taken by Sulaiman bin Abdulmalik was that he named Umar bin Abdul’Aziz to be his successor. Sulaiman bin Abdul’Aziz passed away in the 99AH his funeral prayer was led by Umar bin Abdul’Aziz. Immediately after his death, people paid their allegiance to his successors Umar as he proposed during his illness. After the allegiance, Umar made the following public address; O! my people I have been tempted with this leadership without being interested to it or any previous consultation to me, I therefore announce to you that I have drop it so you could appoint any other person, there and then people unanimously rejected that from him and insisted that he must be their leader. When it became apparent to him that he has no way for dodging that
responsibility, he delivered the following sermon; “Listen, there will be no Prophet after your Prophet SAW and there will be no another Book apart from the Qur’an, anything Allah declared unlawful, it continues to be unlawful till the last day, I’m not a judge but my duty is only to implement the laws, I’m not going to innovate laws but to follow the way of the Prophet SAW, nobody should be obeyed while he disobeys Allah, I’m not better than any of you only that Allah has chosen me to man your affairs. For anybody who wants to be in my company, must observe the following manners: he should be representing people who have no meant of reaching me by forwarding their complains to me, he should always be advising me on doing the right things, he should not blackmail anybody to my present and he should not interfere with things that are not his own business. I implore you the fear Allah because the fear of Allah is solution to everything, work for the hereafter for if you work for the hereafter, Allah will take care of your present affairs, correct your private (hidden) deeds, Allah will help you correct your public deeds, be in a frequent remembrance of death, and be well prepared for it for cuts luxuries. However, this nation did not disagree on their Lord or their Prophet or their Book but they only disagreed Dirham and Dinar (Money). I swear by Allah that I will not give anybody anything he does not deserve it and nobody will be denied his own entitlement. O! my people anybody that obeys Allah, must be obeys and anybody who disobey Allah must not be obeyed, so you should obey me as I obey Allah but if I disobey Allah you owe me no obedience. (ibid)

This is the inaugural speech delivered by Umar bin Abdul’Aziz which gave a blueprint of his policy of administration. However it could be easily extracted from the above sermon that Umar bin Abdul’Aziz is someone very humble, trustworthy, he loves justice and transparency, he hate corruption and corrupt people, he is a committed person to the will of his creator, he there call his subject to the obedience of Allah not only that but he also encouraged them to stay by his side only when he stays by Allah’s side.

Umar was extremely pious and averse to worldly luxuries. He preferred simplicity to extravagance, he deposited all assets and wealth meant for the ruling caliph into the Bait al-Mal (public treasury). He even abandon the royal palace and preferred to live in a modest house. He wore rough clothes instead if riyal robes and often went unrecognized in public like his great grandfather caliph Umar bin al-Khattab.

After his appointment as caliph, he discarded all the pompous appendages of princely life-servants, slaves, maids, horses, palaces, golden robes and real estates and returned them to Bait al-Mal. Not only that but he also asked his wife Fatima to return all the jewelries she had received from her father caliph Abdulmalik. The faithful wife complied with him and deposited them to the public treasury. Umar auctioned his articles of luxury and spent the money on charitable purposes. Moreover, Umar had never built a house of his own.

Once his wife found him weeping after prayers, she asked him what was happened, he replied “I have been made the ruler over Muslims and I was thinking of the poor who are starving, and the sick who are destitute unclad who are distress and oppressed that are stricken and the stranger that is in prison, and the venerable elder, and him that hath a large family and small means and the like of them in countries of the earth and the
distance provinces, I felt that my Lord would ask me about them on the day of resurrection, and I feared that no defense would avail me and wept.” Umar followed the example of the Prophet SAW, he sent out emissaries to China and Tibet inviting their rulers to embrace Islam. It was during his time that Islam took root and was accepted by a large segment of the population of Persia and Egypt. When the officials complained that because of conversion, the Jizya revenue of the State had experienced a steep decline, Umar wrote back saying that “Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent as a Prophet to invite people to Islam and not as a tax collector.” He abolished home tax, marriage tax, stamp tax and many other taxes as well. When many of his agents wrote that his fiscal reforms in favor of new converts would deplete the treasury, he replied: “glad would I be by Allah, to see everybody become Muslim so that you and I would have to till the soil with our own hands to earn a living.” (http://www.nairaland.com/1072849/umar-ii-template-how-islamic)

Umar bin Abdul’Aziz was able to carry out his leadership responsibility in a successful way and one of the factors that helped him in doing so was that he had good advisers who included his own sons and wife. It is narrated that immediately after taking allegiance, in the following day as Umar wanted to had a siesta his son asked not do so without returning properties confiscated by the past authorities to their rightful owners, he told the son that he had a sleepless night he therefore not some rest and would do that after Zuhr prayer, then son asked if he was sure to live till the time of the Zuhr prayer. Hearing that, Umar called his son to come closer to him and told him to his ears that he thanked God who gave a son that helps him in doing good things. There and then Umar went to the mosque and people were surmount to present all complains for consideration. Thus Umar returned everything that was taken from the owner without lawful justification. Umar faced some enemies both internal and external mostly from the people who used to benefit from the past oppressions, but Umar did not show any sign of giving or abandoning his policies that transform the whole Umuyyat Dynasty and the Islamic world in general.(Husain, Vol. 3, 309)

Above has clearly indicated the personality, ideology and believes of Umar bin Abdul’Aziz as caliph. To sum up the idea here it could seen that there some main factors that helped caliph Umar in recording the great success he had recording which the pages of the history will never forget, thses include the following:

a. Piety; Umar is a pious man to the extreme end, many historians called him the second Umar, which means he was second to Umar bin al-Khattab. Many other historians and Muslim scholars too considered him as the fifth caliph.

b. Association with good people; Umar throughout his carrier as a governor of Medina and the caliph, he surrounded himself with good people who were well recognized among the Umma and knowledgeable enough, these of people were Umar’s advisers and parliamentary members known as shura body.

c. Fear of Allah; Umar had demonstrated a high level of taqwa fear of Allah, this can be seen theoretically through his first speech as caliph and in practical during the running of his administration; deserted all the luxuries and were used to before becoming the caliph.
d. Compassion; caliph Umar is so compassionate, right from the time when was appointed governor of Medina, if we could remember one the condition he gave people who will be attending his palace was that they should be taking complains from the helpless to him.

e. His verse knowledge; Umar has proved to be a knowledgeable person. Sufyan al-Thauri said: “Scholars in present of Umar bin Abdul’Aziz sre like students. (ibid)

His Demise
Umar bin Abdul’Aziz passed away on Friday the six of Rajab which is the eight month of the Islamic calendar in the year 101 AH, when he was forty one old. Umar’s reign lasted for two years or thirty month as according to some historical accounts. (Hibban, Vol. 2, 566)

On Overview Of The Resent Naigerian Leadership To The May 2015 Transition
The former president Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan from south-south Neger Dela was sworn in as the elected president of the federal republic of Nigeria on the 29, May, 2011 in a controversial election process which witnessed a serious post election violence that claimed a lot of lives of the innocent citizens of the country and properties worth millions of Naira. Jonathan contested the election against his prominent opponent General Muhammad Buhari Rtd. If fact the story is too about the administration, there are so many case of aversive corruption, unemployment, insecurity violation of human right, embezzlement of public fun, extrajudicial killing and the general misconduct. Nigeria is no doubt a reach Nation and even one of the largest oil producing countries which it citizens should not be suffering too much from earning living, social structures, education, health and the rest of them. But the true fact is that Nigerians life on a very low income, the economy is so deteriorated. The worse of the situation is that Nigerians are in many cases leaving in internally displaced refugee camps a condition caused by insecurity in the country. The US had the following account about Nigeria:

There is massive widespread and pervasive corruption at all levels of the Nigerian government and the security forces. Just as the Goodluck Jonathan administration is facing mounting security at home over an illegal payment of N155 billion to cronies and associate of government officials on a presidential order, the United State of America has delivered a stringent critique of the government’s anti-graft effort. ...The provides criminal penalties for official corruption; however, the government did not implement the law effectively, officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. The report submitted by secretary of States, Hilary Cliton, to the U.S congress said: “Massive widespread and pervasive corruption affected all levels of government and the security forces. It continued. The report is an X-ray of human right abuses ranging from extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and
detention, free press abuses to cases of graft worldwide. (http://www.gusmania.com/talk/topic,111797.0.html) retrieved: 30/May/2015.

The above report also indicates that the government under Jonathan was characterized by promoting corruption. Moreover, other cases like pardoning highly corrupt politicians is recorded in that administration but some of them were even allowed to occupy some celebrated positions in his government.

General elections were conducted on the 28/March/2015 were as usual, General Muhammad Buhari Rtd. Contested the election against the incumbent president Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. Indications right from the campaign activities show Buhari’s victory over Jonathan and that was realized as Professor Attahiru Jega the chairman of the independent national election commission announced Muhammad Buhari the winner of the general election. This is in fact accepted by both local and international communities as being the most credible election ever conducted in Nigeria since the country returned to democratic rule back to the year 1999.

It is generally observed that many people across the faiths, ethnics and geopolitical zones alike believed that it is only Muhammad Buhari that has the necessary qualities of leading the country to the promise land, both Christians and Muslims were unanimously troop after him if not very of them, not only that but it has went to the extent that masses contribute moneys from the very little they earned in serious hardship to the campaign of General Muhammadu Buhari Rtd. This clearly shows how high expectations are the masses carrying with the newly elected president. It however indicates how the masses trust him and believe that he will take Nigeria to the expected level of integrity not only in Africa but to the international community too.

**Who Is Muhammadu Buhari**

He is a native of katsina State, born in 1942. Buhari was the 7th head of State of Nigeria ((1983-1985). His initial military training was at the Nigerian military training school and military college, Kadauna. This was furthered at the officers’ cadet school (U.K), Army mechanical transport school (U.K), Defense services staff college (India) and United States Army war college. His previous work experience includes: Governor (north-eastern Nigeria, 1975), federal commissioner for petroleum resources (1976-1978), chairman NNPC (1978), chairman of the petroleum trust fund (PTF, 1995-1999). http://www.dailymail.com.ng.who-is-general-muhammadu-buhari/ Retrieved: the 30, May, 2015.

During his two years administration as a military head of State, Buhari had implemented a number of measures and plants that include the war against indiscipline and corruption, other measures were taken toward improving the nation state of economy. Though some people considered some of his measures as difficult and posting hardship on the citizens of the country, but many expert believe that these measures will lead the country to positive developments. However, in the year 1995, he was appointed chairman of the PTF by the Sani Abacha administration. Moreover, there was a general perception that he handled this oil revenue fund with transparency and efficiency.
However, on the global front, Buhari is reported to be well respected. It is on the history that he and Nelson Mandela were the only private African individuals invited by the white house to Barrack Obama’s inauguration ceremony. (Ibid).

Some Areas Of Basic Similarities Between General Muhammedu Buhari And Umar Bin Abdul’aziz
I will like begin this item by noting Umar bin Abdul’Aziz is not a companion but he belongs to the generation of the followers (al-Tabi’un). Some of areas of similarities between the two include the following:
a. They both enjoy high level of public recognition and confident
b. two of them had enough previous experience on administration which is one of main requirement for a successful administration.
c. In the areas of trustworthiness, the two were tested
d. they are known for their compassionate to the masses
e. anyone of them had inherited some administrative problems of different degrees.

Lessons
As for caliph Umar bin Abdul’Aziz, he and his administration are now a history and history is meant for learning lessons from. Therefore, the present government of General Muhammadu Buhari Rtd., has a big lesson to learn from the policies and the administration of Umar. This administration should learn that maintenance of the mentioned qualities of Umar during his administration and practicing to the expectation of the people was the secret behind his success. Thus, this administration should stick to its promises of eradicating corruption, improving security standard, providing social amenities and other welfare packages.

Conclusion
Leadership is bedrock of the continuity of any society. Islam has given it necessary recognition in terms of making it to be compulsory and defining all what is needed to establish a good leadership and to maintain it. Justice, provision of security of lives and property, protection of human right and the provision of basic social amenities are part of the main responsibilities of a leader. In Nigeria, there is a new transition thus a new government. This paper has a believed that no matter how things went wrong there will be still strong hopes for correcting and improving the situation. Therefore, the leadership of caliph Umar bin Abdul’Aziz is taken as an example and also to serve as lessons for the new administration of Nigeria to copy from in order to attain needed success.

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