

## War On Corruption: Is Obasanjo For Real?

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On Dec. 5th, 2005, the European Union (EU) denied giving Pres. Obasanjo a clean bill of health concerning his anti-corruption credentials. This has dented the saintly image the President has cultivated in the past few years.

Elendureports.com can now reveal, according to documents in our possession, that on August 18, 1973, Brigadier Olusegun Obasanjo, the then Commandant of Nigerian Army Corps of Engineers, registered Obasanjo Farms, Ltd. On October 1979, Gen. Obasanjo retired from the Nigerian Army after ruling the country for three years, following the assassination of Gen. Murtala Mohammed. By 1979, Obasanjo Farms, Ltd. started commercial operations with fifty million naira (N50,000,000.00). Given the exchange rate in 1979, the Obasanjo Farms, Ltd. commenced operations with more than fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000.00).

Until 1979, Olusegun Obasanjo had spent his entire professional life in the Nigerian military. The natural question is how did this man who is reputed to have been an honest soldier float a multi-million dollar company without partners? Who bankrolled Obasanjo Farms, Ltd.? What collateral was provided for loans, if financing was raised through a bank?

Under duress from the public, following allegations of corruption against Pres. Obasanjo, his spokesman, Femi Fani-Kayode, declared that Obasanjo Farms, Limited, headquartered at the Agbeloba House on Quarry Road, Ibara Abeokuta, Ogun State generates a monthly income of about thirty million Naira (N30,000,000.00)

Obasanjo Farms Ltd. is a success story. Yet, it is not an ordinary success story in the sense that it does not follow the normal patterns of rags to riches; the staple from which typical success stories are made. Elendureports.com was reliably informed that Gen. Obasanjo's pet project as Head of State, "Operation Feed the Nation," was set up as a front to divert resources for the funding of Obasanjo Farms, Ltd. Obasanjo Farms, Ltd., is listed as being engaged in poultry and pig farming, which employs about 3,000 people.

The allegation is that money, heavy-duty machinery, and other materials meant for Operation Feed the Nation were diverted to Obasanjo Farms, Ltd. right from its inception. Obasanjo Farms, Ltd. has a huge abattoir at the back of General Hospital in Otta, Ogun State.

In direct contravention to the Nigerian Constitution, Pres. Olusegun Obasanjo still retains the title of Chairman, Obasanjo Farms, Ltd. This allegation is supported by documents in the possession of Elendureports.com. Other members of the top executive of Obasanjo Farms, Ltd. are Elder Daniel W. Atsu, who is the Managing Director, and Bolarinwa Atilade, who is the Financial Controller. WEMA Bank is the company's major account provider, while it maintains accounts in several other local banks.

Ironically, some elected Nigerian public officials have been dragged before the Code of Conduct Tribunal for operating their businesses while in public service. Recently, the President also warned civil servants to desist from engaging in private businesses.

Soon after the Abacha junta imprisoned Obasanjo on trumped up coup charges, Obasanjo Farms, with operational bases in Owiwi, Igboora, Lanlate and Ibadan, started experiencing a down-turn in fortunes. There is speculation that the Abacha regime discouraged people from patronizing the farm. However, after Obasanjo was released from prison and his subsequent drafting to run for president, the farm saw a resurgence of income. Since 1999, Obasanjo Farms, Ltd. has acquired more assets. For example, the President showed off a huge teak farm to one of his close friends some years ago.

Elendureports.com was authoritatively informed that Obasanjo deposited checks worth millions of Naira meant for his Presidential campaign into various company accounts. There are claims that he did not make this money available to his campaign. As at the time of filing this story no audit of his 1999 campaign organization account has been conducted. A source very close to Pres. Obasanjo said, "Money just flowed in and Baba was just using it as he wanted."

Just recently the former Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Audu Ogbah, revealed that Pres. Olusegun Obasanjo and his bosom friend, Anthony Anenih, have yet to account for forty billion naira (N40 billion) raised for his 1999 Presidential campaign. Ogbah insisted that the President, through his Legacy Campaign headquarters, was responsible for appropriating the campaign funds.

Also, Lagos lawyer, Gani Fawehinmi, in recent Court submissions regarding the seven billion naira raised for the Obasanjo Presidential Library, presented evidence linking the President to Bells University and Bells Educational

Services, a multi-million dollar institution, wholly owned by Obasanjo Holdings, Ltd.

Contrary to popular belief, President Olusegun Obasanjo has yet to publicly declare his assets. In addition, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has yet to publish its findings regarding allegations of corruption made against the President by Abia State Governor, Orji Uzor Kalu. While Nigerians may disagree on almost everything else, it is reasonable to expect that the unanswered question on the minds of the citizenry is: Is the President's anti-corruption war for real or a charade designed to attack opponents, deceive Nigerians and the international community?

The Joint Development Zone (JDZ) is currently the proverbial money tree for the President. The JDZ is a joint venture owned by Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe. This venture is supposed to manage the large deposits of oil in the Gulf of Guinea. The company managing the mapping of the JDZ is PGS, a company whose Nigerian subsidiary is managed by the father-in-law of Obasanjo's second son. Obasanjo's cronies, Emeka Offor and Wahab Folawiyo, also have business interests in the region.

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