

GHANA, ARE WE UNDER ATTACK?

By Kwesi Yankah



Sunday, 1st September, I skipped my Methodist Church and dashed to Accra Airport circle, startled by a social media newsbreak that was more serious than an election prophecy. The breaking news was that our Big Six monument had been dismantled at dawn in the full glare of pedestrians. Was this fake news, or rather a toy monument on a children's playground? Surprisingly, there was in the social media a video recording of the unfolding drama.

I dashed towards the scene not quite sure my hair was well combed. Around the Circle a few cars had parked, their owners equally guilty of skipping Sunday service. I later realized most of the cars waiting at the Shell station still had their

engines running. Walking closer, I could confirm that Ghana's famous Big Six Statue, representing our foremost statesmen that berthed our Independence, had been taken apart. Kwame Nkrumah, J. B. Danquah, Edward Akuffo Addo, Emmanuel Obetsebi Lamptey, Ako Adjei, William Ofori Atta were gone, erased from the monument.

The Bronze monument had been reduced to a rubble: smashed, shattered, and pulverized around the marble pedestal. The piled up debris had an odd item beneath: a pair of Charlie wotey slippers charitably left by the assailant to assist investigators. From a distance I could well conclude that our trespasser was in no hurry to finish the job and take to his heels. He had ample time to dismantle the sculpture at his own pace, and may have posed as a certified artisan on state service: a situation where a bystander could even have congratulated him, 'Ayikoo,' for a Sunday morning sacrifice to perform a national duty. The original sculptor of the monument, George Atobra did not live to see the ruins. He also sculpted the Oburumankoma masterpiece at Mankessim Circle, and had greatly helped to recount our great history before bowing out.

But why worry about a demolished sculpture that can be easily replaced in a few weeks? The Big Six monument is not simply another piece of art work. They occupy the spiritual foundations of a nation state, and their attack is a symbolic assault on our sovereignty, our national heritage. The Big Six of late have been in the news every Founders' Day, 4th August, sparking an argument each year, that a Founders' Day with multiple actors is needless, and that Ghana has simply one Founder who embodies the nationalist spirit of the Big Six. It is Kwame Nkrumah. Was the dawn assault partly a contribution to the debate? Alternatively, was the demolition a September vote ahead of December 7?

It is indeed an understatement to say *kurom aye hye* towards December Elections: the ominous signals, and war drums by political parties. The demolition of the Big Six as a virtual attack on our foundations, deepens the agony. The 9-11 terrorist assault on the Twin Towers of New York was a symbolic act meant to destabilize America as an economic power. The Big Six in our case occupy the very foundations of our nationhood; when they are in flames, we cannot stand and stare.

Current events deepen our worry: unknown to many, we are a nation under attack. When terrorism in our neighborhood is pointed at, all eyes turn to Burkina Faso: 'monitor our borders with Burkina, check the invading terrorists, and get worried when they sneak in to use our health facilities.' As eyes are trained on our borders, terrorists from within grin from ear to ear, and strike where it hurts most. They poison our river beds; strike at our golden pod weakening our economic base. Villages wobble on Galamsey tunnels; illicit mining threatens to block highways; children's future is at stake. There is cause for alarm, yet our parliament including ministers argue about which party has caused greater or lesser damage with Galamsey, preparing to applaud lesser offenders. And they argue 'who is qualified to use sirens and dispatch riders to harass sweating pedestrians.'

The enemy mocks from within. Being a home boy, he knows why we can only look on: 'Our culture considers it bad manners to talk while you eat.' Absent-minded, we are busily grazing while the country is under siege.

The historic assault on our Big Six is an open slap in our face; Galamsey is a terrorist invasion from within, and we have no business folding our arms, or planning to protect our heritage after elections.

We may win power on 7th December only to realize there is no country to govern, and nothing left to plunder.

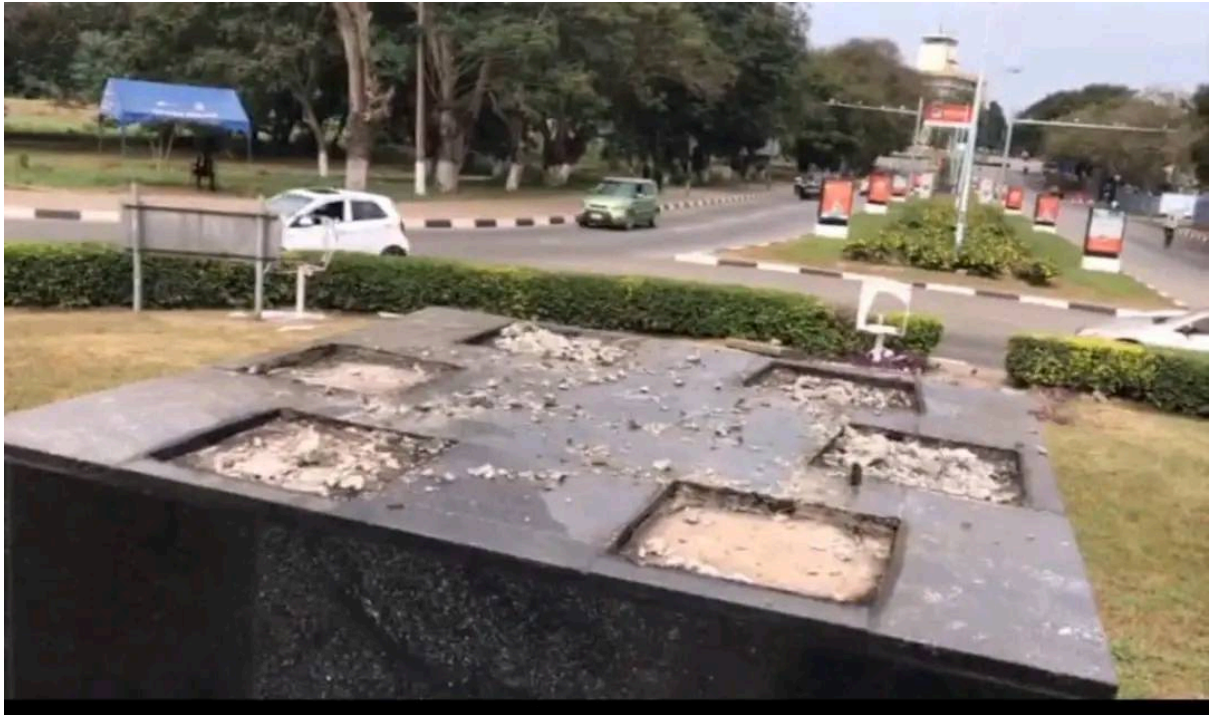
kwyankah@yahoo.com



Charlie Wotey Slippers among the Rubble



Empty Pedestal of the Monument



Scars of the Big Six



The Big Six Circle, without its Celebrities



The Full Monument before the Dawn Raid



A Shadowy Figure on the Pedestal



Suspect under Arrest



Internal Terrorism