Seldom in the history of man were more profound words written or spoken.

Just as they propelled the new continent of America two and a half centuries ago into the most powerful and freest nation in the world, so shall the profound words in the book, WE THE PEOPLE, propel Nigeria – and, indeed all of Africa -- into a new, vibrant and incomparable force for good. The book, WE THE PEOPLE, is the kind of document that will resonate throughout history—not unlike the American Declaration of Independence, or The Federalist Papers.

As a career diplomat I am very much a latter-day “Africa hand,” starting in 1983 when I accepted an assignment in Lagos – then the capital of Nigeria – as Deputy Consul General and Regional Consular Officer for a dozen West African countries. That was the beginning of my love affair with Nigeria – and Africa. “A Man Called Peter”

It also led me to my friendship with Peter U. Nwangwu, who is inarguably the most remarkable man I have met in more than a half century of travel in all parts of the world, in my 77 years of existence on planet earth.

This man called Peter, or “Prof” by his students, chose to come to my alma mater, the University of Nebraska in January 1972 because of the utter corruption and scourge of examination malpractices (expo) in the flawed educational system in Nigeria. Through a connection of “old boys” he was recommended to me by a dear, retired colleague Herman Bailey, with whom I served at the U.S embassy in Lagos, and whose brilliant and courageous daughter Juanita became one of my beloved late daughter’s best friends while on school holidays in Nigeria.

As detailed elsewhere in this book, Professor Peter U. Nwangwu has unmatched academic and professional credentials. At the University of Nebraska, he completed a bachelor’s, master’s, and two doctorates with unparalleled speed. He set two records at the University of Nebraska in over 100 years’ history of the university: he was the first student to earn a bachelor’s degree in Chemistry on honor roll only after two years of university education, after secondary school; he was also the first student in the history of the University allowed to work on two terminal doctorate degrees, the Pharm.D., and Ph.D., simultaneously, which he completed in record time. To celebrate and honor his international stature and achievements, he was decorated in 2008 with the prestigious, “Outstanding International Alumnus of the University of Nebraska”. Only one person in the world is selected for this award to celebrate their global stature and international contributions. Professor Nwangwu was the second person to receive the award since it was established at the University of Nebraska. He might have been chosen as President of the four-campus University of Nebraska system had I not unwisely arranged well-placed newspaper articles bruiting Peter’s candidacy, with the result that my friend Peter -- and the former Governor of Nebraska whose candidacy also became

Building a new democracy. Corruption free, bottom to top
public -- were both excluded from the interview round of the confidential global executive search process that is as inviolable as selecting a pope.

“Cleaning Corruption from Bottom to Top”

When leaving Lagos in 2014, after a brief visit to Nigeria, my friend Peter and I were traveling to Turkey on business. We stayed at a very comfortable small hotel at Ikeja, not too far from Murtala Muhammad International Airport. However, on the day of our flight, heavy traffic was all over Lagos -- despite having a police escort -- and we arrived ten minutes late for checking in. Peter courteously, steadfastly, and diplomatically searched for a solution to boarding our flight which was still more than an hour away from closing the doors. When that failed, he went back behind the office counter of Turkish airlines to pursue the matter. In the process, we were asked to bring a “dash” of U.S. $300. Even though I was suggesting that I would be willing to pay that, my friend Peter would have nothing to do with a bribe, so we returned to the hotel. The next morning, we visited the airline managing director at his office in Ikoyi, where Peter documented names, having kept a virtual transcript. This took the better part of four hours, but reflected Peter Nwangwu’s total commitment against bribery and corruption.

“Corruption at the Top”

Dr. Nwangwu is a scientist in the fullest sense of that word. With his Pharm.D in pharmacy and Ph.D. in pharmacology, he saw the opportunity to bring pharmaceutical manufacturing to Nigeria rather than acquiesce to foreign production for sale in the country. One plan was to build a pharmaceutical factory in Jos. He pursued this with the legendary vigor for which he has become famous. He built the factory, was awarded a five years’ contract by the Nigerian defense ministry to manufacture and supply drugs to Nigerian Army, Navy, and Air force. In the process of implementing and servicing a contract that was signed by the minister of defense in consultation with the minister of health, without any demand for bribery, it was made clear to Peter that demand for bribery by senior staff of the ministry of defense was ubiquitous, led by the then permanent secretary. Characteristically, Peter refused – and walked away from the 5-year contract.

Make no mistake, Peter Nwangwu sees corruption as a curse that must be excised at all levels in Nigeria. This will become a mantra for the movement which he is prepared to lead throughout his native land. We the people need a person at the top who personifies honesty, integrity, and absolute intolerance for corruption—Peter Nwangwu is that person. I served as U.S Consul General in several countries including Russia, Canada, Taiwan, and Nigeria. I will simply say that in my more than half century of work abroad and in America, I have yet to encounter any other person of such knowledge, integrity, humility, and honesty.

The Difference of Nations

From a Nigerian base, this kind of leadership will find resonance and renascence among youth, among women, and especially among the educated. For these people, they can look to places like Singapore and Malaysia which have less natural resources than Nigeria, but have achieved far greater results. What should be seen is the difference of how principled leadership brings vast opportunities for we the people. We the people demand an incorruptible leader.

The future of Nigeria and Africa are intertwined with a leader who cares not about his personal fate, but about the destiny of his country and continent. WE THE PEOPLE book and movement is the clarion call for Nigeria and all of Africa to cast off the desultory past and embrace a thunderous revolutionary future.