

Military, Politics and Public Administration in Nigeria: What Prospect for Sustainable Development and Democratic Consolidation?

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Abstract

This paper provides a critique of military intervention in Nigeria. In an attempt to come to grips with the phenomenon of military intervention in politics the paper examines various theories put forward to explain it. To be sure the theories provide some insights into the phenomenon but they leave a lot of questions and issues unexplained. The paper goes on to examine the role played by the military in Nigerian politics and administration and comes to the conclusion that a number of factors and forces rendered the military incapable of ushering substantive democratic order and sustainable development in the country.

Keywords: *military, politics, public administration, sustainable development, democratic consolidation and substantive democracy*

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine the nature and dynamics of the relationship between the military and politics on the one hand, and public administration on the other. It seeks to do this by reflecting on Nigerian experience. The questions that suggest themselves and which should be addressed here are: what is meant by military? Why military intervenes in politics? What is the role of the military in Nigerian politics and administration? To what extent is the military capable of meaningfully transforming the state and society in a way that makes for consolidation of democratic order? These and many other questions require careful examination.

Two general points inform our discussion and analysis in this paper. One is that the military in Nigeria is a product of the colonial system and carries the legacy of its past. As the coercive arm of the colonial state, it was used principally as an instrument of local control and not as an agency for fighting external battles. More fundamentally, the relative isolation of the military from the rest of the society and failings of civilian regimes made it possible for the military to present itself as opposed to the system in which it participates and therefore in the survival of which it has a partial interest.

2.0 The Meaning and Mission of the Military

The military is the collectivity of trained, armed personnel available to the government for taking part in armed conflict. In the past this meant land and sea forces. Today, of course, the military includes submarine, amphibious, airborne as well as special and air forces. The nature of military participation in politics depends on the type of political system that exists in a given society. In feudal society, there was no standing army, so the army participated in politics only during the time of crisis. With the emergence of modern nation-states, the role of military in politics changed dramatically. Though the extent and degree of military involvement in politics vary from one state to another, generally there is no state in the world where the military is in existence and is not involved in politics. For instance defending the state against external aggression and suppressing internal subversion. These, however, are functional roles, and the military can undertake them only when asked to do so by the political regime.

It is a matter of the gravest consequence that in Nigeria, the military has no well-defined mission. It has been responsible for both operational and policy control over defence and political matters. More fundamentally, there is no effective oversight in place that could make for scrutinizing its decisions and actions thereby holding it accountable, and submitting it to ultimate civil control. The threat of a military without a well-defined mission therefore becomes real in a country where the military is preoccupied with dual responsibility for political and defense matters (Fayemi, 1998:87). Without a clearly defined mission, after all, there is likelihood for the military to poke its nose into forbidden areas. This brings us to the important phenomenon of military intervention in politics.

3.0 Military and Politics

The occurrence of *coup d'état* has become very common and regular and the incidence of military government universal in the third world. But the question should be raised: what factors prompt military intervention in politics? When an army sets itself up as an independent political organization and ceases to obey the government, there is clearly a profound disorganization of political power (Duverger, 1980:182). This presupposes the phenomenon of military intervention. When the military initiates a seizure of power, there has been a *coup d'état*. Therefore, one talks of military intervention when the military assumes formal political power. Here it formulates and executes government policies.

3.1 Theories of Military Intervention

A number of theories were advanced to explain the abnormal phenomenon of military intervention in politics. Some of these theories are: international conspiracy theory, demonstration effect theory, personal and corporate interest theory, institutional fragility theory, and modernization theory. Other explanations put forward to account for military intervention in politics include political culture explanation, organizational structure explanation, elite crises, and class action theory.

According to international conspiracy theory, military intervention in politics is usually engineered by foreign power or capital whose interests have been threatened by the existing regime. This theory views military as political surrogate for external capital (Murray 1966, Luckham 1988 and many others). For instance, if any leader goes against the interest of any foreign power or that of a transnational corporation operating in his country a coup will be sponsored to remove him. The removal of Mossadeq of Iran provided the best example of this. The idea of "regime change" currently being peddled by the United States of America under President George W Bush is also a good case in point.

Demonstration effect or contagion theory is another explanation put forward to account for military intervention in politics. The general thrust of this theory is that the institutionalization of the military coup as an important means of regime change stems not only from the internal characteristics of each country but also from the phenomenon of contagion. This is known as the theory of imitation behaviour: 'since they did it, we too can do it'. Some people call it 'bush fire effect theory'. The theory suggests that military coups usually have spill-over effects. It was speculated that Soglo's success in Dahomey (Benin Republic) probably affirmed the resolve of Nigerian officers next door. It was also believed that the 1966 coup in Ghana was due to the success of the Nigerian coup. For more on this theory see O'kane (1983) and Lunde (1991).

Another theory put forward to explain military intervention in politics is personal and corporate interest. The general thrust of this theory is that coups are due to either personal or corporate ambitions of military officers. This means the ambition is sometimes personal to individual officers and at times corporate to the whole military. Putting this in another way, the military intervenes to protect its own interest or interests of certain group or party. Moreover, competition to become officers often prompts military intervention, especially when a particular ethnic group feels that not many of its people are either in power or in senior ranks in the military. More to the point, the military may intervene when it is not in favour of the policies adopted by the regime in power. The first and second coups in Nigeria can be explained from the standpoint of this theory (Muazzam, 1981).

Modernization theory is one of the most prevalent theories on military intervention in politics. A number of explanations were subsumed under the modernization theory. One of such theories is "institutional fragility" theory (Finer 1988). The general thrust of this theory is that political institutions if ever they exist in African states such as Nigeria are fragile or weak in nature as such cannot cope with the demands for political and socio-economic transformations. In consequence, there is always a gap between demands and supply which results in crisis. Hence the military intervenes to mediate between demand and supply by creating institutions that could receive demands from the environment and convert these demands to policy output.

Political culture explanation posits that politics needs some myths, code of conduct, pattern regularities or psychological variables that help define political behaviour and unite the rulers and the ruled as well as create legitimacy for the rulers. By legitimacy, we mean popular perception of a justifiable and acceptable use of public power. It denotes congruence between the beliefs, attitudes, actions and values of the political system and those of the people it governs. Political Culture is the cluster of distinctive shared political values, attitudes, beliefs" and orientations and can be divided into three main types: "participatory" or civic, "subject" and "parochial" political cultures. Participatory or civic culture exists in states where people are oriented positively towards most aspects of the political system. "Subject" political culture exists in states where "the citizen is expected to have a passive or obedient relationship to the system". On the other hand, "parochial political culture exists in states where the average citizen "hardly relates himself to politics and is unaware of its existence" (Leeds, 1981: 196-7). Nigeria is believed to lack civic culture which is well disposed toward the mental and spontaneous attachment to political community coupled with a committed consciousness to fight for and defend the nation and its form of government and policies. In a situation whereby this attachment to civilian regime is low, the military is more likely to intervene (Toungo, 1982). However, in most cases, it is not the whole military that will intervene. Rather a section of it intervenes to overthrow the civilian government. This sums

up the crux of the matter: the model argues that Nigeria lacks civic political culture that defines how political leaders are to be recruited and removed from offices, and who should occupy what position in the political system. In absence of defined code of behaviour what usually prevail are corruption, tribalism, nepotism and federal character syndrome in the appointment of administrative and political office-holders. As such the general level of political culture of a country could make the military to intervene in politics.

Elite crisis model is another theory put forward to explain the phenomenon of military intervention in politics. The model contends that in third world countries such as Nigeria, political elites were enmeshed in fierce and unprincipled competition among themselves. In their struggle for political power and economic resources the elites always rely on their various groups for support. Having acquired power, the elites tend to give much loyalty to their various groups which might be ethnic or religious. Hence the resources of the nation are always allocated on ethnic, religious or regional basis. The military, therefore, intervenes to mediate between the various elites that are competing among themselves for the scarce resources.

Organizational structure explanation for military intervention in politics is based on the assumption that there are a number of qualities associated with the military training and profession that are compatible with an active and vigorous role in politics. These include aspirations for positions of power and skills useful for coping with the special nuances of politics. Moreover, military officers have often found themselves propelled to the forefront of organized effort to change simply because there are no other groups that might assume the role.

Specifically, the model posits that the military training had imbued the Nigerian armed forces, with certain features which distinguish them from the rest of the society. First, the recruitment is open to all irrespective of ethnic or religious background who can fulfill the entrance requirement at every stage. This makes for the emergence of non-tribal, completely de-ethnicized national unit. Second is that the long training and the organized hierarchy of military schools which funnels the candidates through a highly unified educational system provides a very strong *esprit de corps* for the officers and men of the military compared to any other comparable group in the society. Thirdly, the military is a highly organized, cohesive, disciplined, hierarchical and centrally command unit within the society. Fourthly, the military are repositories of bureaucratic and managerial skills. They also believe in rationality, efficiency, secularism, patriotism, discipline and achievement. Because of their belief in these values whenever the military see corruption, mismanagement of resources, intra-elite conflict and abuses of power by political leadership, they are always forced to intervene in order to tidy up the mess and create a new political order (Bienen, 1968, Perlmutter, 1981 and Muazzam, 1981).

The class action theory is advanced to explain the occurrence of incidence of military intervention in politics. The general thrust of this theory is that the profound dependence of Nigeria on capitalism and imperialism is the main cause of military intervention in politics. The central thesis of this argument is that Nigerian State is being exploited by international capitalist system and Nigerian leaders are the conduit pipes that serve to perpetuate this situation of dependence and exploitation. More specifically, the military is the class that helps to perpetuate the situation of exploitation and dependence. The military in Nigeria, after all, is a product of the colonial system and carries the legacy of its past. As the coercive arm of the colonial state, it was used principally as an instrument of local control and not an agency

for fighting external battles. The military controls the state using it both to guarantee the neo-colonial presence of transnational corporations and to gain privileged access to surplus for itself. "Generally speaking, Duverger (1980:182) noted, the military is the political instrument of privileged classes and minority groups, which need rifles, machineguns and tanks to maintain their domination over exploited classes that threaten to submerge them by sheer force of number". It is a matter of the greatest consequence that the military was primarily designed as an instrument to guarantee the ruthless exploitation of human and material resources of the country. Nigeria society, after all, is a class-ridden society;"a sack of potatoes" so to speak (Muazzam, 1981). The military is socially part and parcel of Nigerian society and therefore reflects the class structure as well as its tensions and contradictions. The military intervenes to prop up the existing socio-economic order. Hence it replaces one political leader with another in order to guarantee the continuity of the phenomenon of exploitation and dependence. Hence military coups are reactionary in nature and their sole *raison d'être* was to maintain the existing class structure in the society. The overthrow of President Morsi of Egypt (in 2013) who was democratically elected and military intervention in Algeria to prevent Islamic Salvation Front(FIS) ,which was poised to sweep the polls from coming to power provide the best examples of this.

Each of these theories of military intervention has its weak points. It provides plausible explanation for military intervention but it also leaves a lot of questions and issues unexplained. One thing to note about them, however, is that they are interwoven and none is exhaustive in itself. Taken together they test each other and balance each other. The theories can be broadly categorized into two main premises: systemic cause theory and system based on class structure. The systemic causes of military intervention are ethnicity, lack of national feelings, weak civilian institutions, and decline in the legitimacy of the political elite attendant upon their inability to agree on the basic rules of the game, failure to solve fundamental socio-economic problems, widespread corruption, maladministration and disrespect for the rule of law and sanctity of human person. While the system based on class structure argued that the reasons for military intervention in politics are to be found in the socio-economic formations of Nigeria.

3.2 Do Coups Change Anything?

The military in Nigeria had been drawn into the political arena because of the failure of politicians to put their own house in order. But a question should be raised: Do coups change anything? Do they lead to socio-economic transformation of Nigerian society in a meaningful way? The experience of military rule in Nigeria has shown that coups did not result in any meaningful, fundamental transformation of the society. The military regimes in the country have failed both in the economic and political fronts. In the economic sphere each military regime had exhibited similar symptoms implying that each suffered from similar diseases. The symptoms include declining production of major export crops, deterioration in the balance of payment, declining government revenues that coupled with increasing expenditure lead to inflation, budget deficits and a fall in value of national currency as well as inability of the state to provide electricity to power country's industries. More fundamentally, the country economy is a captive of International Monetary Fund (IMF) who dictates what policy to follow in the domestic and international arena.

The military had failed to provide high levels of housing, education, welfare and employment. Vast majority of Nigerian people live in squalid conditions. Massive growth of shanty towns adjacent to many urban centers is a proof enough of poor housing conditions in the country. The education system, which had been hampered by shortage of basic school

supplies functions only in name. Basic social services have virtually disappeared while medical services have ceased to function effectively because of non-availability of vital medical equipment and medicine. Unemployment grows at an alarming rate while majority of people live below the absolute poverty line; that is income level below which a minimal nutritionally adequate diet plus essential non-food requirements are not affordable.

In terms of politics, the military has failed to re-usher viable political order and substantive democracy. Military rule has fostered an authoritarian culture in the country which is inimical to conditions necessary for the workings of a democratic system of government. Such threats to democratic tradition include the phenomenal rise of ethnic armies, muzzling of press, suppressing of dissent, curtailing of independence of the judiciary and harassment of workers and students organizations. More to the point, the military tended to dictate the tune of political debate and impose false consensus on the people. If anything the military had only succeeded in privatizing the state by turning it into their own private property. 'The privatization of the state', together with the resulting failure to fulfill the people's aspiration for democracy and economic development has led to the erosion of legitimacy of the Nigerian State and a reduction in its capacity for good governance (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002). The military always sees itself as a corrective regime and comes up with a litany of woes which the civilians wrought on the nation. The experience of Nigeria, however, had shown that if the military hops into political platform as physician, it soon discovers itself as a patient infected by the disease of its predecessors it had set out to cure and prevent. Most often than not, the military also discovers that instead of dampening crises, it heightens them (Elaigwu, 1985:173). This situation, therefore, begs the question, as to whether the military regimes had fared better than the civilian regimes they had replaced.

The phenomenal rise of corruption in our national life provided the best example of the above mentioned problem. Corruption has become so endemic in the national life that most people in the country have to do something illegal just in order to survive. The system we operate encourages everyone who can to grab as much as he can from whatever source. Interestingly, privileges multiply and corruption triumphs while morality declines, (Fanon, 1963:138) under so-called corrective regime. The military rule gave rise to materialism, meaning the tendency to attach too much importance to matter and regard its manifestations the be-all and end-all of everything. Materialism rejects all forms of higher moral qualities, and prefers immediate over the ultimate gain. A resultant effect of such an outlook is glorification of material gains over principles: ideologies, code of ethics and morality - all are sacrificed at the altar of minutest profits and personal gains. The significance of materialism is that it liberates the realm of public life from moral restraints and thereby turning it into an arena not of service and dedication to the nation but of quenching the thirst for material gains. Public resources and public trust would in these circumstances naturally be diverted to the procurement of material gains and promotion of selfish interests. In consequence, corruption persists and thrives under a corrective regime.

A question should be raised: why corruption persists under a military regime that presented itself as a corrective regime whose mission is to eradicate corruption from the national life? Corruption persists simply because it is pertinent to continuity and functioning of the Nigerian political system and its removal would have many consequences for diverse types of people whose support and effort are needed to avert threat to stability and continuity of the system. Consequently, the political incumbents would find it extremely difficult to take appropriate measures that may fundamentally transform the system in which they participate and therefore, in the survival of which they have a partial interest. Logically, corruption

persists not only because it satisfies a number of functions but also because many of the functional alternatives to corruption would be quite dysfunctional to political incumbents and their constituencies (Muhammad and Abdullahi, 2013).

The persistence of corruption constitutes a serious threat to the tenure of political incumbents and exposes them to the necessity of legitimizing their power through anti-corruption efforts. Hence military rulers have seen anti-corruption efforts as a good political cry. A vigorous anti-corruption campaign, after all, may save them from the suspicion of having a soft spot for corrupt elements like the politicians they replaced. Such anti-corruption efforts, however, will only be made up to the point where the needs of political incumbents to legitimate their power are satisfied, rather than satisfying the great variety of public needs and demands. Consequently anti-corruption policies will turn out to be, in terms of their implementation; lopsided cosmetic exercises which do not go against the existing political and economic reality (Muhammad, 2007).

Anti-corruption campaigns in Nigeria are no stimulus to high standards of probity in the realm of public life but a legitimizing principle in the hands of political incumbents. Paradoxically, the idea of probity to which the political incumbents pay lip service in order to stem the tide of legitimation crisis becomes fetters on them. This is because it becomes a standard for evaluation of regime performance: a standard which must ultimately show them in a bad light because they cannot meet it. In consequence, this provided those who are bent on capturing power through extra constitutional means with a legitimizing principle. They will, after all, use the failure to put an end to corruption in the national life as compelling reason for military intervention in politics. The pity of it is that, the new rulers will turn out corrupt those they replaced. The dialectics of the human society is such that any revolutionary force, upon coming to power, runs the risk of becoming a conservative force. This may help to explain why the military in Nigeria did not bring the society up to a qualitatively new level of socio-economic and political development. After the military take over there was a reversal in observance of fundamental human rights, accountability and transparency, investment, education, health and welfare. There was stagnation of agriculture and industry. So, all in all, the military governments in Nigeria appeared to be in unenviable mess. The pity of it, however, is that much the same could also be said about the so-called democratically elected regimes in the country and there seems to be no easy and viable way out to such a political cul-de-sac.

3.3 Military and Public Administration

The influences of the military on public administration in Nigeria can be broadly categorized into two main types: positive and negative impacts (Adebayo, 1994). First positive influence of the military on public administration is the seriousness with which they handled the annual budget exercise. By and large, the military rulers displayed a serious consciousness of the importance of the annual budget exercise far more than the case under the civilian regime. Budgetary process under the civilian regime was often little better than farce. For the so-called civilian regime a budget is not an accounting instrument that holds government officials responsible for the expenditure of funds with which they had been entrusted. The political incumbent subjectively determines which provisions of the budget he has to implement and how to implement them irrespective of what the legislature might do. Little wonder, poor budget implementation has assumed the status of an established tradition under civilian regime. Right from the advent of the current civil rule in 1999 to date, there has never been a financial year in which capital budget attained up to 75% implementation. The whole essence of budgetary exercise has been reduced to furthering the political and financial

interests of the political incumbents rather than promoting the public good. Provisions of the budget meant for promotion of the common good were seldom implemented while those that provided vast opportunities for kickbacks and backhanders were eagerly implemented (Muhammad, 2012).

Another positive impact of the military rule, Adebayo (1994) continued, was the speed and thoroughness with which they usually read their files. The civilian regime both prior to and after the military rule compared very unfavorably in this respect. The civilian politicians were so preoccupied with political squabbles and constituency problems that there was hardly any time left for them to attend to departmental files and memoranda. More fundamentally, the military infused a sense of urgency into governmental processes and machinery. In a sense, they attached a note of urgency to practically all matters requiring action. From calling for information or advice to the construction of a road or bridge, from the preparation of policy memorandum to the submission of the report of a committee or commission, everything was demanded with haste and urgency. Much the same cannot be said about the civilian regimes both before and after the military rule. This, however, is far from saying that the influences of the military rule on public administration are salutary.

The military usually maintains a hierarchical or pyramid structure with a chain of command running from the chief of staff to the lowest recruit in the army. This is the normal pattern of day-to-day military operation and organization. When in government this pattern is duplicated, administration tends to be centralized no matter whether a state being run is a federal or unitary one. Centralization of authority and crucial decisions in the centre leads to a sort of imperialistic system in the organization with the centre (federal government) dictating to the colonies (state and local governments) the rules, the actions and values to be followed. Putting this in another way, under military rule the machinery of government tends to be run by centralized methods of management. State and local governments were granted little discretionary authority; therefore, they have little or no administrative and financial latitude. Every policy question major or minor has to originate from the centre. Such a rigid centralization and command system was impermissible in tackling the problems of a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria. This is because it mocks the autonomy of the state and local governments as well as that of government departments and Parastatals. It also institutionalized an extreme form of upward referral which stifles initiative, independence and creativity. Such centralization far from facilitating managerial effectiveness in the public sector serves only to accommodate poor management, low efficiency and out-of-the-date methods. The by-product of all this would be an unmanageable and faceless bureaucratic machinery doing little else than pushing paper around between in-trays and out-trays and discouraging people to render a contribution of their own in solving their own problems. The end-result is apathy, constant criticism of the government and no involvement. No doubt this does not make room for meeting the needs for recognition, participation, and involvement and autonomy of different tiers of government.

The military is incapable of manning the institutions of civilian regime and dealing with inherent conflicts in the civilian system of administration. Hence it left the day-to-day administration in the hands of a few higher civil servants. These higher civil servants such as the so-called "super permanent secretaries" of the General Yakubu Gowon's era provided a good example of this. They initiated, formulated and executed policy. This politicization of the civil servants increased their power and led to usurpation of the power of political class. The preponderance of the civil servants in the military government transformed such a government into what Balogun (1987:76) called "administocracy" meaning "rule by

administrators". This is because the military left both policy making and policy implementation in the hands of senior bureaucrats. Bureaucracy is a potential Frankenstein's monster in need of firm check on its power. Under the military this check appeared to be lacking or ineffective where it existed.

The military rule contributed greatly to the erosion of executive capacity in the public sector. The inefficiency and ineffectiveness that characterized every aspect of the public sector is enough proof of this. Executive capacity arises from better training, higher standards of recruitment, faster communication with other parts of the organization, and a more dynamic outlook generally. The merit, the reputation and the achievement capability of any organization depend on its leadership at all levels. The pity of it, however, is that under the military the cult of the amateur is highly praised in Nigeria. Consequently, little is done to cultivate executive personality active and full of initiative, creativity, and competence and capable of being in touch with contemporary reality. The military reduced the function of the public sector to that of providing patronage to their retired and serving colleagues, friends and relatives. Hence senior administrative personnel who owed their appointment to such a patronage often lack relevant skills. They had no professional training, after all, to equip them to carry out the tasks of modern administration in the public sector.

In a sense, appointment in the public sector tended to be based most often than not on association with the military regime than on technical expertise, managerial skills and educational qualifications. Consequently, the well-connected obtained position for which they were often intellectually ill-equipped. These new recruits were often not suited to work which they were required to do. Their education and training did not fit and equip them to deal with conditions of modern administration in the public sector. Recruitment of personnel on the basis of patronage; meaning a system of personal favourites is an extremely dangerous precedent. More fundamentally, it involves a huge cost on socio-economic and political well-being of the nation. It is interesting to note that such personnel who lacked adequate training and relevant skills are not likely to see the value of staff training and development. Consequently, there was a lack of adequate training of administrative personnel and too little attention was paid to their career development. Too much reliance was placed on connection rather than the demonstrated ability so that overall structure of the public sector and training of its personnel were out of keeping with modern conditions. Moreover, junior officers found their promotion blocked when an outsider was brought in to fill a senior vacancy. Many of them had become alienated from their work. The posts were filled by people with untested talent, and the result was overall loss of efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

What has become obvious from the foregoing discussion is that the ways and manners the military sometimes made appointment to top posts in the public service made the mockery of public service rules and regulations governing appointments and promotions. It is a matter of gravest consequence that the military rulers tended to brush aside well-established and clearly recognized rules and regulations and made use of personal and subjective criteria regardless of consequence on the system as a whole. Besides frustration and irritation, appointments of this nature destroy *esprit de corps*, the spirit of comradeship among the senior officials in the civil service. Not only was the spirit of comradeship destroyed in the civil service by the presence of 'favorites' but discipline was also seriously impaired. A relatively junior official who happened to be a personal friend of the military ruler through games, drinks, or some other social connections did not waste time in letting his fellow civil servants know of this fact. He would brag around, was often insolent to his seniors and largely behaved as though he was above the law. This state of affairs, Adebayo (1994:199) concluded, is not conducive

to good discipline in the civil service.

Negative effect of military rule on public administration also manifested itself in terms of what Adebayo (1994:200) called counter-productive discipline. The military took the simplistic parade approach to the issue of efficiency and effectiveness in the public service. Consequently, the military rulers introduced the idea of locking out latecomers to office in the morning. There are urgent matters for action which cannot be disposed of during the normal office hours, partly due to the great volume of work and partly due to the fact that senior officials hardly find time during office hours to attend to the work on their tables. Hence some senior officials choose to put in some extra hours in the evenings, other prefer to get up in the early hours of the morning and work at home for some hours before coming to work. Locking out such senior officials for coming to work an hour late and subjecting them to indignity and humiliation merely results in counterproductive reaction. It destroys the sense of initiative and responsibility in the officials.

Unlike the classic conceptualization of legislature, executive and judiciary as the three branches of government, Nigeria was faced with the situation in which the military, judiciary and bureaucracy were the three branches of government. The military rule tended to be characterized by cynical disregard of democratic principles in both making and implementation of policies. The military rulers viewed democratic process which subjects governmental policies to scrutiny, debate and negotiation as an unnecessary cog in the wheel of rapid development. Consequently, law and order is the clarion call of the military rulers and their obsession with this makes them impatient of the due process of law when dealing with criminals. They seemed to prefer administrative justice to normal legal system with its long and windy litigations and appeals. Therefore the military ruled by decrees which are not bound by or subject to legal or judicial constraints. Perhaps, this explains why the military rule is characterized by phenomenal rise of tribunals. This certainly deprived the ordinary courts of their jurisdiction and independence. Experience of many countries suggests that independence of the judiciary is vital for the predictability of the latter. Predictability means following objective criteria when making decision so that others following the same criteria would arrive at similar decision.

4.0 Concluding Remarks

The military is usually politically untrained and naive and its personnel therefore unable to undertake long term political management. This lack of political sophistication is attributed to peculiar organizational characteristics, command structures and pattern of socialization and training in the military. This put severe limitations on the ability of the military to produce those skills in bargaining and political communication that are required for sustaining political leadership. This may be especially true in developing countries such as Nigeria, where the intensity of political conflicts is great and new political forces unleashed by the processes of socio-economic change are agitating for an enhanced role in the political system. It is on the basis of those assumptions that military regimes are believed to be inherently unstable. Social and political stability will continue to elude the country until political debates and administrative activities have taken place within democratic setting which encourages search for peaceful ways of settling differences, mutual tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and inclusion.

It goes against the grain for the military to assume democratic character. Democracy is a product of rich harvest of views and voices and this is alien to the military by nature and inclination. Democracy is an all-embracing mechanism for expressing and regarding

opinions, positions and various interests in a society. It can only develop in the process of constructive debate and clash of opinion. It implies discussions, debates, deliberations, and dialogues until people arrive at consensus. Democracy entails that government should be based on an agreed set of values about the way government should make decisions and how they should be administered. Government must be subject to a high degree of control by the citizens, take into account public opinions and does not act in an arbitrary manner towards the individual or groups. Unlike democratic government a military government is characterized by an inherent lack of normative basis of support and legitimacy, and it is usually unstable and therefore unabashedly repressive. Corruption and repression are the tools the military rulers tended to use to maintain themselves in power. They have no qualms about resorting to cooptation, preemption and adaptation to widen their power base. This explains why the military rulers distributed positions in the government and public corporate sector even to their open critics. Those who refused to be lured into accepting government posts or opposed its repressive policies become target of every form of repression. Abacha regime is a good case in point. Part of the reason why the military keeps intervening in Nigerian politics is that many a military officer has realized that state power can be used to amass wealth. In Nigeria, Claude Ake (1986:7) said, there is nothing which those who control state power cannot do or cannot get. By the same token, there is nothing which those who have no access to state power cannot suffer.

Frequent change of government that military intervention in politics engendered had a number of adverse effects on the national life. These include loss of experienced military personnel, dislocation and disruption in the work of government and erosion of the nation's ability to bring itself to a qualitatively new level of socio-economic and political development. More to the point, military intervention tends to trigger off political instability. Political instability is a factor of high potency in socio-economic and political underdevelopment of Nigeria. The implications of instability become apparent when one takes into account the fact that socio-economic development rests to a large extent on stability. Not only instability leads to destruction of life and property but also inhibits meaningful socio-economic and political development. It often leads to the flight of capital and technically skilled manpower. In the event of instability the incidence of brain drain and flight of capital are commonplace. In conclusion, corruption has provided the military rulers with means of acquiring the support it required for perpetuating itself in power but at the same time succeeded in bringing every aspects of national life closer to ruin. This makes corruption a factor of high potency in legitimation and delegitimation of rule in Nigeria.

But a question may be asked: what must be done to encourage the military to steer clear of partisan politics and dedicate itself to consolidation of democratic order? This question does not have a clear-cut answer due to the dynamics and character of the Nigerian State. Perhaps, the solution to military intervention lies in the sincerity and commitment with which Nigerians address the key issues of state reconstruction and political reforms. First of all Nigerians must recognize the urgency and necessity to reconstruct the state with a view to making it efficient, accountable, democratic, responsible, sensitive and responsive to citizens' needs and grievances. Second is the need to educate the political elites to realize the significance of demonstrating in their conduct integrity, accountability, responsibility, transparency and willingness to respect the rules of the game. Third is to educate the military to willingly accept the reality of being subjected to control by the civil order. Fourth is to encourage a culture of constitutionalism, rule of law and dialogue, which makes for rational democratic politics of accommodation, inclusion and tolerance. Fifth is to open lines of dialogue, understanding and accommodation among the military, the political class, and civil

society in the long term interest of the larger society. Sixth is to develop professional ethos among the military in a way that strengthens their faith and confidence in democracy. Seventh is to establish institutional mechanisms which have the capacity to address the genuine fears and concerns of the military. Last but not the least is to recognize the urgency and necessity of the need to come up with anti-corruption measures capable of dealing with cases of proven corrupt enrichment.

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