

In Search of Political Stability and Survival: Toward Nigeria's Third Republic

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Introduction

This is where God in His infinite wisdom "planted" me and this is where I intend to live. I will travel and come back. I do not think one has the right to go somewhere else where somebody else has cleaned it up. I think this is where the work is, and this is where I shall be....

Chinua Achebe

Nigeria, like the rest of Africa, is still finding its way. It is easy to forget that we are trying to do in a matter of decades what it took the Western world centuries to do. Perhaps at the moment we are not doing it so well, but at least we are doing it ourselves --and, as you can see, not without the ability to recognize some of our shortcomings....(1)

Onyeka Onwenu

The former was Chinua Achebe's response when the latter queried him as to why a scholar of his intellectual stature should live in Nigeria, absorbing its hardship, while many of his compatriots were in the West and elsewhere basking in their intellectual glory and prestige.

Nigeria, a former British colony, became independent in 1960. In 1963, it became a republic and in 1966, the military intervened. The period from 1963-1966 is referred to as the First Republic. Between 1966 and 1979, the country went through a civil war (1967-1970) and during that time partisan politics was "comatose." From 1979-1983, there was a rebirth of participatory democracy in what has been termed the Second Republic. In December 1983, the Second Republic "died" following a military coup. The military has reigned since 1984, and now plans to transfer political power to a civilian-elected president in 1992, in what has been dubbed the Third Republic.

Nigeria's three decades of independence have been fraught with turbulence as a result of economic, social and political distemper. These have left many in continuous bewilderment as to when it would become politically stable. Yet, Nigerians at home and in the diaspora have continued to celebrate its independence day with optimism. This may be a reassuring sign that in spite of its shortcomings, many Nigerians still have great faith in the country's ability to overcome its difficulties.

Stressing the causes of the political instability of Nigeria since its inception as a sovereign state, while significant, is not the purpose of this paper, for they

have been superbly dealt with elsewhere.(2) Rather, it is an attempt to suggest and analyze a couple of remedies and strategies for dealing with the issues of participatory democracy (including freedom of the press, etc) and stability(which implies the absence of military intervention and the need for law makers to adhere to the constitution) in Nigeria in 1992 and after --a task that is both difficult and daunting. Be that as it may, I would like to argue that it demands a bipartite cooperation between and among "movers" of the polity- i.e., the military and civilians (technocrats, bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, labor, and academicians, etc). In this regard, the pursuit of the national interest (not individual, group, class, state or government interests) should be the most fundamental objective and melding factor among these cleavages in the Federal Republic.

J. Isawa Elaigwu has noted that, "for a long time to come, the socio-political and economic factors which made the federal government a political imperative will continue to task the capabilities of Nigeria's leaders....Nigeria needs leaders[military and civilians] imbued with a high sense of nationalism, foresight, dedication, integrity, patience, accommodation and fairness." (3) These are admirable qualities that only a relative few are able to imbibe because of the often conflicting and some-times antagonistic individual and group interests. As Rene Dumont has noted: "It has become increasingly clear that there has indeed been a false start in Africa. It is a false start, which is part of the legacy from Africa's colonial past....There has been a false start, too, by the academicians in their efforts to speak meaningfully to each other and to Africa's law makers."(4)

In fact, it might be argued that in order for democracy to blossom in Nigeria and political stability to be sustained, it would take the mutual efforts of the military and civilians. Nigeria may have to borrow from the advanced societies those factors that enhance the development of democracy in the country. These factors may then be combined with traditional ones. In this sense, the country would adopt a strategy that the Chinese have sometimes referred to as the policy of "walking-on-two-legs."(5) This implies that Nigeria must maintain its traditional values while absorbing those foreign values (tolerance, magnanimity in political victory, etc) that may be conducive to the Nigerian political culture.

However, the problems of democracy and political stability have been viewed by many from the historical perspective. Some scholars have argued that it would be foolhardy to address today's problems without alluding to the past. After all, they argue, it was the problems of yesterday that metamorphosed into the problems of today, and that today's problems are likely to give birth to tomorrow's problems.(6) Some of these scholars have expressed profound pessimism concerning the future of democracy and stability in Nigeria in light of the manner of the transition of power from the military to civilians. Indeed,

some have already eulogized the "death" of the Third Republic in professional journals(7) and in national and international fora.(8) Moreover, the intensity and frankness with which some observers have argued their case against the mechanisms for implementing the Third Republic appear convincing and thus disturbing. One of such issues was the open ballot system.(9)

The Open Ballot System

The open ballot system is an electoral system which involves the electorates queuing up in front of the portrait of the candidate of their choice so that they could be visibly seen and counted by the electoral officers. This system superseded the secret ballot system used in previous elections, which allowed the voters to secretly cast their votes for the candidate of their choice.

The argument for the open ballot system, noted Humphrey Nwosu, chairman of the National Electoral Commission(NEC), stemmed from the assumption that it represented the "most indigenous, simple, cost-effective and credible system since it gave no room for any form of rigging and dubious intentions [to win an election]." (10) Elsewhere, he contended that "in an ideal situation, the secret ballot could be used but Nigeria is not facing an ideal situation." (11) However, one could argue that if the system is indigenous, as he suggested, ipso facto, it should be ideal to the country. Such seemingly contradictory assumptions and apologia illustrate the complexity in Nigeria's democratic experiment. The problems in melding traditional political norms and borrowed political systems are enormous. This is especially so because the acceptance of indigenous social and political patterns require attitudinal adjustments on the part of those who are more likely to support or oppose the local system. For example, Oyeleye Oyediran (a member of the Nigerian constitutional drafting committee) expressed his concern regarding the issue of the open ballot system. This system, according to him, would deny the electorates the right to secrecy—one of the fundamental tenets of democracy. He, then, wondered how the NEC could argue that such a practice would further democracy. (12)

While this debate rages on, the efficaciousness of the open ballot system cannot be fully measured until well after 1992. Suffice it to say that the system appears to have a number of converts. In-deed, following the december 1990 local elections, Baba Kingibe, the chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was alleged not only to be in support of the open ballot system but to have said that, "open ballot system will in a short while constitute Africa's major contribution to democracy." (13) He further claimed that the open ballot system would benefit the millions of SDP sympathizers who understood better the unusual style of exercising their franchise.(14)

By way of comparison, in Kenya where the open ballot system was adopted, the results have been mixed. Indeed, it appears that the system will be

eliminated as part of the political changes the people desire.(15) That it had mixed reviews in Kenya should not imply that it would be ineffective in the case of Nigeria.

The issue is not whether the open ballot system is effective or ineffective in Nigeria's quest for political stability. The concern is whether the people will be patient enough to accept it as part of the nation's(16) democratic experiment. For instance, are the political parties truly "wedded" to the idea of the open ballot system such that if their party failed to win, they would not blame their defeat on the system? In other words, are the parties capable of convincing their followers and backers that if they lose, the open ballot system will not become the scapegoat and thus withhold their support for the winning party? Does the system have the grassroots support?

Some advocates of the system contend that "the past experience whereby ballot papers, camouflaged as pregnancies were later stuffed into ballot boxes by unscrupulous party stalwarts makes the open ballot formula appealing."(17) President Ibrahim Babangida, throwing his weight in support of the system said: "The whole process of elections is about political choices, and whatever will make Nigerians to choose the right people to represent them, we will go for that. Our problems in the past have been the secret ballot and ballot papers and we want to make sure that this problem does not persist in our national life."(18)

Although the two parties (legally sanctioned by the military to compete for the apparatus of government and power), the Nigerian Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) appear to be in favor of the open ballot system, they have done so with pre-conditions. For example, the SDP insists that polling booths must not be located near churches, mosques, and in front of the homes of influential people. The NRC, on the other hand, favors a modification of the open ballot system. It is in favor of what it refers to as the "open-secret" ballot system. The party explained that, "this had all the qualities of the open ballot with the exception that the thumb printing and sealing of the ballot paper is done in secret, while the voter drops a paper in a box placed outside for all to see."(19)

The foregoing positions of the parties suggest that they are not fully in sync regarding the open ballot system. This does not mean that their positions are unbridgeable. What is important is that they must seek the consent and support of the grassroots electorate if the democratic experiment is to have any validity. If successful, the process of socializing the people regarding its efficacy must continue unabated after 1992.

The Governing Process

Electing political candidates to govern a polity is one thing, however, and the ability of the legislators to adequately govern is another. In other words, are the

governors able to use the existing or modified political structures and institutions to govern effectively? Some critics believe that the Third Republic might end up just as the second did because the "new breed" politicians have not learned a lesson from the past. They are just not fully adjusted to the new political structure. Certainly, the concerns raised by these observers and scholars are well founded. Thus, this is the time to seek out solutions -- the kind that Larry Diamond has pointed out with respect to successful governing. He underscored among other factors: (a) Accountability of rulers to the ruled; (b) Pluralism in social, political, and economic life, involving dispersal of resources and competition between ideas and preferences; (c) Checks and balances to prevent the accumulation and abuse of power...(20) Adjusting to these solutions will not be easy. In fact, conflicting interpretations of these dimensions by the political parties may have led to the political chaos and demise of the Second Republic. Nonetheless, they are significant and should be viewed positively by future lawmakers. It is a fact that the Nigerian polity like others will continue to go through trials and tribulations, but as Vaclav Havel, Czechoslovakia's president once noted rather poignantly, "We would be cursed by future generations [if the country's major problems such as democracy and stability are not resolved]." (21)

In addition, such centrifugal religious and ethnic tendencies that sometimes warp the politics of the nation must be dealt with in order to prepare Nigeria for the future generations. But how must the country go about it? Ali Mazrui has contended allegorically with respect to the nation-state that "if married couples continued to recall past altercations [and how they may have mutually traded insults at each other's family members], such a relationship would be headed toward doom."(22) Conflicts are natural in any political system. The question is to what extent is the political system capable of managing its conflicts to prevent it from becoming ungovernable? Accentuating the positive and de-emphasizing the negative might be one way of assuaging the pessimism and cynicism that have become commonplace in the Nigerian polity following the post-oil boom era. I contend that in order for a nation to be stable and advance courageously in the face of difficulties, the people must feel good about themselves or at least feel that the opportunities are there for them to improve themselves. And in the words of the American civil rights leader, Jesse Jackson, are the opportunities there to "keep hope alive?" If and when such a sense of hope is promoted by the system, the people are likely to support the government and this could then further stability.

The Role of Scholars

To come back to one of the central themes of this essay, it is a given that scholars interested in Nigerian affairs are aware of the problems confronting the

nation and indeed so much has been written by so many on the subject.(23) But my position as I have argued earlier on must be to shift our foci from the problem areas to providing solutions. In fact, I contend that if collective efforts are made especially by the academicians to pursue the problem-solving goal with the same intellectual vigor that they have asserted and explained the difficulties confronting the country, the task of resolving Nigeria's political imbroglios would probably be assured. And through political socialization, the process may even be furthered. In this approach, it may be worthwhile to state that such collective strategies should be devoid of the philosopher-king approach. Put another way, the problem-solving technique applied by scholars should avoid what I would like to refer to as "myopic syndrome," - i.e., the assumption on the part of some that their views are sacrosanct. Perhaps, it would be imperative to adopt what Charles McClelland described as the "wisdom outlook." That is, "the notion that no one man can understand the sweep of [Nigeria's problems] but that many specialists, each working in his [or her] own sphere, together have such knowledge." (24) In other words, it assumes that no one individual has a "finite" knowledge of the country's problems. In a nutshell, the quintessential dimension of my argument is that the national interest should supersede the provincial and parochial interests of the different publics. Thus, as critical political observers (no matter the political and ideological persuasion) efforts and analysis should be directed toward furthering "nucleotic" allegiance, (25) i.e., political allegiance directed toward the nation-state as opposed to "cytoplasmic" or geo-ethnic allegiance.(26) Shifting allegiance to the central government is a sine-qua-non for successful governing in Nigeria as Claude Ake has eloquently noted elsewhere.(27) This could be done if the mechanisms for doing so are available. I suggest political education and intend to pursue this matter later on in the essay.

Now that it appears that the Third Republic is likely to fail as Agbase,(28) Akinola,(29) Ihonvbere,(30) Uwaruiki(31) and others have suggested, what must be done to rectify it? Put another way, what should scholars, politicians and others interested in democracy and the political stability of the country do to avoid the conditions that might lead to the collapse of the forthcoming republic and perhaps others to follow in the future? This remains one of the central foci of this paper.

Some Possible Solutions

Here, I will attempt to offer two unrelated and probably simplistic solutions. I contend that sometimes "intellectual" solutions are confusing even to the informed public, let alone the massive, "poor," illiterate Nigerians for whom scholars have so craftily designed their solutions. As with most solutions to a problem, there is always the issue of implementation.

My first solution deals with the "immediate" issues facing the nation, i.e., the present electoral process leading to the presidential election in 1992. The second is a long-term solution to the issue of democracy; that is assuming it is the determined road and direction the country wishes to travel.

As to the former, the pessimistic prognosis issued by many scholars and politicians regarding the success of the Third Republic stems from the political behavior patterns of many Nigerians both during the pre-and post-independence eras.(32) A discussion of the political culture during these periods is not within the purview of this essay. Suffice it to say, however, that in the politics of the nation, the struggle for power in the classical Laswellian tradition (of who gets what, when and how) has tended to pit families against families; not to mention enemies against enemies. Claude Ake has noted, *≈inter alia* • that in the Nigerian politics:

...A willingness to violate the legitimate methods of contestation [is applied], if necessary, to achieve the goal of power. The break down of constitutional norms, in the context of a high premium on power, in turn generates a high level of political anxiety...[Therefore], a desperate struggle to win control of state power ensues since the control means for all practical purposes being all powerful and owning everything. Politics becomes warfare...[to which the winner is entitled to the spoils of the political battle].(33)

In such battles between political parties, it is the nation-state that has often suffered from the obfuscation of democracy caused by the ubiquitous military regimes. Nigeria is by no means unique on this issue. The major problem, however, is that after the battle is lost or won, the process of reconciliation that must follow has tended to be non-existent. Where reconciliation has existed, it has sometimes been so slow that by the time of the succeeding elections, old political wounds become recrudescient; a condition that often revives the problem of geo-ethnic angst. But this should not be the case for Nigerians have been known to be magnanimous in victory. This was an observation that Ali Mazrui made succinctly in *≈The Africans* • (34), and elsewhere.(35) For example, when the civil war came to an end in 1970, General Gowon received a group of "Biafrans" who had come to surrender by embracing them as brothers [and wishing the war had never taken place].(36) The reconciliation that followed has been described by some as *Lincolnesque*, in reference to the reconciliation between the north and south following the end of the American Civil War of the 1860's.

If Nigerians could be as conciliatory in a war that claimed the lives of thousands, perhaps millions, why can't Nigerians be equally magnanimous in political victory? Larry Diamond has argued that political cleavages "need time not only to develop their organizational structures and political identities, but

also to build relationships of mutual tolerance and trust with one another; only in this way can there be developed the confidence that defeat will not mean political death and victory will be tempered by magnanimity."(37) Such a system of "mutual security," contends Robert Dahl, "can only grow gradually over many years and several elections."(38) Perhaps what is politically soothing in the Nigerian case as it goes through the present political metamorphoses is the shift from the somewhat zero-sum-game of the parliamentary system to the variable-sum-game of the presidential system in which the parties come out with some benefits. And if this is the political road that Nigeria wishes to traverse, it is incumbent on the nation to commence without delay to educate the grassroots about its virtues. In addition, political parties should stress national issues that benefit everyone irrespective of their ideologies. This, it has been suggested elsewhere, may induce political losers to confer legitimacy on the political party in power(39) and thus encourage what Bolaji Akinyemi described as maximal unity-- a transference of loyalties from sub-national primordial units to one of the nation-state.(40)

So far, the discussion has centered on the assumption that in spite of the shortcomings of the post-independence political history of Nigeria, there was need for the country to create conditions for optimism and to capitalize on the nation's accomplishments past and present in hopes that they would help to rekindle a sense of national pride and nationalism. Probably, a good case in point would be Nigeria's African policy, which, taking all in all, was quite positive.

For example, Falola and Ihonvbere have noted, that "the intensification of Nigeria's role in the OAU, the United Nations, the Non-aligned movement, the group of 77 and the ...activity against racial discrimination and colonialism, increased material and diplomatic support for liberation movements and the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are evidence of [the desired goals] to win friends within the OAU and to emerge as Africa's spokes country."(41) In this regard, Nigeria used its oil wealth to pursue the country's interest within the African continent and elsewhere. It is not unusual for nation-states to bask in their past glories with a view to persuading its people that through hard work such glorious times may very well come again. Nigeria should be able to use such accomplishments to revive the spirit of nationalism --the kind that was popular and commonplace in the late 70's and early 80's when the country was relatively wealthy as a result of the abundance of "petro dollars."

Dealing with the issues of Corruption, Fraud

Two other relational areas of concern as Nigerians march toward civilian rule in 1992 and thereafter are the questions of electoral fraud and corruption which

are rampant in the struggle for power. These factors have impugned the outcome of previous elections and the concept of democracy in the country. Electoral fraud remains a major bane in the nation's search for democracy and stability; a condition that is exacerbated by the ubiquitous nature of corruption.

An examination of extant literature on corruption is replete with various analyses of the causes and effects of corruption. For example, Gerald Caiden argues that scarcity breeds corruption and that "every society exhibits certain features that encourage and foster official misconduct.... Unless they are tackled, corruption is likely to persist." (42) The sociologist, Varda Eker, affirms that the "term[corruption] is usually reserved for the practice of using the power of office for making private gain in breach of laws and regulations nominally in force..." (43)

Elsewhere, G. E. Caiden and N. J. Caiden have argued that "although the public's perception about corruption in developing countries are likely to be wholly negative, most of the existing scholarly literature on the subject tends to take the opposite view..." (44) Thus, the economist, M. Shahid Alam, alluding to the work of the functionalist, D. H. Bayley asserts rather poignantly that corruption in developing countries plays a "role which is sufficiently important that if it was not played by this device must be played by another..." (45)

How, therefore, are these perplexing analyses related to the Nigerian case? In his New Year speech to the nation following the overthrow of the Second Republic, General Buhari stated the reasons for the military coup as follows:

While corruption and in discipline had been associated with our state of underdevelopment, these twin evils in our politics have attained unprecedented height over the past four years. The corrupt, inept and insensitive leadership in the last four years has been the source of immorality and impropriety in our society, since what happens in any society is largely a reflection of the leadership of that society. (46)

When Buhari's major assertions are juxtaposed against those of Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu, the leader of the January 1966 coup, one sees some parallels as to the causes of both coups. For instance, Nzeogwu said after the coup:

Our enemies are the political profiteers, swindlers, the men in high and low places who seek bribes and demand ten percent, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as minister and VIP's of waste, the tribalists, the nepotists.... (47)

What does this comparison betoken? It betoken's the fact that fraud and corruption have become endemic in the society. Perhaps through socialization they have become "acceptable" norms given the longevity of their practice in the system. Any attempt to stop it, while not impossible, is

difficult because it will meet with resistance even from "high" places. Thus, the issue, then, is how to control it.

Indeed, that Nigerians do not have a monopoly on corruption is a known fact, and stressing the issue as many scholars have rightfully done would be tantamount to flogging a dead horse. Instead, I would like to argue that as far as humankind was concerned, corruption was and is *semper et ubique*—it is instinctive. (48)

Arthur Nzeribe takes umbrage on this view. In his diatribe on corruption in Nigeria, he stated emphatically that "while ethical and moral values are an integral element of the human being as God's creation, and while the 250 ethnic groups in the federation of Nigeria may have numerous variants of the same ethical and moral injunction, there is still little doubt or dispute that all Nigerian ethnic groups, big and small cherish certain universal moral values." (49)

He further suggests that corruption was probably a learned behavior in most societies and not a "genetic" characteristic. So, he argues: "What one can say for Western societies in this regard is that through decades, and in some cases centuries, of observance of their tradition and culture, bolstered by education and enlightened legislation, there has emerged a political culture which has more vigorously implemented the demands of ethics and morality in public office and public conduct than perhaps has been the case in our society." (50)

I view his former assertion with reservations, noting that "human nature" is too complex to assume its "absolute" obedience to God's moral will. One must take cognizance of environmental "determinism" or factors that are sometimes beyond human control. However, his latter analysis is quite plausible. In fact, I would like to argue that if Nigeria applied similar political engineering to its system, it too, with patience and prudence might acquire similar characteristics; one that is likely to further political stability in the country.

But when "70% of Nigerian foreign exchange earnings is repatriated out of the Nigerian economy" (51) and \$33 billion of the nation's wealth is invested in foreign banks by Nigerians according to the Morgan Report, (52) those should be causes for alarm and the need to control corruption. It should be stressed that while not necessarily acquiescing to these occurrences in Nigerian polity, that many Nigerians would like such "loots" to be invested in the nation's economy to provide jobs. Such jobs could help to further the process of development and demarginalization of the people. Diamond (53) and Ihonvbere (54) have given a litany of corrupt practices commonplace in the Nigerian polity. However, Diamond notes that... "what Nigerians resent is not individual wealth [especially that earned in the old fashion way through hard work] per se, but the riches that have been garnered at the expense of society, and so have failed to improve the standard of living in ordinary people." (55)

It is important that Nigerians should be continuously educated through the mediums of television, radio and newspapers about the moral, psychological, economic and developmental consideration to invest in the nation. Perhaps, this strategy would be efficacious if the nation launched a moral crusade, similar or even better than the "intentions" of the policies of War Against Indiscipline (WAI).

Another political dilemma that must be tackled in the electoral process is that of political fraud. Indeed, political fraud, especially the rigging of elections has been a major disruptive element in Nigerian politics. The use of an open ballot system which was discussed earlier has been suggested as a possible remedy. Although it has not been fully tested, it is probably a good start.

To be sure, if only "men" were angels we would not need a government and a priori there would be no political clashes and conflicts. But when one truly examines the concept, politics, one sees it to be enamored with conflict. Definitionally, politics is described variously as the struggle for power; who gets what, when and how; the authoritative allocation of values, et cetera. So, the nature of politics itself conjures competition, and when such a competition is for the allocation of scarce resources, the battle cry from the political cleavages can sometimes be very fierce and the clashes tend to create durable centrifugal tendencies. What point am I trying to make here? It is that given the electoral conflicts and instability of Nigeria's post-independence political history, a maximum attempt should be made to control political violence and its sources through "genuine" legal enforcement.

The Issue of Diarchy

Some political observers have suggested a system of government known as "diarchy" for Nigeria - i.e., a system of government made up of civilians and the soldiers as a strategy for avoiding military coups in the country. Indeed, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, one of the founding fathers of the nation and first president of Nigeria has remarked that:

...not that the military caste is perfect or that civilians are imperfect, but that civil rule depends upon the military establishment as a sanction for the maintenance and enforcement of the law. Until developing nations have had sufficient experience and maturity in handling human problems with reason and finesse, and until they have become disciplined in their personal lives, community living, and the exercise of political rights and privileges...incorporating the military hierarchy on a more active basis in a civilian-based administration to make it stable [is a reasonable proposition].(56)

It might be argued that military involvement in Nigerian politics has become part and parcel of its political culture given the longevity of the military at the

helm of the Nigerian government. In fact, it might be contended that through the process of political socialization many Nigerians, especially the youth, have not only resigned themselves to the reality of military intrusion into politics, but may have accepted it as the norm. Today, it is possible that many who aspire to become head of state have chosen the military as a sure and perhaps quickest way to that goal. Thus, it might be wise to incorporate the army into a civilian regime, in spite of the sensitivity of many to this proposal and reality. As a matter of fact, this dualism already exists, except of course, that the head of state has always been a military officer. In a military cum-civilian-administration, the head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces would have to be a civilian. Tom Ikimi, the Chairman of the NRC was said to have promised that his party would bring the military into his government in 1992. However, he refuted the statement and clarified his position by stating that, "the NRC government wants Nigeria to be a world power in a decade and a strong and prosperous nation deserves a strong army. I have never said that the army should be part of a civilian democratic government." (57) Probably, the alleged statement accredited to Tom Ikimi represented a true and honest assessment of the political reality in Nigeria, even though the idea may be unpopular among many political elites and analysts. Nzeribe has suggested that both political parties must have in their manifesto a desire to "promote the general welfare of the Nigerian military. Though not a diarchy, the military should be represented both at the state and Federal levels of governments, as a means of insulating them from future intervention." (58) This is so, since the military has a monopoly on the instrument of coercion. (59)

Whereas such a political marriage of convenience between the civilians and military should be a temporary measure, I maintain that the de-coupling process should be delicately implemented. Perhaps in the Machiavellian metaphor, the civilians should play the game of the "lion and fox". The soldiers have been in power for "too" long and sociologically, old habits diehard, and attitudes tend to change incrementally.

Speaking in Ogbomosho, during the 1983 presidential campaign, president Shehu Shagari alluded to the Nigerian democratic experiment (60) -- one that must take into account Nigeria's political characteristics. Nigeria has traversed a long way in its search for a viable democracy and stability. At this stage, therefore, Nigerians must take bold measures and attempt to concoct an eclectic system that works. Like scientists, the experiments must be carried out in an atmosphere of dedication and patience. John Wiseman has argued rather eloquently that "democracy will remain the major path for African countries because it reflects the plural nature of African states," (61) and Nigeria is no exception.

So far, I have looked at some of the political problems confronting Nigeria and some ways in which to deal with them in the short run. But no amount of theorizing would mollify the imbroglio in Nigerian politics. I maintain, therefore, that concrete problems require tangible solutions, while simultaneously recognizing the fact that there are no quick fixes to endemic problems. Chudi Uwazurike has noted that "... under third world conditions even ostensibly neat models [or paradigms] founder in the face of real life struggles...."(62) A country is "doomed" if it does not recognize the fact that failures are natural, and that out of the lessons learned from its failures it could arise to be a great nation. And, we need not look that far for the history of some of the world's greatest democracies are replete with failures. But despite these failures they have emerged as great nations today. Nigeria stands at the crossroads of joining this exclusive club, given its tremendous but under-utilized manpower and perceived regional power status. This view, Andrew Young asserted rather succinctly when he said, "Nigeria is in some important respects Africa's most powerful nation," (63) probably because of its manpower and natural resources.

Political Education

What about the long range strategy for sustaining democracy and stability in Nigeria? Analogically, a nation-state is like a car. When it is new, it usually runs well and requires little or no maintenance. However, after a couple of years, the need for periodic tune-ups becomes imperative to sustain it and prolong its life. This analogy leads us to the next question which is how to maintain a well fought for and earned democracy. Whereas ideas for this are numerous, various and even sometimes contradictory, I would like to suggest political education. The assumption here is that education helps to change attitudes and that "proper" education could foster the "right" attitudes. By this strategy, one would like to suggest the inclusion of political education into the curriculum at the kindergarten up to the high school level. This view is not novel. After all, students recite the pledge of allegiance at school and other major gatherings. I believe that the kind of political education that the nation should embark upon is one that teaches the rudimentary characteristics of democracy and the art of "good" government. A good government at the vestigial level may be one that stresses the following characteristics: (a) Politics is a variable-sum-game; (b) National interest supersedes individual, parochial, provincial and regional interest; (c) Political parties represent national interest, not just party members interest; (d) The respect for human rights; (e) Freedom of expression. Such a view has been referred to elsewhere as "strategic imperative" for the furtherance of the aspiration of the African people. These conditions include the following: (a) Responsiveness and efficiency; (b) Trust creation and confidence

building which must be between the governor and the governed; (c) Decentralization of power to the grassroots; (d) Pluralism and de-centralization of the economy; (e) Political communications; (f) Education and political education; (g) Promotion and defence of human rights; (h) Creation of appropriate political machinery; (i) Renewal of mandate and succession programme; (j) Popular participation in all aspects of the developmental process. (64)

Whereas the former should serve as a form of political education at the early level, the latter should be instituted to help lubricate the political system at all levels. It is hoped that this strategy could enhance the activity of the already established Center for the Democratic Studies (CDS) which is aimed at "nurturing politicians and aspiring politicians democratic values and its etiquette."(65)

One hopes that the kind of democracy which the nation yearns for is one that is not imposed. As many Nigerians have learned a "genuine" and durable democracy must be built from down upwards, not from up downwards.(66) It must be taught, preached and even prayed for at the grassroots level. Such a strategy is likely to further what president Ibrahim Babangida termed "demilitarization of Nigerian politics...while transforming Nigerians from the untenable past of destructive politics to one of grassroots democracy,"(67) [through early political education].

It is a given that most Nigerians and "Nigerianists" (i.e.,scholars interested in Nigerian affairs) no matter their political ideology are in favor of a viable democratic and stable political system. Indeed, many have (in their own special ways) been working toward this objective. They only have different tactics for attaining the same goal. I suggest that this is one strategy. To delay the process to the high school or higher level may be unproductive as some have come to learn.(68)

Conclusion

The late Chief Obafemi Awolowo probably captured what should be-come the political focus and attitudes of Nigerian law-makers when he said in regard to socialism in Nigeria: "No one nation ever attains a worth-while goal designed for the benefit of the entire people in one fell swoop without courting irreparable or prolong disaster for the people concerned"(69)

Nigeria's quest for democracy and stability will not come easily. It requires careful planning and patience. But Nigeria, like many Third World nations, suffers from what Albert Hirschman described as "La rage de vouloir conclure" (the mania for wanting to be done with it).(70) This assertion assumes that as soon as Third World nations are confronted with failure, the intellectuals call for an immediate comprehensive solution to the problem without first mastering all

of the local problems. Indeed, sometimes they introduce policy solutions from abroad to tackle indigenous problems. These solutions do not always work.

In the Nigerian case, the open ballot system has been introduced with numerous assumptions as to its indigenous validity and efficacy. One major test for it was the December 8, 1990 local elections, which was said to be successful. Indeed, it was revealed that about 12.5 million people voted. This represented approximately 22 per cent of eligible voters. (71) No matter its merits or demerits, its outcome should be considered heuristic for now. More testing is needed at the grassroots level to determine its effectiveness to produce the desired result.

Although the political parties back the system, it appears that they have done so with the assumption that the system would be beneficial to their party, and probably not because it is "good" for the country. It has been suggested that "the process of psycho-cultural modernization or change within an individual will be less disruptive and will endure longer if the person is rewarded substantially for having made the shift." (72) The open ballot system introduces a new equation into the nation's political culture and the response of the people to it may rest on how they view the system (either as rewarding or non-rewarding) and their comprehension of its "genuine" purpose.

Nigeria's policy makers may come up with strategies, structures and institutions to solve the nation's problems, but if they do not deal with the root causes of instability their labor will be in vain. For example, the building of modern parliaments and other institutions for governing do not solve political problems. This was the lesson learned by the unused and ubiquitous parliaments in the African continent and else-where. One could only hope that these elegant edifices are lying "fallow" as the attitudes of the legislators who are in the position to use them are adequately adjusted to take advantage of these modern structures and institutions. Political structures alone will not lift any country out of its economic and political miasma. Thus, Elizabeth Normandy has argued that "more attention should be paid to political attitudes and culture and the role they play in Nigeria's political stability. More studies of this much neglected area could offset the preponderance of studies on political structure and provide a more complete picture of the causes of and remedies for instability." (73)

Although it remains difficult to study the political attitudes and culture in Nigeria because of the fact that the military has been entrenched in the governance of the country for so long, the issue is an important one deserving major consideration.

The issues of corruption and electoral fraud are major concerns that the nation must address in order to further democracy and stability. To suggest, however, that these irregularities in Nigeria's political system will go away in one fell swoop is to delude oneself. But it does not mean that they are impossible to

eradicate. It was to this end that I suggested the need for political education. Such an education could enhance what Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba have termed "the civic culture"- i.e., that balanced set of attitudes toward citizenship and politics that helps nourish a democratic, stable and effective nation. (74) In all, therefore, "adequate" education helps to change attitudes especially when it is aimed at the youth who must govern tomorrow.

Endnotes

1. See Onyeka Onwenu, *Nigeria: A Squandering of Riches*. (A documentary produced by the BBC and Nigerian Television, 1984)
2. The literature on this subject is overwhelming. See for example, Samuel P. Huntington, *Soldiers and the State*(Cambridge:Harvard University Press, 1967); Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Studies in Military Styles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); Celestine O. Bassey, "Retrospects and Prospects of Political Stability in Nigeria," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1989), pp. 97-113.
3. "Federalism: past, present and future, Accident or design? West Africa, (December 3-9, 1990), pp. 2940-2941.
4. Rene Dumont, *False Start in Black Africa* (New York:Praeger, 1969), pp. 18-23.
5. Gary Bertsch, Robert Clark, David Wood, *Comparing Political Systems: Power and Policy in Three Worlds* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986), p. 199.
6. Pita Ogaba Agbese, "The Impending Demise of Nigeria's Forthcoming Third Republic," *Africa Today*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (1990), pp. 23-44. See also J. Isawa Elaigwu, "The Shadow of Religion on Nigerian Federalism: 1960-90." This was a paper presented at the 33rd Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, Baltimore, Maryland, November 1-4, 1990.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Julius Ihonvbere, "Structural Adjustment, The April 1990 Coup and Democratization in Nigeria;" A paper presented at the 33rd Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, Baltimore, Maryland, November 1-4, 1990.

9. Oyeleye Oyediran, "Liberal Democracy for Nigeria." A paper presented at the 33rd Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, Baltimore, Maryland, November 1-4, 1990.
10. West Africa(September 24-30, 1990), p. 2586.
11. West Africa(December 3-9, 1990), p. 2959.
12. Oyediran, "Liberal Democracy for Nigeria." See West Africa (April 8-14, 1991), p. 516. It was alleged that after the December 1990 open ballot local elections that there were instances of broken friendships, severed matrimony and split homes due to differing political beliefs.
13. See "'Local government elections in Nigeria: Lustreless campaigns," West Africa((December 10-16, 1990), p. 2984.
14. West Africa(December 17-23, 1990), p. 3046. See also Agbese, "The Impending Demise of Nigeria's Forthcoming Third Republic, Africa Today, p. 33.
15. See Raymond Bonner, "African Democracy," The New Yorker, (September 3, 1990), p. 100.
16. The concept nation and state have been used interchangeably with nation-state for analytic convenience.
17. West Africa (April 8-14, 1991), p. 516.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Larry Diamond, "Nigeria in Search of Democracy," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 62 (1984), pp. 914-921. Diamond also asserted that the experience of the Second Republic made it obvious that several institutions should be removed from the control of elected officials and entrusted to the supervision of the military. These were:
 - A. The Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal (i.e., the tribunal responsible for punishing corrupt officials).
 - B. The Federal and State Electoral Commissions.
 - C. The Police Service Commission.

D. The Judicial Service Commissions.

E. The National Population Commission.

Such suggestions as to how Nigeria could solve some of its endemic problems are welcome. I believe, though, that institutional changes while very vital must be followed by attitudinal changes. The latter may be accomplished through political education and socialization.

21. Time Magazine, Vol. 136, No. 27 (December 24, 1990), p.44.
22. Ali Mazrui, PBS documentary, "In Search of Stability," The Africans, part six.
23. Claude Ake, "Explaining Political Instability in New States," The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1973), pp. 347-359; Larry Diamond, "Nigeria in Search of Democracy," Foreign Affairs, pp. 905-927; Pita Ogaba Agbese, "The Impending Demise of Nigeria's Forthcoming Third Republic," Africa Today, pp. 23-44. Anthony A. Akinola, "A Critique of Nigeria's Proposed Two-party System," The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1989), pp. 109-123; Chudi Uwazurike, "Confronting Potential Breakdown: the Nigerian Redemocratisation Process in Critical Perspective," The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1990), pp. 55-77; Larry Diamond, "Issues in the Constitutional Design of A Third Nigerian Republic," African Affairs, Vol. 86, No. 343 (April 1987), pp.209-226.
24. Charles McClelland, "International Relations: Wisdom or Science," in James Rosenau (ed.), International Politics And Foreign Policy: a reader in research and theory (New York : The Free Press, 1969), p. 3.
25. Emmanuel Udogu, "National Integration Attempts in Nigerian Politics 1979-1984," Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism, Vol. XVII, No. 1-2 (1990), p. 166.
26. Ibid.
27. Claude Ake, The Theory of Political Integration (Homewood, Ill: The Dorsey Press, 1967), pp. 1-18.
28. Agbese, "The Impending Demise of Nigeria's Forthcoming Third Republic," Africa Today, pp. 23-29.

29. Akinola, "Critique of Nigeria's Proposed Two-party System," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 109-113.
30. Ihonvbere, "Structural Adjustment, The April 1990 coup and Demo-cratization in Nigeria."
31. Uwazruike, "Confronting Potential Breakdown: the Nigerian Redemocratisation Process in Critical Perspective," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 61-77.
32. Richard Sklar, "Nigerian Politics in Perspective," in Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe (eds), *Nigeria: Modernization and Politics of Communalism* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1971). See Okwudiba Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*(Enugu: Forth Dimension Publishing Company, 1980).
33. Claude Ake, "Explaining Political Instability in New States," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp.347-359.
34. PBS documentary, "In Search of Stability," *The Africans*, part six.
35. Ali Mazrui, "Walter Rodney: The Problematic of African History." (Book Review) A paper discussed at the 33rd Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, Baltimore, Maryland, November 1-4, 1990.
36. PBS documentary, *The Africans*, part six.
37. Larry Diamond, "Issues In The Constitutional Design of A Third Nigerian Republic," *African Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 343 (April 1987), p. 224.
38. Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 10-40.
39. Udogu, "National Integration Attempts in Nigerian Politics 1979-1984," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, p. 166.
40. Bolaji Akinyemi, "National Unity Within the Context of Regional Relations: The Nigerian Experience" in D. R. Smock (ed.), *The Search for National Integration in Africa* (New York: Free Press, 1976), p. 72.
41. Toyin Falola, *Julius Ihonvbere, The Rise & Fall of Nigeria's Second Republic: 1979-84* (London: Zed books, 1985), pp. 92-93. For example, Nigeria

built a highway from Nigeria to the capital of the Republic of Benin for N1.8 million, and gave that country N2 million 25-year interest free loan; Nigeria agreed to invest N7.2 million in a joint cement project and N20 million in a sugar venture in that country....In 1972, Nigeria donated N50,000 to the Guinean ruling party....In 1973, the government gave N2 million grant to Sahelian countries. In 1974, Ethiopia received N200,000 for draught relief. In 1975, it spent N89,000 on the printing of Niger's calendar....In 1972, Nigeria contributed f126,000 to the OAU liberation Committee and \$180,000 to that fund in 1973. The MPLA received f10 million in 1977. N2.5 million went into the South Africa Relief Fund in 1976. N250,000 was given to Mozambique for the support of Zimbabwean freedom fighters....In 1975, Angola received \$20 million and the ANC of South Africa \$32,000. These are a few illustrations of Nigeria's desire to project itself as a leader in the continent "before the well ran dry." Nigerians have every reason to be proud of these accomplishments. See Diamond, "Issues in the Constitutional Design of a Third Nigerian Republic," *Foreign Affairs*, p. 209-226. See Timothy M. Shaw, "Nigeria in the International System," in I. William Zartman ed., *The Political Economy of Nigeria* (New York: Praeger, 1983), pp. 207-236. See also Harold D. Nelson ed., *Nigeria: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Press, 1982), pp. 224-229.

42. Gerald Caiden, "Abuse of Public Trust: Fact or way of Life?" *USA Today* (July 1990), pp. 58-60.

43. Varda Eker, "On the Origin of Corruption: Irregular Incentives in Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 19, No. 1 (1981), p. 173.

44. See the survey by G. E. Caiden and N. J. Caiden, "Administrative Corruption," *Public Administration Review* Vol. 37, No. 3 (May-June 1977), pp. 301-309.

45. Cited in Shahid Alam, "Anatomy of Corruption: An Approach to the Political Economy of Underdevelopment," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* Vol. 48 (October 1989), p. 441.

46. Major General M. Buhari, New Year Day Broadcast to the Nation, January 1, 1984. Cited in Falola and Ihonvbere, *The Rise & Fall of Nigeria's Second Republic*, p. 231. Elsewhere, the General said: "Gross indiscipline, corruption, squandemania, misuse and abuse of public office for self or group aggrandizement which has assumed debilitating proportions in the last few years

will be dealt with ruthlessly no matter whoever may be involved." See Onwenu, Nigeria: A Squandering of Riches.

47. See John St, Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War*(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), p. 38. See also A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 71.

48. Carlton J. H. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1968), pp. 288-296. This is only an attempt to argue along the same line as Hayes with respect to nationalism. See also E. Ike Udogu, "Nationalism and Political Integration: Toward 1992." This was a paper presented at the Second Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI), the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, September 3-8, 1990. The paper dealt with the issue of European integration. Arthur Nzeribe, *Nigeria I believe: A Manifesto for the Third Republic*(London: Kilimanjoro Publishing Company, 1984) p.21. Nzeribe chafed at the position taken by some politicians who argue that the "causes of corruption lie deep in traditional habits, and that corruption should be viewed more positively as long established patterns of behavior and cannot be rooted out because many forms of it are widely acceptable to the general public..." See David Ejoor, *Reminiscences* (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 1989), p. 174. General Ejoor(rtd) noted that [even] the military may be more corrupt than civilian politicians, because of its monopoly and command over the instruments of coercion [which] allows it to get away with more abuses of power than the civilian government [that they chastise].

49. Nzeribe, *Nigeria I believe: A Manifesto for the Third Republic*, p. 20.

50. *Ibid*, p. 22.

51. Agbese, "The Impending Demise of Nigeria's Forthcoming Third Republic," *Africa Today*, p. 28. See also the Report of the Odama Commission on the Causes of the Nigerian Economic Crisis (Lagos: Government Press, 1982); Yusufu Bala Usman, *Nigeria Against the IMF: The Home Market Strategy* (Kaduna: Vanguard Publishers, 1986).

52. See Uwadiogwu Ogonnaya, "Nigerians have \$33bn in Foreign accounts," *National Concord*, Vol. 11, No. 2193 (Thursday, August 16, 1990).

53. Diamond, "Nigerian in Search of Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, pp. 906-909.

54. Ihonvbere, "Structural Adjustment, The April 1990 coup and Democratization in Nigeria. See "Obasanjo denounces corruption," West Africa, (December 10-16, 1990), p. 3017. Obasanjo accused the administration after his of turning the nation's civil service into a haven of corruption and ineptitude ... a haven for creating jobs for the boys, rewarding party faithfuls and doling out political largesse. He suggested that the only way to improve this situation was by training, motivation and leadership by example.
55. Diamond, "Nigeria in Search of Democracy," Foreign Affairs, p. 924.
56. "Democracy with Military Vigilance," The Sunday Triumph (Kano, Nigeria), August 28, 1983. See also Diamond, "Nigeria in Search of Democracy," Foreign Affairs, pp. 916-917, and "Issues in the Constitutional Design of a Third Nigerian Republic," African Affairs, p. 219.
57. See "Political draughtsman," West Africa (September 17-23, 1990), p. 3047.
58. Nzeribe, Nigeria I believe: A Manifesto for the Third Republic, p. 78.
59. Falola and Ihonvbere, The Rise and Fall of Nigeria's Second Republic, 1979-84, p. 254.
60. Mazrui, "In Search of stability," The Africans, part six.
61. John A. Wiseman, Democracy in Black Africa: Survival and Revival (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1990), p. 190. See E. Ike Udogu, "Democracy's Prospects in Sub-Saharan Africa," Africa Today, Vol. 37, No. 3 (1990), pp. 45-47. See "A Dialogue with Nigeria's Chief Spokesperson," EMERGE, Vol. 2, Issue 9 (August 1991), PP. 11-13. When queried as to whether Nigeria's quest for democracy was something that burgeoned during the colonial times, Nigeria's Information Minister, Alex Akinyele said: "I would not say it's a legacy of the colonial masters. I think it is the natural attribute of the Nigerians, which does not accommodate authority, tyranny or dictatorship. Everybody wants to be free, everybody wants his views to be known...so all of this lead to our upholding democracy as the best way of life. Even within the family or in the village or in the town, if a traditional ruler does not rule according to the wishes of the people, they will gang up against him and get him out and install somebody in his place.

62. Uwazurike, "Confronting Political Breakdown: the Nigerian Redemocratization process in Critical Perspective," *The Journal of Modern African Affairs*, p. 61.

63. Andrew Young, "The United States and Africa: Victory for Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (1981), p. 654. See Emeka Nwokedi, "Subregional Security and Nigerian Foreign Policy," *African Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 335 (April 1985), pp. 195-209.

64. *West Africa* (May 7-13, 1990), p. 762.

65. Ibrahim Babangida, "Contending Approaches to the Role of the Military in Politics," in Ibrahim Babangida, *Portrait of a new Nigeria: Selected Speeches of IBB* (Lagos: Precision Press, n.d.), p. 83, cited in Agbese, "The Impending Demise of the Nigeria's Forthcoming Third Republic," *Africa Today*, p. 32.

66. See D. K Chisiza's pamphlet, *Realities of African Independence* (London: African Publication Trust, 1961). Also cited in Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism* (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 59. Chisiza was concerned about the direction of pan-Africanism, and suggested the need to consolidate re-gional solidarities before the establishment of pan-Africanism. Similarly, the argument here is that democracy must take roots and germinate at the grassroots level before it can be viable. That is, it must be nurtured and nourished from the base to the top and not vice versa.

67. *West Africa* (November 12-18, 1990), p. 2831.

68. See E. Ike Udogu, *Chuka and Family: A Political and Sociological Fiction*. This is a forthcoming book. It was the tradition at Christ the King high school (Ck high) in Biagara, to present an annual award to the student who in the opinion of the student body had made the greatest con-tribution to the school and enhanced its prestige. In this year, there were three candidates vieing for the coveted student-of-the-year award. There was Chuka, the school's soccer and tennis captain and star. He represented the school at the regional and national levels in both sports. There was Shaka, a one time president of the Rabonite student organization, the most populous ethnic organization on campus. The third candidate was Nudo, a smart and bright tactician. Given the popularity of sports at CK high, it was considered a foregone conclusion that Chuka would win the year's award. Polls leading to the final hours of the election showed Chuka to be well ahead of the other candidates, but Chuka hailed from a minority ethnic group. When it became clear to Shaka that he

might not win, he summoned his ethnic organization, the Rabonite student union who rallied behind him to give him the victory. This was how Chuka became conscious of the politics of ethnicity, and how after high school, he was determined to wage a war against it - but it was a losing battle.

69. See Daily Times, 22 September 1978. Cited in Falola and Ihonvbere, *The Rise & Fall of the Second Republic*, p. 57.

70. Robert P. Clark, *Power and Policy in the Third World* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company), pp. 158-159. Suffice it to say that Hirschman borrowed the phrase from Gustave Flaubert.

71. See "Fresh elections," *West Africa*, (May 6-12, 1991), P.719.

72. Clark, *Power and Policy in the Third World*, P. 76.

73. Elizabeth Normandy, "Trends in the Study of Nigerian Politics." (A paper presented at the 1990 annual meeting of the African studies Association, Baltimore, Md.), p. 29.

74. Gabriel Almond, and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963).