

The Military, Civil Society and the Issue of Democratic Governance *Toward Nigeria's Fourth Republic*

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ABSTRACT

Generally, the assumption is that it is useful to apprehend where a nation has come from, historically, in order to successfully map out its future plans. Thus this article, among other things, addresses the complex process of democratization in Nigerian politics since 1985. It examines endeavors by civil society to reinstitute democratic governance in the country following the abortion of the Third Republic on June 12, 1993, and concludes with a possible strategy for the sustainment of democracy in the forthcoming republic.

THE POLITICAL actions of the military regime within the Nigerian system represent an obstacle to the vision of democracy in the republic. This was especially so between 1992 and 1994. Endeavors to rectify the political complications emanating from the regime's policies, by relevant groups within the civil society, have so far been problematic and unsuccessful.

It was not that the military's penchant for nullifying elections was novel. It was that the painstaking procedure made by the military to see that the elections to the Third Republic did not mimic previous ones (as for example, 1979, 1983) heightened the expectations of the electorates and citizenry. Thus, the immediate reactions of the country following one of the numerous *faux pas* of the military, when it annulled the June 12, 1993 presidential election were expected, and the consequences predictable.

It is a given that the country's gestation as a British colony and final birth as a sovereign nation-state was mired by political contestations and upheavals that continually threatened its tenuous political atomism. Its metamorphosing process in nation-building, in evidence as long ago as 1960, has depicted the problematic procedure in altering the defective political "genetic" make-up inherited from the womb of colonialism. The inherent instability in the republic today flows in part from these historic and political disarticulations.

The general assumptions were that the military interregna and the occasional renaissance of partisan politics (as for example, 1979) would lead to a

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major mutation that could change for good the erstwhile contentious genetic strands in the country's body politic, and usher in an era of national cohesion and political legitimacy.

For example, each time the army has seized power from a civilian government, it has affirmed that as a fiduciary guardian, it would lead the republic into political nirvana and genuine democracy after first eradicating the nation's endemic corruption, and putting the country's economic house in order, *inter alia*.¹ But no sooner have the Armed Forces claimed to have acceded to power, due to over-whelming pressure from the populace, than some of its leaders "serendipitously" found the fortunes of governance so robust that they were seduced by the very evil they swore to get rid of.² As a result, it is really tough to relinquish power. So, "the more things change, the more they remain the same," is a familiar aphorism that many critics of Nigerian political development apply to this phenomenon.

Central to the proceeding analysis is the notion that if the country is oblivious to its past, it could be condemned to the same pitfalls that led to the demise of its three republics. To that end, this disquisition seeks to do the following: 1. Trace briefly events and antinomies leading to the June 12, 1993 presidential election and its annulment; 2. examine the efficacy (or lack of it) of the civil society in tackling the political imbroglios that arose as a result of the policies of the military administration; and 3. revisit a possible strategy for democratic sustainment in the forthcoming republic.

Transition to the Third Republic 1985-1992

The post-independent Nigerian political history is replete with instability brought about by corruption, mismanagement, indiscipline, lack of national cohesion, et cetera. Indeed, the failure of the Third Republic and plans for the fourth (all other things being equal), are indicative of the failures of past endeavors. Moreover, military praetorianism as a presumed strategy for lifting the republic from its economic and political miasma has in over two decades of its governance lacked efficacy. Coups and counter-coups have become commonplace. In fact, no matter how well intended, the military's quest to democratize the Nigerian polity has not only promoted national angst, malaise, dissonance, and the problem of legitimacy, but also left many in bewilderment as to the true intentions of the military regimes. Whereas many attribute the republic's inconsistencies and, in fact, explain the country's political unsteadiness and dislocation under the rubric of chaos theory (that is, certain phenomena involve so many factors that they are inherently unpredictable),³ others place the blame on the military, and their precursors, the weak political class for their inability to solve the dysfunctional phenomena inherent in the polity.

The process toward the Third Republic, which was in essence the prologue to the June 12 imbroglio, was tortuous and satiated with anxiety; and the architect of this perplexing situation was the Babangida administration. Although it has been noted elsewhere that the military, probably fatigued from

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coups and the cumbersome burden of governing a resilient and sophisticated polity, decided to relinquish power to democratically elected civilians in 1993,⁴ it might be safe to argue, in retrospect, that the Nigerian military probably suffers from "oligarchic patrimonialism." This is especially so given the manner in which power seems to be transferred "ascriptively" among the military plutocrats at the apex of its hierarchy. Indeed, its monopoly on power manifested itself during the continual metamorphoses from 1984-1993 (e.g., Generals Buhari—Babangida—Abacha—and possibly Diya). These leaders, in conjunction with their close military advisers set the political agenda for the republic.

For instance, in 1985, the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), in its rudimentary strategy to hand-over power to a civilian government, set up a 17-member Political Bureau (PB). The *raison d'être* of the PB was to review and assess Nigeria's political history, and identify the fundamental pitfalls which precipitated the failures in the past. The PB's mandate was to identify tactics for mollifying the country's intricate problems. It was hoped that such strategies might be conducive to the instauration of the Third republic.

Following its deliberations, the PB advised the AFRC, among other factors, that the number of political parties in the republic be restricted and condensed to two in order to promote a politics based on ideology and principles rather than ethnicity.⁵ The AFRC acceded to the recommendations of the PB, augmenting them with the following as the logical basis for the two-party system: 1. Political associations were dominated by a few rich individuals; 2. associations were interested in serving their parochial interests instead of the nation; 3. the groups showed the very deficiencies of intolerance and self-aggrandizement which brought about the collapse of earlier experiments in democracy; 4. the associations paid little attention to the organizational structures at the grassroots level.⁶ Before the condensation of the political parties into two, there were approximately 49 registered associations.⁷

Ideologically, Sam Oyovbaire (a member of the PB) contended that the two-party system would "set the stage for the gradual clarification of our choice and locus in accordance with the great historical systems—i.e., capitalism and socialism [with the National Republican Convention (NRC) espousing capitalistic doctrine and Social Democratic Party (SDP), socialistic dogma.]"⁸

Having accepted this modality, the major task confronting the AFRC, contended Pita Agbese, was the promulgation of certain concrete programs designed to accomplish the goal of democratic stability. These objectives were: 1. Enactment of laws to preclude "bad" Nigerians from hijacking the politics of the Third Republic; 2. state funding of political parties and electioneering campaigns so as to de-emphasize the role of private money in politics; 3. establishment of state agencies such as the Center for Democratic Studies (CDS) and Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) to teach, inculcate and induce democratic behavior; 4. direct supervision of elections and other aspects of the transition program by the AFRC; and 5. the establishment of two "grassroots" political parties to permit mass participation in politics.⁹

It was on the basis of these essential conditions that the parties went into

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political contestation. It was, however, not too long before the problematic politics that were reminiscent of Nigeria's atavistic struggle for power (e.g., corruption, electoral rigging, etc.) unfolded and came to the fore.

The gubernatorial and state legislative elections were held in 1991, but in a real sense, the true locus of power, prestige, and, in fact, national concern was the presidential office. It is, therefore, to a brief analysis of this significant step in the march toward the revival of democracy in Third Republic that I now turn because it served as the premonitory omen to the June 12, 1993 presidential election,—the outcome of which posed a challenge to the pertinent groups within the Nigerian civil society.

The political duel between the SDP and NRC in the odyssey toward democratic governance in Nigeria was discordant and at times fierce. The decision by the two parties not to perform legitimately in the final stages of the electoral process was not only confounding, but also left many observers profoundly perplexed in light of previous difficulties and experiences which led to the resurgence of the military.

In the environment of extreme cynicism which characterized the entire transition scheme, the parties in their intra-party fracas gave venomous ammunition to those skeptics of the two-party system and of the AFRC, itself. They maintained that the real issue in Nigerian politics was the lack of commitment and obligation to a democratic political culture and that this oversight was likely to lead to the abortion of the Third Republic.¹⁰ It was against the background of such perturbing conjectures that the federal legislative primary and more importantly the executive primary elections were conducted in 1992.

The Presidential Election of 1992 and 1993

It is safe to contend that because of the high stakes involved in capturing the presidential office, the political actors construed the intraparty competition to become the flagbearers of their parties the “mother of all battles.” Hence, the chief principals, Olu Falae and Shehu Musa Yar’ Adua (SDP), and Adamu Ciroma and Umaru Shinkafi (NRC) believed that they had to win at all costs. Little wonder, then, that the primary elections were mired by massive rigging and what Karl Maier termed the politics of “moneyocracy” in which “money, fertilizers and even salt, rather than ideology or campaign platform became the big vote getters.”¹¹ In fact, reacting to the wanton and egregious political discrepancies, Ibrahim Babangida told the nation that: “The *raison d’être* of the administration’s transition to civil rule program initiated in 1986 . . . is that Nigerians should make a clean break from the unedifying history of political brinkmanship that had been her unfortunate lot hitherto . . . indeed, it can be said that the history of the past seven years had been an epic battle waged relentlessly by the forces of change against the cliques and cabals that profited immensely from the retrogressive politics which we seek to supplant.”¹² The result of these political anomalies was the cancellation of the September 1992

presidential primaries, the urging of the parties to try again, and the deferment of the date of military abdication from power for a civilian president.

Prelude to the June 12, 1993 Election

It is true that the political class, especially those charged with designing a modality for the electoral process, worked assiduously and diligently in tackling the problem of electoral rigging—one of the banes of the two previous republics. First, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) adopted the open-ballot system. This was a system whereby electorates queued in front of the portrait of the contestant of their choice, so that they could be visibly seen by everyone present and counted by the electoral officers. The assumption was that since the process was done in the open, it would be difficult for unscrupulous political stalwarts to be fraudulent. Although this framework received plaudits from such a politician as Baba Gana Kingibe, chairman of SDP, who boasted that, “open ballot system will in a short while constitute Africa’s major contribution to democracy,”¹³ the NRC took a somewhat dim view of the open-ballot system. Indeed, the NRC opted for a modification of the procedure. It suggested the adoption of an instrument which it termed the “open-secret” ballot system. The party claimed that the eclectic model (derived from a combination of the secret and open-ballot systems) had all the attributes of the open-ballot system 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.”¹⁴

Paradoxically, this strategy that was intended to purge the system of its conflictual electoral practices of the past failed at the presidential level. The NEC, determined to resolve and ameliorate this problem before the June 12, 1993 election, concocted another approach dubbed Option 4.

Basic to Option 4, as a framework for the presidential election, was that each state of the federation was capable of producing a presidential candidate—the so-called favorite son concept. Therefore, the plan was for each state to elect two presidential candidates, one each from both parties at the state congress. The elected contestants would then meet at a national convention of both parties where they were to jockey for votes among elected and special representatives of the SDP and NRC. The result of the convention would be the selection of one candidate from each party.

The National Conventions scheduled for March 27-29, 1993, in which 62 contestants were expected to participate, made provisions for two ballots. Before the first ballot would be cast, aspirants were allotted three minutes each to address delegates to the convention, emphasizing their platforms and vision for the republic. In the second ballot successful candidates who survived the first round would be given fifteen minutes to expatiate their policies and the direction that they wished to lead the country.¹⁵

In the NRC convention held in Port Harcourt, Rivers state, Bashir Tofa convincingly emerged as the party’s presidential candidate. In the SDP con-

vention held in Jos, Plateau state, Moshood Abiola barely squeaked by Baba Gana Kingibe (3617 to 3225 votes).¹⁶

Arguably, it was politically soothing, that in both cases the conventions were conducted adequately, that Tofa and Abiola received support from their parties without major commotions. In fact, somewhat uncharacteristic of the political game in Nigeria was Kingibe's magnanimity in defeat. He said: "I want to assure anyone from the opposition party who believes there would be cracks within the ranks of the SDP that they will be disappointed. We shall march forward together now, and by the grace of God and in the name of the people, capture the presidency for our great party, for the people and for Chief Abiola. . . . We submitted ourselves to the democratic process, and to the will of the people as represented by the delegates who attended the convention as democrats, and we bent to the will of the people."¹⁷ Indeed, the traditionally "taciturn" Japanese ambassador to Nigeria, who was one of the observers noted: "I have been keeping my eyes open and I can say that it has been orderly. . . . The aspirants participated according to the rules of the game and I can say from what I have seen that Nigeria is the largest democracy in Africa."¹⁸

It might be difficult to ascribe the result or success of Option 4 to astute political engineering. The fact, though, was that it was efficacious probably because the republic was suffering from electoral fatigue, and was determined to do whatever it took to consummate the process and consequently put a stop to the Babangida administration which had promised to hand over power to a civilian government on August 27, 1993.¹⁹

To give impetus to the electoral process, as it were, and to ensure fair-play, a decree titled, "Presidential Election (Basic Constitution) and Provision Decree 13," was promulgated. The decree affirmed that the presidential candidates were not immune to disqualification should fresh evidence come to light of their legal and political culpability in the past. Section 54(1) of the decree also noted that "where a date has been appointed for holding of an election and there is reason to apprehend that a serious breach of the peace is likely to occur if the election is proceeded with on that day, the election may be postponed by the commission until some convenient day."²⁰ To add muscle to the decree, the NEC reminded the candidates of the tenets of Decree 27 of 1989, which stipulates, *inter alia*, that "no political campaign shall be made on the basis of sectional, ethnic or religious grounds or consideration. . . . The objective of the decree is to remove violence and ensure a civilized political campaign. . . ." ²¹ The NEC then affirmed emphatically that the presidential election would be held come hell or high water on June 12, 1993, and would not brook any action that was likely to lead to its deferment.²²

The foregoing discussion is intended to explain the political psychology and chemistry of the Nigerian polity leading to the June 12 presidential election. In a way, it is aimed at shedding light on the possible rationale for the reactions that followed, in the wake of the annulment of that election.

June 12 Election

The June 12, 1993 presidential election might remain a significant milestone in Nigeria's political history because of the peaceful manner in which the electorate expressed their franchise at the polling booth. The major political actors were Moshood Abiola and Baba Gana Kingibe (presidential and vice-presidential candidates for the SDP), and Bashir Tofa and Sylvester Ugoh (presidential and vice-presidential candidates for the NRC). Geo-ethnically and religiously, Abiola was a southerner, Yoruba and Moslem, while Kingibe was a northerner, Kanuri and Moslem. In the case of NRC, Tofa was a northerner, Kanuri and Moslem, while Ugoh, was a southerner, an Ibo and Christian. These distinctions tend to influence the voting behavior.

Strategically Abiola emphasized his desire to redeem the country from its economic quagmire, and Tofa stressed, in particular, the ethno-religious balanced ticket.²³ In the political contestation, it was alleged that, "the SDP was able to pick a majority of votes in both the Northern and Southern minority areas populated by mostly Christians, make a mincemeat of some Northern conservative states like Kaduna, Kano and Borno, make an inroad into the core Eastern states that it was initially expected to lose outright while keeping to itself the Western part populated by the Yorubas, Abiola's ethnic group."²⁴ The projected results are presented in Table 1 (at the end of the essay). It suggests that the SDP won 19 states, including the Federal Territory of Abuja, while the NRC won 11 states.²⁵ The election that was relatively peaceful by Nigerian standard was, however, said to have been mired by irregularities such as massive rigging. In addition, the voter turnout was said to have been low (approx. 14 million) as a result of the confusion brought about by the Association for a Better Nigeria (ABN) which sought an injunction to postpone the elections due to alleged malpractices by the parties.²⁶ Such politics in the struggle for power mimicked previous attempts.²⁷ It was clear in the eyes of the Babangida administration that despite the presumed orderliness of the June 12 election and its legitimization by the national and international observers, it lacked the electoral "perfection" that the administration envisioned, and thus it annulled the election. In his address to the nation on June 26, 1993, explaining the rationale for his action, Babangida affirmed:

History would bear witness that as an administration we have always striven, in all our policy decisions, to build the foundation of lasting democracy. Lasting democracy is not a temporary show of excitement and manipulation by over-articulate section of the elite and its captive audience. Lasting democracy is a permanent diet to nurture the soul of the whole nation and the political process. Therefore, it is logical, as we have always insisted upon, that lasting democracy must be equated with political stability. Informed by our sad experience of history, we require nothing short of a foundation for lasting democracy. As an administration we cannot afford to lead Nigeria into a Third Republic with epileptic convulsion in its democratic health...²⁸

The preceding was presented to the nation in an attempt to mollify an exasperated citizenry which became skeptical about the true intentions of the

military in the politics of Nigeria. Additionally, he noted the following as the causes for the administration's actions:

1. There were allegations of irregularities and other acts of bad conduct levelled against the presidential candidates but the NEC (National Electoral Commission) went ahead and cleared them.
2. There were proofs as well as documented evidence of widespread use of money during the party primaries as well as the presidential election. These were the same bad conduct for which the party presidential primaries of 1992 were canceled. Evidence available to the Government put the total amount of money spent by the presidential candidates at over N2.1bn. The use of money was again the major source of undermining the electoral process . . .
3. There were cases of documented and confirmed conflict of interest between the government and both Presidential aspirants which would compromise their positions and responsibilities were they to become President . . .²⁹

It was in view of the foregoing reasons that the National Defence and Security Council called for another presidential election under the supervision of a recomposed National Electoral Commission.³⁰

Whereas the aforementioned indictments of the political parties might appear cogent and logical, the perplexity of the government's action issues from the fact that the abrogation of the election occurred *ex post facto*, unlike the cancellation of the September 22, 1992 presidential primaries which occurred immediately following the discovery of irregularities. Indeed, it is such complexities in Nigerian politics that prompted Celestine Bassey to assert that not even a probabilistic theory could be devised to explain the republic's political instability. This was so because of the unpredictability of Nigeria's conflictual politics.³¹

In any case, the chain reactions engendered by the government's edict nullifying the June 12, 1993 election provided the rallying cry for the somewhat "somnolent" civil society to resuscitate the democracy that was moribund as a result of military interventions in the country. It is on this development that I now focus my proceeding analysis.

The Civil Society and the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO): The Struggle for Democratic Renaissance

The concept of the civil society within a national polity is a complex one, especially in the over-centralized governments of developing nations. But what is civil society? Definitionally, S.F. Starr notes that within the concept of Western tradition, civil society refers to that political space or universe that is "distinct from government and that government is but one of the several institutions coexisting in a pluralistic social fabric."³² Naomi Chazan's definition applies *mutatis mutandis* to the preceding thesis. She notes that the concept of civil society denotes that sector of society that interacts with the states, exerts pressure and power on the state, and yet conspicuously different from the state.³³ Alfred Stepan, describes a civil society as "an arena where manifold social movements

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... and civic organizations from all classes... attempt to constitute themselves in an assemble of arrangements so that they can express themselves and advance their interests."³⁴

The emergence of civil society in Nigeria pre-dates its birth as an independent nation-state in 1960. In fact, it was the convocation of intellectuals (and political activists) in major cities, and the later articulation of their interests that resulted in the cessation of colonial rule in Nigeria. To attain this objective, the intellectuals led the political movement against the colonial administration by coordinating the activities of the various cleavages and (ethnic) groups in their demand for independence. Following independence, however, these social groups became weak as their members were assimilated into the political system that they displaced. Paradoxically, it was their weakness and ineffectiveness in governing an enormous country with diverse ethnic groups that has led to over two decades of military administration in Nigeria.

Arguably, a series of exogenous and endogenous events may have contributed to the formation of NADECO as a voluntary association, within the civil society, to press for the return to democracy in Nigeria.

Exogenously, some Western powers including the United States and Britain imposed economic (and political) sanctions of some sort on Nigeria following the nullification of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. The effect within the business community and the general populace was problematical. It was difficult to buy spare parts, to acquire foreign exchange, undertake foreign trips, et cetera; and, for the grassroots, there was unemployment, inflation, malaise, and alienation. Additionally, there was the psychological impact of the South African elections which culminated in the victory of the African National Congress (ANC). NADECO and other groups saw the installation of Nelson Mandela as the president of the Republic of South Africa as a possible catalyst for a democratic rebirth in Nigeria. Indeed, to most Nigerian elites this metamorphosis in South Africa was ironic since Nigeria that has continually clamored for democracy in that country was still under the grips of military praetorian rule. In truth, the democratic success in South Africa galvanized NADECO and members of the informed public in the movement for democracy in Nigeria.

Endogenously, many Nigerians have become weary of the military's "caesarism" in Nigeria's post-independence political history. Indeed, as if to underscore the anxiety issuing from the military's incessant rule in Nigeria, a former Supreme court justice, Udo Udoma, noted in an interview in *The African Guardian* that: "... Now they [the military] have lost the [will] and skill of fighting as soldiers in the field. They are now being trained as politicians. That is a very dangerous situation; ... and, we must retrace our steps [and] get rid of the military. Let the military do its own assignment—protect the country [and] maintain their skills as warriors. ... They must respect the government of the day and be loyal to it. That is very important."³⁵

Although the above summarizes the relative attitude of some members of the informed public and political class toward the military, the annulment of

the June 12, 1993 election which would have ushered in the Third Republic may have been the coup de grace in the civil society's patience with the military rule in Nigeria. The actions of the civil society toward the Interim National Government (ING) of Ernest Shonekan, sworn-in by Babangida, and Abacha's military administration bear this out.

NADECO, which represents an amalgam of democratic organizations, is supported by such significant actors as Anthony Enahoro, Michael Ajasin, Ebitu Ukiwe, Dan Suleiman, Beko Ransome Kuti, just to list a few.³⁶ On May 14, 1994, the organization, in its inchoate battle against the military for democracy in the republic issued an ultimatum in its communique to the Abacha administration. It gave the administration 15 days (i.e., May 31) to relinquish power, and to hand over authority to Moshood Abiola, assumed to have won the June 12, 1993 presidential election. Thereafter, Abiola was to form a broad-based national government made up of diverse ethnic and interest groups in the country to provide the legitimacy with which to govern. Moreover, NADECO argued that, "the military government as an institution is essentially authoritarian and cannot midwife democracy. The military government is not qualified by its antecedents, disposition and track record and has no moral standing to organize a proper sovereign national conference as desired by Nigerians."³⁷

But such rhetorical fulminations were offset by equally impressive flourishes from the Abacha administration. In fact, as a riposte, the government's position was not to recognize NADECO as a political force. Moreover, it affirmed that the organization was illegal,³⁸ and in order to cripple it and similar groups, it directed that: "Any association seeking registration that does not give full details of its objectives must not be registered. And any of such associations mistakenly registered already should have their certificates revoked with immediate effect."³⁹

Although these tactics of intimidation applied by the government might be reminiscent of, and analogous to, those strategies applied by the colonial power, NADECO remained defiant at least in its public proclamations for a democratic renaissance in Nigeria. In a statement entitled, "The People Shall Overcome: A Progressive Report by the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO)," the group alluded to the motives of the organization. A selected and concise summary of the group's communique regarding the political confrontation with the military is as follows:

On the 12th of May, 1994, NADECO was set up by several Democratic and Human Rights Organizations to work, among other things, for:

- * the restoration of authentic democracy and genuine federalism in Nigeria;
- * a Sovereign National Conference composed of popularly elected representatives of the ethnic groups and established professional and other national interest groups in the country;
- * the actualization of June 12 through democratic measures;
- * a broad-based National Government of Reconciliation and National Unity, committed to democratic values, to be formed as an outcome of June 12...⁴⁰

One of the major bones of contention between NADECO and the military administration derives from the issue of support for the National Constitutional

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Conference established by the regime to write a new constitution for the republic's democratic genre. While the position of NADECO was for the formation of a Sovereign National Conference to thrash out the issue of the National Question (e.g., state formation, federalism, etc.), the Abacha regime insisted that its constituted conference was preferable and non-negotiable. In a way, therefore, this arrangement strategically gave the government major regulatory control over the conference's deliberations.

So far, in the political tussle between the military government and NADECO in the democratization process, the military's position has prevailed. Nevertheless, given the nature and complexity of Nigerian politics, a successful outcome of the National Constitutional Conference should by no means imply that the political problems in the country are over. Witness, for example, the Babangida administration's transition program and the demise of the Third Republic.

Seeking a Common Ground: Toward the Fourth Republic

It has become increasingly clear that the political class and other groups in the civil society may clamor *ad infinitum* for democracy, but not until they pledge themselves to adhere to the established rules of the political game, and reason with the military leadership, their efforts will be in vain. After all, the military has a monopoly on the instrument of coercion, and have used it effectively to sustain itself in power.

The writing of a new constitution, while significant, cannot guarantee good governance or solve Nigeria's political problems, unless the political class, the civil society, and the military are committed to live by the tenets of the document. In short, good constitutions don't govern; humans (with their numerous frailties) do. The issue, then, is how might the relevant groups in the polity join forces to govern effectively. Whereas answers to this difficult query are numerous and diverse, it might be necessary to revisit and re-examine an old debate that could possibly resolve some of the problems of political instability, at least in the short run, while long term solutions are worked out.

Empirical data in the First, Second and aborted Third Republic suggest that the attitude of members of the political class left much to be desired in the manner in which they conducted themselves politically. The query, therefore, is could the politicians perform admirably to the point that the military might be induced to play the subordinate role in the polity? Sociologically, it could be argued that because the military has become so entrenched within the political system, that at this juncture of democratic development a complete divorce after over two decades in power, while helpful in the democratic process, is problematic. For example, the military in its constitutional engineering and interest has insisted that there should be no provision made in the constitution to outlaw a military coup. What this "window of opportunity" implies is that the military wishes to play a role in the political development of the country regardless of the opposition to the military's political participation in the republic by some members of the political class and civil

Table 1
A breakdown of the Presidential polls as tendered by the Campaign for Democracy in a Lagos Court

State	States Presidential Elections Results 1993				Total Score
	SDP Score	SDP %	NRC Score	NRC %	
1. Abia	105,273	41.04	151,227	58.96	256,500
2. Adamawa	140,875	45.72	167,239	54.28	308,114
3. Akwa Ibom	214,787	51.86	199,342	48.14	414,129
4. Anambra	212,024	57.11	159,258	42.89	371,282
5. Bauchi	339,339	39.27	524,836	60.73	864,175
6. Benue	246,830	56.94	186,302	43.06	433,132
7. Borno	153,496	54.40	128,684	45.60	282,180
8. Cross River	189,303	55.23	153,452	44.77	342,755
9. Delta	327,277	69.30	145,001	30.70	472,278
10. Edo	205,407	66.48	103,572	33.52	308,979
11. Enugu	263,101	48.09	284,050	51.91	547,151
12. Imo	159,350	44.86	195,836	55.14	355,186
13. Jigawa	138,552	60.67	89,836	39.33	228,388
14. Kaduna	389,713	52.20	356,860	47.80	746,573
15. Kano	169,619	52.28	154,809	47.72	324,428
16. Katsina	171,162	38.70	271,077	61.30	442,239
17. Kebbi	70,219	32.66	144,808	67.34	215,027
18. Kogi	222,760	45.60	265,732	54.40	488,492
19. Kwara	272,270	77.24	80,209	22.78	352,479
20. Lagos	883,965	85.54	149,432	14.46	1,033,397
21. Niger	136,350	38.10	221,437	61.90	357,787
22. Ogun	425,725	87.78	59,246	12.22	484,971
23. Ondo	883,024	84.42	162,994	15.58	1,046,018
24. Osun	365,266	83.52	72,068	16.48	437,334
25. Oyo	536,011	83.52	105,788	16.48	641,799
26. Plateau	417,565	61.68	259,394	38.32	676,959
27. Rivers	370,578	36.63	640,973	63.37	1,011,551
28. Sokoto	97,726	20.79	372,250	79.21	469,976
29. Taraba	101,887	61.42	64,001	38.58	165,888
30. Yobe	111,887	63.59	64,061	38.41	175,948
31. FCT Abuja	19,968	52.16	18,313	47.84	38,281
TOTAL	8,341,309	58.36	5,952,087	41.64	14,293,396

Source: *The News*, (June 28, 1993), p. 24.

society. Indeed, in an interview with Odumegu-Ojukwu (a member of the National Constitutional Conference) on Nigerian politics, he asserted, among other things, that: "Let me not deceive anybody, there is no-way you can really ban coups. What you can do is to make coups not possible. . . . [But] why do the military go to coup? The simple answer in one word. Profit. It is not to repair the nation or do anything as glorious as you read in the newspapers or hear on the radio . . ."41 So, given the military's proclivity to intervene in the

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system for its benefit, and the inability of the less fortitudinous political class to confront the armed forces (as was the case with Yeltsin and the pro-democracy movement in Russia), a probable strategy might be to bring the military into the process at levels that are "less" political.

For instance, Larry Diamond has argued that the experience of the Second Republic made it clear that a number of institutions should be moved from the control of elected officials and entrusted to the military. These were the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal responsible for punishing corrupt officials, The Federal and State Electoral Commissions, The Police Service Commission, *inter alia*.⁴² I contend, in spite of the sensitivity of this issue, that such a dualism between the military and civilians is not unlikely to promote stability. This argument stems from the republic's past political experiences, whereby the military is reluctant to relinquish power. Such an arrangement should be in place while members of the political class endeavor to rededicate themselves to the principles of good governance. In fact, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe has noted that: "[It is] 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 not an unreasonable proposal at this juncture of the nation's political development.]⁴³ Such a marriage of convenience, it has been contended elsewhere, should be ad hoc,⁴⁴ as the political class demonstrates leadership by example. Indeed, in the words of Victor Hugo: "A great army can capture an enemy city, but to rule it requires a great idea."⁴⁵ This is one possible paradigm for resolving Nigeria's political instability as it marches toward the Fourth Republic.

NOTES

- 1 See Toyin Falola and Julius Inhonvbere, *The Rise and Fall of Nigeria's Second Republic: 1979-1984* (London: Zed books, 1985), p. 231; Oyenka Onwenu, "Nigeria: A Squandering of Riches." (A documentary produced by the BBC and Nigerian Television, 1984).
- 2 See David Akpode Ejoor, *Reminiscences* (Lagos: Spectrum Books, 1985), p. 163. General Ejoor (rt.), who was once the governor of the erstwhile Midwest state, stated that, "... the military in government are seen to amass easy wealth, witnessed by the fact that nearly all army officers who have retired after a stint in government have become comfortable tycoons." Additionally, the Pius Okigbo panel of inquiry into the operation of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) during the tenure of General Ibrahim Babangida found that \$12.4bn "wind-fall" from oil revenue "vanished" or was unaccounted for. See Bola Olowo, "Fuel price crisis," *West Africa* (October 10-16, 1994), pp. 1752-1753; Paul Beran, "Nigeria's Political Progress Essential to Stability of Africa," *Christian Science Monitor* (Monday, October 24, 1994), p. 19.
- 3 *Time Magazine* (February 22, 1993), p. 63.
- 4 E. Ike Udogu, "Democracy, the Two-Party System and the Transition Imbroglia in the March Toward Nigeria's Third Republic 1985-1994," *Scandinavian Journal of Develop-*

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34," *Scandinavian Journal of Develop-*

- ment Alternatives*, Vol. 13, No. 1 & 2 (March and June 1994), p. 205.
- 5 See Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Report of the Political Bureau*, (Lagos, 1987), p. 42. See also Tunji Olagunju, Adele Jinadu, Sam Oyovbaire, *Transition to Democracy in Nigeria (1985-1993)*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1993), pp. 109-111.
 - 6 See *West Africa* (October 23-29, 1989), pp. 1755-1756; *Christian Science Monitor* (Wednesday, October 11, 1989), p. 6; Udogu, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
 - 7 Oyeleye Oyediran and Adigun Agbaje, "Two-partyism and Democratic Transition in Nigeria," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (June 1991), pp. 223-224.
 - 8 See "Can the Civilian Triumph," *African Concord* (February 12, 1988), pp. 21-23; Anthony Akinola, "Critique of Nigeria's Proposed Two-party System," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1989), pp. 109-112. Akinola presented four theoretically contending viewpoints borrowed from the works of Frank Sorauf in an attempt to explicate the intricacies in Nigeria's democratic experiment, and the rationale for the two-party system. These categories were institutional, dualist, cultural and consensual.
 - 9 Pita O. Agbese, "The Impending Demise of Nigeria's Forthcoming Third Republic," *Africa Today*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (1990), p. 32. See Also Chudi Uwazurike, "Confronting Potential Breakdown: the Nigerian Redemocratization Process in Critical Perspective," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1990), p. 62. See in particular Table 1, the Nigerian redemocratization package, 1987-1992.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 23-29; Akinola, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-113; Julius Ihonvbere. "A Critical Evaluation of the Failed 1990 Coup in Nigeria," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (1991), pp. 601-626.
 - 11 Karl Maier, "The Rise of Moneyocracy," *Africa Report* (September/October, 1992), pp. 68-70.
 - 12 Olugbenga Ayeni, "Transition Setback?" *West Africa* (October 26-November 1, 1992), p. 1819.
 - 13 See "Local government elections in Nigeria: Lustreless Campaigns," *West Africa* (December 10-16, 1990), p. 2984.
 - 14 *West Africa* (April 8-14, 1991), p. 516.
 - 15 See "Presidential Race," *West Africa* (March 29-April 4, 1993), p. 517.
 - 16 Bola Olowo, "Triumph of Option A4," *West Africa* (April 5-11, 1993), pp. 546-547.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, p. 547.
 - 18 *Ibid.*
 - 19 See "Presidential Campaign," *West Africa* (April 12-18, 1993), p. 604.
 - 20 See "Picking up the pieces," *West Africa* (April 19-25, 1993), p. 641.
 - 21 See "NEC cautions Presidential candidates," *West Africa* (May 24-30, 1993), p. 871.
 - 22 "Presidential Election Plans," *West Africa* (April 26-May 2, 1993), p. 694.
 - 23 See "An interim sweep," *West Africa* (June 21-27, 1993), pp. 1032-1034.
 - 24 *Ibid.*, p. 1032.
 - 25 See "How Abiola Won," *The Tell News* (June 28, 1993), p. 24. Indeed, on June 18, 1993, Abiola went on Television to claim victory, while Tofa did not challenge the results [openly]. See *West Africa* (June 28-July 4, 1993), p. 1081.
 - 26 Chuks Iloegbunam, "Catalogue of events," *West Africa* (June 28-July 4, 1993), p. 1080.
 - 27 Maier, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70.
 - 28 See "Laying foundation for democracy," *West Africa* (July 5-11, 1993), p. 1137.
 - 29 *Ibid.*
 - 30 *Ibid.* In fact, the National Defence and Security Council instituted additional conditions "as a way of widening and deepening the base of electing the president and sanitizing the electoral process." Accordingly, a candidate for the coming elections must: 1. Not be less than 50 years; 2. not have been convicted for any crime; 3. believe, by act of faith and practice, in the corporate existence of Nigeria; 4. possess records of personal, corporate and business interests which do not conflict with the national interests; 5. have been a registered member of either of the two political parties for at least one year to this election.
 - 31 Celestine Bassey, "Retrospects and Prospects of Political Stability in Nigeria," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (1989), p. 98.

- 32 S.F. Starr, "Soviet Union: A Civil Society," in Roy C. Macridis and Bernard E. Brown (eds.) *Comparative Politics, Notes and Reading* (Pacific Grove, CA.: Brooks Publishers, 1990), p. 194. See also Dwayne Woods, "Civil Society in Europe and Africa: Limiting State Power through a Public Sphere," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (September 1992), p. 78.
- 33 Naomi Chazan, "Africa's Democratic Challenge," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 9 (1992), p. 281.
- 43 Alfred Stepan, *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 3-4.
- 35 See "Constitutional Conference is not Necessary," *The African Guardian*, Vol. 9, No. 20 (May 23, 1994), p. 8.
- 36 Gbenga Tanimowo, "Back on the boil: The Abacha regime in a fight for its life as bungled constitutional conference gives new life to June 12," *The African Guardian*, Vol. 9 No. 21 (May 30, 1994), pp. 20-21. In general, the group is made up of prominent politicians, civil rights activists, and retired military officers. See also "We want democracy now," *The African Guardian*, Vol. 9, No. 23 (June 13, 1994), pp. 23-25.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ima Niboro, "End Game? The nation's long drawn out political crisis builds to a denouement," *The African Guardian*, Vol. 9, No. 24 (June 20, 1994), p. 23. See "NADECO not recognized," *The (Nigerian) Vanguard* (May 27, 1994), p. 2.
- 39 Daniami Nmodu, "Confab: A Mixed Grill of Fortune," *The Sentinel*, No. 16 (June 13, 1994), p. 21.
- 40 See "NADECO: Situation Report on Projected Dialogue," *The (Nigerian) Guardian* (Wednesday, June 29, 1994), p. 24. Reprinted also in *Vanguard* (Tuesday, July 22, 1994), p. 15. See "National Democratic Coalition (NADECO): The People Shall Overcome—A Progress Report by the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO)," *(Nigerian) Vanguard* (Tuesday, July 19, 1994), p. 7.
- 41 See "Nigeria: I have a dream," *West Africa* (June 26-July 2, 1995), p. 998.
- 42 Larry Diamond, "Nigeria in Search of Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 62 (1984), pp. 914-921.
- 43 See "Democracy with Military Vigilance," *The Sunday Triumph [Kano, Nigeria]* August 28, 1983. See also Diamond, "Nigeria in Search of Democracy," *op. cit.*, pp. 916-917.
- 44 E. Ike Udogu, "In Search of Political Stability and Survival: Toward Nigeria's Third Republic," *Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternative*, Vol. XI, No. 3 & 4 (September-December, 1992), p. 16.
- 45 See Dan Goodman, "The GOP has thoroughly discredited Democrats in Congress, but now it must move beyond obstruction and heckling to win support for its own ideas," *Time Magazine*, Vol. 144, No. 21 (November 21, 1994), p. 54.