The Military, Civil Society and the Issue of Democratic Governance

Toward Nigeria’s Fourth Republic

E. IKE UDOGU*

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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...and where a nation has come from, as. Thus this article, among other Nigerian politics since 1985. It examines in the country following the inclusion of a possible strategy for regime within the Nigerian republic in the republic. This avors to rectify the political system, by relevant groups within the republic, and testy elections was novel, military to see that the elections (as for example, 1979, 1983 and citizenry. Thus, the of the numerous faux pas of presidential election were

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), 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 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. 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. AAs 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.
coup and the cumbersome burden of governing a resilient and sophisticated polity, decided to relinquish power to democratically elected civilians in 1993, 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’etre 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. 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. Before the condensation of the political parties into two, there were approximately 49 registered associations.

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 capitalist doctrine and Social Democratic Party (SDP), socialistic dogma].”

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.

It was on the basis of these essential conditions that the parties went into
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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. It was against the back-
ground 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 “moneytocracy” in which “money, fertilizers and even salt, rather than ideology or campaign platform became the big vote getters.” In fact, reacting to the wanton and egregious political dis-
crepancies, 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.” 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,” 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.”

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.

In the NRC convention held in Port Harcourt, Rivers state, Bashir Tofa convincingly emerged as the party’s presidential candidate. In the SDP con-
to try again, and the deferment for a civilian president.

Those charged with designing a busily and diligently in tackling of the two previous republics. adopted the open-ballot system in front of the portrait of be visibly seen by everyone. The assumption was that since difficult for unscrupulous polity network received plaudits from an of SDP, who boasted that, ite Africa’s major contribution n view of the open-ballot system of the procedure. It suggested ed from a combination of the ures of the open-ballot system sealing of the ballot paper is in a box placed outside for all ed to purge the system of its at the presidential level. The problem before the June 12, and Option 4. presidential election, was that ng a presidential candidate— the plan was for each state to both parties at the state con- a national convention of es among elected and special it of the convention would be March 27-29, 1993, in which 62 ovisions for two ballots. Before allotted three minutes each to their platforms and vision for didates who survived the first x their policies and the direc- court, Rivers state, Bashir Tofa candidate. In the SDP con-

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

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.

To give impetus to the electoral process, as it were, and to ensure fairplay, 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.” 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 . . .” 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.

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. 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." 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. 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. Such politics in the struggle for power mimicked previous attempts. 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...

The preceding was presented to the nation in an attempt to mollify an exasperated citizenry which became skeptical about the true intentions of the
The major politicians of the NRC were Kingibe (presidential and vice-presidential candidates), Tofa and Sylvester Ugochukwu Togor. Geo-ethnically and religiously, while Kingibe was Moslem, Tofa was a Northern minority, an Igbo and Christian. Editorial behavior.

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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.

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.” Noami 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, exacts pressure and power on the state, and yet conspicuously different from the state. Alfred Stepan, describes a civil society as “an arena where manifold social movements
... and civic organizations from all classes ... attempt to constitute themselves in an assembly 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
TOWARD NIGERIA’S FOURTH REPUBLIC

...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. On May 14, 1994, the organization, in its inchoate battle against the military for democracy in the republic issued an ultimatum in its communiqué 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.”

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, 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 mistakingly registered already should have their certificates revoked with immediate effect.”

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 communiqué 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...

One of the major bones of contention between NADECO and the military administration derives from the issue of support for the National Constitutional
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
new constitution for the republic. DECO was for the formation of the National Assembly; the Abacha regime insisted that this was negotiable. In a way, there were major regulatory changes; the government and NADECO have prevailed. Nevertheless, politics, a successful outcome of the Babangida regime suggests that this is for the record, for the Babangida regime suggests that this is for the benefit of democracy, but not until they have revisited and re-examined an old problem of political instability, solutions are worked out.

The Fourth Republic

Political class and other groups with democracy, but not until they have revisited and re-examined an old problem of political instability, solutions are worked out. The Third Republic suggests that the political class and civil 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."

Table 1

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>SDP Score</th>
<th>SDP %</th>
<th>NRC Score</th>
<th>NRC %</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abia</td>
<td>105,273</td>
<td>41.04</td>
<td>151,227</td>
<td>58.96</td>
<td>256,500</td>
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<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>140,875</td>
<td>45.72</td>
<td>167,239</td>
<td>54.28</td>
<td>308,114</td>
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<td>Akwa Ibom</td>
<td>214,787</td>
<td>51.86</td>
<td>199,342</td>
<td>48.14</td>
<td>414,129</td>
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<td>Anambra</td>
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<td>57.11</td>
<td>159,258</td>
<td>42.89</td>
<td>371,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>339,339</td>
<td>39.27</td>
<td>524,836</td>
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<td>864,175</td>
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<td>Benue</td>
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<td>186,302</td>
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<td>128,684</td>
<td>45.60</td>
<td>282,180</td>
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TOTAL 8,341,309 58.36 5,952,087 41.64 14,293,396

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.* 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.]" Such a marriage of convenience, it has been contended elsewhere, should be ad hoc, 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." This is one possible paradigm for resolving Nigeria’s political instability as it marches toward the Fourth Republic.

**NOTES**


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 "windfall" 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.


cess fortiudinosous political class th Yeltsin and the pro-democ-

% the experience of the Second sions should be moved from the military. These were the ble for punishing corrupt offi-

It vitnessed by the fact that nearly all on television, 1984). General Ejoor has noted

Out of Nigeria's Second Republic: 1979-1984


Banda found that $12.4bn for. See Bola Ie


Ibid., p. 547.


Maier, op. cit., pp. 68-70.


Ibid.

See “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.


37 Ibid.


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, 1944), p. 54.