

Military Incursion in Nigerian Politics: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Ever since the attainment of self-governance more than three decades ago, Nigeria's journey toward a stable democracy has been continually interjected with a recurring spate of military coups d'état. The intervention of military in the political scene of Nigeria did not come as a total surprise to most political observers and thinkers. The study examines the Nigerian military incursion into politics and political development in Nigeria. Exploratory research design, documentary sources and qualitative descriptive methods of data gathering and analysis were adopted. Findings from this study revealed that military rule in Nigeria tended to be characterized by cynical disregard of democratic principles in both making and implementation of policies. The study also finds out that the military failed to demonstrate after about thirty years, that it has the panacea for Nigeria's political problems. While it can neither be wished away nor dismissed as a complete fiasco, military intervention in Nigerian politics has so far demonstrated the existence of a wide gap between the visionary promises of coup makers and actual performance. The study recommends need to educate the military to recognizing their constitutional duties to the nation.

Keywords: Political Development, Military, Intervention, Military Coups

Introduction

In Nigeria, the Military came about through the colonial masters. This was accompanied by the need for the protection of the then Royal Niger Company. Most of Nigeria's early officers were trained abroad. Gathering from a secondary source of data mostly the internet, the military inherited the colonial legacy infused with our inherent characteristics on their return. After independence, the military got involved in politics during the Nzeogwu coup of January 1966 which brought about a clear influence of the military in politics thereby causing division among early leaders. Satisfied with this, the military intervened in Nigeria's politics July 1966; July 1975; December, 1983; August 1985; November, 1993 (Olusoji, Shadare & Owoyemi, 2012; Siollun, 2013). At the different time of military intervention in Nigeria's politics, the experience was mostly unpleasant. Some of

these issues range from extra-judicial killings like that of Ken Saro-wiwo and Kudirat Abiola during Abacha; imprisonment like that of Olusegun Obasanjo, Al'mustapha; the annulment of election like the 1993 general elections among others. This has created a critical mind in the citizens about the military being constantly skeptical as to whether the military will seize power again (Butts & Metz, 1996; Ukpabi, 1966; Olusoji, Shadare & Owoyemi, 2012; Siollun, 2013).

The military foundation of most societies would be difficult to dispute. The quest for democracy and therefore development in Nigeria has been hindered by the disruptive influences of militarism. The military's love for power stems partially from a love for wealth and partly from its self-image as the custodian of the independent and corporate existence of the country. If the democratic tradition is to be sustained in Nigeria, constitutional as well as policy measures should be adopted to tackle the issue of militarism (Abdulyakeen, 2023).

Ever since the attainment of self-governance more than three decades ago, Nigeria's journey toward a stable democracy has been continually interjected with a recurring spate of military coups d'état. The intervention of military in the political scene of Nigeria did not come as a total surprise to most political observers and thinkers; this was because nearly all the pre-colonial ethnic groups in the country were ruled by traditional rulers who were more or less dictators (Yesufu, 1982). When a group of army officers announced the first military seizure of political power on January 15, 1966, Nigerians were persuaded to accept the forceful change of government as a revolutionary crusade aimed principally at forestalling an imminent descent into anarchy and subsequent demise of the new nation-state (Emenyeonu, 1997).

In a more philosophical explanation of that coup 15 years later, one of the surviving brains behind it, Ademoyega who in his expository book published in 1981, maintained that the "revolution" was informed by their burning desire to introduce an ideological change in a First Republic whose endemic political, economic and social crises have been attributed to an 'ideological lacuna' (Okigbo, 1992). The ideological novelty which was expected to revolutionize Nigeria's politics, economy, educational system as well as social and foreign affairs was dubbed 'democratic socialism'.

After gaining independence from the United Kingdom on the 1st of October, 1960, Nigeria's parliamentary Westminster-style democracy collapsed on January 15, 1966, when a group of radical young army majors staged a military coup and overthrew the civilian government of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Although the coup leaders did not manage to seize power for themselves, the coup's violent nature, and assassination of key government personnel such as Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello (Premier of the Northern Region), Samuel Akintola (Premier of the Western Region), and Festus Okotie Eboh (Finance Minister) was enough to topple the government and persuade the rump cabinet to cede power to the General Officer Commanding (GOC) the army, Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (Siollun, 2013).

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Although Ironsi had suppressed the coup and was not among its planners, he was unable to escape the stigma attached to it. Northern soldiers were aggrieved at the coup's lopsided nature and became suspicious of it, and of Ironsi's motives. Since most of the coup's planners were Igbo, their victims were non-Igbo, and its outcome was a military government led by an Igbo army officer, northerners suspected that the coup was an orchestrated conspiracy to wrest power away from the northern-led civilian government. These tensions and suspicions led to another coup by northern officers in July 1966, during which Ironsi was assassinated and replaced by Lt-Colonel Yakubu Gowon (Siollun, 2013).

Gowon governed until July 1975 when he was deposed by the same soldiers who had staged the coup that brought him to power in 1966. The new military leader was Brigadier Murtala Muhammed, the leader of the July 1966 coup. After Muhammed was assassinated during an abortive coup in February 1976, he was replaced by his deputy, Lt General Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo remained in power for almost four years, leading the country back to civilian democracy before stepping down in October 1979 after multi-party elections were won by Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The voluntary surrender of power was a source of great pride and prestige to the military, but it amplified its political ambitions by giving it a self-righteous air of being the nation's political custodian and moral conscience (Siollun, 2013).

However, as the brief review of the political programmes of different military administrations in Nigeria shows, the military failed to demonstrate after about thirty years, that it has the panacea for Nigeria's political problems. While it can neither be wished away nor dismissed as a complete fiasco, military intervention in Nigerian politics has so far demonstrated the existence of a wide gap between the visionary promises of coup makers and actual performance. Regardless of the circumstances under which it has occurred in Nigeria, military intervention has merely lived with if not exacerbated the political, economic and social problems of the nation. This is not to talk about dismal performances in other spheres of administration such as economic husbandry and the provision of moral leadership. Anim (1990), observes that since the first coup that introduced military intervention in politics, "the armed forces have manifested all the weaknesses of the other sections of the society: corruption, graft, indiscipline, ethnicity, disrespect for law and order". In most cases, the impact of military rule has been most glaring in the areas of civil liberties in general and press freedom in particular. As a result, this study attempts to examine military in politics: issues, challenges and prospects.

Conceptual Clarification

The Military

Julius Ihonvere (1991), defined the military as an organised institute with coercive use of force, a strong "esprit de corps" and with a high respect for the chain of command. To Morris Janowitz, the military is the most established with a constitutional role. This is not far from protection of the territorial integrity of a

sovereign state both from internal and external aggression (Ihonvbere, 1991). This is one of the institutions of the state assigned with the responsibility of defending the territorial integrity of the state to ward off aggression from other independent state.

The Nigeria's experience with democracy has been paradoxical and ambitious. "The military has been like a clog on the wheel of the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria" (Brammah, 2006:37). Nigeria civil-military relations cannot be over-emphasised as the relationship between civil society and the armed forces is an essential part of any polity, democratic or otherwise. As rightly postulated by Plato in his work, the Republic, soldiers constitute a vital element of the ideal structure of the society. It is indeed to Plato that we owe the first systematic idea of a professional army (Ojo, 2006). All societies require a body of men and women whose sole occupation is that of protecting them from the dangers of external invasion, internal subversion or irredentist claims that may tear a society into shares (Ojo, 2000).

Military rule in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasised by different and numerous attributes. In naked quest for political power, army officers had decimated the ranks of the military. Coups, coup attempts and even rumours of coups have led to many officers being executed. At the last count, over one hundred and seventeen (117) persons, both military and civilians have been executed over coup charges. The death toll in 1976 was 39, 10 in 1986 while the aborted coup in 1990 recorded the highest casualties of 60 (Ojo, 2000). In the final analysis, this practice did not only damage the chain of command, it created a climate of mutual suspicion and recrimination detrimental to military discipline and consolidation of democracy.

There is no gainsaying that Nigeria has experienced a lot of hurdles on her march to democratic transition. The focus of this paper therefore, is to examine critically how the military has monopolised the democratic political structure from the hands of the civilians for the greater part of Nigeria's existence. The resultant effect is that during the several decades of military rule in Nigeria, the Nigerian armed forces became thoroughly corrupt and lost almost every semblance of a professional force whose customary and constitutional role is to defend the territorial integrity of Nigeria. The paper however, provided some suggestions on how the civil and the military could co-exist for the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria.

Democracy

Rousseau (quoted in Sabine & Thorson, 1973), defined democracy as "the people's administration for the general desire of the people." According to Rousseau, in order for government to fulfill the general will of the people, it must provide liberty under the law and establish a system of public education that teaches kids to only see their uniqueness in relation to the state as a whole.

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Hood (2004) defined democratic centralism as the rule of the peasantry, which subjugates the minority to the majority by means of a robust party apparatus that transfers decision-making authority to higher party organizations. Lenin contends that under this democratic centralism, the populace will not tolerate criticism, dissent, or demands for individual liberty. They may hold seemingly different opinions about democracy, yet they all agree on a few fundamental ideas. These include, among other things, the supremacy of the law, the equality of all citizens before the law, individual freedom, the popular will, the fair distribution of resources within society, and equal opportunity for all individuals. Democracy is an administrative form of governance in which the people maintain their political sovereignty, which they then actively exercise. Continuing from his definition, Oluwole (2003) asserts that the ability to act, rather than majority rule, was the original meaning of democracy.

In the Nigerian context of democracy and sustainable national development, this is illuminating. This is due to an apparent Nigerian ideology that holds that majority rule translates to democracy. Nonetheless, a fundamental tenet of democracy is that the well-being of its constituents must be ensured. However, studies conducted in Nigeria (Osabiya, 2015) have shown that democracy in that country disregards the wellbeing of its people. Therefore, it will be challenging to sell any form of governance as democracy if it cannot ensure the wellbeing of its constituents. A more appropriate term for such a regime would be ceremonial democracy. Nonetheless, it seems as though the foundations of African democracy clearly demonstrate the characteristics of democratic capitalism, also referred to as capitalist democracy.

In the context of this study, democracy is defined as a form of government established by the people that respect the principles of the social contract between the state and the people, guarantees equal opportunity and resource distribution to all of its citizens, and operates under the rule of law.

Nigerian Military: Historical Overview

The history of the Nigerian Armed Forces could be traced to 1863, when the Governor of Lagos – Lt Glover of the Royal Navy- put together 18 Northern Nigerians as constabulary force to protect the lives and properties of the British residents in and around Lagos (Miners, 1971). They were also expected to protect the British traders, the Christian missionaries and to protect the British Trade routes around Lagos (Ukpabi, 1989). The constabulary forces formed by the RNC were not the same with the Lagos constabulary force. The RNC established her own constabulary force after she was granted her. The first Battalion was formed on 26 August 1896 while the second Battalion was formed in 1898 and the third Battalion was added later in 1898 (Butts & Metz, 1996; Ukpabi, 1966; Olusoji, Shadare & Owoyemi, 2012). The West African Field Force and the Northern Nigeria Regiment were amalgamated in May 1900 (Killingray, 1986).

In 1914, the Southern Nigeria Regiment and the Northern Nigeria Regiment were amalgamated to form the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force (Miners, 1971). In 1956, at the visit of Queen Elizabeth II the remaining troops, not part of the West African Frontier Force from the North and South Regiments, was renamed the Queen's Own Nigerian Regiment (QONR). Later that same year, Britain granted military autonomy to her dependencies and the QONR was renamed Nigerian Military Force (NMF) (Lukham, 1971). In 1960 at independence the name changed again to become the Royal Nigerian Army. As soon as Nigeria became a Republic in 1963, the name was changed to the Nigerian Army and with the other two forces - Navy and Air Force- were designated the Nigerian Armed Forces, the name it bears till today (Adekson & Adekanye, 1981; Olusoji, Shadare & Owoyemi, 2012).

The armed forces of Nigeria were up till 15 January 1966 seen in public only on ceremonial occasions especially during the annual Independence Day anniversary – 1 of October- when they make ceremonial parades and the Air Force engages in the usual colourful air display (Janowitz & van Doom, 1971). This changed immediately after the coup of 15 January 1966; the military took over the managements of Federal, States and to some extent Local Council Affairs. Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country has experienced almost thirty years of military dictatorial rule (Hargreaves, 2002, cited in Olusoji, Shadare & Owoyemi, 2012). With the demise of the First Republic in January 1966, the dictatorial and authoritarian military rule was only interrupted by a brief civilian and democratic rule of the Second Republic from 1979 to 1983 (Lewis, 1994).

Between 1983 and 1999, four different military regimes had their taste of power starting with General Muhammadu Buhari who overthrew Shehu Shagari, a democratically elected civilian president on the 31st of December, 1983. Buhari was overthrown two year later by General Ibrahim Babangida his Chief of Army Staff, on August 1985 who held on to power till 1993 when he was force to step aside and allowed an interim government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. The interim government lasted for only three months before being swept aside by General Sani Abacha who unfortunately, died in office five years later and was replaced by General Abdulsalam Abubarkar in 1998. General Abubarkar kept to his word by organizing a general election and handing over power to Obasanjo, a civilian elected president who has a military background. Olorungbemi (2015, p.197), outlined the various coups, attempted coups, conspiracies to stage coups and allegations to carry out coups in Nigeria. They are listed in table 1;

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Table 1.History of Coups Nigeria

S/N	Coups	Year	Individuals Involved (With the exception of Ironsi, all the others participated in the plot that ushered them as military heads of states).
1.	Successful coup in Nigeria	January 1966	General Aguiyi Ironsi
		July 1966	General Yakubu Gowon
		July 1975	General Muhammed Murtala
		December 1983	General Muhammed Buhari
		August 1985	General Ibrahim Babangida
		November 1993	General Sani Abacha
2. Attempted and foil Coups d'etat in Nigeria			
	Attempted and foil Coups	January 1966	Major Nzeogu
		February 1976	Lt. Col. Dimka
		April 1990	Major Gideon Orkah
	Conspiracies to stage a coup as alleged	October 1962	Chief Obafemi Awolowo
		September 1967	Colonel Ifeajuna, Biafra
		December 1985	General Mamman Vasta
		March 1995	No clear leader
		December 1997	General Diya Oladipo
	Political allegation of Coup plans	January 1965	No clear leader
	Include	June 1998	No clear leader.
Military Regimes in Nigeria (1966-1999)			
	Date of Coup	The Head of State	Duration of Regime

1.	Jan. 15th 1966	Major Gen. J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi	Jan. 15th –July 29th 1966
2.	July 29th 1966	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	July 29th 1966- July29th 1975
3.	July 29th 1975	Gen. Murtala Mohammed	July 29th 1975- Feb 13Th 1976
4.	14TH Feb. 1976	Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo	14th Feb. 1976-1 st Oct. 1979
5.	Dec. 31st 1983	Major Gen. M. Buhari	Dec. 31st 1983- Aug27th 1995
6.	Aug. 27th 1985	Gen. Ibrahim B. Babangida	Aug. 27th 1985- Aug 25th 1993.
7.	Nov. 17th 1993`	Gen. Sani Abacha	Nov. 17th 1993- June 9th 1998
8.	June 9 th	Gen. Abdusalami Abubakar	June 9th 1998- May 29th 1999.

Source: Okeke& Ugwu (2013); Olorungbemi (2015) and modified by the Author.

Military coup d'état has always ushered in a military regime, which always had far reaching socio-economic consequences. The very existence of a group of military rulers affects the social climate of a country. Social priorities are altered and the economy is reoriented, ostensibly for the better. The social status of the military is enhanced and the military becomes an attractive profession owing to the opportunities offered for the exercise of power and influence in the polity, leading to the emergence of a new group of comfortable upper class with a military background, a situation that has promoted mass discontent (Olorungbemi, 2015).

The Nature and Changing Pattern of Civil-Military Relations in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

From the above, the Nigerian Military since independence ruled Nigeria for 30yers. Though legacies of the Military remain, it has had many issues which were mostly failure to improve the Nigerian system in so many areas. For example, aside the repeated seizure of power (coup and counter-coup) by the military from the civilian government, the Gowon regime failed to reduce corruption and extravagance and did little to reduce the influence of ethnicity; It also wasted the National resources on a fruitless project of the FESTAC; it could not tackle political problems in the country; it hardly introduced any satisfactory revenue allocation programme and failed to return power to a democratically elected president. During the Murtala/Obasanjo regime, corruption grew and it could not address the issues of National Census; the UPE scheme introduced by Gowon collapsed; the society could not be transformed to a just and egalitarian one as the regime promised Amuwo (1999). Under the Abdulsalam regime, though a very short and transitional one, it recorded failures as: the failure to arraign the issues of petroleum product; the new minimum wage announced by the regime rose uproar; it effected the

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devaluation of naira which affected the economy and the regime failed to prosecute Abacha's family. The Military had so many weaknesses which became visible after they left the scene. There are so many of them but the few above listed are the most glaring of them. The perception of most Nigerians is that the Nigerian military does not have what it takes to manage the country. For example, Ajagbe (1990) wrote that if there is any institution that is least respected in Nigeria, it is the Military. Irrespective of this paradoxically, some people see Military as being better than civilian rule because of the role it played in local government reforms, state creation among others.

Military regimes were not willing to have a professional military that could strike with precision because of the fear of military coup. The argument then is that rather than preparing Africans for political independence, the colonial regime prepared Africans against independence. Democracy, democratisation and military in Nigeria Democracy had become a much-abused concept even as it has gained a lot of currency across the globe. Claude Ake argues that democracy has been devalued in order to make it convenient and less threatening to those in power or demanding on anyone. He argues: 'Democracy spreads because it has been rendered meaningless and innocuous without losing its symbolic value of good governance and its attendant economic prosperity is a bulwark for democracy. The military institution is the offshoot of the need to secure the territorial boundaries of the state. The military is called forth by the need to enhance the safety of a nation's social, 'economic and political institutions against threat arising from other independent states (Adesina, Enemu, Francis, 1999; Amuwo, Kunle, 1999).

The first point of relevance to new democracies like Nigeria is the conflict between the military world view and culture and democratic values. The military mind upholds organisation, and commends the subordination of the individual to the group. The emphasis is on hierarchy, loyalty, order, discipline and obedience. Democracy places premium on none conformity and freedom of thought and expression. The emphasis is on constant questioning of authority, discussion of issues and consideration of policy options that are non-violent and respectful of the lives of others. The ascendancy of the military especially in times of war meant that liberal democratic values are compromised. Indeed, the military mentally is one major reason why Claude Ake argued that military rule is a negation of what is uniquely human to rule and believed that military could never engender democracy because it is an anti-thesis of democracy is regarded to its norms, values, purposes, and structure. According to Ake (1994): the military addresses the extreme and the extra ordinary while democracy, addresses the routine, the military values discipline, and hierarchy, democracy, freedom and equality, the military is oriented .to law and order, democracy to diversity, contradiction and competition, the method of the military is violent aggression, that of democracy is persuasion, negotiation, and consensus "building" Two decade of military rule in Nigeria left very strong authoritarian imprint on civil life and civil society that conscious effort has to made to engineer the cultivation of civic virtue to advance democracy.

This is very important to remove violence that continuously characterises electoral competition, itself crucial to the effort to crystallise civilian control of the military so long as authoritarian practices continue to pervade society, democracy will remain fragile, and the threat of military incursion into politics real. Enhancing enduring civil-military relations fourth re-public and beyond (Findings) As Luckha has noted, the military has the capacity to block expansion of the political space reverse democratization process and return mid-way (Lai, 2004). They are also able to determine the terms, conditions and character of the return to constitutional rule. According to Huntington (1957) there are historically two types of control of the military in the west: objective or liberal and subjective or penetration control. The objective/liberal control is best exemplified by western democracies in which there exists a clear distinct between military and civilian roles and functions.

Civilian control of the military is achieved in several ways (Findings) in the first instance; the military is kept out of politics and thus subordinated to civilian leaders who are accountable to the people directly or through an assembly. Secondly, while the military is required to provide input in form of advice and as well implement defence policy, the formulation of policy in the realm of defence is to be the sole responsibility of the civilian authority. Thirdly; there exists strict political neutrality within the military as a means of ensuring its loyalty to the government of the day, irrespective of the political party that constitutes the government. The subjective or penetration control employs the systematic and thorough-going politicisation which has been achieved in varying degree in dictatorial or one-party state. For example, Hitler attempted in 1934 to turn the German Army into "political soldier". Under the institutional penetration control, civilian control of the military is maintained through a level of interpenetration between the armed forces and the party (Remi, 2004; Abba, 2008).

The contention that the military should be subordinated to civil authority is predicated on the premise that the military is an arm of the state and an important tool of state policy. Hence, it is to serve as an instrument of political authorities which has the constitutional right to determine its use. However, it is difficult to achieve complete objective civilian control over the military. This is the case because of the tendency of many civilian groups to see such control in subjective terms. Rather than allow the military to be neutral, dominant groups seek to subordinate the officer corps to their own interests. The situation is even more difficult in countries like Nigeria, coming from the very antithesis of objective civilian control: military participation in politics. Until 1999, the Nigerian military was immersed in regional ethnic, institutional and constitutional politics. Specific efforts are being made to professionalise the military, re-indoctrinate it on values of subordination to civilian rules improve its capacity and give it a national apolitical outlook. The 1999 constitution states in section 217(2c) that one of the fundamental objectives of the armed forces of Nigeria is "suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order whom called upon to do so by the president, but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an act of the Nation

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Assembly”. Section 218(1) similarly underscores the president’s supreme and constitutional power over the military: “The powers of the president as the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the federation shall include power to determine the operation use of the Armed Forces of the federation. Against the background of these constitutional powers and as a device for clearing up the mess that had been perpetrated by the past military regimes, that former president Olusegun Obasanjo invoked two fundamental measures: one, he retired all military officers that had held political appointments in the country between 1984 and 1999; two, he brought to trial some top military officers (Remi, 2004; Abba, 2008).

The rationale for purging the erstwhile political military officers was premised on the perception that all officers that served previous military regimes in various political positions might not be fully amenable to life in the barracks any longer, and could therefore disturb the efforts at re-professionalising the military under civilian political leadership. These appeared to be bold attempts to institutionalise civilian control of the military and re-professionalise, the armed forces they are insufficient to checkmate future military intervention in the nation’s body polity. It is only good and transparent people-oriented governance that can constitute the major antidote to military incursion into politics.

Efforts at Reforming the Military in the Fourth Republic

When Obasanjo took over from the military in 1999, he was never unmindful of the potential danger the military could pose to the nurturing, sustainability and eventual consolidation of the nascent democracy (Ojo, 2000). Thus, the federal government carried out sweeping retirement exercise when it pulled out from the military, personnel well over 100 soldiers including generals and other senior military officers who were suspected to be political. Worthy of note, are those of them that have held one form of political appointment or the other between 1985 and 1999. In May 2001, just as the country was preparing for the second anniversary of democracy, General Victor Malu, the Chief of Army staff, and his counterparts of Navy and Air force, Victor Ombu and Ibrahim Muhmud Alfa, were relieved of their positions and were replaced immediately. Since, the first spate of retirements, reorganisation of the armed forces continued to be a recurring occurrence. According to Agbese (2009), several measures have been taken by Obasanjo government in repositioning the military. More training programmes for the military were announced and such training programmes were to emphasise the need for the military to subordinate themselves to civil authority. However, the big challenge for the military is how to address itself to its customary and constitutional role of defending Nigeria’s territorial integrity and subordinating themselves to civil authority in sum, while Huntington does discuss military effectiveness as a product of civil-military relations, the manner in which he does so is problematic. His basic formulation seems to be that the pattern of civil- military relations which produces the most effective militaries is that which impinges least on their ability to operate according to a constant and universal functional imperative. The difficulty

is that the superiority of this “professional military” ideal type regardless of context is doubtful. There is not one type of military organisation that is most effective across time and space, regardless of adversary or strategic context. A second point arising from the above discussion is that the maintenance of military effectiveness may require change over time-----a point that Huntington does not address.

In *The Soldier and the State*, one of Huntington’s basic methodological assumptions is that it is possible to define an equilibrium called “objective civilian control” that ensures civilian control and maximizes security at the same time. (Huntington, 1957: p. viii) He argues that “In practice, officership is strongest and most effective when it most closely approaches the professional ideal; it is weakest and most defective when it falls short of that ideal” (Huntington, 1957). An officer corps is professional to the extent it exhibits the qualities of expertise, responsibility, and corporateness. In addition to enhancing effectiveness, these traits also enhance civilian control because a professional military seeks to distance itself from politics (Huntington, 1957).

In the Nigerian context, however, military professionalism is difficult to maintain because liberalism is inherently hostile to the military function and military institutions. The classic liberal approaches to military affairs are extirpation (reduce the military to the lowest possible level) or transmutation (to civilianize it). This context dependence is relevant not just to thinking about valuable characteristics of individual soldiers and officers, but also to thinking about organizational structures, equipment, technology, training techniques, and a whole host of other factors. There is nothing to guarantee that evaluation by “independent military standards” will alone ensure integration of all these in a way that maximizes the effectiveness of the military organisation in a dynamic societal and international context. In fact, Barry Posen argues that military organisations will stagnate without civilian involvement and will be ill-suited to meet the requirements of their political leaders’ grand strategy (Posen, 1984: p. 80). Without accepting the power of this prediction from organisation theory that organisations never adapt on their own-----indeed it has been convincingly argued against-----Posen is correct in emphasizing the point that military organisations may need to change over time to remain relevant and effective (Rosen, 1991; Posen, 1984).

There is no doubt that since the advent of the present democratic dispensation in 1999, Nigerian military has been making courageous efforts to redeem its image which was badly damaged over the years as a result of the military involvement in the politics of this country. It is also true that past and present military leadership has been working tirelessly to improve the general welfare and competence of its personnel through the provision of modern weapons/equipment, continuous training, both within and outside the country and above all, the general re-orientation of the entire military so that its personnel can discharge their duties with zeal, pride and confidence as professional soldiers. Onwuamaegbu (2005), has argued that today, it is quite reassuring to state that the

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Nigerian military has started reaping the fruit of these courageous efforts. There is a tremendous change of attitude and perception from the general public towards the Nigerian military. They have accepted that they are part of the society with equal stake in the overall development of the society and the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. There is a popular proverb, which says: “respect from outside is a clear reflection of success within”. This is exactly what the Nigerian military is enjoying now. Agwai (2004) has urged officers to cultivate trust in comments, statements and everything they do in order to protect ourselves and show to the people that we are that army that Nigerians should be proud of. Several efforts have been made in this regard. We can cite the examples of such initiatives by the federal government in conjunction with other well-meaning western countries. The Nigerian military itself has done a lot to remain relevant in the present dispensation to consolidate democracy. However, there has been no comprehensive effort at self-examination, aimed at totally reforming the system. Such efforts should be seen by all as part of Nigerian military corporate responsibilities toward national goals and aspirations as well as its interpretation of how best to perform to meet these aspirations, which is the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The Military is the most regimented and disciplined group with chain of command and capacity of using the force of coercion. The main purpose of the establishing it is to fight internal instability and protect the state against external aggression. Though when the military assumes power it carries out certain activities that maybe developmental, it does not make it a legitimate government. This is the experience with Nigeria where the military ruled for more than thirty years. At this point it suffices to note that the military is good at what it is established for but certainly not for governance. As such, in the present time, if the society must move with civilisation, all institution of government must exhibit professionalism and work within its confine. The concept of democratisation is the main thrust of the main. The concept makes it clear that democracy cannot be instituted by conducting an election to replace military dictators with civilians. Rather it has to be established and gradually institutionalised through the conscious efforts of the elites and political leaders over time. Such a process will involve political institutionalisation, behavioural and attitudinal changes that normalise politics and narrow uncertainty. The challenge of democratisation is therefore to ensure that democracy ‘becomes the only game in town. It must involve a shift in political culture, a transition from instrumental to principled commitment to the democratic framework, a growth in trust and cooperation framework, a growth in trust and cooperation among then political competitors and a socialisation of the general population. This can be achieved through both deliberative efforts and the practice of the democracy in politics and civil society. Democratic consolidations thus involve a shared normative and behavioural commitment to the specific rule and practice of the country’s constitutional system. It is the major catalyst that will comment the

democratisation of Nigeria and engender enduring civil-goods transparent and viable people-oriented governance. With the increasing involvement of the retired military officers in Nigeria's democratisation may well be a factor capable of discouraging military direct incursion into civil politics

Recommendations

The following are measures of preventing military intervention in Nigeria.

- i. Military intervention should be outlawed by the constitution of Nigeria.
- ii. There should be accountability on the part of the politicians who are in government or planning to be in government.
- iii. The game of politics should be played according to the laid down rules and regulations.
- iv. Ethnic politics should be avoided by the politicians
- v. There should be good leadership on the part of all elected officials who are to serve in different areas of government.
- vi. Mismanagement of public funds should be avoided by the politicians and the ruling elites.
- vii. There should be free and fair election in the country
- viii. The elected government should be responsive to the yearnings of the people
- ix. The military should be depoliticised. In other words, the military should be completely separated from politics.
- x. The people should resist military intervention through peaceful mass disobedience.
- xi. There should be independence of the judiciary so that cases can be judged impartially.
- xii. The masses should be given political education. Many people are ignorant of their rights.
- xiii. Fundamental human rights should be respected by everybody in the society including the military.

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