THE MILITARY IN NIGERIAN POLITICS (1966-1979):

CORRECTIVE AGENT OR MERE

USURPER OF POWER?

By

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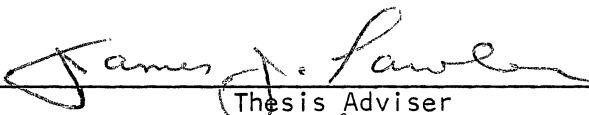
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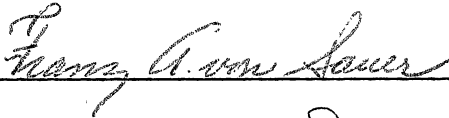
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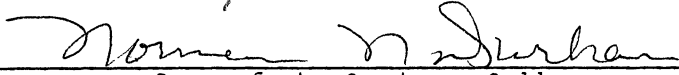
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

"The wind of change is sweeping through Africa," Harold MacMillan once said in a famous speech he gave after World War II. The British prime minister was referring to the euphoric rise of African nationalism at the time and the resolve of Africans to exchange European Colonialism for self-government and independence. There was no indication then that there was soon to occur direct involvement of the military in the politics of sub-Saharan Africa.

A decade later, the military took over in Sudan in November, 1958, in what can be said to be an eye-opener. After an interregnum that lasted another decade, a flurry of military take-overs occurred spanning the length and breadth of sub-Saharan Africa. First was Zaire (Congo Kinshasa)--November, 1965; Benin (Dahomey)--December, 1965; Central African Republic--January, 1966; Upper Volta--January, 1966; Nigeria--January, 1966, and July, 1967; Ghana--February, 1966, and January, 1967; Togo--January, 1967; Sierra Leone--March, 1967; and Congo (Congo Brazzaville)--August, 196?, just to mention a few. The above pattern and trend are still with us today as exemplified by both Bourkina Fasso and Nigeria in 1983.

The Problem

Nigeria has suffered several coups and counter-coups. She has one of the worst, if not the worst, record of the phenomenon of military intrusion in politics in sub-Saharan Africa. Apart from the January 15, 1966, and July 29, 1967, coups already mentioned above, Nigeria also experienced military seizures of power on July 29, 1975, and lately on December 31, 1983. This is apart from the abortive coup of February 23, 1976, and several other rumored-abortive coups. For most of her twenty-five years as an independent country then, Nigeria has been under military rule. At the present time, the military is in power in Lagos. Nigeria is in search of a workable system which would facilitate the solution of her pressing problems, namely:

1. The integration of the numerous ethno-cultural groups within the country into a united Nigerian nation, and

2. Socio-economic development to deliver material prosperity, the so-called "good life" to Nigerians.

This study will assess what the role of the military, if any, has been with respect to aiding and abetting or otherwise hindering the realization of the above needs.

Thesis and Purpose

The study will investigate the involvement of the Nigerian military in the country's politics from 1966 to 1979. Between 1979 and 1983, the civilians were back in power in Lagos and it is too early to assess the present military regime; hence our time frame, 1966 to 1979, which also forms a "solid block"-period of military rule.

The study will test the following hypothesis: that the Nigerian military has been, by and large, a mere usurper of power in Nigerian politics and has done very little toward the realization of the two major needs mentioned above because of tribalism, disunity, and corruption.

Analytical Framework and Methodology

After introducing our subject, we shall proceed to state briefly the history of military involvement in Nigerian politics, in the process of which we shall examine the nature of the coups d'etat. This is of utmost relevance because Nigeria's present day integration problems directly stem from the way and manner the country was created. Also, an examination of the nature of the military takeovers serves to throw light on the real motives of the conspirators and on their performance in office.

We shall then turn to the thesis of this study and ask the following questions: Does the Nigerian military regime concern itself with primarily the material well-being of the majority of Nigerians? (An examination of the budgetary allocations to various government departments in comparison to the allocations to the Defense Department should throw quite a bit of light here.) How much more nationally integrated are the ethno-cultural groups within the country since over a decade (1966 to 1979) of military rule? (Simply put, national integration refers to the process of uniting culturally and socially discrete groups and it shall be assessed by the degree of sectionalism, ethnicity, tribalism, etc., both in the make-up of political parties of the second republic and the results of the 1979 general elections.) What is the record of the

military in the realm of economic development--economic development here simply means self-sufficiency in food production and the adequate provision of sanitary (tap-borne) water, electricity, and housing? These variables were selected because they provide a good measuring stick of how the military has fared with respect to the two great needs of Nigeria mentioned above. The performance of the military as measured by the standards above in turn determine whether they have been mere usurpers of power or not.

The above questions, needless to say, are not mutually exclusive. The aim here is to pitch the promises of the military against their performance, not necessarily against the performance of the civilians. For the sake of convenience, we shall be dealing with the military as an institution rather than dealing with individual administrations. The justification of this approach lies in the fact that there is a congruence of not only the principal elements but also of the guiding principles of all military regimes during our period of focus (1966 to 1979) and even beyond, for example, the regime that assumed power on December 31, 1983.

This study will employ the non-quantitative and traditional methodology of empirical observation or evaluation. We shall begin by taking a cursory look at the territory that has already been covered by available literature.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THEORETICAL LITERATURE

The flurry of coups mentioned previously caught many political observers by surprise. The surprise was not in the fact of military involvement in politics. Such involvement of the military in the politics of developing nations had already occurred in Israel and Turkey, for instance. Rather, because African soldiers had not been squarely behind the nationalists during the latter's confrontation with the colonialists on the question of independence (with the possible exception of Algeria), it was surprising to watch these soldiers carve a political leadership role for themselves overnight and so soon after independence. This was especially so since a lot of confidence was reposed in the efficacy of the Westminster model and other metropolitan models, and their bright future in Africa was assumed. Moreover, the officer-corps of the African military had been, and still is, trained in metropolitan military academies such as Great Britain's Sandhurst, France's St. Cyr, and the United States' Fort Gordon. They (African soldiers) had been properly schooled in Western European military tradition, which outlines the military's role as that of the prosecution of war as declared by its political leaders. They had been taught that the political leadership role was not for the military.

Given the number and importance of the military regimes in the new states, scholars have been drawn to study them and the result has been

some important systematic and theoretical works on the military's political role in particular and civil-military relations in general. Initially, the dominant orientation toward the subject was that of the "Garrison State" model (Lasswell, pp. 455-468) which was in reaction against the rise of totalitarian states in Europe in the 1930's. For Lasswell, the garrison state is one in which the specialists in violence represent the most powerful group in the national decision-making process. Historical examples would be Germany (1933 to 1945) and Japan (1930 to 1945).

After World War II, the trend moved away from the discussion of the Lasswellian model of civil-military relations. One of the first attempts since then to set up a theoretical framework of civil-military relations, argued, rather too broadly, that the officer corps is a professional body, acknowledges a responsibility to society, is expert, possesses a sense of corporateness which excludes outsiders and has a distinctive outlook and role. According to this view, there are two models of civil-military relations: the objective control model, in which the military is small, exclusive, highly professional, indifferent to ideologies, and subject to civilian governmental control; and the subjective control model which is characterized by the absence of clear lines between civilian and military groups and values. The military is said to be integrated into society and to support dominant political ideologies and social values (Huntington, 1957, pp. 7-18, 80-93). This assessment hardly applies to African armies today as will be shown below.

Generally speaking, the technological developments of this age have produced major changes in military establishments, and the revolution in military technology has altered the patterns of organizational authority in the army. Also, technical innovation has caused a narrowing of skills

between the military sector and the civilian sector. This has moved military officers into a large managerial and political arena where they tend to look beyond purely military affairs and therefore become concerned with politics both at home and abroad. Where this is true, and it is not true in every case, the officers become politicised and show broad interests in political, social, and economic subjects (Janowitz, 1960, pp. 22-75). A prime example of the above is seen in the prominent role played by the Soviet military in the Korean jet-liner flight 007 incident recently. Again it must be noted that this is only a general picture. Specifically, as it applies to Africa, especially Nigeria, the military seized power and then became politicised in the process of exercising it and not the other way around.

The study of the military in politics was furthered by the rise of modern comparative politics. This time the studies focused upon the role of the military in the politics of developing nations. Among the first attempts at a comparative study of the military in modernizing states is a work edited by John J. Johnson. The book's theme is to explore the role of the military in transitional societies. The military is considered an effective agent of modernization by most authors in the book.

In the introductory essay, modernization is defined as egalitarian democracy, representative government, technological and economic progress, efficient and honest administration, and national autonomy and status in the international system. The essay further states that when parliamentary democratic regimes falter, military rule is one of several practicable and apparently stable alternatives and that the military

oligarchy is one of several political forms in the course of political development, especially in developing nations (Shils, pp. 9-13).

The experience of several African states, especially Nigeria, has been that one coup has led to another and another--an obviously destabilizing state of affairs which clearly has not and cannot foster modernization even as defined by Shils. This observation goes for the next essay in the Johnson book which argues that the military is the most modern and rational organization in the traditional society having been modeled after industrial-based organizations and influenced by highly advanced Western military technology; that the army contributes to the increase in social mobility of the recruits and provides considerable training both in technology and citizenship and thus plays a prominent role in the modernizing process as a powerful modernizing instrument in the transitional society (Pye, pp. 78-89).

At the time the Johnson book appeared in 1962, it could not be reasonably concluded that the military is an effective agent of modernization in the new states. This is especially so where sub-Saharan Africa is concerned. By 1962, only/coup d'etat had been registered in the region--the Sudanese coup of November, 1958. Most of the few independent states in the area were barely half a decade old as such, with certainly no experience of military government. Therefore, one can safely say that the Johnson hypothesis under consideration here was hastily arrived at to the exent that it affects sub-Saharan Africa. Even given that the contributors of the Johnson book were desirous of thoroughly investigating the general hypothesis of the book, they could not have been able to do so for reasons stated immediately above.

Since the appearance of the Johnson book, however, enough has been seen and observed of the military in politics and military government in Africa to enable fairly exhaustive investigations to be carried out in this direction and reasonable conclusions arrived at. It is to some of these investigations that we shall now turn.

Far from being a coherent, organized and an efficient organization that it is so often pictured as, once an army (African) enters government, the possession of power proceeds to divide it: army cohesion disappears as soon as the army stops performing the functions for which it was drilled, hence the incidence of the counter-coup (First, p. 436). Once in government, the political neutrality of the military is severely tested by the rigors and "corruption" of political life. In fact, right after graduation, the African Sandhurst, St. Cyr or Fort Gordon alumnus begins to strive for social and material upward mobility to the detriment, invariably, of service to the army and the state. Involvement in politics is for him the surest and most rapid route to achieving social and material mobility.

The entry of soldiers into government worsens the alignment of social forces in the affected societies because it introduces weapons into the conflict. In the Nigerian case, military involvement in the mid-sixties almost led to the demise of the country rather than blocking disunity and disintegration. As soon as the Nigerian army stepped into the turbulence of Nigeria's post-independence politics, the agglomerations of interests and social groups that made up the army soaked up the political and social conflicts of the day. As a result of the involvement of the military, the conflict took a worse turn--civil war.

Once the military enters politics, the stability it promised is soon broken by the episode of the counter-coup. Within African armies, it is not surprising to find acute resentment between different generations of officers and fierce rivalry at lower levels. One generation rose through the ranks and was promoted at Independence and during the Africanization of the colonial armies. The other, which is made up of younger men better educated and better trained at intensive officer courses at Sandhurst and other metropolitan military academies, consider themselves better qualified to command. Frustration and conspiracy therefore flourish. This leads to disunity within the army and to the frequent occurrence of counter-coups.

The very seizure of power itself inflicts a profoundly devastating blow on the cohesion of the army. A coup d'etat shatters forever, the sanction against a military seizure of power. A major-general or a brigadier who usurps state power must expect to be emulated by a colonel. What one colonel can do, another surely can copy, improve upon, or undo (First, p. 437). Indeed, what a colonel can do, a lieutenant-colonel, a major, and even a sergeant who is daring can--after all, they also have guns and bullets: for example, flight lieutenant Jerry Rawlings of Ghana and Sergeant (now General) Samuel Doe of Liberia. The obligation of military discipline is thus broken ultimately.

Possession of power not only divides the army and therefore makes it inefficient but it also corrupts it. Regardless of why the army came to power, office soon creates an appetite for power and feeds it. The old generals tend to grow fond of the ceremonial and perquisites of office and the young officers enjoy the authority and popular awe in which they are held. Compared with life at the State House or the Governor's

mansion, in the ministries (government departments) and the diplomatic round, life in the Officers' Mess is meager and secluded (First, p. 439).

Another examination of African armies on the basis of empirical realities reveals that African armies are not "modern corporate hierarchies" but "autonomons, only quasi-modern, tenuously interlinked, personalist pyramids" clashing over the allocation of promotions, commands, and patronage (Decalo, p. 240). The African military, in general, is neither more cohesive, nationalist, progressive, nor self-denying than the civilian clique toppled (Decalo, p. 36). Therefore, when the military assumes political power, it is rarely able to provide an efficient, nationally oriented and stable administration, partly because of its own cleavages and competitions. Often, considerable time and effort is expended toward warding off alternative challenges to their authority both within the military and outside of it.

As far as a mission or a sense of direction is concerned, it is questionable that they (the military) desire to change things for the better. The military does not differ, on the whole, in its orientations from the civilian regime but is mainly preoccupied with personal and corporate aggrandizement (Decalo, p. 24). All the change that the coup--a method of change that changes very little--generally brings to affected African states is cosmetic and usually comprises only a change in personalities and political style and a redistribution of political and economic power among the elites with the army getting the lion's share. The low-income and largely agrarian-based economies of African states do not disappear; neither are their ethnically split societies consolidated with a wave of the gun (Bienen, 1978, p. 18).

The African military is not up and doing generally speaking and if one were to measure professionalism not by the statements of individual officers nor their verbal commitment to civilian rule but by military criteria, for example, demonstrated logistical ability, the maintenance of a chain of command, skills developed in combat or engineering prowess, one would discover that the level of professionalism in African armies cannot be said to be high (Bienen, 1978, p. 18). In addition to being deficient in innately military qualities, the African military lacks the political talents requisite for rule in Africa such as skill in dealing with political groups via persuasion, flexible policies, and bargaining abilities, that is, politiking. It is not equipped to bring stability, order, and modernization by overcoming the same problems of ethnicity, regionalism and economic stagnation that the civilians confronted. In other words, even if the military desired to improve the political and social-economic life in an African state, it simply could not because it is not equipped to do so. The promises of "national reconstruction" drummed by an African military just arrived at the State House are therefore, invariably, a garb for how can the military "succeed" where the civilians "failed" in what is basically a civilian endeavor? The chances of better conditions ensuing being bleak, the prognosis is consequently for political decay and not political development in African states falling under military control (Welsch, 1970. p. 229).

As far as Africa south of the Sahara is concerned, the military intervenes in order to enhance its corporate interests more than those of the society in general. Military officers desire promotions and are afraid of dismissal. They are interested in adequate (in their definition) budgetary support and are very mindful of interference in their

internal affairs, for example, the promotion of a soldier on the basis of loyalty to the President instead of seniority and merit. In a bid to compel members of the Ghanaian armed forces to join his Convention Peoples Party (CPP), President Kwame Nkrumah promoted officers loyal to his ideology while punishing recalcitrant ones. In 1965, Nkrumah ordered the compulsory retirement of the two highest ranking officers because they objected to his removal of the Presidential Guard regiment from regular army chain of command. In addition to the above, you had a reduction in the material privileges of the Ghanaian army as General Ocram, one of the conspirators, brings out in his memoirs. Ocram said that by late 1965, things were tough for most senior army officers; that while salaries were worth only a third of their value, the officers were then not only to lose their training allowance but also to pay for their electricity (Nordlinger, pp. 35, 38). This situation played no small part in bringing about the first Ghanaian coup in February, 1966, which toppled Nkrumah.

As far as Nigeria is concerned, it has been pointed out that the Ibo majors who carried out the first coup in 1966 did so partly because they felt that they had or would soon suffer promotional discriminations and possibly be forced out of the army to make room for the Hausa-Fulanis (Nordlinger, p. 41). The counter-coup which followed shortly after can be regarded as the Hausa-Fulani officers' answer to the many Ibo promotions ordered by Aguiyi Ironsi following the January, 1966, coup.

The martial virtues of the military--for example, bravery, discipline, and obedience--have little relevance for the governing of states. Pretorians, that is, military officers who become major political actors due to their actual or threatened use of force, as governors are as

corrupt or more so than their civilian predecessors. Some Nigerians
feel that the Nigerian military is less corrupt when holding political
power than Nigerian politicians. This is a fallacy, and a "per-head"
consideration of the matter would reveal that this is so. Because more
people are needed to run a civilian government than needed for a mili-
tary one and therefore more people have access to government funds in
the former than in the latter, it appears that the former is, per se,
more corrupt than the latter. Secondly, very little is known of mili-
tary corruption and one suspects that the actual magnitude of military
corruption during the latter part of the Gowon regime was unknown to the
Nigerian "in the street." The actual evidence of military transgression
in this area, and elsewhere, is not easily obtainable and even when ob-
tained is not publicized unlike in the case of civilians. This is be-
cause few journalists want ot risk losing their jobs and being thrown in-
to jail by attempting to expose military corruption in the media which
is invariably state-owned and controlled. In Nigeria, daring journal-
ists have been thrown into jail after having their heads shaved because
they criticised the military government. Also, while a civilian regime
does not probe the outgoing military government for fear of a coup, the
praetorians make it a point of duty to probe the displaced civilians and
to go out of their way to show that the ousted civilians deserved what
they got!

Praetorians do not become governors in order to improve government.
This is brought out clearly in a survey of 229 coup attempts between
1946 and 1970, which revealed that only 19 such attempts were motivated
by any kind of reformist inclinations and only 8 percent of the attempts
were undertaken to correct economic, political, and social maladies

(Nordlinger, p. 86). African military governments usually portray a "better than thou" image, particularly during the early part of their incumbencies in an attempt to justify their action. They may do such a thing as step-up the payment of external loans taken by their predecessors. Soon, however, the true intentions of the new leaders begin to show. The Ghanaian National Liberation Council made substantial cutbacks in government spending with a lot of hullabaloo after toppling Nkrumah. Soon, however, the economically unproductive military budget swelled by 40 percent due to pay increases and purchase of Mercedes-Benz cars for officers. By 1968, two years after the coup, the number of expensive status symbols doubled compared to the situation at the time of the coup (Nordlinger, p. 128). Although government corruption was not unknown in Sudan before 1958, in that year it reached gargantuan proportions under the praetorians who took over large plots of restricted public lands, took bribes to grant import licenses, embezzled large public sums and then manipulated the judicial process to go scot-free (Nordlinger, p. 128).

At the assumption of political office, African military, being simpletons in the exercise of political power, usually ban all political parties and outlaw the constitution, naively imagining that they can govern their complex (though traditional) societies without politiking--a case of throwing away the baby with the bathwater. Of course, government by decree, not debate, and according to the whims of the military rather than popular support soon proves impossible. At this juncture the praetorian may become dictatorial, for example, Idi Amin or else involve civilians at the highest levels as has been the experience of Nigeria and Ghana. In this case, and this is particularly true of

Nigeria, permanent secretaries (bureaucratic departmental heads) become "super permanent secretaries" as a result of increased influence through advisement.

In Ghana, the slogan "no politics" initially adopted by the country's first military regime in 1966 was soon discarded and several anti-Nkrumah politicians of the outlawed United Party were involved. In Nigeria, beginning from the Gowon regime to date, the military government has appointed several former top Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.), Action Group (AG) and National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) politicians to high office in an attempt to court popular support. Gowon even appointed Obafemi Awolowo as vice-chairman of the Federal Executive Committee. This practice demonstrates very loudly that by their own self-admission, the military is not equal to the task of governing that they assume for themselves by shear force of arms.

The Ataturk Model

Turkey under Ataturk is most widely cited as one case in which a military oligarchy made fundamental contributions to the social and economic development of a developing state. Such citation usually comes with the erroneous implication that therefore many more Ataturk-Turkeys are obtainable elsewhere, including Africa.

It should be noted that certain conditions obtained in Turkey when Ataturk came to power that do not obtain in Africa today. Turkey was underpopulated and culturally homogeneous, had a peasant land-owning class that was isolated from urban politics and the country was united against foreign enemies. Not only were the conditions obtaining in Turkey unique, but Ataturk's style was also unique for a military leader.

Unlike what many an African general would do, Ataturk made the moderniza-
tion of the army dependent on the transformation of Turkish society as a
whole. Appropriations for national defense decreased from 1926 through
the 1930's and it was not until 1939 that it rose to the pre-1926 level
(Bienen, 1971, p. 16). This undoubtedly made some capital available for
development purposes. On assumption of power, however, African military
rulers generally "eat" up such a large chunk of the national income that
economic development is precluded.

Ataturk insisted that Turkish army officers who wanted to become di-
rectly involved in partisan politics should leave the armed forces, thus
indicating that civilian institutions, not military ones, are better
suited to lead Turkey (and other countries) to modernization. In fact,
it is questionable that the Ataturk regime was a military, as opposed to
a civilian one. Ataturk is known to have "civilianized" himself and his
regime, for example, his official portrait showed him in white tie and
tails, not in military regalia.

Even if the military were capable of making fundamental contribu-
tions to the socio-economic development of African states, that is all
that the military could possibly do--just aid the socio-economic develop-
ment of African states. This route to modernization is hostile to the
needs of political institution building which is able to usher in poli-
tical stability and order without which any gains in the socio-economic
realm cannot be sustained. It is the political party, not the military,
which can be effectively institutionalized as a ruling force to bring
about political institution building.

The Origins of Military Intervention

There are several approaches to the study of military intervention in politics. Some seek the causes of military intervention in the characteristics of the military establishment. Such authors say that the ability and propensity of military officers to intervene in politics is related to their control of physical power, their "ethos of public service," their skill structure, which "combines managerial ability with a heroic posture," their internal cohesion and their middle and lower middle class social origins (Janowitz, 1964, pp. 1-74). Most of these characteristics, however, do not describe African armies as we noted above. Janowitz distinguishes the military careers into two types: "prescribed" and "adoptive" careers. The former refers to the career of the officer who has ordinary military assignments and education but no special assignments while the latter means, on the other hand, that the affected officer has unique educational or political-military assignments. Janowitz argues that those officers who belong to the latter category have broader knowledge on social and economic matters and become more political while those officers of the former category tend to be less political and uninvolved in politics. Officers who received overseas military education tend to be more interested in domestic politics (Janowitz, pp. 44-63). The more cohesive the military officers are, the greater ability to intervene in politics they could have. Cohesion, the feeling of group solidarity and the capacity for collective action, conditions the political behavior of the officers. Lack of cohesion leads to unstable and fragmented involvement and to a high possibility of counter-coups after the seizure of power (Janowitz, pp. 67-74).

Others look for the causes of military intervention in politics in the political and institutional structure of the society rather than in the social and organizational characteristics of the military establishment. Such authors link military intervention to the political culture of a country by which they mean the strength of the "political formula" sustaining the rules of political conduct, the extent of popular consensus supporting civilian institutions, and the degree of public involvement in, and attachment to, civilian supremacy over the military. They argue that the more solidly established civilian supremacy is the less likely are the opportunities that the military will seek to intervene in politics. From this proposition, political culture is classified into four different types: "mature," "developed," "low," and "minimal" political culture. These four types of political culture are determined by the following three criteria: (1) the legitimacy of the procedures for transferring power; (2) the degree of organization of the public; and (3) the existence of a wide public recognition as to who or what constitures the sovereign authority. Where all these conditions are fulfilled the level of political culture is said to be high and to the extent that they are not, it is correspondingly low.

The characteristic form of military intervention in a "mature political culture" is said to take the form of "influence"; in a "developed political culture" it is "blackmail"; in a "low political culture" it is "displacement" of some civilian leaders by others regarded more favorable to military interests; and in a "minimal political culture" it is "supplement" of civilians by the military regimes (Finer, pp. 87-163).

Like Finer, Huntington seeks the causes of military intervention in politics in the political structure of the society. According to him,

the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not

military but political because military interventions are only one speci-

fic manifestation of a broader phenomenon in underdeveloped societies,

that is, the general politicization of social forces and institutions--

"praetorian politics" (Huntington,/p. 194). He argues that the causes
                                1957,

of military intervention in politics lie not in the nature of the mili-

tary establishment but in the absence of effective political institu-

tions capable of mediating, refining, and moderating group political ac-

tion. He distinguishes the coups in the praetorian politics into three

types: the governmental coup or palace revolution; the revolutionary

coup; and the reform coup. The governmental coup, he says, is a change

in the top leadership of the government without significant changes in

the social structure or political institutions. The revolutionary coup

implies fundamental changes not only in the governmental authority but

also in the social and economic structure. The reform coup falls some-

where between these two. It takes place to effect reforms in the poli-

tical, social, and economic structure of the affected society (Hunting-
     1957
ton,/pp. 71-98).

                        Africa South of the Sahara

     As far as sub-Saharan Africa is concerned--Nigeria included, of

course--the above is but a plethora of plausible causation of coups d'etat.

Some explanations of coups which run the whole gamut from factors endo-

genous to the military to exogenous factors down to personality factors

have not been very rewarding either.

     The size of the armed forces of sub-Saharan African states is often

cited as a cause of coups d'etat. In actual fact this may not be so,

because Nigeria and the Central African Republic with armies numbering 250,000 and 1,100, respectively, as of 1977 have each experienced coups. Primordial factors have also been cited as a cause for coups in sub-Saharan Africa. We know, however, that Somalia, which is characterized by ethnic/cultural homogeneity, Burundi by ethnic/cultural polarization, Benin and Zaire by ethnic/cultural fragmentation, have each had military regimes.

Another reason for coups that is often cited is the poor economies of most of these states. Yet Libya and Upper Volta, with differing economies, have both experienced military dictatorships. The economy of the former is comparatively buoyant with a per capita GNP of $1,500. The latter has a GNP of only $40. This discrepancy weakens the economic argument.

Then there is the contagion rule or the so-called demonstration or domino-effect by which it is meant that a military take-over in country "A" will lead to a similar incident in neighboring country "B." This is often cited in the case of military intervention in Nigerian and Ghanaian politics. Two situations contradict this reasoning. Though bounded by Ghana, Upper Volta and Mali--all of which have experienced coups--the Ivory Coast has had none. Also, Tanzania has not experienced a military coup d'etat though bounded by Zaire and Uganda, both of which have.

The above represent some of the varying ways of looking at the phenomenon of military involvement in politics. Maybe there is a necessity for a shift in scholarly emphasis away from the study of "the coup d'etat," that is, their "Whys and Wherefores," to the study of military regimes and their performance. It is not being suggested here that the study of military intervention, especially in Africa, cease forthwith,

but rather that serious case studies of the performance of military re-
gimes in Africa be embarked upon. This thesis represents a step in this
direction singling for examination the role that the Nigerian military
has played in the country's 24-year history as an independent political
entity, especially during the period 1966 to 1979. We shall begin this
examination by briefly outlining the history of military involvement in
Nigerian politics (1966 to 1979).

CHAPTER III

BRIEF HISTORY OF MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN

NIGERIAN POLITICS (1966-1979)

Nigeria, the most populous state in Africa, the richest and most powerful in black Africa, was a creation of British, French, and German colonial rivalries and ambition in West Africa.

Until 1900, Nigeria existed as a number of independent national states with linguistic and cultural differences. She was a collection of "independent native states separated from one another . . . by great distances, differences in history and traditions, and by ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers" (Obasanjo, p. 1). In 1900, the British, who had gained an upperhand in the European "Scramble for Africa" as far as the territory now referred to as Nigeria is concerned, created the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria.

These protectorates were separate, distinct, autonomous, and each directly responsible to the Colonial Office in London. A most momentous step in the political evolution of Nigeria as a modern state was taken on January 1, 1914, with the amalgamation of the two protectorates. Despite this, the protectorates were still administered as separate entities.

Indirect rule was instituted over most of the territory of Northern Nigeria. It was agreed that the Colonial Office would not interfere with the religion of the people (Islam) and therefore the activities of

Western European missionaries would be restricted only to the non-moslem areas of the north. The Emirs wanted to maintain the status-quo and therefore their dominant positions. As for the British, the Christian missions had brought with them modern Western education which had given the people of the South "dangerous" ideas which may lead them to demand for the "vote" and self-government, it was feared. The "quarantine" of the North was intended to stop these "dangerous" ideas from spreading and possibly "catching on." On the other hand, rule through the local authorities, the Emirs, facilitated good administration and was inexpensive.

In 1923, a Nigerian Consultative Council was created and a few Nigerians were given the chance to air their views on the colonial government's legislative agenda, but this was exclusively limited to the South. The political changes in other parts of the British Empire at this time helped to hasten Nigeria's constitutional development.

In 1938, three regions--Northern, Western, and Eastern--were created and in 1946, a constitution which provided for regional assemblies in the regions and for a House of Chiefs each in the Western and Northern regions was adopted. These assemblies did not make law. The prerogative of law-making lay with a central legislature which was made up by designated colonial officials and representatives of the regions. It was the first time the North and the South were legislatively integrated.

Following another wave of political awareness in the colonial territories, this time after World War II, regional delegates met to revise the 1946 constitution and came up with a new one in 1951. By then regional political parties had already been formed--the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the North, the Action Group (AG) in the West, and the

National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) in the East. The 1951 constitution strengthened regional autonomy, for example, it gave the regional assemblies the authority to make laws for the regions. A new constitution adopted in 1954 further strengthened regional autonomy. The trend continued all through the constitutional conferences held in 1954, 1957, 1958, 1959, and 1960.

At independence, regionalism became the bane of national unity instead of ensuring and preserving it. There was a diffusion instead of a fusion of the three units. Additionally, there was the problem of the lop-sided nature of the political (structural) division of the country, the existing Federal Constitution, and the spirit in which it was operated and the ill-fitting form of government--the parliamentary party system.

Burke defines a party as "a body of men united for promoting, by their joint endeavours, the national interest based upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed" (Okpaku, p. 15). The parliamentary party system assumes a national arena in which the national interest is known but in which groups differ as to the means of achieving the ends. Such groups may form parties and seek office. While in office, their duty is to carry out the national mandate faithfully. Groups which at the moment are not in office because their proposals are only acceptable to a minority of the population become the people's watchdogs (the opposition party).

A national arena such as Britain's where the national interest is agreed on is good ground for the success of the parliamentary party system. But when this concept is transferred to a society still in flux-- such as Nigeria was in the late fifties and sixties and possibly still

is--where the national interest is still in the process of definition, there are difficulties to say the least (Okpaku, p. 81). Political contest becomes a contest to define the goals to be sought by society. Conflicts tend to be chaotic and politics becomes a "zero-sum" game. Parties seek means to "bend" the constitution to further particular (partisan) ends and parliament, rather than being the institution where the national logic or idea is abstracted from the numerous and partially organized demands from the political system, becomes the arena of power where the temporary majority superimposes its will upon the general will. Immense chaos invariably ensues. Nigeria was not an exception.

The first federal elections to be held in Nigeria since independence were held in 1964 between the NPC/Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) alliance called the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and the AG/ NCNC alliance called the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). All kinds of devices were used to eliminate opponents in the regions, thugs were hired to stop opponents from campaigning. In November of 1965, elections into the Western Regional House were held. Again massive rigging more brazen than had occurred the previous year was employed. Law and order broke down completely, leading to an almost complete state of anarchy.

In the small hours of the morning of January 15, 1966, the soldiers struck. To all intents and purposes, it was an Ibo coup. It was led by an Ibo and the casualty was all but non-Ibo. Nigeria had been in turmoil but the involvement of the military, especially the method (firearms) and style (tribal chauvinism) of such involvement, put it in an even graver situation. Nzeogu and his group of Majors had reportedly hoped to "establish a strong, unified and prosperous nation free from

corruption and internal strife" but power fell into the hands of an "un-
prepared" Aguiyi Ironsi (also an Ibo) who came out of a social party to
become Nigeria's head of state.

The way Ironsi handled the affairs of state tended to confirm the
fear of the North that the coup was a hegemonic design of the Ibos to
rule the country. Ironsi was nepotic and he failed to try the coup plot-
ters. He unilaterally effected promotions within the army in which 80
percent of the beneficiaries were Ibo and appointed these officers as
prefects of the provinces he had just created then (Dudley, p. 80). Re-
sentment grew in the North, culminating in the May, 1966, riots which
broke out in Northern towns during which many Ibos were killed while
others fled back to the East.

On July 29, 1966, Northern army officers staged a counter-coup, kill-
ing Ironsi and other Ibo officers. Again power fell in the hands of one
who had not prepared to exercise it--Yakubu Gowon. Odumegwu Ojukwu, a
surviving Ibo officer and then military governor of the East--the post
he had been appointed to by Ironsi--refused to submit to federal govern-
ment authority. On May 26, 1967, a meeting of the Eastern Regional Con-
sultative Assembly empowered Ojukwu to lead the East out of Nigeria in
secession. On May 27, 1967, Gowon declared a state of emergency before
Ojukwu could implement the mandate he had been given, assumed full pow-
ers and divided Nigeria into twelve states.

Ojukwu refused to recognize the twelve-state structure and declared
the Eastern Region the independent Republic of Biafra. The die was cast.
Both sides increased their military arsenal and moved troops to the "bor-
der." A bloody and costly civil war ensued beginning on July 6, 1967,
for thirty months.

Five years after the end of the civil war, Gowon was himself ousted from power in 1975 by the same clique that had literally put him in power and was succeeded by General Murtala Mohammed who was assassinated in an attempted coup in February, 1976. Olusegun Obasanjo took over as Head of State until October 1, 1979, when the civilians were handed power.

Thus, though Nigeria had been in turmoil prior to 1967, as a result of the intrusion of the military in Nigerian politics, not as a corporate entity but along ethnic and sectional lines and the introduction of fire-arms, the political conflict within the country took on ominous dimensions. A civil war was fought which led to the near demise of Nigeria altogether.

Within only a decade (1967 to 1976) Nigeria had had four military governments--a highly destabilizing phenomenon. What is more, only one (Murtala) of the four heads of governments had premeditated occupying the highest office of the land and therefore could possibly have been ready to effectively discharge the duties of the office. The other three had had political power literally thrust at them--a situation which lends itself to inefficiency. It is little wonder then that the military was ineffective.

Having briefly outlined the history of military intrusion in Nigerian politics, let us proceed to examine their performance once they arrived on the political scene. As stated above, the examination shall be on the basis of their (military) performance vis a vis the two crucial problems facing Nigeria: national integration and economic development.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION

The term "integration" is used to cover an extraordinarily large
range of political phenomena. Generally speaking, "integration" has to
do with that which holds a society or a political system together. Spe-
cifically, however, one can talk of five types of "integration": nation-
al, territorial, value, elite-mass integration, and integrative behavior
(Weiner, p. 180). Here we are concerned with the foremost type, that is,
"national integration."

National integration refers to the process of uniting or bringing
together culturally and socially discrete groups within a territorial
unit and the establishment of a national identity among such groups
(Weiner, p. 180). The use of the term presupposes that one is dealing
with an ethnically or otherwise plural society such as Nigeria in which
every group (tribe) is characterized by its own language, customs, or
other self-conscious cultural qualities. National integration therefore
refers specifically to the issue of creating a sense of territorial na-
tionality which overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial (tribal)
regional loyalties.

When successfully effected, national integration leads to the crea-
tion of a "nation," for example, the cases of Italy and the United States.
No agreement exists as to the perfect definition of the term "nation."
Such a definition would have to be "watertight" in the sense that it

lists constituent elements of the nations that are known in such a way as to distinguish them satisfactorily from other types of communities in which men live without opening up a Pandora's box of leaky "ifs" and "buts." However, we define "nation" here, like Emerson does, as a community of people who belong together in terms of a common heritage and feel like they have a common future. It is the largest entity which when the "chips are down" effectively commands men's loyalty over and above the claims of lesser communities within it or those communities which cut across it or encompass it (Emerson, p. 95).

The first political question for every African so-called "nation" is whether it is indeed one. Each African country could be ripped apart by tribal jealousies and all are weakened by them. This problem is shared by all new states with the exception of the first new state--the United States. It is, however, particularly acute in Africa where most of the newest of states are.

By her very size--twice as populous as any African country--Nigeria faces a greater problem in the area under discussion than most African countries. She conglomerates not just more people per se but more ethnic (tribal) groupings than any African country. Estimates of the number of distinct languages (which means ethnic groups) as opposed to dialects in Nigeria are usually from 150 to 248 (Schwawz, p. 1). The three major ethnic groups--the "big three"--are the Hausa-Fulani in Northern Nigeria, the Yoruba in Western Nigeria, and the Igbo in Eastern Nigeria. A word or two about the "big three" at this point will be in order as it would shed some light on the plurality of Nigeria.

The Hausa-Fulani inhabit most of Northern Nigeria. Besides them there are the Nupe, Tiv, Kanuri, and several other tribes. They are

mostly muslim and are the least literate in the Western script (though

literate in Arabic) of the three. The Hausa-Fulani were suspicious of

the more educated Yoruba and Igbo and were therefore not enthusiastic

about early independence or a centralized Nigerian government.

The Igbo who live in Eastern Nigeria with among several others--the

Ijaw, Ibibio, Efik, and Ekoi--are traditionally a highly individualistic

people with no political chiefaincies and no politically conceived hier-

archical structures. They are noted for their strong kinship ties to

one another and are mostly Christian.

The Yoruba live in Western Nigeria with minorities such as the Bini,

Itsekiri, and the Urhobo. They are a mixed ethnic group religiously.

There were among the Yoruba subtribal unions with a long history of con-

flicts, especially during the precolonial slave trade era. These con-

flicts have continued today in different forms and on a much reduced

scale.

In addition to the sharp ethnic disparities between Nigerian ethnic

groups, there are religious differences and differences in the impact of

Western civilization. Southern Nigeria is mostly Christian because it

was profoundly influenced by Western civilization (through the activities

of European Christian missionaries) during the colonial era unlike the

mostly Islamic North.

Nigerian peoples still live in their ethnic homelands and are not

geographically intermixed, generally speaking. Members of ethnic groups

reside in their ancestral territory where few members of other ethnic

groups live; therefore, the possibility of reducing inter-tribal differ-

ences through the contact of the various ethnic groups is severely limit-

ed. The Nigerian experience is unlike the Italian or American experience.

Italy, once a mere geographical expression, is today a nation due to the unifying advantage of a common religious faith (Roman Catholicism) and a common language. Those who came to the colonies left their homelands. Though they may have brought their langauges and customs with them, by leaving their homelands they had abandoned one set of loyalties and could easily develop another. Thus today, one can speak of a United States nation.

One of Nigeria's greatest needs is that the different tribes become but strands woven together to form one whole and her greatest danger is the outbreak of tribal jealousies which could cut whatever similitude of ties that presently hold the Nigerian people together (Schwarz, p. 1). The high degree of ethnic pluralism and heterogeneity characteristic of Nigeria provides the societal backdrop for the concurrent problems of national integration and economic growth that face Nigeria today. We shall take up the problem of national integration presently and that of economic development shall be looked at in the latter part of this study.

<center>British Colonialism and National

Integration in Nigeria</center>

British rule in India is said to have led to the maintenance of law and order, administrative unity, the introduction of a common body of social and political concepts and values, English as a lingua franca, and fiscal and economic integration which served to link together the heterogeneous elements which make up Indian society (Emerson, p. 123). The net impact of British colonialism in Nigeria is probably the direct opposite of the Indian experience. The British can be justifiably accused of creating Nigeria's national integration problems.

There is nothing natural about the borders of the British creation --Nigeria--except the Southern Atlantic coastline. The artificiality of the original amalgam of ethnic groups to form Nigeria resulted in a grossly unbalanced federal structure distinguished by extreme levels of ethnic pluralism. One region--Northern Nigeria--enjoyed not only numerical but also geographical (size) superiority against the other two regions--Western and Eastern Nigeria--put together.

The colonial regime in Nigeria was unconcerned with the development of national (Nigerian) loyalties but interested in creating groups of people who would be loyal to its interests. The development of national loyalties represented a threat to the interests of the British. Very limited popular participation in the affairs of state was allowed. The particular sentiments of a "John Citizen" hardly ever entered into the making of any significant decisions. At independence, when a greater measure of public participation was suddenly permitted therefore, the integration requirements of the "system" sky-rocketed overnight--so to say. "Once educational policy [was to be] determined by national not colonial needs, the issues of language policy, location of facilities, the levels of educational investment and the question of who bears the cost of education all affected the relations of [the] culturally discreet groups [in Nigeria]" (Weiner, p. 184).

The peculiar colonial policies and constitutional formulas were such that each of the "big three" became a core majority in a three region arrangement where each constituted the dominant political party. Politically, Nigeria had three one-party regions and could have been more appropriately described then as a "three-one-party system" than a "one-three-party system."

The integration of the various heterogeneous segments of Nigeria was never the intention of the colonizers. This was abundantly demonstrated in their adoption of the policy of Indirect Rule which is rule by proxy. Though expedient to begin with, Indirect Rule became a fetish and was abortively applied in Eastern Nigeria as noted above. The natural political course of Indirect Rule was toward the evolution of a number of distinct tribal states. Indirect Rule depended on the maintenance of the status-quo of traditional authority which in turn depended upon keeping tribes apart and maintaining differing tribal customs. It "supported the most conservative elements who were least likely to have a horizon wider than the tribe. Its legacy for independent Nigeria has been to delay and make more difficult the process of national integration" (Swartz, p. 33). The North was sheltered from the foreign influences that were affecting the South and Southerners and Northerners were isolated from each other by official policy. Obstacles were placed in the path of Christian missions that wished to establish schools in the North. Secular education was equally neglected in the Islamic North with the exception of a few efforts like the Katsina Teacher Training College. It was feared that modern education (secular and nonsecular) would undermine the muslim faith and the local traditional authority and ultimate the structure of Indirect Rule.

As a result of the colonial educational policy, the peoples of the North fell far behind the Southerners in the acquisition of modern skills. In 1952, only two percent of persons more than six years old in Northern Nigeria were literate in the Roman script--5.4 percent were literate in Arabic. In fact, Sokoto, Kano, and Bornu areas had only one percent

literacy in the Western script. On the other hand, there was 16 and 18

percent literacy in the Roman script in the Eastern and Western regions,

respectively. In 1961, the North, with a larger population than that of

both the Eastern and Western regions put together had only 6,487 stu-

dents in secondary school as opposed to 25,908 and 127,751 for the other

regions, respectively (Swartz, p. 34). The ratio in these figures have

remained more or less the same today. Northern backwardness as briefly

discussed above and for which the British are partially responsible is

one of the basic causes of tension between the North and South in Nigeria

today.

The British authorities encouraged the local authorities in the North

to isolate the Southerners who came into the North as government employ-

ees because there were too few educated Northerners to fill government

vacancies. The Southerners were therefore isolated in separate areas

called "Sabon Garis" or "new towns." Northerners were discouraged from

going to the more radical South. No Northerner sat in the legislative

council established under the 1922 Clifford Constitution, for example.

Inspite of the 1914 Amalgamation, Northern and Southern Nigeria con-

tinued to have separate administrations as mentioned above. The loyalty

of the British Colonial officers to their particular regions of assign-

ment was so intense that it was believed that they (officers) could go

to war against each other in support of their places of assignment. This

attitude coupled with general British policy enunciated above in brief

no doubt encouraged similar attitudes between and among Nigerians. This

probably explains why the leader of the NPC, Ahmadu Bello, declined to

leave his premiership of the Northern Region and become Prime Minister

of Nigeria in 1960 because he would have had to live in the Federal Capi-

tal, Lagos.

Furthermore, though Nigeria did not evolve as an organic political entity, the British left her with full formal structures of government and administration, a national anthem, a flag, political parties, and all the trappings of sovreignty. The cart was put before the horse! The institutional apparatus and symbols of statehood preceded the achievement of nationhood. Underneath lay contradictions, cleavages, and centrifugal forces which prevented the growth of truly national sentiments.

About the only positive thing that can be said about British Colonialism in Nigeria vis a vis other areas (East Africa) with reference to the issue of the national integration of the conglomerations of ethnic groups it called Nigeria is the absence of a settler population either of Europeans or an Asian lower middle class. (This is not to say that a country with a racial mixture is unfortunate. It is to say that the problem of national integration in Nigeria would have been compounded if she had a settler population.) But even in this case, British Colonialism cannot take all the credit. The lack of a settler population was partially caused by the fact that Nigeria was unhealthy due to the deadly bite of the ubiquitous mosquito. Also, there was not found land as suitable for settlement, climate-wise, as the low-temperature highlands of East Africa (Kenya) for example.

The problem of national integration in Nigeria may have been made a little easier by the absence of a settler population but it is still quite a job. The building of a nation out of a multitude of tribes-- each with different languages and traditions--brought together indiscriminately by an alien power, with the tribal differences reinforced by religious and educational differences is quite a job. This then is the job which the military self-appointed themselves to carry out.

The Military and National Integration of Nigeria

The "majors coup" was supposedly carried out to "establish a strong, unified and prosperous nation free from corruption and internal strife." However, an examination of the mechanics and results of the January, 1966, coup shows its alleged motivation to have been a garb. The coup was an exercise in tribalism and nepotism as noted above. It was led by an Igbo, the casualty was all but non-Igbo, and the inerhitor of power was Igbo and his actions in office prove that the Igbo were about to put into effect a grand hegemonic design to dominate Nigeria. One of such actions needs recounting here. Having decided to turn Nigeria into a unitary state, the military under Ironsi appointed two commissions--a Constitutional Review Commission headed by Chief Rotimi Williams and an Administrative Review Commission headed by a sole commissioner, Mr. F. Nwokedi, an Igbo. Mr. Nwokedi was single-handedly to determine the feasibility of "integrating" the federal and regional public services into a single unified service. It is notable that before the Williams Commission could really start deliberations--deliberations whose end result would delineate the work of Mr. Nwokedi, the latter submitted his report and the military preceded to announce what one can justifiably call premeditated fundamental political and administrative changes in Nigeria.

The fact that the murderous majors were not tried coupled with negative reactions to the decreed changes made by Aguiyi Ironsi led to the July, 1967, coup and ultimately to the civil war and almost to the actual dismemberment of Nigeria as she is known today. Thus, the dire problem of national integration facing Nigeria which had manifested itself many times since independence in October, 1960, got worse with military involvement in Nigerian politics.

It has been said that the creation of twelve states out of the three former regions in Nigeria in 1967 "will likely stand as the armed forces major contribution to Nigerian politics (integration)"--that the exercise meant a disintegration of the parts to integrate the whole (Welsch, p. 135). An examination of the circumstances that led to the creation of states in 1967, however, would reveal that much of the credit for the exercise belongs elsewhere--not to the military.

The main reason for creating states in 1967 was to enforce military discipline. In other words, states were not created in order to integrate the country. Ojukwu as Military Governor of the East--an appointment that Ironsi had made--had ceased to attend meetings of the Supreme Military Council because he refused to accept subordination under Gowon, the Commander in Chief of the armed forces. The creation of states was to bring Ojukwu down on his knees by pre-empting the mandate he had just received from the Eastern Nigerian Consultative Assembly to secede from Nigeria.

In any case, the idea of creating more states was not something the military introduced. Long since before independence, minority movements had arisen in the regions that made up Nigeria. The minorities within these regions wanted regions of their own where they would be free from the domination of the "big three." The minorities in the Western region under the leadership of Chief Denis Osadebay agitated for the creation of a Mid-West region. Eyo Ita was leader of the minority region in Eastern Nigeria and the demand was for the creation of a Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers region while Joseph Taka led the demand for the creation of a Middle Belt region out of the Northern region. Agitations for new regions came to a head at the 1957 London Constitutional Conference (LCC). The fifteen

requests which were put forward were referred to a Minorities Commission. At the 1958 LCC the report of the Minorities Commission which was against the creation of states was tabled and discussed but shelved in favor of independence talks. The issue of state-creation was only shelved, not satisfied, and requests for more states continued to be made all through the first republic.

Furthermore, in the first half of the Second Republic, Nigeria had five political parties: Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), and Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP). Three of the above represented a resustication of the former three dominant political parties in Nigeria. The UPN was a resustication of the AG, the NPN of the NPC, and the NPP of the NCNC. The PRP was a resustication of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) which was an opposition party in the Northern Region during the first republic and was based in Kano. Only the GNPP could not be clearly identified historically as having roots in the first republic though its founder and financier was a cabinet minister in Balewa's government. All five political parties, however, drew most of their support in specific ethnic-geographical parts of the country during the 1979 general elections. The UPN drew most of its support from the states corresponding to the former Western Region, the NPN to the former Northern Region, and the NPP to the former Eastern Region. The PRP drew its support from Kano and Kaduna states and the GNPP from the Kanuri ethnic group located at the North Eastern part of the country--Waziri being a Kanuri (see Tables I and II). The few exceptions to the above rule were the performance of the NPN in Rivers and Cross-Rivers

TABLE I

1979 GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS DISTRIBUTION
OF SEATS: STATE ASSEMBLIES

State	Total Seats	GNPP	UPN	NPN	PRP	NPP
Anambra	87	1	---	13	---	73
Bauchi	60	9	---	45	2	4
Bendel	60	---	34	22	---	4
Benue	57	6	---	48	---	3
Borno	72	59	---	11	2	---
Cross-River	84	16	7	58	---	3
Gongola	63	25	18	15	1	4
Imo	90	2	---	9	---	79
Kaduna	99	10	3	64	16	6
Kano	138	3	1	11	123	---
Kwara	42	2	15	25	---	---
Lagos	36	---	36	---	---	---
Niger	30	2	---	28	---	---
Ogun	36	---	36	---	---	---
Ondo	66	---	65	1	---	---
Oyo	126	---	117	9	---	---
Plateau	48	3	---	10	---	35
Rivers	42	1	---	26	---	15
Sokoto	111	19	---	92	---	---
Total	1347	157	333	487	144	226
% Seats	100	11.7	24.7	36.2	10.7	16.8

Source: B. Dudley, An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics
(Bloomington, 1982), p. 205.

TABLE II

1979 GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS:
PARTY CONTROL OF STATES

GNPP	UPN	NPN	PRP	NPP
Borno	Bendel	Bauchi	Kano	Anambra
Gongola	Lagos	Benue		Imo
	Ogun	Kaduna		Plateau
	Ondo	Kwara		
	Oyo	Cross-River		
		Niger		
		Rivers		
		Sokoto		

Source: B. Dudley, An Introduction to Nigerian Government and
Politics (Bloomington, 1982), p. 205.

and the NPP in Plateau state. Only the NPN came near to qualifying as a
truly national party.

The above picture of the 1979 elections is so similar to the results
of the federal elections in the first republic that there is hardly any
difference to be found between the two. The fact that things have re-
mained more or less the same after over a decade of military rule clear-
ly shows that they failed to make good concerning their self-appointed
task to integrate Nigeria.

When the military intruded into Nigerian politics in 1966, they pro-
mised not only to "establish . . . a unified . . ." nation but also a
"prosperous" one. We have already seen that they failed in the first
task. We shall now turn our attention to the second task the military
set for themselves in an area which has been noted above as one of Ni-
geria's two most pressing problems.

The Problem of Economic Development

"Economic development" is here simply defined as the provision of
the material well-being of the people of Nigeria. Nigeria belongs to
that group of countries variously referred to as "underdeveloped," "de-
veloping," "Group of 77," etc. in international economic jargon. How to
marshall her resources and provide material well-being to her citizens
is one of Nigeria's main problems.

In Gross National Product (GNP) terms, excluding Egypt and South
Africa, Nigeria is the wealthiest African state with a GNP estimated in
1974 at $22.4 billion. According to the same estimates, Nigeria, how-
ever, ranks as follows out of a select group of 18 African states with
reference to the following indices of social welfare (see Table III).

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TABLE III

NIGERIA'S RANK IN PROVISION OF SOCIAL WELFARE
OUT OF A SELECT GROUP OF
18 AFRICAN STATES

Indice of Social Welfare	Nigeria's Rank
1. School age children (5-19 years) per teacher	16th
2. Per capita expenditure on health	18th
3. Population per physician	18th
4. Infant mortality rate, i.e., deaths under one year per one thousand live births	15th
5. Life expectancy	15th

Source: B. Dudly, Nigerian Government and Politics (Blooming-ton, 1982), p. 226.

Economic planning began in Nigeria with the 1962-1968 National De-
velopment Plan (NDP) which was formulated with aid from United States
economic consultants. Before then, there was the "Ten Year Plan of De-
velopment and Welfare" of 1946 and the "Economic Program" of the federal
and regional governments of 1955-1960--all of which could not be classi-
fied as economic plans. They lacked set goals and were not even consis-
tent. The former was an attempt of the British Colonial office to help
re-activate the Nigerian economy after World War II, while the latter
was merely a shopping list of the four regional governments.

The Military and Economic Development of Nigeria

The military took over the implementation of the 1962-1968 plan in
1966 when they intruded in Nigerian politics. As a result of the outbreak
of the civil war from 1967 to 1970, all efforts were geared toward the
prosecution of war during those years. The first NDP developed under
the military therefore was the 1970-1974 plan, hereinafter called the
second plan while the second NDP developed under the military was the
1975-1980 plan, hereinafter called the third plan.

The military's economic goals and methods through which the regime
expected to achieve such goals as listed in the above plans will be ex-
amined in order to assess the economic performance of the military. Spe-
cifically, their housing program (social welfare) and their agricultural
and industrial program (general economic policy) will be examined. Em-
phasis will be on the second plan because it is the one plan that had
every chance to succeed as will be shown below.

The years 1966-1970 were spent in crises including the Civil War,
and in 1975, the Gowon administration was terminated after it had had

ample opportunity to fully operationalize the second plan. In 1976, the Murtala administration was terminated with his assassination in February. By then, the third plan (1975-1980) had been seriously impeded on two separate occasions--the ousting of Gowon, its mentor, and the assassination of Murtala who had pledged to implement it after he made some moderations. It was therefore a mutilated third NDP that Obasanjo carried on to 1979. Therefore, one could argue that the third plan did not stand a chance of being successfully implemented. The second plan did not suffer any of the above setbacks but instead had the advantage of abundant capital. The "oil boom" earnestly took off in 1970 in Nigeria and by 1974, Nigerian production represented 3.5 percent of total world production and 6.7 percent of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) output--OPEC accounting for 50 percent of world output. By November, 1974, Nigeria produced twenty-four barrels per day (bpd) of its high priced oil which by then was priced even higher as a result of the fourfold OPEC oil price hike following the Yom Kippur War of 1973. In other words "money was no problem" in the implementation of the second plan (Arnold, p. 51).

The second plan was, however, improperly formulated. Unlike the 1962-1968 plan which was formulated only after extensive consultation between the federal and regional governments for purposes of overall coordination, there was very little consultation during the formulation of the second plan. It was a plan from "above"--a misnomer in economic planning which is usually from "below." It was a federal government plan. By 1970, the states were barely three years old and lacked the wherewithal to undertake the task of economic planning.

It has also been suggested that the second plan was formulated as a sort of alibi. That is, once the military informally decided against going back to the barracks after the civil war, new goals had to be set, the achievement of which necessitated the continued stay of the military in power. This was in order to prevent the erosion of the regime's raison d'etre. This suggestion is said to be clearly evident in Gowon's 1970 independence day (October 1) broadcast (Olorunsla, p. 64). The point is that although the second plan had every chance to succeed, it had a false premise of conception.

The five principal objectives which the military supposedly set out to accomplish through the second plan were outlined as follows (Second National Development Plan): the creation of

1. a united, strong, and self-reliant nation
2. a great and dynamic economy
3. a just and egalitarian society
4. a land of full and equal opportunity for all citizens
5. a free and democratic society (p. 32).

A hierarchy of priorities was set and agriculture, industry, transportation, and manpower development were seemingly given top priority. Next were social services and utilities (electricity, communication, water, etc.). The third were defense and security which though third, supposedly, was referred to as a "special class." As shall be seen, "the first of these priorities became the last and the last the first."

A second look at the above priorities reveals that they are all related and can be reduced to the following--the creation of a "just and egalitarian society and a land full of equal opportunities for all citizens." The Nigerian society which the military sought to turn egalitarian etc. was (still is) one which contained a pyramidal allocation of privileges. A small group on top of the pyramid consisting of merchants,

transporters, academicians, higher civil servants, company executives, and of course army officers live in quality residential areas called Government Reservation Areas (GRA) at subsidized rents with abundant access to medical and various other social amenities. Then there are clerks, semi-skilled and self-employed artisans who live in overcrowded urban areas with little access to social amenities. At the bottom of the ladder are those who are virtually just managing to "exist" in the rural areas in abject poverty on subsistence level.

In order for such a society to become egalitarian, there is the need to reduce the government provided fringe benefits of the elite, better the lot of the generality of Nigerians and to pursue a policy of balanced development among the various communities. An examination of the implementation of the second plan reveals hardly any evidence that the military really meant to better the lot of the generality of Nigerians or if they meant to, that they did.

The capital available for the implementation of the second plan was an astronomical $4 billion for the four years (1970-1974) compared to the figure of $286 million for the six years of the first development plan (Dudley, p. 234). Though there was an increase of almost 2,000 percent in the amount of capital available to implement the second plan compared to the first, the former showed less than 10 percent increase in budgetary allocation to any crucial segment of economic life. On the contrary, some important segments suffered decreases, e.g., social welfare suffered a .1 percent decrease while town/country planning suffered a 4.3 percent budgetary decrease. When one takes into account the spiraling inflationary wave triggered by the OPEC oil price hike in 1973, even the increases we are talking about here were actually nullified (see Table IV).

TABLE IV

A COMPARISON OF THE FIRST AND SECOND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS

	1970-74 Plan		1962-68 Plan	
	₦ Million	As % of Total	₦ Million	As % of Total
Social-Economic	286,380	27.9	165,167	24.4
Education	138,893	13.5	69,763	10.3
·Health	53,811	5.2	17,076	2.5
Information	10,931	1.1	3,662	0.5
Labor and Social Welfare	11,973	1.2	8,662	1.3
Town and Country Planning	19,075	1.9	41,746	6.2
Water and Sewerage	51,696	5.0	24,258	3.6
Total (Public Sector)	1,025,369	100.0	676,800	100.0

The total socio-economic budget showed an increase of only 3.5 percent. The education, health, information, and water/sewerage budgets increased by only 3.2, 2.7, 9.6, and 1.4 percent, respectively.

Labor and social welfare suffered a 0.1 percent decrease; likewise, town and country planning suffered a 4.3 percent decrease.

Source: V. A. Olorunsola, Societal Reconstruction in Two African States (Washington, D.C., 1977), p. 66.

Though the second plan acknowledged housing as a gigantic problem, the total expenditure established to deal with it throughout the entire plan period was only $45 million out of the available capital of $4 billion. A study of urban versus rural investment of the military government in the second plan shows not "social justice" but injustice for people in the rural areas. Only 11 percent of total government electrification was in the rural areas and 84 percent of the health investment benefited urban areas where the elite live. Water supply to Nigerians living in rural areas was also given low priority (see Table V).

Although the military declared that agriculture was one of the highest priority areas, this was in fact not so. The second plan represented a return to the colonial policy of producing raw materials for overseas markets. No attempts were made to locally process cocoa, palm oil, or groundnut for overseas and domestic markets. This negated the goal to create "a self-reliant country" as a country must be at least self-sufficient in food production to be self-reliant. Agricultural research was woefully funded. In fact, two-thirds of the twelve states allocated absolutely nothing to agricultural research and even the federal government allocated only a meager 4.4 percent of the agricultural budget to research. Yet the military had expressed desire to increase the production of the farmer through the development of cheap, simple, hand-operated or small motor-powered or animal drawn implements! The fact that there was very little consultation during the formulation of the second plan had by now caught up with the military (see Table VI).

The industrial policy of the military as enunciated in the second plan was to say the least self-contradictory. On the one hand, there was to be even development and fair distribution of industries in all

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TABLE V

URBAN VERSUS RURAL INVESTMENT IN 1970-1974 PLAN

	Total Planned Investment	Urban Investment		Rural Investment	
	₦ Million	₦ Million	%	₦ Million	%
Industry	86.1	77.7	91.2	8.4	9.8
Electricity	45.3	40.3	89.0	5.0	11.0
Water and Sewerage	51.7	42.2	71.6	9.5	18.4
Town and Country Planning	19.1	18.0	94.3	1.1	5.7
Education	138.9	98.4	70.9	40.5	29.1
Health	53.8	45.2	84.0	8.6	16.0
Social Welfare	12.0	11.0	91.7	1.0	8.3
Total	406.9	322.8	81.8	74.1	18.2

Source: V. A. Olorunsola, Societal Reconstruction in Two African States (Washington, D.C., 1977), p. 69.

TABLE VI

1970-1974 PLAN FOR PROPOSED EXPENDITURE ON SOME
IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS (₦M)

State	Food Crops	Export Crops	Research	Extension Services	Farm Mechaniza- tion
Federal	---	---	4.362	17.000	---
Benue Plateau	0.442	0.100	---	2.026	0.071
East Central	2.299	5.480	1.160	0.550	0.100
Kano	0.709	---	---	6.927	0.742
Kwara	0.359	0.706	---	1.110	0.135
Lagos	1.500	0.245	0.240	0.315	0.300
Mid-West	1.673	1.989	0.172	0.226	0.040
North Central	0.266	0.185	---	1.560	0.232
North Eastern	0.370	0.093	---	1.373	0.150
North Western	0.216	---	---	1.301	0.176
Rivers	1.480	0.589	0.181	0.071	0.244
South Eastern	0.683	2.231	---	2.267	0.974
Western	2.00?	3.735	---	1.165	1.606
% of Total*	9.790	11.100	4.610	24.780	3.600

*Percent of total investment on agriculture, fisheries, and forestry.

Source: V. A. Olorunsola, Societal Reconstruction in Two African States (Washington, D.C., 1977), p. 71.

parts of the country and on the other industries were to be cited on the basis of economic considerations. This was contradictory because the citing of industries based on "purely economic consideration" favors the urban areas over the rural because the former have the infrastructure-- the _sine_ _qua_ _non_ for the location of industries--already in place. The military lacked the willingness to invest in the infrastructural development of the rural areas which is a negation of their expressed intention to evenly develop the country.

While the above crucial and productive sectors of the economy were being starved of funds and attention, the nonproductive class of defense and security received abundant budgetary allocations at a time when the country was facing neither an external nor an internal threat to security. More will be said about the unjustified allocations to defense and security in peacetime when we turn to look at the third plan period of 1975 to 1980.

So obvious was the military's failure that they had to admit it themselves. The first progress report on the plan issued by the government acknowledged failure in agricultural development. It was reported that there had been stagnation in food production consequent upon which food prices had skyrocketed. This was a very significant failure because the agricultural industry provided (and still provides) the livelihood for an overwhelming majority of Nigerians (_West_ _Africa_, p. 719).

Agricultural development had been declining under the civilians but with the advent of the military and bouyant oil revenues, agriculture suffered a near total neglect. Oil exports rose in value from $262 million in 1969 to $5,365.7 million in 1974, by which year oil contributed 96.8 percent of Nigeria's external earnings (Dudley, p. 116). On the

other hand, there occurred a 41.3 percent drop in the total area under active agricultural cultivation—from 18.8 million to 11.05 million hectares. As a result, whereas Nigeria used to export cocoa, palm produce, groundnuts, cotton, rubber, etc., by 1975, Nigeria became an importer of palm produce and groundnuts while cocoa and rubber exports declined considerably (Dudley, p. 112). There occurred an ironical shift in Nigeria's import-export structure. Cocoa which accounted for 19.9 percent of total exports (by value) in 1962 fell to a mere 3.3 percent in 1975. Whereas Nigeria had been self-sufficient in rice, by 1976 60 million kilos of rice had to be imported. Whereas Nigeria was once the largest exporter of vegetable oils and groundnuts in the world, in 1976 1002 tonnes of vegetable oil and 14,000 tonnes of groundnuts had to be imported. Against this background, crude oil exports rose from 9.9 percent in 1962 to 92.7 percent of total Nigerian exports in 1975 (see Table VII).

A number of reasons help explain the above state of affairs. The farmers were left on their subsistence level of operation (except for the very few mechanized farms of the privileged elite), there was not nearly enough agricultural extension services and the illiterate farmers were too poor to afford the technical hardware and fertilizer to improve production. To top it all, very poor prices were offered for the crops that the farmers managed to produce. The net result of the neglect of agriculture was that whereas the sector was the mainstay of the Nigerian economy at independence and contributed 65.9 percent of the GDP then, after suffering nine years of military mismanagement, agriculture contributed only 24.5 percent to the GDP in 1975.

It cannot be said that the military shifted emphasis from agriculture to another equally crucial sector of the Nigerian economy—to

TABLE VII

PERCENT OF TOTAL BY VALUE OF NIGERIA'S
EXPORTS, SELECTED YEARS

Item	1962	1967	1971	1975
Crude Oil	9.9	29.8	73.4	92.7
Cocoa	19.8	22.6	11.0	3.6
Palm Oil	5.3	0.5	0.3	0.0
Palm Kernel	10.0	3.2	2.0	0.3
Groundnuts	19.2	14.6	1.9	0.0
Groundnut Oil	3.6	3.0	1.0	0.0
Groundnut Cake	1.4	1.7	0.5	0.1
Raw Cotton	3.5	2.7	0.8	0.0
Rubber	6.7	2.6	1.0	0.3
Tin/Metal Ore	4.1	5.4	1.8	0.5
Others	16.5	13.7	6.3	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.5[*]

[*]Figures for hides and skins, and timber and timber products were omitted in order to show comparability with the 1962-1971 data.

Source: B. Dudley, An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics (Bloomington, 1982), p. 240.

industry. Industrial output which accounted for 7 percent of the GDP in 1965/1966 fiscal year accounted for only 10.2 percent of the GDP in the 1974/1975 fiscal year--a percentage increase of only 3.2 in nine years inspite of the huge difference in available capital noted elsewhere in this study which could have been wisely invested to obtain better re-sults (Dudley, p. 113).

At the expiration of the third NDP period in 1980, the federal gov-ernment was in a position to spend two times as much "oil boom" money in one day as the civilian government spent in one month twenty years ago, yet industry did not fare any better then than it did during the previous plan period. The Nigerian Enterprises and Promotion Decree (NEPD) was promulgated in 1972 to enable Nigerians gain control of the commanding heights of the economy. NEPD required that Nigerians own at least 40 percent equity-share of companies operated by foreigners. The percentage equity share was increased in 1977 to 60 percent through the instrument of the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree number three-- the so-called Indigenization Decree of that same year.

Though the indigenization decrees broadened the pattern of owner-ship in major financial and industrial enterprises, they left foreign interests concentrated in various firms and therefore left de facto con-trol of the enterprises still in the hands of non-Nigerians. Moreover, those Nigerians who were able to buy the shares were the already "high ups" in society. "One need not therefore dispute the statement of one of the goals of (the military) which was to create 'a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens' except to make the qualification that in place of the phrase 'for all citizens,' one should read 'for the few' which is perhaps a more palatable way of denying one other goal of

(the military)--the creation of a 'just and egalitarian society'" (Dudley, p. 273).

A statement released in 1978 by the Nigerian Manufacturer's Association which groups together all Nigerian industrialists provides a fair judgment of the military's industrial policy. "Nigerian manufacturers are beset with a host of problems such as frequent power cuts, inadequate water supply, shortage of trained manpower and nonavailability of facilities for additional working capital which not only results in reduced production but also discourages expansion of existing plants (Dudley, p. 242).

The social welfare (housing) sector of the economy did not fare any better. The military proposed to build 60,000 housing units during the third plan period which were to be sold to the low-income public on an owner-occupier basis. Loans were to be made available by the Federal Mortgage Bank with eight percent interest. An analysis of the proposal shows that the first year repayment on the loan of $45,000 (the average cost of the houses) alone at the interest rate of eight percent is far greater than the total annual wage of the highest paid low-income earner in the Nigerian public service, that is, someone on Salary Grade Level 8 who is at the top of the scale for their grade level. The housing proposal turned out to be another extra feather in the already comfortable nest of the Nigerian elite. Privileged Nigerians, including army officers, took possession of such housing units, rented them out and continued to live in government subsidized housing themselves.

The military promulgated a number of rent decrees which were supposed to control rent in the urban areas but actually led to between 33 and 50 percent increase in rent. Most residents were public servants

whose rent is subsidized by state agencies like universities and corporations. The rent decrees simply legalized the transfer of public funds into the private pockets of the elite who owned such rented buildings. For example, following the 1976 Rent Decree, the rent bill for the staff of the University of Ibadan rose by 50 percent to over $2 million. One of the houses so rented belonged to the then Head of State, General Obasanjo and rent on it rose from $6000 to $8000 (Dudley, p. 323).

During the third plan period, the military attempted to do something about the deteriorating agricultural sector to no avail. In 1976, the high cost but ineffective Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) was launched. Eleven River Basin Authorities were established for the irrigation of integrated farming schemes that were created. The schemes failed due to a dearth of skilled manpower, that is, professional and technical personnel, senior administrative/managerial staff which were not planned for. Efforts made to provide fertilizers, mechanical aids, and credit facilities to small farmers with unmechanized farms benefited the large mechanized farm owners who invariably were the already privileged in society. Small farm lands were actually taken over by the elite--the upper ranks of the armed forces and others who had access to bank loans and other agricultural credit and could therefore own and operate large-scale mechanized farms. At this juncture, it is to be noted that at least seven of the highest ranking officers of the Obasanjo regime retired or were retired to start a new career in large-scale farming on estates that were acquired while they were still in office.

Again, like the case with the second plan, while crucial sectors of the economy were starved of funds and inadequately managed, the military oligarchy and their accomplices siphoned away millions of public funds

into private coffers via several means including the inordinate infla-
tion of the defense and security (peacetime) budget.

In the 1979/1980 fiscal year which recorded the highest expenditure
on health and education of our time frame (1966-1979), per capita expen-
diture on education and health was only ₦4.19 and ₦1.1, respectively!
The defense and security per capita expenditure was almost twice that of
education and health put together--₦8.17, but expenditure per soldier
came to ₦3476. The defense figure (₦3476) represents a 38 percent rise
in the per capita expenditure from the 1974 figure of ₦2518, much of
which was not spent on armaments but salary increases and fringe bene-
fits accruing to army officers (Dudley, p. 264). The corruption and
waste were carried on in other areas as well.

Approximately ₦800m was poured into the collosal jamboree in waste
that was called the World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture
(FESTAC) just to provide entertainment for the various foreign "big men"
and the Nigerian elite. FESTAC had no bearing whatsoever with reference
to the issue of elevating the pitiful economic condition of ordinary Ni-
gerians. Also, in 1972, a Public Service Review Commission was set up
by the military and chaired by Chief Jerome Udoji to recommend ways to
improve the efficiency of the Public Service. The Commission reported
two years later and recommended the employment of modern techniques of
management science, for example, "management by objectives," "project
management," etc. but instead, the military paid out a meaningless and
wasteful nine months arrears of salary--the so-called Udoji Awards--to
every employee in the public sector. This was probably the military's
way of cushioning the bombshell concerning the postponement of the re-
turn to civilian government that was announced on October 1, 1974. The
Udoji arrears amounted to over ₦500 million lavished on only 5.5 percent

of the population to the exclusion of private sector employees, rural

farmers, and the self-employed. Needless to say, the Udoji awards sent

the inflationary rate, which was already one of the highest in the world

at 28 percent, to over 40 percent. The price index, which was 150.6 in

1970 (1960 = 100), was up to 348.2 in 1976 because of the awards and the

differential between the average urban wage, which was already twice the

average rural wage by 1974, was doubled due to the awards (Arnold, p. 77).

Gowon toured extensively on "personal diplomacy" squandering Nige-

ria's funds as though they were in his personal bank account for objec-

tives that were not readily perceivable to be in Nigeria's interest. For

example, Gowon promised to pay salaries of all Grenadian civil servants

for two months following his visit to the Island country early in 1975.

Also, the military under Gowon committed ₦19.5 million toward the expan-

sion of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation when she was al-

ready in technical partnership with Britain, Canada, and India through

which a lot more technical expertise stood to be acquired (Dudley, p.

289).

Corruption, waste, and/ethics go together. Thus when on October 1,

1974, the military reneged on their promise to return power to civilians

by 1976, this was corruption of a sort. The reasons the military gave

were not taken seriously; instead it was widely believed that the mili-

tary simply wanted to stay in power so they could continue to corruptly

enrich themselves. The military governors and members of the executive

councils used their positions and glaringly and corruptly enriched them-

selves as they wished, having no constituents to conciliate and no elec-

torate to be accountable to (see Appendix A).

Thus, the military used the oil boom not to put Nigeria in a position to take off industrially but to "foster the growth and spread of commercial capitalism enabling the military hierarchy and their civilian aides to emerge as the new dominant property-owning 'class' in the society"--the main losers being the "John Citizens" in the rural areas and on the streets (Dudley, p. 120).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded from the preceding that the military have been
mere usurpers of power--as opposed to corrective agents--in Nigerian
politics. This is borne out by the performance of the military in office
vis a vis two of Nigeria's most important problems or needs, namely, the
integration of the multiplicity of ethno-cultural groups in Nigeria into
one nation and the socio-economic development of Nigeria to where Nigeri-
ans would enjoy material prosperity.

As far as the problem of national integration is concerned, military
intervention led not to the integration of Nigeria, but to civil war and
almost to the dismemberment of the country altogether. The creation of
states in 1967 by the military, which some have cited as a significant
contribution of the military to Nigerian unity, was actually a tactical
ploy in the struggle for power between Gowon and Ojukwu. Thirdly, the
tribal, sectional, and ethnic nature of party politics in the second re-
public proves that over a decade of military rule did not do much good.

Economically, military rule in Nigeria led to the neglect of agri-
culture and industry and the general mismanagement of the Nigerian eco-
nomy. The huge oil revenues which provided the "break" needed to help
put Nigeria on the developed map of the world were squandered on pres-
tigious but economically unproductive projects such as "FESTAC" 77 while
the military feathered their own nests to become together with their

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civilian aides, the new dominant property-owning "class" in Nigeria.

In the light of the failure of military rule in Nigeria, the logi-
cal question that begs to be asked and answered is "If not military dic-
tatorship, what then?" How is a new "nation" to "make it" economically
and otherwise? A look at how the first new nation--the United States--
made it should throw some light here.

The United States can be rightly regarded as the first new nation
because it was the first major colony to successfully revolt against co-
lonial rule. (The Spanish colonies to the South were to follow suit
shortly after.) Initially, English Christian Puritans who had migrated
from England formed the nuclei of the new nation that was to be. Soon,
however, persons from Great Britain and all over Europe migrated to the
Americas from different backgrounds and cultures. When eventually inde-
pendence was achieved, the new nation--the United States--was faced with
problems of national integration and economic development, that is, how
to integrate the various groups within its borders into a nation, and
how to achieve substantial economic development to the place that its
citizens would be materially prosperous.

It took time to institutionalize common values, beliefs, and prac-
tices. In other words, it took time for an identity to be established.
"Countries, like people, are not handed identities at birth, but acquire
them through the arduous process of 'growing up,' a process which is a
notoriously painful affair" (Lipset,/p. 16). A revolutionary war and
then a civil war were fought. Imperfections and unacceptable phenomena
such as the Spoils System were eventually discarded. All these took a
century or so and that is the crucial aspect with respect to the desires
and efforts of new nations today--Nigeria included--who seem bent on

devising a "short cut to Heaven." It did not simply take time, however,
but all the while a system of government--Western Democracy--was in
place to undergird the process mentioned immediately above.

For Nigeria then, the answer to the above question, "If not mili-
tary dictatorship, what then?" is clearly that Nigeria needs "a form of
government in which the leaders are open to criticism, open to reason,
open to dialogue, responsive to the yearnings of the people, accountable
to the people, and ready to compromise when compromise there should be"
(Okafor, p. 59). It cannot be autocratic monarchy for the bloody his-
tory of such government is reprehensible, not feudalism for its age is
past, not communist despotism because that negates the very principles
of natural law which guarantees human freedom and fulfillment. Besides,
the moral-cum cultural values which the African has consistently upheld
are the exact opposite of those accepted by communist totalitarianism.
The most applicable option is Western Democracy.

The view is widely held that Africa in general is "done for" due to
the fact that "tribalism is the stock-in-trade of the African milieu."
The fact, however, is that tribalism has been and is still to be found
in other parts of the world (although its effects have been largely nul-
lified) and such cultures have continued to progress. The countries of
Europe grew from tribal beginnings. The plague of tribalism, ethnicity,
and other forms of sectionalism have not been wiped out of that conti-
nent. The separatists movements in parts of Europe are manifestations
of tribalism. In Spain, Basque and Catalan nationalists are demanding
autonomy. Extremists of the Gaelic peoples of Great Britain--the Scots,
Welsh, and Irish are not content under English lordship. In France,
the Breton separatists prefer their own black and white flag to France's

tricolor flag. In Belgium, the Walloons and the Flemings have bickered from time immemorial.

It is unquestionable that tribalism has not had the kind of adverse effect on these societies that it has has on Africa. The reason has been that Western Democracy has been able to ameliorate the differences caused by tribal leaninqs or agitations in the former. The story should not be any different in Africa.

Western Democracy will through its political, social, economic, educational, and moral operations provide for the security, liberty, and fulfillment of the individual and therefore loosen tribalism's grip on and its appeal in the African perimeter. Democracy creates a society where men have equal access as much as is possible to the opportunities, rewards, and benefits of the social environment. In Nigeria, it should provide the avenue for healthy competition, untarnished by hereditary (feudalistic)/totalitarian (military) privileges which would release the creative energies of all groups for the purpose of exploiting the wealth of the nation for the good of all.

Democracy creates a society "where members of diverse tribes and ethnic groups live in a national cohesive whole enjoying an organic relationship without hate and without suspicion, with each man relying for success not on the dehumanizing incitement to sectional hatred and tribal feelings and ostracisms but rather on his ability to give proof of his effectiveness and potentiality for good" (Okafor, p. 64).

In order to attain rapid material development, Nigeria desperately needs peace. Democracy is a better guarantor of peace and stability than any other form of government--certainly than military dictatorship. The political framework of democracy gives power to the people and

grants freedom of expression, freedom of association, and other liber-

ties. Violence and democracy are not compatible concepts. Those (the

military) who in the name of tomorrow's "peace" inflict men and society

with violence today have been proven by history, as discussed above, to

have nothing to offer. We disagree with Aristotle who said that benign

dictatorship is the best form of government. Dictatorship--benign or

military--is anachronistic.

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APPENDIX

Case I

Joseph Gomwalk, Governor of Benue Plateau State. On taking office in May, 1967, Gomwalk was supposed to have a sum of ₦200 in his savings account and ₦430 in his current account. But while governor, he acquired the following:

1. A house in Naraguta Ave., Jos valued at ₦70,000
2. A block of four flats in Pankshin valued at ₦60,000
3. A house rented by Voteniski (a firm of contractors in which the governor had an interest) for ₦24,000 a year
4. Another house rented by Voteniski for ₦20,000
5. Another house valued at ₦140,000
6. 1500 (50K) shares, 1300 (₦1.00) shares and 910 (₦20.00) shares in various companies, etc.

Case II

Governor O. Ogbemudia of the Midwest, who acquired the following in office:

1. A farming estate
2. A motel valued at ₦149,759
3. Several landed properties in and outside the Midwestern state
4. Investment in shares worth ₦28,940

Case III

Ukpabi Asika, Administrator of East Central State, who acquired while in office:

1. A house valued at ₦120,000

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2. An apartment in Spain in addition to other property there

3. Shares worth thousands of naira

Source: <u>New Nigerian</u>, December 3, 1975.

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VITA

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