

# **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE MILITARY IN NIGERIA POLITICS**

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# **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this project was carried out by **IBAYEMI SEGUN**, with  
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# **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty, for the he is good; His steadfast love endures forever let Niyi say, His steadfast love endure forever my special thanks belongs to God Almighty the omniscience for the knowledge, wisdom guidance, vigil over me and for the strength given to me to complete this work even youth shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted, but those who went for the lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My profound gratitude and appreciation goes to my father, Hon. Dayo Ibayemi whose selfless service and determination towards the actualization of this dream even in the face of personal sacrifices and self them ends was paramount of course tribute needs be paid to my late mother Mrs. Ibayemi Iyabo and also to my step mother Mrs. Ibayemi Semilola, my siblings: Mrs. Ibayemi Esther, Mrs. Akingunsoye Titilayo and also Mr. Ebi Sanmi Olukayode for their loving supports, understanding and prayer enjoy throughout the period of this programme, may joyful moment not cease to find its may in our midst.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The constitutional role of the military in Nigeria or anywhere in the world is purely to defend the country against any external attack. However, since 1966, up to 1999, Nigeria experienced about ten coups, both successful and unsuccessful. These coups ushered in era of military in Nigerian politics.

At every inception of the military governance, the military give reasons for their interventions, which includes amongst others tribal loyalty by politicians, regional differences, regional / State political parties and agitations, politicization of the army, post election crisis of 1964 and 1962, low level of economic development, corruption, nepotism and so on.

This project shall trace the origin of military incursion into Nigerian politics and examine the impact of the military men in politics.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This research work intends to achieve the following:

- \* To discuss Nigeria of the colonial period.
- \* To discuss Nigeria political activities after independence
- \* To trace the origin of the military incursion
- \* To find out the reasons for the military intervention
- \* To discuss the achievements of the military.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research adopted historical approach, both primary and secondary sources are used for data collection.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Nigeria is presently witnessing a nascent democratic system; politicians are decamping from one party to the other. The economic system is not healthy, while militant groups are carrying out dangerous activities in various parts of the country.

Considering the above, this work is considered significant so as to checkmate and warn the politicians from the past making the same mistakes that could lead to another military take over.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This project work shall be limited to tracing the military incursion into the Nigeria politics and suggest solution towards discouraging further military interest in politics.

## **LIMITATION TO THE STUDY**

Due to the vastness of the topic of this project, and the time available to carry out the research, the project shall be limited to tracing the origin, reasons and impact of the military in government including suggestions that could prevent future military incursion into politics.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **NIGERIA IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD**

Until about 1900 the land mass known as Nigeria today existed as a number of independent and sometimes hostile national states with linguistic and different cultural back ground.

With seaborne committee report of 1899 of the protectorate of Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria in 1900, along with colony of Lagos, the building of Nigeria as a multi-national State started. Further effort at unification and integration was made in May 1906, when the colony of Lagos and Southern protectorate which had existed separately was amalgamated to become the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria. It is important to note that the Northern administration and Southern administration were separate and distinct. Both were independent of one another and each was directly responsible to the colonial office.

However, the first notable act of the British in the political evolution of Nigeria as a modern state was the amalgamation of the two administrations in 1914 that is the Northern and Southern administrations by Lord Lugard. This was done for administrative convenience and in the economic interest of British, indirect rule and separate development policy were maintained in the two sections of the country with amalgamated administration in Lagos.

It is important at this juncture to say that the effect of this was the production of two Nigerians each with different social, political, economic and cultural background within the country.

The British role formally began in Northern Nigeria after the success of the British West Africa frontier force which conquered Northern Nigeria on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1900.

The British flag was hoisted. But because of adherence to their region which forbade them to be ruled by unbelievers (infidels) between 1900 and 1906 one finds areas like Yola, Bida, Kentagora, Kano, Zaria, Bauchi, Sokoto, Katsina Vehemently resisting the imposition of British rule.

The British established their rule through conquest. The conquest showed the type of strong allegiances the people had for their rulers, as demonstrated by the support people gave to either dying or fleeing Emirs. Lugard was to learn from this that it would be impossible for him to rule the people without making use of their rulers. He therefore assumed that since he had conquered the people he had equally assumed sovereignty power, with this in mind he appointed new emirs but care was taken to see that such emirs were chosen from the recognized ruling families so as to make them acceptable to their people. They were later known as native authorities.

He was also influenced to use this type of system by the limited number of overseas officials available and added to this was the fact that they cannot perform their duties because of ill health.

This type of indirect rule was however extended to Yoruba Land where it was a partial success and Eastern Nigeria which met a completed failure. Until about 1922 constitutional development took place. The 1922 constitution was a landmark in the political history of Nigeria as it is the constitution that estimated the rise of political parties in the history of Nigeria. The first political party was Nigeria

National Democratic Party (NNDP), the National Youth Movement and the W.A.S.U (the West African Student Union).

This political parties it should be mentioned created effective instruments for arising the grievances of the Nigerian Nationalists. But the constitution failed to satisfy the aspiration of the Nigeria Nationalists. The tourbillion which was meant to correct the anomalies in 1922 constitution failed again to satisfy the political lining of the Nigeria Nationalists.

It needs be said that the core of the major complaints of the Nationalists against these constitution was that they were mere ciphers which Nigerians cannot allow in the affairs of their country and the method of nomination was equally resented. Hence the conscious struggle for constitutional reforms which would give Nigeria better opportunities in effective participation of policies in their country became rampant; press group became more strident in their allegation. The Nigeria students organized series of meeting in Lagos to arouse the Nigeria people to nation, to these meetings, various organizations like the NYM, TUC, M.T.U the Federal Union of M. administrative tribal union, farmer's organizations professional organizations like Nigeria Bar Association etc.

The effects of these series of meetings was the formation of N.C.M.U. (National Connal of Nigeria and Cameroon) on August 24 1944 with the basic aim of exerting pressure in order to accelerate political development of the country.

The formation of N.U.M.U started battle against the Colonial Rule. This led or made Sir Arthur Richard's (came out with) constitutional proposals which according to him were designed to promote the unity of Nigeria. His proposals were adopted by the British parliament in a slightly modified form.

Its key features include:

- (a) Division of Nigeria into three, each under a Chief Commissioner
- (b) Establishment of three regional Houses of Assembly at Enugu, Kaduna and Ibadan with power merely to discuss general legislation and the right to pass their regional budgets.
- (c) Selection of membership of each regional house from existing native authorities, who in turn selected five of their members as representatives to central legislative council which met successively in Lagos, Ibadan and Enugu.
- (d) The establishment of a house of Chiefs only for Northern Nigeria.
- (e) Section of membership of the regional houses on the ratio 19:20 North, 14:15 West, 13:14 East and 20:29 (central officials to unofficial).

The constitution was been condemned by many people. It met sharp criticism from many people.

The Nationalist maintained that the method of nomination of unofficial members appears more of government agent than representatives of the people. The pronouncements of some of the nominated members tended to render the conjecture of the Nationalist what? For instance Rev. T. Ogunbiyi nominated member for the Colony said at the council meeting in 1942 on the question of self government, "I hope the time will never come during my own life, but if it must come, I beg you sir to have me enrolled now, when you are ready to hand-over the land again as in days gone by to go with you and all English people where-ever they go".

Also some of the nominated members displayed lack of adequate knowledge which would help them in effective discharge of these duties, for example, Mr.

Agbaje, a nominated member for Oyo during one of the debates had this to say “when I look at the extensive work involved in the preparation of the estimate I am lost in wonderment”.

Even though the Richard constitution was to last for nine years, it was expected that limited changes would be made at the end of the third and sixth years but with the arrival of a new governor Sir Jacob Macpherson, in 1948 and the poor reception the constitution received. This led to adoption of new constitutions. Here we were only concerned with the provision of the constitution and the stage set for January 1966 by this constitution.

The salient features of the constitution were the followings:-

- (i) The three regions no longer operated merely as administrative units, each became a political entity vested with executive and legislative powers but the public service and the judiciary remained united.
- (ii) Unicameral legislature at the centre
- (iii) A council of Ministers, whose advice to the governor was binding on all matters in which he had no discretion. This among other things the constitution contained. The rigid and complicated nature of this constitution arrangement led to conflicting interpretations of what it actually was. Coleman referred to it as “essentially unitary”. To Eme Awa it is “as an embryonic stage of Federation”. To Chief Awolowo however it is a wretched compromise between Federalism and Unitarianism.

However, after only two years various crises led to the breakdown of the Macpherson constitution. A new constitution came into force in 1954. This was Oliver

Hyttleton constitutions. He was the centre figure of its formulation. Kirt Greene suggested federalism constitution since the constitution provided for separate governors, separate premiers, cabinets and legislative etc.

As Arikpo pointed “the 1954 constitution was kernel of all further constitutional changes when culminated in the establishment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1963.

Before ending the history of Colonial Rule in Nigeria, it is good to mention the North and South ethnic rivalry which later changed to North and East rivalry. Between 1941 and 1950 the unhealthy rivalry between the Yoruba and Ibo was intensified. It was not limited to the political scene, it extended to almost every area in which the two groups met. By 1948 Azikiwe had ceased to be Zik of Africa but Zik of Ibo nation. Awolowo emerged as champion of Yoruba nationalism, first through the Egbe Omo Oduduwa and soon as leader of the Action Group Political Party.

Until 1950, the ethnic rivalry was primarily limited to the South. The process of drawing the Macpherson constitution promised this opportunity of extending it to the North. The starting point was the General Conference at Ibadan in 1950. The defeat of Zik in his bid to enter House of Representatives in 1951 has been attributed to ethnic as well as political party rivalry. This defeat led to the end of Macpherson constitution. With this brief history of colonial Era in Nigeria by October 1<sup>st</sup> 1960 Nigeria was given her independence.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **The First Republic**

In October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960 the colonial government handed over power to the Nigerians. It is unfortunate that few years after handing over, those people who received the power misled the country into chaos and state of anarchy. Many things went wrong with the republic. The first was the political breakdown at the centre, the rise of protests, first among the peasants, then among urban workers and most effectively among the military and lastly was the census controversy.

These activities listed above marked the history of first republic. Both the regional government and the centre politicians became notorious for their extravagancy and corruption and these aroused hostility of the more political conscious of the masses who came to wonder what independent was all about. The forms of Parliamentary Democracy Collapse with amazing rapidity. Chief Awolowo the leader of Action Group embarked on Nationwide campaign against the coalition government. As the only possible way of uniting the different ethnic grouping he supported “democratic socialism”. Some of the section of his party opposed to this because of these reason some wealthy business men, had no sympathy for socialism and as politicians hungry for office, they wanted to try and enter the coalition rather than challenging it from the outside and antagonizing its members. This resulted to regional coup in the West, the leader of this faction; Akintola replaced Awolowo as Western Region Premier. Despairing of democracy, Awolowo turned to conspiracy. After celebrated trial, he was imprisoned.

What led to this was when Awolowo failed to become the Prime Minister; this can be legitimately be regarded as the original source of Action Group Crisis of

1962 and the accompanying trial. It should be mentioned however that shortly after 1959 the ability of the Action Group to maintain in public strict discipline within the rank and file of the party was showing signs of weakening. With the decision of Awolowo to move west to the Federal Legislative there was disagreement within the party over. Who should succeed him as the premier. Against Awolowo's wish, Akintola became premier and soon after began to take control of decision making in the Western Regional Government with the least possible consultation with Awolowo.

Within two years of Akintola takeover of the premiership, dissension within the Action Group became public knowledge with the news papers which Awolowo controlled seriously criticizing the policies of the Western Region Government.

Apart from other personal issues which some writers have raised to the status of ideological differences, the disagreement between Awolowo and idea of strengthening national unity through the formation of a coalition government to be formed by the three major political parties. Akintola strongly supported the proposition while Awolowo was opposed to it. However, it was at the Action Group convention at Jos that Chief Awolowo openly admitted that there was crisis in the party.

But one thing is very important at this material time, at Federal level Awolowo as the leader of the opposition party was very effective in making the government of Tafawa Balewa most uncomfortable through series of attack on major and popular issues. These attacks were on colonialism economy and corruption which plagued the country.



The defense pact signed between Britain and Nigeria formed the central focus of Awolowo's attack on colonialism. He claimed that the pact had been extorted from the Nigerian Government by Britain as a condition for granting independence. As a signatory to the original draft, Awolowo alleged that the British used "bare faced, unabashed and undue influence".

Evidence of strong public opposition to such a pact was effectively played upon by Awolowo to the extent that the students of University of Ibadan in particular rioted within the premises of the Federal legislative and many members of government were maltreated. In January 1962 the pact was abrogated.

Nationalization was Awolowo's answer for radical economic policies which would remove the nation from economic bondage. This as far as the Federal Government was concerned was unacceptable. Apart from public utilities, shipping, airways, railway, communication and marketing boards, the government was not interested in Nationalisation. But in order to develop the local economy, argued Okotie-Eboh, the Federal Minister for Finance the Country needed capital from outside and in order to attract capital it was necessary not to frighten foreign investors.

One thing is also important at this time, Nigerians outstanding feature is in dangerous decline in moral values whereby honesty is at the lowest and corruption and mediocrity have a high premium. This was Chief Awolowo's assessment of Nigeria first year of independence. His criticism of the Federal Government became so dangerously frightening, that the Federal legislative voted to censure him after his return from London in 1961 where he had lectured Nigeria students in Britain on the incompetence and ineffectiveness of the government. His continued support

and that of his party, Action Group, for the minority movements added to his popularity all over the country. As a result the Northern people congress and (M.G.M.C) National Convention of Nigerian Citizen coalition had no alternative but to go on a counter-attack. It is also good to say that without the rift on policies and of personalities within the Action Group the chances at success of the counter attach would have been remotes.

At 1962 convention of Action Group in Jos, Awolowo openly admitted for the first time that rift existed within the party. This rift in Action Group got worse at Jos convention. On May 25<sup>th</sup> 1962 a riot broke out and the Prime Minister instructed the Police to clear the chamber and look it. The Governor, the Premier, Minister, President of the house of Chief, Speaker of the House of Assembly and superintendent of local government police were relieved of their posts. Dr. Majekodunmi was appointed administrator with considerable powers.

Also other complementary events follow in quick succession. A commission of enquiry into financial and investment policies of six Western Regional Government statutory corporations including their relations with political parties was set up by Federal Government. This commission was headed by Justice Coker; found that the Action Group received 4.4. Million in cash for National Investment and Properties Corporation, in addition to payment of its 1.3 Million overdrafts with National Bank. But Akintola was unindicted by the commission. The treason trial in which it was alleged that Awolowo and others planned to overthrow the government also found him and twenty other members of his party excluding the deputy leader, Akintola guilty and sentences them to varying terms of imprisonment. Awolowo earned ten years imprisonment.

Before all this, Akintola and Rosiji (general secretary of Action Group) had been expelled from the party. With their supporters they formed a new political party, the United Peoples Party. With the support of Federal Government, both through the administrator of the Western Region and other channels, he Akintola with a vote of confidence on him resumed his leadership of the region till the day of reckoning on January 15<sup>th</sup> 1966 – when he was killed.

This first republic was marked by violent protests leading to breakdown of the Central Government. The Peasants protest broke out first in Thailand which broke out into open revolt in 1964 and 1966. This protest was embarked upon against an imposed, inefficient and corrupt local government authority. But when Gowon came to power, he released over a thousand of these Tiv (registered) from prison. Also was Akintola's corrupt victory in 1965 which led to another peasant revolt but at this time in the West, majority of the Yorubas whether intellectuals, workers or peasants disliked his regime and came to see Awolowo as a symbol of unity it is also of paramount importance to say that where the intellectuals grumbled, the peasants exploded in rage. They drove their representatives from villages and some burnt alive. The peasants of the west set up road blocks, the urban workers turned to a General Strike. In 1964 under the leadership of a brave flamboyant mid-westerner, Michael – Imodou a railway man, there was a General Strike which temporarily paralysed the economy and won substantial wage increases.

Another event which marked this first republic was the census – controversy. If the action group crisis was the first sign post to disaster that led to events of 1966, the Census controversy of 1962 – 4 was not too far from it. As Kirk – Greene graphically put it, “from this controversy, the gun powder trail was laid, awaiting

only the lighting of the line in October 1965 to result in the final conflagration on January 1966". One of the political issues that arose from Census figure in Nigeria has always been that determined the relative numerical strength of each region or State in the Federal legislative. Another issue is the revenue which each region/state collects from the central distributable pool. Another important issue was that all the regions inflated their population which resulted in cancellation of the census. Another census was embarked upon, this produced the same result. This was done so that there may be an increase in their revenue allocation.

The final blow which toppled the first republic came not from the peasants nor from workers but from army officers who could no longer endure the plight of their unhappy country. Of paramount importance is the structure of the army. As an integral part of body politic, it is difficult for the Nigeria Army to be completely immune from all the central fugal forces of the society particularly after independence. The intensity of each of these forces varied but together were enough to disrupt the democratic functioning of the Nigeria political system. The most important society cleavage which seriously affected the organizational integrity of the may was ethic and regional conflicts. Shortly before independence in 1960 the debate started among political leaders as to whether courage or educational qualification should be the basis for recruitment into and promotion within the army. Some favour courage and some educational qualification.

Those who favoured courage argued that the foundation of the army recruitment and to use educational qualification is to ask the officers corps being dominated by intellectuals who because of their background and training were not doers but talkers. This was the position of Northern people congress leaders who,

often quoted in Hausa saying that warriors is not a talkative. The supporters of educational qualification argue that without educational qualification, the modern military equipments will not be utilized well and also for good administration, education is necessary. Tied to this problem is the problem of quota system. In Ibadan conference this quota problems was solved by given Northern part 50% Eastern region 25% and Western region 25%. When Mid-Western region was created in 1963, that region was given 4% and that of Western region was reduced to 21%. One may say that this disparity between the North and South about promotion and recruitment by using courage or educational background was due to the fact that the Northerners saw that the north is backward in education that the South and in using educational qualifications they will be at disadvantage.

Added to this politicization was the problem of indiscipline. This also could be one of the reason that make the young army officers plan coup which led to the overthrow of government in 1966.

The 1964 – 1965 Federal Election also marked this period. This 1964 – 5 Federal Election has often been referred to as a classic case of the politics of brinkmanship. It was during this election that the first plot for a military coup d’etat by some members of the Nigerian Army was planned. What is the story of this brinkmanship. When NMDP that is Nigeria National Democratic Party was formed to represent the Yoruba interest, one of its member first publications charged Ibo leaders with tribalism in the administration of Nigeria Railway co-operation and other Federal Minister for information talked about unfair and offensive practices against “my people” – that’s the Yoruba.

Two major alliances were eventually formed to contest the election of 1964. The Nigeria National Alliance (N.N.A) brought together the Northern people congress, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), apart from political parties such as Midwest Democratic front and Dynamic Party of Dr. Chike Obi formed (N.M.A). On the other land the United People Grand Alliance (U.P.G.A) was made up of the (NUMC) the National Council of Nigerian and it has been changed to Action Group (AG) and United Middle belt Congress. The United People Grand Alliance (U.P.G.A.'s) campaign theme was primarily on the reconstructing of the Nigeria Federation in such a way that by the creation of new states the bonds of unity would be strengthened. The N.M.A was opposed to this and placed their priority on National Unity through the representation, of all ethnic groups at the Federal Level particularly through job opportunities. This theme was emphasized to attack the Yoruba leaders. On the Election Day UPGA leaders asked their supporters to boycott the polling both as a protect against the arrest and goaling of their members who were to contest the election in the North and West. The boycott was totally successful in the East partially in West and complete failure in the North. This was to the disadvantage of Action Group because they think that this would show their popularity in West.

By the rules of the game, it was the duty of the president to appoint prime-minister the leader of political party that had the majority in the House of Representatives, but Azikiwe threatened that "I would rather resign than exercise the powers to call on a person to form government". There began a stale make which lasted for four days. It is however pertinent to say that for the first time no government was formed in Lagos.

Finally, on January 4, 1965, the president reappointed Tafawa Balewa as the prime-minister after the plan drawn up by the Chief Justice of the Federation. Sir, Adetokunbo Ademola and Chief Justice of the Eastern Region, Sir Louis Mbanefo had been accepted by the two warring leaders Balewa and Azikiwe. By this plan there was to be a broad based National Government, fresh elections were to be conducted in all areas where there had been a total boycott, grievances were to be taken to the law courts and a commission was to be set up to review the constitution. When in March 1965 fresh elections were held, the final results were (NPC) Nigerian People's Congress 62. Nigerian National Democratic Party 36. Nigerian Convention of Nigerian Citizens 84. Action Group 21, as to the boycott of the election it was the Action Group flat lost in the negotiation.

When the National broad based government was formed, the Action Group was not included.

As Angling has rightly observed, "the resolution of this crisis did not resolve any of the fundamental problems facing Nigeria. Instead Northern domination, Yoruba discmity and Easter aggressiveness were all highlighted there were personal ammonites, the ugly scramble for jobs, the resort to force and fraud, the glaring inequalities of opportunities and the growing economic disparities". Bit it would take another twelve months before these problems set ablaze the show piece of democracy at work in Africa.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE MILITARY INCURSION**

The first coup which took place in January 15, 1966 has its root on what happened from 1959 to 1965. For several years after 1959 elections, the problems facing the country were many and disturbing. The politicians were very powerful, foreign investors and capital leaders exercised their influence on the country through them. Useful development plans which failed to serve the interests of politicians were distributed.

The second problem was clearly defined in Sir Tafawa Balewa's speech before Nigeria House of Representatives in 1964. "It must be obvious that no Nigerians can contend so long as any major sector of the economy is controlled by foreigners". By far, the most important problems was the unfriendly relations among the regions of Nigeria. A constant source i.e. of political friction was the imbalance in the size of the regions. It was this that led to Akintola / Awolowo's crisis in 1962 earlier discussed in Chapter 2. Population census figures arrived at after bitterly controversial censuses showed the largely Northern Region to have some twenty-nine million people (29m). This was more than half the country's population and ensures virtual built-in control of the Federal legislature and institutions. The country, in 1960 was ruled by coalition government of Northern People Congress, National Convention of Nigeria and Nigeria Citizens – the MCNU and the Action Group was leading opposition party. Prior to 1962, each of the three major parties was the strongest party in one of three regions. The Northern people congress had dominated the Northern politics because half of Nigerian population was said to be living in the North. The National Convention of Nigerian Citizens was popular in



parts of West and was particularly powerful in the East. Also the main basic of Action Group was the West, yet it formed alliances with some small parties outside the West. In addition the west at the centre was not powerful. This was because the Action Group was in opposition. Many Yorubas did not like the situation.

With this was Political Alliances during 1964 Federal Election. Chief Akintola out manicured the Western National Convention of Nigerian Citizen (NCNC). He succeeded in getting some members of Western N.C.N.C. to form another party – the National Democratic Party (N.D.P) headed by Chief Akintola himself and allied the party with Northern People Congress (N.P.C) to form Nigeria National Alliance (N.N.A). The N.C.N.C and Action Group allied themselves and became United Progressive Grand Alliance (U.P.G.A).

The Nigerian National Alliance (N.M.A) managed to win the 1964 Election but charges of unfair practice were rife. The United Progressive Grand Alliance candidates and voters boycotted the elections.

The future of the country was threatened. The President for several days in January 1965 did not call on any leader to form, the government.

Finally, a coalition Federal Government was agreed upon and formed. The problem was still there, N.N.A. had much stronger representatives than the UPGA. The country was therefore divided roughly into two main political alliances.

The spilt in Action Group, the emergency in the West, and crisis over election of 1964 weakened the bond of trust among peoples of various regions. The next opportunity for U.P.G.A. the challenge the power of N.N.A. was election in the West in October 1965. Discontent reached high point when Chief Akintola's group with N.P.C. support retained power in the West. Charges of rigging were made and

were widely believed. The elections were, however declared legal. The result were announced but was followed by wides spread disturbances in the West, many people were killed and properties destroyed.

It was this circumstances that plagued the country and in the morning of January 15, 1966 a section of Nigerian Army revolted in Lagos, Enugu, Ibadan, and Kaduna. Many leading politicians were killed including the prime minister, and premiers of the North and West were killed. At about 11.50p.m on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1966 the acting president of Federal Republic of Nigeria Dr. Nwafor Orizu, made the following broadcast on Radio Nigeria. “I have tonight been advised by the council of ministers that they have come to the unanimous decision to voluntarily hand-over power to Armed Forces of the republic. “All ministers are assured of their personal safety by new administration”. “I now call upon the General Officer commanding, Nigerian Army Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi to make a state statement to the nation on the policy of the administration”. In acceptance of the government machinery the General Officer Commanding of Nigerian Army Major General Johson Thomas, Umunakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi spoke to the nation in these words. “The Military Government of the Republic of Nigeria wishes to state that it was taken over the interim administration of the republic of Nigeria following an invitation of the council of ministers of the last government”. General Ironsi later became the Head of State. He announced decrees for the suspension of the offices of the president and the prime minister and also the parliament. He also declared that there should be a military government in each region of federations.

On January 18, 1966, major general Ironsi announced the appointment of military governors in charge of all the four regions of the federation. They were Lt.

Colonel C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, East, Lt. Colonel F.A. Fajuyi, West, Lt. Colonel D.A. Ejor, Midwest, and Lt. Colonel Hassan Katsina, North.

It is pertinent to say this is the first military coup d'état in the country since independent and marked the areas which the military actually intervened in the history of political set up of the country since independence.

Coup number two: The second coup had its root on the need by Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi, to turn the country from Federal to unitary state. The military government announced plans to move from federation towards unitary state, claiming that the federal system had forced politicians to play on tribal passions to cement their supporters and thus had driven wedges between the country's regions. But the January coup was given different interpretations. Initially this was interpreted as a nationalist effort on the part of the Nationalist Army to end the instability of the country. But (B.B.C) British Broadcasting Corporation interpreted the coup in ethnic terms. It did not see the coup as a bid for clean government but as Ibo power play to smash the Northern grip on the country. Hence an announcement of moves towards unitary system of government was misinterpreted, since it was an Ibo who was the political head made this more dangerous, and people gave various reasons to this announcement.

Violent protests broke out in the North. Ibo's were killed indiscriminately and their properties were destroyed. This led to mass immigrations of the Ibos from various part of the country and this led to civil war eventually. It is also pertinent to mention that this happened on the fourth month after General Ironsi came to power. The hostility continued and on July 28, 1966 Supreme Commander was at Ibadan to open the conference of the Northern Rulers. He was guest of the Western Military

Governor, Lt. Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi. Rebellion broke out in Ibadan, Abeokuta and Ikeja units of Nigerian Army. By 5.00a.m dissidents soliders entered the government lodge on morning of July 29<sup>th</sup>, officially as Lt. Colonel Gowon said in his broadcast on assuming power on August 1<sup>st</sup>, “Irons and Fajuyi were believed to have been kidnapped and there was no confirmation of their where about”.

A number of officers of Eastern origin were killed. In Abeokuta three army officers were shot. Lagos Airport, which lay about two miles from Ikeja barracks, was completely deserted. All the offices were closed down and no plane was allowed to land or take off. At Kano soldiers were on guard, but work on normally. No plane was allowed to land or takeoff. In Lagos, life continued as usual; shops offices, markets and entertainment houses were opened. On Ijora cause way soldiers searched Lorries to exclusion of private cars. At State House at Marina, Lagos the official residence of the National Military Government was guarded by Armed Policemen, instead of soldiers who were usually on guard.

All reported quiet in the Military Barracks in Kano, Zaria, Enugu and Benin. The Police Headquarters at Obalende, the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation and Dodan Barracks also at Obalende were heavily guarded by armed soldiers and anti-riot policemen.

In Ikeja heavy fighting continued all day on July 29<sup>th</sup>, in the barracks Lt. Col. Yakubu Gown moved to Ikeja as part of an attempt to control the situation. He later reported through telephone to say that he had been taking prisoner. In the afternoon troupes from Lagos moved up to Ikorodu Roads to Wards Ikeja but were ambushed near Maryland Area. There was cross firing, several cars were hit, panic stricken motorists abandoned their cars. A number of bodies lay on the scene of the firing.

By evening it became clear to Brigadier Ogundipe and his loyalists that the rebels were in control at Ikeja, Abeokuta and Ibadan. At 11:00p.m. On July 29<sup>th</sup> Brigadier Ogundipe made a broadcast appealing to all members of the public to co-operation with the armed forces in keeping the present peace and calm that now existed in our country, stressing that there was no cause for alarm.

Lt. Col. Gowon in his speech at 11:20 on the morning of Monday August 1<sup>st</sup>, said he had been brought to the position of having to shoulder the greater responsibilities of this country and the armed forces with the consent of the majority of the members of the Supreme Military Council and referred to the events that had led up the “sad issue of 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1960 from the sad and unfortunate incidents of 18<sup>th</sup> January 1966”. He felt that the issue “of our national standing should be reviewed to stop the country from drifting away into utter destruction. A decree, he said, was to be issued to lay firm foundation of this objectives, with the general consensus of opinion of all the military governors and other members of the Supreme and Executive Council”.

Speaking at Enugu on the same day. Lt. Col. Ojukwu, Eastern Military Governor, said that the “brutal and planned annihilation of officers of Eastern Origin” had cast serious doubt as to whether the people of Nigeria could ever sincerely live together as members of a nation. He thought that Brigadier Ogundipe should have assumed command and said that the only conditions on which a cease fire was to be agreed (splitting up of Nigeria and repatriation of southerners in North and Vice Versa) had come from the rebels and that the people of the Eastern provinces had not been consulted.

On August 2, Chief Awolowo, leader of the banned action group, Chief Enahoro, as well as four others jailed at the same time including Lateef Jakande were released. On August, 4 came the announcement of the release of the former Eastern Region Premier Dr. Michael Okpara, the former Trade Minister, Dr. Mbadiwe and thirteen members of the banned Nigeria National Democratic Party including former Federal Minister, R.O.A Akinjide and also T.O.S Benson former Deputy premier of Western Region.

On January 4<sup>th</sup>, the Federal Military Government announced the death of former Head of the National Military Government and Commander of Armed Forces was officially announced dead. Also announced dead was Lt. Col. Adekunle Fajuyi, first military Government of Western Nigeria. The Federal military Government expressed its sorrow on the death of the two leaders. Late major General Ironsi was accorded full military honours flags were flown at half mast for three days from dawn on Wednesday January 18<sup>th</sup> 1967 until the day he was buried in his home-town Umuahia-Ibeku.

Earlier in his broadcast, Lt. Col. Ojukwu narrated how he had the “unbearably painful duty” of breaking the tragic news to Mrs. Victoria Agunyi Ironsi, who has since the announcement of the kidnaps of her husband on July 29, last year been living in lonely and lawful anxiety. In his tribute, Lt. Col. Ojukwu referred to late Lt. Col. Fajuyi as “gallant host” and said this of the late Major General. “He was a true and sincere nationalist captivating and courageous nationalist.

He appealed to the people “to accept his loss as yet one more sacrifice we in the region have made for the good of Nigeria. The greatest and most befitting honour

we can do the memory of our head of National Military Government and Supreme Commander of the armed forces is to ensure that his death is not in vain. We must mourn his loss with dignity”.

A Federal Government publication released on January 14, 1967 and titled “Nigeria 66”, listed the names of the soldiers who planned and executed the military coup of January 15, 1966.

Following is part of the text of chapter three of the document outlining events of January 15, 1966. “As far back as December 1964, a small group of army officers mainly from the Ibo ethnic group of Eastern Region dissatisfied with political development within the Federation began to plot, in collaboration with some civilians, the overthrow of what was then the government of the federation of Nigeria and the eventual assumption of power in the country. “The Chief plotters were Major C. K. Nzeogwu, Major D. Okafor, Major E. Ifeajuna, and Captain E. N. Nwobosi. Others connected with the plot were Captain Oji, Major C.I. Anoforo, Major I. H. Chukwuka, Major Ademoyeje, Captain Abulie, second Lt. M.S. Wokocha, Lt. B.O.O. Oyewole, Major T. Onwuatuagwu, and second Lt. Ojukwu.

“The 1964 plan was designed to take place at Enugu during the annual shooting competition of the army which is normally attended by all Senior Officers of the army”. The plan leaked, most senior officers kept away and the plan was temporarily abandoned”.

“The 1965 plan by the same officers which was executed on January 15, 1966 was matched out finally in Abeokuta during the all Arms Battle Group Course there. The course was originally planned to be held in Kaduna in Northern Region. But suddenly the officer commanding the Nigerian Army, the late Major General Ironsi

changed the venue and ordered that the course should be held in Abeokuta. All the officers involved in the plot to overthrow the government were given assignments to do at the course.

There are five battalions in the Nigeria Army. Prior to the Abeokuta course, three of these were commanded by Ibo officers. One of the two not commanded by Ibo officers was the one at Enugu by late Col. Fajuyi. To pave the way for an almost Ibo command. Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi sent Fajuyi to conduct the eve of the coup, four of the five battalions of the five under the command of Ibo officers. This was done to facilitate the commands in case members of the army revolted against the coup.

The coup was termed among the plotters “exercise Damissa” which translated from its Hausa language means “exercise tiger”. “Although the original plan stipulated that the action intended by the plotters should take place simultaneously in all the regional capitals (Kaduna, Ibadan, Enugu and Benin) and Lagos, all available information indicates that there was in fact no intention to carry out the plan in Benin and Enugu.

In Benin, an Ibo man of mid-west origin was the premier and head of government while in Enugu another Ibo man was premier and head of Eastern Regional Government.

“The plotters brought in some junior officers and other ranks to assist in the execution of their plans, on the threat of death if they refuse to collaborate, others participated as soldiers obeying instruction although some joined the revolt of their own free will.



In charge of Lagos operation of the plot were Captain Oji, Major Ifeajuna, Major I. Anoforo, Major I.H. Chukwuka, Major D. Okafor and Major Ademoyega. In charge of Ibadan were Captain E. N. Nwobosi, second Lt. M.S. Wokocha, Lt. B.O. Oyewole and Captain Abulie. In charge of Kaduna operation were Major C.K. Nzeogwu, Major T. Onwuatuagwu, second Lt. Azubuogu and second Lt. Ojukwu.

Lt. Colonel O. Ojuwku seized Kano Airport operation on January 15 and 16 and was later appointed military governor of Eastern Group of provinces by the former Head of State Late Major General Ironsi, Lt. Colonel Ojukwu was then the battalion commander of 5<sup>th</sup> battalion at Kano.

After Lt. Col. Ojukwu had seized Kano Airport on Saturday, January 15, he took the Emir of Kano Alhaji Ado Bayero, from his palace to the barracks, sent Emirs councilors and the provincial commissioner and asked the Emir to come and make a broadcast to his people informing them that a new government had taken over. All these happened even before Major General Ironsi announced taking over the Federal Government.

The plan of the army officers appeared to have been successfully carried out in Kaduna and Ibadan but in Lagos was failed by the intervention of the bulk of the Nigerian Army”.

**Coup No. 3:** General Gowon dismissed as unrealistic the 1976 deadline for a return to civilian rule in his speech marking the fourteenth anniversary independence. The army could not honour its pledge to return to barracks in 1976 without plunging the nation into chaos. The deadline, he said was unrealistic. “It would indeed amount to a – betrayed of trust to adhere rigidly to that target date”.

The ban on politics scheduled to be lifted in October 1974 was to remain in force. The government, he said had not abandoned the idea of a return to civilian rule but it would “be utterly irresponsible to leave the nation in the lurch by a precipitate withdrawal which will certainly throw the nation back into confusion”. Despite the State of emergency, which was imposed in 1967, said the Head of State then there has already emerged such high degree of sectional politicking, intemperate utterances and writings, all designed to whip up ill feeling within the country to the benefit of a few.

He said “four years ago when I gave 1976 as the target date for returning the country to normal constitutional government, both myself and the military hierarchy honestly believed that by that date, especially after a bloody civil war there would have developed an atmosphere of sufficient stability. “We have thought that genuine demonstration of moderation and self control in pursuing sectional ends in the overall interest of the country would have become the second nature of Nigerians. But General Gowon regretted that from all information at his disposal, from the general attitude, utterances and maneuvers of some powerful individuals and groups and from publications during the past few months, “it is clear that those who aspire to lead the nation on the return to civilian rule have not learnt any lesson from past experiences”.

In the final analysis the government of General Gowon did not hand power to the civilian “stunned shock” was likely to be the reaction of many Nigerians to the announcement by General Gowon that the programme for a return to civilian rule in 1976 was to be abandoned said an editorial in the financial times. Since the Civil War, the conviction had grown that one way or other the military would have

honoured its pledge to hand over power, it said. “Though General Gowon had declared that the eventual aim of civilian rule has not been abandoned, Nigerians are going to find it hard to adjust to continuing military control with no end in sight” the editorial said”. “The hope must be that the speech heralds a new and firmer political direction for Nigeria and that General Gowon can once again rally Nigeria behind him, as he did successfully immediately aftermath of the civil war.

With these kind of events blowing across the country, but on Tuesday July 29, 1975 at 6.am. Col. Jospeh Garba former Head of the Brigade of Guards announced in Lagos Radio broadcast that General Gowon had been ousted from power. The coup was the third one since 1966. The General was in Kampala Uganda to attend the 12<sup>th</sup> summit meeting of organization of African Unity (O.A.U). In view of what had been happening in Nigeria for the past few months Col. Garba said “Nigeria Armed Forces have decided to effect a change of the leadership of the Federal Military Government, and from now General Yakubu Gowon ceases to be the Head of the federal Military Government and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria”. He went on this has been bloodless operation and we do not want anyone to lose his or her life”. People were warned “in their own interest” to be law abiding. “Any-one caught disturbing public order will be summarily dealt with”.

Lagos airport had been ringed by troops by 2.am and towards dawn approach roads to the airport Ewere closed. Workers not on permanent business were given a day’s holiday and asked to stay off the streets. They were told to report to their places of business as usual the next day.

Dusk to dawn curfew was imposed, Nigeria Airways flights suspended and airports and borders closed down. External communications were cut off. The curfew was lifted on July 30. The writer of these long essays was at Ilorin, sent an errand and I was looked for after about six o'clock when they could not find me, but I knew that something special was happening.

The coup took place on the ninth anniversary of the coup which resulted in the killing of General Ironsi and several other army officers and which brought General Yakubu Gowon to power. It was later announced that Brigadier Muhammed Murtala Ramat was the new head of State and Commander in Chief of Armed Forces. At the same time that Brigadier Muhammed was appointed Head of State several other changes were affected. Brigadier Olusegun Obasanjo the Nigerian Army's senior engineer, Commissioner for works was announced as Chief of Army Staff, Supreme Headquarters, replacing Admiral Wey. Brigadier Danjuma was named Army Chief of Staff. Alhaji M.D. Yusuf head of Police intelligence and Commodore Michael Adelanwa becomes Chief of Naval Staff and Col. John Yisa Doko the Chief of Air Staff.

On July 30<sup>th</sup> he announced his policies and many important personalities were retired. The last coup was that planned by Buka Suka Dimka. On February 13, 1976. B. S. Dimka struck and assassinated the Head of State General Ramat Muritala, in the morning of February 13, Lt. Col. B. S. Dimka broadcast the following statements on Lagos Radio. "Good morning fellow Nigerians, this is Lt. Col. B. S. Dimka of the Nigeria Army calling, I bring you good tidings Muritala Muhammed's Hypocrisy has been detected. His government is now overthrown by Young revolutionaries. All the Nigeria Military Governors have no power over ht

estate they now controlled. The State Affairs will now be run by Military Brigade Commanders until further notice. All commissioners are sacked except armed forces and Police commissioners, all senior officers should remain calm in their respective positions.

Any attempt to foil this plan from any quarters will be met with death. You are warned it is over the all nine states”. The announcement followed sounds of shooting at Dodan Barracks. It was preceded with martial music, which continued afterwards. Shortly after this announcement witnesses said that they had seen General Muhammed’s black Mercedes riddled with bullets near a petrol station near Dodan Barracks.

Dimka’s rebel troops remained at studies until mid-afternoon when troops loyal to the Federal Government retook the radio station after about 10 minutes of firing. No death was reported in this station and rebel troops were rounded up and taken away. Soon after Lagos radio resumed transmission with light music which carried out on for two hours before the collapse of the coup attempt was officially announced.

Dimka was reported to have gone to the British High Commission in uniform at 9.15a.m asking to telephone Gowon in Britain from Commissioners Office. He later declared himself as Head of State.

At about five o’clock p.m the Federal Government announced that it had crushed a coup attempt. It said that the supreme military council was meeting and that further announcement should be expected “the situation is under control and the entire members of the armed forces and police remain totally loyal to the Federal military government”.

Although the situation was normal in the interest of security and safety of the general public a dusk to dawn curfew was imposed throughout the federation.

The broadcast then named the leader of the coup as Lt. Col. Dimka of army physical training corps. In the interview with General Gowon then on February denied any prior knowledge of the coup attempt “can you leave me out of this. “This is not my show” he said the problem is in Nigeria”. The general said he knew nothing of the young revolutionaries and had no advance knowledge of any coup.

Later on those killed in the coup attempt were named they were the Head of State Murtala Muhammed and the Governor of Kwara State Ibrahim Taiwo whose body was recovered from a shallow grave outside Ilorin. General Olusegun Obasanjo assumed the post of Head of State of Nigeria and Commander in Chief of Armed Forces.

Those involved were tried and executed. Some declared wanted Gowon was tried in absentia and dethroned of his General post and became Mister.

**Steps towards Civilian Rule:** In a special broadcast, in July 14, 1978, the then Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo threw a bombshell. “Military Governors in the nineteen states of federation have been redeployed on normal military duties from July 24. In their positions nineteen military administrations had been named.

At the federal level, all military commissioners were from the same date being redeployed on purely military assignment. All officers holding political offices from July 24 to the end of the military administration would not be re-integrated into armed forces after October 1979. Civilian’s commissioners who wished to take part in politics would be excused from government service.

The Head of State said that the military council had decide on above measures as a beginning to military disengagement from a political role and furtherance of the federal military government to hand the country back to civilian rule come October 1, 1979.

Four Federal commissioners returning to military duties on Jul7 24 are Brigadie J.M. Garba who has always stressed of his desire to return to “soldering” (External Affairs) Col. Magoro Transport, Col. Buhari (Petroleum) and Col. A. All Education, Major General J. Oluleye, Labour Major General Shua (Trade).

Both General Obasanjo and Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters Brigadier Shehu Yar’Adua will not return to barracks when the army hands over to civilian. In frane and tough broadcast General Obasanjo traded the events which led to military intervention in politic of 1966. On August 29, 1978 the new constitution that is to lead Nigeria back to civilian rule planned for October 1979 has been formally presented to General Obasanjo, The ceremony marked the conclusion of eleven months of debate in the constituent assembly which recommended the constitution. It will now go before the supreme military council which will formally promulgate the new constitution.

By September 20, 1978 constituent Assembly formally dissolved. On September 21, 1978 the constitution becomes law. The head of State signed decree No. 25 which promulgated the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria into law. The new constitution would come into effect on October 1, 1979. In a broadcast of September 21 1978, at which General Obasanjo blew the whistle for the game of politics to begin after more than twelve years of military rule in Nigeria. The Head of State announced seventeen amendments that have been made to the constitution.

The amendment started with the preamble which he said has been revised to reflect the process of the documents evolution.

Just about twenty-four hours after the ban on politics was lifted on Thursday September 21, 1978 Chief Obafemi Awolowo announced the formation of his political party. The Unity Party of Nigeria (U.P.N) with his four cardinal programmes. Addressing journalists, Chief Awolowo said the goal of the U.P.N was socialism. He announced the four cardinal programmes as free education at all level, effective from October next year, integrated rural development under which rural areas will be developed, free medical service for all Nigerians and also full employment.

On September 22, 1978 a new party was also born in Lagos called Nigerian People Party. It is a fusion of three groups. The groups are National Union Council, Club 19, and the Council for National Unity and Progress. Although the Party had not picked a leader, Alhaji Ibrahim read a written statement to reporters at launching ceremony at 8, Ojuelegba Street, Surulere – the party officer. The third political party was National Party of Nigeria – N.P.N. the fourth is Nigerian Advanced Party (N.A.P) by a Lagos Lawyer Mr. Tunji Braithwaite, and also Great Nigerians Peoples Party G.N.P.P. making five political parties and also Peoples Redemption Party (PRP).

The Federal Electoral Commission was established and prepared for the Election Day senatorial election was held on July 7, that of National Assembly on July 14, on Saturday 28, Gubernatorial Elections were held and August 11, for presidential election.



National party of Nigeria won the presidential election and this generated a lot of problems. Nigerian people party rejected the presidential election. On August 17, 1979, the people's redemption party described it outrageous the declaration of Shehu Shagari as first executive president.

Unity party of Nigeria rejected the result of the presidential election and went to court. It lost the court battle.

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1979 the military government of Obasanjo handed power over to the civilians and Alhaji Shehu Shagari became the first executive president and also call on all other party leaders to join him in forming the government.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE CAUSES, IMPACTS AND SOLUTIONS TO MILITARY COUPS**

Military intervention can be said to persist or occur when the military institution veers from its role concerned with the management and use of controlled violence in the service of the State according to terms laid down by the State to participate in or to influence other non-military agencies and functions of the state including its leadership. This occurs when the military leaves its traditional role of protecting the nation for the task of ruling the country.

Many reasons or theories have been put forward to explain causes of military intervention in the world and this include those put forward by Morris Janowitz, S.P. Huntington, S.E. Finer, Roth. and Jamibewon, but the fact is that a combination of all of the theories were responsible for the military intervention in our fatherland Nigeria.

Janowitz out forward the internal characteristic model. Huntington believes that the causes of military intervention in politics are not military but political. He believes that the military intervenes when almost all the aspects of a country's life are being politicized. But finer, attributed it to the low level of political culture of the countries particularly those in third world.

Ruth first in her own attributed it to political instability in the newly independent states. This to be candid applied truly to Nigeria situation in 1966.

Jemibewon postulated six reasons why the military intervene in Nigerian politics in his book. "The combatant in government" as follows:

- (1) Inability of the civilian regime to govern well
- (2) The corruption of political leaders

- (3) The tendency on the part of army officers to emulate their colleagues who have staged similar coups in their countries or outside the countries.
- (4) The personal and political ambition on the part of the officer coups and;
- (5) Army officers being instigated by the civilian leaders.

Looking critically at these theories by this different scholar one will see that they are the factors that are responsible for military intervention in Nigeria and the world in particular.

**Impacts:** The military rule in Nigeria, had indeed affected unique opportunity, to judge the extent to which the principle of military strategy could be useful in the political sphere. “The science of military strategy can indeed be usefully employed as methodological basis for achieving the goals of modernization”.

This was described as “a slightly curious analogy” of the managing director of the daily times, Dr. Dele Cole. He likened the modern army to a republic with an executive president in a developing country. He said an army mobilized for war was like a developing nation mobilized for modernization. This apply to Nigeria, this is because the army developed the country in all field of activities both economic and social.

With the handing over of power to an elected civilian government on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1979, the military has honorably taken its exit, saying farewell to public administration.

There is, however, a state of ambivalence in the opinion poll of political analyst concerning how the military had forced during its tenure of office.

For this reason, it may not be possible to risk a review at this state without bringing in very many facts and figures to give desired satisfactory explanation for both side that is the good and the bad side of military administration. However, the fact is that the military has voluntarily surrendered power which was voluntarily handed over in January 1966. This is one of the achievements attributed to the army.

It is necessary to mention here also that the military has been able to lay a primary foundation for peace and stability. This, the military has vigorously worked for since the end of civil war. Added to this was that the military government was responsible for the smooth running of the country after civil war which came to an end in 1970.

The following achievements were also counted for the military regime; the creation of more states that gave rise to the nineteen states in 1976 was another achievement of the military government. This creation of states could be said that it has removed the fear of domination.

With this creation of states, Nigeria now has one of the most stable political structures and a viable administrative framework on African continent.

Unlike before when there was grave political rivalry within the four regions of federation. The subsequent reconstruction, rehabilitation, reconciliation and resettlement after the war was done by the military men. This was another impact which could be attributed to the military.

In their plan for return to civilian government a new constitution was drafted in 1976 and the submission of its report was made in September 1976. This is also another achievement attributed to the military. The military government tried as much as possible to ensure that all discharged soldiers get their benefits on time and

payment of salaries to those still serving is also being facilitated through good banking system. Among their things is a new and better terms and conditions of service for soldiers which will be implemented to the benefit of all in due course.

Another notable achievement of the military government was that there was an improvement in our international military co-operation, having assisted in the conflict in Chad Republic and we are still contributing troops to United Nations Interim Forces Lebanon (UMIFIL).

In lighter aspect, sports gained new impetus, for our sportsmen proved their worth in both national and international engagements. It could be said that it was the spirits laid down in sport by the military that is still guiding our sportsmen and women because since return to civilian government nothing could be write home about sports in this country. Gone are the days of military when Nigeria as name rings bell in the field of sport.

There were also improvements in infrastructural facilities during the military regime. A number of projects had been done by the military during their tenure of office. These were construction of Roads, were being done by them.

For example the Ibadan-Lagos expressed road was done at a total sum of one hundred and seventy naira (~~₦~~170), another trunks “A” read was constructed leading to Lagos-Kaduna Road. The Federal Military Government spent about seven billions on Road. This is because they thought that efficient transportation system contributes to economy like Nigeria. It is worthy of note that this unique achievement was the result of the lessons of the necessary measures and chaise of politics taken during the war time. After the war the military have continued to use them as the tool to promote economic development.

It is also pertinent to mention at this junction that the objective of economic development and the expansion of the role of Nigerians in the above process will remain illusory unless the financial system is developed and to this objective.

Lucky, Nigeria has made much progress in this direction. They established many institutions in this direction. We have the specialist bank. The Nigeria Agricultural Bank was established in 1973. The long term objective of this bank is to provide credit and loans for development and thereby enhance the level and quality of Agricultural production which include the followings, horticulture, poultry and distribution of such products. We also have Nigeria bank for commerce. Others are Nigeria Oil cooperation etc.

It also introduced operation feed the nation, universal primary education and National Youth Service Corp to unify the country.

Besides, the military has done quite a lot within its fold too. It has engaged in the reorganization and demobilization of the army. It has taken adequate steps to strengthen its potency by of expanding training scheme. It has also provided adequate accommodation for its rank and file. Above all, it has established its credibility in themes of integrity as the most benevolent military government that had existed.

New that the army had successfully handed power back to the civilian government, my appeal to the troops is to maintain discipline and loyalty to the government of the day and above all, they should now settle down to pursue the purpose for which the military has been set-up that is defending the territorial integrity of the nation.

**Solutions:** It is good at this juncture to suggest some solutions to military interventions. One way is that the civilian government of the day should try their possible way to maintain peace and order in the nation. They should also pursue the aspiration to which they were elected for and not seeking personal aims which will raise the army eyebrows to what they were doing.

Another solution is that they should not introduce politics into the army, they should be left to defence the territorial integrity of Nigeria. The junior officers and non commissioned officers should be prevented in rebelling against their superior and thereby over throwing civilian government, high quality of discipline would be important among all ranks in the army.

Promotion to the high ranking positions should be made on merits and the economic conditions of all sections of the army be improved.

Also with the army brought into closest contact with the civilian government and the army accorded an integral role of influence in workings of government, it might be possible to remove much threat of military intervention which takes over the government especially these of small African countries like Sierra – Leone.

Another possible solution to stop military intervention is that the government should design a policy of educating the officers and men of the army about the functions of government and explaining to them the policies and aims of government. In this way the members of the armed forces would come to play an integral part in the affairs of the country and closely identify its fortunes within a democratic system of government. This would also remove the prevalent threat of intervention, since with such close identification of the army with the civilian

administration; the army would in a sense be prejudicing its own interest by a military takeover.

## **CONCLUSION**

In concluding this dissertation, I believe that the coups and military rule had a very significant effect on the political life of Nigerians.

We must appreciate the truth that the military seems to be an exception to organization weakness. Generally, it demonstrated strong organization particularly in its ability to assume power 1966 – 1979 within which was troublesome wind blowing over Nigeria then.

They have also achieved many things on the field of economic development. Not only these, they have voluntarily handed over power to the civilian in 1979. My only hope for the army is that they should try to keep and defence the territorial integrity of the national and seize power when necessary and handed it over in good time.



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