

OD  
DT  
515  
AZ2  
B112  
1987

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

# ADDRESS

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL  
IBRAHIM BADAMASI BABANGIDA, CFR, FSS, MNI  
PRESIDENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED  
FORCES OF NIGERIA

TO THE NATION

ON POLITICAL PROGRAMME FOR  
THE COUNTRY


PRICE : N1.00

CD  
DT  
515  
A22  
.03  
B112  
1987

ABUJA  
DDP/STS A22 03 B112  
Date Received 22/3/85



ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION OF NIGERIA

The image shows the front cover of a document. The background is a light beige color. In the center is a large, faint watermark of the Government of India emblem. The emblem features a four-headed eagle at the top, a shield in the middle containing a lion, a galloping horse, a bull, and an elephant, and a lotus flower at the base. Below the lotus are two ribbons with the motto 'Satyameva Jayate' in Devanagari script. The text 'ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON POLITICAL PROGRAMME' is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font across the middle of the emblem.

ADDRESS TO THE NATION  
ON POLITICAL PROGRAMME



**MAJOR-GENERAL IBRAHIM BADAMASI BABANGIDA CFR, FSS, MNI**  
*President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria*

**ADDRESS BY MAJOR-GENERAL IBRAHIM  
BADAMASI BABANGIDA, cfr, PRESIDENT  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE  
NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES TO  
THE NATION ON POLITICAL  
PROGRAMME FOR THE  
COUNTRY**

Fellow Compatriots,

In the course of my Budget Speech at the end of December 1985, I addressed the question of a political programme for the country. I spoke of the need for a new and viable political order which must be strong enough to withstand the shocks of political crises while being flexible enough to adapt to desirable changes.

The new social order must also deter the re-emergence of the kind of political insensitivity, intolerance, gross indiscipline and mismanagement which characterised our past political activities.

It was in pursuit of that goal that the Political Bureau was inaugurated on 13th January, 1986. Its mandate was to :

(a) Review Nigeria's political history and identify the basic problems which have led to our failure in the past and suggest ways of resolving and coping with these problems.

(b) Identify a basic philosophy of government which will determine goals and serve as a guide to the activities of government.

(c) Correct relevant information and data for the Government as well as identify other political problems that may arise from the debate.

(d) Gather, collate and evaluate the contributions of Nigerians to the search for a viable political future and provide guidelines for the attainment of the consensus objective.

(e) Deliberate on other political problems as may be referred to it from time to time.

The Political Bureau submitted its Report on 27th March, 1987. With despatch. Government established a Committee to produce a Draft Government White Paper ; and that Committee submitted its own Report on 18th May, 1987. I am glad to report to the Nation that since then, the National Council of State and the Armed Forces Ruling Council had deliberated extensively on the Political Bureau Report and the Draft White Paper on it and reached several key conclusions which will be addressed later in this broadcast. Before doing that however, it is important to remind ourselves about the reasons for military intervention in the government of our country in December, 1983.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA
BRANCH ABUJA
CALL NO.
ACC. NO. 36506
DATE RECEIVED 21/01/88

In this context it is relevant to recapitulate some of the basic weaknesses of our political system which had given rise to quite a number of Military interventions in the political process.

Those of us who were old enough did witness the practice of politics in the First Republic, from October 1, 1960 to 15 January, 1966. The lack of adequate and guided political culture had led to the politics of intolerance and indiscipline among politicians. The rules which were designed to govern the 'game of politics' were often ignored or blatantly violated as politicians turned the political arena into a 'battle ground' which only catered for 'the survival of the fittest'. A political failure in one election meant failure for all times. The incumbent political actors closed all re-entry channels. It was no wonder that the period witnessed 'politics with great bitterness'. The crises of political succession which we experienced are linked to this political attitude.

The rights of the individual as well as of groups were eroded with wreckless abandon. The Fundamental Human Rights clauses in the 1960 and 1963 Constitutions were hardly enforced. Elections which were designed to make leaders more accountable and give power to people to determine their new leaders, became nightmares for Nigerians. Rigging of elections, and the violation, as well as deliberate and warped interpretation of electoral laws and provisions were rampant. The people had been deliberately disenfranchised.

In addition, public funds were misused and political power with its accompanying privileges were imprudently used. Intense regionalism eroded the effectiveness of the central government, with a climax in the civil war of 1967. There was clear evidence of lack of commitment to the concept of 'One Nigeria' by national political leaders who often became ethnic or local champions. The military intervened in 1966 in order to rectify the above anomalies, among others. But Nigeria's intractable societal and intra-military problems led to further military interventions.

Before inaugurating the second experiment in civil democratic policy, the Military Government in power, had thought that the 1979 Constitutional provisions were adequate to usher in a new era of decent politics of accommodation, tolerance and participation. Fellow Nigerians, we were all witnesses to the appalling performance of our politicians of the Second Republic. These politicians improved on the vices of those in the First Republic thus implanting more political violence into our already adulterated political culture.

The rules of the conduct of politics were violated more blatantly. Laws of the land were interpreted deliberately to favour one or the other political group, depending on which political party was in government. Political

parties hardly abided by our electoral laws, and hardly any one of them rendered correct annual reports to the Federal Electoral Commission. Rigging mechanisms were perfected brilliantly by politicians. Law and order in the land were of punctuated by violence engineered and perpetrated by politicians as a result of political intolerance and lack of the sense of fairness in the competitive process. The economy was plundered ruthlessly leading to the current economic measures aimed at turning the economy around. The military again intervened to restore sanity in the political arena.

Candidly, and with the benefit of hindsight, we accept that there are lessons to be learnt from the 1979 exercise in military disengagement. As pointed out by the Political Bureau, perhaps we need to learn a lesson from an abrupt handover of power to civilian politicians. This is why the AFRC accepted the suggestion of the Political Bureau that what we need, and I quote :

... is not a hand-over programme of the 1979 experience, but a broadly-spaced transition in which democratic government can proceed with political learning, institutional adjustment and a re-orientation of political culture, at sequential levels of politics and governance beginning with local government and ending at the federal level.

From our past experience, our political programme must be gradual, purposeful and effective. It must aim at laying the basic foundation of a new socio-political order. We must create a new set of values—a new set of political attitudes or political culture aimed at ushering in a new social order. For this administration, this is a duty we owe the future generations yet unborn. For us, it is a challenge we shall face with the resolve and fortitude characteristic of our military profession. We are committed to laying such foundations for political stability as will render unnecessary military intervention as a vehicle for alternating or changing governments.

## II. TOWARDS A NEW SOCIAL ORDER

Fellow Nigerians, we are at the dawn of a new social order. We must be patient and methodical as we prepare today for the challenges of tomorrow. As I observed in my address to members of the Political Bureau, at the heart of our problems, is the absence of a viable political arrangement. In our search for solution in the past, we considered beautiful institutional arrangements without the supporting values which would make these institutions work. We tried to find approximate solutions for immediate and approximate problems without adequate attention to long-term problems which call for long-term, gradual but solid solutions.

One of the cardinal tasks of this administration, therefore, is "to bring about a new political culture which, like a veritable fountain head, would bring forth a stable, strong and dynamic economy".

In our search for solutions to our political problems, three interrelated issues, among others, must be highlighted. These are: (i) our impatience as a people; (ii) the *crises* of political succession and (iii) the conduct of elections. As a people, we are hard-working and enterprising but we are very impatient with ourselves in the process of experimentation. We must as a people have the will to try out a system. We must not be afraid to make mistakes if only to enable us make necessary corrections, and try again. Often, we forget that the system tried out was created by us. If the system had failed, we as operators were responsible for such failures. We must exercise more *patience* in order to lay any meaningful foundations for the future. We can change the system many times, but if we do not change our attitudes, the system will not stand the test of time. A battered economy does not turn around over-night, nor does it ever happen without some hardships. Values do not change over-night nor do people change old habits as if one were switching off and switching on the light. This impatience affected political institutions in the First and Second Republics. Institutions do not get regularized immediately because you have provided for them in a constitution. All these things take time. This administration calls on all Nigerians to cultivate the value of patience. We need the patience to assess our progress and to learn from our mistakes of the past. We need the patience to correct the present as we prepare for the future.

Secondly, our political history had been ridden with problems of *Political Succession* because political actors did not adhere to the 'rules of the game' of politics. The resultant insecurity made those in power to seek to remain in power in order to avoid their being at the receiving end. Again, in a political culture in which actors adhere to the 'rules of the game' of politics and in which actors have re-entry channels into the political arena, these crises would be very minimal or would become irrelevant. In this regard, this administration intends to arrange for, and supervise, political succession as the batons of power passes from one person to the other. Government believes that every Nigerian must have equal opportunity to ascend to political leadership of this country. In pursuance of this conviction, necessary provisions for this would be made in the New Order.

The third issue—the *Conduct of Elections*—is related to the problem of political succession. The fairness with which elections are conducted goes a long way in providing for accountability of the political leadership as well as the smoothness in political succession. Government intends to arrange for, and supervise elections. This administration hopes that after a few elections and political successions, the democratic values of tolerance, participation and accommodation which had eluded us in the past, would have been sufficiently learnt. A new *Political* culture would have gradually emerged and Nigerians would have correctly begun to see politics as a game and not a battle.

Government will establish immediately a *National Electoral Commission* (NEC) which will be responsible for : the recognition and registration of : Political Parties, conduct of elections, electoral laws and other such functions as will enable us have a free and fair election.

In our search for a new socio-political order, a number of issues which have pestered the polity must be courageously tackled. In this regard, we need the will and patience to remove from our body politic those tumours which will create serious problems for us in the future. Let me mention a few knotty problems which were recommended by the Bureau for effective action before final disengagement of the military from the political arena.

The issue of the *Creation of additional States* has become a recurring problem in this country. During the Second Republic, the demands loomed so large in the political horizon, that politicians thought it wise to exploit the sentiments for electoral purposes. Recently too, communal or ethnic champions have resorted to enlisting political support by exploiting the demands for additional states, thus raising inter-ethnic tension in the country. Government believes that we must learn to live with one another and build a new and strong political community based on fairness and justice. This Administration is committed to making Local Government a third-tier of government, in practice. This will enable basic development to take place at the grassroot level where most Nigerians live. However Government will, at a later stage, announce a comprehensive and firm decision on the creation of additional states, within the transition period. I should emphasize that this will be done in the national interest.

Similarly, the Bureau recommended that a Census exercise be undertaken before civilian rule. Government accepts this recommendation and sees it as a challenge to all Nigerians. We cannot run away from counting ourselves simply because the exercise easily gets politicized. Fellow Nigerians, in a modern world in which data is needed for essential planning for development, we cannot afford to toy with the future of our children. We must honestly and sincerely conduct a census exercise to enable us face the future effectively. This administration is determined to conduct a fair census exercise. To this end, Government will establish a *National Population Commission* early next year to handle the exercise. With the belief in your ability to live up to challenges, I am sure we shall succeed in this endeavour.

We have witnessed political squabbles over *revenue Allocation* in the past. Government accepts the recommendation of the Political Bureau that a permanent and technical *National Revenue- Mobilization Commission* be established, to periodically assess the functions of each tier of government and make necessary recommendations for revenue-sharing. Government believes that the politicization of revenue would thus be minimized.

As I had intimated the nation before, the people of this country will participate in the ratification of a new constitution. This year, a *Constitution Drafting Committee* will be established to carry out a review of the 1979 Constitution in the light of accepted recommendations of both the Bureau and the Committee on a Draft White Paper. Subsequently, a *Constituent Assembly* shall be inaugurated for the purpose of debating and ratifying the Draft Constitution in the course of 1988.

One of our greatest problems as a nation is that of building a political culture which will regulate our behaviour in politics. There is an urgent need to inculcate new values, politically educate the adult, socialise the young, and mobilize the masses for participation in the New Order. Government has therefore accepted the recommendation of the Bureau that there should be established a *Directorate of Social Mobilization*. This Directorate will be set up immediately and shall be based in the office of the President, because of its importance.

The 1979 Constitution contained provisions for the establishment of a *Code of Conduct Bureau* and a *Code of Conduct Tribunal*. As we all know, the laws which were to enable these bodies operate properly were not passed by the then National Assembly. To this end, this administration will establish both bodies early in the transition period with appropriate laws to enable them function as institutions for ensuring accountability and probity in public office.

Finally, Government believes that the stability of this nation is very much linked to the *Political Education of the Military*. My colleagues in the Armed Forces and I will embark on such political education as will enable us respect our nation's Constitution as sovereign. Our package of political education will heighten the values of professionalism as we restrict ourselves to our traditional roles of the defence of the nation.

Fellow countrymen, the implementation of these items, among many others in the programme, will require your loyalty and support. They will require your commitment to the ideals of a New Social Order, and your determination to achieve such democratic order. Above all, they require your patience and goodwill. In the circumstances and given the major issues which must be tackled before military disengagement, the Armed Forces Ruling Council has decided to accept the minority view of the Cooley Report that 1992 will be the final year of disengagement, all things being equal. However, the political transition programme takes immediate effect. The programme which shall begin at the Local Government level this year, will run through the State Government level and mature at the Federal Government level. For the avoidance of doubt all these processes shall at every stage, be properly *supervised* by the military administration.

Government is aware of the disappointment this date will cause for self-seeking politicians who have been running around the country investing resources and mobilizing the public for leadership roles in a political system they had not yet known. This administration assures all Nigerians that the old brand of politics will not be permitted in our New Political Order. For us in the Armed Forces in general, and the Armed Forces Ruling Council, in particular, the journey towards a new political order has begun, and we shall not allow ourselves to be distracted or dissuaded in our pursuit of our target.

While some ambitious Nigerians may have nightmares over 1992 date, we are convinced that the interest of this nation is greater than that of any individual. The foundations we lay today will form the basis of stability on which generations of the future will build a greater, stable and prosperous Nigeria.

The time-table for the political programme is as follows :

*3rd Quarter—1987 :*

- Establishment of the Directorate of Social Mobilization.
- Establishment of a National Electoral Commission.
- Establishment of a Constitution Drafting Committee.

*4th Quarter—1987 :*

- Elections into the Local Governments on Non-Party Basis.

*1st Quarter—1988 :*

- Establishment of National Population Commission.
- Establishment of Code of Conduct Bureau.
- Establishment of Code of Conduct Tribunal.
- Establishment of Constituent Assembly.
- Inauguration of National Revenue Mobilization Commission.

*2nd Quarter—1988 :*

- Termination of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)

*3rd Quarter—1988 :*

- Consolidation of gains of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP).

*4th Quarter—1988 :*

- Consolidation of gains of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP).

*1st Quarter—1989 :*

- Promulgation of a New Constitution.
- Release of New Fiscal Arrangements.

- 2nd Quarter—1989 :*  
Lift of ban on Party Politics.
- 3rd Quarter—1989 :*  
Announcement of two recognised and registered Political Parties.
- 4th Quarter—1989 :*  
Election into Local Governments on Political Party Basis.
- 1st and 2nd Quarters—1990 :*  
Election into State Legislatures and State Executives.
- 3rd Quarter—1990 :*  
Convening of State Legislatures.
- 4th Quarter—1990 :*  
Swearing-in of State Executives.
- 1st Quarter—1991 :*  
Census
- 2nd Quarter—1991 :*  
Census
- 3rd Quarter—1991 :*  
Census
- 4th Quarter—1991 :*  
Local Government Elections.
- 1st and 2nd Quarter—1992*  
Elections into Federal Legislatures, and convening of National Assembly.
- 3rd and 4th Quarters—1992*  
Presidential Election  
Swearing-in of New President and final dis-engagement by the Armed Forces.

As you can see from the political programme, it is aimed at establishing a gradual and graduated learning political process while establishing a new Political Culture. Government is aware that during the transition period, normal government activities must go on. Our duties of governing cannot be abdicated within the period. Our attempts to turn the economy round must continue, especially since the implementation of our programme depends, a great deal, on the finances available to fund them. All these measures require time and commitment of the people.

In our New Political Order, areas of wastes must be pruned to manageable minimum. Politics must not be seen and practised as a gateway for the poor to enrich themselves. Only those committed to the noble ideals of service will be attracted to run for public office.

Thus, The AFRC has approved a *Bicameral Legislature* at the Federal level, comprising :

- (i) the Senate and
- (ii) the House of Representatives.

The State Assembly and Local Government Councils shall have only single legislatures. All legislators at State and Federal levels shall operate on *part-time* basis. They shall *not be entitled to salaries*. However, they shall have *sitting allowances, hotel accommodation, and transportation allowances*. All the above recommendations together with those contained in the White Paper on the Political Bureau shall be sent to the Constitution Review Committee for necessary incorporation in the new Draft Constitution.

Government shall periodically inform the nation about the modality for implementing each item of the programme, as and when appropriate.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Dear Countrymen, we are at the dawn of a new Nigeria. It must be a new Nigeria of our dreams :

- (a) a United, Strong and Self-reliant nation ;
- (b) a Great and Dynamic economy ;
- (c) a Just and Egalitarian society ;
- (d) a Land of bright and Full opportunities for all citizens ; and
- (e) a Free and Democratic society.

These laudable national objectives are also buttressed by 1979 Constitution in the sections which deal with Fundamental Rights; and Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. What we need is the will and the courage to practically pursue these lofty objectives in order to achieve greater happiness for the masses of our country. Therefore, Government does not consider it necessary to attach any ideological label to our new socio-political order. I am convinced that with a collective resolve to achieve this Nigeria of our dreams, we shall succeed.

For the avoidance of doubt, let me make it absolutely clear, that Government's Human Rights policy should not be mistaken for weakness. This administration is committed to the successful implementation of this political programme. Therefore, let me warn that attempts by any individuals or groups to distract us or put obstacles in the path of a planned and effectively supervised return to a democratic civic order, shall be treated as sabotage. For this purpose, Government is immediately promulgating a Decree to provide legal backing to the Political Transition period and the behaviour of citizens within that period. In pursuit of this orderly return to civil rule, Government is setting up a standing Special Tribunal to deal with despatch, any violation of the Transition Decree. Government does NOT recognize any sacred cow and would like to remind politicians that the ban on party or partisan politics is still very much in force.

Fellow Nigerians, as we look forward to the future with hopes, our generation must summon the courage to take their destiny into their hands and engineer the basic foundations of political stability today, for the purposes of a better future. To learn new values, we must be patient and willing to unlearn the negative values we have acquired. We must be determined to start anew, bearing in mind, the lessons from our mistakes of the past. It is not enough to lament the past, it is more important and more noble to do something today in order to re-shape the future.

The journey we are embarking upon today calls for loyalty and determination of us all. It calls for personal and group discipline and a sense of restraint as well as of patriotism. I believe, we are equal to the challenge.

To my colleagues in the Armed Forces, I call for exemplary behaviour as we chart a new course in the political engineering of our nation. We must collectively work hard to leave behind an enviable legacy for succeeding civilian regimes as we gradually withdraw to our professional roles.

To all Nigerians, I call for support, loyalty, determination and patriotism. WITH GOD'S HELP, WE SHALL SUCCEED IN LAYING SOLID FOUNDATIONS FOR A STABLE, DEMOCRATIC AND PROSPEROUS NIGERIA, THANK YOU. LONG LIVE NIGERIA.





FGP 1162/787/5,000