

7312120
FOURTH DIMENSION PUBLISHERS



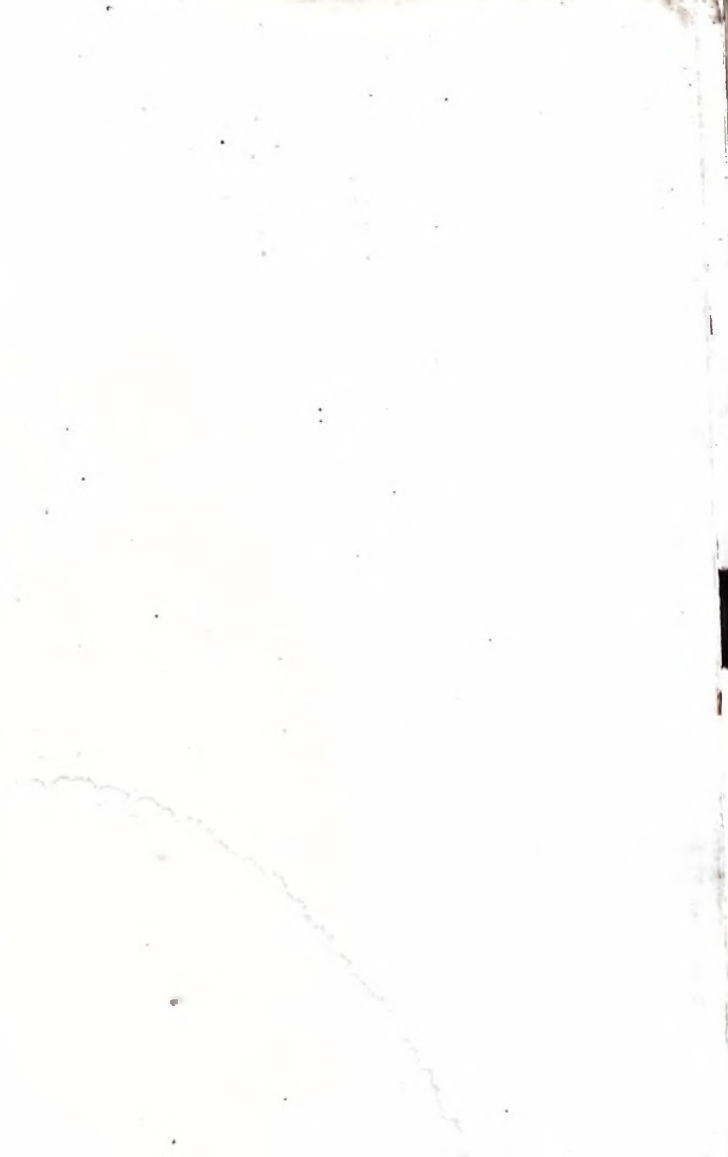
NIGERIA'S FOURTH COUP D'ETAT

Options for Modern
Statehood

S. G. IKOKU

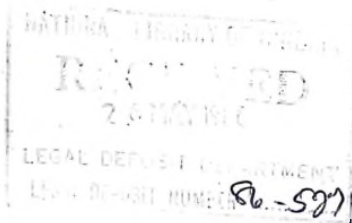
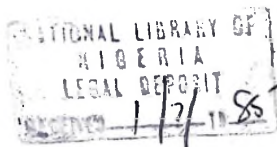
NC
DT
515.8
.J26





NIGERIA'S FOURTH COUP D'ETAT

(Options for Modern Statehood)

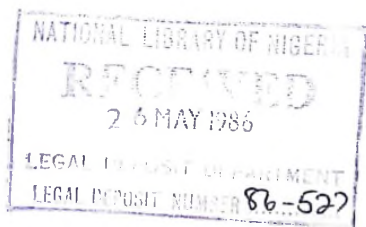




NSR

Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat (Options for Modern Statehood)

by
S.G. Ikoku



FOURTH DIMENSION PUBLISHERS

First Published 1985 by

Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd.
64A City Layout
P.M.B. 1164
Enugu, Nigeria

© 1985 by S.G. Ikoku

ISBN 978 156 226 9

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA
Branch...
Call No. MC075.812
Date Received 8/1/87

CONDITIONS OF SALE

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission of the Publisher.

Cover Design by Emma Okereke

Photoset and Printed in Taiwan, R.O.C.
by AI-UNITED INDUSTRIES & SHIPPING INC.
10th Fl., Cheng Chung Great Building
No. 12-1, Lane 5, Lin Shen North Road, Taipei, Taiwan

DEDICATION

86-527

This book is dedicated to the following:

Herbert Macaulay

Zikist Movement

Nigerian National Federation of Labour

Nigerian Socialist Review

Joseph Sarwian Tarka

Yakubu Gowon

Movement for Peoples Democracy (1973)

Murtala Mohammed

Aminu Kano

whose messages and methods provide the fabric out of which shall be woven Nigeria's new politics.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	
Chapter 1: Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat	1
Chapter 2: Kirikiri Re-visited	9
Chapter 3: Which Way Nigeria?	29
— The Battle for Africa	
— Trends in Nigerian Politics	
Chapter 4: The Options	37
— i. Junta Politics	
— ii. Guerrilla Politics	
— iii. Politics of Peoples Nationalism	
Chapter 5: The Desiderata	57
* Chapter 6: The Nigerian Experience I	69
— The 1979 Constitution	
— Neo-Colonialism in Nigerian Life	
— Leadership — Nigerian Style	
• Chapter 7: The Nigerian Experience II	107
— A Need for less Government	
— Elimination of Ethnic Politics	
— A New Role for Education	
— Strengthening Mass Organisations	
— The Mass Media	
— A New Party System	
Chapter 8: The Model	129
A. Basis	
B. At the Federal Level	
i. The President	
ii. The Prime Minister	

- iii. National Assembly
- iv. The Federal Civil Service
- v. The Judiciary
- vi. Council of States
- C. At the State Level
 - i. Governor
 - ii. State House of Assembly
 - iii. State Judiciary
 - iv. State Civil Service
 - v. Local Government
 - vi. Constituency and Elections
- D. Footnotes
 - i. Political Parties
 - ii. The Armed Forces
 - iii. Creation of States
 - iv. Universities and Higher Education
 - v. Revenue Allocation
 - vi. Remuneration of Public Office-Holders
 - vii. Chiefs

Chapter 9: Engineering the Model	143
— Further Considerations	
Postscript	

Appendices: I	— The Executive in the Second Republic ...	163
II	— Party Strength in the Second Republic	165
III	— Radio Announcement of the Fourth Coup	166
IV	— First Radio and Television Broadcast of Nigeria's Fourth Military Administration	168
V	— Supreme Military Council (January 1984)	172
VI	— State Military Governors (January 1984)	173
VII	— Federal Executive Council (January 1984)	
VIII	— How Can Nigeria Move Forward? (facsimile)	174
IX	— Address at Rally of the National Party of Nigeria held at Owerri new stadium on April 14, 1983.	175

Index	181
-------------	-----

PREFACE

I held a high-ranking office in ex-President Shehu Shagari's second term administration as Special Adviser to the President on National Assembly Affairs. That Administration was toppled by a military *coup d'etat* on 31st December 1983. It is important to stress that this essay is no attempt to exculpate or even to assess the Shagari Administration. This is a job for the chroniclers of political history.

There is a second clarification. It is not my intention in this work to vilify or condemn military rule as a political category. An objective look at political history compels one to admit that military rule could have something to offer in a situation like ours, in which the central problem is nation-building. In addition, I just do not believe that the beautifully packaged dispensations supplied by Europe and North America have any abiding relevance to the political needs of the new States of Africa. Indeed I am inclined to the view that the mystification of political thought in Africa by the introduction of these ornate but inadequate doctrines are part of a carefully conceived control mechanism. As such, a butt of this book are the illusions and platitudes that pass for political thinking in Nigeria.

Also rejected is the hypothesis that military regimes in Africa are convenient interregnums of political excellence inserted by divine intelligence between bungling civilian administrations. The fundamental assumption underlying this view is the intellectual, forensic and moral superiority of the African in khaki over the African in mufti. This assumption only has to be stated to be seen as grotesque and palpably false.

As the title *Nigeria's Fourth Coup d'etat – Options for Modern Statehood* of this book suggests, I have made use of the 31st December 1983 military *coup d'etat* as the jumping-off point for the articulation of the view that both military and civilian administrations in Nigeria, since independence, should be seen as important milestones in Nigeria's historical march to modern statehood. These are elements in a dialectical process. Behind all the twists and turns, the accomplishments and failures, the optimism and vicissitudes of our political life, there is a central thread. Nigerians

ii *Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat*

are in search of an appropriate statehood. The urge is to create and sustain civilised living at home, to project an effective pro-Africa stance on the African continent, and to reinforce black irredentism in a world dominated and exploited by the white race. In this historic search, the differentiation between soldier and civilian is trite, puerile and enervating. The important issues are the quality and relevance of our performances, as individuals or as groups, to this historical process.

The starting point has to be a revolution in our political thinking. We have to undertake an agonising re-appraisal (apologies to late John Forster Dulles of the U.S.A.) of notions and concepts that today are considered sacrosanct in our heritage of western political thought. Some of these are (1) the military is apolitical; (2) the multi-party system is the bedrock and touchstone of democracy; (3) welfarism; (4) military regimes are corrective; etc.

Given our standpoint that the coup of 31st December 1983 constitutes a veritable watershed in Nigeria's political evolution, this book considers, in some detail, the illusions and platitudes that have impeded and undermined our efforts at nation-building. It advocates a fundamental re-design of Nigerian politics, not as an academic conclusion, but as a historical necessity. The direction, structure and modalities of Nigerian politics call for far-reaching and radical recast. These are the essential tasks that have to be accomplished successfully and speedily in order to erect a Nigerian state capable of providing the mould, generating the thrust and containing the vibrations of nation-building.

I am quite conscious of the many shortcomings in this book, particularly its conversational and evangelical style in parts and its minimal documentation. Time has been a constraint. However, there is more to it. This is not a literary essay served for the edification of the connoisseurs of vintage prose and piquant situations. Nor is it an academic dissertation meant to stimulate debate on the campuses, even though such a development would be welcome. Rather it is an effort to persuade and help create a strong public opinion nationwide over the long-overdue but much-needed radical departure in both the conception and the practice of Nigerian politics. Accordingly, this work is beamed at the ordinary Nigerian in every walk of life, with the desire to understand how he is governed and possessing but a working knowledge of the English language.

I am grateful to my many political friends for their constant insistence that I set down my thoughts and experience on paper. In

this regard, I would like to make special mention of Ikeogu, Chief Arthur Nwankwo, my brother Professor Chimere Ikoku, Dr. Mang Obasi, Dr. M.T. Liman, Meke Anagbogu, my cousin Dr. Emma U. Ikoku, and my son Samuel Ikoku Jr. This book is a result of their constant promptings. I thank Dr. Ikem Okeke and retired General Olusegun Obasanjo for finding time to read the manuscripts and discussing these with me. The arguments, conclusions and concepts remain absolutely mine.

If it stimulates the search for a moderately viable and largely homespun political system for Nigeria, this book would have served its purpose.

Enugu,
Anambra State,
NIGERIA.
June 1984

S.G. IKOKU

ii *Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat*

are in search of an appropriate statehood. The urge is to create and sustain civilised living at home, to project an effective pro-Africa stance on the African continent, and to reinforce black irredentism in a world dominated and exploited by the white race. In this historic search, the differentiation between soldier and civilian is trite, puerile and enervating. The important issues are the quality and relevance of our performances, as individuals or as groups, to this historical process.

The starting point has to be a revolution in our political thinking. We have to undertake an agonising re-appraisal (apologies to late John Forster Dulles of the U.S.A.) of notions and concepts that today are considered sacrosanct in our heritage of western political thought. Some of these are (1) the military is apolitical; (2) the multi-party system is the bedrock and touchstone of democracy; (3) welfarism; (4) military regimes are corrective; etc.

Given our standpoint that the coup of 31st December 1983 constitutes a veritable watershed in Nigeria's political evolution, this book considers, in some detail, the illusions and platitudes that have impeded and undermined our efforts at nation-building. It advocates a fundamental re-design of Nigerian politics, not as an academic conclusion, but as a historical necessity. The direction, structure and modalities of Nigerian politics call for far-reaching and radical recast. These are the essential tasks that have to be accomplished successfully and speedily in order to erect a Nigerian state capable of providing the mould, generating the thrust and containing the vibrations of nation-building.

I am quite conscious of the many shortcomings in this book, particularly its conversational and evangelical style in parts and its minimal documentation. Time has been a constraint. However, there is more to it. This is not a literary essay served for the edification of the connoisseurs of vintage prose and piquant situations. Nor is it an academic dissertation meant to stimulate debate on the campuses, even though such a development would be welcome. Rather it is an effort to persuade and help create a strong public opinion nationwide over the long-overdue but much-needed radical departure in both the conception and the practice of Nigerian politics. Accordingly, this work is beamed at the ordinary Nigerian in every walk of life, with the desire to understand how he is governed and possessing but a working knowledge of the English language.

I am grateful to my many political friends for their constant insistence that I set down my thoughts and experience on paper. In

this regard, I would like to make special mention of Ikeogu, Chief Arthur Nwankwo, my brother Professor Chimere Ikoku, Dr. Mang Obasi, Dr. M.T. Liman, Meke Anagbogu, my cousin Dr. Emma U. Ikoku, and my son Samuel Ikoku Jr. This book is a result of their constant promptings. I thank Dr. Ikem Okeke and retired General Olusegun Obasanjo for finding time to read the manuscripts and discussing these with me. The arguments, conclusions and concepts remain absolutely mine.

If it stimulates the search for a moderately viable and largely homespun political system for Nigeria, this book would have served its purpose.

Enugu,
Anambra State,
NIGERIA.
June 1984

S.G. IKOKU

CHAPTER 1

NIGERIA'S FOURTH COUP D'ETAT

Saturday, 31st December 1983 in Lagos. Many public figures had gone home for the weekend and for the New Year holidays. Senators and Representatives had left Lagos soon after the presentation of the 1984 Budget by President Shehu Shagari at a joint session of the National Assembly, December 29. Top civil servants, police and armed forces officers had dispersed. The nation's capital was in a state of suspended animation.

It was a bright morning. At 08.30 hours I left the Federal Government Special Guest House at the Bar Beach, Victoria Island, for the residence of Dr. Umaru Dikko, the Minister of Transport. I left behind in my apartment, Room A 205, my wife, Virginia Chikaodili, with the comment "I will be back soon." I travelled in my official car CVU 5077 B with my official driver, Mike, at the wheels. Everywhere looked peaceful and normal. The only unusual sight was soldiers at the Victoria Island end of the Falomo bridge. I rationalised this as New Year holidays for the Police who had worked all through the Christmas period.

I arrived at my destination, 16 Alexander Avenue, South West Ikoyi, a little before 08.45 hours. The man at the gate greeted me quite familiarly as was customary. He told me the minister was in. As I moved into the compound the gateman asked a question: "Ogah, you hear anything for town?" This was unusual. I did not reply. I entered the building and was met in the visitor's lounge by Minister Umaru Dikko who was just coming into the lounge. The minister was carrying a miniature transistor radio. Close behind the minister, and emerging from the minister's study/office, was Usman Muktari, State House correspondent of the Nigerian Television Authority. The minister asked me if I had heard what was on the radio. My answer was in the negative. I had for long given up the habit of listening to radio programmes, including tuning in for the news bulletins. I did not like the lack of cheer on Umaru's countenance. I asked: what is on the radio? Then the minister spoke in measured tones: "It seems there is a coup."

I immediately abandoned what had brought me to see the minis-

2 *Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat*

ter. This had to do with trade unionism. The shocking news of a military *coup d'etat* froze in me all thoughts that I had brought with me to Minister Umaru Dikko. Other thoughts quickly took possession of me. Who was behind the coup? Has the coup succeeded? What is the fate of President Shagari? Clearly the three of us gathered – Umaru Dikko, Usman Muktari and I – could not provide answers to these searching questions. We decided to search for clues. Umaru undertook the assignment of finding out the positions with the Service Chiefs. I decided to check on the Inspector-General of Police and on the Vice President, Dr. Alex Ekwueme. I sent my driver to the residence of the Vice President to scout what was happening there, and to ascertain the whereabouts of Dr. Alex Ekwueme. I walked down the road to the Alexander Avenue official residence of the Inspector-General of Police. I met a squad of Mobile Police led by a very cooperative Sergeant Ilori. I was informed that the Inspector General was in town, but was attending a meeting somewhere at that moment, and is expected back soon. I walked back to the residence of the Minister of Transport. My driver returned to report that Dr. Ekwueme's whereabouts was unknown, and that a few soldiers were seen at the entrance to his residence. Umaru Dikko's scout returned to report that the chief of Army staff, Lt.-General Wushishi, was not in his residence. He too was reported to be attending a meeting. The soldiers guarding the residence of the Chief of Army Staff volunteered the useful information that the sergeant in control of the squad was replaced the night before. Some other information trickled in. Soon it was clear that all the service chiefs were not within reach. And the telephones were dead.

On 29th December 1983, my good friend and comrade, Pascal Bayfa, the Secretary-General of Nigerian Union of Railwaymen, had called on me in my State House, Marina office, accompanied by his Union's National President. Their complaint was the indefinite delay in appointing a substantive Director for the Nigerian Railway Corporation. The place was innundated with Assistant Directors, each jealously guarding his area of operation, and none willing to take orders from the other. There was no coordination at the top. This rendered industrial relations ineffective, if not inoperative. The Union wanted the boss of the Railway Management appointed without further delay. The Union pledged cooperation with whoever is so appointed. However, the Union threatened to embark on industrial action if by 6th January 1984 the appointment of a Direc-

tor for the Nigerian Railway Corporation had not been made.

I had agreed to take up this matter with the Minister of Transport, on condition no industrial action was undertaken in the eventuality of the minister undertaking to make the requested appointment on a date later than 6th January 1984. I met Minister Dikko on 30th December 1983 at the Presidential terminal of the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Ikeja. He flew in with President Shagari from Dodan Barracks on an Air Force helicopter at about 16.40 hours. President Shagari was on his way to Abuja for a few days rest, and from where he would make his New Year broadcast to the people of Nigeria. The President changed planes and left for Abuja in less than five minutes. Minister Umaru stayed behind. I then hinted the minister about the problem of the railway union. We agreed to talk it over by 08.30 hours in his residence the following day. I had also hoped to discuss with Dr. Umaru Dikko the impending elections of a new National President for the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in succession to outgoing Alhaji Hassan Sumonu. In an earlier discussion on this matter, Umaru had indicated his support for Mr. Ojelli, the National President of the Nigerian Civil Service Union. I thought the right candidate was Alhaji Ali Ciroma, the incumbent Deputy National President of the NLC and the National President of the Nigerian Medical and Health Workers Union, whose Secretary-General is Joe Mbah, a veteran trade unionist with a clear-cut socialist orientation.

By 09.20 hours I heard for the first time Brigadier Sanni Abacha's broadcast. It came over my car radio. Its tone was firm, rehearsed and precise. And the rank of the broadcaster indicated that this was a serious exercise. Soon after this broadcast repeat, Mr. Okion Ojigbo, President Shagari's speech writer, drove in. His concern was the disruption of political stability which it had taken these four years to build. Do these soldiers fully appreciate the setback they have caused the nation, Okion repeated. Then a middle-aged gentleman came in. He spoke in low tones. He wanted Umaru Dikko, and us all, to move to the residence of a High Court Judge in Ikoyi. Continuing at Umaru's residence, he asserted, was unsafe. The conversation turned on where to move. We all agreed that staying on at 16 Alexander Avenue was unwise. As a temporary stage, we decided to move to the Nigerian Ports Authority guesthouse behind the Ikoyi Hotel. I sent my driver back to the Federal Government Special Guest House, Victoria Island, to inform my wife of the *coup d'etat* and instruct her to stay put. I ordered my driver also

4 Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat

to stay at the Special Guest House until I came back. I drove off with Mr. Okion Ojigbo in his back up car.

We called briefly at Okion's Glover Road residence, and then drove on to 4C Solomon Close, Minister Dikko's Victoria Island private residence. We were there before Umaru drove in soon after. Umaru said he had found a convenient place. The three of us drove off, Okion at the wheels, I in the passenger's seat, and Umaru in the "owner's" seat at the rear. Okion was in short sleeves over a pair of trousers. I was in a beige French suit with a red shirt. Umaru had a full dress white Nigerian robe but without the top gown. It is ridiculous that two journalists on *The Guardian* who saw us drive off reported the next day that the three of us were in disguise. I was in shorts and dark shirt and Umaru in a priest's cassock.

We drove to 16B Idowu Martins Street, Victoria Island. In the sitting room we met Abba Dabo, President Shagari's Chief Press Secretary, Senator Ahmadu Alli, Usman Muktari and Betty, Umaru's secretary. Our prime concern was accurate information. We learnt that Bonny Camp was the Tactical Headquarters for the coup planners; that a column of armoured cars had been moved from the Ikeja cantonment to Bonny Camp. We concluded that there was the need to go out in search of more information. Umaru volunteered the view that Major-General Babangida was the moving spirit behind the coup. He also tagged the coup an act of the Kaduna Mafia; and was strongly of the view that retired Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua had a finger in the pie. We all trooped out in search of more facts. Okion and I twice drove past Bonny Camp to confirm that the armoured cars were stationed there. These ferret cars were not seen anywhere else. The soldiers at check-points did not show much enthusiasm in their search. Indeed at one check point (Falomo Bridge) we saw an Arab-looking expatriate sharing out soft drinks to soldiers who were idling around as traffic went past. It was about 14.30 hours. We drove into 20 Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, the residence of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police. The deputy police boss was out of town. Fortunately, we met Police Commissioner Mamman Nassarawa, the head of the Lagos State Police Command. I quickly told him of my concern. Is the President dead or alive? Who are behind the coup? Mamman Nassarawa informed us with an air of self-assurance that up to the time of talking to us no one had been killed. The President, he went on, was safe in Abuja. He was not sure of the officers behind the coup; but he thought they were in effective control.

We drove back to our rendezvous, getting there a little after 15.00 hours. We were all there — Umaru, Senator Alli, Abba Dabo, Usman Muktari, Okion Ojigbo, Betty, and I. Then someone came in, took Umaru upstairs for about five minutes, and left. This was the middle-aged man who met us at 16 Alexander Avenue and requested that we move to the Ikoyi residence of a High Court Judge. I still did not know his name; and I did not ask. Subsequently, I met this man at Kirikiri prisons where he informed me he was an automobile engineer with a prosperous garage in Lagos. He was in Kirikiri, as he deposed, because the authorities thought he had aided Umaru Dikko's flight from the country. All of us at the Victoria Island rendezvous were not happy about this man's turn up at the place. We left Umaru in no doubt about our feelings. However, the exchange of tit-bits continued.

In the meantime, the army had made a second broadcast. The name of the officer who made the broadcast was not given. However, both Umaru and Usman Muktari were certain it was the voice of Major-General Babangida. Later Brigadier Oni also broadcast. At this stage we were pretty sure the coup plotters were very high-ranking officers, and not the middle echelon officers we feared had struck. We also had the feeling that the coup leaders were involved in stiff bargaining to agree on the new leader and Head of State. We surmised that the presence of the ferret cars in Bonny Camp meant a strong hand for Major-General Babangida.

Gradually, the discussion broke in two factions. Okion and I discussed in English; Umaru, Usman Muktari, Senator Alli and Abba Dabo rattled away in Hausa.

At about 18.00 hours, Betty served lunch. Umaru, Okion and I did the eating, while the others preferred to go on soft drinks. There was an element of a rush over the lunch, for soon after, Okion and I had to leave our comrades in order to beat the curfew imposed that evening by the coup leaders. We all agreed to wait for the projected broadcast of the new Head of State, who up till then remained unnamed. We were to meet again the following morning. Okion drove me straight to the Federal Government Special Guest House, Bar Beach. We parted at about 18.40 hours, Okion re-assuring me that he will call next morning by 10.00 hours.

My official driver was waiting. I asked him to leave the official car in the Guest House premises and come back by 09.00 hours the next day. He was sure he would find his way in spite of the curfew just about fifteen minutes away.

6 *Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat*

In my Guest House room, I met my dumbfounded wife. I tried to fill her in with my day's experience. It all looked like a dream. It was not easy to live down the fact that our Administration had been toppled. But that was the harsh reality.

A late dinner. Then a long wait for the promised midnight television broadcast by the new Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The wait after the stroke of twelve midnight seemed an eternity. Who is the new leader? What direction is he likely to take? My mind was in a turmoil. But as is usual with me during such moments I was placid and calm. At 00.22 hours Sunday, 1st January 1984, the riddle was broken. As soon as the new leader announced himself as Major-General Muhammadu Buhari I chuckled loudly. My wife wanted to know why the chuckle. I told her that this was a coup of the top brass; and that the only lingering doubt in my mind was whether the new leader was the man behind the coup or a compromise choice. I made a mental note of this as a question to which the correct answer must be found. We followed the broadcast with rapt attention. At the end of it, I saw nothing to disagree with in the policy frame outlined by the new leaders. I was re-assured emotionally.

I turned to my wife with a sense of restored inner calm, and asked her to go to sleep. I added absent-mindedly: "There is no coup." She was puzzled by this comment and sought an explanation. I insisted on having some sleep.

At about 09.00 hours, I was knocked up by Mike, my official driver. An exchange of morning greetings took place. I enquired after his newborn son. Then Mike, with a worried look on his face, pleaded that it was unsafe for me to continue at the Guest House. I demanded to know the reason for this. Mike thereupon informed me that four army armoured cars had been positioned around the Guest House. The reason? The new Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces had moved into one of the presidential suites of the Guest House after his midnight televised broadcast. I pondered over this. It at once struck me that should I be found in the same Guest House with the new leader, no one would care to remember that I had been there for the past two months; that it was the new boss who came in after me. It would be said with the customary Nigerian love for the dramatic that I had sneaked into the Guest House on a nefarious mission. I told my wife to pack up with despatch. We left the place with such haste that about half of my clothes were left behind. Not to attract attention to myself,

Mike advised that I go in a vehicle of the car hire service. We came downstairs to enter the car. My heart must have missed a beat when I saw a ferret car parked by the 'A' entrance, our exit route. Two soldiers in khaki overalls moved in my direction, and were quickly engaged in a diversionary conversation by Mike. However, one of the soldiers lurched past Mike and greeted me familiarly. I returned his polite courtesy. He wondered why I could not recognise him. He then added that he was always on duty at State House, Ribadu Road, when I came and went. He let me get by, adding that I was not among the ones they were looking for. We drove off to 5 Adepegba Close, off Allen Avenue, Ikeja. This is the residence of a friend and comrade, Alhaji Nuru Bello Damz who hails from Porto Novo in the Republic of Benin. We knew ourselves in Ghana while working with late President Kwame Nkrumah. In Ghana, Damz was the editor of *L'Etincelle*, the French version of *The Spark* which I helped to produce as a co-editor with Mr. Kofi Batsa, the veteran Ghanaian journalist and politician.

I spent a lively three days with Damz. He took charge of the cousine, occasionally assisted by my wife, Chika. We engaged in all sorts of futuristic explorations and prognosis.

The very day I reached Ikeja, Sunday, 1st January 1984, I persuaded Damz to go in search of the Lagos State Police Commissioner, Mamman Nassarawa. His mission was to get a police escort for me to travel home in order to report to the police in Arochukwu as directed by the new rulers. Damz made fruitless trips to both the Police Command Headquarters near Oduduwa Road and to the Commissioner's residence at Temple Road, Ikoyi. The next day, however, it was possible to get the Police Commissioner, who advised that I stay put for a few days to let the dust settle a bit. I accepted the advice, since the new rulers had given seven days for surrendering to the police. On Tuesday, 3rd January, prompted by an editorial in *The Punch*, I wrote a letter to the new Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. I sent the letter through Damz to the newly appointed Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Alhaji Muhammed Gambo, for onward transmission to Dodan Barracks. I also enquired after the possibility of me reporting to the Force Headquarters instead of to the police detachment in my home division. The letter was promptly delivered. It must have been one of the first mails received by the new rulers. The feedback was that someone would come for me that evening. All I had to do was to stay put. The evening came and passed into night. No one came. The

8 *Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat*

next day, Wednesday, 4th January, I again sent Damz to the Deputy Inspector-General of Police. At about 13.30 hours Damz returned with two men sent to fetch me. Alhaji Gambo's message was that I go with the two men who were men of the Nigerian Security Organisation (NSO). After a little wait to enable me iron my shirt, we drove off in a Peugeot 504 saloon car and arrived at the NSO Headquarters, Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, officially tagged State House Annexe, at about 14.40 hours. I had thought that I had come for a brief chat. Instead, that was the beginning of my detention. Even faced with this predicament, I had chalked up one success. I was safely in the hands of the authorities, three days to the deadline set by the new rulers; and my being with the authorities was known to my family and friends.

CHAPTER 2

KIRIKIRI RE-VISITED

Our car pulled up in front of a massive iron gate. Two mobile policemen peeped out at us, and promptly the gates swung open. We drove in, and parked by a kerb in front of the multi-storey office complex. We all alighted and went straight to a reception desk. The wall clock at the reception indicated it was 14.40 hours. I was given a form to fill. The two men who came for me simply vanished into thin air. I was ushered into an adjoining waiting room. I had arrived at 15 Awolowo Road, South West Ikoyi, the Headquarters of the Nigerian Security Organisation (NSO). The male receptionist who showed me into the waiting room mumbled something like "they will see you shortly" and left. Less than ten minutes at the waiting room, another male usher came in and invited me to follow him. We both moved across into office buildings opposite the tall new office block. We passed by yet another reception desk, this time noted for the large array of keys hanging in rows in an outsize glass case. We went past this reception point without any formalities. We turned right and reached a dead end. The door on our left was unlocked, and I was asked to go in. I looked over the door and saw a hand-written S.2. I have reached my room. The young usher said a few things about food later and the toilet being just down the passage way; and left.

This was a small, unpretentious office. It had two windows both looking right out. There was an air-condition unit that seemed quite effective. The carpet was almost wall to wall, but it was hardly as thick as linoleum. There were just two straight-back office chairs and a medium-size executive desk. The walls were bare of paintings, maps or charts. The room could not be more than ten feet by nine feet. As the usher withdrew locking the door behind him, I was left with two room inmates. The one I knew was Victor Masi, the former Minister of Works and later Minister of Finance in Shagari's first administration. We exchanged pleasantries. He had come in the day before, and looked quite strange to his surroundings. He told me he was brought by road from Ahoada in Rivers State, breaking

his journey at Benin where he and his escorts did a night. My other roommate was rather reserved and taciturn. We introduced ourselves. He was Alhaji Garba A.D. Inuwa, a Kano businessman. He was not so sure as to why he was being held. But the indications were that he was a beneficiary of import licence allocations by Bello Maitama Yusuf, a Minister of Commerce in Shagari's first administration. He was not fluent in the English language and I could not express myself in Hausa. Still we made meaningful conversation in slow monosyllabic English. His prayer beads were his constant companion. After absorbing the details of my confinement room, I had to move across to our neighbours, Room S.1. The one who stuck in my mind because of his rather different circumstances was Mohammed Yakubu Wanka, an accountant public servant whose problem was with his former associates in the Nigerian National Supply Company. His name and face remained fixed in my mind because I had known his father in the pre-independence legislative set up. He was a member of the House of Representatives from Bauchi. Soon we all developed a small community of the afflicted, eating together, chatting together, and exchanging views as to what we would do together once out of the clutches of the security organisation. There is no greater organiser than common adversity.

At about 5 p.m. I was invited to visit room 015. Two young men were already seated. The shorter of the two with prominent good stock of black hair was apparently the senior, he was in command. The questions were rather exploratory and wandering. The men were not yet geared for action. I figured that they were simply letting me know that the grilling will come from them. I returned to my room. Sitting on the floor, we the inmates chatted away. The drama connected with the arrests seemed to dominate the accounts.

Around 7 p.m. two junior staff came in with food. It was a dinner of beans and yams. The food was well prepared and tasty. However, I could not eat. I suppose the psychology of confinement still weighed heavily on me. In answer to a question, one of the staff informed us that the food came from the Police Officers Mess, Awolowo Road. In about half an hour, the bustle about dinner was over. We began preparations for bed. There being no beds, we merely took different corners of the floor. I had to take the corner opposite the door, for the other corners had been taken by my seniors in the room. We cannibalised the chairs for headrest. The seats and the backrests were pulled out to provide pillows. There were no blankets, no bedsheets. I took off the tunic of my french safari suit and settled

down on the floor to sleep. The mosquitoes were kept at bay by the powerful airconditioner. But there was a snag. My roommates did not like the airconditioner, at least its power. To satisfy them, the airconditioner had to be put off from time to time. But as soon as the mosquitoes re-asserted themselves, we promptly put it back on. This we did several times before dawn. It disturbed our sleep. But for what did we need good sleep?

Because of insufficient wrap during sleep, my back pains quickly re-commenced. The next morning, I asked for a doctor. No real action was taken for the whole time I was at NSO Headquarters, because I suspect the authorities thought I was merely pretending.

On the whole the night went off fairly well. It looked more like camping, but the fun disappeared after two such nights. The hard part of the routine was to bang on the door in order to be let out to go to toilet. Some knocks were promptly answered. Others took over fifteen minutes to get answered. I guess the staff on duty were also having their nap. At first we made use of the junior staff toilet. Two days later, however, we were given the use of the senior staff toilet. We had neither tooth paste nor shaving sticks, nor even toilet soap. I could see that the establishment was striving to perform a new assignment. After four days, we began to get these things, some out of our own pockets.

The second day at NSO Headquarters, Thursday, 5th January, was the day of sustained interrogation. I was grilled in Room 015 by two senior interrogators from 10.30 till 13.30 hours. At the end, there was a promise of more interrogation.

The drill commenced with the filling in of a standard questionnaire. Your personal data were requested. Additionally, you were invited to give details about your relations – brothers, sisters, etc. A detainee told me he was questioned about his girlfriends. However, this was not on the standard questionnaire. You had to give full details about your bank accounts, both at home and overseas. The questioners wanted to know how much money was in each account. My reply was simple. Nothing to talk about. You can contact the banks concerned. The authorities wanted to know your business partners and your political associates. These were not happy with me on the matter of Minister Umaru Dikko's escape from the country. I explained that I was with Umaru only on 31st December and did not see or talk to him again until I read of his fleeing the country in the newspapers. I could see the policeman in these interrogators did not allow them to believe me. Then I administered

12 *Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat*

shock treatment. I told them that Umaru did not confide his plans about leaving the country. If he had done so, most probably I would have gone with him. Both men almost simultaneously retorted, "Then you are a coward." I laughed. I took them head-on. I enquired if they would not run for dear life, if walking down a bush track they suddenly got confronted by a leopard. They smiled. I insisted that is human nature. Confronted with danger, your first impulse is to run for safety. It was in the relative security of safety that one begins to plan his counter-action. On one occasion, the questioners nearly had me stumped. They asked me about M.D. Yusuf. I was relaxed and ecstatic. Yusuf was a good friend. I saw him as a symbol of the right public officer. He wielded power and he knew it. But he was anxious not to be overbearing in his exercise of power. Then the questioners swung round. What about Chief Adisa Akinloye? The swing was so violent that I gasped for breath. Quickly, I came round. Chief Akinloye, I enquired. The two men nodded. Well, he was National Chairman of the NPN. I knew him even from Action Group days. My relations with him are correct and polite. You had no business deals with him, the interrogators snapped at me. No, oh no, was the reply. The two questioners asked about Shagari. I maintained Shagari was a sincere and honest man. He knew that his first term in office was no dazzling success. He was anxious to make good during the second term in office. He was already moving in that direction. I invited my questioners to call for the minutes of the Federal Executive Council meetings in December 1983. In the debates on the budget and on the report of the commission on ethical revolution, they will discover a determination to get to grips with the nation's burning issues of economic recovery and moral re-awakening. My questioners looked supercilious. Almost scoffing, they said Shagari was a weakling. My reply was that they needed more first-hand information on Shagari. They should then answer the question whether Nigeria is better served by an iron fist or by an accommodating spirit.

My frank, commonsense and unpretentious answers must have helped to melt inquisitorial frigidity into cautious amiableness. Perhaps my style of occasionally moving into the offensive, and putting my two questioners on the defensive helped to mellow things down. For example, I at one stage asserted that the NSO was a pro-UPN organisation. My two gentlemen were taken aback. I added that their pro-UPN attitude was reflected in their assumption that the coup was targeted at the NPN, and the UPN would soon be

invited to take over the reigns of power. Before they could finish denying this allegation, I confronted them with another evidence. The toilet was carved up with pro-UPN slogans. The retort was that the toilet was that of the junior staff. I countered that the senior men must be sitting on a volcano. This relaxed atmosphere helped us to move into what looked more like an honest exchange of views on serious national issues. Two matters come into mind. First, I was engaged on the issue of corruption and abuse of office. I admitted that the Nigerian psychology was to parade power. We revel in ostentatious living. But I enquired whether the problem is solved if we became more cautious in the consumption of ill-gotten wealth. My friends were apparently not prepared for this approach to the problem. Then I asserted that corruption was a malaise that permeated deep into our public life. It was not confined to politicians. What of the office messenger who demanded five naira in order that a missing file could re-surface? What of relations who would chastise a public officer for not making good use of his opportunity? What of the honest public servant who was stampeded into corruption because he found the atmosphere in the office rather suffocating, because of the hostility of the corrupt majority? I asserted that if a serious search is made, corruption would be found even within the NSO. My questioners, in apparent despair, wanted to know the answer to corruption in public office – shooting or life jail? I replied that my approach to the problem is rather different. We must start from two facts. The malaise is widespread and ramified. There is no existing law against the malaise. My approach is to avoid the holier-than-thou attitude. Probe vigorously and hold former office holders found guilty in these probes in prison custody until every kobo of ill-gotten wealth is refunded. Then these could be freed from prison, but remain permanently excommunicated from Nigerian public life.

The other issue was my association with socialism. I maintained that I was still very much attuned to socialist philosophy. I believe that it is the way for mankind. But I hold that it has been inadequately preached and wrongly applied in Nigeria. The contemporary problem in Nigeria is nation-building, not establishing socialism. In any case, socialism implies a truly sovereign and developed Nigeria. The fight against neo-colonialism has to be won before there can be any meaningful talk about constructing a socialist society. My friends were obviously good listeners. I cannot vouch they became converts. In any case, I took them for good public officers, Nigerian style,

14 Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat

who revelled in being non-ideological, or indeed above ideology. But the cautious warmth between them and me remained till my departure from detention.

Moving up and down the passage way to toilet or to interrogation gave me the opportunity to see a few of the inmates of State House Annexe. I met Usman Muktari and Klaus Seemuth. I saw and chatted with Buhari, the Minister of Housing in Shagari's second term administration. Ibrahim Tahir, Shagari's Minister of Internal Affairs came in the day Professor Ambrose Alli, ex-governor of Bendel State, left after one restless night with us. I saw some ladies, one of whom I identified as Mrs. Nene Archibong of the Presidential Task Force on Rice. But, with the exception of your roommates the safest approach was a curt salutation and a quick step to wherever you were heading.

I kept a diary of my stay at the NSO Headquarters. I scribbled on a piece of paper. It reads:

Wednesday 4/1/84

Left Ikeja 14.10 for Lagos under escort of 2 NSO men. Arrived State House Annexe 14.35 hours. Confined in a room (S.2) 14.50 hours. Briefly interviewed by 2 men about 17.00 hours. Dinner served 19.00 hours. (Yam and beans). Could not eat. Room mates – Victor Masi; Alhaji Garba A.D. Inuwa of Yakamata Group of Companies, Kano.

Thursday 5/1/84

Interrogated 10.30 – 13.30 hours. More to follow. Could not see a doctor. Back pain increasing.

Friday 6/1/84

A day wasted. Professor Ambrose Alli left and Ibrahim Tahir came in.

Saturday 7/1/84

Further interrogation. I wrote a 9-page statement for authorities. Tooth brush, paste and shaving stick supplied at last.

Sunday 8/1/84

A day wasted, though officials were at work. *Sunday Times* reports me on its front page as wanted by the police, even though I have been here since 4th. Had to wash my pants, there being

no change of dress. Noticed several female detainees. Parallax (*Sunday Concord*) engages in fascist baiting. Ola Balogun's article (*Sunday Concord* p.5) is food for thought.

Monday 9/1/84

No action, Buhari left. *Guardian* Supplement (Sunday Jan. 8 1984) contains under Cocktail Circuit a write-up "The rump Cabinet" — a tissue of falsification.

Tuesday 10/1/84

Moved to Kirikiri Maximum Security Prison by 6.10 p.m., 6 men and 1 lady. Had first night on a bed Sharing block (ground floor and adjacent block top and bottom) with armed robbers who shouted us in at about 9 p.m.

Wednesday 11/1/84

Had first bath in a week.

From the fifth day at NSO Headquarters, stories of our being moved began to circulate. The reasoning was the lack of sleeping and feeding facilities at State House Annexe. On Tuesday, 10th January the move was effected. A little before 4 p.m. I was invited to check out at the reception. I collected my briefcase which my friend, Damz Bello, had brought in a few days previously. At the main parking area were two Mitsubishi commuter buses with a good number of mobile policemen standing by with their Scorpion automatics, and automatic rifles. It was clear I was not for release. I was the last of the inmates to board the vans. Others, I was told, had been in the two mini buses about an hour earlier. I sat between Mr. Klaus Seemuth, the West German Managing Director of an Apapa-based company, and a lady whom I later knew to be Mrs. Nettimah. We were the only detainees in our vehicle. The other passengers were either mobile policemen or NSO men.

At well after 5 p.m. the two buses set off, destination unknown to us. The escorts wore such stern looks that no detainee even had the desire to ask them questions. Neither did we talk to ourselves. It reminded me of the biblical account:

He was led like a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
So he openeth not his mouth.

But I was making mental surmises as to our destination. My first guess was Kirikiri. This was strengthened by the convoy moving towards Apapa. When we passed the Malu Road exit on the Apapa flyover, I gave up the idea that we were heading for Kirikiri. Sweeping through Liverpool Road and then on to the flyover that took us on to the Apapa-Isolo expressway, I concluded that we were either to be housed somewhere in Ikeja or to be flown out of Lagos. Not long after, the convoy careered down one of the outlets, took a major bend and was off the tarmac. Making a sharp turn left through a mini bus and taxi park, I saw the little bungalows, both the Medium Security Prison and the women's prison. Soon the two vehicles drew up in front of a massive wall with a small door that serves as the passage way. About halfway up the over twenty feet wall was boldly written Maximum Security Prison, Kirikiri. The detainees looked at each other as we were all ordered to alight. All seemed to be saying, so this is it. With our scanty baggage we all filed in through this narrow door that was just big enough to take one person at a time. There were seven of us — Klaus Seemuth, S.G. Ikoku, Ibrahim Tahir, Victor Masi, Alhaji Garba A.D. Inuwa, Mohammed Yakubu Wanka and Mrs. Nettimah. Soon after our arrival, Mrs. Nettimah was taken to the women's prison nearby.

As the six men were checking in at the prison reception known simply as the gate, I jokingly demanded that the squad accept me as the prefect, on the grounds that this was my second visit to Kirikiri. All agreed. And while we were having our induction talk at the prison governor's office, my status as prefect was humourously communicated to the prison boss. It seemed to have had effect. For the prison boss tended to take my chats with him in the days to come as representations from the community of political detainees.

Sitting around one could not but be attracted by the giant notice board that carries the prison statistics. The board showed that the prison population was around two thousand, of which some one hundred and seventy odd were condemned criminals awaiting execution. At the induction talk, the prison governor won us over. He was understanding, and was anxious to make our stay comfortable within the limits of prison regulations. His other senior staff showed the same human touch. I made a mental note. The days of the old, semi-illiterate and bullying officers seemed over. The team struck me as well-educated and groomed in human psychology. We waited rather long at the gate, because we were apparently not being expected. This fact again reflected in there being no dinner for us. A

little before 9 p.m. the six of us were moved across the football field to Block A. This is a two-wing structure. Each wing was two-floor. In our induction talk, we were informed that we are to share the block with armed robbers awaiting trial. The detainees were to have the top floor of one of the wings. The ground floor of that wing, together with both the ground and top floors of the adjacent wing were overcrowded with armed robbers. As we stepped into the courtyard of the block, we were greeted with vociferous shouts and hand clappings. It was a grandstand ovation from armed robbers for "fellow robbers." For among the loud-throated shouts could be heard clearly "welcome, oh fellow armed robbers." The humiliation was complete. We had been warned about this sort of reception by the authorities. Perhaps that helped us to stand up to the strain.

Somberly, we climbed two flights of steps to our floor. There were some thirty cells on this floor. We were advised to shack up three in a cell but not two. We could even stay one in a cell, but we were told that more political detainees are likely to arrive. We decided to be three in a cell. Ibrahim Tahir, Mohammed Yakubu Wanka and I took cell 11. We quickly retired to bed. We were supplied with double decker Vono beds, with mattresses, pillow and three blankets each. The cell was barely 8 feet by 6 feet. There was just one window about 4 feet high and 3 feet wide stoutly fortified with one-inch iron rods placed at six-inch intervals. There was one cell door which looked more like a gate. It was a steel frame with solid one inch rods at six inch intervals, laced by two diagonal bars welded to a transverse bar at the middle of the frame. At the top of the ten feet cell walls are two rows of apertures each measuring about six inches by four inches. The whole floor had two rows of cells both opening on to a common corridor about five feet wide. The toilet area was at one end of the corridor. At the other end of this corridor was another iron-gate that opened on to a landing about fifteen feet by ten feet. From this landing one went down two flights of steps to the ground floor and the courtyard. While we were yet absorbing our new surroundings, a pail with a lid was brought into our cell. This was to serve as the w.c. during the night. Soon the iron-door swung shut and a warder with a huge bunch of keys locked us in. Till 7 a.m. the following day. As we lay down to sleep, we still had something to be grateful for. I was sleeping on a bed and mattress with blankets for the first time in seven days. The squad was made up of friends who had no difficulty in making conversation. Indeed we had the singular honour of being the very

first batch of political detainees after the fourth coup d'etat to arrive at Kirikiri, Nigeria's premier penitentiary. There was irony too. Only twenty-four hours before our arrival, Ibrahim Tahir, as the Minister of Internal Affairs, had been scheduled to pay an official visit to the Maximum Security Prisons, Kirikiri. Now he was here, an inmate!

After about two days, the traffic began. Every day some five to ten political V.I.Ps will join us. The former governors came in. The Vice President came in. Odumegwu Ojukwu came in. Ministers rolled in. Chief executives of parastatals rolled in. In less than a fortnight, the population of political detainees had risen to seventy-one. And there was no sign that the traffic would ease up. The food was simple but monotonous. The beddings were good and utilitarian: but bedbug-infested. Prisoners served us with food, water for bath. These ran errands for us, and washed our few clothes. Their reward was to share our special diet which included four pieces of meat, milk, bread, eggs, fruits and bournvita or tea. We were soon allowed to buy a few items from whatever money we had brought with us.

This was my second visit to the maximum security prisons, Kirikiri. My first trip was in November 1967 when I was brought down from Kaduna prisons after nearly two years in detention. Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi had ordered my detention on 31st March, 1966. I suppose I was being punished for being a leading member of the Action Group that led the opposition to the Balewa Government in the First Republic. Even after Ironsi's overthrow, his successor, General Gowon thought I should continue in detention. After about a month in Kirikiri, I was released just before Christmas 1967 together with my colleague, Barrister Ayo Adebajo. This time I took a cell almost opposite the one I had occupied in 1967. But the atmosphere was quite different. In 1967 the inmates were mostly war prisoners from the Bonny operations and detainees who were not considered safe. The latter were mostly Igbo public officers but included some Yoruba politicians who appeared to support secession. There were a few hard core, long-sentence prisoners. This time, apart from the armed robbers awaiting trial, the place was filled with political detainees of all parties. It looked as if the military had declared war on the entire political class, and we were the prisoners of this war. There were two long-sentence prisoners, a former army major and one other. The former major was so kind to us that our NSO guards had to move him into solitary confinement. The other distinguished prisoner with us was the celebrated Bukar Mandara who was charged for attempting to organise an army

overthrow of the Shagari government. He was quite kind, always wearing the countenance of one whose so-called crime has turned out to be great foresight. He let us share his privileges. He supplied us with chicken, fried plantain, milk, sugar, etc. Above all, he permitted us the use of his transistor radio. He let us read his daily newspapers. A tall, benign, middle-aged man, Mandara bore himself with dignity and made good use of his stay in prison. The prison authorities had organised a literacy instructor for him from among the convicts in Kirikiri. Mandara was respected by both the warders and NSO men. Even in their war of attrition against the political detainees, the NSO men were careful not to have a brush with Mandara. But these NSO men seemed to have cooled down after a brush with us. They saw clearly that we had a much higher rating for the prison warders than for themselves. However, I think what turned the tide was the arrival of UPN and NPP governors at Kirikiri. Before these men came in, the impression was that the NPN and its political friends were in for it. And many NSO men of Yoruba origin were visibly pleased. But when it began to look as if the attack was across board, the mischievous grin had left the faces of these officers. These men now wore the look of concern.

Among the detainees, things happened. To describe each detainee would look like producing something akin to Chaucer's Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Nonetheless, some images have registered with me. There was Professor Ambrose Alli, stripped to the waist, carrying both hands high up like a boxer covering his face and moving forward step by step throwing punches into thin air. Dr. Alex Ekwueme preferred to pace up and down the corridor with his hands folded behind him, and wearing a fixed gaze that saw barely a few feet ahead of his legs. There were Professor Odenigwe and Deputy Governor Engineer Roy Umenyi dashing from cell to cell shouting "prayer, prayer" as the call to worship. There was Lateef Jakande, aloof and reserved, wearing his long mecca-style, white caftan, and praying alone even though the muslims among the detainees were praying together. I can still see the well-tailored half-nude frame of Eteng Okoi Obuli nipping around cracking jokes and exchanging salutations with all and sundry. Most simply lay on their bunks and read. Nor will I easily forget the witicisms of former governor Bisi Onabanjo. I asked the ex-governor of Ogun State why Professor Ambrose Alli contributed nothing to Papa's election fund whereas the other UPN governors contributed handsomely. The reply was shattering. He used the money to bury his

father. Asked why he, Bisi, donated some ₦4 million while the former governor of Lagos State donated some ₦14 million the reply was simply "that's why he is nicknamed mini Awo." One morning he sent ex-governor Sam Mbakwe scurrying back to his cell. Mbakwe had tried to be brave over the reported findings of a million naira with his wife. Mbakwe said his wife was in business in her own right, and the reported find had nothing to do with him. Bisi sneered: Sam, don't forget that this is Africa. If your wife has one million, then be prepared to cough up ten million. It looked as if Mbakwe had been struck on the temple with a crowbar. He wheeled around and went into his cell. The next I saw of him, Mbakwe was flat on his back on his bed.

Two humorous stories ought to be told. The news came that ₦2.4 million had been found in Sabo Barkin Zuwo's residence. The reply of the ex-governor of Kano State was swift. Said he, "They've stolen my money. What I had was ₦6 million. They have to produce the balance of ₦3.6 million." Eteng Okoi Obuli gave a licking account of how he got to Kirikiri with ex-governor Clement Isong. While at NSO Headquarters they were boarding the vans, he had told Isong that the destination was Kirikiri. Isong's reply was, "My friend we are not joking." When the van swept past the Malu Road exit of the Apapa flyover, Isong summoned courage to point out that they could not be going to Kirikiri. But when they saw the medium security prisons Kirikiri, and then the bold inscription "Maximum Security Prisons Kirikiri" starred all in the face, there was silence. And as all disembarked and were herded inside, Isong broke into the well-known hymn: "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past." These were some of the juicy tales that helped while away the time. Everybody had the feeling that the experience would be brief. The only worry was whether the new rulers were firm enough in control. There was the dread of a more vicious set taking over and slaughtering all in detention. This fear, and fear of the unknown gave almost everybody hypertension. For the first time in my life my blood pressure rose to 160 over 110. I just could not understand this. I told the prison doctor so. He agreed with my suggestion that mental worry is the cause, he having detected no physical malady. And so I got confirmation of the Buddhist view that the mind or spirit holds away over the material body. The one detainee whom I knew had no blood pressure problems was Adamu Ciroma. Indeed, I discovered Adamu as an exceptional character. He was calm all the time. Pondering over Nigeria's economic predicament,

he would say simply that the situation wanted dollars, not guns. He however proved one night that he was very human. A new batch of political prisoners was coming in at about 8.30 p.m. We had heard it rumoured that the ex-Deputy Governor of Bauchi State, junior Tafawa Balewa, the Emirul-Hajj 1983 was among the new intake. As these men entered the cell block, most detainees rushed to the iron doors of their cells to get a look. Lo and behold Balewa came along and exchanged brief greetings with Ibrahim Tahir and Adamu Ciroma, and passed along the corridor to his cell. For the next ten minutes the serenity of Adamu was shattered. The man sobbed openly and loudly like a child. We tried to calm him. His complaint was that it now looks as if there is no honest man among Nigeria's political class. He again cried with tears running down his cheeks. When eventually we got him calmed down, I was so overwhelmed by the incident that I decided this was the right moment to go to sleep.

One morning we were subjected to a snap and rigorous search. Both our persons and our cells were painstakingly searched. I lost twenty-one naira and some forty kobo to the federal treasury. In addition, my scripts were seized, but fortunately I recovered these the day after my release. Still not re-assured after the search, we had yet another brush with the prison authorities. It was about 9 p.m. and all were locked in. Ex-governor Jim Nowbodo called for his drugs to calm his running tommy. The warder on duty was slow to react. Abubakar Rimi took up the gauntlet. Making use of the fact that his cell door was faulty, the ex-governor of Kano State went up the corridor, and standing behind the iron-gate separating the corridor from the landing where the warders on night duty were stationed, railed at the warders. Soon some reinforcements arrived. More warders and their Alsatian dogs moved in. As soon as the dogs roared, Abubakar Rimi scurried to his cell, thankful to God that the iron-gate had held back the barking Alsatis. Then it was the turn of the warder to reply. All was quiet as the warder castigated Rimi. If you are a governor outside, you are not one inside here. I am the ogah here. And you have to obey me. Then abuses followed. Soon there was calm like the aftermath of a tornado. I could hear Rimi asking his cell mate: was he abusing me? The cell mate's reply was: you heard him.

The next morning prison officials moved into our block in full force. Obviously, last night's incident had been reported, and the official reaction was taking place. Detainees were being moved

around. Rimi was sent downstairs into the row occupied by armed robbers. The development was frightening. I went over to the gate to see the prison governor. I persuaded him that it was not abnormal for some of us to still carry the air of big men we had outside. He should overlook the incident, and appreciate the grave danger posed by a political detainee being left at the mercy of armed robbers. He mused awhile and then promised to do something. Apparently, his decision was not to return Rimi upstairs, but to clear the ground floor of all armed robbers. Thus, we had a whole wing, both ground and top floors, entirely to ourselves. The move was further justified by the steady increase in the population of political detainees.

I noticed one incident that ought to be reported for the edification of Nigerian diplomats the world over. The West German, Klaus Seemuth looked very worried. On enquiry I was informed that a missive he sent out had gone astray and ended up with the NSO. To make matters worse, two West German diplomats from the Embassy of the Federal German Republic in Lagos had come to the gate to see him, but were turned back. I consoled Klaus, pointing out that the unsuccessful visit of the West German diplomats was a good sign. I just cannot see how the Nigerian authorities would resist a firm representation by the West German Ambassador over a good West German citizen. To the amazement of Klaus himself, my words of consolation had turned prophetic. Two days later Klaus Seemuth was summoned to the gate and released.

To me Kirikiri was not all hardship and humiliation. Like Shakespeare's toad, ugly and venomous it wore yet a precious jewel in its head. Kirikiri deepened my knowledge of human beings. We all parade our knowledge and our power of reasoning. We proclaim our innocence, and vow to stand up to anything. But when the chips are down, we seek solace in faith. Man is ten percent reason and ninety percent emotion. His prime motivation is self-seeking, not the common good. His obedience owes more to fear than to what is right. His failings are the machinations of others. His faith in God is either convenient fashion or a mere fall-back position. Perhaps this explains why charisma usually triumphs over rationalism in political practice. It is not impossible to find a person ruled by reason, motivated by the common good, admitting his faults and striving to perform better, seeking God as a way of life, and standing up for what is right. But your find is not a man. It is a great man.

I had very deep discussions with Ibrahim Tahir, someone I consider to be at the other end of the political spectrum from me. But

I found him stimulating. We agreed to jointly author a book. We agreed that there is need for less government in the conduct of Nigeria's public affairs. My discussions with Adamu Ciroma gave me a new angle on the Sharia. I had discovered from a book on the *Political and Social Theory of Islam* by a Professor at Ryyad University that Sharia was not Hausa/Fulani customary law. It is a moral code founded on Islamic ethics. The important point is that Islamic political and social theory upheld this moral code (Sharia) as defining both private and public morality in a muslim community. The State was subject to this moral code. Such a practice is of the greatest significance. In a multi-religion community, it implies that the moral code has to be something acceptable to all the religions involved. Thus for Nigeria, the need was for an ethical code that synthesised Sharia, Christian ethics and our traditional mores. I was happy to find a powerful religious precept for the advocacy of a moral code for the political system. Instead of the questionable approach of declaring the State secular – a situation that encourages the view that the State cares little for moral precepts – we now have the positive stance of anchoring the State on a set of ethical norms acceptable to all citizens because it is a synthesis of the values upheld by all religions within the State.

Through the book referred to above, I was introduced to Ibn Khaldun, a great exponent of Islamic political thought and practice. Ibn Khaldun deserves greater recognition in Nigeria's institutions of higher learning.

Above all, the spell at Kirikiri enabled me take stock of Nigerian politics. The best way, I think, to narrate what went on in my mind is perhaps to publish my jottings on the matter. The facsimile of these jottings is attached as Appendix VIII to this book. It is reproduced hereunder:

How can Nigeria Move Forward?

1. Introduction

We have been prisoners of exotic ideas and concepts. As a result, our political culture has been askew our indigenous mores.

We need modern technology.

We are colonised by foreign concepts, technology and finance.

Internally, we are convulsed by the rapid growth of an

educated people that is unproductive, in terms of either investors or captains of industry (entrepreneurs) or disciplined work force.

Yet every Nigerian demands a good and improving life. The oil boom (1972-1979) provided the illusion that this demand could be met without hard work.

This demand postulates a Modern State.

A modern Nigerian State requires:

- i) National unity (founded upon territorial integrity, respect for ethnic groups, equality of rights and duties among citizens, guarantee of a minimum standard of life for all)
- ii) a strong, independent and expanding economy
- iii) political stability (i.e. a generally accepted political system founded on indigenous political concepts/practice, permitting leadership changes without crises, and able to withstand social upheavals at home and subversive external interests)
- iv) domesticated and self-promoting technology
- v) strong Nigerian consciousness among the entire people
- vi) a national culture

The emergence and survival of a modern Nigerian State, given our geography and demography as well as contemporaneous world history, compels the rise of a Black State of world power dimensions.

The interests of the Black race the world over also demand that Nigeria becomes a Black State of world power dimensions. This desideratum means that Nigeria's emergence will take place in the context of a global clash of interests.

To attain world power dimensions, the Nigerian State may have to evolve into a Union of African States.

2. *Concept Substitution*

- 1) For parliamentary democracy (Westminster model) and presidential democracy (US-style) substitute indigenous democracy. Indigenous democracy means community for constituency; use of traditional systems of authority in administration; limited use of the political party (if to be used, should be allowed to grow over time); synthesis, not separation of powers; executive convergence not divergence in a federal system; indirect election of legislative and executive?; police force – federation of community constabularies;

peoples army with a system of peoples commands responsible to legislature, for various special military formations; reduced powers for states under federalism; an integrated judiciary under a single judicial service commission, responsible to the legislature; part-time legislators elected by Assemblies of communities delegates; political heads of ministries; a national legislature that contains nation's distinguished but retired expertise.

- 2) For welfarism substitute humanised privatisation.

The concept of "less government." Duties of government to include law and order; roads and railways; fuel and power(?); water supply(?); basic education and mass literacy; preventive health care; enforcement of humane working conditions; provision of support (expertise, financial and legal/diplomatic) for Nigerian entrepreneurs on sound commercial basis; public care for disabled, destitute and unemployed.

- 3) For multi-party system mediated by "corrective military rule" substitute integrated military/civilian people's democracy.

3. Strategy for building Nigeria's New Political System

Stage I: Military Rule

SMC, FEC, National Council of States, State Executive Councils. New conception of Rights and Duties of Citizens. Judicial reforms. Set up L.G.As and councils. Corrective measures to refloat the economy. Critical assessment of parastatals. Regulatory distributive system for essential commodities. Reduction of the armed forces, especially the Army. Move capital to Abuja by end of this stage. Review conditions under which the media will operate.

Stage II:

SMC, FEC, National Council of States, State Executive Councils, Advisers to Head of State. Federal Consultative Council elected by State Consultative Councils elected by L.G.A. Conference of communities delegates. Decisions are recommendations to Federal, or State Executive Council or L.G.A. councils. Retreat from parastatals and entronement of privatisation principle. New division of functions between Federation and States. New States, if any. Review of universities and polytechnics to reduce

numbers, expand size, and regulate mode of appointment of top officials and reconsider "academic freedom."

Stage III:

SMC, FEC, National Council of States, State Executive Councils elected as at Stage II now make recommendations to SMC and State Executive Councils. L.G.A. conference of communities delegates now elect State Governors. Federal Credit Guarantee Department and Economic Intelligence Unit to support private enterprise at home and abroad. Political parties allowed to operate at community level under specified guidelines to make them programme-oriented.

Stage IV: *Peoples Democracy*

Federal Consultative Council (renamed Federal Legislature – part-time and containing retired experts) replaces SMC. FEC with elected Chairman. Head of State is still military but gives up chairmanship of FEC and National Council of States. State Executive Council now advises State Governor. Size of new legislatures (Federal maximum of 300; states maximum of 60).

Political parties, satisfying certain criteria, now to operate at State and Federal levels. However, election on party tickets only at community level.

Armed Forces Council to be set up with powers to elect Commander-in-Chief who is Head of State for 5 years, subject to approval by Federal Legislature.

Duties of Head of State clearly defined and separated from duties of Chairman of the Federal Executive Council. Chairman of FEC to appoint State Governors with approval of State Legislative Councils."

The above are my ruminations as I could set them down on paper. It is best to reproduce them as these were, even though the following pages show that some ideas have been much reconsidered, and some abandoned. However, there is organic unity between these jottings and the arguments adumbrated in succeeding chapters of this book.

Just before 8 p.m. on Wednesday, 24th January I was called upon to collect my belongings and proceed to the gate. We had already been locked up for the night. I pleaded that I be allowed to do the

trip to NSO headquarters in the morning. All to no avail. I greeted the few friends I could reach as most cells had been locked. The last person I spoke to was Dr. Alex Ekwueme. When I got to the offices, the prison governor had come to get me off. I pleaded once again that I would prefer to go in the morning. He calmed me and got some documents countersigned by the NSO. I guess this was just one of the confidence tricks. A headquarters officer of the NSO was also present, and this re-assured me considerably. After thanking the prison governor for his humane handling of the detainees, we agreed I should return to Kirikiri the next morning to collect my belongings. The stores people had already closed. We drove off to State House Annexe, Awolowo Road, arriving there a little after 9 p.m. My escorts simply abandoned me at the reception. The reception clerk had no instructions about me. He advised that I sit out the night at the waiting room. I agreed. But the goings on at the reception had convinced me that I was on my way out. The authorities seemed no longer concerned about me. At the waiting room I met former deputy governor of Niger State, Alhaji Idris Alhassan Kpaki, and an Ibadan businessman, both awaiting the pleasure of the NSO. That was their second night in the place. After chatting well into the night, we went to sleep, either on the couch or on the floor. The airconditioner left me almost half dead. I had collapsed on my way back from the toilet. Luckily, Alhaji Idris Alhassan saw what was going on. He rushed to my rescue. We switched off the airconditioner, and I stretched out on the floor. In the morning I went to the reception to check out. I saw Chief Felix Okon who informed me that a pass was being prepared for my son, Samuel, to visit me at Kirikiri. Moments later I was released. I drove with Samuel back to the residence of my step daughter, Maggie where I had breakfast. Then we drove to Kirikiri to collect my belongings, most important of all, my jottings. I took the opportunity to deliver some change of clothes for Ibrahim Tahir supplied by his brother, Isa Tahir. Once again, I was a free man. But it took me a few days to fully realise that I was really a free man.



CHAPTER 3

WHICH WAY NIGERIA?

The Battle for Africa

Exactly a century ago, the battle for Africa reached its apogee. After decades of war, both with the African kingdoms and principalities and between themselves, European States assembled in Berlin to agree to a carve-up of the African continent into spheres of influence. This activity was climaxed in 1885 with the Treaty of Berlin. While respecting the American enclave of Liberia, the European States drew up and agreed to a "possessions map" of the African continent. The beneficiaries were Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Portugal and Spain. Africa was gulped by the rival imperialisms of Western Europe.

A slight re-drawing of this map took place after World War I (1914-1918) when the African possessions of vanquished Germany were shared between victorian Britain and France principally. In the 1930's, Italy moved against and subverted Abyssinia, later resurrected after World War II (1939-1945) as Ethiopia. During World War II, Germany seized North Africa, but could not hold it against the combined might of Britain, U.S.A. and France. Thereafter, the U.S.A. penetrated Morocco and Libya through Kings Hassan and Idris respectively. Other significant developments for Africa arising after the Second World War were the rise of the Soviet Union, the upsurge of African nationalism, the emergence of the U.S.A. as by far the most powerful and de facto leader of the western imperial states, and the revulsion of the conscience of the international community against overt colonialism.

Today, the battle for Africa has become the battle of Africa. This new struggle is raging furiously and continuously. It is a three-cornered struggle. The contestants are Western imperialism, Eastern communism and African nationalism. Except in South Africa where militarised settler colonialism is still in the saddle, this three-cornered struggle everywhere is manifested through the new states of Africa. The track record of almost all African countries since the 1960

De-Colonisation Resolution of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) has been unending experiments at statehood punctuated again and again by military *coup d'etat*. The combatant banners are democracy and socialism. The result is a Client State in which a small class of the new rich regiments national stagnation and mass penury through political arrangements which are in essence dictatorships.

Underlying this regime of political turbulence is a discernible trend. There is a continuing search for a political edifice that will protect, stabilise and promote recognisable, indeed compelling, interest patterns. The central issue everywhere is the nature of the new African State. Should it be a client state either of Western imperialism or of Eastern Communism? Or should it be a state of authentic African nationalism? This situation is rendered more complex by first the necessity for emergent Africa to relate meaningfully to both the East and the West; and secondly by the reality that African intellectual life is dominated by influences from both the East and the West. Clearly, there is the need for a conscious retreat from both the East and the West, followed by a determined search for solutions based on the African reality and a selective and critical appraisal of both the East and the West.

Our standpoint is that political stability and, hence, national development and the upliftment of the ordinary people, will continue to elude Africa until African nationalism emerges triumphant in this three-cornered conflict of interests, and its demands are universally recognized.

Illusions Versus Reality – The Battle for the Mind

Overwhelmed by the illogical stances of the American civil war, Abraham Lincoln is reported as having observed that the worst form of slavery is the slavery of the mind. This great insight, by such a renowned political figure, is as true today as when it was averred. Ideas and technology are the key elements in the control mechanism devised by the West for the direction of the affairs of its former colonial possessions, now christened the Third World. In this situation, Africa is the worst placed. If Nigeria is to take a bold and positive step forward in the direction of nation-building, Nigerians have, as it were, to re-think their thoughts, at least in the realm of politics. Both in political science and political practice, Nigerians have to undertake a determined spring cleaning of far-reaching

dimensions. Our armoury of concepts, ideas, and operational maxims has to be turned inside out. The lingering cobwebs of colonial mentality, founded on the notion that the white man came to Africa on a civilising mission, have to be swept away. Soporific platitudes, for example that the West and Africa are partners in progress, must be exposed as intellectual opium and firmly discarded. Downright illusions, for example that Nigeria can play the role of a regional power for Africa south of the Sahara even while lacking an independent and advanced industrial base, must be cast overboard, however flattering these might be to our national ego.

This important exercise of a thorough intellectual and mental clean-up is a vital pre-requisite for nation-building. For nation-building calls for repeated sacrifices over a considerable period of time by a patriotic people. But such high patriotism, capable of sustaining prolonged sacrifices, is not attainable where the people are either ignorant of the goals or are confused on the correct approach to these goals or find it impossible to identify with these goals. Here lies the key function of political leadership, which is to provide the people with national goals, with which they can identify and for which they are prepared to make heavy sacrifices. In a developing country, this demands not only expertise and experience but also a high degree of consensus among the political class.

Trends in Nigerian Politics

When after World War II, the continued existence of overt colonialism became impracticable, the departing colonial powers had to invent a conceptual frame, an ideas system, within which the abiding interests of imperialism could be secured inside the emergent states of Africa. Wrongly identified as the enemy, but quite logical in the context of world power politics, was and remains the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx. Colonial peoples and their leaders referred to the communist manifesto and were enamoured of the achievements of the Soviet system in both European and Asiatic Russia. Therefore, a rival manifesto had to be written up, articulated and taught as the cream of social science in the leading universities of the West. W.W. Rostow's concept of "growth stages" was deified as the "science of development" par excellence, for the erstwhile colonial countries. This "science of development" rests on a doctrinal tripod – a political theory that points up the hegemony of the "new rich" secured through cash power and the seductive promises

of the welfare state; an economic philosophy whose motif is increased returns on private investments in an economy dominated by international finance; a sociology whose central theme is modernisation, that is the systematic elimination of those indigenous relationships and modes that impede the full flowering of free enterprise.

Since independence in 1960, this has been the ideology of the Nigerian Establishment, preached by the political parties, implemented through the National Development Plans, taught by the universities, researched by the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research, and tacitly accepted by the Nigerian Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies as the ideological reference frame. The socialist revolution of Karl Marx was replaced with "the revolution of rising expectations." For Marx's Proletarian State was substituted the Client Bourgeois State, often euphemistically daubed the "Welfare State" or even "African Socialism." The West had squared up to the East. Communist subversion had been halted. All was now smooth sailing.

What is the verdict of history? It has all been a grandiose shying away from the reality. The Rostow model had simply ignored the demands of authentic Africa. Indeed, authentic Africa has tended to lose confidence in itself. However, the instability of the various political contraptions *a la West*, and the deprivations of those other political models designed *a la East*, have permitted authentic Africa to assert its claims, albeit ignored, from time to time.

Nigeria is a classic example of an African country that has got bogged down in the quagmire of "the revolution of rising expectations." Indeed, the expectations of the ordinary Nigerian has not just risen, they have leapt. Those of the privileged class have become veritable fantasies. But the resources for sustaining this expectations explosion have slumped. The economic substructure for the rising expectations has proved woefully inadequate and tragically fragile. What panacea has Rostow to offer? Silence! As if their failed practice was not based on an ideology, some practitioners of the Rostowian science of development now urge that Nigeria needs an ideology. Nonetheless, their mooted ideology of "modern Africanism" is no more than a mere rehash of the Rostowian science of development, meant to bamboozle the unwary.

Today, the country is declared bankrupt or on the brink of bankruptcy, depending on the political stance of the declarant. Yet, in truth, it is the bankruptcy of the system that stands exposed.

The general direction of Nigerian politics has been the welfare

state. This has been seen as the political framework for attaining "the revolution of rising expectations." Almost everything has been promised the people, free of charge. These grandiose promises have been made unmindful of resource availability. Nigeria has found it convenient to copy the politics of the Western World. But it has failed to transplant, indeed it is unable to transplant, the imperial economy, serviced by sophisticated industrialism and captive markets that lie behind and sustain the Welfare State of Western Europe and North America. The oil boom of the mid-70s helped to sustain the illusion. The Nigerian economy became pivoted on imports, with nearly 90% of the needed foreign exchange coming from a single commodity, crude oil. All other sectors of the economy ground to a halt, or were merely idling, as importation and service industries related thereto reigned supreme.

The oil burst of the early '80s shrivelled Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings from US \$90m. to US \$40m. per day. This draconian drop in foreign exchange earnings coupled with insufficient prudence in the management of the economy meant, in effect, the virtual collapse of economic activity. The country turned to foreign loans in a frantic bid to keep the economy afloat. It came to discover that foreign lenders concern themselves with pushing their interests, and care little for welfare schemes that yield no profits and less for national aspirations that challenge their economic hegemony. The loan approach is doomed to failure. It will either not yield the needed quantum of US dollars; or will yield this on terms that make the Nigerian economy more dependent and more vulnerable. Slowly, but painfully, the Nigerian people are coming to the realisation that the solution to their economic distress lies in increased domestic production outside the crude oil sector. Accordingly, the welfare state has been proved to be premature in historical sequence. The build-up of an independent and sophisticated economy has been demonstrated to be the condition precedent for the welfare state. A further realisation is dawning on Nigerians. The build-up of a sophisticated and independent economy is not achievable without the assertion of national independence in the fields of politics, technology and culture. Economic build-up implies titanic struggles against existing economic structures and financial empires. We are face to face with the problem of nation-building.

The above contention drives home an important conclusion. Nation-building is prior in historical time to welfarism, the Nigerian nomenclature for the welfare state. Therefore the shunting of Nigerian

politics on to the path of welfarism is a major failing on the part of most of those leaders who have wielded political power since independence in 1960. There has to be a national consensus on the need to return to nation-building as the prime historical task. Perhaps this will be the most important legacy left by Nigeria's oil saga.

All along, Nigerian politics has been modelled on western democracy. The first experiment (1960 – 1966) was with the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy. This failed, because Nigeria is not a nation-state. It had to be replaced. By 1979, the British tradition was replaced with the United States presidential system. There was concentration of power without the political culture which provided the built-in restraints on the exercise of this power. The essential cultural homogeneity of the U.S.A. was lacking. So was the settled role of the military. The multi-party system was deified; but the demography and ground rules that made it work elsewhere were either totally ignored or perfunctorily applied. Above all, the political superstructure of economically advanced, culturally homogeneous, imperial nations of the West has proved wholly inadequate to the circumstances of a newly emerged, economically dependent and culturally mosaic multi-ethnic community like Nigeria. Accordingly, new modalities for Nigerian politics are not only needed; they have become imperative.

Perhaps the area of the greatest concern in Nigerian politics is its structure. Either overtly or obliquely, Nigerian politics, soon after independence, reflected a tussle between three giants – the Hausa/Fulani, the Yorubas and the Igbos. Gradually and through the demand for the creation of more states, the other ethnic groups, usually referred to as the ethnic minorities, asserted themselves. This self-assertion became self-realisation when Nigeria changed from a four-state to a nineteen-state federation. The ethnic minorities have become an estate of the realm, stating its demands side by side with the three ethnic giants. What is more, the claims of the ethnic minorities have been asserted through the military regimes. The altering federal structure has exercised great influence in the politics of the country. Indeed, the perfection of this federal structure has become a condition for Nigeria's political stability.

A major lapse in the political structure of Nigeria has been the practice hitherto of ignoring the military. The Armed Forces have been assigned the role of protectors of Nigeria's territorial integrity. If historical events and empirical evidence are allowed to be our guide, the Nigerian military is not satisfied with its assigned role.

Section 197 of the 1979 Constitution reads:

197. — (1) The Federation shall, subject to any Act of the National Assembly made in that behalf, establish, equip and maintain an Army, a Navy, an Air Force and such other branches of the armed forces of the Federation as may be considered adequate and effective for the purpose of —
- (a) defending Nigeria from external aggression;
 - (b) maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea or air;
 - (c) suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President, but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly; and
 - (d) performing such other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.
- (2) The composition of the officer corps and other ranks of the armed forces of the Federation shall reflect the federal character of Nigeria.

It now sees itself as part of Nigeria's political process. Whether this is right or wrong is a matter for political semantics. The reality is that the Nigerian military has become an estate of the Nigerian realm. The situation admits of no quibbles. The Nigerian military exists. Its liquidation is impracticable. It cannot be wished away. Its persistence in political roles is undeniable. Therefore, Nigerian politics must of necessity provide an agreed role for the Nigerian military. To ignore this demand, or to implement it inadequately and wrongly, will provide a permanent source of perennial instability for Nigerian politics.



CHAPTER 4

THE OPTIONS

The first quarter of a century of Nigeria's existence as a Sovereign State has been spent in political prodigality. The Marketing Boards reserves accumulated in pre-independence days were run down on projects which, far from increasing the earnings of the nation, demanded ever-increasing outlays from the national treasury. Just as we were scraping the bottom of marketing board reserves, the oil boom arrived. Again, we embarked on gigantic projects which took large capital outlays and, in addition, constituted a big and expanding element in recurrent expenditure. The country lost two glorious opportunities to plough its wealth into the creation of more wealth. We gave priority to consumption and ignored production. Today our resource base is wholly inadequate to support our acquired level of consumption. The country has to retrace its steps.

Our standpoint is that the fourth *coup d'etat* constitutes a historic turning point in Nigeria's political evolution. All subsequent coups, if at all, will merely confirm and energise this conclusion. There is little likelihood of a return to the era when the conduct of our national affairs was the exclusive concern of a civil political class, with a supercilious military at the ready to defend our territorial integrity. Such a return to the *modus operandi ante* will be neither feasible in a permanent sense nor in the national interest.

This conclusion is based on two hard facts. The first fact is that the officers corps of the Nigerian armed forces is deeply politicised. The misfortune, in this regard, is that such politicisation points in different directions and to conflicting ideologies. In its practical manifestations, the existing politicisation of the Nigerian military is centrifugal rather than centripetal. From the first military coup in January 1966 it became clear, to those concerned to see, that the Nigerian armed forces are riddled with political motivations. Major Nzeogwu pleaded the breakdown of civilian rule. He complained of inefficiency, corruption, tribalism and nepotism. Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi, inheriting this analysis, set sail for what was termed Nigerianism, but practised ethnic hegemony. The Gowon coup

claimed there was no basis for Nigerian unity. But it fought a civil war in defence of Nigerian unity. And it sought to end Nigeria's political crises through the political hegemony of the ethnic minorities. In the meantime, the Nigerian army has metamorphosed from a glorified constabulary into a large modern force. It had grown from a mere 10,000 men in 1966 to some quarter of a million men by the end of the civil war. Since that time, it has been pruned down somewhat to an order of some 150,000 men. Even more significant, the officers who led the combat formations in the civil war became heavily indoctrinated politically through exposures to the undercurrents of Nigeria's domestic politics. Today, this crop of officers is the top brass of the Nigerian military. The Murtala/Obasanjo regime also made political assessments of Gowon from whom they took over in 1976. They cited corruption and nepotism. In addition there was a more significant charge, for our purpose, that under Gowon there was "national drift."

Although civilians took part in fashioning out the Constitution of the Second Republic, the decisive decisions were those of the Supreme Military Council of that regime. Seventeen important amendments were made by the military to the Constitution approved by the Constituent Assembly. The creation of 19 states (an additional 7 on Gowon's 12) was done entirely by the military. So was the electoral decree by which the 1979 elections were conducted. Other far-reaching political decisions were taken by the military at that time, the iron and steel complexes at Ajaokuta and Aladja, the Kaduna Oil refinery, the new capital of Abuja. In twenty-four years of political independence, the Nigerian military has ruled the country for 15 years, with the civilians governing for barely 9 years. The Nigerian military has not only demonstrated political motivation and inclination, but also has shown a relish for political administration.

It is important to point out that the notion of an apolitical military was handed to us by colonialism. The colonial army, the Royal West African Frontier Force, was a back-up force for the Nigeria Police in the subjugation of rebellious tribesmen, the pacification of turbulent kingdoms and principalities, and the general enforcement of Pax Britanica. That army was largely recruited in the colony, but officered by whites drafted from the metropolis. Such an arrangement kept down costs. But the problem of loyalty remained. To solve this problem, colonialism applied two strategems. First, locally-recruited soldiers were of very low social standing, preferably illiterate. Second, the locally-recruited soldier, particularly the non-

commissioned officers, were indoctrinated on having absolutely nothing to do with politics, in terms of association both with political ideas and political operatives. Only such a politically naive and deluded force could be effectively used in sacking towns, in destroying dynasties, and in enforcing highly political decisions against a people from among whom the soldiers were recruited in the first place. This colonial concept and structure has lingered on decades after independence, with the Nigerian officer corps and Nigerian political class inheriting the myth of departed colonialism. This concept now stands exposed as a concoction that never applied to the imperial country. It is increasingly seen as wholly inapplicable to the circumstances of newly emergent States.

This issue could be looked at from another angle. The armed forces of Western Europe, North America and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and China fully endorse the Clausewitz doctrine that war is politics in another form. Therefore, in order to be mentally and psychologically battle ready, the armed forces of these countries are systematically and thoroughly groomed in the political interests of their respective States. In addition, these armed forces are carefully inoculated against political doctrines emanating from other States considered their strategic enemies. Thus, even if we confine ourselves to the narrow view that the armed forces exist solely for the purpose of protecting their State's territorial integrity and safety from external aggression, the involvement of the military in political considerations and calculations remains a necessity. The military is of necessity immersed in politics. One is tempted to assert that in politics the military lives, moves and has its being. And one would not be too far wrong. Hence the view that the military is apolitical is a myth deliberately fostered by discernible interest groups. We have seen that it originated with colonialism. We understand the rationale behind this. In the context of national independence, the myth is fostered by a political class, and an officers corps sharing similar class interests, in order to keep their field of specialisation inviolate. But this stance is ambivalent and, as events have shown, self-defeating. These politicians deploy the armed forces to enforce their rule and defend their regimes. The outcry against the military erupts when the armed forces pursue a political goal that hurts or undermines these civilian regimes. In addition, it seems the officers corps within the military have a vested interest in cultivating this myth. It permits them to pursue basically political goals without being overtly identified as a political group. It also helps

these officers to secure the blind obedience of their troops, who might be differently motivated politically, in a situation where missions of a political nature are shrouded in altruistic, national overtones.

The second hard fact on which our conclusion rests is the blunt truth that the Nigerian military is the only institution with the capacity to enforce Nigerian unity. At this point in our political history, its break-up or its political quarantine could bring in its wake the disintegration of Nigeria. It is not being urged that the Nigerian military is the only institution or organised influence working for the oneness of Nigeria. There are others – the judiciary, the police, truly nationwide political parties, a growing band of men and women of all walks of life and in all parts of the country who have acquired, and are determined to sustain, a Nigerian horizon in their conduct of both private and public affairs. But, after stating this, it is only realistic to add that, at this point in time, these other institutions and influences play a secondary, even a tertiary role in holding Nigeria together. The military play the primary role, because of their capacity to enforce Nigerian unity. The other institutions and influences merely sustain and nurture Nigerian unity while the military imposes and guarantees Nigerian unity. For this reason alone, it is quite unrealistic to think of Nigerian politics without the Nigerian military.

Against the background of the Nigerian military being in Nigerian politics for good, what are the options open to the country?

We may start with the non-options. In the first place, there is the view that all the present situation requires is a brief spell of military rule to be followed by a return to civil rule, based on an amended version of the 1979 Constitution. During its brief spell in office, the military will concentrate on the eradication of corruption, the recovery of ill-gotten wealth, the revamping of the economy, and the conduct of free and fair elections to choose new civilian rulers. The central weakness of this view is that it is based on the assumption that the failings of the Second Republic were due primarily to personality traits. It also assumes, wrongly as events have since shown, that the pseudo paragons of civilian politics were above the odium attaching to that era. As we come to the realisation that institutional factors played very important roles in the politics of the Second Republic, and that corruption is a trans-party, trans-profession, trans-attire, trans-tribe phenomenon, the idea of a little corrective action here and there doing the trick will be consigned to

oblivion. For to continue with such a notion will be tantamount to self-deceit.

The David Ejoor option is a blind alley. *The Guardian* of Monday, 19th March 1984 carried the following story on its front page:

Former Army Chief of Staff (retired Major-General) David Ejoor suggested a gradual hand-over of power to civilians, beginning from 1987. He said at the weekend that the military should relinquish power at the local and state government levels after conducting elections but remain at the centre. He reasoned that a federal government run by the military with civilian state governments should last for another four years during which the army would not allow civilians to go to excesses.

Mr. Ejoor does not envisage a situation where the army should remain completely out of the scene. He suggested that a Supreme Military Council should exist side by side with an elected civilian federal government.

The role of the Supreme Military Council will be;

- a) conduct elections
- b) take charge of security
- c) assure accountability of public officers

The first snag with this approach, which was first mooted by General Ayub Khan of Pakistan just before he was swept out of office, is the political authority of the Supreme Military Council. Will it be above the National Assembly? Or will it have veto powers over certain laws passed by the National Assembly? In either case, the Nigerian people have ceased to be sovereign. The military would have set itself up above the Nigerian people. Where the Supreme Military Council disagrees with the elected federal government, whose view is upheld? And why? The central weakness in the Ejoor approach is the tacit assumption that the military are the apogee of moral rectitude and forensic excellence. If the soldiers are humans, then they too must be accountable. To what body are they accountable? The Ejoor formula is silent on this. As such, what the retired army boss recommends will breed friction between the Supreme Military Council on the one hand and the elected federal government and elected National Assembly on the other hand. The people will be pitched against the military. This is a recipe for political instability.

The third non-option is the Umaru Dikko call for a jihad, which supposedly will restore the ousted civilian administration. In the

first place, Nigeria is a multi-religious community in which muslims are approximately a third of the population. How are non-muslims expected to react in the face of an Islamic injunction? Again, the military junta to be evicted by a jihad is led by muslims. And it is common knowledge that Islam contains several sects, some fanatically sectarian. It is not beyond the realm of probability that a call to jihad could kindle a prairie fire of sectarian conflict with resultant destruction of lives and property of muslims and non-muslims alike.

The author's understanding of jihad, not being a muslim himself is the injunction that devout muslims have a duty to struggle against what Islam considers irreligious. The Buhari administration is not a religious phenomenon. When, and by what Islamic authority, was it pronounced irrelegious in general and anti-Islam in particular? The advocates of a jihad may be attracted by the historic success of Islam in the northern parts of the country in the 19th century, guided by the genius of Othman Dan Fodio. That historic sweep, which compares more readily with the Enlightenment or Renaissance in European history, had nothing to do with restoring to the throne an ousted emir. It concerned itself with establishing the sway of islam, and triggered off a big leap in learning, in jurisprudence and in public administration.

Another spurious option that has been canvassed is the intervention of foreign mercenaries, with the sole aim of restoring the ousted civilian administration. It is argued that a lightning strike by a force of mercenaries would dislocate or paralyse the country's transport and power systems, decimate if not eliminate the ruling junta, and set in motion a chain reaction within the armed forces that will restore ex-President Shagari to power. This is wishful thinking. Mercenaries never plan for pitched battles or for a protracted operations. Although the mercenaries are the prime element in this calculus of violence and disruption, the success of the exercise depends on the operatives inside Nigeria. There is little evidence of such groups of operatives, their battle capability, their effective deployment in the country, and the level of coordination between these groups. Moreover, the disjointed nature of the NPN machinery, the pervading money motif among political operatives of the Second Republic, and the deep schisms within the NPN leadership at both federal and state levels, provide for us *prima facie* evidence that the contemplated action is unlikely to succeed. In any case, a return to the status quo ante 31st December 1983 is not desirable, except there is cast iron assurance that needed reforms will be effected.

Many well-meaning Nigerians rallied to the cause of the second Republic only because they saw that political arrangement as a firm enough jumping off position for far-reaching modifications to Nigeria's political edifice.

The author believes that the emigre politicians associated with the mercenaries venture are fully aware of the unpatriotic and treasonable nature of such action. Even if the venture succeeded, it will be difficult for these politicians to live down the political opprobrium of being installed in power by foreign soldiers of fortune. The scheme looks absurd for a bunch of politicians who profess democracy and patriotism. There could well be another side to the episode. The news of the possible invasion of the country by mercenaries was released from the Nigerian end and accompanied with an orchestrated publicity blitz. In such circumstances it is not unlikely that the story is a hoax planted by the military regime as part of its campaign for the extradition of the emigre politicians.

We may now turn to a consideration of the real options open to the country, on the assumption that the military are in Nigerian politics for good. There are just three meaningful options as follows:

1. junta politics
2. guerrilla politics
3. politics of independent development

These options will be considered seriatim.

Junta Politics

The home of classical junta politics is Latin America. It is the modality through which U.S. finance capital establishes and secures its hegemony over the greater part of the Western Hemisphere. It is a game reserved strictly for the top military brass. Where they wade into the game, the middle and junior officers must be in a position to eliminate all ranks above them. This is the pre-requisite for establishing firm control over the armed forces. But this very act could lead to the disintegration of the military.

The canons of junta politics are few and straightforward. The junta itself must have command over the entire armed forces or over those formations critical to its operational control. The junta must give a free hand to giant U.S. monopolies operating in the country. The junta should be underwritten by the government of the U.S.A. Usually this comes by way of pressures exerted by the giant U.S. combines operating in the country in question. In the same way,

the New York money and capital markets will certify the country ideal or safe for foreign investors. Underwriting by the U.S. government could take several forms. Some are guarantees of loans and credits raised on the New York capital and money markets; support for specific projects sponsored by U.S. monopolies or considered necessary for the survival of the junta; military training schemes, supply of military hardware and military advisers. The entire artifice is monitored and policed by U.S. diplomacy checked out by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), by U.S. experts and technicians engaged on one or other of the numerous development projects, by the ground rules of the Organisation of American States (OAS), and, in the last resort, by gunboat diplomacy in which U.S. marines play the leading roles.

The multi-national corporations are already operating in Nigeria, especially in crude oil exploration and extraction. These may soon infest the on-coming petrochemical and liquified natural gas industries. The Buhari junta is the very pinnacle of authority in the armed forces. The Nigerian armed forces are large enough to maintain the minimal law and order required for the operation of the multi-national corporations. All that is needed for the Latin American political model to become operational here is the pursuit of mindless epicureanism by Nigeria's top military brass. The apparent commitment of the top-ranking officers to accountability, war against public corruption and to "Nigerianism" is all that separates us from the classical junta of Latin America. The other problem, namely the invasion by U.S. capital of what is regarded as the traditional sphere of Anglo-Saxon capital, will not prove too difficult to resolve. Britain will need U.S. understanding and accommodation to hold down Nigeria. British and U.S. global defence strategies have reached an advanced stage of integration. The pay off is a free hand for U.S. business interests. In the end, the law of capitalist development will take its course. The stronger will absorb the weaker through company take-overs, mergers, and deals in equity holdings.

When this arrangement is well set, manipulations by the multi-national corporations operating here, considerations of Anglo-U.S. global interests, the use of military strongmen as disposable materials, the intrigues of the secret services of Britain and the U.S., and rivalry between Westminster and Capitol Hill could lead to changes in the composition of the ruling military junta. As the heads roll, so one junta yields place to another. Junta politics is firmly established.

However, the stimuli for change-over from one junta to the other

will not be supplied exclusively from abroad. Internal developments here in Nigeria could and will lead to the handing over of the baton. An empirical study suggests several seams along which a junta may crack up and yield place to another. The armed forces could challenge the validity of the claims by any junta to be speaking for the entire military. There may be personality clashes. Other officers also in the top echelon of the military, but not among the ruling junta, may wish to reach the pinnacle of their services before retirement. There could be ethnic motivation. There could be differences over programme, on the implementation of agreed programmes, on ideological matters. There could be intrigues with multi-national corporations that wish to improve their position in the country's economy. Military putsch could be triggered off by officers lower in rank than the generals that compose the junta, for several reasons. There may be frustration over promotions, and on policy and ideological directions. There may be promptings from civilian political groups.

The mere enumeration of the possible causes of disagreement and disenchantment within the military at once highlights the truth that junta rule is inherently unstable. But, it should be noted, junta politics as a species can last for a long time, even where each succeeding junta has but a brief spell in office. The over-riding desideratum is that the character of the State remains unaltered.

Part of the survival tactics of junta politics is to change the performing cast without changing the play. The changing acts, calculated to mesmerise the untutored populace, are not confined to musical chairs among the top military brass. It could involve civilians, both experts and politicians. It is however important to draw attention to the various types of junta rule possible. These are all-military administration (in some extreme cases, with military men serving as permanent and principal secretaries); a civilian-assisted military government; a junta-picked and backed civilian administration.

If the Buhari Administration opts for it, junta politics will be reasonably operative in Nigeria on one condition: that effective military command is firmly wedded to the concept of a united and indivisible Nigeria. The cosmetic use of the slogan One Nigeria will not solve the problem. For this will be exposed with time. Nor is it enough for the military leaders to be committed to, but lack the will to practicalise One Nigeria. The officers corps of the armed forces, especially the top brass, must not only be committed to a united and indissoluble Nigeria, but be seen, by the generality of

Nigerians, to be so committed. The touchstone here will be the direction and implementation style of government policies.

The greatest solvent of junta politics is human frailty. The generals, admirals and air marshalls soon lose their national vision and ennobling inspiration. They begin to seek wealth, personal power. They grow mindless of public opinion. As their goal, they begin to see naked military power, no longer the nation-building and general happiness to which military power should be geared. The complementing movement away from the common good is increased fascist tendencies. The military glorify in their apparent monopoly of violence. Authoritarianism becomes unconscionable. The degeneracy is complete. It is at this stage (or even before) that disagreement among the ruling junta could lead to warlordism. In a country like Nigeria with ethnic, religious and cultural plurality, each war lord retires to his part of the country to set up his military administration in opposition to the central authority. The geographical setting of Nigeria, and the geo-political considerations of neighbouring neo-colonialisms make warlordism a distinct possibility in Nigeria. Nigeria would be precisely where China was in the early decades of this century.

Guerrilla Politics

Both warlordism and guerrilla politics are reactions to junta politics. The former takes place where junta politics has lost its unifying elan and the military breaks up into warring factions, each with its territorial base. The latter is a populist reaction to junta politics, even though it could supervene where political authoritarianism has not taken the form of junta rule. Both are stages on the road to peoples power.

In modern times, guerrilla politics was invented in China in the 1930s by Mao Tse Tung, the legendary leader of the Chinese communists. Ho Chi Minh employed it against the French in Indo-China after World War II. Che Guevara became its foremost exponent in the political terrain of Latin America where, in a historic team-up with Fidel Castro, a resounding victory was scored in Cuba against the U.S.-backed Batista junta. Amilcar Cabral in Guinea-Bissau, Augustinho Neto in Angola and Modlane (later Samora Machel) in Mozambique proved the efficacy of guerrilla politics in a context of militarised colonialism. Recently, urban guerrilla action has developed in Western Europe.

Historically, guerrilla politics rose as a populist reaction to political privilege buttressed by armed might. Indeed it cannot exist for any considerable length of time, let alone triumph, if it is not firmly anchored on the masses. In the words of Che Guevara the guerrilla band is the fish and the water is the people. Mao Tse Tung asserts that the people are the medium in which guerrilla politics lives, moves and has its being. But the people have to be motivated, oriented and mobilised. This gives the second condition of successful guerrilla politics as a people-oriented revolutionary ideology. The third condition for success is secure logistics. The movement has to enjoy an external staging base, well beyond the reach of the authority against which the guerrilla movement is directed, where supplies (and training at the initial stages) could be procured in safety.

A major aim of guerrilla politics is to set up a rival administration to the central authority. Soon, by military attrition, a guerrilla government is created complete with its territory, public service, propaganda paraphernalia and diplomacy. Eventually a final trial of strength with the military forces of the central authority takes place. If successful in this series of encounters, the guerrilla movement becomes the effective political power over the entire country. A new State with its distinctive political system comes into existence.

A guerrilla movement may take a decade or more to triumph. It could score full success in a few years. The decisive factors are its strength at home and the international situation. The increased resort to guerrilla warfare in different parts of the world has compelled many countries, especially the super powers, to spend considerable time and massive resources in the study and organisation of counter-insurgency warfare. The U.S. applies this in Latin American countries. The U.S.S.R. is currently waging counter-insurgency warfare in Afghanistan. Apartheid South Africa applies this in its fight against the liberation movements of Southern Africa. In such situations, guerrilla movements could be stymied, and for a long time settle down as the unconstitutional and officially unrecognised opposition to discredited authoritarian or military rule. Then, both the central authority and the guerrilla movement become pawns on the chessboard of international diplomacy. Important features of stalemated guerrilla politics are a permanently depressed state of the economy, general insecurity, and far-reaching erosion of basic freedoms. It induces increased foreign interference in the affairs of

the country, and consequently carries the retardation of nation-building in its wake.

It serves no useful purpose to argue that the conditions for a vigorous guerrilla movement in Nigeria do not exist. Only simpletons would think this way. The important thing is to circumnavigate the shoals of unconscionable conduct of public affairs. To this end, the powers-that-be, in steering the ship of state, have to manifest deep insight and sound judgment, backed by timely and adroit actions. The blind parade of naked power, the persistent disregard for the peoples' will, and harsh measures backed by brute force are sure invitations to guerrilla politics.

With the circumstances of Nigeria in mind, we have all along characterised junta politics as a right-wing political phenomenon serving the interests of imperialism. We have seen it as an element in the nexus of neo-colonialism. However, it ought to be stated that there is a distinct probability of junta politics giving rise to military rule with a left-wing anti-imperialist stance. In the game of musical chairs, known as junta politics, a radical-minded military junta could come to power. On the other hand, a moderately nationalistic, but deeply patriotic, junta could be pushed in the direction of left-wing radicalism by developments either on the international scene or within the officers corps of the armed forces. In such an eventuality, neo-colonialist junta politics could yield place to socialist junta politics.

The point that must be emphasised here is that both pro-imperialist and pro-socialist junta politics have a common denominator. Both depend heavily on external financial interests and on the military backing of the super powers. As a result, both types of junta politics turn the country into an economic sphere and/or a military base either of the East or of the West. As such, both are manifestations of the politics of dependent development, that is development that owes both its vision and its driving force to external influences and stimuli. On this showing, junta politics provides the theatre for the play of super power rivalries and intrigues. In pursuit of its goal of world domination, the West will strive to destroy any State that is tied to the East economically or militarily. Similarly, in its drive to defeat western imperialism, the East will endeavour to de-stabilise any State that serves as a sphere of influence of the West. Inevitably, junta politics gets sucked into the vortex of super power diplomacy. The result is the absence of national identity, and increased dependence accompanied by stunted development. Under neo-colonialist junta politics, a small privileged class revels in ill-gotten opulence

with the masses wallowing in ignorance, squalor and disease. Under socialistic junta politics, the masses experience an improvement in their living compared with what it used to be, while the privileged class of yester-years is subjected to harsh suppression. In both situations, governments function as surrogates of the super-powers. Political instability is endermic, development is minimal, national independence is eroded, freedom is absent.

In due course, neo-colonialist junta rule provokes left-wing guerrilla movements; while socialistic junta rule induces right-wing guerrilla movements. These guerrilla movements find favourable conditions for their existence and operation in ethnic, religious, racial and cultural plurality, as well as in the dictatorial rule of a mindless privileged class, long-standing social antagonisms and deepening economic crises. The only effective solution to both developments is a change-over to the politics of independent development, an arrangement under which national evolution is determined by the national interest, and the motive force of national development is the common people.

Politics of Peoples Nationalism

The weaknesses of, and the cure for both junta and guerrilla politics point to the urgent need for dynamic nation-building. But nation-building is in need of a politics appropriate to it. Indeed both junta and guerrilla politics often allude to nation-building. Experience has shown this to be more propaganda than commitment to far-reaching social engineering. The politics of independent development, like junta and guerrilla politics, is a category in the politics of developing countries. It will therefore be unscientific to christen it the politics of development. Furthermore, the politics of independent development will remain relevant after the practising country has emerged from the position of a client or neo-colonialist state. It is a political arrangement that seeks both development, in the economic and social senses, and a truly independent and meaningful statehood within the international community. Again, independent development ought to be differentiated from the nationalism of the "new rich." It depends on the power of the masses as its main driving force. Seen in this light, the politics of independent development provides the scaffolding for erecting a modern state, given the circumstances of the contemporary world. It seeks to terminate oblique dependence and under-development, to stimulate national independence founded upon national cohesion and self-

reliance; to point the way to an advanced modern state. Accordingly it is a political type that will span twenty to fifty years in the life of a developing country. This type of politics needs the power of self-regeneration; and its efficacy becomes apparent only if given time to evolve.

The politics of independent development seeks to substitute a rational arrangement, informed by the common good and propelled by the popular will, for the monopoly of violence serving individual or group interests as the central axis around which our political life is made to revolve. Central to it is the firm belief that consensus via dialogue among a free people produces lasting and more satisfying solutions in the ordering of public life than the blind welter of conflicting forces seeking supremacy through the force of arms. This does not mean that arms are an unmitigated evil in politics. What it does mean is that ideals that uplift a nation and serve humanity, not the control of arms, is the supreme objective; even though it might become necessary to sustain noble ideals with the force of arms.

The politics of independent development rests on two pillars – radical, multi-faceted national independence, and democracy conceived as the power of the people. True, Nigeria has had nationalism in the past. But there is need for a new nationalism. We have had experience of the negotiated demise of colonialism; but neo-colonialism has risen in its place. We have fought a civil war to hold our territory inviolate and indissoluble. In the process, the military dimension was added to Nigerian politics. The new nationalism welcomes both experience; but it seeks new frontiers. It seeks the radicalisation of national independence by complementing State sovereignty with a distinct political system rooted in our historical experience and nourished by our evolving national culture; a self-activating, diversified and expanding national economy; an integrative national culture that will forge one people out of our many tribes and tongues. The nationalism of yester-years was conceived and directed by the privileged in the society. Its efficacy was undermined as soon as the class of privilege connived at, and in some cases applauded, the destruction of dynamic youth movements and radical trade unionism by the imperial master. Once the leaders of the nationalism of yester-years were shunted on to the path of collaboration with the imperial power, it was quite logical for neo-colonialism to supplant colonialism. In politics, the partnership of unequals reduces to the hegemony of the stronger. Negotiated

independence brought in its wake a business class yoked to foreign interests, and the oil boom produced the "new rich" that acquired wealth through their links with the state apparatus. The nationalism of these social strata has run out of steam, because the motivation now is the protection of the system that has been handsomely rewarding. The new nationalism can no longer count on these social strata. Its motive force has to be provided by the people. And the people must be protected from the seductive power of the bureaucracy — business complex and the subversion potential of "the free flow of information."

At this juncture, it might be appropriate to seek an answer to an important question. What is nationalism? Such an inquiry is useful because the notion has been variously misconstrued by Nigerians in all walks of life. Some Nigerians equate nationalism to the struggle for the termination of white colonial rule. By this view, nationalism had served its purpose by 1960, and is no longer relevant to Nigerian life. Some others think it is the fight to keep Nigeria a single indivisible entity territorially. The outcome of the civil war had settled this permanently and positively. These views are merely angles to the matter at issue. Nigerian nationalism contains both notions, but it is something considerably deeper and richer than either. A consideration of patriotism and nationalism may lead us to the fullest possible understanding of nationalism in the Nigerian context.

Patriotism relates to the actions of the individual, assessed in terms of the national interest. It is self-direction that protects and promotes the interests of the nation. Patriotism approximates but is not exactly loyalty to the state. For patriotism could compel disobedience of, or even opposition to, the state. The apparent mystification disappears once it is realised that the nation and the state are two quite different things. There can be a Nation without the State, though the converse is hardly possible. Zionism has provided evidence that a nation (the Jews) can exist without a State. But the same Zionism, as manifested by the State of Israel, has demonstrated that, in the long run, a nation requires both the state and a definable territory for its survival. Now, if the dictates of the state run counter to the best interests of the nation, a citizen, in his overt actions, could be patriotic to his nation but disobedient to the state. The converse is also possible. In extreme cases, the citizen could lose his life because he is disloyal to his state, even though his stand could be in the best interests of his nation. Such situations in history have produced martyrs who become canonised as patriots

and national heroes posthumously.

On the other hand, nationalism relates to a group position. It is the self-consciousness and self-assertiveness of a nation, that is, people with a distinctive culture and language. The nation is the same thing as a nationality, often referred to, in the Nigerian context, as an ethnic group. Nationalism usually asserts itself through the State though the State could fall foul of the dictates of nationalism. However, nationalism is often gauged by the actions, thinking and behaviour of the generality of citizens in support of State action in furtherance of the national interest.

In some cases, and Nigeria is one such case, the State is not made up of a single nation. Instead it groups together several nations or nationalities. Under such a situation, nationalism can no longer be the self-consciousness and the self-assertiveness of a nationality. It becomes the consciousness and assertiveness of something higher than each of the component nations and to which all the nationalities within the political community relate harmoniously and realise themselves. For the purpose of defining nationalism in such a context, the 'nation' becomes an organic body politic that spans but includes the nationalities and which is founded upon a lingua franca, a common political culture and an integrated economy. Of necessity such a body politic is held in position by a State that possesses both the appropriate perspective and the requisite capability. Accordingly in a multi-nation state, nationalism has two complementary aspects. One aspect is integrative and solidarist. This seeks to create one people out of the various nationalities grouped within the political community. Its tools are a lingua franca, a common culture into which the cultures of the various nationalities are synthesized, and an integrated economy. The other aspect is assertive. It insists on political, economic and military independence and self-direction of the multi-nation state in its relations with other states and political entities. It seeks to create conditions at home and abroad that guarantee the security of the multi-nation state. And it demands international recognition of these conditions. The two aspects of nationalism, the solidarist and the assertive, are dovetailed, programmed and promoted by the over-arching multi-nation State.

Thus, in the multi-nation State, there are three levels of nationalism or patriotism or loyalty. There is the nationalism of each of the nations or nationalities that make up the political community. Secondly, there is the nationalism that holds the various nationalities together in a sort of supra-nation State. Then there is thirdly

the loyalty to the multi-nation state. Political success lies in a statecraft that gets the three levels of loyalty to pull in the same general direction. When this is unattainable, political disintegration is inevitable. Such a statecraft involves a conscious and determined movement away from both refractory eccentricity and obscurantism on the part of the amalgamating nationalities and from mindless regimentation and nepotism on the part of the multi-nation State. This middle ground is a strong, humane and egalitarian multi-nation State that operates through a new and higher nationalism that elicits the conscious support of all the amalgamating nationalities, because each of these nationalities enjoys a good measure of self-realisation arising from uninhibited participation in the public life of the multi-nation State.

This new and higher nationalism is peoples nationalism. It builds on the twin foundations of terminated colonial rule and secured territorial integrity. It strives after all-round and rapid national development, whose driving force is the will and sacrifice of the common man, and whose goal is the greatest good of the ordinary people.

The democracy pillar of the politics of independent development has little to do with the political systems of the Western world. We often copy such political prescriptions. But invariably we fail. Our failure has been due to our inability to copy either the political culture that sustains those systems or the economic substructure on which those systems rest. In our case, democracy means simply representative government, in the context of basic freedoms, that harnesses the power of the people to the promotion of national cohesion and national development. The basic freedoms for us are the freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom of association, freedom of religious belief, the rule of law, and the right to a minimum standard of living. Our democracy sees the military no longer as the watchdog over our territorial integrity, but additionally as an integral part of the political process. It postulates an overarching national ideology that informs the military, the press, jurisprudence, education, social and economic life, and the conduct of public affairs. In designing the institutions through which the politics of independent development operates, we shall be guided by tested concepts and by our political experience. We shall pay heed to a self-directing judiciary; free but responsible press; the importance of not concentrating all political power in one hand; free adult suffrage; the publicly-supervised organisation, stimulation and regulation of

production.

The politics of independent development demands a new conception of the armed forces and their role in society.

The seven canons of the politics of independent development can be set down in skeletal form as follows:

1. National Independence.

a) A political system that has its roots in indigenous African life, and in our colonial and post-colonial experience.

b) An independent, self-activating, balanced and expanding national economy, which is people-oriented and in which indigenous economic organisms play the leading roles under effective state support and direction.

c) A national culture that unifies an ethnically plural and culturally mosaic community, whose ethos are national pride, national cohesion, self-reliance and a scientific attitude.

d) A national ideology of peoples nationalism.

2. Representative government, elected by adult suffrage, and based on a people-dominated two-party system insulated from the cash power of the business community.

3. A thoroughly politicised citizen Armed Forces, ideologically monolithic, and fully integrated into the political system.

4. A Moral Code upheld by the Constitution. A code of morals distilled from traditional African mores, Canon laws and Sharia laws. This moral code serves as the reference point for individual and family conduct, for the actions of government ministers and civil service officials, and for legislation.

5. Respect for the dignity of man. The guarantee of basic freedoms — speech, association, movement, religious belief, right to a minimum standard of life — within the limits set by the national ideology. Free and responsible press.

Free and compulsory basic education related to the national need.

Free and comprehensive preventive health care.

Equality of citizens as regards rights and duties, irrespective of tribe, religion, sex and social status.

6. Rule of Law

Reliance on the due processes of the Law Legislation, governmental and civil service actions to be continually monitored with reference to the Moral Code entrenched in the Constitution. A judiciary informed by the problems and parameters of

national life. Jurisprudence imbued with the national ideology of peoples nationalism.

7. Guided mixed economy.

State monopoly of central banking and heavy basic and engineering industries.

State control of foreign trade and wholesale domestic trade in essential commodities.

State participation in commercial/merchant banking, energy/power, communications, transport, mining, insurance.

State regulation, supervision and guidance of free enterprise, especially

- i) conditions of work, including working premises, wages, benefits
- ii) wage levels and cost of living indices
- iii) State support for Nigerian private enterprise in the areas of finance, economic intelligence, export promotion
- iv) State regulation of investment/declared profits ratio of private enterprises
- v) State surveillance and regulation of investments.

Nigeria's Second Republic was a State of nominal independence and formal democracy, operated by a business-dominated multi-party system, and upholding a mixed economy in which the State serviced private interests. Under the politics of independent development, Nigeria's Third Republic will be a State of radical, multi-faceted and real independence, operated by a people-oriented two-party system, and upholding a mixed economy in which the State withdraws from many productive sectors but at the same time increases its directional role over the entire economy.

Our view is that commencing from the fourth *coup d'etat* the Nigerian military has a permanent role in national politics. That role is to conduct itself in such a manner as to spare the nation junta politics that can induce guerrilla politics. The expertise and experience of the armed forces relate neither to the practice of politics nor to the art of political administration. Their goal should be to help design, put in place, monitor and sustain the politics of independent development. In this way, the Nigerian armed forces will play an important and permanent role in the historical process of nation-building.

Before we go on to sketch in some detail our political model it is useful to consider two related problems. The first are the desiderata of the new political system. The other is the Nigerian experience our model has, of necessity, to draw upon and accommodate.



CHAPTER 5

THE DESIDERATA

Every political system that works is a successful blend of the general with the specific, the universal with the unique. For a country like Nigeria, the political experience of developing countries and man's struggle for dignity provide the general or the universal. Nigeria's political history provides the specific or the unique. This chapter is devoted to the general or universal; while the following chapters will consider the specific or unique.

All African countries experience, adversely, the dominance of imperialism, and the retarded national development due to the persistence of the neo-colonialist nexus. These countries are bordered either by weak states that serve as launching pads for imperialist designs against them or by stronger states which have been converted into "regional powers" in the service of foreign powers. Everywhere boundaries are arbitrarily drawn and these artificial borders provide sparks for spasmodic conflagration. Internally, national independence is undermined by exogamous social sciences and national cohesion is subverted by both the importation of alien political practice and the clash of conflicting foreign ideologies. A profligate privileged class wishes to exercise political power to the detriment of the downtrodden masses. The imported political culture is askew the domestic reality.

Nigeria shares all these weaknesses. In addition, Nigeria has problems of its own, which some other developing countries experience. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, culturally mosaic community. The ethnic diversity is reinforced by long history, at times mutually antagonistic. The cultural mosaic is conflict-inducing, because there is a high religious content to each of these cultures. The religions, in turn, conflict among themselves, thanks to religious chauvinism, and within themselves, thanks to sectarian fanaticism.

With such a social milieu every body politic faces immense and perennial pressures. This explains the general concurrence that stability is the supreme attribute to be sought after by emergent States. Even developed and older states need stability. But the demand is much greater in the newer states still bogged down in

covert colonialism. One of the shortcomings of Nigerian politicians and social scientists alike is the adoption of a casual attitude to the issue of political stability. It is either ignored, or a most formalistic attitude is adopted.

The first requirement of political stability is the peaceful change-over from one administration to the next. This implies that the agreed process of change must be seen, in its practical operation, to be fair and above board. So far, Nigeria has failed to conduct elections regarded by all sides as fair. It seems the Nigerian tradition is for elections to be tagged unfair and unfree by the losers. The absurdity of it all is dramatically exposed where the same interest group brands elections free and fair where it wins but unfree and unfair where it loses. All this notwithstanding the fact that the elections are conducted by the same agency. This merely draws the line between partisan interest and objective verification in the assessment of Nigerian elections.

A second requirement of political stability is that the process of change-over from one administration to the next must be legal and constitutional. This means that elections must be conducted according to law. It further means that military coups are ruled out. But military coups are very much the reality in the politics of emergent states. The problem then, for political stability, is to search for political systems that will be immune to military coups or make them unnecessary.

The one solution that immediately comes to mind is to abolish the military. Yet this is a most simplistic contemplation. Border instability, predatory action by imperialism lurking in neighbouring states, unstable coexistence of differing ethnic groups and rival religion-based cultures make the armed forces a *sine qua non* for most emergent states, Nigeria included. The solution lies, rather, in the direction of having a military that sustains, and does not disrupt, political stability. This is unattainable where the armed forces are riddled with clandestine ideologies, political motivations and personal ambitions. Nor is it attainable where the armed forces are made up of mere job-seeking soldiers, sailors and airmen. Except in the older, advanced and stabilised States where a long-settled political culture more than counter-balances fleeting political aberrations within the military, a job-opportunity army is not far removed, in philosophy and motivation, from a band of mercenaries. Indeed, it looks much like a conglomerate of mercenary groups, ready to undertake any high revenue but low risk venture. These are soldiers

of fortune, very much in the likeness of mercenaries.

In order to create a stability-inducing military, it is necessary to have a citizen army, navy and air force that are thoroughly imbued with the political ideology on which the state is founded. The national ideology thus becomes the only political ideology allowed in the armed forces. Effective steps are taken to rear (and monitor on a continual basis) an efficient officers corps on the basis of the sole and official ideology. Under this arrangement, any aberration among a few officers will be promptly detected and swiftly muffled. Alternately, the predominance of loyalty to the official ideology will lead to the quick apprehension and elimination of the infidels. The only politically-motivated military uprising that can succeed becomes one that is demanding an acceleration of the pace in the pursuit of the goals of the national ideology. Although a change of administration could accompany such a move, technically there is no *coup d'etat*, because the nature of the state remains unaltered. Perhaps this was what President Julius Nyerere had in mind when he claimed that he could be removed from office but the Tanzanian experiment at Ujaama will continue.

Here it is important to state in precise terms what we mean by the politicisation of the military. Obviously, the aim is not, and cannot be, to turn the soldier into a politician. Politicisation of the military, in our view, is the acceptance and understanding of the national ideology by the soldier, as well as, his identification with the fundamental national objective postulated by the national ideology. Under our scheme, the soldier is not a party member. Although he is free to vote at elections for the party of his choice, the soldier is not expected to get involved in partisan politicking. If, however, our political model opts for the one-party system, there are great advantages to be gained by the soldier being a party member though not a party functionary.

A third requirement of political stability is that the Constitution of the land should be capable of absorbing necessary changes. Political changes made necessary in the light of experience will have to be accommodated constitutionally. Once such a possibility exists, it becomes unnecessary to resort to illegality or turmoil in the attempt to bring about desirable changes. The process for effecting constitutional changes must be clearly spelt out in the Constitution document, and should be attainable in the normal process of politics.

Political stability could be viewed from a different angle. The

inquirer could seek answers to three specific issues — internal resilience, resistance to externally-directed disintegration, and resistance to internal subversion. The need for internal resilience is obvious for a political arrangement oriented to nation-building and therefore liable to encounter major and frequent strains and stresses. These pressures could come in the form of a high population growth rate, from the inflow of aliens, from the excess of school output over available jobs, from the over-education of youths in terms of available jobs, from a slump on international markets, from the disequilibrium created by a sectional press that are more powerful than the forces of true nationalism, from religious chauvinism overpowering religious tolerance, from the emergence of a mindless privileged class founded on wealth, birth or power. These developments, some the result of success and others the concomitant of failure in nation-building, will produce a welter of forces pulling in different directions. In terms of national cohesion, some of these forces will be centrifugal in effect while others will be centripetal. Political stability demands that on balance the centripetal forces are more powerful (and more decisive in the long-run) than the centrifugal forces. To detect these forces as they build up, and to take effective remedial action in the interest of national cohesion are qualities of any political system that wants to be considered stable.

Externally directed disruption takes the form of propagating hostile ideas vis-a-vis the national ideology, limited military action (commando strikes and guerrilla incursions), and all-out war. The propagation of hostile ideas that subvert the political system is the most dangerous. This is often done through the media or institutions of learning. The media approach is to allow free inflow of pamphlets, magazines, etc. and to permit the existence of media houses that propagate these unwholesome concepts and notions. This is usually defended in the name of freedom of the press and freedom of conscience. We have urged elsewhere that basic freedoms are conditional on the promotion of national independence and national cohesion. This becomes most necessary in a community that lacks the innoculatory advantages of a settled political culture, a long common history of struggle, and firmly rooted media and academic traditions. Limited military action and all out war will be embarked upon in anticipation of the domino effect on the ill-at-ease ethnic groups that make up the political community. The long-term answer lies in a political practice founded upon welding our numerous

ethnic groups into a veritable Nigerian family made up of Nigerian men and women.

Internal subversion, in the context of ethnic, religious and cultural plurality, takes several forms. It could take the form of a guerrilla movement that is ethnic-based. It could travel the route of religious fanaticism. Military adventure could yet be a manifestation of this evil. The answer to these problems is not to set up an armed force that operates like a fire brigade, rushing to and fro to put out social fires. The solution lies in the political system, and in the conduct of public affairs by those in office. Ethnic-fuelled subversion is undercut by a political system that respects the principle of ethnic self-determination. A countervailing consideration in this case is the need for national cohesion and unity. Religious chauvinism is nipped in the bud by the twin action of a constitution that upholds religious tolerance and a political practice that stamps out bellicose religious sectarianism.

Whatever recipes are prepared in our effort to combat political instability, it is imperative for Nigerians to realise that a major breeding ground for political subversion is gnawing poverty and mindless ethnicity. The cure for the former is a justice-oriented management of production and distribution. It is not enough to reduce the gap between the haves and the have-nots. In addition, it is necessary to justify differences in income. The cure for political ethnicity is the creation of a truly Nigerian body politic founded upon a Nigerian national culture. Zoning, as practised in the Second Republic was, at best, a mere palliative. At worst, it fanned the embers of ethnic chauvinism practised through shifting ethnic alliances. We need a Nigerian culture arising from but over-arching our mosaic ethnic cultures. We need a Nigerian man, and not just Edos, Efiks, Fulanis, Hausas, Ibibios, Igbos, Itsekiris, Ijaws, Jukuns, Kanuris, Tivs, Yorubas, etc. To achieve this we need a lingua franca, and a basic education, informed by the national ideology and compulsory for all, designed specifically for this purpose. All this has to be held in position for twenty to thirty years, in order to permit the rearing of two or three generations of Nigerians in this way of life.

This brings us to the second desideratum for our new political system, namely continuity. A bane of the politics of emergent states is the frequent return to square one. Each time a civilian or military group takes over, the tendency is to dismantle all that went before, to stop on-going projects, and to start new ventures and

political styles. We lack a firmly established political culture. Yet our political practice is punctuated with hiatuses that make the cultivation of a political culture impossible. Even where the malfunction of an existing political arrangement is accurately diagnosed, the system is not allowed enough time to correct itself and in the process accumulate political experience. The entire system is thrown overboard. We embark on a fresh effort, usually at copying foreign models. It is in our national interest that the political model we decide upon is given ample time to prove its merits and expose its defects, thereby permitting political advance through an evolutionary process. This is the only road to developing a distinct political culture, a commodity that can neither be borrowed, copied nor bought. A distinct political culture is founded on the political history of a people. Continuity is essential to it.

This is no plea for political immobility, for the over-stay in political office. The concept of continuity does not exclude change in political administrations. The desideratum is that the direction of national development is unchanged for a considerable length of time. In this context, changes in administration merely indicate changes in emphasis, in priorities and in pace in the on-going plans for nation-building. The direction is fixed; but there may be changes in speed, order and style of movement along that direction. Indeed, this touches on the proper role of political parties in the political system. The two-party or multi-party system is disfunctional and counter-productive, if the parties are divided on fundamental ideological grounds. For example, a two-party system where the two parties are the fascist and communist parties is an exercise in futility. The mutual incompatibility of these parties makes such a two-party system an impossibility *ab initio*. We have employed this extreme example in order to underscore our point, namely that parties with fundamentally divergent goals and ideologies cannot co-exist in a political system, however permissive. Disruption is avoided in such a situation, only if one of the parties merely exists to provide comic relief. From this, we arrive at an important conclusion for political practice. The rationale of the two-party arrangement is efficiency-inducing competition within a political system that is firm common ground for all parties. This finding exposes the falsity of the view that the hallmark of democracy is the operation of the two-party or multi-party system. The existence of two parties that both accept a fascist view of the State cannot produce democracy, which is founded on the sovereignty of the people. South Africa and some

neo-fascist states of Latin America are cases in point. On the other hand, a one-party state that provides political choice through means other than a rival party can serve the best interests of the generality of the people. Thus it could be ruled democratic. Democracy is not the choice process. It is the people-orientation of the entire state considered as a functioning system.

A little clarification is called for. Our plea for keeping the direction of national development unchanged for a considerable length of time could be used as justification for perpetuating the neo-colonialist character of the Nigerian State. There can be no justification for the permanency of dependence and social injustice. Before the plea for continuity could be evoked, it is important to make certain that the projected path of development leads progressively to full-blooded national independence, organic national cohesion, and the well-being of the people as a whole as distinct from a privileged class.

We may return to the issue of continuity. Our case for the politicisation of the armed forces in order to ensure stability applies equally here. The new dimension in our exposition is the discovery that the nature of the permitted political parties is relevant to political continuity. The conclusion is swift and inescapable. A free-for-all in the formation of political parties enthrones political confusion. It can create political paralysis. Therefore, creating an efficiently functioning political system demands a firm consensus on the party system. If we seek political efficiency through the existence of political parties, then a firm decision has to be taken on the number of these parties. Once the number of political parties is agreed, the powers-that-be have to take a hand in setting up these organisations. For the nature of the political party is germane to the operational efficiency of the party system. And the operational efficiency of the party system is a key element in the success of the political system as a whole.

A mobilised people is an important desideratum in the politics of emergent states. On this is anchored internal security, political stability and rapid development. It is the central plank in the strategy of self-reliance. However, a mobilised people is more the creation of political education through the political parties than either the divination of the Constitution or the cacophony of media jingles.

The people are not mobilised by exhortation or propaganda. Indeed the proper role of propaganda is to canvass among a mobilised people the correct direction in any given situation. It is important

to stress this point. For one of the causes of our failure in mobilising the Nigerian people is the apparent equation of propaganda (usually by the media, occasionally reinforced from the pulpit) to mobilisation. Sustained actions in other fields give birth to a mobilised people. Propaganda merely assumes the existence of a mobilised people to which it seeks to give directions in a specific situation. The Nigerian experience hitherto has been to give directions in specific situations to a dis-oriented and politically amorphous people. As a result, the driving force provided by a mobilised people is lost to the process of national development.

The elements in the mobilisation of a people despoiled by prolonged colonial rule are a revolutionary ethos, an appropriate leadership style, and sufficient motivation of the work force of the country. Revolutionary ethos must include a new patriotism. Colonial patriotism extolled the virtues and prowess of the alien raj. It was unrelated to the colonial territory. For Anglophone countries, the landscape was "an empire on which the sun never sets." Loyalty was to the British monarch, the defender of the faith, and by the grace of God King of Great Britain and Ireland and the emperor of India, etc. School children sang "Rule Britannia; Britannia rules the waves; Britons never never shall be slaves." Imported christianity reinforced the myth. For example, the British anthem is a hymn in the Church hymnary. Education was the study of the foreign ruler's life and work and his views about us.

Clearly a new patriotism has become imperative. It has to attach to a definable territory. It has to extol indigenous values, valour and heroes. The new territory must recover from the ravages of colonisation. It has to be re-built. This task makes self-reliance the cornerstone of the ethos of nation-building.

Leadership style is important in the mobilisation of a people. A pro-imperialist leadership cannot rouse the people into a frenzy of anti-imperialism. Nor can leadership provided by privilege move the downtrodden into sustained action on the basis of self-reliance. The people have to see the leadership as coming from them. This makes political record quite relevant. And the style of leadership will have to persuade all and sundry that it is people-oriented. This gives a pivotal position to service. In addition, the leadership must be wedded to simplicity in life style. This makes it both approachable and acceptable to the masses. It helps identification with the people, a condition that makes it easier for the masses to follow its prescriptions.

Motivation demands that the people see the promotion of their interests in whatever they are called upon to do. The central problem in developing countries is production. This is be-deviled by a voracious appetite for consumption that bears testimony to the subsistence level of existence. Self-reliance, which almost all emergent states now preach but few really understand, implies that even in this context of low per capita income there should be high production all round, and at the same time consumption should be below production. People have to work hard, and concurrently practise abstinence. This cannot be a palatable prescription for people who live at subsistence level; hence the all-importance of motivation in a general direction endorsed by the people themselves. Fair reward for work done, equal pay for equal work, bonuses in kind, housing schemes for meritorious service, etc. are necessary. But equally important are the rationalisation of the wages and salaries structure, and the elimination of privilege of every description. The basics of life — rent, transport to and from work, prices of essential commodities, basic education, comprehensive preventive health care — have to be brought within the reach of the entire people. This is how to persuade the people that they earn a fair reward on their jobs, and that the state is worth sustaining and dying for. Additionally the goals and objectives of the state should persuade the people that the survival of the state is in their interest. To crown it all, the performance of the leadership must reflect, in concrete terms, loyalty to the ideals of the state and a high degree of abnegation in the realisation of the objectives of the State. All that need be added here is that the persuasion of the people will have to be achieved through the practical experience of the people themselves, not through strident media propaganda falsified by everyday experience.

Low cost of running the political system is an important desideratum for the politics of emergent states. In the first place, resources are scarce. And there are many demands waiting to be met out of these limited resources. An added dimension is that part of the cost of running the political system will have to be met in foreign currency. And the emergent states are afflicted by chronic foreign exchange crises. High cost of running the political system easily engenders political instability. For the burgeoning treasury cost of the system is quickly palmed off as evidence of a privileged class, the political class, living in mindless opulence at the expense of the ordinary people. Indeed, the leaders of military take-overs

often exploit such a situation, unmindful of the fact that the cost of maintaining the armed forces is quite properly part of the cost of running the political system. The cost of running the political system includes the operational and capital costs of the civil service, the armed forces, the police and security service, the judiciary, the diplomatic service, and the legislative and executive arms of government at all levels down to local governments. However, this excludes the cost of running the social services. The ideal would be to keep such costs down to about five percent of the budget, but never above ten percent of the annual budget or 2.5% to 3% of the Gross National Product.

In the second place, keeping down the cost of the political system should impose a puritanic pattern of life on public office holders, especially of the political class. This class of leaders should be seen to live simply, and free from the wealth-acquiring syndrome. Such an image enhances the prestige of leadership; and hence makes leadership more acceptable and more readily obeyed. Part-time legislators, ministers whose service conditions are equated to those of the upper rung of the civil service, cost-conscious technical civil service are measures that should reduce the cost of running the political system and induce public respect and esteem for the men and women operating the system. When wealth acquisition ceases to be the prime stimulant for office seeking, better equipped persons enter public life, and this manifests in a corresponding rise in the efficiency of the entire political system.

Our fifth and last desideratum is an optimal zone of development. The thesis is that given the level of technology, a modern state requires a minimum territorial base for survival and growth. The doctrinal canons contained herein are two-fold. First, a modern state (not just a contemporary state) is predicated on advanced industrialism. Second, sophisticated industrialism requires access to a variety of basic raw materials, mineral and agricultural, self-innovating technology and a large and increasingly sophisticated market demand. The large territory is supposed to supply both the raw materials and the requisite population. Looked at from another angle, this thesis asserts that where these conditions are lacking, a state, in the modern sense, cannot survive.

This theory seems to have been most assiduously developed by French social scientists, in contrast to the British and the Americans. This is perhaps a reflection of the world situation facing each of these countries. Thanks to the Monroe Doctrine, the application

of which is being expanded menacingly by President Ronald Reagan, the economic build-up of the U.S. has been backed by an exclusive sphere of influence that comprises the entire western hemisphere. Britain had a far-flung empire. The demise of old-style colonialism has compelled the search for a new *modus operandi* for the imperial economies of the U.S., Britain and France. The instrument is the multi-national corporation that grabs worldwide the sources of basic and strategic raw materials, complemented by state-guaranteed national companies that criss-cross the Third World. The network is backed and kept in place by the diplomacy and military capability of these countries. For added effectiveness, there is the tendency of the diplomatic and defence strategies of these countries to reinforce one another, and in some cases to act in unison.

Africa has been hard hit by this state of affairs. The operation of these imperial economies has meant the continued balkanisation of the African continent. This trend is further supported by the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which guarantees the international boundaries created during colonisation. Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure and Modibo Kaita gave a lead in a different direction, in the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union. Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta and Milton Obote also tried their hands at the East Africa Community, though this was more an economic than a political zone. The fossilisation of Africa's colonial boundaries has made it impossible for African states to evolve the territorial spread that is optimal to their development. A method for circumventing this handicap has been the erection of economic communities invariably bogged down by internal problems that originate from the control of the economies of the community states by rival neo-colonialisms of Britain, U.S. and France. The stunted growth of African states owes much to this factor. Many African states have no prospects of a take-off, because the economic base for such take-off is lacking. The few that possess this economic base find take-off difficult or painful because they lack a self-directing economy, and also because these are surrounded by client African states which serve as staging areas for external subversion — economic, political and military.

In the light of this, Nigeria's political system ought to reflect a deep understanding of the social, economic and political problems of the African continent. Specifically, the search for an optimal zone of development, and for security against externally directed subversion, should include the union of African states. The emergence of large political units in Africa, and hence fewer states than

exist today, appears an important geo-political condition for the final liberation of Africa. Nigeria should provide more effective leverage for this concept. An important corollary here is that Nigeria's political system must be able to contain the recoil action let loose by such an ebullient African policy. Consequently, Nigeria has to turn away from the self-delusion that all alone she can solve all her problems. Against this background, Nigeria's African policy in the past has lacked sufficient vision, thrust and dynamism. The re-ordering of Nigeria's political life, made necessary by the re-entry of the Nigerian military into the political arena, should reflect this awareness.

CHAPTER 6

THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE – I

Politics everywhere, both in its format, direction and motivation, draws heavily and inevitably from the political experience of the community in question. Such political experience, in its totality, constitutes the mould out of which the political edifice is cast. Analysed and synthesised, this political experience provides the imperatives that shape the political edifice. The non-grasp of this truth accounts for Nigeria's abject reliance on alien political models. The exception to this has been the drawing up of the Constitution of the Second Republic. In that exercise, we dwelt disproportionately on the knotty points of the First Republic, ignoring or glossing over some fundamental issues, especially as regards the armed forces and the organisation and operation of our economic life. For this, Nigeria has paid a heavy price. Political instability has been the outcome. In times of political crises, our people have lacked the will to defend the status quo, because the status quo means nothing to them. Indeed, most ordinary Nigerians have welcomed as providential intervention the changes in administrations and systems that have come in the wake of political instability. However, many Nigerians, at least in the leadership class, now know better.

As a movement involving the people even marginally, Nigerian politics could be dated from after World War II, 1939 – 1945. Traditional rulers came into the equation only obliquely. Before that time, Nigerian politics was the recreation of elite circles in Lagos and Calabar. The Macpherson Constitution was an amendment of the Richard's Constitution, a colonial contraption arbitrarily foisted on the country. The independence Constitution was founded on amendments to the Macpherson Constitution and sly deals between the British raj and Nigeria's political leaders. The Constitution of the First Republic was simply the independence constitution in a republican setting. The Constitution of the Second Republic merely abandoned Westminster democracy for the presidential system of the United States of America. The country went from one alien system to the other. It then proceeded to seek solutions for the

aberrations of First Republic politics. And in the process, we skimmed lightly over the conventions that surround the U.S. presidential system. Today, Nigeria is again on the eve of modelling a new political edifice for herself. This exercise ought to be firmly based on a thorough digest of our political experience.

The 1979 Constitution

The starting point is the 1979 Constitution. Many people, Nigerians and foreigners alike, tended to eulogise the Second Republic because it was a multi-party U.S. presidential-type democracy. The multi-party system gave it the democratic accolade. The mimicry of U.S. presidential style meant Nigeria was firmly anchored in the best traditions of western democracy. However, the outward placidity of the Second Republic concealed grave weaknesses within the system. A few Nigerians perceived these internal strains, and thought the way forward was incisive reforms pushed through a dominant political party with a national spread. The reform movement was not given time to get started, though many of the conditions for its success had been attained. The one condition not attained at the time of the fourth *coup d'etat* was farsighted party leadership committed to change. However, things were in such a state that the embers of radical reforms and upheavals were smouldering both in the National Assembly and in the hierarchy of the political parties.

The 1979 Constitution concentrated too much power in the President. The President was involved in too many things. This put him at the centre of every controversy, and hence eroded the aura of hallowness which should surround the office of the Head of State. Again, being involved in almost everything undermined effective control by the President. The power of the President (and the State Governors) was further enhanced by the fact that patronage was central to party building. The National Assembly could block the policies of the Federal Government, but could neither alter these nor unseat the President. The cleavage between the Executive and the Legislature could only be resolved through general elections and these were held only four-yearly. The Nigerian situation will be best served by having both a president and a prime minister. The president will take responsibility for sustaining the state, while the prime minister will concern himself with the day-to-day running of political affairs.

The Constitution drafters had thought, wrongly, that the needed

checks and balances lay in the separation of the three arms, executive, legislative and judiciary. They failed to see that, given Nigerian conditions, both the independence of the judiciary and the supremacy of the legislature were undermined by a party system which, without varnish, was a spoils system. Additionally, the spoils system undermined the electoral system. The end result was one-party dominance in a theoretically multi-party system. And when the dominant party was itself dominated by the "new rich", the Second Republic degenerated into an unconscionable plutocracy. This experience calls for a break-up at source of the forces at work.

The judiciary was politicised through a system of independent state judiciaries. Each party in power at the state sought to create a judiciary that will do its bidding. The exercise included the use of the State House of Assembly against some independent-minded judges, the unnecessary proliferation of judicial appointments, vicariousness in the appointment of Chief Judges, the involvement of the families of judicial officers in the spoils system. The party in power at the centre strove to do the same thing, though its success was limited because it lacked control of the National Assembly. The use by State Governors of the prerogative of mercy to set free party stalwarts who had committed heinous crimes, including arson and murder, was becoming a fad. An inevitable follow-up action soon developed. The police force was involved in the spoils system, especially after the abortive attempt to set up state police forces. The zenith of the denouement was the widespread purchase of police support by contending parties in the 1983 elections. The probable answers to these related problems lie in an integrated judiciary for the entire country, in the elimination of political rivalry between the state and the federation government, in the raising of entry requirements into the Nigeria Police, in the concentration of the prerogative of mercy at the federal level; in the exoneration of state governments from the responsibility for law and order in their respective states, save as a monitoring agent of the federal authorities. The caveat to this concentration of powers at the federal level is that checks and balances exist at that level.

Another weakness of the 1979 Constitution is the political party. The political party was viewed simply as a platform for those seeking elective public officers. Its installation was left to vicarious criteria and dubious contrivances. There was no in-depth monitoring of its performance, let alone a machinery for punishing shortcomings. The law courts aided party indiscipline, by weakening the party whip

among party legislators. There was both hypocrisy and naivety in our thinking about how party funds could be raised. The national executives of some parties were undermined, in their relationships with the state governments these controlled, by political intrigues emanating from rival political parties. The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) sequestered the state governments of both the Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP) and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) from their respective national executives. In addition, the representatives of both the GNPP and the PRP in the National Assembly were in large measure, turned against the national leaderships of these parties. The party responsible for this was the UPN. The strategy was to paralyse the federal government of President Shehu Shagari.

A three-pronged siege was laid against the Shagari Administration. Through party alliances, the minority position of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was perpetuated, despite the occasional solvents provided by lobbying, the Nigerian style. Executive measures were either blocked or mutilated or subjected to long delays. By sequestering some State Governors from the national leaderships of their parties, the constitutional forums that served as clearing houses for the federal and state governments were turned into arenas for blocking federal government policies. This was the case with the National Economic Council and, to a lesser extent, the Council of State.

In the meantime, a large segment of the media was manipulated into a position of perennial vilification of the federal administration. The technique of "the big lie" was employed with reckless abandon, under the cloak of speculative journalism. Attempts to infuse rectitude into the media were frustrated by a legislative blockade of the mooted Press Council. Nigeria was left with a limping federal government, held at bay on most issues, and vilified as incompetent at every turn. There were no constitutional provisions for dealing with such a situation. It had to be suffered until the next general elections when efforts could be made by the ruling party at the centre to win a working majority both in the National Assembly and among the State Governors.

But even the electoral system, which largely conditioned party activities and impinged on the credibility of elections generally, was left to chance. In the end, the Electoral Act became a hotch-potch created out of ad hoc political alliances and "lobbying" in the National Assembly. The political party existed merely to sell its ticket to the highest bidder and the smarter intriguer. Candidates

for elections spent a fortune in winning the party ticket. Corrupt party officials had a field day. It was their harvest time, as some cynics put it. The electioneering itself cost even more. Both candidates and their parties had to sink huge sums of money into the election campaigns. Corrupt party functionaries, including so-called local leaders both inside and outside the parties, again made their demands for a share in the booty. Since the elections did not turn primarily on such issues, the political parties outbid themselves in making fantastic and unrealisable promises. Politicians dared to make sober promises only where they relied on other factors for attaining victory at the polls. Some of these other factors included electoral malpractices, thuggery, subversion of law enforcement agencies charged with policing the election arrangements.

The carving out of the electoral constituencies owed more to the European canon of numbers and less to the demographic reality on the ground. The general tendency was to group together several communities with an eye on the agreed statistical strength of the constituency. A great truth was lost, namely that political competition, based on rival approaches to agreed goals, is either meaningless or relegated to the background except the competition is within the community. If political rivalry is between communities, rival approaches to agreed goals count for little. The game reduces to support for the "son of the soil." Accordingly, a more meaningful representative would be achieved where the electoral constituency is coterminous with the community. This will throw up a large number of elected persons. But the problem here would be solved or reduced considerably through the payment of allowances, not salaries, to deputies; and there could be indirect elections to higher levels based on the directly elected deputies as an electoral college. The fair representation of the various communities could be achieved through weighting by the population factor.

The 1979 Constitution created a political superstructure that proved too expensive to run. Politicians were free to fix their remuneration and, in effect, to audit themselves. Lobbying in a National Assembly in which the Executive was outnumbered 2 to 1 meant that large sums of money changed hands in order to permit minimal operations by the Executive. The enabling powers for fixing the salaries and allowances of political office holders should be removed from the Constitution. Instead, a salaries and benefits structure should be put down for the political system as a whole. There is no rationale for relating these to what obtains in the civil

service. And revision of this remuneration structure could be undertaken ten yearly by a presidential commission.

The 1979 Constitution specifically pronounced Nigeria a secular state. This drew delight from all sides. To a great extent it cut the ground from under religious chauvinism and religious politics. However, religion has posed a different sort of threat. Intemperate religious sectarianism has disturbed public peace and order, and threatened the stability of the State. The Maitatsine type disturbances are evidence of this. But there is a more sinister disservice by other religious sects. Either under oath or compulsion by doctrinal prescriptions, some religious sects bar marriage of their members to members of other sects or religions. Some exclude their members from communal labour, and from support for community projects. The danger of this state of affairs is the more readily appreciated when it is realised that communal effort is a major weapon for combating underdevelopment in the rural areas. Bellicose religious sects that preach or practise violence ought to be proscribed by law, and the importation of their tracts prohibited. Similarly, proscription should be the fate of all religious bodies that preach social isolationism in the form either of interpersonal relationships or of relations of the individual with the community.

An outcrop of the notion of a secular state is the belief that the Nigerian state is irreligious or amoral. Some refer to ours as a permissive society. This ought not be so. Our society cannot derive any benefits from such a state of affairs. The state must be seen to opt for moral values. The state must be seen to support religious faith, though not tied to a particular religion. We have earlier recommended a Moral code for our new political system. This covers conduct at the family level, and in both private and public life. Such a moral code should pull in the same direction with the national ideology. It should permeate the education system and inform jurisprudence. As a vigorously pursued endeavour, religious organisations and procedures ought to be fully Nigerianised, while leaving the cardinal tenets and pilgrimage to continue as internationally recognised.

Again, the system set up by the 1979 Constitution was slow and cumbersome, especially in a situation where the National Assembly was dominated by forces hostile to the Federal Government. Even when the ruling party, late in 1983, secured a comfortable majority in the National Assembly, things were not expedited dramatically because legislators were more concerned with recouping their astronomical election expenses. The Electoral Act took some twelve

months to pass through the National Assembly and, in its final form, contained ambiguities which reflected inter-party compromises. The same cumbersomeness dogged the Economic Stabilization Act. National Assembly approval came very late, and only when the deteriorating foreign exchange situations had reached crisis dimensions. The executive was slow to act. This time drag is bad for any system of government. It is disastrous for the political systems of developing states. Such constitutional and political paralysis induced by political obscurantism or executive indolence ought to be studiously avoided. The multi-party system is the breeding ground. It ought to be abandoned. Such a problem cannot arise under the one-party system. Under the two-party system, however, the probability is greatly reduced; but some supporting measures will still be necessary. All sorts of inter-party alliances, either for elections or for running the government, should be outlawed. Party representatives in any legislature should abide by the decisions of their respective party executives. Alternately, these should vote on specific matters coming before the legislature strictly in accordance with the party election manifesto. On fiscal and monetary policies, the Executive should be able to act either with retrospective legislative endorsement or even with the legislature disagreeing. The same procedure should govern military action in protection of the country's international borders.

Finally, the 1979 Constitution suffers from serious omissions. First, it merely assumed that a civil service built on the pattern of Whitehall will serve efficiently the Presidential type of government. It *ipso facto* assumed that an administration-oriented civil service inherited from colonialism will adequately meet the needs of an emergent state in a world context of technologically advanced and highly competitive superpower diplomacy.

The economic system was left severely alone. Apparently the penchant for free enterprise rationalised neo-colonialism. Smugly, the Nigerian leadership class believed that a colonial economy, given the face-lift of joint ventures and indigenisation decrees, and flattered by an oil boom that has proved evanescent, would meet our requirements. The fact that school leavers at all levels number some two million every year was not even recognised. A population growth rate of some three percent meant nothing. The dominance of the foreign partner was acclaimed the way to the transfer of technology. The nationally adverse manipulations of the multinational corporations were lubricated by the opulence of a com-

prador class. All this now stand exposed.

Again, the issue of revenue allocation was a watershed in the last administration. Instead of working out a revenue allocation formula, together with ground rules about how it could be modified, the designers of the Constitution left such an explosive issue to the politicians themselves. Section 149, sub-sections (2) (3) and (4) vested the power to agree on a revenue allocation formula between the Federation, the States and the Local Governments on the National Assembly. Self-misdirection on the part of the designers of the 1979 Constitution extended to the remuneration of politicians and to audit. Section 78 permits the National Assembly to fix the salaries and allowances of its members. Once done, this became an automatic charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Again, by section 80 (1) (2) and (3) the President, provided the Senate confirmed, appointed the Auditor-General who was accountable to no one. Thus the politicians spent public funds on themselves as they wished; and they chose who to audit their financial performances.

The reconstruction of our political edifice of necessity has to pay more attention, in terms of expert knowledge and popular awareness, to economic problems. Specifically, Nigerians have to examine in great detail the structure and control of their economy; the organisation and indigenisation of productive forces; and the humaneness and incentives of production relations.

There was no serious consideration of the rationale for the political party in the politics of an emergent State. Upon this grave omission was imposed the multi-party system. The mention of Political Parties as Section D of Part III (Supplemental) under Chapter VI (The Executive) of the 1979 Constitution is an afterthought by legal draftsmen. Only nine sections of the Constitution (Sections 201 – 209) relate to the nature and formation of political parties. Nowhere is spelt out rules to govern the operation of a party or the inter-relationships between parties or the relationship between the party on the one hand and the executive and legislature on the other hand. There was no systematic elucidation of the duties and obligations of political parties. There was no code of conduct for political parties. The result was that the multi-party system, and how it functioned, generated considerable strains within the political system. It has become necessary to study the party system more closely, to put the political party in its proper place, and to impose on the political party its appropriate functions.

The mechanics of elections were not fully studied. In fact, the

job was left to the Federal Electoral Commission largely selected by politicians seeking re-election. The wisdom of giving control of the electoral machinery, however tenuously, to an elected president was questionable. The impracticability of policing 160,000 polling stations by a Nigeria Police with a total strength of 100,000 men was not fully appreciated. Nor was it perceived that it was unsafe to count votes at numerous locations where neutral supervision and law enforcement were impossible. The logistics for moving election materials was not foolproof because it was either ignored or considered in a rush, thanks to the excessive delay by the National Assembly in passing the Electoral Act. The electoral roll was in shambles, printed at numerous centres by printers who could be influenced but could not be supervised.

Finally, the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC), the Constituent Assembly, the Supreme Military Council (SMC) of the Mohammed/Obasanjo Administration and articulate Nigerians who wrote in the newspapers and contributed to seminars on the Draft Constitution seemed agreed to ignore vital issue. There seemed to be a conspiracy of silence over the Armed Forces. There was no discussion of its size, the relative strength of its constituent services, its ethnic composition, its role in politics, and its orientation. As a result, a very large army, created to meet the demands of the Nigerian civil war, was carried over to the Second Republic but given roles inherited from the First Republic.

Neo-Colonialism in Nigerian Life

Neo-colonialism has dominated Nigerian life since independence. This has been the direct result partly of a negotiated independence and partly of a lack of will by the political leadership to combat neo-colonialism. In either case, the political leaders are to blame. Negotiated independence was substituted for a national liberation struggle. At the constitutional conference table, a capitalist-oriented, ethnically-divided national leadership, lacking the support of direct mass action which it helped to castrate, faced a firm and wily colonial power. After independence in 1960, political leadership set out to consolidate three Nigerias divided on ethnic lines, each capitalist-oriented, inward-looking and seeking a tie-up with foreign capital. Military interregnums since independence have sought to resolve the conflict created by the three Nigerias hypothesis without destroying the external control and direction that lay behind such an arrange-

ment. The use of the USSR as a fall-back position during the Nigerian civil war quickly gave way to a diversified neo-colonialist nexus. United States, French and West German interests penetrated Nigeria and now co-exist with long-standing British interests. Behind the apparent rivalries between these foreign interests lay a fundamental unity dictated by the international power dichotomy between East and West. The dominance of British interests was reduced, but the control of neo-colonialism was reinforced.

Nigeria since independence has become a classic example of neo-colonialism, a system of external control exercised through international agencies. It is new style colonialism. In a genetic sense, it is but another manifestation of imperialism. The underlying characteristic of economic exploitation has remained constant. All that has changed is the political superstructure. By 1960, and following on the historic resolution at the UN condemning colonialism and calling for its eradication, the Western world changed from imperial states and their colonial territories into advanced states and emergent states. The advanced states have played essentially the same role vis-a-vis the emergent states as the earlier imperial states played in relation to the colonial territories. There was, however, a significant difference. The colonies were exclusive preserves of their respective metropolis. The emergent states, given a political leadership that wished to wear the toga of national self-assertion, have become theatres for rival imperialisms. This development is both a handicap and an opportunity.

Nigerians, in particular the political class and the professional and intellectual elite, have tended to see neo-colonialism as an act of God. This view conceals a pervading and debilitating inferiority complex that can be traced to our colonial connections. It reflects the sad truth that imperialism, in its cultural and religious aspects is still exerting a sustained assault on our mores and spiritual values. Our nascent manufacturing techniques were decimated by colonialism in order to make way for the unfettered reign of imperial economies. As part of this drive, we had to be persuaded that home made goods are inferior, and even injurious to health. Buffeted into supineness, we have come to regard westernisation as the index of civilisation and achievement. We have come to believe that no meaningful progress is possible without the sustenance of the white man. For the external in this context encompasses Europe and North America but firmly excludes Africa and the Third World.

In the field of business, Nigerian politicians and economic

advisers, even from pre-independence days and especially after the grant of Regional self-government in 1956 have always considered the creation of a climate favourable to foreign investments as the prime desideratum of sound economic policy. In this view, neo-colonialism is a partnership of foreign and domestic private business in the operation of free enterprise. It is the ideal and natural organisation of production. The Nigerian mass media is wedded to this conception, thanks both to its ownership and its practitioners. The exploitative nature of neo-colonialism is stoutly denied. However, the harsh reality subsists, reinforced by vested interests, slovenly intellectualism, political artifices, and exotic mores. The axis of neo-colonialism is the multi-national corporation. Complementing the multi-nationals are an array of joint ventures and import-substituting manufacturing firms where management, technology and key raw materials are all controlled by the foreign partner; the indigenised enterprises where Nigerian shareholders serve as mere cover for foreign interests; consultancy services dominated by foreign experts and western thinking. Against this formidable, externally directed economic nexus, the genuine Nigerian entrepreneur stands little chance. His hope lies in the political support of the Nigerian State. But such political support is circumscribed and undermined by the penetration of the political parties by imperialism, as well as by the rewards spell cast over public office holders by the business community. In order to keep this exploitation network working, the home governments of these multi-national corporations and the foreign partners in joint ventures organise all sorts of support schemes. Export promotion schemes, loan guarantees, credits by international finance institutions, diplomacy, defence strategies, intelligence services, international seminars and university exchange programmes are all pressed into this carefully orchestrated action.

Gradually the emergent state is divided into three classes – an expanding class of the comprador bourgeoisie; a stunted proletariat made up of white collar, blue overall workers and general labour; and a large impoverished class of peasants, part-time farmers and migrant farm labourers. The inevitable conflict arising from such a situation is reinforced by ethnic, cultural and religious differences. The political system becomes a carefully designed contrivance for holding together the wobbling underdeveloped country with its conflicting classes, tribes, religions and cultures. In such a state of affairs, the armed forces permeated by the western view of the world, linked with business interests and observed continually by

an elaborate imperialist monitoring system, are given the dominant role. Indeed a yardstick for measuring the success of the government of the imperial state is the efficiency attained in protecting and promoting this neo-colonialist nexus. The mentality of reliance on the external in Nigeria and Africa is taken for granted by the outside world. The defence strategies, the diplomacy and even the social sciences of both the Western world and the Eastern block countries draw heavily on this. Nigeria is a regional power controlling Black Africa on behalf of the Western world. Africa is within the sphere of influence of the West. Social scientists cast Africa in the role of a partner in stabilising a world order built to Western specifications. These social scientists extol the conservatives and downright reactionaries in Africa's leadership class who are given a face-lift as moderates. Africans are called upon to consolidate a world order that leaves Africa oppressed. On the other hand, Soviet social science conceives of Africa as the strategic reserve of communism in its drive to replace capitalism worldwide. In the process Africans are saddled with an excruciating dictatorship presiding over economic stagnation. The tragedy of it all is that Nigerian politicians, military officers, businessmen, and social scientists seem content to be cast in the mould of either the East or the West.

The dominance of neo-colonialism has implications for the Nigerian political system. The "acceptable" politics becomes what stabilises neo-colonialism. Accordingly, national independence demands a political system that can cut down, control and ultimately eliminate all neo-colonialist structures and relations, substituting in their place full and free intercourse by independent and self-activating States within the international community. In this connection, special attention has to be paid to the political party system where the political parties are sustained by business interests, to the attitude and life-style of holders of public office, to the orientation and connections of the officers corps in the armed forces and uniformed services, to the direction of our universities and institutions of higher learning, to the foreign modes and ideas beamed at the ordinary folks. In drawing up a constitution for Nigeria, and for emergent states generally, more attention ought to be paid to these realities than to the platitudes of personal liberty, the separation of powers, independent judiciary, multi-party democracy, sovereignty of the people expressed through the ballot box, a neutral civil service, and an apolitical military.

Dependence on the external can never liberate Nigeria. If our

goal is cultural liberation within the frame of national independence, the requirement is a re-discovery of the authentic African, and the re-assertion of the Black African as a distinct category of world culture, upholding the dignity of man and commanding the respect of civilised humanity. Movement along this new direction is within our ken. But this is predicated on one condition: that we rid ourselves of the illusion that salvation lies in a tie-up with the external.

Leadership – Nigerian style

In every country, developed or developing, political leadership is an important factor in the conduct of public affairs. In the process of nation-building it is crucial. Hence political leadership is the decisive element in the politics of emergent states. In the case of Nigeria, political leadership has been a constraint in nation-building. It is primarily responsible for the very little that the country has to show for a quarter of a century of political self-management.

Nigeria's political leadership was cast in the mould of colonialism. Its evolution owed more to the long-term needs of British imperialism, and less to the vision of a strong, modern, Black State. In the late 1940s, colonialism was confronted with a menacing nationalist movement. This movement was led by Herbert Macaulay of the Democratic Party, and later by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) which had integrated with the Democratic Party. Concurrently, there was heavy pressure worldwide on colonialism, thanks to the democratic and liberation ferment unleashed by World War II. In Asia, India, Burma, Malaya Pakistan emerged as sovereign states. Dutch colonialism collapsed, yielding place to independent Indonesia. China regained national independence after a peoples war that routed first Japanese and later U.S. hegemony. The Pan-African Movement had held its Fifth Conference in Manchester, England, and the revolutionary waves set up by it had begun to lash the shores of West Africa.

Pressed by an international climate that was hostile to overt colonialism, and stunned by the success of the 1945 general strike led by Michael Imoudu of the Railway Workers Union, Whitehall decided on a strategy of bifurcation against the Nigerian anti-colonial movement. It welcomed the arrival in the Nigerian political arena of Chief Obafemi Awolowo whose *Path to Freedom*, foreworded by Dame Margery Pelham, provided the ideology of regionalism and gradualism for the attainment of independence. The Action Group,

organised west of the river Niger as the political arm of the Egbo-Omo Oduduwa (the cultural movement of the Yoruba people) emerged to challenge the NCNC. The NCNC, on its part, was becoming increasingly Igbo-dominated, relying heavily on the Ibo State Union, an Igbo cultural organisation. But by 1953, the NCNC and the Action Group had struck up a political alliance that pushed through Chief Anthony Enahoro's self-government motion in the House of Representatives. The reaction of British colonialism was swift and sharp. Convulsed by the apparent inconsistency of Chief Awolowo, it turned to encourage the formation of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) under the leadership of the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello. The eight-point programme of the NPC was reportedly drawn up by Mr. C.R. Niven, at the time the Senior Resident of Plateau Province. For this purpose, the Northern Peoples Association, a predominantly Hausa/Fulani cultural body, was ready to hand. Nigeria was carved into three Regions — North, West and East, each with its political party and its political leader. These leaders headed the governments of their respective regions. Thus the three major ethnic groups in the country had their respective spheres of influence. The Hausa/Fulani dominated the Northern Region, the Yorubas were the overlords of the Western Region, and the Igbos established their hegemony over the Eastern Region. It is important to note that each of these regions contained ethnic minorities. Thus each of the major ethnic groups had its vassals established its hegemony over its ethnic minorities, and built up its power complete with its government, its marketing boards, its commercial bank, its political party. At the centre, government was a compromise between these power blocs mediated by the British Governor-General. By 1956, the regions had attained self-rule. But Nigerian independence was delayed another four years because the tandem administration at the centre moved at the pace of its slowest member. And when it was proclaimed, the independence was inchoate and quasi. This was the practice and consequence of what came to be known in Nigerian politics as the tripod theory. Thus arose the concept and practice of the hegemony of the three major ethnic groups. This quest for hegemony has produced two developments, both detrimental to Nigerian politics. In the first place, effective control at the centre meant ad hoc and shifting alliances between two ethnic groups or fragments of these groups. In the second place, the quest for power at the centre led one of these major ethnic groups to seek to suborn the ethnic minorities.

in the domain of the other major ethnic groups. This injected blind bitterness into Nigerian politics, and relegated issues or programmes to the background. The central issue was how each major ethnic group can attain to and secure power at the centre. Ethnic intrigues were profuse. Leadership fashioned in such a mould has haunted Nigeria since before independence. It is responsible for much of Nigeria's political woes.

However, two developments within this political scenario proved positive in the process of Nigeria's evolution. The dominance of the Northern Region was challenged on the ground that the three-Region Nigerian Federation was an unusual federation. It ran foul of a canon of federalism which stipulates that no single state should be in a position to bend the will of the federation to its own. The second positive development was restiveness among the ethnic minorities in all three regions. These elements demanded self-determination within the Nigerian federation. The two developments merged into a general demand for more states, which was given concrete expression first by Yakubu Gowon and later further amended by Murtala Muhammed, in 1967 and 1976 respectively.

Despite the heavy blow dealt hegemony politics by the Nigerian civil war, and the shining example in leadership provided by Murtala Muhammed and Olusegun Obasanjo, the thinking of the First Republic was projected into the practice of the Second Republic. Both the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) emerged as platforms carrying respectively the aura of Yoruba and Igbo hegemony. Both parties made strenuous efforts at covering up, but never really succeeded. The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) performed a little better by putting together a leadership which was an agglomerate of ethnic leaderships. However, NPN leadership still fell short of the ideal, namely a monolithic national leadership characterised by a well-thought-out political perspective with an articulated programme to match. Thus, while the UPN and NPP leaderships were largely the reincarnation of the hegemonistic approach of the past, the NPN leadership was at best a transitory stage to the national leadership for which Nigeria yearned. The Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) had an elaborate programme informed by a discernible philosophy. It lacked a nationwide vehicle. The other political parties were mere whimsicalities.

A new dimension in political leadership was becoming discernible in the Second Republic. This was the tendency for the ethnic minorities of the North and South of the country to club together as a

fourth force in Nigerian politics. This thinking was most pronounced in the Senate where the eight minority states had forty of the ninety-six senators. It is enlightening to note that the strategy of constituting the ethnic minorities into the driving force in Nigerian politics was mooted in the time of Yakubu Gowon. It was the brain child of the "Ibadan school of thought" made up of Ukpabi Asika, Allister Ayida and his fellow super permanent secretaries. The view was held that Nigerian political instability arose from the perennial tussle for power at the centre between the three major ethnic groups: Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo. To found power on the ethnic minorities would bring welcome relief, and is more likely to provide the much-needed political stability. The architects of this view held that such an exercise would be democratic, because all ethnic groups put together minus the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo constituted a majority of the Nigerian populace. In any case, an Igbo people heavily crippled by the civil war will provide ready and willing political reserve for this strategy. The expectation of the architects of this theory was that Yakubu Gowon, himself from a minority ethnic group, and haloed as the embodiment of a united Nigeria before the civil war, would lead this new approach to Nigerian politics.

* * *

The Buhari diagnosis of Nigeria's political problems (1979 – 1984) is not without its flaws. If the ousted federal government "lacked the will to rule this country," it will be enlightening to find out if this was due either to Shagari's weakness of character or to some institutional constraints or to stalemated political will. The key factor in assessing Shagari's first term in office is the fact that the ex-President enjoyed only a minority support in the National Assembly. In both the Senate and the House of Representatives, Shagari's party had a mere one-third support. This meant that the majority in both chambers (up to two-thirds on certain issues) supported the parties ranged against the President. In addition to the domination of the National Assembly, the so-called progressive parties commanded twelve delegations, leaving the president's party with only eight delegations, on the Council of State and the National Economic Council that handled economic matters. What is more, the Unity Party of Nigeria, the moving spirit in this anti-Shagari form-up, was committed to a strategy of engineering the political paralysis of the federal legislature. On the National Economic Council, the strategy was to cause as much delay as possible, and prevent the emergence of a consensus on presidential initiatives.

In consequence, federal government policies had to be watered down, or some concessions made to the state governments of the opposing groups, in order to secure a passage through the National Assembly. In addition, large sums of money had to be expended on what came to be known euphemistically as lobbying. Ironically, even representatives of the National Party of Nigeria had to be "lobbied."

A few striking examples illustrate our point. The disastrous dip in both world sales and prices of crude oil assumed crisis proportions in July 1981 when Nigeria exported barely 771,000 barrels of crude oil per day compared to 2,381,000 barrels per day in the same month in 1979. The Central Bank carried this ugly situation in its quarterly report for October – December 1981 which appeared in February 1982. It should be noted, however, that these figures were available in the records of both the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and in the statistics of companies in the exploration and production of crude oil. The National Assembly gave President Shagari the powers to cope with the situation only on 20th April 1982. A secret session of the National Assembly became necessary in order to persuade the legislators on the disastrous foreign exchange situation the nation was facing.

The Revenue Allocation Act provides the second example. This Act took six months to pass through the National Assembly. The Governor of Bendel State, on behalf of the opposition parties, took the matter up to the Supreme Court, where it took several more months to be disposed of in favour of the plaintiff. Thus nearly a year was wasted over the revenue allocation formula that was supposed to guide the distribution of revenue between the federal, state and local governments.

A third case was the Electoral Act. This took one year to pass through the National Assembly. Indeed it was passed by the National Assembly only when the Federal Electoral Commission complained publicly that it would be unable to conduct the 1983 elections on schedule should the delay in passing the Bill persist. The Shagari Administration could not break the monopoly of the Societe Generale de Surveillance (SGS), created by the military in January 1979, even where its efficacy in protecting Nigeria's interest had been in doubt. The National Assembly blocked all efforts to break this monopoly, even where this was shown to be in the national interest. In consequence, the SGS monopoly outlived the civilian administration.

Lastly, there was the case of the Code of Conduct Bill. The National Assembly blocked the passage of this bill all through the life of the Second Republic. The result was the permission of a yawning gap in the anti-corruption net meant to check the excesses of public office-holders.

The *New Nigerian* (9th March 1984) carried the story of "important bills which would have improved the operations of some government departments and protect consumers' interest but did not see the light of day because of undue delay in the defunct National Assembly." Indeed there were fifteen such bills including Nigerian Enterprises Promotion (Amendment) Bill, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (Reorganisation) Bill, Nigerian Tourist Board Bill, Provident Fund Management Board (Amendment) Bill, Consumers Products Protection Authority Bill, Pre-Shipment Inspection of Imports (Amendment) Bill.

It is apt to aver that the president ought to devise adequate economic intelligence machinery in order to inform himself and his government promptly and adequately of trends on the international markets. But it remains a fact that the president could order neither the time-table nor the procedures of both the National Assembly and the Courts. To break the legislative constraint on the Shagari Administration was one of the major issues of the 1983 general elections. The author made this point at the Presidential Rally of the National Party of Nigeria at Owerri on 14th April 1983. It later became a recurrent theme in President Shagari's campaign speeches.

Another major constraint on President Shagari's performance was his party, the National Party of Nigeria. The ban on political parties was lifted on 21st September 1978. The new political parties were registered and certificated by mid-December of the same year. Because of the very limited time allowed by the military (the Obasanjo Administration) for the formation and consolidation of political parties, Shagari in 1979 found himself the prisoner of his party. He lacked both the party control that Chief Awolowo enjoyed in the Unity Party of Nigeria and the towering personality of Dr. Azikiwe in the Nigerian Peoples Party. The style of the military leaders did not help either. General Obasanjo seemed more concerned with who should be the presidential candidates. Consequently, he paid little heed to the power structure within the political parties. Even the sifting of political operatives was ignored. While those with poor track records were refused contesting as election

candidates, these same characters found power bases for themselves in the machinery of the political parties. The ten-year quarantine rule merely meant that these discredited elements, by grabbing a safe berth for themselves in the hierarchy of the political parties, were poised to leap into elective office by 1987. This calculation greatly influenced political trend nationwide.

The abject dependence on a party whose national executive looked more like the annual general meeting of a limited liability company and less like a political team bent on the engineering of the greatest good of the greatest number, was a crippling blow to Shagari as president. Even his ministers were foisted on Shagari. It was in reaction to such an ordeal that Shagari, after his sweeping victory at the 1983 general elections, publicly demanded that he be left alone to select his ministers and advisers. He added tartly that in his first term in office he hardly knew some of his ministers. It is easy to urge that Shagari found himself in such a helpless position because he was a weak personality always in search of compromises and consensus. On closer examination, however, it was precisely this quality of Shagari that enabled the 1979 Constitution to be put to the test in the first place. What could have been achieved in a situation where Shagari was constitutionally President but could not operate because he was at loggerheads with his party and faced a hostile majority in the National Assembly? To the much-maligned Shagari style of administration Nigeria owes the fact that the civilian take-over from the military was smooth and there was no breakdown. To it Nigeria owes the fact that the 1979 Constitution was put to the test, and its strong points and weaknesses exposed. Even the sweeping condemnation of the 1983 general elections is more partisan propaganda than scientific analysis. It ought to be noted, in that connection, that the pro-Buhari Africa Editor of the *Financial Times* of London, Quentin Peele, wrote as follows:

In spite of the serious flaws in the elections, however, there were some important developments relevant to any future return to democracy.

In the first place, all the main presidential candidates actually improved the geographical spread of their support, in spite of the continued dominance of regional and tribal voting patterns. Mr. Shagari won at least 25% of the votes in 16 of the 19 States, compared with 12 in 1979; Chief Awolowo won the same proportion in eight states (compared with six in 1979); and Dr. Azikiwe in four, with two near misses (compared with two in 1979).

The elections also showed that ruling parties can lose: the NPN lost Kwara State to the UPN because of a split in its ranks, while the opposition parties lost seven states to the ruling party, in spite of their control of the local (i.e. State) government machinery. For those who are totally cynical about African elections, the results afford a modest hope.

It is instructive to take into account what Shagari tried to do at the beginning of his second term of office. He was happy that the stranglehold of the opposition parties in the National Assembly had been broken. When briefing Mr. S.G. Ikoku, his new Special Adviser on National Assembly Affairs, Shagari served notice that he would lean more on the national interest as conceived by his party and less on "lobbying", the Nigerian style. Again, the new National Assembly showed a vast improvement in the calibre of our legislators. In the House of Representatives, some 80% of the members were new, and many had chalked up experience in the professions and in business. There was similar, though not so definitive a trend in the Senate. Shagari retained only nine of his first-term ministers, out of a batch of forty-five. He retained only two of his ten special advisers. Entrusting the fundamentals of his economic policies to a team made up of Gamaliel Onosode, Philip Asiodu, Adamu Ciroma, and the Governor of the Central Bank, Shagari served notice that he would be firm and competent in the search for an orthodox free enterprise solution to Nigeria's economic malaise. Many people, including some top NPN members, did not know that Shagari had decided to stamp his personality on the NPN caucus. The Party Caucus met every Monday at State House, Ribadu Road, to review the performances and outline the work of the National Assembly as this relates to the business of the Executive. Shagari got the 1983 Ibadan Convention of the NPN to make both the Secretary to the Federal Government and the Federal Attorney-General and Minister for Justice members of the caucus. Additionally, the president was allowed four more members of the caucus to be appointed by him. There was no doubt that Shagari was gearing up for more decisive action during his second term. His generally accepted, and acclaimed in the business community, 1984 Budget gave firm basis for this view. The military view that the will to carry through the budget was lacking would have been objectively verified if the coup had taken place a year later.

A point that ought to be stressed, as regards the political parties, is that Shagari suffered at the hands of his party, even though the

People Redemption Party (PRP) tried to smooth his path; and his party suffered at the hands of the opposition parties grouped together under the leadership of the Unity Party of Nigeria. The activities of these political parties, taken together, snookered the Second Republic. Great insight is revealed in General Buhari's assertion that "the change (i.e. in government) became necessary in order to put an end to the crisis of confidence now afflicting our nation." Even before the military take-over, some political analysts had taken the view that the practice of the multi-party system under the Second Republic was not in keeping with the dictates of the presidential system of government. Without doubt the character traits, the personal ambitions and the operational styles of the political leaders, both acclaimed and the newbreed, was a factor of some importance. However, these operated in a context set for them by the military administration 1975 – 1979. We have earlier drawn attention to the extremely short period of three months allowed for the formation and crystallization of political parties. Why were as many as five political parties allowed? How objective were the criteria by which these parties, out of a field of fifty-two, were registered? Why were Nigerians disqualified to contest elections because of proven abuse of public office, permitted to hold key positions in the political parties? What was the rationale for barring contributions to party funds by foreign companies, but allowing such contributions from the Nigerian subsidiaries of the same companies? How effective was public surveillance over the amount of money political parties put into elections? How effective in enforcing public probity is the ten-year political quarantine on a Nigerian who amassed wealth through the abuse of public office but is allowed to retain his ill-gotten wealth? Honest answers to these questions add up to one firm conclusion. The process of power transfer from the Murtala/Obasanjo Administration to civilian politicians in 1979 was neither scientifically conceived nor adroitly executed. A good deal of the problems posed by the political parties under the Second Republic can be traced to this failing. This conclusion, it should be noted, is the result of hindsight. Accordingly, we ought not go to extremes in putting the blame on Generals Obasanjo and Shehu Yar'Adua who respectively as Head of State and Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces and the Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters supervised the process of power transfer. After all, the country had no precedent to go by at the time. Everybody, military and civilian alike, was more concerned with political stability

than with political efficiency. And nobody was in the position to know with certainty what the political leaders would do, once they were back in the political arena. Today, the situation is quite different. Such efforts ought not be allowed to repeat. More so as the Buhari Administration claims a genetic link with the Murtala/Obasanjo regime.

* * *

For the purpose of historical accuracy, it ought to be set down on record that the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) did foresee, to some extent, the political damage that could arise from virulent partisanship in a situation where the President was a minority in both chambers of the National Assembly. The situation was made more fragile by the fact that the country was experimenting with the presidential system; and civil political practice had atrophied, somewhat, because of nearly fourteen years of military rule. Towards the end of September 1979, and just before the inauguration of President Shagari as Nigeria's first executive president, the PRP called for a government of national unity in which all registered political parties would take part. Chief Awolowo for the UPN and Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri for the GNPP opposed the idea. Eventually Mallam Aminu Kano, as the National President of the PRP, and the author, as the National Secretary of the PRP, held discussions with Chief Awolowo and Alhaji Waziri at the Apapa residence of the UPN boss. The PRP side systematically expounded and stoutly defended its call for a government of national unity. The UPN and GNPP sides, appearing to be taken in by a compelling concept, requested that documents of the PRP on the issue be made available to them for further study. In strict confidence, a copy each of the PRP memorandum on a government of national unity was handed to Chief Awolowo and Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri. Follow-up discussions, irregularly attended by Chief Michael Omisade, the UPN representative, took place at the Ikoyi residence of Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri. The whole exercise, together with the concept of a government of national unity, were torn to smithereens when Chief Awolowo released his copy of the PRP memorandum to the press. Both *The Sketch* and the *Nigerian Tribune* had a field day carrying this document, as well as tendentious comments on it and vitriolic write-ups on its authors.

The Peoples Redemption Party strove to effect a *modus vivendi* with the National Party of Nigeria in Kaduna State, where the PRP had won the governorship of the State while the NPN held more

than two-thirds of the seats in the State House of Assembly. This exercise failed, because the State Governor, Alhaji Balarabe Musa preferred the lead of Chief Awolowo to that of his party president, Mallam Aminu Kano. Not content with destroying the PRP concept of a government of national unity, the UPN set out methodically to subvert the Peoples Redemption Party by swinging the PRP Governors, Balarabe Musa of Kaduna State and Abubakar Rimi of Kano State, over to its policies. The political thinking behind the UPN strategy was that Mallam Aminu Kano and the author were the obstacles to the expansion and consolidation of the Party's opposition strategy. But the PRP itself was essential to that strategy. To build political support for an essentially personal dream of power was infinitely more desirable than either national stability or a successful experimentation with presidential democracy.

The next effort by the Aminu Kano-led PRP was made in 1981. In February of that year, the National Directorate of the Peoples Redemption Party, prompted by the author as its national Secretary, decided to issue a nationwide call for a national front for the defence of the Second Republic and for national development. The PRP saw the threat posed by the Meeting of Nine Governors under the aegis of Chief Awolowo. (This was a regular get-together of the State Governors of the UPN, GNPP and PRP. The meeting later became known as the Meeting of Twelve Governors when it was joined by the three NPP Governors). The PRP also saw that the loss, through subversion, of its two governors, had sapped its strength and fighting capability. In pursuance of the February 1981 resolution of the PRP National Directorate, the PRP National President led a team of PRP leaders on a countrywide tour. The tour was adjudged a huge success. The PRP concept of a national front was everywhere acclaimed.

Such success spurred the PRP to take up the issue of a national front with President Shagari. The matter became the subject of formal negotiations between the PRP and the NPN. The NPN team was led by Dr. Chuba Okadigbo, Special Adviser to the President on Political Affairs. It included Senator David Dafinone, Leader of the NPN in the Senate, Mallam Adamu Ciroma, Minister of Agriculture and Alhaji Suleiman Takuma, National Secretary of the NPN. The PRP side was led by S.G. Ikoku, the National Secretary of the Party. It comprised Alhaji Musa Musawa, the PRP National Treasurer, Dr. M.T. Liman, the Deputy National Secretary of the PRP, and Representative Muhammed Tudun Wada. A Draft Agreement was hammered out. Both the Mahmud Waziri faction of the GNPP

and the N.N. Anah faction of the NPP later subscribed to this Draft Agreement.

The key element in the prosecution of the national front was a joint approach to the 1983 general elections. The mooted, but unannounced, PRP view was as follows:

1. concession of the presidency to Alhaji Shehu Shagari.
2. both PRP and NPN should hold the States each won in the 1979 elections.
3. the governorships of the GNPP, UPN and NPP States should be shared between PRP and NPN in a ratio of 2:1 in favour of the NPN.

The UPN and the suborned governors of the PRP, GNPP and later NPP were up in arms against the Aminu Kano/Ikoku move. Both men were tagged alarmists, because they had charged that the UPN and its collaborators were on the path of de-stabilising the federal government. The two men had drawn attention to the fact that guerrilla training was going on at a farm station in Kano State. Ikoku had deposed before the Anigololu Commission of Inquiry into the Maitatsine religious riots in Kano that foreign influence, especially Israeli, could not be completely ruled out. These hints were, of course, discarded at the time. However, events seem to have vindicated the stand of the PRP leadership. The Buhari regime has uncovered documents to show that the UPN strategy was to induce political paralysis through the National Assembly; that the NPP were training guerrillas; that trade unions were to induce economic paralysis through strikes; that Chief Awolowo was in possession of a classified military map. And now a Maitatsine-type religious riot has broken out in Yola, this time with greater loss of lives and property.

The PRP scheme for a national front foundered on human frailty. Elements within the PRP queried why Aminu Kano should concede the presidency to Shagari. To contest the governorship of Kano State was below the dignity of Mallam Aminu. The probability of the PRP losing some support in Kano State if seen to be in alliance with the NPN was rated higher in the political calculations of these elements than the reality of losing ground in all eighteen states of the federation, Kano excepted. These elements were more concerned with their personal political calculations than with the national interest.

But look at the immense, but lost, opportunities! The PRP would have won at least two, possibly as much as four governorships. Being in working harness with the NPN in the National Assembly

would have opened the door for radical and populist policies to be agreeably embraced by the Federal Executive. A landslide poll victory for such a political combination would be easier for the country to swallow. What is more, the political tie-up of Shagari and Aminu Kano would have deterred any contemplation of a coup by the military. A re-vitalised Shagari Administration, enjoying a comfortable majority in the National Assembly, and relatively at ease with radical and popular opinion in the country, would have commanded enough respect in the country to be given an extension of life to find solutions to the problems of the economy.

This urge to make the 1979 Constitution a functional success by infusing some sanity and serenity into the multi-party system drove the author into joining the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in April 1983. The reasoning behind such a move is to be found in the public address the author delivered at the NPN Presidential Rally held at the new stadium in Owerri, Imo State, on April 14, 1983. Inter alia, I said:

"The consolidation of our new political system demands the stabilisation of the multi-party system in the service of a national consensus on the goals and paths of national evolution . . .

"We Nigerians have freely chosen the multi-party system. This means that the national search is for a political system tailored to our circumstances, whose *modus operandi* is the multi-party system. Unfortunately, the apparent equation of the multi-party system to a multiplicity of political parties, each operating on a different wavelength, has be-devilled the process of political consolidation. If care is not taken, this state of affairs could undermine our national development. The proliferation of political parties seems to have substituted licence for liberty, acrimony for dialogue, bravado for tutelage, insolence for self-assertion, demagoguery for development, and eccentricity for leadership."

The full text of this address is at Appendix IX.

* * *

Despite all that has been stated above, Shagari's leadership was an important factor in the demise of the Second Republic. To a considerable extent, Nigeria's Second Republic was a challenge to leadership. On balance Shagari's leadership was ineffectual. The situation demanded political leadership that was above the ordinary. Yet what the nation got was largely supine and humdrum. Nearly four-

teen years of military rule had almost atrophied the art of democratic governance. A new generation of political aspirants who demanded leadership roles without putting in the necessary apprenticeship had arisen. A new political system was being experimented. Major high-cost projects had been inherited from the military era, and retreat from these could be interpreted as affront to the military. The key assumptions surrounding crude oil which earned ninety percent of the country's foreign exchange, namely daily sales of 2.2 million barrels per day at US\$40 per barrel throughout the Fourth Development Plan period 1981-1985 had failed to materialise. The need was for dynamic nation-building whose parameters are a clear vision of a modern Black State, a skilled and resolute struggle against foreign dominance, an adroit and rational utilisation of limited resources, and sacrifice from all segments of the Nigerian people. Instead the nation got a leadership whose public image was that of accommodation with imperialism, whose goal seemed to be the satisfaction of party greed. Shagari could not fire the imagination of students and youths. He could not reach down to the inner springs of Nigerian nationalism. He failed to win the trust of organised labour. He inspired neither the bureaucrats nor the technocrats. The captains of business saw Shagari as the distributor of patronage, not the leader of a national crusade for economic independence and achievement. Shagari could not discipline erring lieutenants, both at party, legislature and public service levels, who were possessed of a mindless drive for wealth. This further complicated a situation where most of Shagari's team were mediocres, in terms of expertise and experience.

Right at the inception of his administration, Shagari betrayed weakness that was quickly exploited by the members of the National Assembly. The legislators abandoned the place prepared for them along Badagry road and moved into Block 1004 on Victoria Island. Shagari acquiesced. This was seen as weakness, and the legislators were quick to exploit this character trait.

Shagari was too much a prisoner of his party hierarchy. He was either unwilling or unable to compel either his party chiefs or the leaders of the National Assembly to place the national interest above personal considerations. There was little evidence of disciplinary action against ministers and chiefs of parastatals involved in self-enrichment. The key formula for handling almost every situation was the fair share-out of the spoils of office. Shagari could not break out of this iron grip of mindless self-seeking because he could not

identify with the Nigerian masses.

Shagari's leadership was at its worst on economic matters. His team for running the economy — first Professor Esang and later Victor Masi at the Ministry of Finance; first Isaac Shahu and then Maitama Yusuf Bello at the Ministry of Commerce; Professor Edozien as Special Adviser on Economic Affairs — proved either too orthodox or rather incompetent. Even after the incompetence of his economic team was obvious to all, Shagari lacked the will to choose a better team. He delayed action until after the 1983 general elections, and by this time the rut had gone too far.

Shagari was slow to appreciate the fact that the economy was ailing. He had no early warning system, and he made no attempt to create one. He wrongly diagnosed a serious malady as a transient indisposition. And when finally he came face to face with a grave economic situation, Shagari persisted with palliatives and failed to apply a therapy that got to the root of things. He lacked the will to cut public spending, and could not evoke in the nation a sense of economic emergency. He persisted with projects when the national interest demanded that these be halted or even scrapped. Indeed, he pursued new projects, for example the new universities, with an eye on political kudos and with unconcern about the nation's economic interests. It was a grievous fault to betray greater attachment to partisan calculations than to national economic well-being. Shagari showed himself a shrewd politician seeking party advantage in a situation that demanded a courageous leader who could rally the people in the drive to far-reaching economic reconstruction.

Up to the time of writing this book, there is no evidence of self-enrichment or corruption or the abuse of office on the part of Shagari. But it would be naive to argue that he was unaware of mushrooming corruption among his top lieutenants, in the party, in government and in the bureaucracy. Perhaps it was the case of an honest but over-indulgent leader, who kept his hands clean but could not discipline lieutenants with soiled hands. The only other explanation is that Shagari proved weak in these matters because he was privy to the goings on or feared to apprehend some corrupt men because this would produce a boomerang effect on his confidants. Clearly there is need for further study of this problem.

It is important to be fair to Shagari, and at the same time to uphold the national interest. In terms of consolidating the new experiment at presidential-type democracy, Shagari's accommodating

spirit was a great asset. When it came to grappling with economic issues (and be it noted that economic matters are today at the heart of the nation's problem) Shagari's leadership was inadequate and uninspiring. Accordingly, Shagari proved incapable of raising Nigeria to greater heights of achievement. Whether the situation would have been different, if Shagari had completed his second term in office, is a matter for conjecture.

Nigeria must develop a new political model that will provide the appropriate mould in which true national leadership can be cast. Political parties must be national in spread. In addition, these ought to be permeated by the national ideology and should reflect a definite perspective in attaining agreed national objectives. The use of state governments as theatres for rearguard action against the federal authority ought to be eliminated. Perhaps a cutdown in the powers of state governments, a reconsideration of the number of states in the Nigerian federation, and an arrangement whereby state governments are made to pull in the same general direction with the federal authority should help the emergence of a truly national leadership in the country. For the big lesson our political travail since the 1950s has taught is that the nature and style of political leadership are very much a derivative of the political edifice itself. According to Sir Winston Churchill, we design the House and the House in turn becomes the mould in which our politics is cast. Sir Winston was commenting on the British House of Commons. If this is a firm conclusion, then mere exhortations will not give Nigeria the desired political leadership. The new political system has to be fashioned in a manner that will make national leadership the context of political success. The demand for a qualitative change in leadership style was already asserting itself noticeably in the Second Republic. What is needed is an acceleration of the process, accompanied by a thorough demolition of the bases of ethnic politics. Only a new political edifice will produce new quality political leaders. These political leaders should perform more like conductors of symphony orchestras than as star soloists. National leadership should not be conceived as an agglomerate of ethnic leaderships. Such a formation is inherently unstable and crisis-inducing. The desired political leadership should be a collective of leaderships in all facets of national life, sharing an agreed national perspective. Conceived in this manner, political leadership serves as a major and effective leverage in national development.

Leadership inadequacy has been at the heart of the Nigerian political problem since independence. It has not been the failure of an individual or of a political party. It has been the failure of the political class in particular, and the Nigerian elite in general.

The root cause of this leadership debacle is neither ignorance, nor administrative incompetence nor public corruption, though these could be considered important elements in individual cases. Nigerian leadership has failed primarily because it could not identify the imperatives of national existence. The direct consequence of this has been the inability of the Nigerian leadership to establish a firm national consensus to provide the conceptual and behavioural framework within which a Nigerian people could be evolved out of the ethnic agglomerate left behind by departing colonialism. Instead of striving to erect a new political, economic and social order, founded upon self-reliance and full national independence, promoting national cohesion and providing expanding opportunities, the Nigerian leadership in the post-colonial era came to terms with neo-colonialism, either because it was cowed by public office, or because it accepted the world view of imperialism, or because its personal and group interests were handsomely enhanced. The logical outcome of this state of affairs has been the inability of the Nigerian leadership to create and sustain conditions congenial for national development.

Conception of the Military

The notion that the Nigerian military is apolitical is widely held in this country. It is a false notion but its general acceptance has far-reaching political implications.

The notion could relate either to the individual soldier or to the Nigerian institution of soldiery. The Nigerian soldier, and this includes the air force and the navy man, is an ordinary Nigerian citizen, usually of average education and who is in search of a job. He is no different from other Nigerians of the same social and economic level. He is political in the sense that, by and large, he follows the lead of one or other of the "big men" in his village, clan or state. These "big men" are usually politicians (ministers, commissioners, legislators, councillors) or businessmen who are generally politics-oriented in the interest of their business, or chiefs who invariably need the support of politicians or businessmen to gain office or to stay afloat if in office. Thus the Nigerian soldier is simply part of the Nigerian masses who have political inclinations, usually induced. He lacks

both the sophistication and the resource-base to be above politics.

The Nigerian in the officers corps is more responsible for his views. He has political inclinations, often derived, though not always, from the political view dominant in his area of origin. He talks politics, at times passionately. Contrary to the general belief, he lives politics. He has been described as a politician in uniform. Again, the career prospects of the Nigerian military officer owe much to assessments made of him either by politicians or by high-ranking officers who attained their eminent positions on political considerations. It is established practice in the Nigerian Army, that promotions beyond the rank of major are done by politically-influenced military councils. Some of these promotions owe much to the inclinations of the President or Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The fact that mistakes could be made in these political assessments does not invalidate our contention. The promoted officer must have given the impression of being politically reliable only to renege after his promotion. Both when wearing his political camouflage in order to make himself acceptable, and afterwards when he wears his true political garb, this officer is wallowing in politics.

What has been stated above about the Nigerian military officer applies equally in the advanced countries of the world. In the United Kingdom, incidentally the supposed source of the notion we are considering, in the United States of America, and in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the promotion of officers to the higher ranks contains a distinct political element. For many years, junior officers are put under continuous political surveillance. In some cases, these officers have to sit written examinations and undergo aptitude observations that are politically and ideologically tainted. It is thus impossible for a certified communist or indeed a "fellow traveller" as the term goes, to gain promotion to high military ranks. In some countries, like the United Kingdom, the lineage of the candidate is an important consideration. In the USSR, all officers must belong to the sole communist party, and promotions must take into account the rating of candidates by the party school of ideology.

There is a related view. It is conceded that even though individual soldiers and officers could have political inclinations and indeed indoctrination, yet the army as an institution, it is maintained, remains above politics. Facts falsify this view. The successful coups in this country have always been announced as a venture by the armed

forces. The impression is always given that the armed forces acted as a body. Invariably, the case for military intervention has been political, either that political affairs had not been efficiently managed, or that the policies of the civilian administration threatened the stability of the country, or that the trauma of civilian politics constituted a threat to life and property, or that the nation was adrift.

Even the spurious claim that the armed forces are only concerned with geo-politics, and not with partisan politics, cannot validate the view that the military is apolitical. The geo-politics of any state are the conditions for its survival and development. Obviously, the conduct of partisan politics impinges directly on the state's survival and development. Therefore concern over the geo-politics of any state necessarily involves an assessment of partisan politics within the state. Some go as far as to assert that the conduct of domestic politics in other states, particularly the neighbouring states, are also to be taken into account. Thus, far from it placing the military outside politics, the claims of concern with geo-politics place the armed forces right at the centre of politics.

Closely related to, and drawing strength from the myth that the military is apolitical is yet another myth, namely that the military in politics is a corrective agency. Since the delusion is abroad that the military is above politics, it follows that military intervention in the political arena must be sold to the general public as an attempt to correct the aberrations either of inept and corrupt politicians or a malfunctioning political system. This is political salesmanship made necessary by the urge for legitimacy. It might just be noted in passing that the search for legitimacy by a military regime is yet another gimmick. At the commencement of a military regime, legitimacy is not necessary. The public concern is with effective control, operational competence and relevance. Effective control is reflected in the ability of the new regime to weather all attempts at its overthrow. Operational competence is measured in terms of resolving pressing national problems. While relevance is gauged with an eye on the process of nation-building.

To aver that a military administration is corrective has several implications. The military is the embodiment of efficiency and competence. The military is led by men of excellence in all walks of life. Military officers are paragons of probity and discipline. In sum, the military is the crystallisation of supreme intelligence. These, obviously, are spurious claims. The second (29th July 1966) and the

third (29th July 1975) Nigerian coups provide data to refute such claims. In both these coups, the military took over from the military. Therefore, charges levelled by the incoming junta relate to the military. After 29th July 1975, the Gowon regime was accused of incompetence, national drift and burgeoning corruption. The claims to "Nigerianism" and monumental patriotism by Gowon and his team were afterthoughts, considering that Gowon himself, on coming to power on 29th July 1966 publicly declared that there was no basis for Nigerian unity. The truth is that both the treasonable first statement and the patriotic act of prosecuting a civil war in order to keep Nigeria one become justifiable only in the light of the political direction Gowon pursued. Gowon's record in political life will acquire sanity and rationality only when it is postulated.

The Dimka-led abortive coup of 13th February 1976 disproves the military's claims to discipline and comradeship. In dramatic and macabre fashion, the civilian attributes of indiscipline, rivalry and intrigues erupted in the barracks. These acts expose the pretenders; and again confirm the known, namely, that soldiers are human beings.

The moral excellence and supreme intelligence claimed for the military by the notion that military regimes are corrective cannot stand even elementary tests. Granted that high-ranking officers possess high professional skills, is political proficiency part of such expertise? The purge of some officers and men of the armed forces proves not only the lack of probity and efficiency among soldiers, but also the presence of mundane fears and human frailty. The inability of military regimes to cure the ills that provided the excuse for the ejection of civilian administrations puts paid to the claims of superior intelligence on the part of the military.

Nigerians, both civilians and soldiers, will do themselves a world of good if they discard myths, and pay more attention to the reality. And what is this reality? The military harbours political inclinations. The military are free to make *coup d'etat*. The justification for such acts is not the will-o-the-wisp over legality and legitimacy. Justification lies in competence in solving pressing national problems; in a positive promotion of the historical process of nation-building and in evidence of being in firm control within the military itself. In our view, the man in khaki can govern this country, provided he is born a Nigerian citizen, he is not a minor, and he is not of unsound mind. Whether he rules successfully is another issue altogether. That will depend on what marks he scores on the three related problems of

resolving pressing national issues, promoting nation-building, and providing stability. The judges and examiners are the people. But these are indeed the very yardstick by which all civilian administrations are assessed. Nigerians should pay more attention to these criteria, forgetting the attire of the performers. For in the political practice of emergent states, the distinction between uniform and mufty, khaki and agbada, is blurred and evanescent. The soldier is often another manifestation of the politician. Both are human. Each has to give account of his stewardship in terms of national needs. Indeed, behind the apparent rivalry between both men in contemporary Nigeria, there lies a fundamental unity.

* * *

The Buhari regime has little possibility of remaining a salvage group simpliciter. It has to undertake some reforms. An added stimulus in that direction of reform is the possible achievements of the Buhari team in the next year or so.

First, the economy should be put back on its feet. There are several indications in this direction. There is a fair chance of trimming the pattern of imports consumption to available foreign exchange earnings. The drastic cuts needed to achieve this could be more easily attained under military rule than under a civilian administration. The Nigerian public is acquiring a better understanding of the general perspective of the IMF. There is noticeable, if not as yet general, upturn in those western economies that are Nigeria's main trading partners. Diplomatic action needed to persuade the Middle East OPEC members to sympathise with Nigeria's plight has gone quite far. The trade union movement could become more understanding of the nation's plight, given the new leadership in the National Labour Congress (NLC) and the official policy of involving the trade unions in the distribution of essential commodities. The savings in government expenditure, arising from abolishing all civilian administrations and their legislative and local government support systems and from the reduction in the strength of the public service, could help the morale and productivity of the shrunken public services. The adequate rains this year, the high prices of food items, and the loss of employment for large numbers of people in the public service, the services and manufacturing industries, could stimulate agricultural production in a context where the crucial input is labour. The attitude of western financial circles to Nigeria's foreign debts will ameliorate, because of the Buhari Administration's probable acceptance of terms largely dictated by these bodies.

The *gravamen* of the case of the Nigerian military against the ousted civilian regime is excesses and ineptitude. According to the military, the holders of public office under the Second Republic (1st October 1979 – 31st December 1983) went to extremes both in amassing ill-gotten wealth and in the exercise of their powers. In addition, these public office-holders were inept in the performance of their official assignments. Substantially accurate, this assessment nevertheless has some shortcomings. Would the abuse of office become acceptable if it were not carried to excess? The impression is created that all public office-holders under the civilian administration were both corrupt and inept. The telling evidence, in this regard, is provided by the wide-ranging probes conducted by the military. Many public office-holders under the civilian administration either had no case against them, or were found not culpable. Another weakness is the impression that corruption and ineptitude are the accolade of politicians and their associations alone. Evidence abounds that other strata in the Nigerian society – civil servants of all categories, military officers, officers and other ranks in the police, top functionaries of the Nigerian Security Organisation (NSO), contractors, business executives, etc. – have been afflicted by this epidemic. In truth, the phenomenon is a Nigerian, if not a human, malady. A third weakness is the impression that corruption, abuse of office and ineptitude are confined in time to the period 1st October 1979 – 31st December 1983. However, available historical facts show that these aberrations have been with us even from pre-independence days. And precisely these weaknesses have been made manifest in previous military regimes spanning January 1966 to September 1979. Even in the first few months of the Buhari Administration these maladies have appeared among Nigerians, both in uniform and in mufti.

Albeit, our standpoint is not to condone both abuse of office and ineptitude by demonstrating their general incidence. However, widespread their occurrence, these remain social evils that must be contained, curtailed and eventually eliminated. Rather our standpoint is that in the effort to understand the social disease and come up with the right therapy, Nigerians must insist on full answers to two key questions. How much of these social evils are due to subjective factors, namely the character traits of the public office-holders? How much, in turn, is due to structural factors, namely constitutional provision (or non-provisions?) and the manner in which the political party system operated? There is little doubt that character

traits contributed to the excesses. However, the widespread occurrence of these social evils points an accusing finger at the system and how it worked. For example, the system nowhere stigmatised kick-backs as a crime, nor set up a surveillance machinery to detect inflated contracts and padded invoices. As a result, self-enrichment at the expense of the public treasury occurred even where the scanty ground rules were meticulously observed. Furthermore, the funding of political parties provided a convenient and generally acceptable legitimacy for amassing ill-gotten wealth. Worst of all, the Nigerian expectation that people in public office must make good use of their opportunity and get a fair share of the national cake for their state and home areas provided intellectual rationalisation and emotional justification for a style of politics that has been aptly daubed kleptocracy.

In sum, we assert that the Nigerian Constitution, the working procedures in the ministries and parastatals, Shagari's style of sweeping things under the carpet, and the attitude of the generality of Nigerians to public life are factors that must be taken along with the character traits of individuals in the diagnosis of abuse of and ineptitude in public office. Therefore, a thorough drive against ill-gotten wealth should facilitate the sorting out of the political class on the basis of objective and verifiable criteria. It should then be possible, on this basis, to lay the ghost of politicians who have overstayed their welcome, as well as deflate spurious claims to rectitude and progressiveness. The elimination of the "bad eggs", for which the country has yearned for so long, could now be carried out, using an objective and generally accepted yardstick. Public morale should improve appreciably.

Third, the inquiry into ill-gotten wealth will reveal the anatomy of public corruption in the country. It will be seen that one part of this disease that has hit the country is a compact between office-holders (politicians, top civil servants, consultancy groups, and errand boys) and foreign companies operating in the country on the much-vaunted joint venture basis. The findings will lay bare the neo-colonialist basis of much of the wealth of Nigerians. The other part of public corruption will be traced to an operational alliance between holders of public office and well-placed Nigerian business tycoons. The evidence, in this case, will reveal the growth basis of Nigerian capitalism. All these findings are predicated on the probes being efficiently done and carried far enough. Such findings will lead Nigerians to ask the question whether there would be no repeat

performance, if the same administrative style is allowed to continue. The military rulers will be under pressure to reform the governmental system, at least as it applies to economic matters, if repeat performances are to be avoided.

Fourth, salvage operations in all important aspects of national life will confirm the all-pervasiveness of corruption. This debilitating phenomenon will be traced, if the investigations are thorough, to our production system, and to the excessive involvement of orthodox governmental machinery in economic production. Then it will dawn on the military rulers that a significant cut-down on the omnipresence of corruption is predicated on some reforms in the scope and nature of governmental dealings with the business community.

These possible achievements, once attained, will place reform on the agenda of the military rulers. But the same achievements will provoke reactions from international finance and western multinational corporations which, inevitably, will be exposed. Relations with the West will be strained by our efforts at the extradition of political escapees; and by attempts by the West to use the re-negotiation of our foreign debts to strengthen its position within Nigeria's economy. As these reactions from the outside world impose pressures on the Buhari Administration, disagreement between the salvage and reform factions within that team will deepen. Safety for the team as a whole will lie in accommodating some reforms.

Once the Buhari team transforms significantly into a reform group, the problem becomes where to draw the line. One strategy of reform could be to head off revolution. On the other hand, reform could open the way for yet more reforms, ending up in a revolution, defined as fundamental changes. In the effort to consolidate support among middle echelon officers, the Buhari team will tend to accommodate revolutionary ideas. Soon the permanency of the junta will become conditional on the embrace of a revolutionary programme.

The issues on which the Buhari team could generate internal schisms are many. Apart from personality clashes, a few of these could be mentioned here. There could be divergent pressure on the junta by their retired mentors. While retired General Obasanjo thinks there is no room in contemporary Africa for western-style democracy, retired General Danjuma pins his faith on hand-picking civilian successors. It is simply naive to think that there can be no disagreement within the Buhari team arising from the formula for

selecting civilian successors to the military. The Buhari team cannot remain unaffected by the posture of radical forces in the country. The elements most relevant in this regard are the trade union movement, students movements, pontifications from academia, and the crusade of Islamic Fundamentalists. Out of this welter will be discerned the threads of Nasser, Nkrumah, Franz Fanon, Augustinho Neto, Amilcar Cabral, Castro, Marx-Lenin, Ayatolla Khomeini.

If the experience of history is anything to go by, then it ought to be deposed that once it converts from a salvage to a reform group, the Buhari regime could move in an anti-revolutionary direction. Up till now, we have assumed that it will move leftwards on the political spectrum, that is with increased nationalism and radicalism. But the opposite could be the case. Its foreign debts problems and the need to placate multi-national corporations and western financial institutions, the longing of some of its leading members for training and equipment for the Armed Forces from the West, its probable anxiety to strike a distinctly pro-West posture in order to resolve the problems posed by the emigre political group (Dikko, Akinloye, Maitama Bello, Wayas) — these factors could propel the Buhari Administration rightwards. There are some straws in the wind. In the first half of March 1984, barely two months after taking over power, the Buhari Administration sent its Minister of Defence, Major-General Domkat Bali and its Minister for External Affairs, Dr. Ibrahim Gambari, to a "conflicts studies" conference in Washington D.C. organised by academic and defence associations which normally serve U.S. global interests. This is ominous. At *The Guardian* of 19th March 1984 commented editorially: "there is no way that a Nigerian strategic perspective which aims at consolidating the gains of national independence, and which supports the struggle of the Afffrican peoples to freedom and peace, could coincide with the world-view of a United States government." The stance of *The Guardian* is decidedly anti-imperialist. What if the Buhari Administration decides to be pro-imperialist? The trend is already clear. The Buhari Administration will be increasingly under imperialist pressures abroad and radical pressures at home.

The solution, for the military, is not an unholy alliance with western imperialism. This will be setting the hand of the clock back. This will range it against the Nigerian people. Nor does the answer lie in setting up a barricade against revolutionary ideas. Ideas are never fought successfully with guns. It serves no useful purpose to waste precious time arguing the difference between legitimate reform

and bloody revolution. That the one can shade into the other is the verdict of history. Furthermore, the possible achievements of the military outlined above might not materialise in full. The economic malaise could prove malignant; and it might require a much longer time to resuscitate. The probe into ill-gotten wealth might itself be undermined by corruption, lack of fair-play, and absence of thoroughness. Such a situation would discredit the Buhari Administration and increase its vulnerability. The answer in both situations lies in dropping altogether both terms — reform and revolution, which in any case are capable of varying interpretations. The military rulers should fix their gaze on nation-building. That is the task that must be done. The military must resolve to do all that is required to build this new nation. Then let the scholars, public relations practitioners, and lead writers in the print media sort it out among themselves whether what has been done is reform or revolution. In addition, the military must be firmly pro-Africa. Thereafter, let the world argue to their heart's delight whether the military regime is pro-West or pro-East.

CHAPTER 7

THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE – II

A Need for less Government

The Nigerian conception of government is a constraint on national development. Of necessity this conception of government ought to be totally recast.

To the average Nigerian, government is business. The ordinary people see government as the benefactor. Things have to be done for the people. If not free everything, then at least little or no taxes. The successful representative is he who promises free this and free that while holding out the prospect of diminishing taxation. The professional class see government as the godfather. Once a diploma is obtained and a friend or relation is in public office, the way to position and affluence is paved. The business community see government as the goose that lays the golden eggs. It provides the juicy contracts, ranging from petty supplies to giant projects. All that is needed in order to make a fortune is connection. And connection is founded upon and reinforced by blood and marriage links, old school ties, club membership, ethnic origin, and above all pecuniary inducement.

The public servant regards public office as the opportunity to make good. The professionals, academics as well as businessmen consider some presence in the corridors of power as the secret to success. Competence does not really matter. The politician sees being in public office as the chance of a lifetime to get his share of the national cake. This thinking lies at the root of the Nigerian malaise. Because of these pressures – from public workers, professionals, academics, businessmen and politicians – the size of government has become bloated. The civil service is enlarged through spurious appointments or multiplied through the creation of more states. Government persists in commissioning more and more parastatals, and involves itself in all sorts of projects, many ill-considered. The politicians demand new states as the only way to bring the good things of life within the reach of all. This is the doctrine of even

development. Bureaucracy is over-burdened, and becomes incompetent. Waste and duplication abound. Public life is festooned with inefficiency, nepotism and corruption. National development is bogged down in the quagmire of too much government.

Nigeria's new political system ought to reflect consciously the drive to have less government. A small and new style civil service is required. This will be taken up below. The big change will have to take place in our view of the role of government in economic activity. Because of our colonial experience, it is inevitable that government must operate in the fields of heavy basic and engineering industries, and in the provision of the infrastructure of transport, communications and power. However, there should be a conscious withdrawal from manufacturing and service industries. In the field of agriculture, government effort should concentrate on the provision of a comprehensive support programme, leaving production and distribution to private enterprise.

This increased emphasis on private enterprise will stir the ire of the doctrinaire socialists in our midst. These ought to know that this call is based on the Nigerian reality, not on ideological considerations. The Nigerian records low productivity in public enterprises, but quite high self-application, if not efficiency, in his private business. This is a paradox the political system has to recognise and resolve. The doctrinaire socialists in our midst ought to know that the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange was a doctrine that called upon the democratic state to take over existing industries. It was predicated on sophisticated industrialism. Such a situation does not exist in contemporary Nigeria. Furthermore, public, that is state ownership, does not necessarily imply civil service management of the productive sector. In large areas of production, the role of the Nigerian state should be promotional and not entrepreneurial.

Closely related to this new role of government in economic activity is the problem of the civil service. Reared under colonialism, the Nigerian civil service is basically an administrative service. It was designed by people whose concept of government meant a minimal role for the civil service. For the colonialists, government was concerned only with public peace, law and order enforcement, collection of taxes, the provision of roads and communications, and the supervision of standards governing skeletal education and health services. The colonial civil service had nothing to do with state-owned enterprises, nor with the administration of expanding welfare

schemes. Today, all this has changed beyond recognition. Apart from being over-stretched as an administrative machinery, the Nigerian civil service is confronted with problems of running a comprehensive social welfare scheme, coping with complex development projects, and operating an expanding inventory of state-owned companies and corporations. The Nigerian civil service has not measured up creditably to its expanded roles. The diagnosis is too much government. The demand on performance is far in excess of the supply of appropriate expertise. And the gap is widening. For example, the Nigerian civil service cannot match the expertise behind project proposals flowing in from the private sector, notably from expatriate firms and consortiums. The way round this has been to fall back on consultancy services. But much of this consultancy is in cohorts with the project promoters. The lack of expertise within the civil service colludes with suborned consultancy and sharp-dealing foreign interests unconcerned with our national aspirations and interests. The result is increased treasury-cost all round. Again, the therapy for this malady is less government.

Within the shrunken civil service, there should be both more expertise and new structures operating on a new methodology. We need a technical civil service. Administration should be seen as one of the expert fields. All the experts should be coordinated by a ministerial secretary appointed by the government and answerable to the minister. In order to attract and hold the right calibre experts, civil service salaries and service conditions ought to be related to market conditions. The pyramidal salary structure with the administrative officer at its apex has become an anachronism. The build-up of the requisite calibre of cadres within the service will have to acknowledge the dictates of the markets for specialised skills. The new technical civil service, sequestered from parastatals and no longer called upon to perform management roles in the execution of social services, will concentrate on a few roles, namely to provide well-packaged alternatives for attaining governmental goals; to provide expert cost-analysis of projects submitted to government; to programme the implementation of government-approved projects in a manner to obtain high yield and early returns on investments; to keep an up-to-date and sophisticated data bank on all aspects of international business. In the change-over to a technical civil service, the presumption is that recruitment into the service will be based on merit and no other factor. This is desirable in the national interest. It may not be altogether satisfactory to ignore the criterion

of "federal character." However, our view is that an adequate federal structure for the country should give every state the opportunity to run its own civil service based primarily on its own personnel. It is at that level that "federal character" might be realised without placing the national interest in jeopardy.

Elimination of Ethnic Politics

A condition for erecting a stable and efficient political system for Nigeria is the complete elimination of the ethnic factor as a prime motivation in Nigeria politics. The ethnic factor has to be sterilized in the contest for political office. The conditions for achieving this are an acceptable federal anatomy and a supra-ethnic national culture.

In deciding finally on the number and demarcation of states within the Nigerian federation, the great objective should be the extirpation of ethnic politics. The cost factor, in this consideration, is important but not over-riding. In any case, costs could be reduced substantially by reviewing the distribution of functions between the centre and the states, by pruning down the administrative machinery of the states, and by re-structuring the remuneration of political office-holders. In this context, the doctrine of North versus South should be exposed as a myth. For neither the North nor the South is monolithic ethnically, religiously, economically or socially. Hence, the search for balance in the number of states as between the North and the South is further mystification.

The core of ethnic politics has been three related postures, namely:

1. securing a fair share of the national cake, that is even development;
2. rivalry between the three major ethnic groups, Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo;
3. the self-assertion of the so-called ethnic minorities, that is, all the Nigerian ethnic groups less the three major ones noted above.

The Nigerian experience is that ethnic politics dominated the pre-independence constitutional conferences, and sought to triumph through the political parties and the military. Today's requirement is not a re-shaping but the complete elimination of ethnic politics. The three basic postures of ethnic politics could be adequately assuaged by the application of a fundamental formula that will guide the fashioning of a permanent and ultimate structure for the Nigerian

federation, underlie recruitment into the armed forces and the police, and provide the basis for revenue allocation between the centre and the states. The three major ethnic groups see themselves as equals in the tussle for political power. The desire to be politically dominant, by each of these groups, lies at the root of our inability to conduct an acceptable head count. The 1953 population census is perhaps the most accurate the country has had, if the criterion is the relative size of the various ethnic groups that make up the Nigerian family. Two observations can be made. The three major ethnic groups seem approximately equal in population. The minority ethnic groups taken together seem approximately equal to the three major ethnic groups also taken together. Herein could be found the philosopher's touchstone for resolving Nigeria's ethnic tangles. The three major ethnic groups are allocated 48 points, with each getting 16 points, the other ethnic groups are collectively allocated another 48 points, and the two federal capitals get 2 points each. In the creation of states, this means that the three major ethnic groups get the same number of states each; the ethnic minorities together get a number of states as equal to the three major ethnic groups taken together; and there are two federal capital territories. The Hausa/Fulani ethnic group currently has four states, since only minority formations of this ethnic group appear in Gongola, Kwara, Plateau and Niger States. There are outcroppings of Yorubas in Kwara and Bendel States; while Igbo outcroppings appear in Bendel and Rivers States. On the other hand, the ethnic minorities appear in Kaduna and Bauchi States. These minorities extrusions, in order to avoid restlessness, should be regrouped with their fellow minorities in the adjoining states. All calculations should be permanently based on this ethnic categorisation. On this basis, both the Yorubas and Igbo groups will have four states each; and the ethnic minorities grouped together will have twelve states. This gives us a federation of 24 states, with two federal capital territories – Abuja and Lagos. We are of the considered view that the country has come round to appreciate the inconvenience of making the federal government a tenant of any of the states. Major federal institutions in Lagos cannot be moved elsewhere and their continued presence in Lagos poses administrative and jurisdiction problems. However, the federal territory of Lagos need not be coterminus with the existing Lagos state. There will be no need to retain the predominantly Yoruba areas of Epe, Badagry, Ikorodu within the Lagos federal territory. It should be noted that the number of states in the Nigerian federa-

tion could be cut down simply by allocating less than four states to each of the three major ethnic groups. For example, if the major ethnic groups get 3 states each, then the minorities together will get 9 states and the total number of states in the Nigerian federation would be 18. Similarly the number of states could be raised to 30 by allocating 5 states each to the major ethnic groups.

On the basis of the foregoing calculations, the Nigerian federation will have the following anatomy:

- Federal Capital Territories — I. Abuja
II. Lagos (present Lagos state less Badagry, Epe and Ikorodu Local Government Areas).

<i>Ethnic Groups</i>	<i>States</i>
Hausa/Fulani	Bauchi (less Gombe and Toro Local governments). Kaduna (less Kachia and Jema's Local governments). Kano Sokoto
Igbo	New Anambra Enugu Imo Abia
Yoruba	Ogun (to include Epe, Badagry and Ikorodu Local Government areas of present Lagos State). Oyo Oshun Ondo
	<i>Note:</i> The states within each ethnic area could be re-defined, provided the total number in each ethnic area remains four.
Ethnic Minorities	Kwara (present Kwara state less Kabba province but including the Nupe area of present Niger State). Kogi (present Kwara state less Ilorin province plus Igalla people in present Benue State).

Ethnic Groups

States

Benue (present Benue state less Igalla people plus Lafia division in present Plateau State).

Plateau (present Plateau state less Lafia division plus Toro Local government in present Bauchi state plus Kachia and Jema'a Local Governments in present Kaduna State).

Borno (Kanuri areas of present Borno state).

Biu (non-Kanuri areas of present Borno state).

Gongola (present Gongola state plus Gombe local government in Bauchi state).

Ethnic Minorities
(cont'd)

Niger (present Niger State less the Nupe area).

Bendel (present Bendel state less Western Ijaw division).

Rivers (present Rivers state plus Western Ijaw division of present Bendel state).

New Cross River

Qua Iboe (present Cross River State less Oron, and the senatorial districts of Calabar and Ogoja).

Note: The exact delimitation of the states in the areas of the ethnic minorities could be re-drawn, provided the number of states remains a total of 12.

By this schemata, each state in this 24 state federation has four points while the two federal capital territories have two points each.

This fundamental formula should guide state representation in the Nigerian armed forces and in the Police. The rank and file of the Nigerian Army, Navy and Air Force will be filled by draft through the citizen army arrangement. There will be compulsory national service not longer than 2 years. The permanent and specialised units in these services, together with the entire officers corps, will be recruited on the basis of this fundamental formula. The officers corps of the Nigeria Police and the Nigerian Security Organisation

(NSO) will be recruited by the same formula; but the other ranks of these services, in each state, will be filled with indigenes of these states.

Our fundamental formula may look rather rough-hewn. Yet it goes to the heart of the problem. It smoulders negative ethnic feelings at their source by making the practice of national politics look palpably fair and even-handed. By such an arrangement, the practitioners of ethnic politics are thrown on the defensive. Given general enlightenment, such divisive politics will prove progressively unrewarding. Some critics may argue that the formula gives too much cognisance to the ethnic factor. There is a simple answer to this. Our objective is to eradicate ethnic politics by cutting the ground from under it. Our goal has not been, and indeed cannot be, the elimination of the ethnic groups themselves.

The ultimate cure for ethnic politics, the flesh as it were to the anatomy outlined above, is integrative national culture that will mould true Nigerians. Such a national culture will absorb the best in the value patterns of existing ethnic cultures, and will harmonise these. It becomes the value-frame for the behaviour and responses of all Nigerians, while ethnic cultures are reduced to traditional festivities and pageantry. Additionally, this national culture will point up a Nigerian horizon, reflect a scientific and technological attitude and sustain a consciousness of hard work and self-reliance.

A New Role for Education

A platitude that has beclouded the thinking of Nigerians, vitiated our perspective and undermined our national planning is the notion that the productiveness of an individual is a function of formal education. By formal education is meant the three Rs of primary school education, the grammar school type secondary education, and the academic education provided by the orthodox university. This notion is the rationale for making ill-thought-out promises of providing free education. And the politicians perennially fall over themselves, especially at elections, making promises of free education. The zenith of such propaganda antics has been the promise of free education at all levels.

None of the politicians has bothered to compute the cost to the national treasury of free education at all levels. All that passes for such calculation is yet another promise, namely that enough would be saved on other items of government expenditure in order

to make adequate provisions for funding free education. This aspect of the problem is rather complex. Accordingly it is reserved for a few highly academic circles. The complexity of the problem and, more importantly, the implications for the people make this aspect of the problem of free education unsuited for public harangue.

No one, among the politicians that is, has endeavoured to examine the correctness of the notion or assess its value among the gamut of factors involved in national development. There can be no doubt that formal education can and does impart to the citizen the basic tools that are useful in acquiring knowledge relevant to production in agriculture, in manufacturing, and in the service industries. But these basic tools of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and general knowledge must, in turn, be employed in the acquisition of the technical expertise that is directly relevant to production. The acquisition of this technical expertise presupposes the existence of some measure of technology-based production. It is here that developing countries get caught in a vicious circle. We mass-produce in the field of formal education. Technology-based productive activities with which formal education interacts to produce technical expertise do not exist. Primitive production continues in existence because there is little domestic technical expertise to expand it both laterally and vertically. The result is first, the over-production of persons mainly fitted to office and administrative jobs. The second result is a large and growing army of educated persons who cannot be absorbed either in primitive agriculture or in stunted manufacturing that employs outdated, foreign-supplied technology. Thus formal education ends up reinforcing underdevelopment and creating a growing army of unemployable persons. Indeed by creating unemployable citizens, formal education becomes the major contributory factor to the drift of young people from the farms. The concomitants of this state of affairs are a steady decline in output and productivity in agriculture; urban congestion; rising crime rate in the urban areas due to relaxed societal controls. In the public services, where those with formal education find employment, available jobs do not expand as fast as the army of job-seekers grows. This trend has fuelled the demand for more states in order to create opportunities for white collar workers.

On its part, the proliferation of bureaucracies has lowered efficiency all round, by spreading experience rather thin. A direct corollary has been the encouragement of mediocrity and nepotism in the public services. Again, because of the dominant position of

the civil service in running the public affairs of the country, the managerial cadres in the parastatals have been entrusted to civil servants. But the training and experience of the administrative cadre in the civil service are not at a premium in the managerial levels of the directly productive sectors of the economy. In these areas, the market forces and the vagaries of international business predominate. The result is a plague of mismanagement and inefficiency in the parastatals.

The overall picture is gloomy. The efficiency of the public service has nose-dived. The parastatals are uneconomic and unprofitable. Job availability in the civil service and in the public corporations and companies combined is very low. The surplus labour force cannot be absorbed in agriculture, because formal education orientates the youths away from the farms. Neither can the surplus labour force move into manufacturing which is expanding at a very slow rate. At first, the formally educated sought to overcome his predicament by climbing higher on the ladder of formal education. But the unemployment malaise has hit the university products. The weakness of our planning strategy and the hollowness of our thinking both stand exposed. This discovery becomes a tragic moment in our national life.

Once again, the answer lies in getting rid of platitudes and myths in our national thinking. Far from being the key to production, formal education has produced a supply/demand disequilibrium in the field of production. To make formal education free at all levels is to further compound our problems. The answer, we believe, lies in expanding the contents of formal education at the primary level, and making it free and compulsory at that level. Primary school education ought to expand from the three Rs to include occupational training for agriculture and the service industries. The aim should be to produce children who can fit into agricultural jobs or become apprentices to craftsmen and artisans in the service industries, as a first step to setting up on their own. Our education policies should be informed by our national needs in the field of the economy. These should no longer become the artifices of politicians in their desperate strivings for political power.

Finally, a major objective of Nigerian education should be to inculcate the integrative national culture as discussed above. Primary school, that is basic education, should be education for citizenship. The national interest demands that this be free and compulsory. It should be provided by the local government councils, in accord-

ance with nationally prescribed and supervised standards. The language of instruction will be the child's mother tongue and English until a Nigerian lingua franca arrives. Secondary school education should produce the middle-level manpower needed for Nigeria's development and unity. It should reinforce the integrative national culture, by preparing the ground for the eventual emergence of the Nigerian lingua franca. Secondary school education should be provided by the state governments in strict conformity with federally-prescribed national criteria. It has to be closely monitored nationally. At the end of secondary school education, success at a competitive examination, plus no more than two years compulsory military service become the only desiderata for university and technical education and for teacher training. Higher education should be geared closely to national self-sufficiency in high level manpower requirements in all facets of life, especially in the technical, industrial, agricultural and teaching fields. University and technical education will be provided by the federal government and approved agencies in accordance with nationally agreed standards. Teacher training is the exclusive monopoly of the federal government. Nationally agreed standards at all levels of education will be monitored by a National Education Commission.

Within fifteen to twenty years of the operation of such an educational system, Nigeria should be in the position to agree on a lingua franca, without tears. The Nigerian lingua franca will complement English.

Mass literacy is desirable. It should be given in the mother tongue of the adult pupil. But it should inculcate the norms of the integrative Nigerian culture, while imparting some ideas about key occupations like agriculture, house building, and routine maintenance. It is best organised at the local government level with materials provided nationally and drawing on both teachers and the top class pupils of primary schools as instructors.

Strengthening Mass Organisations

A weakness of Nigerian governance in the past has been the reliance of the federal authorities on the state governments and ethnic-based political parties in order to get through to the grass-roots. The inadequacy of such an arrangement is exposed at times of political stress and national crisis. Faced with such an impasse the federal authorities usually fall back on traditional rulers, whose

limitations are only too apparent. Such limitations on the part of traditional rulers explains the speed with which traditional rulers are played down as soon as the crisis seems to have blown over. The Nigerian political system should set out, consciously and in a determined manner, in the direction of erecting national institutions that serve as transmission belts between federal authority and the ordinary folks at the local levels. The armed forces, the judiciary and the police are national institutions, but these are not levers for moving the common man into action. Accordingly, the country needs a centralised and all-embracing labour movement, a country-wide peasants movement and an integrated cooperative movement. These bodies have to be seen to be nationwide both in their coverage and their operation. The first already exists in the Nigerian Labour Congress, but that structure needs reinforcement, orientation and a feeling of partnership with the federal authorities. On the side of the employers and self-employed persons, there are the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association (NECA), the various Chambers of Commerce, Manufacturers Association, as well as professional bodies. It is in the national interest that these bodies should exist, thrive and provide effective communications channels with the federal authorities. To achieve these goals, these bodies have to be trans-ethnic in the composition of their leadership, and non-political in the party sense, though committed to the general political perspective of the country.

The Mass Media

An important national institution is the press. The Nigerian press has proliferated. It spans the entire country, and penetrates every home. But it contains some deleterious elements. The Nigerian press is often partisan to the extent of being unpatriotic. It does not show much commitment to truth and accuracy in the information dished out to the public, to depth in its analysis, and to balance in its presentation of contesting viewpoints. Ethnic bias and slant are ever present. National commitment is less than skin-deep. Much of its shortcomings arise from the fact that the Nigerian press are largely vehicles for the promotion of ethnic and personal political interests.

There is need for far-reaching changes in the Nigerian press. Higher proficiency, greater depth, and deeper commitment to national objectives are demanded. Both the ownership and performance of

the media call for re-examination. In our view, it is in the national interest that newspapers are owned and run by national institutions, namely political parties, central labour movement, national employers associations, professional organisations, peasant movement, cooperative movement and the armed forces. Governments, at all levels, should withdraw from the ownership and operation of newspapers. Radio and television should be a centralised monopoly of the federal authorities, not necessarily the federal government.

The country will still be faced with two problems. These are existing government-owned newspapers and electronic media, and the privately-owned print media. The government-owned media should become the responsibility of a National Media Commission lodged in the Presidency. Each government-owned press should then be run by a Board of Directors on which the political parties, trade union and peasants and cooperative movements, and the military would be represented. Annual reports should go to the National Media Commission and tabled before the National Assembly. A Press Council, set up by the National Media Commission, should be empowered to adjudicate in all cases of complaints brought by the public against media houses. The Press Council would lay down and enforce guidelines for the operation, including qualifications of top functionaries, of the media. There need not be press censorship, except as the national interest demands in time of emergency. Sanctions imposed by the Press Council and an updated law of libel should be sufficient and adequate. Privately-owned print media should be phased out.

Welfarism

The grand illusion with which contemporary Nigeria is afflicted is a set of related notions and panaceas which could be lumped together under the banner of welfarism. Welfarism is the Nigerian pseudonym for the philosophy and practice of the Welfare State of Western Europe and North America.

The Welfare State sprouted in Western Europe between the world wars, and triumphed after the defeat of Hitler Germany and Mussolini Italy in World War II. In historical perspective, the welfare state in Europe and North America is an attempt to resolve the crisis of liberalism. Liberalism was political democracy, informed by philosophical radicalism, and standing on a foundation of *laissez faire* capitalism. Capitalism, the doctrine of free enterprise in the context of perfect competition, was evolved in the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries. It reached its apogee in the nineteenth century. But towards the end of the nineteenth century, and especially in the opening decades of the twentieth century, capitalism had grown into a system of giant monopolies in a context of imperfect competition. It had become a prime stimulus for world wars in an effort to re-divide the world's raw materials and markets. Political democracy became ill-squared with economic plutocracy. The intellectual climate of the time, dominated by philosophical radicalism, sharpened the conflict. The search for colonial possessions, and the re-distribution of colonial possessions after World War I dampened the conflict in some Western countries but exacerbated it in others. The democrats demanded the democratisation of the economy. The plutocrats wanted a strong State to beat back the menacing trends of plebian democracy. This crisis gave birth to socialism in Russia in 1917 when the popular forces triumphed; and to fascism in Italy, Germany and Spain where the plutocrats won the day. The spoliation of Germany by World War I, which it lost, provided a congenial political climate. Britain, France and a few other West European countries, together with USA and Canada across the Atlantic, viewed these resolutions of the crisis of liberalism with disquiet. Being middle class democracies, these countries abhorred both Soviet egalitarianism based on the expropriation of capital and the militarism of fascism that drew strength from the doctrine of racial superiority. In their case, political democracy accommodated private enterprise capitalism on the condition that part of the wealth of the plutocrats, through steep taxation and a few cases of nationalisation in the national interest, was diverted into the provision of comprehensive "free" social services for the populace. This arrangement came to be known in political philosophy as the Welfare State. The success of this political compromise owes much to the character of the people involved, particularly the British, to the victory scored by Britain and France in World War II, but above all to the vast overseas investments held by these countries in their colonies and in other parts of the world. The Welfare State, in historical perspective, is the reaction of the imperial metropolises to the crisis of liberalism.

Nigerians who studied in Britain and the USA between the Great Depression 1931 – 1934 and after World War II (up to around 1950), especially those in the social sciences, were saturated with the teachings of the Welfare State. In addition, these caught the virus of nationalism which had been spread all over the world by

World War II and the crusade of the Pan African Movement. Accordingly, these Nigerian educated elite returned home after 1945 armed with two concepts – welfare state and nationalism. The spread of nationalism in the form of liberation from colonial rule was an embarrassment for the colonial powers. These powers were put on the diplomatic defensive, especially after 1960 when the United Nations Organisation massively endorsed the resolution condemning colonialism and calling upon its members to renounce that system of oppression and exploitation. The imperial powers saw that the dictate of wisdom was to strike a political deal with the leadership of the national liberation movements. For the grant of formal or political sovereignty, the imperial powers were to retain safe stay for their investments. The leadership of the national liberation movement in Nigeria quickly fell for this ploy. Thus the negotiated independence of 1960 quickly enshrined the welfare state in constitutional form. This was easy to attain, because both sides at the constitution negotiating table (the imperial establishment and the leadership of the national liberation movement) fully shared the philosophy of the welfare state. In their pious ignorance, and given the euphoria that accompanied the grant of political independence, the leaders of our national liberation movement never paused to consider the long-term applicability of the doctrine of the welfare state to the circumstances of developing countries. The shrill voice of scepticism demanding the radicalisation of newly acquired independence was quickly brushed aside as communist extremism or youthful braggadocio. The voice of scepticism failed to espouse its case. Instead it fell back, at best, to the rehash of Soviet experience in Central Asia, and at worst, to the unreflecting regurgitation of Soviet propaganda. Little was it realised that the welfare state, evolved for an imperial country with advanced industrialism at home, huge overseas investments earning super profits, and settled political cultures developed over the centuries, will make a poor fit in underdeveloped countries. The sophisticated political superstructure of the Welfare State just cannot be sustained by the dwarfed and lopsided auxiliary economies of newly emergent states. Nigerian political leaders, both the segment committed to the welfare state and that other segment enarmoured of the Soviet system, committed a common error. They both forgot that their respective advocacy presupposed an intermediate stage of thorough-going, multi-faceted nationalism.

Because of our adherence to the philosophy of the welfare state,

our political practice in Nigeria has been saddled with unrealisable promises and riddled with questionable panaceas. The political class promises endless and limitless welfare schemes. These are to be provided "free". These include education at all levels, comprehensive health services, social security benefits (maternity benefits, unemployment benefits, accident benefits, old age benefits, death benefits), housing schemes. Even full employment is promised. The political parties fall over themselves to make these rosy promises. The one must not be outbid by the other. Of course, the political parties get away with these spurious promises, mainly because a largely illiterate and simpleminded people lack the ability to investigate the cost side of these promises. The few politicians who address themselves to the cost problem, even desultorily, turn up with the claim that graduated income tax and a proliferation of taxes will provide the required funds. Some add the popular sop of the nationalisation of private enterprises, especially foreign-owned business. No one bothers to find out how much income tax can yield in a country where per capita income is below ₦200 per annum. To these, the inquiry whether the proliferation of taxes will stimulate or stifle production is the sophistry of those who wish to protect privilege. Will nationalisation not kill the goose that lays the golden egg is the idle prattle of collaborators with international finance. Even in the face of monumental inefficiency and perennial losses by the parastatals, it is still asserted that the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange will create the needed opulence.

The more the canons of the welfare state fail to produce the promised eldorado, the more strident become the clamour of the welfare statist. The clarion call is for the equitable distribution of wealth. There is no compensating concern about the production of wealth. The inquiry whether what is not produced can be distributed is simply side-tracked, perhaps because many apostles of even distribution of wealth are themselves prominent elements on the ownership side of business.

Then the oil boom burst on the country. Everybody was relieved. Oil wealth would sustain comprehensive and free social services. We forgot that oil is a wasting asset and that it is wiser to build up agriculture and manufacturing industries through oil wealth, and thereafter rest measured social services on a stable and balanced industrialism. Indeed, the urge for "a fair distribution of wealth" has led to the insatiable appetite for new states. The demand for more

states is no longer to meet the cry for ethnic self-determination. Rather it is "the surest and quickest way" to share out the national cake.

Nigeria as a developing country will attain to the welfare of the generality of its people only by creating the wealth on which such welfare could be founded. Our people have to reign in their consumption mentality. Production all round must go up. In such a context, the doctrine of the welfare state is, at best, premature, and, at worst, counter-productive. The philosophy or ideology that should inform our political practice must emphasise the primacy of production, relate reward to output, encourage personal abstinence and productive efficiency as the foundations for economic growth. To make way for this new philosophy or ideology in our public life, the illusion of the welfare state must first be discarded.

A New Party System

The Nigerian experience of the formation and operation of political parties demands deep study. A tradition seems to have been built up in this area. And that tradition is harmful to the national interest. If the party system is to serve Nigeria well, then this tradition has to be rejected totally, and a new approach laid down for the political parties of the future.

Between 1950 and 1966, three main political parties dominated Nigerian politics. These were the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Action Group (AG), and the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC). Their birth, their growth and their operation led to two firm conclusions. First, these were dominated by the ethnic outlook. Second, public funds were used to provide the sinews of growth. Political parties were banned from January 1966 till 20th September 1978. When political parties were again set up late in 1978, the constitutional conditions for winning both the presidency and the governorships compelled political leaders to strive to give a national and state-wide covering to their political parties. Scoring the highest number of votes was supplemented with the need to score twenty-five percent of the votes in two-thirds of the states or local government councils respectively for winning the presidency and the governorships. The new political parties again resorted to the use of public funds for their growth and operations.

If account is taken of the experience of political parties both between 1950 and 1966, and again between 1978 and 1983, three

very firm conclusions can be made. These are as follows:

1. the Nigerian belief seems to be that the founding fathers of political parties must be men (and women) of affluence who additionally can harness the support of wealthy, but usually speculating, businessmen.
2. the resources for running political parties, in the main, come from the spoils of office, namely kick-backs on government contracts, cost-inflated projects, milking of state-owned enterprises, and donations from persons and firms who have benefited, or seek to benefit, from government patronage.
3. a national perspective can be forced on the political parties through suitably-designed laws.

These firm conclusions suggest that the path of development for the political parties of the future lies along enthroning a two-party system, stricter legislation on the national character of political parties, stringent laws aimed at crippling the ability of non-political bodies, especially the business community, to fund political parties, a retreat from the proliferation of state-owned enterprises, stricter monitoring and control of the process of raising and spending party funds. The situation calls for the enactment of a comprehensive legislation covering all aspects of the formation and operation of political parties. Such a law should not be left to a future National Assembly. These stipulations ought to be in a fundamental document accompanying the constitutional instrument.

The cynics will scoff at the submission of the above paragraph. Some believe Africans can never measure up to civilised political life found in some other parts of the world. These elements hold that the African is a sub-human species. We can ignore these. But there are those Nigerian cynics who hold that the military is the only effective government for Africans. This view charges Nigerian politicians of endemic incompetence and corruption. These conveniently forget that the Nigerian military has exhibited all the shortcomings for which the Nigerian politicians have been pilloried. It is important to point out that behind this viewpoint masquerades western imperialism. Imperialism has come to the conclusion that its continued exploitation of emergent African states can be put on a secure trajectory only if political power is wielded by a military, trained by it and loyal to its ideals. The mechanism of the new imperialism is an army that can bend the will of the people to its own and is tied up with the West through training, ideas, supply of military hardware, and integration with Western defence schemes.

The "ideology" for this new colonisation is a run down of the political class in Africa accompanied by the build-up of the military as the agency par excellence of national development because it is the repository of probity, competence, discipline and patriotism. Nigerians must expose this viewpoint for what it is, namely the banner of the re-colonisation of Africa. Indeed, one century after the Berlin treaty of 1885, Western imperialism needs a new technique to remain on the African continent.

Formal Socialism

The assessments made in this chapter and in chapter 6 will provoke controversy and rival assessments. This will be a welcome development. Here, attention need only be drawn to the inevitable reaction of a category of Nigerian critics. The nationalist and populist approach advocated by us will be severely assailed and rejected offhand by the formal socialists. These elements are glued to the class war. For them, everything is cast in the mould of the bourgeoisie-proletariat class war. Anything outside this ambit is either non-science or treachery. The obsession with the class war makes the formal socialists ignore or devalue a political phenomenon that does not exactly fit into their analysis. In particular, the formal socialists downscore neo-colonialism. To them neo-colonialism is no different from the capitalist contradiction. As such, both the nature and the strength of neo-colonialism in the contemporary world are not fully appreciated. This doctrinaire intransigence leads to awkward postures where the national revolution is undermined and its enemies are considered political allies under the dogma of temporary class alliances.

The formal socialists in Nigeria have the problem of credibility. These characterise Chief Awolowo and his Unity Party of Nigeria as the welfarist wing of bourgeois reformism. But these same people served, at least in the 1979 elections, as agents of the UPN in several northern states and within the trade union movement. These formal socialists chastised the Peoples Redemption Party as social democratic reformism. Accordingly, these men festooned around the two PRP governors in the struggle to wrest control of that party from Mallam Aminu Kano. In the end, the formal socialists and the renegade PRP governors settled for a political alliance with "the liberal reformist movement" made up of the UPN (the "welfarist") and the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) and the Great Nigeria Peoples

Party (GNPP) as the "conservative wing". Referring to the 1977 First All-Nigeria Socialist Conference held at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, these formal socialists asserted that "social democrats staged a walk-out at the conference and refused to support the resolution that the Left in the country should organise a separate socialist party." The truth was, of course, quite different. There was no walk-out at the conference. The decision of all the socialist groups gathered at the Zaria Conference, including these formal socialists, was to form a broad-based party of nationalists, democrats, radicals and socialists. Ola Oni and Eskor Toyo were the main dissidents. Furthermore, revelations consequent on the military coup of 31st December 1983 have exposed these same formal socialists as harbouring the same tendencies and the abuse of office usually stigmatised as the accolade of the bourgeois politicians.

Their credibility apart, these formal socialists have to grapple with major ideological issues. First, there has to be a firm decision on which is primary, the imperialism-news states contradiction or the bourgeoisie-proletariate contradiction. Their attachment to the latter has made them ineffective in the on-going fight for the former. Their return to the former is seen by them as self-denunciation. Secondly, there is the problem of an effective proletariat in emergent African countries. In these countries, there is a lumpen proletariat riddled with ethnic, religious, cultural and state i.e. regional interests and with conflicting ideological viewpoints. Its low level of education, its numerical weakness, and the high content and influence of white collar workers in its fold, weaken its grip and efficacy as the coordinator and motivator of the impoverished masses.

In the third place, the formal socialists are caught in a veritable dilemma. Convinced of the need for joint action with other social and political forces because of the relative weakness of the proletariat, these formal socialists yet insist that the leadership of the national front must be recognised as their prerogative. It is conveniently forgotten that leadership is an accolade bestowed by struggle. Leadership is never conferred in a formal negotiation or through semantic brilliance. Invariably, political leadership is the reflection of the balance of internal forces. The prowess of each element among these internal forces is assessed in battle. This is true of a front of political parties. It is also true within the political party. Nigeria's formal socialists ought to be told, in clear terms, that ideological carplings unsupported by a record of effective practical struggle merely relegates them to the role of commentators on the

sidelines of the political arena. Thumbing lifts at any political bandwagon passing by invariably ends up inexplicable sommersaults or alternatively leads to political demise. Furthermore, ideological orthodoxy or dogmatism often leads to political isolation or even irrelevance. Nigeria's formal socialists ought to be constantly reminded that Karl Marx wrote for pre-imperialism capitalism in the context of advanced industrialism, unfettered with foreign dominance and free of external control. He was updated for the imperialist stage by Vladimir Lenin, again from the standpoint of the advanced countries. In the contemporary world, the teachings of Lenin have to be updated for the stage of worldwide inter-linked neo-colonialism, from the perspective of the underdeveloped economies. Herein lies the historical significance of Kwame Nkrumah. In the circumstances of the emergent states, political alliances have become unavoidable, indeed mandatory. This could take the form either of a sole amorphous political party of several political parties in tandem. An updated political theory, firmly anchored to the socio-economic reality on the ground and to a scientific view of the international community, provides the only reliable compass for navigating the treacherous seas of political alliances.

This is not to aver that socialism has no future in Nigeria and the new states of Africa. While welfarism is a blind alley, socialism can still be relevant if scientifically applied. Socialism in Africa must come to terms with the harsh reality, namely that national independence in all its facets and the build-up of a modern industrialism must be an integral part of its doctrine and practice. Given our circumstances, socialism in the emergent states of Africa has to be construed as a new social order of radical nationalism organised on the basic canons of the dignity, equality and brotherhood of man.



CHAPTER 8

THE MODEL

In the previous chapters, the aim was to assess the Nigerian political experience. Our view is that such assessment should serve a dual purpose. Good experience will be identified; and bad experience against which the country should guard itself will also be identified. Such a sorting out will help in the process of building a new political edifice. Our standpoint is that Nigeria's new political edifice has to be genuinely Nigerian. The reproduction of alien models leads to a cul-de-sac. Our uniquely Nigerian model need not be perfect *ab initio*. The important thing is to have a system that works and is suited to our needs, but capable of improvements in the light of experience. We need a political arrangement that is tight enough to contain strains and stresses, but at the same time does not provide a ready vehicle for personal dictatorship. Our starting point has been the rational digest of our past political experience. Our methodology is open-mindedness to change, thereby allowing our political edifice to grow and modify with political developments. What we desire for Nigeria is a Modern Black State created by the genius, industry and brotherhood of its people, dedicated to the liberation and unity of African peoples, and promoting a just social order founded upon the dignity and equality of man. Our model is set out hereunder.

A. BASIS

1. A secular, federal Republic of national independence, with a home-made political system, a self-activating national economy, and a national culture.
2. A federation of 24 states. (Note: the number of states could be varied upwards or downwards. See Chapter 7).
3. A two-party system, where both parties are peoples parties securely insulated from the cash-power of both domestic and foreign business. (Alternately, a one-party system with multiple party candidates and independent candidates at elections).
4. National Ideology: Peoples Nationalism.

5. A citizen armed forces, politically monolithic in terms of the national ideology.
6. A Moral Code, covering private and public life, and entrenched in the constitution. The Code is animated by the national ideology, and distilled out of traditional African mores, Sharia Code and Christian ethics.
7. National objectives:
 - i. national unity that rests on social cohesion, a national culture, and political stability that accommodates necessary change.
 - ii. Africa free from imperialism, racism, despotism and foreign hegemony. Political union of African states.
 - iii. an expanding, self-activating, balanced national economy, approached through a guided mixed economy firmly geared to economic independence.
 - iv. a guaranteed minimum living standard for all.
 - v. basic freedoms within the context of the common good as defined by the national ideology.
 - vi. equality of rights and duties for all citizens.
 - vii. expanding and comprehensive social security, related to the level of economic development.

B. AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

1. The President

Status: Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

Mode of Election:

- a) a military officer not less than forty years old and not below the rank of Brigadier.
- b) Selected by the Convocation of Officers of the Armed Forces by ballot; submitted to Presidential Council, and thereafter to the National Assembly for ratification.

Tenure of Office:

7 years. No re-election.

Functions:

- a) Armed Forces. Recruitment, standards, promotion, and discipline. Army, Navy, Air Force Councils.
- b) Police. Recruitment, standards, promotions and discipline. Police Service Commission.
- c) Civil Service. Recruitment, standards, promotion,

- and discipline. Civil Service Commission.
- d) Electoral Commission.
- e) National Guidance Commission. National Ethical Code. National Culture – standards and inspection. Censorships.
- f) Mass Media Commission.
- g) Judiciary. Discipline and postings. Judicial Service Commission.
- h) Accreditation of diplomats.
- i) Population Census. Population Census Commission.
- j) Nigerian Security Organisation. Recruitment, standards, promotion, discipline.
- k) National Security Council.
- l) Prerogative of Mercy for the whole country.
- m) National Education Commission. Standards and Monitoring.

Modus Operandi:

The President operates through the Office of the President on the basis of decisions of the Presidential Council composed as follows:

- i) President as Chairman
- ii) Prime Minister as Vice-Chairman and the Deputy Prime Ministers responsible for Internal Affairs and Security, and for National Guidance and Presidential Affairs.
- iii) Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters and the Service Chiefs, including police and NSO.
Note: Because the Commander-in-Chief is a full-fledged and high-ranking military man, there shall be no need for a Chief of Defence Staff. The Supreme Headquarters, headed by its Chief of Staff, will serve as the link between the Commander-in-Chief and the Service Chiefs. The Army, Navy, and Air Force Councils shall be housed in the Supreme Headquarters which is the military division of the Office of the President.
- iv) Ministers of Defence, Internal Affairs, External Affairs, Justice and Attorney-General, Finance.
- v) Chief Justice of the Federation.
- vi) Head of the Institute of Policy and Strategic

Studies.

vii) President of the National Assembly.

Note: There shall be no special advisers to the President. The Heads of the permanent commissions shall perform these roles.

2. *The Prime Minister*

Status: Head of Government

Mode of Election:

Direct popular vote of the entire country.

Elected on same ticket with his six deputy prime ministers selected one each for Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba groups of states, and three for the states of the ethnic minorities. Each state has two electoral votes, both of which go to the candidate with a majority of the popular votes cast. The winner is the candidate with a majority of the electoral votes plus 25% of popular votes in two-thirds of the states.

Tenure of Office:

5 years. Maximum of two terms.

Functions:

- a) Assigns responsibilities to his six deputies for Internal Affairs and Security, External Affairs, Economic Affairs, National Assembly Affairs, Social Security and Welfare, National Guidance and Presidential Affairs.
- b) Ultimate coordination of Policies for all ministries.
- c) Responsibility for all matters in the Exclusive and Concurrent Legislative Lists of the 1979 Constitution, as re-defined in the light of functions assigned to the President and Commander-in-Chief.

Modus Operandi

Prime Minister, his Deputies and his Ministers sit in the National Assembly and take part in its deliberations. Deputy Prime Minister charged with National Assembly Affairs is the Leader of Business in the National Assembly. Ministers are appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister, and hold office at the pleasure of the Prime Minister. Prime Minister operates through the Office of the Prime Minister in accordance with decisions of the Federal Executive Council and the Presidential Council.

Ministries:

25 As set out in the Constitution. A suggested list of ministries is as follows:

1. Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
2. Aviation, Ports and Inland Waterways
3. Communications
4. Defence
5. Education
6. External Affairs
7. Federal Capital Territories
8. Finance and Economic Affairs
9. Foreign Trade
10. Forestry and Fishing
11. Fuel and Energy
12. Health
13. Housing, Antiquities, and Tourism
14. Industries and Commerce
15. Internal Affairs (Immigration, Police, Preventive Service, Prisons, Fire Services)
16. Justice
17. Labour, Employment and Productivity
18. Lands, Meteorology, Mines and Surveys
19. National Guidance (Chieftaincy Affairs, National Ideology, Moral Code, Culture, Information, Religious Bodies)
20. Railways and Road Transport
21. Research and Technology
22. Social Security and Pensions
23. Water Resources, Irrigation and Flood Control
24. Works
25. Youth and Sports

Each ministry has a minister responsible for policy who is a member of the Federal Executive Council. The administrative head of the ministry is the Secretary-General, a political appointee of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister may appoint Ministers of State for the large ministries, e.g. External Affairs, Finance and Economic Affairs, National Guidance. No special advisers to the Prime Minister.

3. National Assembly

Meets thrice a year in plenary session. Composed of all

members of its Presidium (or Senate) plus 15 members elected by each state. Its Presidium (Senate) sits continuously, and is composed as follows:

- i) 2 members from each State elected by the State House of Assembly from among its members. (Note: this is additional to the 15 members of the National Assembly elected by each state of the federation).
- ii) Prime Minister, his deputy prime ministers, and ministers of cabinet rank.
- iii) All retired Chiefs of Defence Staff, Heads of Services (including Police and NSO), Chief Justices of the Federation, Prime Ministers, Heads of the Federal Civil Service, Diplomats with over twenty years of active service, Heads of the Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies.
- iv) 1 member from each recognised professional body;
 2 representatives from the Nigerian Labour Congress;
 2 representatives from the National Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture;
 2 representatives each from the Peasants and Cooperative Movements;
 2 representatives each (not the service chiefs) from the Army, Navy, and Air Force;
 1 representative from each State Council of Chiefs.

This gives a National Assembly of less than 600 members, whose Presidium (Senate) is about 150 strong. The National Assembly works through general debates, substantive motions, and ministerial committees. Decisions of the Presidium (Senate) of the National Assembly are recommendations to the President and the Presidential Council and are binding on the Prime Minister and Ministers. However, these decisions are subject to ratification by the National Assembly in plenary session.

Duration:

The National Assembly has a life of 5 years

overlapping the tenure of the Prime Minister. Those organisations with representatives in the Presidium (Senate) of the National Assembly have the power of recall. The elected members representing the various states of the federation are subject to re-election every 5 years. The retired public office-holders are life members of the National Assembly.

4. *The Federal Civil Service*

The administrative arm of the government. Divided into ministries. Each ministry is made up of specialised departments, each under a technical expert. Administration is considered a specialised department. The coordinator of implementation in each ministry is the Secretary-General, who is responsible to the minister.

5. *The Judiciary*

The Chief Justice of the Federation is the most senior member on the Supreme Court bench. A National Judicial Service Commission, headed by the Chief Justice of the Federation, is appointed by the President and Commander-in-Chief after consultations with the Presidential Council. The National Judicial Service Commission operates the budget of the judiciary, which is a direct charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund, after its endorsement by the Presidential Council. The National Judicial Service Commission is responsible for the appointment and promotion of all judges and judicial officers throughout the federation. Compulsory retiring age for judges is 75; and voluntary retiring age is 65. Judges could be removed from office by two-thirds majority vote of the National Assembly in plenary session, approved by the Presidential Council.

6. *Council of States*

There will be a Council of States with the Prime Minister as its Chairman and all State Governors as members. The Council of States is a clearing house for the chief executives of the federation. The Council of States meets every three months. Extraordinary meetings could be held. If the need arises, the President and Commander-in-Chief may address any session of the Council of States, but does not take part in its deliberations.

Note: Under this arrangement, there will be no need for Presidential Liaison Officers or Federal Liaison

Offices at the state level. State Liaison Offices at the Federal Capital may still be useful. The Office of the Prime Minister shall have a department dealing with state Liaison, and servicing the Council of States.

C. AT THE STATE LEVEL

1. *Governor*

Governor and his deputy are elected on same party ticket. The Governor and his deputy are elected by majority of popular votes cast in the state elections. He appoints 10 commissioners who are in charge of the 10 ministries and are members of the State Executive Council. Governor, his deputy and his commissioners are members of the State House of Assembly. The Deputy Governor is the Leader of Business in the State House of Assembly. Tenure of office is 5 years, and elected at the same time as the Prime Minister.

2. *State House of Assembly*

All members elected at state elections. Tenure of 5 years overlapping the tenure of the governor. State House of Assembly sits three times a year. The Legislative Council is elected (maximum of 50 members) by the State House of Assembly from among its members. Every local government area should have at least two members on the State Legislative Council which sits continuously. Governor, Deputy Governor and the commissioners are members of the State Legislative Council. The State Legislative Council will sit one representative each of the Nigerian Labour Congress, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Council of Chiefs in the State.

3. *State Judiciary*

Integrated with the Federal Judiciary. Its Chief Judge is appointed by the President and Commander-in-Chief on the advice of the National Judicial Service Commission. Its Judges are appointed by the National Judicial Service Commission. There will be a Customary Courts Division within the State Judiciary.

4. *State Civil Service*

Organised on the same lines as the Federal Civil Service.

5. *Local Government*

Each local government area as constituted by the 1979 Constitution is considered as a federation of communities, with each community having the same number of Councillors

on the local government council. Every local government functions through the community councils within its area. Local governments should receive statutory revenue from both the federal and state government. Functions of the local governments include maternity and preventive health care, primary school education, adult literacy, feeder roads to all trunk A and trunk B roads, administration of agricultural extension services provided by the Federal and State governments, water supply, housing, income and property rates, police and security as directed by a unified Nigeria Police, community development, chieftaincy affairs. Traditional rulers are ex-officio members of community councils.

6. *Constituency and Elections*

Every community shall be considered a constituency returning one member to the State Assembly. A community may be divided into several constituencies, depending on its population. Each State House of Assembly is an electoral college for the election of 50 members to the State Legislative Council.

Footnotes

1. *Political Parties*

The success of the above model depends primarily on two institutions. One of these is the political party.

There are two alternative approaches. The first is to decree a two-party system. Each party can put up several candidates at each constituency. The other approach is to decree a one-party system under which multiple party candidates as well as independents could contest every constituency.

The conditions for the formation and operation of political parties have to be embodied in a comprehensive basic document, companion to the Constitutional Instrument. Special attention will have to be paid to the raising of party funds. Our suggestion is a fixed annual grant to each political party computed to cover essential activities, to be supplemented with whatever the party can raise internally from membership fees and levies. Contributions or donations from non-party sources should be prohibited. So, too, any contributions/donations from party members other than party fees and levies. Fund raising activities by the parties will be legitimate, provided these are supervised (and appropriately taxed). An up-to-date register of members must be kept by all political parties and

inspected periodically by the Electoral Commission.

Members wishing to secure their party ticket for any elective public office shall pay a deposit of not more than ₦100. Any such contestant who is not satisfied with the conduct of the party nominations exercise will be free to stand elections as an independent candidate. In the case of he succeeding in the elections to the public office, such a candidate will occupy the public office as a candidate of the party of which he is a member. A party member who pursues this course of action shall not be expelled from his party before the elections he is contesting takes place.

No organisation (business, religious, cultural, trade union, chamber of commerce, peasant or cooperative movement, professional association, ethnic body, etc.) shall be permitted to contribute in cash, kind or services to any political party or election expenses of any election candidate.

The basic unit in the political party is the community organisation which should, as far as possible, be operationally and financially autonomous within the framework of the party constitution.

Each political party must subscribe to the national ideology and the national objectives. Membership of political parties will be open to all Nigerians, except those proscribed from partaking in political activities. The difference between political parties ought to be confined to:

- a) priority rating of schemes for attaining national objectives;
- b) financial cost of achieving national objectives and how this can be raised;
- c) strategies, including logistics of human and material resources, for implementing national objectives.

The role of political parties include:

- i) to canvass and enroll party members;
- ii) to spread general understanding of the national ideology and the national objectives;
- iii) to draw up and canvass strategies for attaining national objectives;
- iv) to sustain the brotherhood of all Nigerians;
- v) to examine critically governmental policies and their implementation in the light of the national ideology and national objectives;
- vi) to inculcate national pride, self-reliance in its members and representatives, and in the public generally;

vii) to imbue its members and supporters with respect for the key institutions and high office-holders of the Nigerian State.

2. The Armed Forces

The other key institution for the success of our model is the armed forces. Nigeria needs an entirely new approach to its military. From the armed forces should be expunged the concepts of job opportunity, ethnic hegemony, and the quickest route to political power.

The officers corps and the specialised units should be reared on professional competence, ideological soundness, loyalty to the Nigerian political system. Military officers must be debarred from marrying aliens or joining business partnerships. The other ranks will be made up of national service youths putting in their two years compulsory military service, after passing out of the secondary schools but before embarking upon higher education.

Recruitment into the officers corps and the specialised units will be on the basis of 4% for each state and 2% for each of the two federal capital territories. Promotions will be based mainly on ability and competence. (Note: the assumption here is that the Nigerian federation is made up of 24 states. If the number is different, then the percentage allotment to each state will change). The rationale for this formula is discussed in Chapter 7.

3. Creation of States

The Nigerian Federation should comprise 24 states created on the formula of Hausa/Fulani (4 states); Igbo (4 states); Yorubas (4 states), while the ethnic minorities have 12 states between them. See Chapter 7.

The functions of state governments should be reduced from what these were in the Second Republic.

The Federal government should make grants-in-aid to local government councils in support of primary education, preventive health care, water resources development.

4. Universities and Higher Education

The strength, durability and dynamism of the Nigerian State will draw heavily on products of our universities and institutions of higher education generally. Teacher training should be considered part of higher education. By our scheme, only persons who attain the requisite academic qualifications and

have completed their national military service will be admitted into institutions of higher learning.

University and higher education should be free. This is in the national interest. It facilitates programming for the rearing of the nation's requirements of high level manpower. It gives the nation greater lien in the deployment of the products of higher education.

5. *Revenue Allocation*

A formula for revenue allocation should be entrenched in the constitution. The processes for revising this formula should also be entrenched in the constitution.

A simple and palpably equitable formula is required.

Income tax, value-added tax in service industries, development taxes should be exclusive areas for state governments. Market and motor park fees, income rate, water rate, tenement rate ought to be exclusive areas for local governments. Mining and forest exploitation royalties should be shared between the federal government and the state governments concerned.

All federally derived revenue (less statutory charges on the Consolidated Revenue Fund) will be shared as follows:

Local Governments	10%
Development of Abuja Capital Territory	05%
Maintenance of the two capital territories	02%
Contingencies Fund	
Drought, locust & quela birds, oil spillage, rinderpest, hurricane and flood damage, earthquake, etc.	05%
State Governments (shared equally between them)	39%
Federal Government	39%
Total	<u>100%</u>

6. *Remuneration of Public Office-Holders*

Members of legislatures who sit three times a year are on allowances.

Legislators who sit continuously are on a salary grade not exceeding Level 12.

Ministers, Governors and Commissioners are on salary grades not exceeding Level 17.

President and Prime Minister are on a consolidated salary of ₦20,000 per annum.

The review of the remuneration of political office-holders will be undertaken every ten years by a panel headed by a judge of the Supreme Court and appointed by the President

and Commander-in-Chief, on a substantive motion by the National Assembly in plenary session.

Ministers, Commissioners, Prime Minister, Governors, President, should not be involved in income-earning activity outside their public office.

7. *Chiefs*

Traditional rulers, as distinct from chiefs, play their roles at the local government level. These help with preservation and promotion of culture, maintenance of law and order and security, community development, and the activities of local government councils. These should serve as part of the ex-officio bench in local government councils, on local security committees, on tax collection panels, on primary schools and health management boards, on bodies for cultural promotion, and on customary courts.

Traditional rulers ought to be remunerated either from the funds of boards on which they serve, or from their local government treasury.

Through the State Conference of Chiefs, traditional rulers will advise the State Governors and put across the traditional viewpoint at both National Assembly and the State Legislative Councils.

CHAPTER 9

ENGINEERING THE MODEL

The Nigerian political scene is dominated by two hardened attitudes that have to be jettisoned if Nigerian politics is to rise to higher levels of attainment and proficiency. These fossilised modes relate to the political party and the military.

Hitherto, the Nigerian approach to the formation and operation of political parties has been corruption-inducing, ethnic-oriented and therefore ultimately self-defeating. In the course of things, a few wealthy men and political pundits within an ethnic group cluster around to form a political party. By claiming to be the authentic protector and promoter of the interests of this ethnic group, and simultaneously parading its so-called record of "winning independence for Nigeria", the party strives to gain control of the federal government or of a group of state governments. Through the manipulations of contracts, more businessmen are brought under the gravitational pull of the ruling party. Public offices are used to rope around some professionals, intellectuals and academics. Such an arrangement generates funds for servicing the party, and contributes to the creation of the "new rich." Because the party must retain, and if possible, improve on the governments it controls, elections are debased to a war of attrition for political supremacy between these ethnic phalanxes called political parties. When the law compels "a federal spread", these political parties either establish mere outposts among other ethnic groups or create a convenient amalgam of segments of ethnic leaderships. The former approach is kept going through political patronage. The latter is sustained by promises of power rotation which has come to be known as "zoning". The political parties that fall outside this ambit hardly win political power; and consequently lack the wherewithall to retain and expand support among businessmen and the generality of the public. The nose-dive to a political crash is on. These parties are reduced to political oddities which at worst draw derision from the man-in-the-street, and at best evoke from the knowledgeable some fleeting respect that shrouds ill-concealed sneers. A radically

different approach to party formation and operation has become imperative.

In the second place, Nigerians have been sold to the erroneous concept of the military being apolitical. Our practical experience has exposed the falsity of this notion. The political practice in advanced countries has been cited, quite wrongly in our view, in support of this notion. Little was it realised that the political practice in those lands had gone to great lengths to create a military that reinforces the political edifice and is at peace with it. Furthermore, articulate Nigerian opinion, in the professions, in academia and in public life, has failed to grasp the great import of the fact that the top brass of the Nigerian military today was raised and reared in the context of the Nigerian civil war (1967 – 1970). The ethnic imbalance of the Nigerian military, its ill-concealed political motivations, its outsize, and its supercilious psyche of being simultaneously the custodian of the Nigerian State and the conscience of the Nigerian people, arise directly from this historical fact. Nigerian public men have failed to perceive the crucial, if not decisive, political roles that could be played by an outsize, surreptitiously politicised, standing army in a developing country with neither external wars to fight nor internal insurgency to contain. We are now persuaded, and this is our standpoint, that political stability for Nigeria lies along the path of the permanent integration of the military into the political process. This notion has little to do with the dyarchy of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. The famous politician had sought to placate the military by offering a few ministries to the men in khaki. Chief Arthur Nwankwo has aptly dismissed the Zik formula as an insult to the Nigerian military. It is important, however, to point out that the Nigerian military, to be permanently integrated into Nigeria's political process, has to be something qualitatively different from what today is on the ground. We have discussed this elsewhere.

If these set habits of Nigerian politics have to be uprooted and replaced with new attitudes, concepts and approaches, then our advance to a new political edifice of necessity demands time. Everyone ought to know that the country is engaged in nation-building. It is like living under a state of war. And for nation-building to be successful, we need not only expertise and experience but also time. A most unhelpful and misleading notion, in Nigeria's present circumstances, is the view that the Buhari Administration (or any other military group that takes over from it) is a corrective regime

simpliciter. Such a view is gratuitous insult on all Nigerians. It assumes that the Nigerian military is the supreme intelligence, grouping in itself supreme patriotism, supreme excellence and supreme morality. It gives the wrong impression that what the Nigerian situation demands is merely a policy of amelioration here and there, accompanied by a severe clamp down on public sector immorality and sloppiness. This is a criminal simplification that betrays lack of depth and insight on the part of its proponents and leaves the masses less than convinced about what is going on around them.

We could illustrate with the economic situation. On the surface, our current economic problems look like mismanagement of a slumped oil-economy in the context of international depression. But a closer and more expert look quickly reveals that our economic problems are structural and deep-seated. The oil glut and international depression have merely aggravated a malady that was endemic to the system. Superimposed on this weak economic fabric are a political superstructure and a social programme entirely beyond our economic, human and institutional capacity. From this standpoint, it is abundantly clear that a more efficient management of a slumped oil-economy would not solve our problems. It could create a more congenial atmosphere for the solution of our problems. But on its own, increased managerial efficiency within the economy cannot solve our contemporary problems which have both political and social dimensions.

In the light of the above, the construction and setting up of Nigeria's new political edifice will prove as important as its design. Given the view that the right direction and the correct habits could prove very potent factors in political evolution, one is tempted to state that the process of erecting the new political edifice could prove more crucial to success than its design.

The military rulers have the duty of erecting the new political edifice. They will seek the services of political engineers, both in the design and the construction stages. Nevertheless, the responsibility is that of the military. The task is not to organise erudite seminars on constitutions, though these could help. Rather the assignment is to produce a constitution considered suitable for Nigeria, to allow Nigerian opinion to register on such a draft constitution, and then to proceed methodically and systematically to set up and test-run the new political model. On this the military must never be confused. The historic task is nation-building, not the tinkering with policies

in one field or the other. And nation-building, in our context, involves political reconstruction, economic restructuring, and a cultural resurgence capped with a moral revolution. The fact that some elements in the country think otherwise is no excuse for the military faltering in this historic mission. Any ruling group that rejects this perspective makes itself irrelevant to the historical process through which Nigeria is passing. To that extent, the ruling group merely courts its own demise.

The time has come for the articulate in the Nigerian society, particularly those in the leadership echelons in various walks of life, to stop clamouring (and intriguing) for the speedy exit of the military from the political arena. The reality is that the military are in politics. What the situation demands is a shift in emphasis to the modalities of a civilian-military partnership in the pursuit of national independence and national development. In a dialectical sense, it is possible to clamour for the exit of a particular junta, while affirming the permanency of the military in politics. The search is on for the right type of military junta.

Once the right group – be it military simpliciter, civilian-serviced military, military-backed civilian – adopts the correct perspective on nation-building, the next requirement for far-reaching changes is a healthy public climate. A healthy public climate depends on two specifics. First, the economic rut has to be stemmed. This ought not be confused with the much-needed economic restructuring, which is a long-term process complementary to nation-building. The requirements for stemming the economic rut are stabilised and reasonable prices of essential commodities that are available, a return to work in the really necessary manufacturing activities, the destruction of speculation on the Naira, a foreign debt management policy that will reassure our overseas creditors. Second, the Nigerian public must insist on stable military rule. A quarterly or annual change of military rulers is as unsettling to our national efforts as inept, insensitive and corrupt civilian administrations. The process of installing a new political edifice requires time. All through this necessary time-span, there ought to be political stability. Without such stability, the experiment will be aborted. Perennially, Nigerians would be starting afresh. The result is going round in circles. There is activity; but there is no progress. An added consideration here is that getting bottled up in such a cul-de-sac is often the grand strategy of foreign interests and their Nigerian collaborators. Both the ruling military group and the Nigerian public ought to know that seemingly

attractive short-cuts could well turn out to be carefully laid plans to subvert our national development.

As soon as the ruling military junta gives sufficient evidence that it is treading the path of nation-building informed by the ideology of peoples nationalism, the Nigerian people should reciprocate with stability in office of the ruling junta. For such stability in office is the *sine qua non* for success in the task of nation-building. This means support for the right-type junta. It also implies the build-up of public opinion against cliques, both among civilians and within the military, subversive of the ruling military junta. Our advocacy, be it stressed, is support for a ruling military junta itself committed to the building of a new Nigeria founded upon peoples nationalism. A military junta motivated by self, or vendetta, or hegemonism is of no use to our exercise. A military junta that services imperialism is an enemy of our cause. Our advocacy avoids both the myth of the old brigade and the chauvinism of the new breed in Nigerian politics. There is no basis in Nigeria's political reality for seeking either a gerontocracy or the ecclesia. In general terms, available evidence shows that the new breed have evinced the very vices for which the old brigade is chastised. And the old brigade seems steeped in political modes, the extirpation of which is a condition for our national advancement.

Rather, our advocacy holds that expertise, experience, doggedness and dynamism are all relevant to nation-building. The point at issue is how to discover these elements and then yoke them to the chariot of national identity and development, animated by the ideology of peoples nationalism. For the avoidance of doubt, peoples nationalism is the ideology of political nationalism, economic independence, and a national culture geared to the greatest good of the common people, and powered by the genius, industry and brotherhood of the common people.

Once the right military junta with the correct perspective is firmly in the saddle, the exercise of giving life to our political model can commence in earnest. This starts with the reconstruction of the Supreme Military Council (SMC). State representation, useful and desirable in the composition of the Federal Executive Council, has no place in the Supreme Military Council. That body represents the effective command of the armed forces, not the geographical spread of the Nigerian federation. Even though it has a political perspective, the SMC is a military, not a political body. Its effectiveness depends on the efficiency and stability it exerts on the armed

forces as a unified, ideologically monolithic, mission-oriented, dynamic organism. Therefore, it should reflect the effective command and the new perspective of the armed forces. It ought to reflect neither cliquism nor parochialism. Indeed, Nigeria's new military herein envisaged will have to be free of both political factions and ideological dissent of all sorts.

Given the existing structure in the armed forces, the Supreme Military Council will be composed as follows:

Chairman: Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces

Members: Chief of Army Staff
 Chief of Naval Staff
 Chief of Air Staff
 Inspector-General of Police
 Director-General of the Nigerian Security Organisation
 Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters
 Head of Political Planning (Military)
 Director of Military Intelligence
 Army Divisional Commanders
 Commander of the Brigade of Guards
 Commanders of the various Army Corps
 Commanders of Naval Commands
 Commanders of Air Force Commands
 Commandant of the Defence Academy
 Commandant of the Command and Staff College, Jaji
 Commandant of the School of Infantry
 Head of the Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies

Contained above is the idea that two top brass in the Supreme Headquarters are both members of the Supreme Military Council. These are the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters and the Head of Political Planning. The implication is that Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters is in charge of day-to-day governmental business, while the other top brass is in charge of political planning and implementation, namely the planning and erection of the new political edifice. Perhaps a neater arrangement would be to create a new Directorate of Political Planning outside the Supreme Headquarters and under a top military brass responsible directly to the Commander-in-Chief. The rationale for such an arrangement is the work load involved.

As structures in the armed forces are changed in consonance with the new conception of the military advocated herein, the composition of the Supreme Military Council will be altered correspondingly.

The erection of our political model will be undertaken in three stages, covering seven years, as follows:

<i>STAGE</i>	<i>DURATION</i>	<i>TASKS</i>
1	January 1984 – June 1986	1. Economy Turning the economy round. Stabilisation of prices of food and essentials; getting the greater part of manufacturing industries back to production at full capacity; pegging imports at 30 percent of foreign exchange earnings; sound foreign debts servicing policy; sustaining work on the heavy industries base for the economy; cut-down on state enterprises. 2. Orientation. Reconstruction of Nigerian mentality and work ethics. Specifically, a retreat from state godfatherism in the social services; an agriculture orientation; encouragement of private enterprise in manufacturing and service industries; scale down in our appetite for imported goods; the dignity of labour; discipline. 3. National Identity Cards for all citizens 4. Creation of new states. A new division of functions between the Federation and the States. 5. Delimitation of new consti-

STAGE	DURATION	TASKS
		tuencies (3 per existing senatorial district).
		6. Release of a Draft Constitution
		7. Decree on conditions of service of political office-holders
		8. Election into local government councils, State Assemblies and the National Assembly. (Elections held in May 1986; one day elections; identity cards replace election registers; on the basis of independent candidates).
		9. Set up of local government Councils, State Assemblies and National Assembly in June 1986.
		10. Decree on National Ethical Code.
II	July 1986 – December 1988	1. Economic tasks and orientation tasks as per items 1 & 2 of Stage I further pursued.
		2. Decree on Political Parties. Formation of parties.
		3. Decree on Revenue Allocation.
		4. Decree on New Constitution, to include the National Ethical Code.
		5. Election of Prime Minister and State Governors, November 1988. (One election; identity cards replace voters register; party candidates and independent party candidate where necessary to contest). State Military Governors fade away. Federal Executive Council is reconstituted.
III	January 1989 – December 1990	1. Economic tasks and orientation tasks of Stages I & II

STAGE	DURATION	TASKS
		are further pursued.
		2. Identification of the elements, and outline of the implementation strategy of a National Culture.
		3. Presidency is reconstituted. Supreme Military Council yields place to the Presidential Council.
		4. Up-dating of the Constitution, if necessary. Promulgation of the Codified Basic Law, to include new Constitution, revenue allocation formula, conditions of service for political office-holders, electoral law, national ethical code, and rules for the formation and operation of political parties.
		5. Election of President and Commander-in-Chief in November 1990, to assume office January 1, 1991.
IV	January 1 1991	The formal inauguration of the Third Republic.

Further Considerations

1. The "tasks" in column 3 are not set down in sequence of implementation.
2. the national identity card replaces the electoral register at all elections.
3. Every citizen votes where he is on election day.
4. In the May 1986 elections, all candidates are independent candidates. The military will have the power to blacklist persons for offence against the State.
5. In the November 1988 elections, and in all subsequent elections, election candidates are party candidates. However, independent party candidates can stand under certain circumstances, but where these win they take their seats as party candidates. No independent candidates are allowed in the

election of chief executives.

6. Election of the President and Commander-in-Chief is by the Convocation of Officers of the Armed Forces, and ratified by the National Assembly as set out in Chapter 8.
7. Elections will be held periodically on days set out specifically in the constitution. The next round of elections after 1990 will be:
 - a) Election of local government councillors, State Assemblymen and National Assemblymen on the second Saturday in May 1991. Thereafter every 5 years on second Saturday in May.
 - b) Election of Prime Minister and State Governors hold on second Saturday in November 1993. Thereafter every 5 years on the second Saturday in November.
 - c) Election of President and Commander-in-Chief is on second Saturday in November 1997 by Convocation of Officers of the Armed Forces and ratified by the National Assembly by third Saturday in November 1997. Thereafter every 7 years on second and third Saturdays in November.

The implementation of the new concept of the military is relatively easy, given a general consensus on the matter and the commitment of the ruling military junta. The actual process of bringing into being of the right type of political parties is much more difficult. It can be a tricky process, calling for firmness in a context of transparent objectivity, impartiality and deep insight. Failure in this regard could ruin the experiment at erecting a new political system. There is, therefore, the need to give some consideration to the process of delivering the political parties.

The entire process has to be fully considered and firm decisions taken, before its practical implementation commences. There ought to be a firm decision on the number of political parties. Our view is that Nigerians, under peoples nationalism, need a two-party system. Both parties should be parties of the people, not of the privileged class. Their function will be to programme and canvass the realisation of the national objectives set out in the Constitution, and in the spirit of the national ideology. Accordingly, the stage will be set for the formation of political parties when the military authorities promulgate a decree which, among other things

- a) limits the number of political parties to two;
- b) restricts membership of political parties to Nigerian citizens of voting age;

- c) prohibits non-political organisations, business, and non-Nigerians affiliating or contributing in any form, to political parties — be it in cash, in kind, in services or in guarantees.
- d) restricts contributions by party members to an annual maximum, say ₦1000.
- e) limits the deposit for seeking the party ticket in any election to public office to a maximum of ₦100.
- f) compels returns on the registration of party members to be made to the Electoral Commission;
- g) proscribes gratification in any form at elections to party offices or to public office;
- h) sets down objective and verifiable disqualification criteria for persons who may take part in building political parties or would be party members.

Armed with such a well-thought-out decree, the military authorities would then be in the position to follow any of the approaches sketched hereunder:

Approach I

1. The military sets up one political party.
2. The first election is conducted on the basis of party candidates and independent candidates.
3. The successful independent candidates at the elections will be free either to join the existing one party or to set up a number of alternative parties but not exceeding two.
4. The results of the second parliamentary elections are then employed to determine the rating of the three political parties.
5. The first two parties on this rating are then confirmed by law as the permitted two parties.

Note: If this approach is adopted, then the sole political party set up by the Military will have to come into existence in Stage I in the process of erecting the new political edifice, that is before May 1986.

Approach II

1. After the first parliamentary elections conducted on the basis of independent candidates, the military invites two persons successful at the elections to set up political parties.
2. At the second parliamentary elections, party and independent candidates will be free to vie for election.
3. Successful independent candidates are free to form their poli-

tical parties, but not more than two.

4. The results of the third parliamentary elections are employed to determine the national rating of all political parties.
5. The first two parties on this rating are then confirmed by law as the only permitted political parties.

Note: The two-party system will not be settled until June 1996.

Approach III

1. After the first parliamentary elections conducted on the basis of independent candidates, political parties could be formed by interested persons or groups up to a maximum of six. The vetting of these parties will be done by the Electoral Commission.
2. At the second parliamentary elections, only party candidates take part in the contest.
3. Using the results of the second parliamentary elections, the political parties are given a national rating.
4. The first two parties on this national rating are confirmed by law as the two permitted political parties.

The long gestation period needed makes Approach II perhaps the least commendable. Approach III is superior to Approach I because there is less direct involvement of the military in the mechanics of party formation. All three approaches have a common problem. The election of the chief executives (Prime Minister and State Governors) billed for November 1988 takes place before the two-party system is finally settled. How then will this election be conducted? The candidates cannot be party candidates because the party system would not have been agreed by that time. To let these contest as independents will not be realistic because the constituencies (State and whole country) will be too large for meaningful campaigning. Perhaps the way round this problem is to make the November 1988 elections replace the "second parliamentary elections" (that is May 1991 elections) in the three approaches sketched above. In that case, political party formation has to commence as soon as possible after June 1986, in order to give two clear years for the gestation of political parties before the executive elections of November 1988. By this time schedule, the process of party formation is completed by December 1988 under Approaches I and III, and by June 1991 under Approach II.

P O S T S C R I P T

The central theme of this essay has been a new Nigerian society, the attainment of which postulates an entirely new political system for the country. The requirement is a new Nigerian State whose stability rests on its social justice, whose cohesion lies in its manifest humanism, whose strength derives from a free, hard-working, contented and patriotic people. Success in this historic venture demands from the Nigerian leadership class abundant clarity on two cardinal issues.

There is an external dimension to nation-building. The international situation is an important factor shaping the course of events and the amplitude of transformation. In the long run, the will of a determined people invariably triumphs. However, in the short term, the external dimension could prove the decisive factor in the historical process.

Nation-building involves two complementary actions. One is a systematic dismantling of the existing (semi-colonial) social order. The other is the methodical erection of the desired (people-oriented) social order. It is demolition on a lower plane accompanied by construction on a higher plane. Contemporary Nigerian society contains important strands representing colonial structures, imperial relationships and alien modes. Accordingly, far-reaching national reconstruction necessarily involves the elimination of those foreign phenomena that stand in the way of meaningful national independence. A firm conclusion emerges. In our context of quasi-independence, nation-building implies a major struggle against domineering foreign interests. A clash with imperialism is inevitable.

Our analysis points to our former imperial masters and their international friends as a major obstacle to dynamic nation-building in Nigeria. Nigeria's continuance in a state of neo-colonialism is a condition for the affluence of these imperial interests. Therefore, the goal of these imperial interests is to keep Nigeria an exclusive sphere of economic exploitation and a cog in the wheel of their global military machine. In furtherance of this grand goal of hegemony, these imperial interests work in cohorts with elements within the Nigerian society. While the foreign interests claim they

are our partners in the process of nation-building, the domestic associates brainwash the Nigerian people in their version of the new nation. Thus real nation-building in Nigeria is subverted by the clamour of fake nation-building. However, time exposes this knavery. Imperial interests can be partners in our nation-building only where the new nation we are trying to build accommodates these interests. And the nation-building of the domestic friends of imperialism is the continuance of the status quo, which the Nigerian people have come to discover as inimical to their best interests. Thus, genuine nation-building in this country starts with the accurate identification of the enemies of the process. These are imperial interests and their Nigerian surrogates. To plan with these foreign interests, or to execute with these domestic surrogates leads to certain failure. Once the implacable foes are clearly identified and effectively quarantined, success in nation-building becomes a function of time, sacrifice and application.

The central thesis in this book is that from now on Nigerian politics will have to provide a permanent berth for the Nigerian military. Imperialism did foresee such an eventuality as far back as during the Nigerian Civil War. The first stance of British imperialism when the Nigerian crisis broke out in 1966 was to acquiesce in the break-up of the country. Nigeria would be weakened in the process; but imperialism would be better placed to penetrate the economies of the weakened fragments. This strategy was pursued through Britain's refusal to supply arms to the federal side, even though there was Anglo-Nigerian understanding on the matter. This strategy was foiled by the timely decision of the military administration at the time to buy arms from the USSR. For this Nigeria will be externally grateful to Yakubu Gowon and his permanent secretaries – Allison Ayida, Ime Ebong, Philip Asiodu, Ahmed Joda and Ibrahim Damcida. As Nigeria contained the secessionist move and got poised for an unstoppable offensive to restore Nigeria's territorial integrity, imperialism thought safety lay in switching to the federal side. It quickly realised that the Nigerian military will emerge as the premier instrument of control in Nigerian public life. Nigerian leaders either did not see this possibility, or simply ignored it as something that cannot materialise. Today, the moment of truth is with us.

The outcome of nation-building in Nigeria – its success or failure, its purity or adulteration, it being Nigerian-oriented or foreign-interests servicing – will depend on what influences dominate and motivate the Nigerian armed forces. In a very real sense, we are

witnessing a battle for the Nigerian military. The contestants are western imperialism and Nigerian nationalism. An upper hand for the former means the continuance of the state of neo-colonialism, despite cleverly administered cosmetics. But victory for the latter will open the way to full-fledged, robust and meaningful national independence.

This essay has tried to outline the path to victory for Nigerian nationalism. In particular, we have stressed that the Nigerian nationalism likely to triumph is that powered by the Nigerian people. This has to be the case because the privileged class in Nigerian life has become the other side of the neo-colonialist coin. In any case, what most Nigerians today see as the futility and frustration of nearly a quarter of a century of political independence is, without doubt, the handiwork of the privileged class.

In the light of the above, it stands to reason that Nigerians will have to expect a spirited reaction from imperialism to the chain of events triggered off by the coup of 31st December 1983. The desire of imperialism is that the inevitable presence of the Nigerian military in Nigerian politics should be programmed to serve its vested interests. And imperialism will set about this task with characteristic doggedness, willness, thoroughness and ruthlessness.

Imperialism will employ a three-fold leverage in its drive to control and direct the Nigerian military. These are the economy, diplomacy and defence. The control that imperialism has over the money markets of London, Paris, Hamburg, Zurich and New York, and the fact that it almost wholly owns the World Bank and its affiliate, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), will be harnessed to the task of compelling the Buhari Administration or its successors to apply pro-western solutions to Nigeria's current economic problems. The refusal of the Buhari Administration to go the whole hog will be construed as sacrificing the wellbeing of the Nigerian people on the altar of personal intransigence. The pro-western Nigerian press, in their customary naivety, will sing the usual refrains "— the people want abundant life, not ideology"; "achievements today, not promises for tomorrow"; "man must whack". In the meantime, credit squeeze by foreign banks and manipulations of commodity prices by giant international combines will raise the cost of industrial raw materials and essential commodities to Nigeria while depressing the world prices of Nigeria's major exports. The control of North Sea oil and the new finds in Mexico, and the diplomatic influence over Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States within the Organisation

of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will be employed to blackmail Nigeria into submission. The situation in Southern Africa and in Chad will serve as diplomatic leverage against Nigeria. The training of military personnel and the supplies of military hardware will be employed to integrate the Nigerian armed forces into the defence arrangements of the western powers. Strains and stresses will be engineered within the Nigerian military. The ruling military junta remains in office on condition it toes the imperialist line. Alternately, a new junta is encouraged to take over.

The possibility cannot be ruled out that imperialism will welcome our advocated new political edifice but manouvre to entrust its erection to a military junta loyal to it. The ruling military junta could openly applaud peoples nationalism for Nigeria and claim to be giving effect to it. But at the end of the day, the country is saddled with a veritable military dictatorship. The hypocritical drive for peoples nationalism ends up enthroning militarised fascism. There are classic precedents for such a manouvre. Under the fashionable doctrine of socialism at the time, the giant monopolies and multi-national corporations of the West, frightened by the rise of the USSR and the Great Depression (1931 – 1934), endorsed the establishment of fascism in Italy, Germany, Spain and several Central European countries. The desire to protect huge international investments in South Africa from the menacing sweep of black nationalism has driven imperialism to the endorsement, and defence, of apartheid.

This three-pronged pressure by western imperialism will be exerted through well-known Nigerian advisers of good standing. These advisers who serviced the First and Second Republics and administered the Gowon military regime, will be sought after and activated. These and their professional and academic colleagues will be positioned as the hard core of the advisers available to the military administration to the pro-imperialist groove set by the Second Republic. In dire straits, cloak and dagger tactics could be employed against individual officers within the military junta considered an obstruction to the stabilization of the military regime on an imperialist trajectory. Mercenary strikes could be organised. We may even hear the rumbles of a new civil war.

This corps of advisers is the operational hub of the Nigerian Establishment. Its moving spirit is the administrative cadre of the civil service. That cadre was created by colonialism as the control mechanism of the administrative machinery available to it. An

important aspect of the policy of Nigerianisation of the civil service undertaken towards the end of colonial rule was to fill this administrative cadre with Nigerians hand-picked for their acceptance of western modes and modalities. Through the years, this administrative cadre has perpetuated itself first by confirming its position of pre-eminence in the public service and secondly by extending its sway over the management levels in the public corporations, the state-owned banks, the parastatals. Later, it even retired into these sectors. At the same time, this administrative cadre set up institutions to service the civil service controlled by it. Examples of such institutions are the administrative staff colleges and the Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER). In addition, the professional colleagues of this administrative cadre set up in consultancy services contracted to the public services. These segments, taken together, constitute the Nigerian corps of advisers. The intellectual armoury of this body is the Establishment-endorsed strands of western thought and literature. Thus came into existence the bureaucracy-business complex that has become both a constituency of Nigerian politics and a nerve centre of Nigerian official life. Despite promises at the hustings and declarations in justification of military take-overs, successive Nigerian administrations, civilian and military, end up operating within parameters set for them by this corps of advisers. However, it is important to stress the point that this corps of advisers is not uniformly pro-west and pro-imperialist. It contains differently minded elements ranging from pro-west, anti-imperialist to pro-African nationalist. The painstaking identification and shrewd deployment of such elements, together with a show of political will by the men in government, could transform the Nigerian corps of advisers from an imperialism-servicing to a nationalism-sustaining agency.

The military junta wedded to radical Nigerian nationalism faces formidable opposition. But it could survive these imperialist intrigues on four conditions. First, the ruling junta must elicit the firm support of the Nigerian masses, as distinct from media flattery, intellectual sycophancy, and adulations from favour-seeking businessmen. Second, the military rulers have to pursue a strategy of a deflated economy providing the essential needs of the people in order that the country could live within its legitimate earnings of foreign exchange. Third, the military must possess what it takes to harness the Nigerian corps of advisers to the cause of peoples nationalism. And fourth, the military junta will have to adopt a rounded and

well-considered attitude to the armed forces. It will give an independent pro-Nigeria perspective to the officers corps. It will seek its key military hardware from sources other than those countries that dominate the Nigerian economy. It will seek to reduce the financial burden of the armed forces. It will steer the armed forces away from involvement in the defence strategies of either East or West. This means formulating an independent defence strategy whose main planks are the withdrawal of non-African military forces from countries that are Nigeria's neighbours; Africa as a nuclear-free zone; no foreign military bases on African soil; an African High Command to handle the military situation in Southern Africa.

There is a second issue of great importance. The country's energy has been diffused by a political class that lacks an agreed perspective; and dissipated by segments of this same class in the pursuit of unworthy goals. It is quite fashionable for our political leaders to assert their Nigerianness. This simple claim conceals both stirring idealism and dastardly designs. Some of these leaders see Nigeria as an empire with their ethnic group as the imperial nation. These are the practitioners of the politics of ethnic hegemony. Others see Nigeria as a mini united nations organisation within which each nation strives to outwit the others. These are the confederalists. Yet others see Nigeria as a closely-knit brotherhood of peoples striving to establish itself as a great State in modern terms. These, to our mind, are the Nigerians.

In order that nation-building, as we see it, should be crowned with success, the Nigerians have to combat and defeat both the hegemonists and the confederalists in our political leadership. Specific political trends have to be fully exposed resolutely combated and roundly defeated. Some of these are, the urge to avenge the assassinations of January 1966 and to settle scores over the killing and executions of early 1976; the desire to hold the secessionist side in the Nigerian civil war in vassalage despite the 'no victor, no vanquished' formulation of 1970; the penchant for seeing federal politics as a conspiracy against a particular ethnic group, except and until the leadership of the central government is entrusted to a member of that ethnic group; the view of Nigerian politics as a struggle for supremacy between Christianity and Islam; the notion that the Nigerian military is the instrument for establishing ethnic, regional or religious dominance over all Nigeria; the belief that the mission of politics is self-enrichment and its ideology is sharing the national cake.

Attention has to be drawn to an incipient, and potentially more pernicious, type of hegemony. This new development, which could be dated from after the Nigerian civil war and especially from the middle of the Gowon regime, strives to make the Nigerian military the prime motivator and the permanent medium of Nigerian politics. This notion, which is being pushed all over Africa, and has the experience of Latin America to go by, sees the Nigerian military as *the* State with *a* State. More appropriately perhaps, the military is conceived as an estate that directs the realm. By this view, the military is self-directing, self-accounting, answerable neither to the people nor to any other agency of public life, imbued with the ambivalent concept of professionalism with which colonialism endowed it at birth, and committed to the western viewpoint on the organisation and operation of national economic life. In historical time sequence, this phenomenon has arisen in the wake of the general bankruptcy of the Welfare State in post-independence Africa. Given the context of deepening political instability in Africa, the endeavour has been to replace the rickety and inadequate Welfare state with the political authority of the military, while leaving intact colonial structures and relationships in the national economy.

The protagonists of this new hegemony are to be found among military officers (serving and retired), within the bureaucracy, among traditional rulers and captains of business, and in the ranks of those intellectuals and academics who consider the politics of cultivating the masses as an expensive misdirection of national energy.

Thus, in order to contain radical African nationalism in the ongoing struggle against neo-colonialism, political militarism has emerged as the formula by which imperialism seeks to protect its interests on the African continent. Accordingly, in our struggle to defeat neo-colonialism founded upon ethnic hegemony, Nigerians have to make certain that we do not fall prey to a new colonialism founded upon military hegemony.

In all these battles, we need victory for those who evaluate the traumatic experiences of 1966-1970 and again of 1976 as sacrifices made in the search for national unity and national greatness. We need victory for those who stand up for Nigeria even against the fleeting advantage of their ethnic group. We demand victory for those who see the Nigerian military as the mailed fist of Nigerian unity, brotherhood and irredentism not as an instrument serving imperialism. We pray for victory for those who see political leadership as service to Nigeria and not musical chairs among ethnic leaders or military

commanders. We need victory for those who firmly reject the promptings of religion in their political practice. Such victories will provide the Nigerians.

In sum, victory for peoples nationalism in Nigeria is assured if its practitioners become dominant within the Nigerian political class, and the ideology becomes the wind in the sail of a military loyal to the concept. This involves both an upsurge of patriotic feelings among the Nigerian people, and the harnessing of this power of a mobilised people to the war machine of the New Nigeria. The false perspectives of yester-years will have to be abandoned. New organisations of the people become necessary. And the Nigerian people will have to be liberated from the emotional chains of a civil war syndrome, ethnic jingoism and mindless epicureanism. For the verdict of history is that the ultimate weapon against foreign hegemony is a mobilised people adroitly led. Nigeria will be no exception to this golden rule.

But a mobilised Nigerian people is the creation of the leadership of true Nigerians. And adroit leadership can come only from men and women with the right Nigerian perspective. Where are the Nigerians?

APPENDIX I

THE EXECUTIVE IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC

1. October 1, 1979 – September 30, 1983

<i>Party</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Governors</i>
Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP)	—	—	Mohammed Goni (Borno) Abubakar Barde (Gongola)
National Party of Nigeria (NPN)	Shehu Shagari	Alex Ekwueme	Clement Isong (Cross River) Melford Okilo (Rivers) Aper Aku (Benue) Tatari Alli (Bauchi) Adamu Atta (Kwara) Ibrahim Awwal (Niger) Shehu Kangiwa, later Dr. Garba Nadama (Sokoto)
Nigeria Advance Party (NAP)	—	—	—
Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP)	—	—	Jim Nwobodo (Anambra) Samuel Mbakwe (Imo) Solomon Lar (Plateau)
Peoples Redemption Party (PRP)	—	—	Abubakar Rimi (Kano) Balarabe Musa, later Abba Rimi (Kaduna)
Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN)	—	—	Lateef Jakande (Lagos) Bisi Onabanjo (Ogun) Michael Ajasin (Ondo) Bola Ige (Oyo) Ambrose Alli (Bendel)

164 *Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat*

2. *October 1, 1983 – December 31, 1983*

<i>Party</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Governors</i>
Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP)	—	—	—
National Party of Nigeria (NPN)	Shehu Shagari	Alex Ekwueme	Donald Etiebet (Cross River) Melford Okilo (Rivers) Aper Aku (Benue) Tatari Alli (Bauchi) Samuel Ogbemudia (Bendel) Victor Olunloyo (Oyo) Ibrahim Awwal (Niger) Dr. Garba Nadama (Sokoto) Christian Onoh (Anambra) Lawal Kaita (Kaduna) Bamanga Tukur (Gongola) Asheik Jamaa (Borno)
Nigeria Advance Party (NAP)	—	—	—
Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP)	—	—	Samuel Mbakwe (Imo) Solomon Lar (Plateau)
Peoples Redemption Party (PRP)	—	—	Sabo Barkin Zuwo (Kano)
Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN)	—	—	Lateef Jakande (Lagos) Bisi Onabanjo (Ogun) Michael Ajasin (Ondo) Cornelius Adebayo (Kwara)

APPENDIX II

PARTY STRENGTH IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC

<i>Party</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>National Chairman</i>	<i>Strength</i>
Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP)	Ibrahim Waziri	Ibrahim Waziri	Controlled 2 states in 1979, but non in 1983
National Party of Nigeria (NPN)	Shehu Shagari	Adisa Akinloye	Controlled Federal Government and 7 states in 1979; but controlled Federation and 12 states in 1983
Nigeria Advance Party (NAP)	Tunji Braithwaite	Tunji Braithwaite	Registered in 1982. Controlled no states after 1983 elections.
Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP)	Nnamdi Azikiwe	Adeniran Ogunsanya	Controlled 3 states in 1979 but 2 states in 1983
Peoples Redemption Party	Aminu Kano (Hassan Yusuf from May 1983)	Aminu Kano (Hassan Yusuf from May 1983)	Controlled 2 states in 1979 and one in 1983)
Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN)	Obafemi Awolowo	Obafemi Awolowo	Controlled 5 states in 1979, and 4 states in 1983

APPENDIX III

RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FOURTH COUP

(First heard over Radio Nigeria about 0700 hours on 31/12/83)

Fellow countrymen and women.

I, Brigadier Sanni Abacha, of the Nigerian Army address you this morning on behalf of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

You are all living witnesses to the great economic predicament and uncertainty which an inept and corrupt leadership has imposed on our beloved nation for the past four years. I am referring to the harsh intolerable conditions under which we are now living. Our economy has been hopelessly mismanaged; we have become a debtor and beggar nation. There is inadequacy of food at reasonable prices for our people who are now fed up with endless announcements of importation of foodstuff; health services are in shambles as our hospitals are reduced to mere consulting clinics without drugs, water and equipment.

Our educational system is deteriorating at alarming rate. Unemployment figures including the undergraduates have reached embarrassing and unacceptable proportions.

In some states, workers are being owed salary arrears of eight to twelve months and in others there are threats of salary cuts. Yet our leaders revel in squandermania, corruption and indiscipline, and continue to proliferate public appointments in complete disregard of our stark economic realities.

After due consultations over these deplorable conditions, I and my colleagues in the armed forces have in the discharge of our national role as promoters and protectors of our national interest decided to effect a change in the leadership of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and form a Federal Military Government. This task has just been completed.

The Federal Military Government hereby decrees the suspension of the provision of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979 relating to all elective and appointive offices and representative institutions including the office of the President, state governors, Federal and state executive councils, special advisers, special assistants, the establishment of the National Assembly and the Houses of Assembly including the formation of political parties.

Accordingly, Alhaji Shehu Usman Shagari ceases forth-with to be the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria. All the incumbents of the above-named offices shall, if they have not already done so, vacate their formal official residences, surrender all government property in their possession and report to the nearest police station in their constituencies within 7 days.

The clerk of the National Assembly, the President of the Senate and Speaker

of the House of Representatives shall, within two weeks, render account of all the properties of the National Assembly. All the political parties are banned; the bank account of FEDECO and all the political parties are frozen with immediate effect. All foreigners living in any part of the country are assured of their safety and will be adequately protected.

Henceforth, workers not on essential duties are advised to keep off the streets. All categories of workers on essential duties will, however, report at their places of work immediately.

With effect from today, a dusk to dawn curfew will be imposed between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. each day until further notice. All Airways flights have been suspended forthwith and all airports, seaports and border posts closed. External communication has been cut; the Custom and Excise, Immigration and the Police will maintain vigilance and ensure watertight security at the borders. The area administrators or commanders will have themselves to blame if any of the wanted people escapes.

Fellow countrymen and women, the change in government has been a bloodless and painstaking operation and we do not want anyone to lose his or her life. People are warned in their own interest to be law-abiding and to give the Federal Military Government maximum cooperation. Anyone caught disturbing public order will be summarily dealt with.

For avoidance of doubt, you are forewarned that we shall not hesitate to declare marshal law in any area or state of the Federation in which disturbances occur.

Fellow countrymen and women and comrades at arms, I will like to assure you that the Armed Forces of Nigeria is ready to lay its life for our dear nation but not for the present irresponsible leadership of the past civilian administration.

You are to await further announcements.

Good morning.

APPENDIX IV

FIRST RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCAST OF NIGERIA'S FOURTH MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

(First broadcast 0020 hours January 1, 1984)

In pursuance of the primary objective of saving our great nation from total collapse, I, Major-General Muhammed Buhari of the Nigerian Army have after due consultations been formally invested with the authority as Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

It is with humility and deep sense of responsibility that I accept this challenge and call to national duty. As you must have heard in that announcement, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has been suspended except those sections of it which are exempted in the Constitution Suspension and Modification Decree to be issued in due course.

The change became necessary in order to put an end to the serious economic predicament and crisis of confidence now afflicting our nation.

Consequently, the Nigerian Armed Forces have constituted themselves into a Federal Military Government comprising of a Supreme Military Council, a National Council of States, a Federal Executive Council at the centre and State Executive Councils to be presided over by a Military Governor to be appointed in due course in each of the states of the federation. Members of these bodies will be announced soon.

The Nature of Politics Since 1979

The last Federal Military Government drew up a programme with the aim of handing over political power to the civilians in 1979. That programme as you all know was implemented to the letter. The 1979 Constitution was promulgated. However, little did the military realise that the political leadership of the Second Republic would circumvent most of the checks and balances in the Constitution and bring us to the present stage of general insecurity. The premium on political power became so exceedingly high that political contestants regarded victory at the elections as a matter of life and death struggles and were determined to capture or retain power by all means.

Mismanagement of the Economy

It is true that there is a world-wide economic recession. However, in the case of Nigeria, it is in fact aggravated by mismanagement. We believe that

appropriate government agencies gave good advice but their advice was disregarded by the leadership.

The situation would have been saved if the legislators were alert to their constitutional responsibilities. Instead, the legislators concerned themselves with salary scales, fringe benefits and unnecessary foreign travels, etc. which took no account of the state of the economy and the welfare of the people they represented.

As a result of our inability to cultivate financial discipline and prudent management of the economy, we have come to depend largely on internal and external borrowing to execute government projects with attendant domestic price pressures and soaring external debts. Thus, given the propensity of the outgoing civilian administration to mismanage our financial resources, Nigeria was already condemned to live perpetually with the twin problems of heavy budget deficits and weak balance of payments position with little prospect of building a virile and viable economy.

The 1983 Elections

The last general elections could be anything but free and fair. The only political parties that could complain of election rigging are those parties that lacked the resources to rig. There is ample evidence that rigging and thuggery were relative to the resources available to the parties. This conclusively prove to us that the parties have not developed confidence in the presidential system of government in which the nation invested so much material resources.

Corruption and Indiscipline

While corruption and indiscipline have been associated with our state of underdevelopment, these twin evils in our body politic attained unprecedented heights in the past four years. The corrupt, inept and insensitive leaderships in the last four years have been the source of immorality and impropriety in our society.

Since what happened in any society is largely a reflection of the leadership of that society we deplore corruption in all its facets. This government will not tolerate kick-backs, inflation of contracts and over-invoicing of imports, et cetera. Nor will it condone forgery, fraud, embezzlement, misuse and abuse of office and illegal dealings in foreign exchange and smuggling. Arson has been used to cover fraudulent acts in public institutions. I am referring to fires that gutted the P. & T. building in Lagos, the Anambra State Broadcasting Corporation, the Republic Building at Marina, the Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Capital Development Authority Accounts Office at Abuja and the NET (Nigerian External Telecommunications) building. Most of these fires occurred at a time when Nigerians were being apprehensive of the frequency of frauds, scandals and government's apparent incapacity to deal with them.

Corruption has become so pervasive and intractable that a whole ministry has been erected to stem it.

Moment of Truth

Fellow Nigerians, this indeed is the moment of truth. My colleagues and I in the Supreme Military Council must be frank enough to acknowledge the fact that at the moment, an accurate picture of the financial position is yet to be determined. We have no doubt that the situation is bad enough. In spite of this, every effort will be made to ensure that the difficult and degrading conditions under which we are living are ameliorated. Let no one, however, be deceived that workers who have not received their salaries in the past eight or so months will receive such salaries between today and tomorrow, or that hospitals which have been without drugs for months will be provided with enough drugs immediately. We are determined that with the help of God we shall do our best to settle genuine payments to which government is committed, including backlog of workers' salaries after proper scrutiny. We are confident and we assure you that even in the face of the global recession and the seemingly grim and disturbing financial picture, given prudent management of Nigeria's existing financial resources, and our determination to substantially reduce waste, it will be possible to clear the accumulated domestic payment arrears; to reduce and eventually narrow down rising budgetary deficits and weak balance of payments position.

Priority Programme

The Federal Military Government will reappraise policies with a view to paying greater attention to the following areas:

- * The economy will be given a new impetus and better sense of direction.
- * Corrupt officials and their agents will be brought to book.
- * In view of the drought that affected most parts of the country the Federal Military Government will, within the available resources, import foodstuff to supplement the shortfalls suffered in the last harvest.
- * Payment of salary arrears to workers.
- * Our foreign policy will both be dynamic and realistic. Africa will, of course, continue to be the centre-piece of our foreign policy.
- * The morale and combat-readiness of the Armed Forces will be given high priority. Officers and men with high personal and professional integrity will have nothing to fear.

Judiciary, The Civil Service and the Police

The Chief Justice of the Federation and all other holders of judicial appointments within the Federation shall continue in their appointments and the judiciary shall continue to function under existing laws subject to such exceptions as may be decreed from time to time by the Federal Military Government. All holders of appointments in the Federal Civil Service, the Police and the Nigerian Security Organisation shall continue to exercise their functions in the normal way subject to changes that may be introduced by the FMG (Federal Military Government). All board chairmen and members of statutory corporations, parastatals and other executive departments are hereby relieved of their appointments with immediate effect.

External Relations

The FMG will maintain and strengthen existing diplomatic relations with other states and with international organisations and institutions such as the Organisation of African Unity, the United Nations and its organs, Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), ECOWAS and the Commonwealth of Nations, et cetera.

The FMG will honour and respect all treaty obligations entered into by the previous government and we hope that such nations and bodies will reciprocate this gesture by respecting our country's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Solemn Appeal

Fellow Nigerians, finally we have dutifully intervened to save this country from imminent collapse. We therefore expect all Nigerians, including those who participated directly or indirectly in bringing the nation to its present predicament to cooperate with us. This generation of Nigerians and indeed future generations have no other country than Nigeria. We shall remain here and salvage it together.

May God bless us all.

Good morning.

APPENDIX V

SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (JANUARY 1984)

<i>Name and Office</i>	<i>State of Origin</i>
1. Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation of Nigeria, (Chairman)	Kaduna
2. Major-General Ibrahim Babangida, Chief of Army Staff	Niger
3. Commodore Augustus Aikhomu, Chief of Naval Staff	Bendel
4. Air Vice-Marshal Ibrahim Alfa, Chief of Air Staff	Gongola
5. Major-General Domkat Bali, Minister of Defence	Plateau
6. Major-General Mamman Vatsa, Minister for Federal Capital Territory	Niger
7. Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon, Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters	Kwara
8. Brigadier Yohanna Yerima Kure, GOC 82 Combined Division	Kaduna
9. Brigadier Sanni Abacha, GOC 2nd Division	Kano
10. Brigadier Ola Oni, GOC 1st Division	Lagos
11. Brigadier Mohammed Magoro, Minister of Internal Affairs	Sokoto
12. Brigadier Mohammed Nasko	Niger
13. Brigadier Paul Omu	Bendel
14. Col. Salihu Ibrahim, GOC 3rd Division	Kwara
15. Navy Captain Okoh Ukiwe	Imo
16. Air Commodore Larry Koinyan	Rivers
17. Mr. Etim Inyang, Inspector-General of Police	Cross River
18. Ambassador Mohammed Lawal Rafindale, Director-General of the Nigerian Security Organisation (NSO)	Kaduna
19. Mr. Chike Ofodile (SAN), Attorney-General and Minister of Justice	Anambra

APPENDIX VI

STATES MILITARY GOVERNORS (JANUARY 1984)

<i>State</i>	<i>Governor</i>
1. Anambra State	Navy Captain Allison Madueke
2. Bauchi	Brigadier Sanni Sami
3. Bendel	Brigadier John Useni
4. Benue	Brigadier John Atom Kpera
5. Borno	Major-General Abubakar Waziri
6. Cross River	Navy Captain Edet Archibong, later replaced with Lt.-Col. Daniel Archibong
7. Gongola	Major-General M.D. Jega
8. Imo	Brigadier Ike Nwachukwu
9. Kaduna	Air Commodore U. Muazu
10. Kano	Air Commodore H. Abdullahi
11. Kwara	Group Captain B. Latinwo
12. Lagos	Group Captain Gbolahan Mudashiru
13. Niger	Lt.-Col. David Mark
14. Ogun	Col. O.O. Diya
15. Ondo	Commodore Michael Otiko (Navy)
16. Oyo	Lt.-Col. Oladayo Popoola
17. Plateau	Navy Captain Samuel Atukun
18. Rivers	Police Commissioner Fidelis Oyakhilome
19. Sokoto	Brigadier G. Duba

APPENDIX VII

FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (JANUARY 1984)

Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces	— Chairman
Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon, Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters	— Member
Chief Grey A. Longe, Secretary to the Federal Military Government and Head of the Federal Civil Service	— Member

<i>State</i>	<i>Minister</i>	<i>Ministry</i>
Anambra	Chike Ofodile (SAN)	Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation
Bauchi	Ibrahim Yerimah Abdullahi	Education, Science and Technology
Bendel		
Benue	Abdullahi Ibrahim (SAN)	Transport and Aviation
Borno	Bukar Shaib	Agriculture and Water Resources
Cross River	Emman Nsan	Works and Housing
Gongola	Mahmud Tukur	Industries and Commerce
Imo	Group Captain Samson Omeruah	Information, Youth, Sports and Culture
Kaduna	Rilwanu Lukman	Mines, Power and Steel
Kano	Lt-Col. Ahmed Abdullahi	Communications
Kwara	Ibrahim Gambari	External Affairs
Lagos	Commodore Segun Koshoni	Health
Niger	Major-General Mamman Vatsa	Federal Capital Territory
Ogun	Onalapo Soleye	Finance
Ondo	Brigadier S.K. Omojokun	Employment, Labour and Productivity
Oyo	Michael Sunday Adigun	National Planning
Plateau	Major-General Domkat Bali	Defence
Rivers	Tam David-West	Petroleum and Energy
Sokoto	Brigadier Muhammed Magoro	Internal Affairs

APPENDIX VIII

APPENDIX
HOW CAN NIGERIA MOVE FORWARD? (FACSIMILE)

How can Mexico move forward?

1. Intenditi

1. Introduction
We have been prisoners of exotic ideas & concepts. As a
result, our political actions have been rather an independent
movement.

We need modern technology.

We are slowed by foreign concept, technology & finance

Intimately, we are concerned by the social parts of an educated
 people that is unproductive, in terms of self investment or
 (entrepreneurship) ..
 creation of industry, or discipline work force.

↳ Yet every person demands a good & improving life & in
from (1773-78) provides a lesson that demand can be met in hard work.
This immense potential in modern state.

A modern Nigerian KGB system:

- i. national unity ^{formed after limited unity, rather for ethnic groups, unity of ppl = ethnic unity, for. unity of nation = not dependent on ethnic unity}
- ii. open strong, not independent economy
- iii. political stability (i.e. a generally accepted political system founded on indigenous political concepts/practices, and finally leading to a strong state with no internal threat) ~~stable, to create a strong nation~~
- iv. ~~democracy~~ ^{for} ~~any~~ ^{the} ~~people~~ ^{people} ~~strong~~ ^{strong} ~~economic~~ ^{economic} ~~growth~~ ^{growth}
- v. strong ^{strong} ~~economic~~ ^{economic} ~~growth~~ ^{growth}
- vi. a national culture.

The example is a model of a machine design tool, from
a description as well as
our property, and continuous value history, ~~which~~ ^{single} the use of
Black Box sets of value from dimensions.

The intent of the Black ^{is not an} ~~case~~ ^{demands} that Negroes become a
Black ~~out~~ ^{of} ~~own~~ ^{discretion} from ~~discretion~~ ^{discretion}. The ~~fact~~ ^{fact} is that
Negroes ~~cannot~~ ^{cannot} ~~take~~ ^{take} ~~place~~ ^{place} in the context of a plural society
interest.

To attain broad farm immersion, ask the Trainers to go into a variety of African states.

Steps for building up a New Medical System

Step I

Military rule.

SMC, FOC, Med. Council of Vets, etc. Local Councils.

New strength of Report & Order of Clipping. Technical reform
Set up L.C. & Council. ^{Technical argument &} ~~Technical~~ for, for itself.Council members to represent the country. ~~Technical~~ for, for itself.

Representing distributed system for committee committees.

Representation of the armed forces, especially the Army. More capital & things by
and other steps. But committee was asked to make use of itself.Step II Consultative military Rule

SMC, FOC, Med. Council of Vets, etc. Local Councils, Admin & Head of Vets.

For ~~Consultative~~ Council elected by Vets Committee Council elected by L.C. & Admin
of committee. Decision on representation & Fed. & Vets. Council & L.C. & Admin.
Refused for peace-keeping & endorsement of participation principle.

New division of function between Federal & State. New Vets, if any.

Division of committee & representation to various members, especially Vets, and
refused "more of effort of top officials & members" "academic function".

Step III

Participatory military Rule

SMC, FOC, Medical Council of Vets, etc. Local Councils, Admin & Head of Vets.

Council Council elected a for Vets ^{and members of} ~~and members of~~ Vets. Council & L.C. & Admin.

about Vets Council L.C. & Admin. of committee elected by Vets Council.

Vets Council Council Dist. & support first election of Vets & Admin.

Admin's first ~~function~~ allowed to operate at Committee level under
specific guidelines to make them program-oriented.

Step IV

Popular Democracy

Councils for legislative function & action within report

Fed. Consultative Council, replace SMC, FOC with elected chairman. Head of Vets

in state military but put up chairmanship of FOC & Medical Council of Vets.

Local Council Council was elected

Vets Council Council ~~was elected~~ Vets Council. Elected in legislative (Fed. & Vets. & Admin. of Vets.)

Participatory function, replacing within military, was to function at Vets &

Fed. Council. However, elected in Fed. District only at committee level.

Admin from Council to be set up with power to elect the Council -
Chairman - Head of Vets for 5 years, subject to approval by Fed. legislative.Set up Head of Vets clearly define & separate for duties of Chairman
of Fed. Ex. Council. Chairman of FOC to appoint Vets Council with
approval of Vets legislative Council.

APPENDIX IX

STATEMENT MADE AT THE NPN RALLY HELD AT
OWERRI ON APRIL 14, 1983

By S. G. Ikoku

Since this country attained its independence in 1960, two events have set the parameters of our national evolution. These events are, in historical sequence, the civil war and the adoption of presidential-type democracy. These two events have made, and are still making, their compelling demands on our national resolve and ingenuity. Arising from the civil war, we have the related problems of the retarded development of Igboland and the emotional adjustments needed in the interactions of Igbos with fellow Nigerians. For its consolidation, the newly-adopted presidential-type democracy demands political peace, national security and the ability to accommodate necessary changes.

The consolidation of our new political system demands the stabilisation of the multi-party system in the service of a national consensus on the goals and paths of national evolution. The problem of the retarded development of Igboland and the needed adjustments in attitudes in the inter-relationships of Igbos and other fellow Nigerians, demands that the Igbos should have an effective presence in the mainstream of Nigerian politics.

We Nigerians have freely chosen the multi-party system. This means that the national search is for a political system tailored to our circumstances, whose *modus operandi* is the multiparty system. Unfortunately, the apparent equation of the multi-party system to a multiplicity of political parties, each operating on a different wavelength, has be-devilled the process of political consolidation. If care is not taken, this state of affairs could undermine our national development. The proliferation of political parties seems to have substituted license for liberty, acrimony for dialogue, bravado for tutelage, insolence for self-assertion, demogogy for development, and eccentricity for leadership.

In an attempt to arrest this deplorable, and potentially dangerous situation, some of us put out the formula of a national front. Behind such a national front, several political parties could work in harness by subscribing to a common minimum programme. By such an arrangement, the adverse effects of too many political parties could be reduced to a minimum, while not negating our constitutional right to form political associations. We saw such an arrangement as a transition stage to the multi-party system as known elsewhere. This strategy has not materialised.

The only meaningful alternative now open to this country is to evolve truly national political parties, that is political parties that cut across all ethnic barriers

and have effective presence in all states of the federation. If political parties which possess a truly federal character, not on paper but on the grounds are to be sought after and nurtured in the interest of our national development, then the pride of place must go to the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The reason is obvious. Of all the political parties in the country, the NPN enjoys the widest territorial spread, not in propaganda claims but in objective reality. It runs the Federal Government. It runs seven state governments. And in the remaining twelve states, it is the most viable alternative to the parties in power. Above all, the NPN is not built around a personality myth. And this creates internal conditions favourable to flexibility and growth.

The other major problem — namely the retarded development of Igboland and needed adjustments in attitudes in the relationships between Igbos and fellow Nigerians — is for the Igbos to solve by themselves. Along what path can we, as Igbos, best attain the development of Igboland and normalise attitudes as between us and other Nigerians? Is it to set up Igbo political party and then go into short-lived alliances of convenience with other ethnic political parties? Or is it to establish a strong Igbo presence in a truly national political party?

This is the problem that has been of prime concern to many Igbo politicians, and specifically to Dr. M. I. Okpara, the achievements Premier of the former Eastern Nigeria, Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu, the Ikemba of Nnewi and Dikedioranma of Igboland, and my humble self. Happily today we can announce to fellow Igbos and fellow Nigerians alike, that all three of us are fully agreed on what the correct strategy should be. Our approach is to create an effective Igbo presence in the only genuinely countrywide political party, which happily is committed to democracy, the rule of law, the welfare of the common people, the rotation of the highest political office among all sections of Nigeria, and the creation of new states within the Nigerian Federation. That Party is the NPN. It is this approach that Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu has christened the "New Direction".

Ladies & Gentlemen,

It is important to stress the point that the solutions to both the national problem of political consolidation and to specific Igbo problem of retarded development do converge on the growth and triumph of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). We as Igbos seek our wellbeing within the context of promoting Nigeria's national evolution. We are not tribal irredentists. On the contrary, we are Nigerian nationalists who fully recognize the multi-national character of the Nigerian State.

Some two months ago, Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu declared his support for the NPN.

Today, Dr. M. I. Okpara and his close political friends have also declared support for the NPN.

I now stand before you all here gathered and announce that I and my political supporters in the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) — the leading lights of which are Dr. Mang Obasi, the National Financial Secretary of the PRP; Mr. A. E. Ukiwe, the kingpin of the Imo State Directorate of the PRP; Mr. Philip Nkwocha, the Secretary of the Imo State Directorate of the PRP; Chief Nwojo O. Nwojo, the first Treasurer of Imo State PRP; Dr. Ikem Okeke, Deputy National President of the PRP who declared a few weeks ago in Lagos — have formally declared full and loyal support for the National Party of Nigeria (NPN).

180 *Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'etat*

The declaration for the NPN of Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu, Dr. M. I. Okpara and my humble self, in each case with our political colleagues and grassroots support in Anambra and Imo States, harnesses to the NPN, if I may be allowed to say this, a big stock of political charisma, political experience and political expertise of the highest quality. The positive results of this historic development will soon become apparent. In Igboland, we are on the eve of a political earthquake. At the all-Nigeria level, I predict the death of the politics of personalities and the enthronement of the politics of programmes. As a result, the tempo of national evolution will be accelerated, more especially in the areas of national unity and harmony, economic transformation, the fair allotment of national resources among ethnic groups, and the creation of favourable conditions for the attainment of the welfare of the common man.

What do we do now?

Victory at the polls this year is our key to the New Nigeria.

To return Alhaji Shehu Shagari to the Presidency, and to give him a National Assembly with comfortable NPN majority are the conditions for achieving our lofty objectives and legitimate aspirations.

Therefore let us all – leaders and supporters, men and women, youths and elders – go back home and work hard for a resounding NPN victory at the 1983 elections.

Thank you all.

Enugu

13th April 1983

S. G. IKOKU

Political Career of S. G. Ikoku

1957-1962: Leader of the Opposition, Eastern House of Assembly

1962-1966: National Secretary of the Action Group

1970-1972: Commissioner for Economic Development & Rehabilitation & Commissioner for Health, East Central State.

1975-1976: Member of the Constitution Drafting Committee

1978-1982: National Secretary Peoples Redemption Party

INDEX

- Abacha, Brigadier Sanni, 3
radio speech by (1983 coup),
166-167
- Africa, political trends in, 29-30
- Buhari, Major-General
Muhammadu, 6
broadcast speech by (1 Jan
1984), 168-171
regime of in Nigeria, 100-106
- Civil service,
role of in Nigeria, 107-110,
114-116
- Dikko, Dr Umaru, 2, 4, 11, 12
military government, views of
on, 41-42
- educational planning, in Nigeria,
failure of 114-117
- Ejor, Major-General (ret'd) David,
military role in Nigeria, views
on, 41
- Ekwueme, Dr Alex, 2-3
- ethnicity and regionalism in Nigeria
81-84; proposals for elimination
of, 110-114
- "guerrilla politics", 46-49
- Ikoku, S.G.
coup (1983), experiences of
during, 1-28
statement by at Owerri (14 April
1983), 175-178
- independent development, 25-56
- "junta politics", 43-46
- Latin America
US involvement in, 43-44
- Mao Tse Tung, 46-47
- mass media
in Nigeria, 118-119
- mass organisations,
in Nigeria, need for creation of,
117-118
- military
role of in Nigerian politics,
34-35, 36-56, 97-106,
137-138, 144, 146-147
162-5; views of Umaru Dikko
on 40-41;
views of David Ejor on, 41
and political stability, 58-59
- nationalism, 30-31, 50-53
- neo-colonialism
in Nigeria, 77-81, 103-105,
155-162
- Nigeria
administration of Shahu Shagari
in 84-96
administration of Muhammadu
Buhari in 100-106
civil service, role of in, 107-110
constitution of 1979 in, critique
of 70-75
coup in (1983), 1-28
economic situation of 32-33
educational planning in 114-117
ethnicity and regionalism in,
97-90; proposals for
elimination of, 110-114
judicial system in, 71
mass media in, 118-119
mass organisations in, 117-118
military, role of in 34-56,
97-106, 137-138, 144,
147-148, 159-162
neo-colonialism in, 77-81
103-105, 155-162

- political parties in, 71-73, 136-137 proposals for reform of, 124-125, 151-153
- political system of, 5-6; model for reform of 129-131, 149, 150-154
- political trends in, 31-34
- radical nationalism in, need for, 30-31, 50-53
- religion and morality in, 74
- socialism in, 124-127
- US involvement in, 43
- "welfarism" in, 119-122
- Western political systems, failings of in, 34, 70-75

pan-Africanism

- Nigeria's role in propagation of, 66-68

People's Redemption Party (PRP)

- national unity proposals of, 90-93

political parties

- in Nigeria, 71-73, 136-137; suggested reforms of 123-124, 136-137, 141, 152-153

political stability

- prerequisites of, 57-68

political system of Nigeria

- outline of model for reform of, 129-142, 148
- timetable for implementation of, 149-154

Shagari, Shehu

- administrations of, i, 84-96

socialism, 13, 48

- in Nigeria, 13, 125-128

United States

- involvement in Latin America, 43-44
- involvement in Nigeria, 43

welfare state

- in West, characteristics of, 119-121

- roots of Nigerian "welfarism" in 120-121

"welfarism"

- in Nigeria, 119-122

Western political system

- failings of in Nigeria, 34, 70-75



Nigeria's Fourth Coup D'Etat

Mr S.G. Ikoku has "made use of the 31st December, 1983 military coup d'etat as the jumping-off point for the articulation of the view that both military and civilian administrations in Nigeria... are elements in a dialectical process...". The central theme is that "...Nigerians are in search of an appropriate statehood. The urge is to create and sustain civilised living at home, to project an effective pro-African stance on the African continent, and to reinforce black irredentism in a world dominated by the white race..."

Sam Goomsu Ikoku was with controversial Umaru Dikko — who subsequently escaped to London — in the first uncertain twenty-four hours after Brigadier Abacha announced Nigeria's 4th Military Coup. What really happened?

Dogged by controversy himself, Ikoku's political career spans three decades of significant roles in Nigerian public life. A political tactician, theoretician and pragmatist, he in essence draws heavily from his in-depth knowledge of the Nigerian political terrain, sets illusions side by side with reality, and advocates a fundamental re-design of Nigeria's future, not as an academic conclusion, but as a historical imperative.

This latest contribution to positions of socio-political transformation building is startling in its originality and ingenuity of its tacticalities.



FOURTH DIMENSION PUBLISHERS

The African Viewpoint

ISBN 978 156 226 9