

Article

Military Factor in Nigerian History Since 1960

Paul Obi-Ani¹, and Ambrose Onu^{2*}

Department of History and International Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

¹paul.obi-ani@unn.edu.ng

²ambrose.onu@unn.edu.ng

*Correspondence: ambrose.onu@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

The role of the Nigerian military in the country's political landscape has been significant since independence. Initially, it was seen as a remedy to socio-political crises and was expected to protect the nation's territorial integrity and serve as a unifying force for nation-building. However, the military's involvement in multiple coups led to a deviation from its core objectives and a loss of touch with the tenets of ideal governance. This deviation has had significant implications for Nigerian society, leading to ethno-religious dichotomies, rivalries, and disunity. The military, which was meant to foster unity and cohesion, has, unfortunately, contributed to the fragmentation of the country. The military's involvement in governance has had significant implications for Nigerian society. It has led to a culture of corruption, lack of accountability, and a disregard for democratic principles. Discerned from the historical and descriptive approaches, this investigation discovered that the impact of military rule on Nigerian society has hindered the country's development and progress, contributing to ethno-religious dichotomies, rivalries, and disunity. The paper suggests that the military's role is likely to continue to be prominent in the foreseeable future. It also calls for further research and analysis on this topic, indicating that the impact of military rule will continue to shape Nigeria's political landscape and society.

Keywords: Nigerian military, ethnicity, disunity, nation building

In developed climes, the military is subordinated to civilian control. The British military tradition which Nigeria was supposed to have imbibed during the colonial tutelage, appeared only skin-deep. The attainment of independence in 1960, opened up several cleavages such as ethnicity, North-South dichotomy, corruption, nepotism, abuse of power electoral violence and disdain for merit in recruitment and promotion in the public sector. Thus the nascent independence constitution lacked strong institutions to nurture it to maturity. The civil authority refused to play by the rules. The man on the horseback could not resist the temptation to usurp power through the backdoor. The auguries were ominous. The departure of Leviathan, the British and lack of discretion in the Nigerianization agenda propped up inexperienced officials at the helm of affairs in several sectors with disastrous consequences.

The unwholesome process of Nigerianization of the military; with the rapid replacement of expatriate military officers with Nigerians portends dangers that the Balewa regime could not discern. This problem of rapid promotion on the scale as witnessed in the Nigerian military between 1959 to 1964 could be described as professional disorientation. This was because the young officers had not been in the military services and positions long enough to master the intricacies and become familiar with the tasks involved. Thus, the young officers' chase for rank and position watered-down professionalism, destroyed meritocracy, and enthroned nepotism, and mediocrity. Similarly, the fear of ethnic domination in the Nigerian military and the desire for the northerners to produce army



officers of their own especially when realized that the Igbo constituted about 60 per cent of the entire officer corps in the Nigerian Army led to the commissioning of improperly trained officers through short service courses that are not as rigorous and duration as Sandhursts trained officers all in attempt to bridge the officer gap. There was a case of an officer who in a space of three years was elevated from captain to brigadier. Thus the military tradition of applying merit, competence and loyalty was abandoned for other primordial considerations such as ethnicity. To compound matters, officer recruitment in the army was based on a quota system which tended to favour one region against the others. Esprit de corps, the hallmark of the military was bastardized.

The Road to the Military Coups and Civil War in Nigeria

The socio-political and economic landscape of Nigeria before independence was bedevilled with perennial crises; such as ethnic sentiments, religious bigotry and bitter rivalry among the parties jostled for supremacy at the federal level after the country's independence. The ugly situation alienated the people from the government and offered the army the most inviting opportunity to topple the civilian government, orchestrated by one of Nigeria's finest officers, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and his co-conspirators on January 15 1966. These young Majors who masterminded the coup were reform-minded radicals who were motivated by the chain of military coups in Africa¹. It was the same coup that marked a further dramatic point in a chain of events that led to the civil war. Moreover, it is contended that the objectives of the coup plotters were driven by the quest for national unity and equity, rather than regional and factional dispositions. Even though some argued it has an ethnic tinge of Igbo domination. The "January boys" were deeply disappointed by the horrors of the post-colonial government that promised *Eldorado*, but stumbled from one crisis to another. Whereas the military had intervened purportedly to sanitize the polity, their seizure of power and subsequent administration of national government deepened the socio-economic and political cleavages of the country. Sadly, the Military became purveyors and beneficiaries of corruption, nepotism and ethnic sentiments.

The strained relationship among Nigerian political leaders became conspicuous after the 1959 Federal General Election, essentially the misunderstanding between the leader of the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), Sir Ahmadu Bello, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo-led Action Group (AG) in the Western region². Consequently, the poor handling of the Action Group (AG) crisis between Chief Obafemi and Chief Samuel Akintola in 1962 precipitated the Western Regional crisis and the subsequent declaration of a State of Emergency in the region and polarised the fragile democratic environment. This incident helped to destabilize the AG and endangered peace in the nation. The Western Regional crisis was followed by the disputed census of 1963. The controversial census was compounded by the Tiv riot for which the Northern Premier, Ahmadu Bello rather than make concessions

¹ Tekena N. Tamuno, "Men and Measures in the Nigerian Crisis, 1966-70", in *Nigeria Since Independence: The First 25 Years: The Civil War Years*, ed. Tekena N. Tamuno and Samson C. Ukpabi (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Limited, 1989), 3.

² Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998),33.

to the Tiv people, leveraged the federal might to suppress the rioting Tivs³. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister did nothing to curb this excessive misuse of the army against the Tivs and the rampant looting that followed. Thus, it appeared as if the party in power at the centre was unduly deploying the military on its perceived opponents.

Another important issue that exacerbated sectional and ethnic chauvinism was the removal of Professor Eni Njoku as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos and the resignation of K. O. Dike as Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, due to pressure from the NNDP⁴. Indeed, if ethnic consideration is the intention for the removal of the Igbo Vice Chancellor in the Western Region in the 1960s, little wonder even in the 21st century, such narrow interest is still predominant in the appointment of Vice Chancellors even among the Igbo of Southeast Nigeria; to the ridiculous level of clannishness. Meanwhile, the federal election of 1964/65 bred alliances that were shrouded in bitterness, as political parties allied to control the Federal. The parties, in their blind attempt to control the centre with its enormous power, spared nothing, even murdering opponents to achieve their goals. This led to a series of spontaneous protests, looting, and killings, while over 2000 people were reported to have been massacred in the encounter⁵. Many felt that the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar was not decisive in ending the insecurity enveloping the country, particularly the Western Region. It was this apparent inaction that may have propelled the young majors in their rescue mission. In the light of the above situation, Alexander Madiebo notes that:

If in May 1962, a broken Mace in the Regional House of Assembly provided sufficient justification for the proclamation of the State of Emergency, one should have thought, in 1965, that the loss of lives through bloody riots that had shown no sign of stopping, was more than an adequate justification for the Federal Government to take emergency action. However, Sir Abubakar appeared to be quite satisfied with the situation, which, by his own assessment, did not require the Federal Government's intervention⁶.

Democracy thrives on the unscrupulous observance of the letters and spirit of the constitution. When political actors in desperation try to subvert the Constitution, they reap the whirlwind. The first republic political class did everything to undermine the rule of law leading to the violent end of the republic. The clash between Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Tafawa Belewa over the scandalous 1964 general elections led both leaders to seek the support and control of the military and by so doing gave the military the impression that they had certain political roles to play, hence the ultimate desire to wrest political power. The above failure in leadership was exacerbated by Sir Ahmadu Bello's alleged master plan aimed to:

³Adewale Ademoyega, *Why We Struck: The Story of the First Nigerian Coup* (Ibadan: Evans Brothers Ltd., 1981), 22.

⁴C.C. Agbodike, *Military Intervention in Nigerian Politics and Governance: In Historical Perspective* (Awka: Valid Publishing Company Nig., Ltd., 2006), 12-13.

⁵Zdenek Cervenka, *A History of the Nigeria War: 1967-1970* (Ibadan: Onobonje Press and Book Industries Nig. Ltd., 1971), 2.

⁶Alexander A. Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution and Biafra War* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd., 1980), 5.

Eliminate all the politicians opposed to the NNA (particularly UPGA politicians); to enforce the Igbo must go hue cry in the north and; to impose Islam on the Christian south ... and consequently to establish Nigeria as a theocratic Muslim country⁷.

The proposed jihad became critical following the sudden reposting of high-ranking military officers from the South in order to northernize the High Command of the Nigerian Army. For instance, GOC-Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi was asked to go on indefinite leave on the order of the Minister of Defence. Lt. Colonel Hilary Njoku was asked to relinquish his command of the 2nd Battalion of the Nigerian Army, Ikeja, to Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon⁸, among other postings. This alleged cunning plot by the Northern politicians to unleash the “Night of Long Knives” on the southerners was aptly reaffirmed by Rt. Gen. Chris Ali, thus:

The January 15 coup was staged to pre-empt a Northern People’s Congress(NPC)-inspired coup, ‘Operation no Mercy’ designed to eliminate the critics of Prime Minister, Sir Tafawa Balewa’s administration...Zakari Maimalari was to lead the northern group...the D-Day was 17 January 1966. Majors Nzeogwu/Ifeajuna’s ‘Operation Damisa’ upstaged them by spilling into the strategic areas of Nigeria on 15 January 1966.⁹

The intrigues and counter-plots to dislodge political opponents outside the ballot box speak ill of Nigerian politicians. Thus realizing that Nigeria's political leaders had failed the nation and had betrayed the trust placed on them and realizing that Nigeria’s salvation lay in nothing short of dynamic and enlightened leadership, there was an urgent need to prevent the impending bloodshed and right the wrong of the failing politicians, hence young Majors struck on 15th January, 1966. The Nigerian first military coup d’ etat was masterminded by five Majors-Patrick Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, Adewale Ademoyega, Don Okafor, Chris Anuforo, and Emmanuel Ifeajuna¹⁰. The coup led to the death of some illustrious political officers of the first republic, which include the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello Premier of Northern Region, Chief Samuel Akintola Premier of Western Region, Chief Festus Okotie Eboh, the colourful but controversial Federal Minister of Finance. While the three most senior Northern Officers Brigadier Zak Maimalari, Lt. Col. Pam and Lt. Colonel Largema Abogo, were killed, other slain top military officers of the January coup include; Brigadier Samuel Ademulegun, Lt. Col. Arthur Unegbe, Col. Kur Muhammed, and Col. Raphael Shodeinde¹¹. The above ethnic origin of the coup plotters and the ethno-regional origin of their victims helped to support the one-sided assertion of the Igbo agenda to wrest power through the back.

Initially, the coup was greeted with enthusiasm from many Nigerians, but it was short-lived as soon as the figure of the victims became public knowledge, the ethnic group that

⁷ Ben Gbulie, *Nigeria’s Five Majors*,39.

⁸ Agbodike, *Military Intervention*, 17.

⁹ Alli, *The Federal Republic of Nigerian Army*, 211-212.

¹⁰ Gbulie, *Nigeria’s Five Majors*,18. See also Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 56.

¹¹ Raph Uwechue, *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War: Facing the Future* (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1971), 24-25. See also Gbulie, *Nigeria’s Five Majors*, 160.

was badly affected, particularly the northerners believed that the coup was a camouflaged attempt to secure the domination of the government of the country by certain Igbo leaders. However, it's hard to believe that the intention of the coupists was nationally driven and not a sectional-motivated outburst. Though a Yoruba man Major Adewale Ademoyega was part of the five majors, the killing of senior military officers could not be justified. Even the insinuation that Chief Awolowo was being considered for the Prime Ministership position remained empty when juxtaposed with the massacre of high-profile political figures in a primordial country by a group of young army majors from a rival ethnic group. A more justifiable stand could be that Major Nzeogwu and co-coupists never envisaged resistance from those guarding the political heads, hence their resort to violence. It is also naïve for the young majors not to have envisaged stiff resistance by those security personnel assigned to protect the political and military heads and the consequent fallout that engulfed the country. The intentions of the coup plotters may have been derailed but those who brand it Igbo coup to dominate Nigeria may have overstated the point.

The emergence of Major Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi, following the abortive coup attempt of January 15, 1966, further lent credence to the speculation of an Igbo coup to hijack power through the barrel of the gun. The rump of the federal cabinet had allegedly requested Gen. Ironsi on 17 January 1966 to assume leadership of the country. It's debatable if it's not lust for power that propelled Ironsi to quell the young Majors' uprising. Had he been defending the government he had sworn to uphold, it behoved on him to restore power to the most senior minister. Gen. Ironsi was ill-prepared for the position he craved and assumed. Little wonder he vacillated on the decisive action against those found to have taken arms against the government of Tafawa Balewa. Court martialling the coupists would have doused the anger of northerners and other aggrieved Nigerians. His naivete became too pronounced in his choice of Chief of Army Staff, Lt Col. Yakubu Gowon and Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Kem Salem both northerners. In an attempt to appease the north, Gen. Ironsi threw caution to the wind. Even in this 21st century, Nigeria has not outgrown ethnic, clannish and primordial inclination. Though he may have good intentions in trying to promote unity and national cohesion through an inclusive-based appointment, he paid dearly for it. The trio of Lt. Col. Gowon, Chief of Army Staff, Alhaji Kem Salem, the Inspector General Police and Alhaji M. D. Yusuf the head of the Special Branch (Secret Service) looked askance if not tacitly supported the July 29, 1966 revenge coup that decimated the Igbo officer corps in the army. Henceforth, senior military appointments and postings have been bastardized, devoid of any shred of merit and highly politicized. Every president has recourse to ethnic or religious considerations in the choice of leadership of the armed forces and police. No wonder the armed forces and police are in tatters minor security challenges become intractable due to poor recruitment and promotion criteria.

Gen. Ironsi stumbled along with his infamous unification Decree 34 of 1966. This appears the last straw in the series of omissions and commissions by his government. In a diverse, heterogeneous country like Nigeria, the idea of a unified civil service, judiciary etc was ill-advised. The doubters of the Igbo grand design to dominate Nigeria needed no further

convictions. However, Decree No. 34 gave rise to mass insurrection beginning from May 29th to July 1966 in several parts of the north with placards like 'Down with Ironsi' 'Avenge Sardauna's death', 'Araba' (let's secede). Nonetheless, it took the intervention of the British high commissioner, Francis Cumming- Bruce, and the US ambassador, Elbert Matthews, to convince the Northern secessionist officers to drop their plans¹². What was more, the spontaneous demonstration degenerated into the massacre of the Southerners, mostly the Igbo in the most gruesome manner, while the northern soldiers stood by and watched such brutality. Even the elite on their part backed the massacre of the Southerners. According to John de St. Jorre "the elite setting the pace and organized groups of armed thugs plus casual hangers-on, rushing in and finishing the job"¹³. In the same vein, Usman Kastina the Northern Military Governor was said to have reprimanded Major Muhammed Shuwa who attempted to use the troops to curb the riot in Kano and Kastina¹⁴. Hundreds of persons lost their lives and properties worth millions of naira. Sadly, the crises went unchecked, as Ironsi appeared to be weak and docile in the face of anarchy.

On 29th July 1966, Gen. Ironsi's fate was sealed, as he was kidnapped and murdered alongside his friend, Lt Col. Adekunle Fajuyi, the Western Military Governor, in a counter-coup, led by northerner officers who worked assiduously to avenge the indiscriminate killings of January 1966 coup and reclaim the northern spirit and interest. The young northern officers further went on a rampage to annihilate soldiers mostly from southern origin, from Abeokuta to Ibadan, Ikeja and Kaduna in the most horrible manner. A total of 300¹⁵ Igbo military officers were unjustly massacred in those "nights of long knives". It was obvious that Gen. Ironsi was not prepared to guide the ship of the Nigerian State produced after the coup, a task he should have shelved by installing a civilian government. He was naive, apolitical and lacked the wily and deceptive ways of the Nigerian political terrain. Undoubtedly, Gen. Ironsi was the unfortunate pawn in the hands of fate, who took much for granted and paid the ultimate price for it.

The Triumph of the Northern Military

With the demise of Gen. Ironsi, Lt Col. Yakubu Gowon the most senior northern officer who allegedly contributed overtly and covertly in the July 29, 1966, counter coup assumed office, instead of Brigadier General Babafemi Ogundipe, the then most senior officer of the Nigerian Army. With such an act, hierarchy and seniority in the army, were jettisoned. This issue of hierarchy and seniority was perhaps the basis for Gen. Gowon and Lt. Col. Ojukwu's personality clash. Lt Col. Ojukwu had vehemently refused to recognize Gowon as the Supreme Commander. A successful coup d'état invests the coup leader as commander-in-chief. Ojukwu's argument to the contrary was puerile. This assertion gives credence to Gowon's postulation on the dawn of the war in the following manner: "I know what the world opinion thinks of me as a monster. But the war is not against the Ibos. It is

¹² Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 61.

¹³ John de St. Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), 59.

¹⁴ Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution*, 37-39.

¹⁵ Frederick Forsyth, *Making of an African Legend: The Biafran Story* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), 58.

against the personal ambitions of Ojukwu and his rebel gang"¹⁶. Reaffirming Gowon's view, Brigadier Oluwole Rotimi, in a lecture, titled *Nigeria and the Twelve States*, stressed that it was not the creation of 12 States that provoked Emeka Ojukwu to attempt to take out the former Eastern Region from Nigeria, rather he had made up his mind to secede and had been working towards it long before the 12 States was announced¹⁷. Indeed, Lt. Col. Ojukwu saw an opportunity to carve out an empire out of a faltering behemoth, Nigeria. Latching on the Igbo massacres in the north, he emotionally blackmailed his people into a war they were ill-prepared for.

Besides the personality clash between Gowon and Ojukwu, Eastern Nigeria was economically stable with a high prospect of oil, and the attempt to lure oil wealth drove both parties into fierce encounters. However, it was clear that the renewal of the pogrom on the people of Igbo extraction in the North from September-October 1966, compelled millions of Igbo to retreat to the east and thereby inflamed the passion for secession. Amidst the terror unleashed on the Easterners, Gowon and Ojukwu had continued to disagree in several terms, creating a deluge of uncertainties in the country which led Lt Gen. Joseph Ankrah- (Ghana's Head of State) to arbitrate in the rift between the belligerent groups when he summoned the two parties to seek for peace at the Aburi Conference on January 4-5 1967. However, returning to Nigeria, both parties had different interpretations of the Aburi Accord. General Gowon's Decree No 8 virtually yielded to the Aburi agreement save on the issue of who holds the sovereign power as commander-in-chief. Lt. Col. Ojukwu's overweening ego and penchant for propaganda threw away a face-saving measure that would have arrested the war. No agreement is sacrosanct and any party can renege if its interest is best served by doing so. The Aburi accord was intended to buy Nigeria sufficient time to size up the military strength of Ojukwu. Gowon displayed tact, shrewdness and statesmanship in outmanoeuvring Ojukwu by dangling carrot at Eastern minority groups with the creation of States and thus balkanizing Ojukwu's dream empire. At this point, the rug was pulled off Ojukwu's feet. Gowon unilaterally abrogated the Aburi truce and further enforced Decree No. 14, which brought the creation of twelve states to fruition¹⁸. In essence, the Eastern region was divided into three states ostensibly to break solidarity for the Biafra cause and win the Eastern minority who sat on the oil reserves which was believed to be the economic hub of the Biafra people.

It can be argued that Gowon's state creation became the last straw that broke the camel's back. Hence, Lt Col Ojukwu convened a Joint Committee meeting on 30th May 1966, at Enugu which afterwards declared Eastern Region secession from Nigeria, with its name the Republic of Biafra. As was expected, Gowon responded to crush the Biafra secessionists on the 6th of July 1967, but in order to win international sympathy, Gowon tagged the war a 'Police Action' and further declared that *the war to keep Nigeria as one is a task that must be done*. Thus, the Nigeria -Biafra war had begun.

From the outset the Easterners lacked the wherewithal to prosecute the war, they faced a lot of challenges, ranging from a lack of access to military hardware, ammunition, and

¹⁶ Friedel Ungeheuer, "Biafra's Agony", *Time Magazine*, Vol. 92, No 8, August 23, 1968, 27.

¹⁷ "Ojukwu's Secession was Premeditated", *Morning Post*, Vol. XI No 90, January 19, 1972, 4.

¹⁸ Ademoyega, *Why We Struck*, 230.

funds, to a severe shortage of food supply and medicals. Biafra had to rely on their land army and air force since the coastline was placed under effective blockade by the Federal Military Government (FMG) which truncated every access to the outside world. The effects of the blockade were: starvation, death and the spread of diseases; such as Kwashikwor. Sadly, such a starvation policy was propelled by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who proclaimed that *All is fair in war and starvation is one of the weapons of war*. The appalling condition was exacerbated by the non-recognition of Biafra State by the major world powers, save for the French covert support and a few African countries like Tanzania, Zambia, Ivory Coast, and Gabon who gave recognition on humanitarian, political, and ideological grounds.

However, the Biafran troops made some earlier successes at the beginning of the war. Such as the 51 Brigade who triumphed in three successive battles – Obollo Afor, Obollo Eke and Eha-Amufu as they unleashed disaster against the massive Nigerian troops¹⁹. However, they were later overwhelmed by the Federal encirclement, hence the Biafran troops were unable to advance towards Northern Nigeria. Also, progress was made by Col Victor Banjo led troops in the Mid-West invasion and Benin was captured on August 9, 1967, which helped to counter Federal invasion and control in the northern front (Nsukka)²⁰. The Midwest gamble further alienated Biafra. The Yoruba who had been sitting on the fence, openly supported Nigeria's war efforts. The effect was that the Biafran troops became disorganized with weak morale and the general command was temporarily lost over the struggle of leadership. However, by October 1967 Benin was recaptured by Col. Murtala Muhammed led federal troops whose ruthlessness led to the Asaba, massacre of all adult males²¹.

In as much as Biafra had few foreign supports when compared to Nigeria, the latter had embarked on international propaganda to deride the efforts of few foreign supports the former had established. Gowon government accused Tanzania of supplying arms and training guerrilla fighters for the Biafra region to carry out subversive activities in Nigeria and that most of Ojukwu's emissaries travelled with Tanzania passports²². Similarly, war propaganda had it that France also supplied arms to Biafra through a body called "Biafra Historical Research Association"²³. Mr. Noris of the *London Times* publication alleged that about 200 Ibibios were murdered in a barbaric way on April 2, 1968, by the rebels in front of a hotel at Umuahia on the suspicion that they were collaborating with advancing Federal Troops²⁴. Despite these challenges faced by the Biafra, the new State had demonstrated uncommon innovations, military tactfulness, technological inventions (including rockets, anti-tanks and Ogbunigwes etc) and scientific ingenuity. Such military ingenuity and strategy were critically exemplified at the Abagana battle in 1968, where the federal troops led by Col. Murtala Muhammed with 96 vehicles of supplies and troops that the Biafrans stood no chance of survival. However, with the aid of locally made military

¹⁹ Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution*, 130—144.

²⁰ Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution*, 224.

²¹ Tamuno, "Men and Measures in the Nigerian Crisis", 10-11. See also Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution*, 156-161.

²² "Nigeria Accused Tanzania" *Morning Post*. Vol. VII No 177, May 1 Wednesday, 1968, 5.

²³ Tamuno, "Men and Measures in the Nigerian Crisis", 19.

²⁴ "Rebel Murder 200 Ibibios" *London Times*, quoted in *Morning Post* Vol. VII, No 177, May 1 Wednesday, 1968, 4.

hardware such as Ogbunigwe, Major Jonathan Uchendu was able to ambush the Nigeria armada and deal a devastating blow to it²⁵. Hence, the Nigeria disaster at Abagana replenished Biafran's already depleted supplies and munitions.

Aside from the international and local propaganda associated with the Biafra war, another dimension of the war was the relief, aid and international assistance to the warring parties, particularly the Biafra. To save the Biafra side from the holocaust, relief materials came from several humanitarian groups, such as Joint Church Aid (JCA), Caritas, French Red Cross, Aid to Biafran Children, UNICEF, American Friends Service, etc. Despite repeated pressure from the federal to stall JCA's relief efforts to Biafra, the agency continued its airlift and supplies to Biafra through the improvised Uli airport. It was estimated -that between June 1968 and 1970, the JCA made a total of 5,314 landings with 60,267 tons of supplies, and lost eight aircraft and 13 members in the process²⁶. This made Uli airport the only gateway and point of international contact between Biafra and the wider world; the Uli airstrip operation was perhaps a replica of the Berlin airlift of 1948-1949.

In contradistinction to the Biafran side, Nigeria's military government during the war had arms in abundant. Strategic and diplomatic factors accounted for their success. They had a better communication system between military high command and soldiers in the trenches than the Biafran, which was one of the factors that put the Biafran soldiers on the defensive during most parts of the war. The stockpile of arms was located in Kaduna and Lagos; these two areas were under the federal, thus making the eastern region rely mostly on locally improvised weapons which were largely small arms and light weapons during the war. Economically, the Nigerian government thrived on the oil boom and its accrued resources to negotiate and exchange oil for arms with Russia, Spain, and Britain. These countries provided the arsenal for the federal successful prosecution of the civil war. One may wonder why the major powers despite their economic and political differences during the Cold War had almost a unified resolution to pitch their tents to the Nigerian government during the civil war. Indeed, the Nigeria-Biafran war was not ideological. Ojukwu had the image of a bourgeoisie-capitalist desperately trying to carve a region from a decadent Nigeria. International law favoured Nigeria as a recognised sovereign entity struggling to fend off neo-capitalist interests bent on balkanising it.

Biafran propaganda portrayed Nigeria soldiers as bloodthirsty, and capable of committing genocide against the Igbo. There were instances of pogrom during the war, a situation for which Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe in November 1967 drew the attention of the world to recognize the natural and inalienable right of the Igbo and not to feign ignorance to an unjustifiable pogrom and inexcusable genocide of eight million people²⁷. The Biafra faced unbearable suffering and starvation, there were reported cases of abduction and execution of civilians, and women were raped and molested by the Nigerian Troops. Gowon's government got the support of British expatriates, despite the denial of the British Minister for State for Commonwealth Affairs-Lord Shepherd to the House of Lords in April 1968, claiming that Britain would not interfere in the Nigeria crisis and that the decision of

²⁵ Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution*, 224-225. See also Achebe, *There Was a Country*, 173-174.

²⁶ Tamuno, "Men and Measures in the Nigerian Crisis", 17.

²⁷ Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Nigeria's Future," *Times*, November 16, 1967, 11.

British government to supply arms to Nigeria would certainly be a biased one because of the serious imbalance which such action would create²⁸. The Nigerian government's ability to source armament from around the world was without restraint. Though Britain tried denying the sale of arms to Nigeria incontrovertible evidence suggests otherwise. USSR was a major supplier of arms to Nigeria which accounted for why the Gowon regime gave its Ambassador Alexander Romanov a national honour, (OON) at the end of the war²⁹.

Lt. Col. Ojukwu contributed more than any other body to the fall of Biafra. First, as the leader of Biafra, Ojukwu failed to reconcile with his key officers to forge a united front in the course of the war. For instance, out of his personal safety and security, Ojukwu arrested his superior, Brigadier Hilary Njoku in October 1967 and placed him in "protective custody" throughout the war. Similarly, Ojukwu systematically denied seasoned military officers, like Nzeogwu, to lead any Command at the outbreak of the war³⁰. Many schools of thought finger Ojukwu with the death of Major Nzeogwu, a more charismatic and popular soldier than himself. Worse still, Ojukwu was paranoid over some elements on his side; this explained the reason for his execution of four key tacticians on flimsy excuses that lacked substantial evidence: Lt Col. Banjo, Lt Col. Emmanuel Ifeajuna, Major Alele, and Mr. Sam Ironka Agbam, were executed on account of "an intention to overthrow him (Ojukwu) and not for attempting to overthrow"³¹. This was a monumental military blunder and a huge loss to the Biafra side. Also, there were conflicting views of what Biafran soldiers were fighting for. The likes of Brigadier Njoku and Brigadier George Kurubo (who later joined the Nigerian side) wished to redeem their honour by attacking Northern soldiers who killed Ironsi, but not on outright secession. The 'January Boys' were much interested in "completing the job" of sanitizing the polity without secession. However, Ojukwu was bent on seceding from Nigeria.

Ojukwu thought he could win the war against Nigeria with mere propaganda as indicated in some of his verbal outrage. Ojukwu decreed that he was in a position to line the bottom of the sea with the debris of the Nigerian navy and that no power in black Africa could possibly withstand the strength of the Biafran military³². Such words were considered baseless at a period when it was almost a hopeless situation militarily, from a side that had only 120 rifles to defend the entire territory of the Eastern Region from the outset of the war³³.

The effect of war weariness and diminishing resources in material and combatant of less than 30,000, the Biafra side was massively outnumbered by 250, 000 Nigerian troops. It, therefore, became glaring that they could no longer continue to prosecute the war; they had no other choice but to surrender. Meanwhile, with the approaching Federal Troops with USSR 122mm Field -guns, Ojukwu noted before he took a flight on 9 January 1970 "I

²⁸ *Morning Post* Vol VII No 177, May 1, 1968,3.

²⁹ Tamuno, "Men and Measures in the Nigerian Crisis",13.

³⁰ Uwechue, *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War*, 53-55.

³¹ Ademoyega, *Why We Struck*, 241-242.

³² Uwechue, *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War*, 57.

³³ Ajiroba Kemi Kotun, "Bubbles Burst" *Nigerian Voice*, March 8, 2016.

www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/21125/bubbles.burst.html.

did this knowing that whilst I live, Biafra lives"³⁴. This was the same man who vowed to continue the war to the last man as long as he lived³⁵. Ojukwu's statement was an indication that the declaration of Biafra in the first place was more of his personal ambition and not necessarily a collective interest to pacify the easterners. Lt. Col. Ojukwu relinquished command to his Deputy Major Gen. Phillip Effiong, who formally signed the surrender act on 15th January 1970, and Biafra capitulated.

The Military and the Post-Civil War Reconstruction in Nigeria

Following the surrender of Biafra in 1970, Gen. Gowon announced "No Victor No Vanquished" and launched the vigorous integrated policy of the Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Program (3R's). It was a lofty program which aimed at healing the wounds inflicted by the war, rebuilding the ravaged economy and creating the right atmosphere for national integration at all levels, at least in theory. At the end of the 30-month war, Igboland was laid in ruins; her economy was deeply shattered by severe agricultural depression. The war claimed the lives of over 3 million Igbo, women lost their husbands, and over two million children died of either starvation or diseases. The combat fatality has been estimated to be over 100,000 and the total loss of the war has been estimated to a staggering sum of 300 million³⁶. Meanwhile, after the defeat of the secessionists Biafra, Nigeria tacitly surrendered the Armed Forces to the control of the north and northern power hegemony, hence the military became structured as an alternative means to political power that the northern-dominated military intervenes to ensure that power, as well as presidency, are retained by northern officers³⁷.

Furthermore, the 'No-Victor- No-Vanquished' slogan of Gowon raised the hope of many but within a short period, it proved to be a vendetta. Gowon's regime failed to introduce genuine healing programs that would properly integrate the vanquished; rather the Igbo became social outcasts in their own country. The Igbo were technically prosecuted through the laid-down program of Gowon. For instance, Decree No. 46 of 1970 relieved thousands of the Igbo from top civil service positions, as many Biafrans became unemployment after the war. The immediate post-war scenario estimated that only 34, 000 were employed while over 800, 000 were left out of jobs³⁸. Job retrenchment was clearly communicated to the workers of Eastern Development Corporation (ENDC) of all grades in Umuahia, Eastern Central State, who were summarily terminated in October 1970 after 10 months of service in their various capacities. For seven out of the ten months, they worked without pay and were merely sent away empty-handed³⁹.

Secondly, the 'Abandoned Property' issue was not properly handled, the Committee set up by Gowon lacked backup and was less committed. The Abandoned Property Saga especially to those belonging to Easterners remained unsatisfactory resolved. The most

³⁴ *NewsWeek*, January 26, 1970 and *Times*, January 16, 1970, quoted in Tamuno, "Men and Measures in the Nigerian Crisis", 25.

See also, Uwechue, *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War*, 133-134.

³⁵ Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution*, 370.

³⁶ "Two Years after the Civil War", *Morning Post*, Vol. XI No. 95, January 25, 1972, 5.

³⁷ Chris M. Alli, *The Federal Republic of Nigerian Army: The Siege of a Nation* (Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited, 2001), 210.

³⁸ Paul Obi-Ani, *Post-Civil War Political and Economic Reconstruction of Igboland, 1971-1983* (Enugu: Mikon Press 1998), 25.

³⁹ "Come to the Rescue of Sacked ENDC Workers", *Morning Post*, Vol. XI No 85, January 13, 1972, 8.

notorious states where the abandoned property racket was given an official stamp were the Rivers and Cross River States. The Igbo properties were notoriously confiscated by the Rivers State government led by Alfred Diets Spiff and other indigenes took care of the lands and houses left by the government⁴⁰. Meanwhile, the hypocrisy of Gowon's post-civil war programme was clear with, Alfred Diets, while he was in Bonn, Germany, with his team of officials in 1972, when he told foreign investors that the "investment atmosphere in Nigeria is absolutely stable and secure"⁴¹. Ironically, Diets-Spiff was at the forefront in declaring the vanquished Igbo properties in his State abandoned, but at the same time claiming investment stability.

Similarly, Gen. Gowon purportedly promised a total amnesty as captured by the New York Times described Gowon's amnesty as "Magnanimity in Nigeria", stating on Thursday 30th 1971, thus:

...the Nigerian supreme Military Council under General Gowon cleared sixty-three ex-rebel officers for reintegration into Nigeria's Armed forces and thirty-two others were discharged with full benefits, fifteen lost both jobs and benefits, sixteen who held high rank in the rebel regime were simply dismissed...Nigeria gave the world a dramatic example of reconciliation instead of the savage retribution many had feared⁴²,

However, despite the praise from international bodies, the amnesty program which appeared accommodating was never fulfilled. Adewale Ademoyega, one of the coup plotters of January 1966 was one of the many military officers that were kept in prison from the end of the war up to October 16, 1974. He recounted that:

Not a single one of the January 15 group was set free...it was also a complete negation of the unqualified amnesty proclaimed by the same Gowon for all the officers who fought on the Biafran side...Gen. Gowon's rule was characterized by half-truths, misleading statements and unhonoured agreements⁴³.

The foregoing made nonsense of Gowon's amnesty programme that was lauded by several homes and international bodies. The irony was that only the Southerner military officers were detained, while the case was not the same for the Northerners who played an essential role in the January 1966 coup or those who carried out the revenge coup of July 29, 1966. This made a mess of Igbo rehabilitation under Gowon's regime.

Furthermore, Gen. Gowon initiated the 3 R's Program after the war, but covertly set out policies aimed at extracting war indemnity from the vanquished, this includes: the obnoxious Banking Decree of 1970, the Decree froze all bank deposits in the Eastern States during war years⁴⁴. The Igbo were made to collect only 20 pounds not minding the amount deposited hitherto antebellum. A similar decree was the Indigenization Decree of 1972, which robbed the Igbo of greater opportunity. The case was so with the ban on second-

⁴⁰ Agbodike, *Military Intervention*, 39.

⁴¹ "Investment Chances Exist in Nigeria, Says Spite", *Morning Post*, Vol. XI, No 87, January 1, 1972, 16.

⁴² "U.S. Paper Lauds F.M.G.'s Decision on Ex-rebel Officers", *Morning Post*, January 1, 1972, 16.

⁴³ Ademoyega, *Why We Struck*, 259.

⁴⁴ V. Oshisada, "Diary of Events", *Morning Post*, Vol. XI, No 71, January 1, 1972, 8.

hand clothing and stock fish, an enterprise that was mainly dominated by the Igbo. Yet the Gowon government justified the ban as a means to encourage local textile industries and to maintain the pride of the country. And that the ban on stock fish will not be lifted because "the fish in Nigeria has more nutritious value and the government must conserve her foreign exchange earnings⁴⁵.

The gradual destruction of the Igbo technological ingenuity after the war was another policy the Gowon-led government adopted to subjugate the Igbo. Recall that the necessities of the war had pushed the Igbo into indigenous technological innovations and development. There were local refineries, distilleries, arms production, and research development which culminated with innovations like Ogbunigwe, rockets, explosives, mortars, ant tank weapons, anti-aircraft guns, land mines⁴⁶ and others. This technological transformation was not encouraged by the government after the war, rather they were submerged, Gowon's policies after the war were undoubtedly, the last nail in the coffin of Igbo technological potential.

Apart from the failed post-civil war reconstruction programme, several failings of Gen. Gowon's regime perhaps made the push for a coup inevitable. One major problem that bedevilled his government was the enormous standing army of around two hundred thousand men left over from the war which constituted a range of issues in the field of law and order. So was the question of defence expenditure which remained a sore point. For instance, the actual expenditure in the six months between 30 April - September 1970 was ₦61.73million as compared with ₦21.91 million during the same period in 1969 when the civil war was still ongoing⁴⁷.

Gowon paraded immature men as military Governors in the corridor of power who dismissed commissioners at will, ordered the humiliation of journalists such as Minere Amakiri, and degraded university intellectuals. Equally, the controversial census of 1973 made a mess of his regime, and so was the case of corruption in higher places. Gen. Gowon was too weak to act even at the height of the corruption charges, such as the alleged corruption case of Godwin Darboh, a social crusader launched against Chief Joseph Sarwuan Tarka in 1973, Gowon the Head of State felt helpless until the accused, voluntarily decided to leave the cabinet⁴⁸. Gowon was unable to manage the nation's resources during the period of the oil boom. Thus he once said that Nigerian's problem was not money but how to spend it. Gen. Gowon's regime gradually became prone to subversive sentiments due to his quest to perpetuate his stay in power. His broadcast on 1 Oct 1974 in which he officially reneged on his proposal to hand over power to a democratically elected president by 1976, quickly dwindled the people's support for the government.

Though, Gowon's administration retained Nigeria as one indivisible nation, created 12 states, and launched the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) program in 1973, as part of

⁴⁵ " Ban on 'Okirika' Clothing to Stay", *Morning Post*, Vol. XI No. 88, January 18, 1972, 4.

⁴⁶ Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, *Because I Was Involved* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1989), 66.

⁴⁷ . W. F. Gutteridge, *Military Regime in Africa*, 136-137.

⁴⁸ "What Chances", *The Nigerian Economists*, No.11, Vol.6, March 1, 1993,30.

the post-war healing process. The administration of Gowon played a huge role in the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). As expected, having overstayed his welcome, by 1975 the military cabal was no longer at ease with Gowon's style of governance, he was toppled from power in a bloodless coup on 29th July 1975, exactly nine years in power while he was in Kampala summit for the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Gen. Murtala justified the purpose of the coup in his broadcast after the coup thus:

The drift in which the country found itself had to be arrested, if the country was not to be plunged into chaos and even bloodshed. The widespread dissatisfaction of the people over Gowon's regime led to vociferous demands for his removal. Complaints such as ostentatious living, fragrant abuse of office, indecisions, nepotism, favouritism, and desecration of traditional institutions – deprivation of people's rights and property became rampant⁴⁹.

The ascendance of General Ramat Murtala Muhammed to political authority by the military "coup makers" in 1975 marked the third change in the military leadership of Nigeria. Gen. Murtala treated the issue of the growing hydra-headed monster called inflation by establishing an Anti-inflation Task Force to deal with the inflation problem and rectify the rising cost of living in Nigeria⁵⁰. Murtala created 19 States and named a new Federal Capital Territory through the recommendation of a panel headed by Justice T. A. Aguda. He recorded an unprecedented success in steering Nigeria away from corruption, by asking all Ex-Federal members, Governors, and Commissioners, who were relieved of their posts following the overthrow of Gowon to declare the assets they acquired in Nigeria and oversea up to July 31, 1975⁵¹. Corruption among Gowon's lieutenants was massive, a probe revealed that almost all its governors had looted State treasuries except for Brigadier Johnson Mobolaji of Lagos State and Rotimi Oluwole, others were found guilty of looting⁵².

General Murtala Mohammed had his own shortcomings even before he came to power as a 'bloodletting officer'. Murtala's infamous role in the Asaba massacre during the civil war would remain indelible on the sands of time. He made powerful enemies both at home and overseas which attracted tremendous jealousy. Murtala operated a unitary fiscal policy with all the trappings of inequity and unjust allocation of resources to areas of derivation. All newly appointed Governors under Murtala were removed from the Supreme Military Council (SMC) and members of the Council of State were subjected to the SMC⁵³. In the spirit of keeping Nigeria corrupt-free and ensuring effectiveness, Gen Murtala purged the military, and public officers including University staff, thus the forceful retirement without pension of over 11,000 public servants within the space of 8

⁴⁹ "General Gowon Ousted: Curfew Imposed from 8pm To 6qm Daily", *The Renaissance*, No 987, July 30, 1975, 1.

⁵⁰ "Anti-Inflation Body Gives a Pledge", *The Nigerian Observer* Vol. VII. No. 2068, August 23, 1975, 1.

⁵¹ Mike Ogbeide, "Ex-Fed Exco Members to Declare Assets", *The Nigerian Observer*, Vol. VII. No 2,062, August 16, 1975, 1.

⁵² "What Chances"?, 30. See also Agbodike, *Military Intervention*, 37.

⁵³ Osaheni Uzamere, "July 29 and the Nigerian Revolution", *The Nigerian Observer*, Vol. VIII, No. 2,071, August 27, 1975, 7.

months in 1975⁵⁴. Also, the recommendations made by Col. S. Daramola's panel, appointed by Gen. Murtala over the issue of the "Abandoned Property" in 1975- were not followed⁵⁵.

In the early hours of Friday, February 13, 1976, a small band of 'dissident' rebel officers of the Nigerian Army led by Lt. Col D. Bukar Sukar Dimka, murdered the Head of State, Gen. Murtala Muhammed, his aid-de-camp Lt Akinseyinwa, his orderly and driver in cold blood in their bid to topple the regime. Also killed in the coup was Col. Ibrahim Taiwo, the Governor of Kwara State⁵⁶. It was a sad episode that Nigeria lost such an illustrious leader who within a short period at the helm of affairs, the country witnessed a remarkable and impressive sense of direction, purpose and meaning. Gen Murtala; rolled up his sleeves and plunged himself into the task of rebuilding the country, rekindling the flagging spirit, and reinvigorating the national life of Nigerians. It was almost impossible, but he did it. First, he decongested the Ports, which had been subjected to paying astronomical sums for demurrage penalties to oversee shipping companies, due to 1.5 metric tons of cement that had clogged the country's main port. He cleared the Lagos traffic that had developed into a monstrous nightmare, put an end to petrol shortage, imported food from where he could, subsidised beef prices, cancelled the scandalous 1973 Population Census of Nigeria on the grounds of its unpopularity, launched a new and dynamic foreign policy and set the nation on a course for civilian rule in 1979⁵⁷.

Meanwhile, there were also allegations of foreign influence, including Britain, CIA and Gowon were all accused of being connected to the coup due to their entanglement with Lt. Col Dimka. This was because of the exchange of calls between Dimka and the British High Commissioner in Lagos, Sir Martin Leguesne on the fateful morning of the coup requesting for the quick return of Gowon and as the coup failed, the British government had refused to extradite Gen. Gowon to return to Nigeria and answer some question concerning his complicity to the coup⁵⁸ summed the suspicion of Gowon's involvement. However, the coup was foiled as only Murtala was killed, leaving Obasanjo and Danjuma to restore order. The Supreme Military Council unanimously appointed Gen. Obasanjo as the new Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Gen. Obasanjo equally pledged to continue with Murtala's dream of building Nigeria, all policies of government as before and all ministries should continue their usual duties"⁵⁹.

Gen. Obasanjo, as promised, worked in tandem with Murtala's policies and resolved the issue of the Local Government System in 1976 by constituting it into the third tier of government in the national government system. Obasanjo revolutionized agriculture through Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), which set out to provide food and employment. He introduced the Universal Primary Education, lifted the political ban and set the Constituent Assembly which presented a constitution to the government. The regime of Obasanjo also promulgated the Land Use Decree of 1978, this act gave the sitting

⁵⁴ Sam. C. *Ukpabi, Strands in Nigerian Military History* (Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Ltd., 1986),104. See also Kirk Green and Rimmer, *Nigeria since 1970*, 12.

⁵⁵ Ikejiani, *The Unrepentant Nationalist*, 498.

⁵⁶ "I'll Continue Where Murtala Left Off, Says Obasanjo", *Daily Times*, No 21164, February 16, 1976, 5.

⁵⁷ "Seven Days of Mourning for a Great Great Leader: Adieu Mohammed", *Sunday Times*, No1371, February 15, 1976, 7.

⁵⁸ John Darnton, "Nigerians Storm British and U.S. Offices", *New York Times*, February 18, 1976, 3.

⁵⁹ "I Accept for Murtala's Memory", *Nigeria Herald*, Vol. III. No 858, Thursday 29, 1976, 9.

Governor of a State the power over land in his domain. However, in an attempt to respond to the pressing economic and social needs of the nation, Obasanjo made a move to obtain foreign loans which worsened the inflation rate in Nigeria. Unfortunately, as the economic woes increased, Obasanjo's led regime embarked on two frivolous entertainments, by hosting the All Black Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Game which cost the nation substantial amount. Efforts were made by Obasanjo to reduce the oversized strength of the army through retirement and disciplinary purposes, yet the army was still over-bloated with over 180,000, the highest standing army in Black Africa⁶⁰.

Finally, Obasanjo's administration designed the blueprint that ended the 13 years of military rule (1966-1979) and handed it over to the civilian government. This was one of the top promises of the Murtala/Obasanjo administration. Meanwhile, with the victory of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in the 1979 election, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) declared Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the first Executive President of Nigeria and by 1 October 1979, the federal government led by Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, a distinguished soldier, who by handing over to a democratically elected government to Shehu Shagari carved a niche for himself. The military though gave power to civilian rule, but it appears to be at the corridor of power, hence it was suggested that the Shagari regime was a period during which the military strove to rule by proxy, and when this attempt failed, the government was pushed aside and the military with all the fanfare at its command resumed its predatory course⁶¹, thus, using the same pretext of democratic failings by civilians to justify their intervention. Shagari's regime was accused of several inadequacies that were not limited to the crisis that constituted his re-election to office in 1983. Thus, the army intervened and gave room for a zero-sum game approach, as some of the losers of the election became advocates for military intervention and disintegration⁶².

The Military on Saturday 31 December 1983, seized power in a bloodless coup, by a professional cabal of coup makers in the Army led by Major Gen. Muhammad Buhari, one of the benefactors of previous coups and a strict Muslim. Millions of Nigerians woke up on the new year to hear a change of government in a radio broadcast that assured Nigerians that the armed forces have in their discharge of national role, as promoters and protectors of national interest decided to effect a change in the leadership of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to form a Federal Military Government⁶³. The new regime was regarded as a two-man affair- Major Gen. Muhammad Buhari and Brigadier Tunde Idiagbon. However, Idiagbon wielded much control and side-lined some of his military colleagues. Gen. Buhari described the occasion of his assumption to office as indeed a 'moment of truth' and therefore, outlined a ten-point objective for piloting the ship of State. Gen. Buhari/Idiagbon's regime insisted that it would not tolerate fraud, embezzlement, kick-back in contract awards and illegal foreign exchange deals. The new government claimed to have regretted that the military had to come in because the civilian

⁶⁰ Kirk Green and Rimmer, *Nigeria since 1970*, 56-57.

⁶¹ Ojukwu, *Because I Was Involved*, 10.

⁶² Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 153.

⁶³ "Why Army Took Over", *Daily Times*, January 2, 1984, 32.

administration had circumvented the program which the military laid down and implemented later before handing over⁶⁴.

In an attempt to achieve their objectives, Gen. Buhari/ Idiagbon embarked on a ruthless campaign of indiscriminate arrest of most of the erstwhile political officers, starting from the former President Shehu Shagari, his Vice President-Alex Ekwueme, Governors, Ministers, Commissioners etc., on alleged account of fraud, embezzlement and mismanagement of public fund. The rate of corruption and embezzlement of public funds was so alarming that the ousted civilian Federal Government that kickstarted with a budget surplus of ₦ 1,461.6 million in 1979, left office in December 1983 with a debt of ₦ 3,989,609 million⁶⁵. Gen. Buhari promulgated the Anti-Sabotage Decree (Decree No 3 and Decree No 4) against fake use of currency, while Decree No 4 took steps to censor the press. It states that anyone who publishes "incorrectly" risks a jail term of two years at least. Sadly, Haroun Adamu of Punch, Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor of Guardian Newspaper were among those who were hit by this decree for their inability to disclose their source of information and were jailed for one year in 1984⁶⁶. Buhari/ Idiagbon launched the popular War Against Indiscipline (WAI) in 1984 in an effort to install decorum on Nigerians from bad conduct, adhere to orderliness and comply with environmental sanitation. The law was subjected to uncontrolled abuse by the security agencies. Gen. Buhari's foreign policy has Africa as the centrepiece of Nigerian's foreign policy, his regime sought to address the economic crisis by cutting down waste, abolishing free education, and slashing government expenditure, such as the 1984 budget which was slashed from ₦13 billion to ₦ 10 billion⁶⁷. By late 1984 the Investigation Panel and Special Tribunals had retrieved some ₦ 112,129,482.57 and ₦ 1,688,185.80, respectively from the loots of public officers of Shagari's government⁶⁸. The draconian decrees under Buhari's regime lasted for two years, without keeping to most of its promises of turning the economy around and was ousted in a palace coup in August 1985.

Among the factors that led to the overthrow of Gen. Buhari's regime include: the inability to execute the government's lofty plans, unwillingness to listen to public opinion, vindictiveness, insensitivity, favouritism, selected punishments and trials. One of Buhari's demonstrations of favouritism was in the trials of the political leaders of the country. For instance, while the former President, Shagari was kept on house arrest, his vice president Dr. Alex Ekwueme was sent to Kirikiri Prison, even though both of them were accused of the same charges. The WAI was notoriously and ruthlessly undertaken. Worse still was that the economy suffered due to foreign debt servicing. It was on record that between 40%-45% of the country's earning under Gen. Buhari/Idiagbo was used for debt servicing and by 1985 the nation's debts amounted to ₦13 billion as against the ₦2.17 billion in 1980

⁶⁴ "Gen Buhari is New Head of State", *Daily Times*, January 22, 1984, 1.

⁶⁵ "Ousted Regime Leaves ₦4b Debt Behind", *Daily Times*, January 7, 1984, 1.

⁶⁶ Clifford D. May, "Nigerian Military Regime is Reining in One of the Freest Presses in Africa", *New York Times*, April 30, 1984. www.nytimes.com/1984/04/30/nigeria-military-regime-is-reining-in-one-of-the-freest-presses-in-africa/

⁶⁷ *Times International*, Vol. 6 No 14, January 6, 1985, 8.

⁶⁸ Agbodike, *Military Intervention*, 98.

and ₦4 billion in 1983, while the internal debts stood at ₦27. 67 billion⁶⁹. Giving the above scenario it was not surprising that the military decided to intervene in a rescue mission.

The military putsch that unseated Gen. Buhari from power on 27th August 1985 while he was away in Daura, Kaduna to celebrate Eid-el Kabir Festival was led by Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. He took over power in a period when Gen. Buhari's regime had imprisoned the soul of the nation within a cocoon of draconian decrees that may be seen as self-serving. Then, Babangida decided to modify some of these decrees, starting with the repealing of Decree No 4 and the released of several detainees including journalists whom he regarded as the channel for national orientation and instrument through which the views of the governed were known to the government⁷⁰. Once in power, Gen. Babangida, without going through the ballot box pronounced himself President and declared that his regime would identify with human rights and abolish the death penalty for drug trafficking. This action earned Babangida some commendation by the United States Department of State in a report to the Senate and House of Representatives⁷¹. Such a step among others gave Babangida a good beginning, marked with people-oriented programmes and being solicitous in his approach to national issues. He was flexible, perhaps to accommodate the conflicting views and interests of the people. Thus, in no time he stole the hearts of the people, including Wole Soyinka who was so enamoured with the General style that he could say "we now have a listening President"⁷². However, within a short while his regime became engrossed in the worst political and economic ills for which he persecuted his predecessor thereby reneging on his promise of putting a stop to authoritarianism and stamping out corruption.

Barely five months in office Gen. Babangida, without the approval of the Armed Forces Ruling Council registered Nigeria in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) on 9th January 1986 and maintained that Nigeria would not shy away from flying its flag at all international fora that would be beneficial to the country⁷³. The disclosure of the country's membership to OIC led to a religious crisis in Kaduna in which churches and mosques as well as hotels and private residential houses were destroyed⁷⁴. Gen. Babangida's regime was at loggerheads with various trade unions and civil society groups. For instance, between 1986 and 88, the National Association of Nigerian Students -NANS, the Academic Staff Union of Universities-ASUU, and the Nigerian Labour Congress-NLC, were proscribed at one time or another. *Newswatch* was banned for 6 months on April 6, 1987, for alleged instigation of religious disturbances in Kaduna in March 1987 and an alleged premature publication of a Political Bureau report 'ahead of government's consideration and decision'⁷⁵. An account that the publishing company vehemently refuted. Also, Chief Chris Okolie of *Newbreed* Publications was detained and later charged

⁶⁹ First Bank Monthly Business and Economic Report, May, 1986.

⁷⁰ Charles Mohr, "Nigeria Coup Tied to Lack of Power Sharing", *New York Times*, September 4, 1985, 10.

⁷¹ Godwin Agbroko, "The Messiah as a Problem", *Newswatch*, Vol. 18, No 9, August 30, 1993, 16.

⁷² "Time to Go", *The Nigerian Economists* Vol. 37, No. 6, September 6, 1993, 18.

⁷³ The African Guardian, May, 9, 1988, 17. See also, Agbroko, "The Messiah as a Problem", 16.

⁷⁴ Oluwambo Balogun, "Great Betrayal", *Concord*, Vol. 2 No 29, February 20 1988.

⁷⁵ Ben Edokpayi, "The Guillotine: How Newswatch Passed Through Deaths Dark Tunnel", *Newswatch*, Vol. 6, No 1, September 14, 1987. 17.

with criminal sedition⁷⁶ and Several individuals who rose against the ills of the government were jailed, including Mr. Ken Saro Wiwa and Gani Fawehinmi who earned a record of the most detained Nigerian under IBB⁷⁷.

Gen. Babangida hopelessly embarked on the worst economic programme tagged, the "Economic Survival Scheme" under the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in July 1986, nicknamed "IBBnomics"⁷⁸. SAP was introduced as a relief recovery measure, to increase domestic production of food and industrial raw materials, promote the inflow of foreign investment increase employment and keep inflation under control. While the programme was enriching for some, most people saw it as a merciless monster sapping away energies and life from its subjects. The economic programme drew criticism from the ASUU, NLC and from individuals like Samuel Aluko, Gani Fawehinmi, Tai Solarin etc., and by May 1989, violent demonstrations that involved persons from all works of life broke out in protest against the effect of SAP⁷⁹. The multiplier effect of SAP was that the economy declined and the external debts reached ₦33 billion by 1989⁸⁰ by the time Gen. Babangida "stepped aside" in 1993, defence expenditure was ₦ 4.6 billion and he left a deficit of over ₦ 50 billion⁸¹. The debt service allocation in the budget of 1993 stood at ₦ 58.4 billion which consisted of ₦ 40.5 billion for external debts and ₦ 17.9 billion for domestic debts in 1993 and mounting arrears pushed external debts towards ₦111 billion by 1993⁸². The above figure is well beyond the country's capacity to service and in any case, is profoundly anti-developmental and reflects the intolerably high cost of the state administration in the economy.

Furthermore, Babangida's regime was known for its suppression of the people's right to freedom of speech and the press. A critical attempt to silence public opinion under Babangida was the forceful retirement of two brilliant bankers, Oladele Olashore and Ibrahim Ayagi, the Managing Directors of First Bank and Continental Merchant Bank, respectively in August 1987. Both Ayagi and Olashore suddenly retired with immediate effect "in the public interest" because they disagreed with certain monetary and fiscal policies of the Babangida Junta⁸³. The swift retirement of these two bankers raised concerns as *Sunday Sketch National Newspaper* wrote an editorial condemning the inappropriate retirement of the two bank chiefs. However, the deputy editor of *Sunday Sketch* was threatened with the possibility of losing his job if the controversial editorial was not retrieved. Hence the paper was recalled from circulation within and outside Nigeria. In the same vein, as expected, the editor of *Nigerian Standard*, Jonathan Ishaku, was fired

⁷⁶ "Will These Men Ever Forgive IBB?", *Quality*, Vol. 12, No 8, September 7, 1993, 16.

⁷⁷ "Will These Men Ever Forgive IBB?", *Quality*, 19.

⁷⁸ Nduka Obaigbena, "IBBnomics", *Thisweek*, Vol. 2. No. 8, December 1, 1986, 5. Also see Stephen Agwudagwu, "Eldorado Still Far", *Newswatch*, Vol. 6, No 1, September 14, 1987, 55.

⁷⁹ "Time to Go: Gen Ibrahim Babangida Bows Out After Eight Years in Office", *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol 6, No. 37, September 6, 1993,17.

⁸⁰ *The Nigerian Economists* Vol. 3, No 5, December 11, 1989, 36.

⁸¹ "Implementing Budget 93", *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 6, No 11, March 1, 1993, 7. See also "Danger Signal's", *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 7 No. 15, January 10, 1994, 12.

⁸² "Time for Unity in Nigeria", *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 6. No. 38, September 13, 1993,6.

⁸³ Yakubu Mohammed and Soji Akinrinade, "The Press as Colossus: Fact or Fallacy?", *Newswatch* Vol. 6, No 1, September 14, 1987. 14-15.

on August 18, 1987, for publishing a similar editorial concerning the immediate retirement of Ayagi and Olashore by the federal government⁸⁴.

Babangida got the Armed Forces Ruling Council, AFRC to approve Decree 17 of 1985, which gave him powers to appoint and remove members of the AFRC, military governors, members of the National Council of States and the National Council of Ministers, Service Chiefs and general officers commanding⁸⁵. He designed a blueprint for the transition to civilian rule. This includes the establishment of a Political Bureau in 1986 made up of a think-tank, the setting up of a Constitutional Review Committee in 1987, the inauguration of the National Electoral Commission in 1987, the lifting of the ban on political activities and the conducted population census in 1991 that puts the country's population at 88,992,220 million⁸⁶. Babangida achieved some giant strides in the interest of a much-balanced federation through the creation of two states on 23rd September 1987- Akwa Ibom and Katsina to make it 21 states and nine more states on August 27, 1991, which brought the total states to 30⁸⁷. Equally, to alleviate poverty, the Better Life for Rural Women Program was established by his wife, Mrs Maryram Babangida in September 1987. On the foreign scene, Gen. Babangida renewed diplomatic ties with some African nations, especially South Africa and established ties with Israel, a role that previous leaders played the ostrich with⁸⁸.

The judiciary under Gen. Babangida's regime was shrouded with systematic corruption, intimidation and cajolery, it was on record that only the military were appointed to head tribunals that tried former public office holders, whereas the judges and lawyers were swept under the carpet⁸⁹. Gen. Babangida's regime was accused of the death of the Editor-in-Chief of *NewsWatch* Magazine Dele Giwa- through a parcel bomb on October 19, 1986, hence on 19th November 1986, Gani Fawehinmi filed a suit on the alleged murder. However, Gani's application was dismissed by Justice Ademola Johnson, the Chief Judge of Lagos State on the ground of "hasty and misconceived"⁹⁰. This was no doubt a decoy influenced by Gen. Babangida's junta to silence further trial regarding Dele Giwa's death. Babangida's junta was also particularly notorious for the disregard of court orders, hence, in June 1992, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) went on to boycott courts in protest to Babangida's government consistently disobeying court orders⁹¹.

By December 20, 1985, Lt. Gen. Domkat Bali, announced that an attempt to oust Gen. Babangida's regime was uncovered. The Government claimed that the coup was led by IBB bosom friend, Major-General Mamman Vatsa-the Poet and nine others in Benue and they were tried for treason and executed. However, Haruna Vatsa, son of Gen. Mamman had continually refuted his father's involvement in the coup, stating that there "were incontrovertible facts to prove that the arrest, trial, conviction and execution of my father

⁸⁴ Mohammed and Akinrinade, "The Press as Colossus: Fact or Fallacy", 13.

⁸⁵ Wale Oladejo, "Tussle for Power: : The Removal of Madueke and Alli" *NewsWatch*, Vol. 20 No. 10, September 5, 1994, 10.

⁸⁶ National Bureau of Statistics, Annual Abstract of Statistics, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011. 19. www.nigerianstat.gov.ng.

⁸⁷ *Nigerian Interpreter*, Vol. 5. No. 5, September 1991, 17.

⁸⁸ Uche Ezechukwu, "Trial of IBB", *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 6, No. 36, August 30, 1993, 46.

⁸⁹ Dare Babarinsa, "Still in Babylon", *Tell*, January 24, 1994, 14.

⁹⁰ Lanre Idowu, "Motion Dismissed", *ThisWeek*, Vol. 2, No. 8, December 1, 1986, 12.

⁹¹ Dave Aite-Oshoribhor, "This Regime is Contemptuous of Law", *African Guardian*, Vol. 8. No. 34, August 30, 1993, 17.

were a miscarriage of justice”⁹². Vatsa’s trials and execution exposed how far the military has been inflicting self-immolation on itself since after the civil war. Vatsa’s death was considered as a case of “dogs eating their puppies”. Similarly, on April 22, 1990, Babangida’s regime survived another coup led by Major Gideon Orkar. Orkar’s, which indicated the rift in ethnic disarray in the military and the separation of those in power and the professional army, carried grievances arising from perceived or actual northern domination and was also aimed to create a pro-democratic action that would draw the basic for proper hand over to civilian⁹³. Despite the public outcry for clemency on the coup plotters, Babangida went ahead to execute them. Hence their execution could be regarded as decimation of the middle rank of the military by a desperate leader with intent to perpetuate his stay in office. By using a coup d’etat as a shortcut to power the military has self-destroyed itself. It is the least place to groom patriotic and selfless Nigerians.

Moreover, Gen. Babangida’s handling of political programmes was considered the weakest point of his regime. It exposed the lack of conviction and commitment for him to vacate the seat of power in Aso Rock, Abuja. After the awaited transition to civilian rule, the election was scheduled between Chief MKO Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Alhaji Bashir Tofa of the National Republican Convention (NRC). The election was regarded as the fairest and freest in the history of all elections conducted in the country. Sadly, before the complete result was announced it was stopped by the NEC ostensibly due to court injunction, with the background roles of Gen. Babangida’s Machiavellism and the incomparable propaganda of comrade Uche Chukwumerije as well as the unpatriotic and obnoxious role played by Chief Arthur Nzeribe. Surprisingly, on Tuesday, June 22, 1993, the Federal Government in the most unconvincing and disingenuous manner annulled the results of the June 12 1993 election.

The consequence of the annulment of the June 12 elections was grave. It led to widespread condemnation, division among the top military officers, revolts, chaos, destruction of properties, looting of shops and the death of about 160 persons⁹⁴. Meanwhile, the political impasse reached after the inferno engendered by the annulment of the June 12 election set the stage for mass exodus of Nigerians to their various communities over fear of a second civil war. This panic was heightened when one mysterious organization called “August National Struggle Council” pushed forward an incendiary leaflet. Their pamphlets enjoined “All Citizens of Nigeria and the World to get ready from July 14”⁹⁵. The campaign was a frightful reminder of the civil war, especially to the Igbo who wasted no time returning home en masse. Worse still, was Abiola’s interview with CNN, which further revealed the drum of war. Abiola had affirmed that “if the world fails to do something, things would get bad in Nigeria” and “that a combination of Bosnia and Somalia would be a child’s play in comparison to the holocaust that may befall the country”⁹⁶. Hence people concluded that he was raising an army abroad to invade Nigeria.

⁹² Tunde Asaju, “The Vatsa Coup: Why They killed My Father”, *Newswatch* Vol.30 No.22, Dec 6, 1999, 10-11.

⁹³ Kenneth B. Noble, “Nigeria Reports It Foiled a Coup by Army Rebels”, *New York Times*, April 23, 1990, 1.

⁹⁴ Yakubu Mohammed, “Welcome to Democracy”, *Newswatch*, Vol. 18 No. 24, December 13, 1993, 6.

⁹⁵ Godwin Agbroko “Fear of War” *Newswatch*, Vol. 18, No. 8, August 23, 1993, 11

⁹⁶ Agbroko, “Fear of War”, 11-12.

Similarly, the annulment also attracted international condemnations and sanctions. The European Economic Community took the lead by placing a visa ban on the Nigerian government. The United States announced some economic sanctions to include a loss of \$450 million in industrial and economic aid to Nigeria. Likewise, Britain followed suit, announcing a graduated sanction⁹⁷. In the first week of December 1993, the European Union further came out in tightening the noose of sanctions, as the Union placed an arms embargo on Nigeria and cancelled £34 million grants, expelled Nigerian students in military academies in all its territories and in addition, imposed restriction on movement of Nigerian Defense attaches⁹⁸.

On Thursday, August 26, 1993, one day short of the eight anniversary of the administration, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida bowed out after much pressure from both local and international bodies. In his national address he said "following lengthy deliberation with my service chiefs, I offered as my own personal sacrifice to voluntarily step aside as the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces⁹⁹. He stepped aside for a controversial Interim National Government (ING) to take over, led by Chief Ernest Shonekan, the former Head of the Transitional National Council. Chief Shonekan's appointment appears to have placated Chief MKO Abiola Constituency, not just because both came from the West, but from the same State and same community.

With Chief Shonekan's assumption of office, he intended to provide national reconciliation and the healing of the deep wounds inflicted on the citizens' psyche by the recent political events and the rekindling of the people's hope towards a brighter future. However, this was not to be, the new players in the Interim Government could be seen as surrogates of the former Head of State, Gen. Babangida, who selected them before his final exit. No wonder Olugbenga Awosode, the then Oyo State Campaign for Democracy (CD) coordinator saw the Interim Government as "nothing short of a pack of surrogates and publicity seekers who are afraid to face the electorate and yet are hungry for power"¹⁰⁰. Shonekan's few months in government were neither here nor there; it was an illegitimate interventionist government except as an extension of Gen. Babangida in power.

Several local and international bodies mounted pressure on Chief Ernest to declare the results and hand over power to the winner of the June 12, 1993, Presidential election. These include the "Movement for the Advancement of Democracy" (MAD), led by Jerry Yusuf. The group defiantly hijacked the Nigerian Airways airbus A300 to protest the annulment of the 1993 election. Human Rights Campaign groups led by Femi Falana and Gani Fawehmi, Campaign for Democracy led by Beko Ransome Kuti, and ASUU were among the groups that protested the anomalies of the Junta¹⁰¹. These groups were seen as major bastions of organized opposition to the ING as Chief Shonekan's regime continued to battle for legitimacy until he was booted out of office as expected.

⁹⁷"The Unfolding Danger", *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 6, No. 27, June 28 1993, 36.

⁹⁸ Godwin Agbroko, "How June 12 was Subverted", *Newswatch*, Vol. 18 No. 24, December 13, 1993, 17.

⁹⁹ "Does Anyone Understand the President?", *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 6 No. 36, August 30, 1993, 22. See also Agbroko, "The Messiah as a Problem", 13.

¹⁰⁰ "A Survival Battle: The Interim National Government is Swimming Against a Powerful Legitimacy Tide", *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 6, No. 38, September 13, 1993, 25.

¹⁰¹ "A Survival Battle", *The Nigerian Economist*, 29-30.

The June 12, 1993 election annulment and the effects were the precursor to the emergence of Gen. Sani Abacha who toppled Chief Ernest Shonekan's interim government through a palace coup on 17 November 1993. Abacha convinced the high-ranking military officers to sack Chief Shonekan with a promise to return the acclaimed winner of the June 12 election, Chief Abiola to power. He equally called Abiola on the phone and assured him of his mandate, but needed 6 months to purge the army of "Babangida boys", whereas his interest was hinged on vindictiveness and appropriating the resources of Nigeria, which he did. Only a few could suspect Abacha's hidden agenda¹⁰². In essence, Abacha reneged on his promise of handing over power to a civilian president, rather his government simply portrayed the height of blatant official maladministration and tyranny. On the other hand, Abiola shot himself in the leg by compromising with Abacha for his personal interest, thus gaining the opportunity to request that the Federal government should pay the huge debts owed to his companies and equally submit his nominees such as Ebenezer Babatope, Solomon Lar, Silas Daniyan, Wole Oyelese and Mbakwe (though Mbakwe declined) for Abacha's cabinet. According to the *Newswatch* report: Abiola was aware of and encouraged the coup against ING, but he was not certain of how events would go...thus, having established some understanding with the junta, Abiola drew up a tentative list of his nominees¹⁰³.

The coming of Gen. Sani Abacha was ridiculed with naked self-interest in the hands of Nigerian political elites of all levels. How these political elites came on board Abacha's cabinet is revealing as to what mattered to them was clinching power and not the process in which it was acquired. Most of the self-acclaimed pro-democratic proponents including MKO Abiola and others of comparable stature were scrambling for a place in Gen. Sani Abacha's cabinet. The shocker came to the people when the news of the likes of Baba Gana Kingibe and Olu Onagoruwa, the two key pillars of June 12, along with Alex Ibru, Lateef Jakande, Ebenezer Babatope etc., had gone to form members of Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) with the military¹⁰⁴. By the time Gen. Sani Abacha announced his cabinet, virtually all the cream of Nigeria's political elite, including those at the forefront of the fight for democracy and the inviolability of June 12, had been co-opted into Abacha's government.

From the initial stage, Gen. Abacha tagged his government as "a child of necessity" and armed himself with the best political brains in the history of military rule as his cabinet members. His idea of surrounding himself with star-studded civilian cabinets was to give the false impression that his regime was legitimate, unlike the ING. However, within a short period, events unveiled his secret agenda of staying much longer in power. This had led to a series of protests by pro-democracy and human rights groups who continued to call for the de-annulment of the June 12 election and the proper hand-over to Chief Abiola. The activities of these groups brought them on a collision path with Gen. Abacha's regime. Groups like the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) and National Liberation Coalition (NALICON) came out to challenge the military junta of Abacha and a return to

¹⁰² Abubakar Umar, "Vagabong in Power: The Inside Story of Coup Against Abiola", *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998, 24. See also Agbroko, "How June 12 was Subverted", 12.

¹⁰³ Agbroko, "How June 12 was Subverted", 13.

¹⁰⁴ Agbroko, "How June 12 was Subverted", 11. See also Alli, *The Federal Republic of Nigerian Army*, 296.

civilian rule. So was Gani Fawehinmi who remained a bone in the throat of Abacha's regime¹⁰⁵.

Against the backdrop of these crises, Gen. Abacha soon began to take diligent steps to consolidate state power. Although, he had employed the use of secret killings, and intimidation and instigated the forceful retirement of officers even before he came to power. This was evident in the retirement of 17 top-ranking military officers in less than one month after the exit of IBB from power¹⁰⁶. The retirement started with changes that came like tornadoes to all those loyal to Gen. Babangida- "IBB Boys". Abacha connived with officers loyal to him and prevailed on Chief Shonekan to replace Lt. Gen. Joshua Dogonyaro Chief of Defence Staff with Lt. Gen. Oladipo Diya because he felt that Diya was an easier person to deal with. Equally, Air commodore John Femi replaced Air Commodore Nsikak Edurk; Jerry Useni lost his position as Chief of Logistics, Brigadier Gen. Halilu Akilu was removed from Chief of Military Intelligence, Lt. Gen. Garuba Duba also lost his position as the Commander of the Nigerian Military Training. The above replacements of top military officers were indications that the unity of the military had been in doubt following the exit of Gen. Babangida¹⁰⁷.

Similarly, in Abacha's desperation to consolidate power between 1995-1996, over 200 senior officers were discharged from the military on flimsy excuses. This came after Major General Chris Alli, Chief of Army Staff and Rear-Admiral Allison Madueke, Chief of Naval Staff were relieved of their esteem position over the bitter struggle for power at Aso Rock on August 17, 1994. According to *Newswatch* sources, the two men were believed to have canvassed dropping treason charges against Abiola to cool down the political heat in the country. Their utterances were regarded as an act of disloyalty¹⁰⁸. The State Security Service (SSS), the military and the police force were utilized in clamping down protesters and revolutionaries of any kind. By 21st August 1994, over 100 supporters of MKO Abiola were detained in either Lagos or Abuja¹⁰⁹. Even Chief MKO Abiola was equally imprisoned for pronouncing himself President on June 11 1994¹¹⁰. Even traditional authorities were not spared, as Gen. Abacha ordered the dethronement and humiliation of Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki in favour of Alhaji Mohammed Maccido as Sultan of Sokoto on April 20, 1996¹¹¹.

By 17 August 1994, Gen. Abacha in his broadcast promised to crackdown on people whose actions were at variance with the directives of his administration. A few hours after the broadcast the first set of arrests were made in Kaduna State, among the persons arrested by the security agency were Balarabe Musa, former governor of Kaduna State, Lt. Col.

¹⁰⁵ George Mba and Dayo Aigbotosho, "My Political Agenda Continues" *Tell*, November, 7, 1994, 22-25.

¹⁰⁶ Akilu, "Rasaki and Others Retired", *Vanguard*, November 28, 1993, 1-3. See also "Winner and Losers", *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol.7, No. 12, December 20, 1993, 11.

¹⁰⁷ Raphael Duru, "Breaking the IBB Myth" *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 6. No. 40, September 27, 1993. 12-13. See also Umar, "Vagabond in Power: The Inside Story of Coup Against Abiola", 21.

¹⁰⁸ Oladepo, "Tussle for Power: The Removal of Madueke and Alli", 10-12. See also Human Rights Watch, "Transition or Travesty: Nigeria's Endless Process of Return to Civilian Rule", October 1, 1997. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a8314.html>.

¹⁰⁹ Victor Omuabor, "A New Reign of Terror" *Tell*, August, 1994, 19.

¹¹⁰ Oladepo, "Tussle for Power: The Removal of Madueke and Alli", 11.

¹¹¹ "Dasuki: Hard Life in Exile", *Tell*, January 27, 1997. 9.

Abubakar Umar, Lt. Col. Yohanna Madaki, James Bawa Magaji, Mohammed Arzika, Yussuf Bala Usman etc. This was followed by the arrest and detention of Lt. Gen. Alani Akinrinade, former Chief of Defence Staff, along with Anthony Enahoro, Professor Akinyemi etc Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and Cornelius Adebayo, both leaders of NEDECO on August 19, 1994, though they were released later before fleeing from the country¹¹². There was also a clampdown on members of the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) and Petroleum and Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) to end all striking attempts or face sack¹¹³.

Furthermore, Gen. Abacha's junta was characterized by several politically motivated assassinations championed by his henchmen, Major Abdullahi Hamza El-Mustapha, Abacha's CSO. and Rogers, who were allegedly linked to the assassination of Dr. Sola Omosola in November 1996, the mysterious killing of Mrs. Kudriat Abiola on June 4, 1996, Sir Alfred Rewane chief financier of NADECO on October 6, 1996, Rear Admiral Babatunde Elegbede, Rtd, and Chief Mrs. Bisoye Tejuosho, etc.¹¹⁴

Gen. Sani Abacha's regime could be described as an era of phantom coups when many officers were sentenced to death by firing squad or imprisoned over alleged coups. More than 60 military men and civilians were convicted in the 1995 and 1997 phantom coups. Some of the persons roped in contrived coup plot were, Gen. Olusengu Obasanjo, Maj.-Gen. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua (who died mysteriously in prison), Gen. Oladipo Diya, human rights activist—Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti, Shehu Sani, Prince Ademola Adeniji-Adele, Lt. Col. Sambo, Major Akinyemi, Col. Lawan Gwadabe, Col. Rowland Emokpae, Bello Fadile and other convicted officers condemned by Brigadier-General Patrick Aziza's Tribunal who were expected to be jailed or executed¹¹⁵. Gen. Abacha's response to the alleged coup plotters was thus:

that his junta had carefully investigated the degree of involvement of the so-called plotters...so that at the end of the day, Justice would not only have been done but seen to have been done...we are leaving no stone unturned¹¹⁶

The Esprit de corps in the military collapsed under a long year of military rule. High-ranking military officers were deliberately set up, and roped in coups by colleagues they thought they were discussing the state of the nation with. It was the survival of the fittest. many brilliant officers considered threats got liquidated as private discussions were recorded by military intelligence officers detailed to achieve certain goals for the man in power. It was a dog-eat-dog scenario. In agreement with the above, Col Abubakar Dangiwa Umar, former military Governor of old Kaduna State, thundered:

The whole trial of the alleged coup plotters of 1995 was not sound it was a phoney coup; people were tortured to extract evidence. The fact that

¹¹² Nosa Igiebor and Chuks Iloegbunam, "Abacha must Be Probed", *Tell*, No. 41, October 9, 1995,19.

¹¹³ "The Clampdown", *NewsWatch*, Vol. 20 No. 10, September 5, 1994, 16-18.

¹¹⁴ Umar, "Vagabong in Power: The Inside Story of Coup Against Abiola", 26.

¹¹⁵ Ima Niboro, "The General Hangs Tough", *Tell*, No. 41, October9, 1995,14.

¹¹⁶ Niboro, "The General Hangs Tough", 13-14.

journalists were hounded and tried within 10 minutes and sentenced only shows that Abacha was trying to knock out the opposition¹¹⁷.

The military officers were no doubt tortured decisively to extract false witness against others. For instance, Col. Bello Fadile confessed to Ben Charles-Obi, editor of *Classique magazine* in their cell how he was greatly tortured and hung upside down in one of the torture sessions to give false witness against Gen. Obasanjo, Yar'Adua and Col Gwadabe¹¹⁸. Even the so-called "testimony" of Fadile was a prepared statement by the security agencies aimed to implicate Gen. Obasanjo, with a diplomatic description that was sent to back up Fadile's testimony'. The officer in charge of providing the diplomatic description to back up Fadile's testimony failed to take into account the usual sign name and car registration number register at the gate of the Otta farm. And when the said 'testimony' was brandished under Obasanjo's nose, he (Obasanjo) was said to have promptly sent for the visitor's register which showed clearly that on the day of the said meeting, Obasanjo's "accuser" was never at the farm¹¹⁹. This simply indicates that the conviction of Obasanjo and others were trumped-up charges against perceived enemies of Abacha's government.

Similarly, the press was not left out of Abacha's repression from the early period he assumed office. Gen. Abacha moved quickly to dominate the media landscape in Nigeria by putting not only the State media like the NTA but also privately owned stations under the Aso Rock influence. Whereas other media stations were decisively pushed to the edge of insignificance and extinction. Gen. Abacha's regime introduced the highest level of press censorship in the annals of Nigerian history. Media stations like Punch, Concord newspapers and Guardian newspapers were closed by Decree No. 7 of 1994, Decree No. 6 of 1994 and Decree No. 9 of 1994 respectively, because they were considered anti-Abacha's regime. A good number of journalists were arrested and locked up for their refusal to present the source of stories they did for the coup. For instance, Mr George Mbah, *Tell Magazine's* senior assistant editor was arrested on May 5, 1995 and sentenced to life imprisonment in a terrible prison with chains on his hand for "accessory after the facts of treason" and for trying to "save coup plotters"¹²⁰. Similarly, Mr. Kunle Ajibade, editor of *The News*, was arrested on 18 October 1995 and bagged life imprisonment for publishing a coup-related article, but later commuted to 15 years at Makurdi Prison¹²¹. In the same vein, Mr. Ben Charles-Obi editor of the defunct *Classique magazine*" was arrested in May 1995 and jailed for publishing an article captioned *Colonel Shuaibu: Man who Betrayed Coup Suspects*, the article was said to have debunked the government's coup allegation and prompted people to demand the release of the arrested suspects¹²². He was jailed for the failure to disclose his source of information. These journalists were tried in a Kangaroo tribunal that did not last beyond 15 minutes before the sentence was passed.

¹¹⁷ Umar, "Vagabond in Power: The Inside Story of Coup Against Abiola", 27-28.

¹¹⁸ Yemi Olowolabi, "My Trial was a Charade", *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998,9.

¹¹⁹ Abraham Useh, "Now Things Fall Apart", *Tell*, No.32, August 7, 1995,13.

¹²⁰ Adebola Adewole, Wola Adeyemo and Mikail Mumuni, "I Knew I Would Outlive Abacha", *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998, 4-5.

¹²¹ Adegbenro Adebajo, "The Pen is Still Mightier", *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998, 7.

¹²² Olowolabi, "My Trial was a Charade", 8-9.

Although, Gen. Abacha's regime was responsible for the creation of six geopolitical zones in Nigeria viz: South-East, South-South, North-Central, North-East, North-West, and South-West. An innovation whose aim was not only bent on solving the intractable problem of power-sharing alone but also expected to take the wind out of NADECO's sails. Abacha created six states and local governments which were announced on 1st October 1996¹²³. Meanwhile, as part of Abacha's civilian transition programme aimed at succeeding himself from "Khaki to Agbada", led to the establishment of five political parties that were popularly described as the five fingers of a leprous hand. These parties were designed to extend Abacha's stay in power and a subtle plan to fashion out means that would guarantee him a transit. Gen. Abacha was also able to galvanise the needed support from some unpatriotic groups, such as the Youths Earnestly Ask for Abacha, (YEAA), championed by a self-appointed youth leader, Daniel Kanu who embezzled ₦1.2billion that was mapped out to arrange for their two-million-man-march¹²⁴. The Abacha military regime brought the worst in many Nigerians. Highly placed Nigerians became pawns in Abacha's chess game. The political class were falling over themselves to curry his favour and do his bidding. But for divine intervention that suddenly terminated Abacha's life, Nigeria would have experienced an untrammelled dictatorship.

Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar acceded power following the death of Gen. Abacha on June 8, 1998. He took over the mantle of leadership of Nigeria unprepared for the challenges that lay ahead. On assumption of office, Abubakar was poised to reconcile the government and the people and prepare a proper handover of political power to civil rule in less than one year. In this regard, Abubakar took steps that were aimed at restoring peace and order by granting passage to all political asylum and releasing some of the political prisoners of Gen. Abacha. Prominent among them were Gen. Olusengu Obasanjo, Chris Anyanwu and Chief Olu Falae, among others. Sadly, Abiola suddenly fell ill and died on 8 July 1997, in what appeared to be cardiac at the point he was about to be released. There are many insinuations about his death not being natural but contrived to end the political crisis that had rocked the country for about five years. Nonetheless, the political temperature of the country lowered thereafter.

Abubakar accepted a transition program unlike Abacha who refused to hand over power; his action was received with an outpouring of support from home and abroad. For instance, the United States lifted drug-related sanctions hitherto placed on Nigeria, affirming that Nigeria was drug-free, this was followed by the European Union which equally lifted all sanctions relating to visa restrictions for high-level visits and sporting contracts. So was the case with the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) in London, which on October 10, 1998, announced the lifting of sanctions earlier imposed on Nigeria¹²⁵. Meanwhile, the civility attached to Gen. Abubakar's transition programme was unlike that of Babangida and Abacha who employed military force to protect their transition programme. An Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was

¹²³ Niboro, "The General Hangs Tough", 17.

¹²⁴ Anselm Okolo, "Troubles of the Prodigal", *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998, 30.

¹²⁵ The Role of the International community Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) on Nigerian Government. <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/nigeria/Nigew991-12.htm>.

established to conduct the election, which recognised three political parties to be fully registered viz People's Democratic Party (PDP), All People's Party (APP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD). Unfortunately, political parties were hastily designed with key errors to meet the transition deadline; hence INEC party registration gave room for sectional affiliation, as could be seen in AD which proved that ethnicity still plays a major role in the body politics of Nigeria.

In as much as Gen. Abubakar's regime fast-tracked the plans for civilian rule, the military played a critical role in moulding the civilian government to suit their interest. First, the military closely monitored all the registered political parties and cleverly foisted its former leader, Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo against Dr Alex Ekwueme at the PDP Jos Convention. Secondly, Gen. Babangida was said to have taken the position of a key negotiator between Obasanjo and the northern oligarchy, while the INEC played the card to legitimize Obasanjo's candidacy. Thus Obasanjo was preferred to protect the military interest as they exited power. As part of the military plans to control the election process, Gen. Abubakar did not sign the 1998 constitution provided for the formation of political parties until 6 May 1999, which was a few weeks before the handover. This amounted to putting the cart before the horse as the election had been concluded before the constitution was signed into law. Another important factor that indicated the military influence in controlling the civilian election was the absence of an electoral code of conduct for the election. Abubakar equally took steps that clearly showed that the PDP was controlled by the military and was responsible for imposing Obasanjo. This was proven through the funding of Obasanjo's campaign and election, whereas other parties were denied such a gesture¹²⁶. The covert and overt role played by the army in the 1999 election, succinctly reaffirmed what an astute member of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) described before the 1983 election thus, we have only two political parties in Nigeria, the NPN-"dominant party" and the Military¹²⁷. The military has remained a dominant factor in the Fourth Republic. With their fabulous wealth, they maintained a firm grip on the emergent political class, which often determines who gets elected or appointed into juicy positions.

Conclusion

The military incursion into Nigerian body politics has been debilitating. It has traumatized the military in diverse ways. The esprit de corps among officers has evaporated; the military institution has been polarized along ethno-regional and religious lines, merit has been relegated to the background, while incessant coup d'état has decimated the cream of the officers corps. The political class has been under the military tutelage while the engine room of democratic practice—the political parties—has come under the hammer of arbitrary military decision, being banned and unbanned from time to time.

The Nigerian officer corps are increasingly well-educated. The aphorism of military subordination to civilian control is no longer adhered to. Having tasted political power and the limelight attendant with it, the military whether in active service or retired finds political power irresistible. Plato, in his *Republic*, divided humanity into three classes: the

¹²⁶ Bayo J. Adekanye, *The Retired Military as Emergent Power Factor in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Heinemann Books, 1999), 183.

¹²⁷ Osaghae, *Crippled Giant*, 111.

guardian class, those who are endowed with wisdom, produce the philosopher kings that should be entrusted with leadership. The warrior class, the soldiers, are supposed to defend the realm while the artisans, those inclined to material pursuit, ought to create wealth for the society. Thus in Nigeria, those entrusted with the defence of the society, routinely usurp power while the wealthy class meddle in the choice of leaders either as godfathers or money bags. This appears to be the worst legacy of military intervention in Nigeria as leaders are enthroned with little leadership training. Indeed, recruitment into the armed forces and police has been bastardized. The armed forces are marred in corruption, nepotism and sectionalism. Those with a passion for soldering are hardly recruited into the system and when they do, are frustrated due to skewed promotion and training opportunities. The military institution should thrive on merit but it is rived with all the fault lines in Nigerian society such as corruption, nepotism, north/south divide, and ethnic and religious biases. Thus insecurity is ravaging the country with the military hierarchy looking askance. Apart from the Nigeria-Biafra civil war in which they were able to salvage the mess they inflicted on Nigeria by maintaining the sovereignty of the nation, every other thing that required gallantry and heroism of the military has been disappointing. The Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast has festered for a long while banditry, kidnapping and "unknown gunmen" is the latest addition to insoluble insecurity in the country. The Nigerian military requires fundamental reforms before one neighbouring country's armed forces will have dinner at Aso Rock.

The place of the military in Nigerian society cannot be too stressed. However, they must conform to the natural role of the defence of the territorial integrity of the nation. Recruitment and promotion must be on merit even while observing Nigeria's diversity. This will raise the morale of the armed forces. The military, must as much as possible not be dragged into the internal security. The police ought to be decentralized to the extent that every urban centre with a population of fifty thousand (50,000) and above should maintain a police unit. The image of the military has gone down with their penchant for collecting money from the motorists plying the country's dilapidated road network. The military must be properly equipped to confront any external aggression. The army's effectiveness does not lie in large units that are ill-equipped. A much smaller armed force but easy to be mobilized and deployed is preferable to a clumsy, demoralized and frustrated rank-and-file officer corps.

Bibliography

Books

- Ademoyega, Adewale. *Why We Struck: The Story of the First Nigerian Coup*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Ltd. 1981.
- Agbodike, C.C. *Military Intervention in Nigerian Politics and Governance: In Historical Perspective*. Awka: Valid Publishing Company Nig., Ltd. 2006.
- Alli, M. Chris. *The Federal Republic of Nigerian Army: The Siege of a Nation*. Ikeja: Malthouse Press Limited. 2001

- Cervenka, Zdenek. *A History of the Nigeria War: 1967-1970*. Ibadan: Onobonje Press and Book Industries Nig. Ltd., 1971.
- Forsyth, Frederick. *Making of an African Legend: The Biafran Story*. London: Penguin Books. 1969.
- Gbulie, Ben. *Nigeria's Five Major: Coup d'état of 15th January 1966 first Account*. Nigeria. Africana Educational Publishers. 1881.
- Madiebo, A. Alexander. *The Nigerian Revolution and Biafra War*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd., 1980.
- Obasanjo, Olusegun. *My Command: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970*. Ibadan: Heinemann African Publishers. 1980.
- Obi-Ani, Paul. *Post-Civil War Political and Economic Reconstruction of Igboland, 1971-1983*. Enugu: Mikon Press. 1998.
- Ojukwu, Odumegwu Emeka. *Because I Was Involved*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited. 1989.
- Osaghae, E. Eghosa E. *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1998.
- St. Jorre de John. *The Nigerian Civil War*. London: Hodder and Stoughton. 1972.
- Tamuno, N. Tekena. "Men and Measures in the Nigerian Crisis, 1966-70", in *Nigeria Since Independence: The First 25 Years: The Civil War Years*, edited by Tamuno, N. Tekena and
- Ukpabi, C. Samson. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Limited. 1989.
- Ukpabi, C. Sam. *Strands in Nigerian Military History*. Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Ltd. 1986.
- Uwechue, Raph. *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War: Facing the Future*. New York: Africana Publishing Corporation. 1971.

Magazine

- Agbroko, Godwin. "Fear of War" *Newswatch*, Vol. 18, No. 8, August 23, 1993.
- Abubakar, Umar. "Vagabong in Power: The Inside Story of Coup Against Abiola", *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998.
- Adegbenro Adebajo, "The Pen is Still Mightier", *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998.
- Adewole, Adebola, Adeyemo Wola and Mikail Mumuni. "I Knew I Would Outlive Abacha." *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998.
- Agbroko, Godwin. "Fear of War" *Newswatch*, Vol. 18, No. 8, August 23, 1993.
- Agbroko, Godwin. "The Messiah as a Problem." *Newswatch*, Vol. 18, No 9, August 30, 1993.
- Aite-Oshoribhor, Dave. "This Regime is Contemptuous of Law." *African Guardian*, Vol. 8. No. 34, August 30, 1993.
- Asaju, Tunde. "The Vatsa Coup: Why They killed My Father." *Newswatch* Vol.30 No.22, Dec 6, 1999.
- Azikiwe, Nnamdi. "Nigeria's Future." *Times*, November 16, 1967.
- Babarinsa, Dare. "Still in Babylon." *Tell*, January 24, 1994.
- Clifford, D. May. "Nigerian Military Regime is Reining in One of the Freest Presses in Africa." *New York Times*, April 30, 1984, www.nytimes.com/1984/04/30/nigeria-military-regime-is-reining-in-one-of-the-freest-presses-in-africa/
- Darnton, John. "Nigerians Storm British and U.S. Offices." *New York Times*, February 18, 1976.

- Edokpayi, Ben. "The Guillotine: How Newswatch Passed Through Deaths Dark Tunnel." *Newswatch*, Vol. 6, No 1, September 14, 1987.
- Ezechukwu, Uche. "Trial of IBB." *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 6, No. 36, August 30, 1993.
- Duru, Raphael. "Breaking the IBB Myth" *The Nigerian Economist*, Vol. 6. No. 40, September 27, 1993.
- Idowu, Lanre. "Motion Dismissed." *ThisWeek*, Vol. 2, No. 8, December 1, 1986.
- Igiebor, Nosa & Iloegbunam, Chuks. "Abacha must Be Probed", *Tell*, No. 41, October 9, 1995.
- Kotun, Ajiroba Kemi. "Bubbles Burst." *Nigerian Voice*, March 8, 2016.
www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/21125/bubbles.burst.html.
- Mba, George & Aigbotosho, Dayo. "My Political Agenda Continues." *Tell*, November, 7, 1994.
- Mohr, Charles. "Nigeria Coup Tied to Lack of Power Sharing." *New York Times*, September 4, 1985.
- Niboro, Ima, "The General Hangs Tough." *Tell*, No. 41, October 9, 1995.
- Noble, B. Kenneth. "Nigeria Reports It Foiled a Coup by Army Rebels." *New York Times*, April 23, 1990.
- Obaigbena, Nduka "Ibbnomics." *Thisweek*, Vol. 2. No. 8, December 1, 1986.
- Oladejo, Wale. "Tussle for Power: The Removal of Madueke and Alli" *NewsWatch*, Vol. 20 No. 10, September 5, 1994.
- Okolo, Anselm. "Troubles of the Prodigal.", *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998.
- Omuabor, Victor. "A New Reign of Terror." *Tell*, August, 1994.
- Olowolabi, Yemi. "My Trial was a Charade." *Tell*, No. 32, August 10, 1998.
- Useh, Abraham. "Now Things Fall Apart", *Tell*, No.32, August 7, 1995.
- Yakubu, Mohammed. "Welcome to Democracy." *Newswatch*, Vol. 18 No. 24, December 13, 1993.
- Yakubu, Mohammed & Soji, Akinrinade. "The Press as Collosus: Fact or Fallacy?.", *Newswatch* Vol. 6, No 1, September 14, 1987.

Newspaper Articles

- Akilu, Haruna. "Rasaki and Others Retired", *Vanguard*, November 28, 1993.
- Balogun, Oluwambo. "Great Betrayal." *Concord*, Vol. 2 No 29, February 20 1988.
- Ogbeide, Mike. "Ex-Fed Exco Members to Declare Assets." *The Nigerian Observer*, Vol. VII., August 16, 1975.
- Oshisada. V. "Diary of Events." *Morning Post*, Vol. XI, No 71, January 1, 1972.
- "Ojukwu's Secession was Premeditated." *Morning Post*, Vol. XI No 90, January 19, 1972.
- Uzamere, Osaheni. "July 29 and the Nigerian Revolution." *The Nigerian Observer*, Vol. VIII August 27, 1975.

Journal Articles

- First Bank Monthly Business and Economic Report, May, 1986.
- Human Rights Watch, "Transition or Travesty: Nigeria's Endless Process of Return to Civilian Rule", October 1, 1997. <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a8314.html>.

National Bureau of Statistics, Annual Abstract of Statistics, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011. www.nigerianstat.gov.ng
The Role of the International Community Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) on Nigerian Government. <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/nigeria/Nigew991-12.htm>.

Publisher's Note/Disclaimer: The statements, opinions, and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of NJH. NJH disclaims responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions, or products referred to in the content.