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THESIS

THE NIGERIAN MILITARY AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

by

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March 2003

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THE NIGERIAN MILITARY AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that such structural explanations as economic underdevelopment, ethnic fragmentation, and political corruption for the collapse of democracy in Nigeria in 1966, are insufficient. This study further demonstrates that the immediate cause of the collapse was the failure of the young democratic government to respond to the challenge posed by military opportunism through adequate civilian control strategies. The thesis argues that democratization is attainable in Nigeria if elected governments devise appropriate control strategies to check military opportunism while strengthening and legitimizing their own rule. It acknowledged that the first government of Nigeria's Fourth Republic, installed on May 29 1999, appears to have learned this lesson. The thesis concludes that constant vigilance on the part of successive governments will be essential as the Fourth Republic passes through the long process of democratic transition and consolidation.

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I.   THEORY: DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATION

The task that this thesis has set for itself is very straightforward. It is to show that successful democratic transition and consolidation is attainable in Nigeria if only the successive civilian controlled governments would devise control strategies (even if unconventional in the short run) to check military opportunism and strengthen their own rule. It will trace the roots of recurrent failure of democratic experiments in Nigeria and draw lessons from Kenya and Botswana, two sisters' African countries with successful democratic transitions. Policy recommendations toward reducing or eliminating the problem will be offered.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to examine the theory of democratic transition and civil-military relations as a theoretical background to understanding Nigeria's situation. In order to achieve this, an attempt would be made to address the following set of questions: What is a completed democratic transition and consolidation? Why would a country want to transit to democracy or why transitions from authoritarianism to democracy? What are the ingredients of a successful democratic transition and consolidation or what Linz and Stepan (1996) would call conditions (or arenas) that must exist for a democracy to be consolidated? What are the obstacles to a successful democratic transition and how can these obstacles be surmounted? What does the civil-military relations theory intends to teach democratic leaders?

Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle (1997) defined a regime transition as a shift from one set of political procedures to another, from an old pattern of rule to a new one. According to them, regime transition may occur by means of a short, sharp transformation – for example, when a coercive autocracy collapses and give way to an elected democracy. Or a transition may unfold incrementally, as when a personal dictatorship gradually relaxes controls on his political opponents and introduces a softer, more liberalized form of authoritarian rule. In the case of Nigeria, it experienced a shift from British colonial rule to democratic rule in 1960 and again from military dictatorship to democratic rule in 1979 and 1999.

However, it is not enough for an authoritarian system to give way to elected democracy. It has to be completed and consolidated. "A democratic transition is complete when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government *de facto* has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies *de jure*" (Linz and Stepan, 1996, 3).

The pertinent question now is why democracy? Why did Nigeria, for instance, transited from a relatively peaceful but authoritarian British colonial rule to the turbulent democratic rule of the early 1960s? Why did Nigerians reject military dictatorship, even after several years' military administrations and embraced democratic rule in

1979 and 1999? What is so special about democracy over other forms of government?

Democratization is generally a good thing and that democracy is the best form of government. If democracy is thought of simply as the rule of the people, as a system of choosing government through free and fair electoral competition at regular intervals, governments chosen in this manner are generally better than those that are not. They usually offer the best prospect for accountable, responsive, peaceful, predictable, good governance. Consequently, up to a point consistent with the principles of constitutionalism and representative democracy, government is better when it is more democratic. (Diamond, 1999, 3)

There is a powerful association between democracy and liberty because countries that hold free elections are usually more liberal than those that do not and that the more closely countries meet the standards of electoral democracy, the higher their human rights rating. Although, the process of democratization may stimulate ethnic conflict (as was and still is the case in Nigeria) and induce weak states to meet communal rebellion with repression rather than accommodation, " the resolution of ethno political conflicts in institutionalized democracies depends most fundamentally on the implementation of universalistic norms of equal rights and opportunities for all citizens… and pluralistic accommodation of (group) desires for separate collective status" (Diamond, 1999, 5) Moreover, the policies and institutions that settle ethno political conflicts and manage diversity peacefully include

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full political and civil rights for ethnic minorities, programs to alleviate their poverty, protection for them to use their languages and cultures, regional autonomy and devolution of power and mechanisms or incentives for sharing power, constructing multiethnic coalitions, encouraging crosscutting alignments, and allowing broad access to power at the center. (Diamond, 1999, 6)

Why is it that Nigeria, and indeed other post-colonial African countries could not harness the benefits democratic governance? The answer is simple. Only democratic transition that is completed and consolidated can fully harness all the benefits of democracy. It is an incontestable fact that democratic transitions in many African countries are yet to be completed and consolidated. Even in a few African countries like Kenya and Botswana, where democratic transitions may be said to have been completed, there are still many tasks that need to be accomplished, conditions that must be established, and attitudes and habits that must be cultivated before their democracies could be considered consolidated.

What then are the characteristics of a consolidated democracy? We turn to Linz and Stepan (1996) for explanations. They provide a working definition of a consolidated democracy as follows:

- Behaviorally, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a non-democratic regime or turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state.

- Attitudinally, a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public

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opinion holds the believe that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life in a society such as theirs and when the support for antisystem alternatives is quite small or more or less isolated from the pro-democratic forces.

- Constitutionally, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and non-governmental forces alike, throughout the territory of the state, become subjected to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflicts within specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.

From the above definition, Linz and Stepan conveyed the idea that a consolidated democracy is a political situation in which, in a phrase, democracy has become " the only game in town". In other words, with consolidation, democracy becomes routinized and deeply internalized in social, institutional, and even psychological life, as well as in calculations for achieving success.

Linz and Stepan also offered five interconnected and mutually reinforcing conditions (also referred to as arenas) that must exist or be crafted for a democracy to be consolidated. First, the conditions must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society. Second, there must be a relatively autonomous and valued political society. Third, there must be a rule of law to ensure legal guarantees for citizens' freedoms and independent associational life. Fourth, there must be a state bureaucracy that is usable by the new democratic government. Fifth, there must be an institutionalized economic society.

They refer to civil society as that arena of the polity where self-organizing groups, movements, and

individuals, relatively autonomous from the state, attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interest. By political society, they refer to that arena in which the polity specifically arranges itself to contest the legitimate right to exercise control over public power and the state apparatus. To achieve a consolidated democracy, the necessary degree of autonomy and independence of civil and political society must further be embedded in and supported by the rule of law, the third arena. All significant actors – especially the democratic government and the state – must respect and uphold the rule of law, which requires a clear hierarchy of laws, interpreted by an independent judicial system and supported by a strong legal culture in civil society. Moreover, modern democracy needs the effective capacity to command, regulate, and extract. For this it needs a functioning state and a state bureaucracy considered usable by the new democratic government. Finally, Linz and Stepan posit that modern consolidated democracies require a set of socio-politically crafted and socio-politically accepted norms, institutions, and regulations, which they call economic society, that mediates between state and market. Consequently, they conceive a modern consolidated democracy as being composed of five major inter-relating arenas, each of which, to function properly, has its own primary organizing principle. Therefore, to them, a consolidated democracy is more than a regime, it is an interacting system.

There is no doubt that democracy is a better form of governance than authoritarianism. Nigeria, and indeed, other emergent African countries yearn for this ideal

system, yet majority of these countries have experienced failed democratic transitions and consolidations. What then are the impediments to a successful democratization?

In the literature on the causes of the failure of democratization, especially in Africa, emphasis has been laid on structural variables. These structural variables include social, economic, and political problems and weaknesses. The same concept of structure is used in referring to both state and society on the one hand, and to the military establishment on the other.

Although some may argue that political, social, economic, and cultural factors are at the origin of instability, there is less evidence that these factors lead to the total collapse of democracy unless other factors related to the military as an organization are brought in. Consequently, how a civilian regime treats and interact with its military will have a direct bearing on how the military behaves or reacts, perhaps regardless of structural factors. Many authors, including Boubacar N'Daiye (2001), Chuka Onwumechili (1998), Claude E. Welch (1987), and Eric A. Norlinger (1977) agreed that the explanation of structural variables and the collapse of democracy have not been satisfactory. Let us examine their explanations on political problems, social problems (corruption), economic problems, and the problem of the military establishment respectively.

N'Daiye (36-38) writes that many political development inspired studies conclude that African military intervention and the resultant collapse of democracy is a direct result of political underdevelopment. He cited

Huntington as one of the proponents of this theory. Huntington argues that the newly independent states created a high level of political consciousness among the populace. This increased the readiness of large masses of people to participate in the political process. However, the weak structures and administrative capabilities of these states have not been able to keep pace. No political institutions existed to channel this participation. According to Huntington, it is this absence of institutionalization of accepted norms of political participation (with adequate administrative capabilities), which leads to coups (1968, 194-198). As a consequence, one of the characteristics of developing states is the large number of political players and modes of accession to political office. Each group employs means, which reflect its "peculiar nature and capabilities. The wealthy bribe; students riot; workers strike; mobs demonstrate; and the military coup. In the absence of accepted procedures, all these forms of direct action are found on the political scene. The techniques of military intervention are simply more dramatic and effective than the others because, as Hobbes put it, 'When nothing else is turned up, clubs are trumps.'" (Huntington, 1968, 196).

N'Diaye posits that Huntington and other proponents of development approach stress the strong relationship between political mobilization per se and political pluralism in particular as one of the main causes of coups and collapse of democracy. He believed that any assessment of the political development approach must acknowledge that coups have swept away regimes in plural, fragmented politics, but also in centralized one party systems and personal

dictatorships. For example, He said that Senegal and Botswana, where political competition has been practiced since the last years of colonialism, have not been threatened by military intervention. In Ghana and Nigeria, after the first successful coup (in circumstances far from being marked by political pluralism), coups have occurred at frantic pace.

On corruption, Onwumechili (39-40) writes that corruption has been used frequently as an excuse for military coups and the eventual collapse of democracy. Coup makers especially point to various and sometimes verifiable examples of government corruption. However, this may win support for the coup makers, but it does not stop corruption. Many studies have shown that the coup makers themselves become engrossed in corruption, as many of them have led some of the most corrupt government in Africa. Onwumechili gave the examples of such leaders as Jean-Bedel Bokasa in Central African Republic, Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire (now democratic Republic of Congo), and Idi Amin in Uganda. He, therefore, concluded that coups do not cure corruption. Instead, an effective judicial system under a democratic government would take care of most of the corrupt practices.

Welch (2-3) posits that certain underlying characteristics of Third World countries, including economic problems, may make them more liable to widespread military participation in politics. According to him, economically, a strong majority of developing countries are poor, export dependent, liable to sharp swings in foreign exchange earnings due to fluctuations for primary products,

and hampered by small domestic markets. World Bank figures make these points clear. Members of the Organizations of Economic Cooperation and Development – "First World" countries – had per capita incomes in 1982 above $11,000 per annum; low income countries $280 per annum; middle income countries (including some petroleum producers) $840 per annum. In spite of these figures, Welch contends that high income is not a prerequisite for civilian control of the military as China and India provide striking examples to the contrary. Besides, some of the most politically and economically dependent countries in Africa, including Kenya, Senegal and until recently Ivory Coast have been relatively free of military intervention.

Lastly, on the problems of the military establishment, Nordlinger (62-78) analyzed and explained military intervention and the collapse of democracy from the perspectives of the soldiers themselves. He posits that by far the most common and salient interventionist motive involves the defense or enhancement of the military's corporate interests. Nordlinger explained that every public institution, including the military, perceives their interests in similar ways and is concerned with its protection and enhancement. They all share an interest in adequate budgetary support, autonomy in managing their internal affairs, the preservation of their responsibilities in the face of encroachments from rival institutions, and the continuity of the institution itself. These are known as institutions' corporate interest. However, the military differs from most public institutions in its cohesiveness and *esprit de corps*; it differs from

all others in the enormous power derived from its hierarchical structure and monopoly of violence.

Consequently, the military believed that the only way available to protect or enhance its corporate interest, in the event of the breakdown of civil-military relations, is through the *coup d' état.* The question then, is, when is the military interest threatened? Nordlinger provides three scenarios, namely budgetary support, military autonomy, and the absence of functional rivals and the survival of the military.

A. BUDGETARY SUPPORT

Adequate budgetary support, as determined by the military, constitutes one of its chief corporate interests. This is because budgetary allocations affect the material well-being, usually the privileged position, of the officer corps, including salary scales, the number of promotions, retirement benefits, housing facilities, and other perquisites. Budgetary changes also serve as a telling indicator of the political power and prestige of the armed forces, with reductions in expenditures signaling a loss of influence and standing. Thus, when civilian governments impose reductions or refuse to accede to demands for enlarged budgets, it is interpreted by the military that their influence and standing is declining.

Defense expenditures also affect the self-perceptions of the officers as members of professional, modern organization. Increased firepower, sophisticated weapons, large installations, and even the quality of uniforms are taken as indicators of modernity and professional expertise. Officers who are denied funds for the purchase

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of such equipment may then develop interventionist motives out of wounded pride and resentment toward their civilian political leaders.

Consequently, many coups are the product of a conjunction between the officers' interest in adequate budgetary support and the unwillingness or inability of civilian political leaders to satisfy them.

B.   MILITARY AUTONOMY

Interference in the internal affairs of the military by the civilian political leaders may accelerate the breakdown of civil-military relations. Trespasses upon military reservation by civilians are always seen as attacks upon its corporate interests. This is because military autonomy may sometimes exclude civilian involvement in shaping the educational and training curriculum, the assignment of officers to particular posts, the promotion of all but the most senior officers, and the formulation of defense strategies.

Civilian interference has a multiple and decided impact upon the officers. Such actions may generally lower the professional competence and self image of officer corps by substituting political for achievement criteria, call into doubt the soldiers' identities as independent and respected officers, factionalize an otherwise cohesive officer corps, warp the hierarchical structure, and weaken the officers' power to defend their other corporate interests. Because of the many important ways in which civilian interference is perceived to adversely affects the military, it has always been a source of the breakdown in civil-military relations.

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C.   THE ABSENCE OF FUNCTIONAL RIVALS AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE MILITARY

The absence of functional rivals and the very survival of the military are closely related. They are almost always affected by the same threat: the creation or expansion of a militia under civilian control.

The establishment of a sizable popular militia calls into doubt the military adequacy and reliability as guarantors of national security. The dilution of this responsibility and its assignment to professional inferiors with insufficient training, expertise, and experience can only be interpreted as stinging insult within the officer corps. The political power and prestige of the military are also affected by the loss of its monopolistic control over the means of coercion. A relatively large militia forces may serve as a powerful counterweight to the regular army, thereby reducing its ability to ensure adequate budgetary support and noninterference in military affairs. It also represents a clear signal to the military: the armed forces are replaceable.

Nordlinger states that President Keita of Mali and some other African leaders were overthrown for this reason. At the time of the 1968 coup in Mali, the paramilitary people's militia outnumbered the army by roughly three to one and undertook night patrol work and border surveillance. In addition, the militia enjoyed a privileged position as an integral part of President Keita's single party regime, thereby challenging the army special status even before it became known that it was intended to replace the army. The officers' pride was deflated further when

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illiterate youths with machine guns questioned their authority. Since the senior army commanders were politically and personally loyal to the president, it was left to a group of lieutenants to execute the coup, after which the militia was immediately disbanded. Nordlinger further states that the apparent lesson in Mali was learned in neighboring Niger Republic, where President Diori steadily undermined the army's position during the early 1970s. The hostility and wounded professional pride engendered by Diori's goal of gradually replacing the Nigerian army with a militia organized within his single party regime eventuated in the 1974 coup.

Consequently, the attributes, role, and self-interest motives of the military appear to be more convincing causal factors of coups than the other structural explanation. This is because virtually every state in Africa, regardless of its structural, systemic, or other environmental conditions, has experienced some form of military intervention attributable to some aspect of the military as an institution.

Thus, the prospects for a successful democratization in any area of the world are inextricably linked to reliable civilian control of the military. (Desch, 1999, 5) In other words, "the development, quality, and survival of democratic systems depend on governments making the armed forces their political servants and policy instruments rather than the other way round. (Pion-Berlin, 2001, 1) In short, the integrated system that is a consolidated democracy can only grow and develop if the transition is sustained, and the sustainability of democratic transitions

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has been closely tied to the disposition of the military in Africa. In other words, "as went the military, so went the transition." (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997, 217) Thus, the first major impediment to a successful democratization, especially in Africa, is poor civil-military relations.

Most people think about civil-military relations strictly in terms of coup. In other words, if there are coups, then civil-military relations are bad, if not they are good. Although, this assumption might hold ground in Nigeria and other countries in Africa that have experienced repeated military coups, there are many other aspects of civil-military relations. " Civil-Military relations is a complex array of military behaviors and civil-military interactions, some positive and some negative, that need to be assessed in order to understand just how much further down the road politicians need to travel before they have achieved military compliance." (Pion-Berlin, 2001, 2) Consequently, coup or no coup question is not the only problem of civil-military relations as it is possible, especially in developed democracies, to have poor civil-military relations without the threat of coup.

Diamond and Plattner (1996) identify four general problems affecting civil-military relations in various new democracies as, military intervention in politics, pre-existing military privileges, the definition of roles and missions, and the development and diffusion of new military technology. Desch (1999) also brought up other issues in civil-military relations apart from coups .He examined some indicators of civil-military relations put forward by other analysts, before presenting what he considers the best

indicator. According to him, some analysts use the extent of military influence in areas beyond strictly military issues as a measure of civil-military relations. By this indicator, good civil-military relations exist when the military concerns itself exclusively with military affairs. Others may argue that excessive military influence on national policy debates is a potential problem. Some observers also look to the frequency of conflict between military and civilian leaders as an indicator in that a state has good civil-military relations when there are few conflicts. Still other suggests that the state of civil-military relations should be measured by how much civilians and military officers like and respect one another. Some believe that good civil-military relations are whatever results in effective military policies.

The best indicator of the state of civilian control is who prevails when civilian and military preferences diverge. If the military does, there is a problem; if the civilians do, there is not. The level of civilian control can be determined by whether or not civilians prevail in disagreement with the military. Civilian control is weak when military preferences prevail most of the time; the most extreme example is military rule or military coups that oust one civilian regime and install another or itself. It is a less serious problem for civil-military relations when military preferences prevail only some of the time, though civilian control is still not firm. Finally, civilian control is firm when civilian preferences prevail most of the time. Therefore, Desch warned that if the military is not under firm civilian control, it could represent a serious threat to democracy. (Desch, 1999, 4)

Having identified the major obstacle to stable democracy, one may identify an antidote to the failure of democratization in Africa. This antidote is the prevention of military intervention and maintaining civilian control of the military. Many authors have observed that a number of countries have already made visible progress in recent years toward establishing civilian supremacy over the military. In order to spread this progress throughout the new democracies of the third wave, clear lessons must be drawn about the conditions for achieving a lasting, democratic pattern of civil-military relations. Diamond and Plattner (1996) presented these lessons.

The first lesson, according to them, is to be clear about goals. Civilian supremacy entails more than simply minimizing military intervention in politics. It requires establishing the primacy of elected, civilian authorities (executive and legislative) in all areas of policy, including the formulation and implementation of national defense policy. Thus the head of government, working through a civilian-led and authoritative ministry of defense, must have the capacity to determine budgets, force levels, defense strategies and priorities, weapons acquisitions, and military curricula and doctrines; and the national legislature must at least have the capacity to review these decisions and monitor their implementation.

It should however be noted that democracies must subordinate military to civilian authority while still granting significant scope for the military to exercise its professional judgment and competence within the broad policy parameters that civilian set. This will involve

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considerable autonomy for the military in officer promotion (except at the highest level) training of soldiers, war-fighting tactics, and so on. Moreover, if civilian politicians are to be effective in winning and maintaining military acceptance of their supremacy, it will also involve substantial participation by the military in the budgeting, procurement, strategy, and policy decisions that civilians ultimately make.

The second paramount lesson and the greatest imperative for avoiding a military coup is effective democratic governance. This lesson is based on the premise that military establishments do not seize power from successful and legitimate civilian regimes. They usually intervene in politics when civilian politicians and parties are weak and divided, and when their divisions and manifest failures of governance have generated a vacuum of authority. However, as the weakness and inefficacy of civilian politics invite military intervention, so can strong political institutions and unity of democratic purpose among civilian political elites – backed by broad and manifest citizen support – help to roll back the political prerogatives of the military. But where the military itself has controlled the pace and character of the transition from authoritarian rule, establishing civilian supremacy is a much more formidable task. This is especially so where the military has a long tradition of intervention and rule and has acquired substantial domains of power in the state and the economy – as in Latin America, Africa, and much of Asia – narrowing military prerogatives can be a risky business, requiring for success all the classic instruments of effective politics like

broad coalitions, persuasive communication, a clear vision of ultimate goals and a sequential strategy for achieving them, deft balancing of cost and rewards, and a shrewd sense of timing. Establishing civilian supremacy, therefore, depends in part on the quality of civilian political leadership and strategy. The more entrenched is the military's role in politics, the more crucial these political variables become.

The contradictory nature of the imperatives confronting civilian political leaders in democracies with politically powerful militaries has been known to heighten their political dilemma. This is because, on the one hand, civilian supremacy requires reducing military prerogatives and restricting the military to a much narrower, defense-centered professional mission. On the other hand, political stability requires keeping civil-military conflict to a minimum. Reducing military prerogatives and power almost invariably generates conflict between civilian and military authorities, as it is difficult to maximize both these goals simultaneously. Therefore, another lesson for the new democracies is that, barring some event that dramatically reduces military power and standing in society, democratization of civil-military relations needs to rely on processes of bargaining, dialogue, cooperation, and consensus-building that gradually diminish military prerogatives and redefine and professionalize the military's mission through a series of incremental steps.

The fourth lesson is what Diamond and Plattner call gradualism. This means that time is needed for civilian and military elites to adapt to new structures and to develop

confidence and trust in one another. Military officers in particular need to become convinced that expanding civilian control will not compromise the nation's security or the institutional prestige and integrity of the military. Time is also needed for civilian empowerment, whereby civilians develop the substantive competence to manage and monitor military budgets, acquisitions, training, promotions, and operations intelligently and responsibly. Building up sufficient civilian expertise to staff the defense ministry, the foreign intelligence bureau, and legislative oversight committees and to provide the more informal guidance and scrutiny that must come from the academy, the policy community, and the mass media is a long process.

Still another lesson is that civil-military conflict can be controlled and confidence enhanced if civilian leaders always accord the military a position of high status, honor, and income. Military officers and soldiers who are being asked to accept difficult changes in their functions, in their institutional size and resources, and in their fundamental conception of their national role and mission should be reassured that their role under the new arrangement will be greatly valued by the country, and that their service is honored and appreciated. Soldiers should be paid decently, and they should never have to worry about whether they would be paid (no matter how dire the fiscal crisis of the state). Officers' incomes and pensions should be competitive with private sector management positions, not only to induce loyalty to the reform process, but also to deter corruption.

The sixth lesson is that civilian officials must act with restraint in their relation with the military. Not only must they resist the temptation to turn to the military for support in situation of political conflict, or as an instrument of first resort to quell unruly domestic protests, but they must also repay respect with respect, granting the military the autonomy to conduct its training and operations and assign and promote its officers in accordance with professional standards and criteria, without political interference at the micro level.

In conclusion, the relevance of the foregoing theory of democratic transitions and civil-military relations is that it gives us some insights into civil-military interactions, with a focus on understanding what is that civilian democratic leaders have (haven't) done, can (can't) do, or should (Shouldn't) do to subordinate the armed forces to their will. It also shows that if democracy works in other aspects, it is likely over time to bring progress in civil-military relations as well.

Having examined the general theory of democratic transitions and civil-military relations, the next chapter will beam its searchlight specifically on the roots of the failure of democratic transitions and civil-military relations in Nigeria.

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II. ROOTS OF THE FAILURE OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA: THE STRUCTURAL ARGUMENT

The aim of this chapter is to take another look at the argument attributing the failure of democratic transition and consolidation in Nigeria to structural problems. It will argue that the structural factors identified in the literature, such as economic underdevelopment and ethnic fragmentation cannot in and of themselves explain recurrent military coups, since a number of African countries with similar problems have successfully maintained civilian regimes. It will also show that the military's own justification for coup making, the corruption of the civilian government, is equally unpersuasive, given that military regimes have been as corrupt as their civilian counterparts. It will therefore conclude that structural problems, though necessary, were not sufficient to cause the total collapse of democracy in Nigeria. This chapter examines Larry Diamond's (1988) influential structural analysis of the failure of Nigeria's First Republic, considering whether the argument holds up to comparative analysis. I will examine Diamond's three major structural arguments, namely, economic underdevelopment, ethnic fragmentation, and corruption, in Nigeria and Kenya. Claude E. Welch, Jr. describes the situation in Nigeria between 1960 and 1966 as that of a state of violence.

> Military units had to be called in to quell major outbreaks of rural arson; riot police and tear gas had to be employed when members of one regional legislature fought; the leader (Chief Obafemi Awolowo) of the main opposition party

(Action Group) was convicted of conspiracy to commit treason; there was a census crisis in 1962; a general strike rocked the country in 1964; two of the three major parties called for a boycott of the 1964 federal elections, and severe constitutional paralysis was averted by only a hair's breadth. Probably most important in the progressive breakdown of political institutions was the crooked Western (Region) election of October 1965 and the ultimate debasement of democratic process in the re-imposition of an unpopular government through chicanery and thuggery. Law and order appeared on the verge of breakdown, with more than 2,000 killed in the course of the campaign and balloting. Declaration of martial law and occupation by federal troops to prop up the unpopular Western Region government seemed likely early in 1966. It was in the context of preempting a possible government action directed against a major group of its own citizens that a small group of young, radical Nigerian officers decided to act the night of January 15-16, 1966, by executing several political leaders whom they saw as responsible for the growing anarchy, corruption and tribalism, [thus bringing to an end the first attempt at democratization].(1987:104-105)

What then were the causes of the major crises that led to the failure of that first attempt at democratization? For explanation we turn to Larry Diamond (1988:290-316) who identifies the causes as economic underdevelopment, ethnic division and conflict, and corruption, extravagance, inequality and waste.

Diamond identifies the first and most elementary cause of the collapse of democracy in Nigeria as economic underdevelopment or what he calls "the failure of development". He posits that "the low level of national development and the narrow base of modern economic institutions, opportunities and talents presented obstacles

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to rapid economic growth and provided fertile soil for mushrooming corruption and waste, which only compounded the difficulty of generating economic growth."

Despite the existence of enormous agricultural, mineral and human resources on which to build a foundation of stable growth, the "Independence" generation of Nigerian politicians failed to get the economy moving quickly enough "to prevent the aggravation of ethnic socioeconomic competition and the swelling of popular discontent." That failure manifested itself in poor planning, inefficient administration and widespread political interference. With respect to planning, Diamond identifies the chief failure as the stressing of industrial over agricultural development. He argues that the heart of any development strategy for Nigeria had to be in agriculture, where the overwhelming bulk of the people were. According to him, Nigerian policy makers were caught on the horns of a familiar dilemma. "If they did not steer development resources to the towns and increase employment there, instability would likely result. But if they neglected the countryside at the expense of the towns, they risked, if not widespread peasant unrest, at least a continued flow of migrants to the cities, overwhelming the benefits of development spending there. Moreover, the neglect of agriculture would mean neglect of the economy (both domestic and export), since agriculture accounted for the largest share of gross product."

Diamond gives the example of the deterioration of rural conditions and agricultural prices in Western Region as a contributing factor to the collapse of the First

Republic through the eruption of peasant rebellion in that part of the country in late 1965. Although massive electoral fraud and repression was the fuse for that explosion, he contends that it had been building through years of severe neglect. "Medical facilities, water supplies, roads, and electricity were inadequate or absent altogether. Children were being sent to primary schools, and many to secondary schools, only to fail in the search for a job. At the same time, this process was drawing them off the Region's farms, contributing to a scarcity of labor that caused a fall in food production there in 1964 and 1965." Consequently, in the context of the extraordinary popular expectations for personal and national progress, this failure insured the collapse of the regime.

In respect of ethnic fragmentation, Diamond contends that bitter and increasingly polarized ethnic conflict, and the coincidence of regional and party cleavages heavily contributed to the failure of the first democratic experiment in Nigeria. These features dominated the 1964 Federal Election and every other election contest. It also fed upon itself during the 1950s, as ethnic parties quickly took power in each region and hardened their bases there, thus making each region a one party state. "This gave rise to a host of conflicts during the 1950s, which became incessant and inflamed in large measure because they were repeatedly tapping the same coinciding lines of cleavage." After independence, "the conflict pattern rigidified along the major cumulative divides".

Diamond posits that the cooperation of the two of three major parties, the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC)

and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), in their mutual design to destroy the third one, the Action Group (AG), was to be the last significant bridging of that divide. He noted that before the NPC/NCNC alliance against the AG was over, the NCNC recognized that in destroying its erstwhile Southern antagonist it had also removed an indispensable brake upon the North's march to total political dominance.

> From then on, conflict reduced to a bipolar struggle between North and South, Hausa-Fulani and Igbo, and their respective political alliances. That both the census and the 1964 Federal Election were approached as struggles for control of the Federation between North and South, and ended as fierce showdowns between North and East, owed much to the regional structure and the coincidence of cleavages it produced. The final chapter in this bipolar struggle, the 1965 Western Regional crisis, was the culmination of fifteen years of conflict between these regional/ethnic/political formation.

That crisis was one of the reasons given by the military for bringing down the regime.

As regards corruption, Diamond vividly paints its picture in Nigeria during the First Republic. He tells us that the scale was enormous. He says that the size of the personal fortunes built up by the Finance Minister in that regime, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, will probably never be known, but some ran into hundreds of thousands and millions of pounds. He expresses the belief that the total misappropriation by the political class must have amounted to a significant portion of the capital available for development spending.

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Federal Ministers' official salaries and allowances alone amounted to one per cent of the Federal Budget. When one considers that this was only a fraction of their total take: that others were helping themselves up and down the political and bureaucratic ladders; that contract were let at hugely overpriced sums, often to wholly incompetent firms; and that the portion of the budget spent on official salaries and benefits was particularly large in relation to that for productive investment; the accumulated drag on the development process looms large indeed. And this does not include the other elements of waste, the unproductive expenditures on prestige projects and buildings, which did little to improve peoples' lives or to stimulate economic growth.

According to him, "the politicians continued right up to the time of their overthrow to ignore the whispers of corruption – charges that were loudening into shouts and that were gradually undermining their standing among the leaders of opinion of the towns and the countryside."

There is no doubt that these political, social, economic, and cultural factors were at the origin of instability in Nigeria. However, these factors were not sufficient to bring about the total collapse of democracy absent other factors related to the military as an organization. In other words, such structural factors are present, to some degree, in any coup attempt, but they may also be present without any coup taking place. The factors said to give rise to coup proneness in Nigeria are present in African countries where coups have not occurred or have not been successful. These countries include Angola, Botswana, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, and Mauritius. Others are Namibia,

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Senegal, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. I will now examine the structural argument in relation to one of these, Kenya.

Kenya's colonial economy, like that of Nigeria, "displayed characteristics typical of an underdeveloped economy at the periphery, namely, the preponderance of foreign capital, the dominance of agriculture, the limited development of industry and heavy reliance on export of primary products and import of capital and manufactured consumer goods." (Ochieng, 1989, 213). This underdeveloped state of the economy meant that independent Kenya would have to formulate policy that would not only arrest Kenya's mounting urban and rural poverty and decay, but would also put the economy into the hands of the indigenous people.

One of the major objectives of Kenyatta government after independence was to remove inequalities inherited from colonial period. Some of these inequalities came into being as a result of the uneven penetration of capitalism and Western influence in the country right from the onset of colonialism. For instance, before independence large-scale agriculture, industry and commerce were dominated by non-Kenyans. Europeans controlled agriculture and industry while Asians dominated commerce and trade. Thus, one of the most urgent and pressing problems after independence was to break the foreigners' dominance of the Kenyan economy and transfer it to Kenyans.

Now, the pertinent questions are: to what extent has the post-independent Kenya guaranteed the promise of egalitarianism to her citizens? Has the growth in Kenya's economy since independence and the mechanism of the

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transfer of wealth to the Africans removed to any appreciable extent the inherited inequalities? Ogot and Ocheing' (1995, 89-91) provide the answer.

Ocheing' cites reports compiled by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 1972, and the World Bank in 1975, both of which drew the attention of Kenyans to the problems of inequality and poverty during the Kenyatta era. The ILO report pointed out

> the development of the Kenyan economy has been accompanied by a growing imbalance within the country. The tendency of Nairobi and other urban areas to grow at the expense of the rural, the richer regions in relation to the poorer, has led to growing imbalances between regions and different groups of the population.

The World Bank report of 1975 identified unemployment, poverty and income distribution as the disappointing aspects of Kenya's development story.

What is clear from both reports is that Kenya's economy is still externally orientated, making it highly open and vulnerable to external factors. Ocheing' pointed out that the country's external trade has been characterized by large balance of trade deficits as imports continue to exceed exports. This means that Kenya's economy does not generate adequate surpluses for reinvestment in, and expansion of, the economy. Also, despite the government's effort to improve agriculture – the mainstay of the country's economy – declining international commodity prices and general deteriorating terms of trade have progressively pauperized the peasants, whose numbers have also been steadily increasing. Moreover, the government's industrialization and investment policies tend

to strengthen the dominance of multinational corporations. Thus, Kenya's industries would continue to be dominated by multinational corporations and other foreign investors, who export their surpluses out of the country.

Apart from the fact that Kenya's economic performance has been both distorted and inhibited by its structural relationship to international capital,

> poverty within a large segment of Kenyan society has also been aggravated by secondary factors – including landlessness, adverse climate and soil conditions in some parts of the country, lack of adequate or relevant education, low wages, high cost of consumer goods and unemployment. For most Kenyan peasants, persistent poverty is also a result of lack of meaningful involvement in the monetary economy, as most of them still practice subsistence farming. (91)

Consequently, like Nigeria, Kenya continues to remain a land of a few rich people and millions of poor folks.

The foregoing clearly shows that both Nigeria and Kenya's economies displayed characteristics typical of an underdeveloped economy. Nevertheless, in the forty years since independence, Kenya has never experience a successful *coup d'état*. Thus, economic underdevelopment and inadequate economic policies cannot be a sufficient explanation for military interventions.

Kenyan society, like Nigeria, is deeply divided according to ethnicity, or ethnic identity. Differences in religious and other basic values underlie and help to perpetuate these cleavages. The colonial period had formalized and hardened ethnic division as the colonial ruler established a system of administration based on a

division of Kenya by tribes. Also, as in Nigeria, ethnicity in Kenya and the colonial policy of divide and rule had created forms of ethnic identity and solidarity, popularly dubbed tribalism, largely unknown in pre-colonial times. Such ethnic identity was based on differences in language. Thus, linguistic divisions provided ready-dug lines of cleavage along which other conflict would be politicized.

Consequently, ethnic instability has extended to the realms of governance. Miller and Yeager (1994, 76) reveal that the government of President Moi was widely suspected of inciting communal violence in west-central Kenya as a ploy to prevent, for "security reasons," the holding of a national election in either 1991 or 1992. Earlier, during the 1980s, "an increasingly insecure regime had employed force to suppress Islamic fundamentalism among Arabized residents of Mombassa and other coastal towns." On a wider scale, sub-cultural distinctions have become firmly institutionalized in parliament, whose constituencies continue to reflect the particular ethnic compositions of individual provinces.

Ethnic identity and loyalty also manifest a strong influence in Kenyan society during the Kenyatta era and beyond. Political support, sport organization and employment patterns all reflected the pervasive influence of ethnicity. Moreover, "many of the social issues publicly aired during the initial decade of independence took on a pronouncedly ethnic or tribal character, as some ethnic groups, usually the Kikuyu, were said to be holding the best jobs in the public sector, having more schools, and having assumed a dominant role in business or the trade

union movement."(Ogot and Ochieng', 122) Thus, the problems of ethnic identity and conflict advanced as one of the reasons for the coups in Nigeria are also present in Kenya, where there have not been any successful coups.

While not justifying political corruption, it must be recognized that the use and abuse of political office for personal pecuniary gain is a common feature of politics in less developed countries. The concentration and personalization of political power almost inevitably leads to corrupt practices. In Kenya corruption has been rampant. N'Diaye (2001, 141) considers President Daniel Arap Moi's regime as one of the two most corrupt in Africa, rivaling Mobutu's infamous regime, which ruled Zaire until May 1997. Corruption and nepotism usually go hand in hand, and indeed President Moi is reported to have swarmed the civilian sector of the Kenyan government with officials from his ethnic group, the Kalenjin. He put family members and fellow Kalenjin and allies in top government positions, particularly those related to finance, and allowed them to illegally amass wealth. According to a survey conducted by Africa Confidential (26 October 1990) cited by N'Diaye, of the thirty-four top military and civilian positions in government, industry and commerce, only three were not held by the Kalenjin. Moreover, as corruption and mismanagement begin at the top, "Moi's closest associates, such as Energy Minister Nicholas Biwott, are said to have embezzled millions of dollars in diverse schemes." Moi himself was reported to have owned or had

> controlling interest in many companies involved in a variety of business activities, ranging from banking to manufacturing. The extent of Moi's

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corruption is such that many Kenyans [did] not exclude that one day the military may be compelled to overthrow him.

Yet, Moi was not overthrown by the military. He voluntarily relinquished power after completing the two terms of office allowed by the Kenyan constitution, and his party was even defeated by a coalition of opposition parties in the 2002 election.

Having shown that structural factors, though necessary, were not sufficient to bring about recurrent military interventions in Nigeria, the next chapter will identify the intervening variable, which can explain both military intervention in Nigeria and the absence of military intervention in Kenya.

III. ROOTS OF THE FAILURE OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA: "AGENCY ARGUMENT"

This chapter presents the major argument of the thesis, which is that the immediate causes of the collapse of the first democratic experiment in Nigeria are (i) military opportunism and more importantly, (ii) the failure of the newly elected democratic government to adequately address the military challenge. A comparative analysis of Nigeria and Kenya shows that military opportunism was present in both cases, suggesting that the key explanatory variable is civilian strategies for containing the military. Thus, the failure of the civilian masters in Nigeria to adequately respond to the challenge posed by military opportunism, signed the death warrant of democratization in that country.

Why is military opportunism a better explanation of the 1966 Nigerian coup than the structural factors advanced in the literature? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to consider briefly the course of the 1966 coup. There were actually two coups on 15 January 1966. Major Nzeogwu led the first, which was aborted by the second, that of Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi.

A. MAJOR NZEOGWU'S COUP

Major Nzeogwu, an Ibo from the Nigeria's Mid-Western Region who had been born in Kaduna (Northern Region), was an instructor at the Military Academy, Kaduna. On the night of 14-15 January he took some soldiers out on a training exercise. When they reached the vicinity of the residence of the Premier of the Northern Region, Ahmadu Bello

(Sardauna), the soldiers found that they had been issued with live ammunition and were told the full details of the plan.

> The soldiers then accepted their role, the residence of the Sardauna was stormed and he and his wife were murdered. On Saturday Major Nzeogwu broadcast over Kaduna radio, proclaiming martial law in the name of the Supreme Council of the Nigerian Armed Forces. On Sunday he appointed a government of civil servants in place of the deposed Northern Ministers. (Miners, 1971, 161)

However, the success of the conspirators in the North was not repeated elsewhere.

> At about the same time they struck there, soldiers from the Armored Car Squadron arrived in Lagos to join up with other groups led by Major Okafor of Federal Guards, Lagos Island, and Major Ifeajuna from 2 Brigade Headquarters, Apapa, Lagos. These bands kidnapped the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and the Minister of Finance, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, and later murdered them. The rebels temporarily occupied some public buildings in Lagos and a broadcast was made announcing that the military had taken over. But this success was short-lived. According to Major Nzeogwu, General Ironsi was one of the bigwigs and compromisers whom the conspirators had decided to kill. Ironsi managed to escape the men sent to assassinate him in his house on Lagos Island and slipped out through north Lagos to the battalion at Ikeja. Ironsi rallied the battalion to his support. Troops from Ikeja were moved to Lagos and took over control of the capital from the conspirators. (162)

Although the Premier of the West, Chief Akintola, was assassinated by another group of conspirators, the coup failed in the West, and no action took place in the Mid-West and the East.

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B.   GENERAL IRONSI'S COUP

According to the communiqué broadcast by the Nigerian Broadcasting Service on the afternoon of Saturday 15 January, 'The General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army and the vast majority of the Army remain loyal to the Federal Government, and are taking all effective method to bring the situation under control.' But the question was, what constituted the Federal Government? The Minister of Defense, Inuwa Wada, was away in Europe for medical treatment, and Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, who had been kidnapped, temporarily held the Defense portfolio.

> The only recourse left to NPC (the ruling party) leadership to regain control of the situation was to ask for the help of British troops. The British High Commissioner was certainly consulted by the NPC. Naturally, the British denied that any request for military assistance had been made. If it was, it was refused. 165)

Quite apart from the military difficulties, there was no one competent to make the request, because the acting President, Dr. Orizu refused to appoint an acting prime minister.

Once the question of foreign intervention had been ruled out, there was very little that the cabinet could do except hand over to General Ironsi with the best grace that they could muster.

> The Cabinet met on Sunday 16 January and General Ironsi gave a survey of the position. He insisted that power must be handed over to him in order to save the situation and the ministers had perforce to agree. There was no provision in the constitution for such a hand-over to the army; but no one worried about such technicality. (165)

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I briefly report the facts of the 1966 coups in order to show that General Ironsi, having aborted the Nzeogwu coup, could have protected the remnants of the Federal cabinet if he was not power hungry and opportunistic. Even the motives of the original conspirators were opportunistic, as they merely wanted to take advantage of the fragile situation instead of assisting to protect it. According to the conspirators themselves they were motivated by the desire to put an end to corruption, inefficiency and anarchy. Empirical evidence has shown in Nigeria that the successive military governments were not less corrupt or more efficient than the civilian governments they overthrew. It is on record that the military even promoted more anarchy by plunging the country into a three-year civil war. Thus neither the original conspirators nor General Ironsi had sufficient reasons for bringing about the collapse of democracy in Nigeria. By insisting that power must be handed over to him, General Ironsi merely took advantage of the situation, not because he was patriotic or that he intended to correct all the structural defects in the Federation.

Military opportunism is certainly not unique to Nigeria. In Kenya, where there have been no successful coups, there have been at least four instances of military intervention in the political process. These include the 1964 army mutiny, the 1971 conspiracy against Kenyatta's government, the 1978 conspiracy to kill President Moi and several of his close collaborators, and the Air Force coup attempt of 1982.

The 1982 coup attempt was the most serious challenge to civilian supremacy in Kenya. N'Diaye (2001) provides a vivid description of that coup.

> On 1 August 1982 the Kenyan air force occupied the state radio station and announced the end of the Moi regime, drawing widespread popular support. The grievances of the putschists included economic hardship suffered by the Kenyan people, lack of freedom and widespread corruption of the Moi regime.

Like the initial Nzeogwu coup in Nigeria, the Air Force coup in Kenya was aborted by further military intervention, in this case by the paramilitary General Service Unit (GSU). However, in this case the GSU chose to hand power back to President Moi.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that both the Nigerian and Kenyan militaries are prone to intervene. The key question is why the GSU handed power back to the civilian regime while General Ironsi chose to appropriate it for himself. The answers lies in the fact that while Kenya had relatively effective civilian control strategies in place, Nigeria either had none or pursues an ineffective one.Unlike Presidents Kenyatta and Moi who pursued similar civilian control strategies to check their military, the new democratic government of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in the First Republic failed to forestall the military challenge. The politically naïve government failed to adopt any of the civilian control strategies used by other African states to forestall military coups. N'Diaye characterizes these strategies as: the legitimizing option, external guarantor option, payoff option, and political permeation and control option. (2001, 60) The only strategy

used by the Balewa's government to secure the loyalty of the military was higher pay.

> Between 1958 and 1960 the pay of most soldiers was roughly doubled to bring their level to the equivalent ranks of the police. From 1960 onwards the soldiers received large bonuses on their pay for service in the Congo. In October 1963, when the Congo operation was ending, the Minister of Defense told the troops that a new salary review for the Army was then about to be ratified by the Council of Ministers. 'The army,' he said, 'is like an engine and must be regularly lubricated if it is not to lose its efficiency.' This review raised the pay of all soldiers, but not officers, by about 25 per cent. (Miners, 1971, 101-102)

There is no doubt that the pay-off option can be an effective means of securing the loyalty of the military. However, the government misapplied it by raising the pay of soldiers while that of the officer corps was left out. Although in exceptional cases soldiers have been known to topple civilian governments (e.g., Liberia), the vast majority of coups in Africa are conceived and executed by the officer corps. Therefore appeasing the soldiers with higher pay without any consideration for officer corps is clearly a misconceived strategy.

What then were the measures taken by Presidents Kenyatta and Moi that have led to the absence of successful coups in a civilian-ruled Kenya? Unlike the post-independence regime of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in Nigeria, Jomo Kenyatta seriously considered the possibility of coup attempts in Kenya, andtook necessary measures to subordinate the military to civil authorities. Since Moi, his successor, scrupulously followed Kenyatta's lead, I will pay attention to Kenyatta's strategies. These

strategies were a combination of: (a) the ethnic manipulation of the military through promotions and assignments, (b) the grant of material awards to officers, and (c) the use of paramilitary force as a counterweight to the military. (N'Diaye, 2001, 127)

In shaping Kenya's post-colonial civil-military relations, Jomo Kenyatta borrowed a leaf from the security measures that Great Britain used to put down the Mau-Mau insurrections of the 1950s. Because the police played a prominent role in repressing the insurrection, it led to the perception that the police, especially the GSU, would be needed to play a crucial role in the new state. Thus, Kenyatta concentrated his attention on the General Service Unit.

Kenyatta made the General Service Unit a highly mobile, well equipped, and well disciplined semiautonomous paramilitary force within the Kenyan police. During his tenure, the GSU received two times as much in public funds as all the other military services combined together. Apart from making the GSU a perfect counterweight to the military, Kenyatta also put in place logistical operational measures, which made it harder for any of the regular services to stage a coup. These included keeping the army small, dispersing infantry units throughout Kenya, and making the rapid deployment of army units dependent on the air force. "On top all these, the GSU was made almost entirely Kikuyu-dominated." (Horowitz, 1985, 533)

It must be noted that at independence Kenyatta inherited an army overwhelmingly officered by Kamba, and was faced, already in 1964, by a plot involving the Kamba

Chief of Staff. Thus, Kenyatta moved rapidly to transform the ethnic balance in the armed forces in favor of his own ethnic group, the Kikuyu. However, it was not possible for him to create a largely Kikuyu army in a country where the group was in a minority (21 percent), and where other groups (the Kamba, Kalenjin) had historic claims to military careers. In view of this reality, Kenyatta began to pack the officer corps at junior levels – for the long run – while setting up other control units, like the GSU, with Kikuyu personnel.

According to Decalo (1998), the thrust behind Kenyatta's policy was to attain a balance of power whereby a move by the army as a whole would call for a degree of trust and cooperation between Kikuyu and non-Kikuyu officers. A move by Kikuyu officers alone would probably bring a reaction from non-Kikuyu in the lower ranks, while intervention by non-Kikuyu officers alone could be expected to bring a counter-move by the GSU and other elements of the police under Kikuyu control. (114)

Kenyatta's third coup prevention strategy was to extend material privileges in the form of a payoff to senior military officers. This strategy targeted individual senior officers as well as the military as a corporate body. For example, N'Diaye (129) writes that in the 1960s almost two-thirds of the Kenya's military budget went to pay and allowances, most of it going to officers. In addition, senior officers commanding the army and the air force during the Kenyatta years were engaged in large scale cash crop farming on land secured at giveaway prices and low interest rates, in lucrative smuggling activities and

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in trade and commerce, especially trucking. Consequently, it was the self-interest of the officers that constituted the glue binding military elites to civilian authority. There is no doubt that these combined strategies played a crucial role in ensuring that Presidents Kenyatta and Moi remained in power without a successful coup.

In conclusion, this chapter has attempted to show that the explanation of the collapse of the first democratic experiment in Nigeria rests upon the inadequate response of the new democratic government to the challenge of military opportunism. Using Kenya as comparative analysis, it was shown that Kenya shares the same structural problems as Nigeria. Also Kenya's military were shown to be as opportunistic as their Nigerian counterpart. The only difference is that the Kenyan political leaders right from the onset recognized the dangers of military opportunism and immediately devised civilian control strategies to forestall it. Clearly, this was not the case in Nigeria.

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IV. IN SEARCH OF APPROPRIATE CIVILIAN CONTROL STRATEGIES FOR NIGERIA

So far, this thesis has attempted to show that structural problems and military opportunism are necessary but not sufficient to cause the collapse of democracy in Nigeria. More generally, these problems are 'given' in post-colonial African countries and nothing can be done to avoid them in the short run. Nevertheless, military intervention can be forestalled by effective civilian control strategies, as the Kenya case demonstrates. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the full range of control strategies that have been utilized by African states, examine how well the strategies have worked for these countries, evaluate their relevance to Nigeria, and recommend the appropriate strategies for adoption in Nigeria today.

Before delving into the discussion of different control strategies, it is pertinent to pause and explain the difference between what Samuel Huntington (1957) referred to as 'subjective' and 'objective' civilian control. According to Huntington, subjective control arises from an 'identity of thought and outlook between civilian and military groups.' There is a permeation of the military and civilian values, a convergence of interests. By contrast, objective control depends upon clearly defined boundaries and hence a low level of civilian-military interpenetration except at the highest command levels; a high degree of military professionalism; and the reciprocal acceptance by civilians of an independent sphere of

military authority. Huntington summarizes the distinction thus: the 'essence of objective civilian control is the recognition of an autonomous military professionalism; the essence of subjective civilian control is the denial of an independent military sphere.' (85)

Moreover, a study of civilian control of the military must be grounded on questions about legitimacy and effectiveness of civilian institutions. In explaining the relationship between legitimacy and effectiveness and the forms of civilian control, Goldsworthy hypothesizes as follows:

> the higher the levels of legitimacy and effectiveness, the more likely it is that control will take 'objective' forms (self-restraining military professionalism is more likely to develop in a society that is stable, well-structured etc.); and the lower the levels of legitimacy and effectiveness, the likely control is to assume 'subjective' forms (in a situation of value confusion, poor institutionalization, etc., military allegiance to government depends much more on informal linkages, merging of class interests, and so on).(1981, 56)

Objective civilian control, which has withstood the test of time, is used in the highly industrialized states, and in few less developed states such as India and Malaysia. In contrast, the peculiar evolution of Africa's post-colonial systems and the legitimacy crisis which characterized most of them, suggest that subjective patterns of control will be found to be much more common.

The rest of the chapter will be devoted to answering the following pertinent questions. What were the control strategies used by African states to maintain civil-

military stability? How well did the strategies worked for these countries? How well would they have worked in Nigeria to maintain civil-military stability in the First Republic? I will conclude the chapter by proposing strategies for an enduring civil-military stability in Nigeria.

The actual control strategies pursued by African states are the external guarantor strategy, the payoff strategy, and the legitimizing strategy.

The external guarantor strategy is the existence of external guarantees of military assistance in case of domestic upheavals, which inhibits civil-military turbulence. This strategy has three sub-strategies. The first is the hosting of foreign troops on the national territory as a deterrent to coups and a means to maintain control over the military. France is the sole power with a priori military commitments, and a credible deterrent military presence in Africa (Decalo, 1998, 126) There are standing French presence of this kind in Gabon, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Cameroon. In all these countries the French military has at some stage intervened to protect the incumbent government against the threat of military usurpation. For example, in 1964 French troops returned to power the late president Leon M'ba of Gabon after a successful coup toppled him. Thus, this strategy is not only effective in preventing but also reversing coups in progress.

Inserting expatriate officers into the hierarchy of the military is second sub-strategy. The expatriates provide intelligence and a deterrent presence, which lessen the likelihood of a successful coup. (Decalo, 1989, 564)

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Regional military cooperation is the third. The presence of the troops of a militarily stronger neighbor is one aspect of this strategy for a civilian control. Libyan troops in Chad and Senegalese troops in The Gambia in the early 1980s, Tanzanian troops in the Comoros and Seychelles in the mid-1970s and the reinstatement of President Ahmad Tejan Kabah of Sierra-Leone by Nigerian troops in the mid-1990s, after a successful coup, are examples of such situation.

How well has this strategy worked for the countries that have adopted it? Let us consider the case of Ivory Coast. France and Ivory Coast signed their defense agreement on April 24 1961. The agreement provided for the setup, training, and equipping of Ivorian military and the presence of French (military and civilian) technical advisers. It also provided for the permanent basing of troops and enable Ivory Coast to call on France to ensure their external and internal security (including reestablishing law and order). Thus, French troops based in the country have regularly joined with the Ivorian military in maneuvers to test their readiness to face external aggression or internal threats to the regime. (N'Diaye 2001, 103)

The major advantage of this strategy for Ivory Coast, especially the regime of President Felix Houpouet-Boigny is that the presence of the French troops constituted a critical insurance policy for Houpout-Boigny and his regime. This is because the presence of the French troops serves to deter upheavals or *coup d'états*. Even though Houpouet-Boigny's regime was unpopular, French troops used

maneuvers to deter and dissuade potential opponents from even attempting a coup (N'Diaye, 2001, 105) Thus, it can be said that the external guarantor strategy worked well for Ivory Coast under Houpouet-Boigny in the sense that it was able to prevent coup in the short run. However, as noted in chapter one, the question of coup is not the only problem of civil-military relations. The situation in Ivory Coast under Houpouet-Boigny was that of poor civil-military relations without the threat of a coup. Though this strategy was effective in preventing coups, it had several negative effects on long-term civil –military stability in Ivory Coast, the result of which was the breakdown of civil-military stability in 2002/2003.

First, it is natural that the military will resent a foreign military force. This is because in new states, the military constitutes an important symbol of nationhood and is always particularly sensitive to this issue. (Welch, 1987, 188). In addition, permanent foreign military presence will be perceived as an infringement on the military's monopoly in the use of violence.

Second, giving the French president the decision whether to intervene also undermines sovereignty. For example, in June 1990 France ignored Ivory Coast president Houphouet-Boigny's request and refused to intervene to put down military mutineers in June 1990 (N'Diaye, 2001, 106). This tends to introduce an element of uncertainty, which definitely does not promote civil-military stability.

This pattern of foreign intervention may also lead to the politicization of the military by creating potential coup leaders ready to act on France's behalf. Hissen Habre

of Chad was ousted under this type of condition. Under this circumstance, military elites are alienated through mixed loyalties. The officer may display insincere loyalty to the regime, knowing that it is being protected by a foreign military. At the same, they are likely to remain distant from that regime should it become doomed by its foreign protectors.

The presence of French military advisers is usually detrimental to long term civil-military stability. This is because it perversely entrusts French nationals to sensitive positions in African military and gives them access to information they can use to influence directly and decisively the course of domestic events. Bearing in mind that defense agreements usually imply a commitment to regimes, as opposed to states, the external guarantor strategy worked well for Ivory Coast under the regime of Houpouet-Boigny. What happened after him is another story entirely.

Would the external guarantor strategy have been appropriate for Nigeria? In answering this question it is necessary to state that the former French colonies were not alone in adopting this strategy. Many former British colonies did the same in the early 1960s. Miners (1971) informs us that during the last stage of the decolonization of the Nigerian military forces, a draft defense agreement was drawn up and initialed by the Nigerian political leaders at the 1958 constitutional conference. The Anglo-Nigerian Defense Agreement was presented to the Nigerian House of Representatives for ratification in November 1960. The Agreement was about the provision of instructors,

equipment and training facilities, and arrangement for air-staging rights. Although the opposition party, the Action Group and other radical nationalists who organized demonstrations against the pact condemned the Agreement, the government still forced the measure through the house. However fifteen months later in January 1962 the Anglo-Nigerian Defense Pact was abrogated, by agreement with Britain. (61)

The external guarantor strategy would have worked in Nigeria, at least to prevent the 1966 coups. When Major Nzeogwu's coup was aborted and everything appeared uncertain, the only recourse left to the NPC leadership to regain control of the situation was to ask for the help of British troops. Indeed, the request for military assistance was made through the British High Commissioner in Lagos. It was refused. As a result, there was very little that the remnants of the Federal Cabinet could do except hand over power to General Ironsi. If the Anglo-Nigerian defense pact had been in force, General Ironsi could not have insisted that power must be handed over to him. Consequently, the external guarantor strategy would have been appropriate for Nigeria at that time. It would have at least helped to prevent coups in the short run, buying the inexperienced democratic government the time needed to develop good civil-military relations in the long run.

The second instrument of civilian control is what is called the payoff strategy. This strategy "rests on a tacit but visible trade-off of material benefits (to the military as a corporate body, and to officers as individuals) in exchange for political fealty."(Decalo, 1998, 132) With

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this strategy, stability is only guaranteed with the satisfaction of group and individual needs of the armed forces. In other words, the military becomes a vital constituency that has to be 'taken care of' through the spoils of office.

The payoff strategy has two sub-strategies. The first consist of paying off high-ranking individual officers in order to divert them from attempting to stage a coup. It can be done in different ways. The government may provide lavish benefits to officers in the form of salaries, bonuses and overseas assignments. Officers may also be allowed to engage in private lucrative, often illegal economic activities. Others may be invited to join the government or hold important managerial positions in government-controlled public companies as a means of self-enrichment. The second sub-strategy is the balancing and manipulation of ethnic groups in the military through the distribution of monetary and non-monetary rewards such as promotion and appointments.

Kenya is a good example of an African country where civilian regimes forged a measure of control over their armed forces through the payoff strategy. The previous chapter established that this strategy worked to forestall successful coups in Kenya, but did not eliminate the threat of military intervention in politics, nor the politicization of the military.

Would the payoff strategy have been appropriate for Nigeria? The answer is yes, if it had been properly applied as in Kenya. But it was not. Instead of paying off high-ranking individual officers or increasing the pay of the

officer corps, the new government "raised the pay of all soldiers, but not officers, by about 25 per cent"(Miners, 102). The new government also did not give enough attention to ethnic balancing in the military, especially those of the officer corps. For example, at independence, only 14 per cent of the Nigerian officers were from the North (eight out of fifty seven). Yet the Prime Minister, a core northerner, refused to introduce quota system for officers because "army needed all the officers it could get, from whatever region" (Miners, 115) Although his approach would be ideal in a stable, advanced democracy, it was the height of political naivety in an unstable, multi-ethnic, nascent democracy. The composition of the coup plotters in January 1966 and the victims of that coup showed that the Prime Minister was insufficiently attentive to the ethnic balancing that was appropriate at that time.

According to Miners, of the 32 officers involved in the coup, only five were from the West while none was from the North. The majority was from the East. Also of all the victims consumed by the coup, none came from the East. Moreover, after the coup had been aborted, the General officer Commanding (GOC), Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi, who hijacked the government from the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), came from the East.

The third instrument of civilian supremacy is the legitimizing strategy. This strategy consists of five sub-strategies. The first strategy, which "has nothing to do with the military at all" (Goldsworthy 1981, 55), is the provision of "good government" to the people in order to earn legitimacy in their eyes. Although good government may

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mean different things to some individuals and groups, in a democracy good government will generally entail: instituting a transparent political system; holding regular free and fair election; providing honest and responsive leadership; not repressing or oppressing political opposition; and respecting people's civil and human rights. The strategy is based on the premise that if a society regards its political system (and hence its government) as legitimate, then so will the armed forces, which is drawn from that society to serve the government (Goldsworthy, 1981, 55).

The second sub-strategy entails socializing the military in democratic values. In this regard, individual officers would have to be socialized to have respect for a democratic form of government and support civilian supremacy and democratic institution. This objective can best be achieved through education and training.

The third is the professionalization of the military. It involves delineating for the military a well-defined sphere of autonomy conducive to "widespread acceptance" by the military of "an ethic of subordination" to the civilian authority (Welch, 1976, 6). This strategy is the bedrock of objective civilian control of the military.

The fourth sub-strategy is for government to provide the military with adequate budgets and the most modern weaponry. In this sense, effective civilian control translates to giving the military what it needs to perform its duties. It is different from the payoff strategy where selected officers or ethnic groups within the military are the targets. Here, it is the military as an institution

that is the object of budgetary largesse on the part of the government.

The fifth sub-strategy is the involvement of the military in socio-economic development tasks. Some civilian governments assign their militaries economic development missions such as bridge construction or economic exploitation of land. This approach may keep the military 'busy' and thus less likely to be plotting to overthrow the government. It may also legitimize the civilian government in the eyes of its military by projecting the image of a government that values the military and acknowledges its contribution to national development. (N'Diaye, 2001, 61)

Botswana is a good example of an African country that has adopted the legitimizing strategy as a way of achieving civilian control. The country is a multiparty democracy with an open political system in which political activity by the opposition is not unduly restricted. The government is also generally responsive to the needs of its citizens and relatively less corrupt, compared to some other African countries. Thus all evidence points to the fact that this strategy is working well for Botswana. The evidence includes: (a) the very limited number of instances of violent clashes between the government and its opposition, (b) the virtual absence of the use the use of the military against opponents, and (c) the total absence of instances of military restiveness such as mutinies, conspiracies, or coup attempts. (N'Diaye, 2001, 80)

There is no doubt that only what Huntington calls "objective control" of the military, and a political regime pursuing legitimizing strategies in its relations with its

military and its citizens, is likely to achieve a sustained low level of vulnerability to coups.

Could this 'ideal' strategy have worked well for Nigeria at independence? Definitely, it would have been impossible. This is because the legitimizing strategy is only possible in advanced transitions or consolidated democracies. As mentioned in chapter one, Linz and Stepan offered five interconnected and mutually reinforcing conditions (also referred to as arenas) that must exist or be crafted for a democracy to be consolidated. These are free and lively civil society, autonomous and valued political society, rule of law, a state bureaucracy, and an institutionalized economy society. These arenas were either non-existent or very weak in Nigeria at independence. Botswana was able to utilize the legitimizing strategy because it was free from most of the colonial hangovers suffered by Nigeria. It did not inherit a colonial army; hence it was able to delay the formation of its national army for some years while crafting its arenas of democracy.

In the light of the foregoing, what should be the appropriate strategies for the new democratic experiment (since 29 May, 1999) in Nigeria? This question will be addressed in the conclusion.

V.   CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

The aim of this conclusion is to draw lessons from the collapse of the First Republic and consider its implications for the survival of another democratic experiment, called the Fourth Republic, which came into life on 29 May 1999.

If the Fourth Republic is to survive, there are three major lessons it must learn from the collapse of the First Republic. First, there is the need for the new government to recognize that military opportunism is always there and will remain a threat to the new democracy. The civilian leadership in the First, Second and Third Republics failed to recognize this basic fact. As a result, those three republics are now history.

The second lesson is for the new democratic government to have clear goals on how it intends to achieve a lasting, democratic pattern of civil-military relations. The Balewa led government in the First Republic seemed not to have clear goals on this and was merely drifting until its last days.

The third and most important lesson is for the government to be decisive and pursue a particular strategy or strategies to actualize its goals. The Balewa led government was not decisive on which strategy it wanted to pursue. It appeared to have started with the external guarantor strategy but later dropped it when the opposition party organized a demonstration against the Anglo-Nigeria Defense Pact. The payoff strategy was badly implemented,

favoring soldiers with higher pay while neglecting the officer corps. There cannot be a better example of backing the wrong horse. Balewa also attempted the 'ideal' approach by refusing to introduce a regional quota system for officers at a time when his own region constituted half of the population of Nigeria, but had only 14 per cent of officers in the army, thereby doing the right thing at the wrong time. The lesson here is that even though the legitimizing strategy is adjudged as the ideal source of civil-military stability, it should not be dogmatically applied when the situation in a country is not ripe for its implementation.

What then are the implications of these lessons for the choice of control strategies in the Fourth Republic? Most generally, the new political leadership must consider all the options available and make a choice based on the present situation in the country, while also paying attention to trends in the international community. Let us examine the three control strategies and the relevance of each to Nigeria in this new millennium.

First, the external guarantor strategy can have no place in the new democratic Nigeria. The Nigeria military of today is different from that of the 1960s. Over the years, it has greatly improved in quality and quantity. It is combat tested domestically and in the international arena. It has engaged in a three-year civil war against a rebel army. It emerged victorious. The Nigerian military has grown to become a regional power in West Africa. Under the aegis of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), it restored peace in Liberia. Single handedly, the Nigeria military

succeeded in removing a military Head of State, Major Paul Koroma, who had overthrown the democratically elected government of President Tejan Kabah of Sierra Leone. Thus the Nigerian Armed Forces, itself a watchdog of some of its neighboring countries' militaries, has outgrown being watched by foreign troops. Embarking on such strategy would likely be perceived by the military as confrontational and may actually lead to the deterioration of civil-military stability instead of enhancing it. Besides, Nigerian public opinion rejected the idea over forty years ago and would likely to do again.

Second, the payoff strategy also may be counter-productive for civil-military stability considering the present circumstances in Nigeria. Unlike during the First Republic when the federal government was controlled by one section of the country, the present government is a reflection of all the ethnic groups in the country. This same situation also obtains in the military. Over the years, the quota system of recruitment and admission into the military academies has ensured that no section of the country dominates the military. Under these circumstances, it may be futile to appeal to ethnic sentiments or favor certain ethnic groups in order to buy their loyalty.

Having 'outgrown' the external guarantor and payoff strategies, the new government has adopted since its inception in 1999, policies that can move them closer to the institutionalization of civilian control through the legitimizing strategy. The first sign that the new government was determined to succeed in the legitimizing policies was its request for assistance from the United

States, a beacon of democracy. Within a few months of the new regime's life, it invited the United States based Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI) to conduct a Leaders Seminar, which was attended by top functionaries in the administration. It was followed shortly by a seminar on civil-military relations, mounted by the Center for Civil-Military Relations. In addition there have been numerous courses, conferences, seminars, and workshops mounted in different locations for Nigerian military officers and Ministry of Defense civilian officials. The United States' assistance to Nigeria in this respect is in fulfillment of two of the legitimizing strategies, namely, socializing the military in democratic values, and professionalization of the military, through education and training.

Also as a sign of its determination not to resort to payoff strategy, the new government identified and retired all military officers that had held political appointments in the past. This was done to prevent them from 'contaminating' the professional officers or exercising inordinate political ambition. The latter could not be ruled out, since these officers had tasted power before.

On the political front, the rule of law and the separation of power are constantly being tested. Legislators have been effective in keeping the President on his toes through the threat of impeachment. The state governors have dragged the federal government to court over many issues, including the revenue sharing formula, resource control, creation of a state electoral body to conduct local government election, among others.

Despite the occasional outbreaks of ethnic and religious violence that have dented the country's image, the government is gradually building civil institutions that will be both legitimate and effective. There is no doubt many mistakes will be made along the way, or that it will take many years before the 'five arenas' of democracy are firmly established. The most important thing, however, is that Nigeria is on the right track.

This thesis has shown that structural explanations for the collapse of democracy in Nigeria in 1966, though long accepted, are insufficient. It further demonstrates that the immediate cause of the collapse was the failure of the young democratic government to respond to the challenge posed by military opportunism through adequate civilian control strategies. Thus, democratization is attainable in Nigeria if elected governments devise appropriate control strategies to check military opportunism while strengthening and legitimizing their own rule. The first government of the Fourth Republic appears to have learned this lesson. Constance vigilance on the part of successive governments will be essential as the Fourth Republic passes through the long process of democratic transition and consolidation.

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