Interrogating Military Subordination to Civil Rule in Nigeria, 1960-2015

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Abstract: The Military in Nigeria as in other African countries has antecedents of truncating democracy. Consequently, the military has become one of the critical institutions germane to the survival of Nigeria’s nascent democracy. Therefore, traditional concerns of preventing military incursions in politics through subordination to civil rule in Nigeria remain important. Irrespective of elaborate constitutional provisions and good institutional structure for control of the military, total subordination of military to civil rule in Nigeria has remained mildly indecent issue. This is so because the characters of the Nigerian State as a predator state recruiting other predators for selfish interest has made civil rule vulnerable to military interference in Nigeria’s politics. It is not as if the political class did not understand the military neither do they have misconception of civil control of military. The problem is that Nigerian State as an institution does not exist in a vacuum; rather, it is made up of various groups whose political and economic interests are always in constant conflicts. Thus, allowing the military interference in Nigeria’s politics that lead to the protracted stay of military in power. Despite this, since May 1999, the military has gradually subordinated itself to civil authorities in Nigeria. This paper through diverse secondary sources and historical analysis interrogates the process that made this possible.

Keywords: Interrogating Military Subordination, Civil Rule in Nigeria

Introduction

It is a truism that the incursion of the military into politics was helped by certain factors such as the nature and character of the Nigerian State which manifested in the weakness of the ruling elite class, lack of elite compacts on politics and political process, gross failures of civilian governance, distortions of the political economy, weak societal institutions, and the intense struggles for the political power by the neocolonial political elite. Like Nzeogwu, other Nigeria coup plotters too, argued that their mission in seizing power was to restore the economy; clean the Aegean stables of corruption and abuse of power, democratize Nigeria and then retreat to the barracks.

Yet, with seven different military regimes after Nzeogwu’s coup, corruption was still a major feature of Nigerian public and private life. Regrettably, by 1999 when the country reversed to democratic governance, it had experienced twenty-nine years of military rule as against the barely nine years by the civilians. No doubt, Nigeria’s military has played a very pivotal role in the politics of the country since independence in 1960.

The roles, duties and responsibilities of the military are well encapsulated in the previous and present constitutions of Nigeria. Essentially, the armed forces are specifically charged with the responsibility of protecting the territorial integrity of the nation. In this connection, the military incursion into the nation’s political space was to say the least an aberration. This has shown the extent to which the impunity of successive military regime frustrated and affected the rise and development of civil rule in Nigeria. The military in particular possesses weapons and necessary skills of enforcing tyranny. To protect the state from all forms of tyrannical tendencies, some measures and constraint are important. First, the principles of separation of power should be defined. Secondly, there should be the principle of out-lawing of armed groups and the possession of weapons without state permission. Lastly, there should be the subordination of the military to civil rule, which is most crucial in the political calculation of democratic governance. This is because the military has the capacity and capability to truncate any democratic process and enthroning tyranny as witnessed in African countries and Nigeria in particular.

The scope and intensity of this subordination challenge the assumed ideal state of total military subordination to civil rule as expected in a democratic state. The major challenge confronted by the civilian regime therefore, as Peter Ekeh aptly puts it is on how to subordinate the military to civil rule. The current drive to grow Nigeria’s nascent democracy therefore, underscores the need for in-depth study into aspect of military subordination to civil rule in Nigeria. This is because effective civil rule in control of the military is one important way of preventing military reappearance in governance and consolidating of democratic governance in Nigeria. To achieve this, the nature and character of the Nigerian State should be restructured, including the restructuring of Nigeria’s federalism and her neocolonial ruling elite, salient factors affecting the
total subordination of military to democratic rule should be diagnosed. For instance, one of the most insidious and unfortunate episode of the legacy of military rule in Nigeria should be seen within the context of the military decrees it enacted within the 29 years of its control of the political space.

As Bishop Hassan Kukah puts it, “decrees became so pervasive that they dealt with nearly every aspect of the nation’s life. With the constitution suspended, most of these decrees massively violated the fundamental human rights of citizens. By virtue of these decrees, not only was arbitrations introduced but the moral basis for social relations was eroded and the hopes of the infliction of the rights of the entire society placed in jeopardy. The suspension of the constitution by the military and the enactment of decrees amounted to the replacement of the “rule of law by the rule of men.” Thus, this paper seeks to discuss military subordination to civil rule in Nigeria.

The Concept of Military in Nigeria

The term “military” relates to solders or the armed forces such as the army, navy, marines and air force. The military also called armed forces are forces authorized to use deadly force and weapons, to support the interests of the state and all its citizens. The task of the military is usually defined as defence of the state and its citizens, and the prosecution of war against another state. It may also have additional sanctioned and non-sanctioned functions within a society, including, the promotion of a political agenda, protecting corporate economic interests, internal population control, construction, emergency services, social ceremonies and guarding important areas.

The origin of the Nigerian military can be traced to the last quarter of the nineteenth century when Britain decided to use its power and influence and take effective control along the Nigeria littoral; it had to find a military force capable of helping it to achieve its objective. It therefore, created the West African Squadron. Supplemented by gunboats which were used against towns and group of people considered hostile to British interest. However, the squadron had its limitation in its operations along the Nigerian coast. This was due to the fact that they were kept on combat duty only for a very short time in order to cut down on European mortality.

Consequently, when Britain appointed consuls and administrators to look after its interest in parts of Southern Nigeria, such officials discovered that they could not rely on such naval units to assert their authority in the hinterland. In an attempt to improve its military capability in the first half of the nineteenth century, the British resorted to bringing from Sierra Leone its West Indian regiments who was quartered there. Such troops were, from time to time, dispatched on a tour of duty to Lagos.” Although Britain had declared parts of the area east of the River Niger, a protectorate in 1885, the actual establishment of a colonial administration came early in the 1890s and was quickly followed by the setting up of a colonial force in 1892, which was raised by Sir Ralph Moor and known as the Niger Coast Protectorate Force or Constabulary. It was also known as the “Oil Rivers Irregulars” because of its brutality to friends and foes alike. However, these forces were only adequate to serve the greed of the colonial governments in various localities.

An important step in the development of a modern army in Nigeria was taken in 1897 when the British government needed a more effective military force to counter French incursions into parts of Northern Nigeria already claimed by Britain. This French move was in keeping with the decision taken by the European powers at the Berlin West African conference of 1884-1885, which was to the effect that occupation, in order to be valid, must be effective. Broadly this implied the maintenance of a military force, strong enough to enforce the rights of the power in its area of occupation. The British government therefore considered it necessary to raise a new force altogether to match what the French had in the area in dispute. Joseph Chamberlain, the colonial secretary, floated the idea of forming a “West African Force” and with the concurrence of the British War Office, appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Lugard in 1887 to raise and command this new force of between 2,000 and 3,000 men quartered in the present-day Northern Nigerian and used to oust the French from Borgu and the adjoining areas.

Before the end of 1898, battalions of this force known as “the West Africa Frontier Force” has been raised. The establishment of the West African Frontier Force was, in several respects, an indictment of British military policy during much of the nineteenth century. These colonial forces were run at a cheapest possible cost and so lacked adequate equipment, expertise and professionalism which could only from adequate training. This had an adverse effect on the Nigerian military after independence. For instance, if the forces of the Royal Niger Company had been in a strong position to take on the French, the military history of Nigeria would have a longer lease of life.
In conjunction with the other colonial forces in Nigeria, the Royal Niger Constabulary suffered from incompetent leadership. Regiment officers from the British army who provided the leadership were also in short supply and those of them who volunteered to serve in West Africa were those who had very urgent reasons for leaving Britain. In the atmosphere of military complacency which prevailed in Nigeria before 1897, the officers neglected to maintain a high standard of training and discipline in their forces. In addition, any attempt to use these various units in a combined operation was vitiated by their various degrees of training and efficiency. Some of the units were even equipped with outmoded weapons.

The suggestion in 1898 that the Nigerian territories should be amalgamated coincided with the thinking going on in the British War Office and the colonial Office in London, for a more effective force to be established in West Africa through the amalgamation and expansion of the then existing colonial forces. A committee was set up in 1899 by the British government to work out details. As far as Nigeria was concerned, the forces to be amalgamated included the three military forces established in parts of Southern Nigerian and the two battalions of the W.A.F.F. raised in 1898 and quartered in parts of Nigeria. The recommendations of the committee on amalgamation gave rise to the following military establishments in Nigeria. Two battalions were established in Northern Nigeria and a battalion known as the 3rd Battalion was established in the South.

Similarly, the amalgamation of various parts or even the whole of Nigeria was quickly followed by the amalgamation of the military forces. The amalgamation of the forces involved establishing a new force level necessary to discharge the military duties required in the new political arrangement. It also involved a review of the armaments, equipment, location of the various units and the command structure. In addition, although the Nigerian regiment eventually emerged in Nigeria, this regiment was still regarded as part of the military establishments in the British West African Frontier Force.

One of the major problems which the colonial government had to contend with, in establishing a modern army in Nigeria was the issue of recruitment of Nigerians as other ranks. How the British government solved this problem polarized military thinking in Nigeria in subsequent years and left adverse social and political legacies whose effects continued to be felt during and after the Nigerian civil war. Even in this decade, the Nigerian armed forces are still dogged by this British legacy. The British officers took military, political and social issues into account in determining who was acceptable for enlistment into the colonial army.

From 1900, those vociferous and anti-colonial Nigerians living in Lagos were not considered politically suitable for soldiering since they had demonstrated strong opposition to the British rule established over them. The same was similar to Nigerians in various parts of Southern Nigeria. At that time, many parts of Nigeria were still closed to British colonial enterprise and therefore were not fertile ground for recruitment. Consequently, the colonial government had to rely on a nineteenth century precedent whereby runaway slaves were enlisted in the various colonial forces in Southern Nigeria such as the Lagos constabulary, most of the recruits were runaway slaves from Hausa land; hence, this force was, at one time known as “Lagos Hausa”. Even in the other parts of British West Africa, the Hausa had acquired a reputation for soldiering with the result that the Hausa was the best fighting material in West Africa. Thus, the British created a colonial army in Nigeria virtually divided into two, with most of the fighting men coming from one section, while those manning the officers, signals units, supply and transport and engineering units came from another section.

To say the least, the colonial military did make for esprit de corps among all members of the force, and Nigeria was to reap the bad harvest for this British policy during the crises of 1966 which led to the civil war. However, during the first decade of the twentieth century, the absurdity in attempting to recruit only the Hausa into a force meant to serve government established over so many ethnic groups in the country became obvious, when there was great difficulty in getting enough Hausa recruits. Consequently, the British officers became more flexible in their recruitment policy and took in other ethnic groups found politically acceptable.

The period between 1957 and 1960 was crucial to Nigeria in several respects. Undoubtedly, the political programme and envisaged Anglo-Nigerian relations after independence determined, to a very large extent, the direction in which the Nigerian Army would develop and how it would be controlled. As events turned out, Nigeria’s political leaders during that period were not concerned primarily with working out a suitable defence and military policy which would be a
credit to Nigeria as an independent state or which will secure its national interest or even justify the country’s vaunted non-aligned posture after independence. Soon, however, some of these Nigerian leaders realized that control of the Nigerian military by Nigerians was illusory.

In 1960 when Nigeria became an independent and sovereign nation and up to the first military coup d’etat on 1 January, 1966 the Nigerian regiment was small in size and consisted of five battalions located at Enugu, Ibadan, Kaduna, Ikeja and Kano.

It is significant that the first three places mentioned were headquarters of the regional governments, while the battalion in Ikeja covered the federal capital, Lagos. At independence, certain steps were taken to give the new national army self respect and confidence in itself. In the context of African military history, the Nigerian military inherited from the departing colonial power had always been the last establishment to be completely “Africanized” for while such power was prepared to relinquish control of the national bureaucracy and to grant political independence, it clung to the control of the national army for as long as possible or simply found a way of having its own troops in the territory or of persuading the former colony to enter into a defense agreement with it.

In addition, the government in Nigeria was the creation of the British government, which would not want it replaced by a radical or anti-British political establishment. The control of the armed forces, therefore, would enable the British to intervene effectively in support of the government which it had installed in the country. Furthermore, through such control, the British would influence without external complication, Nigeria’s internal and foreign policies. Departing colonial powers were quite anxious to retain their former African colonies in their areas of influence and such an ambition would be realized more easily if Britain had the control of Nigeria’s armed forces. Consequently, the army which Nigeria inherited at independence soldiered on with most of its members illiterate and oblivious of their correct responsibilities to their fatherland.

Military Subordination to Civil Rule in Nigeria

According to Gana, military subordination refers to the control, management and employment of armed forces, using established laws and state administrative apparatus under civilian authority for extension of politics by other means in inter and intra-state relations with a view to preventing internal jeopardy. On the other hand, civil rule or democratic rule is often referred to as a government of the people by the people and for the people. The people determine in a competitive environment, those who govern them. They get involved in the processes and decision that affect their lives through their representatives.

The tendency and capability of the armed forces in African states to intervene in politics began to manifest in clear term by 1963 in Togo when President Sylvanus Olympio was assassinated by rebel forces and men of the Togolese armed forces. Togo became the first African country to experience coup d’état. Between 1963 and 1965, Africa experienced four coups; in 1966 it was six, two within the space of two months in Nigeria. By 1975, Benin Republic had recorded no less than five coups. As at 1984, Africa had experienced 56 successful coups, while 65 attempts failed. By the dawn of the 1990s, out of 52 independent African states, only 11 had been spared the legacy of military coup or conspiracy to upturn constitutional government. As at present (2017), the list of states spared from the throes of military intervention continued to shrink. A notable example in this regard was the coup that occurred in Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast) in December 1999 and the country’s descent into civil conflict. Given the ease with which African military forces overthrew the civil order, questions have been asked as to what motivated the various interventions.

Umar depicts that the capacity of the African military to serve or pose as potential structures to democracy are not lost on many observers of the observers’ political landscape. Across the continent, the military through series of maneuvers, has scuttled many efforts at enthroning many democratic order by, among other things, truncating the flourishing of popular and mass based governments as well as instituting various forms of authoritarian tendencies. Effective civil democratic control of the military is one important way of preventing military insubordination to civil rule in Africa. However, it is quite known that the virulence of military threat to democracy in Africa is greatly enhanced by widespread of bad governance and defective democratic practices in African states.

In Nigeria, military subordination to civil rule has been difficult to achieve. The military threat has become the most dreaded. This is probably because of its antecedents of truncating democratic rules often due to bad governance. This is not surprising as bad democratic practices are common phenomenon in Africa, especially in states like...
Nigeria, emerging from protracted military regimes. However, military intervention at the instance of bad democratic governance is not recommendable. The military does not allow for systematic experiential development of ideal democratic government over the time.

According to Claude, all established democracies in the world today started on a faltering ground and look time to nature. He opined that the military must be subordinated and controlled to allow democracy grow. This apparently explains why civil control of the military is very crucial and sine-quâ-non to sustaining democracy in Nigeria. On other hand, Nigeria could adopt any of the models of civil control of the military that is best for her democratic ideals

**Models of Civil Control of Military in Nigeria**

One of the major challenges facing all democratic societies in both developed and developing states is that of crafting effective civilian control of the military. This is particularly critical for state emerging from military dictatorship and authoritarian to liberal multi-party democracy like Nigeria. In such state, Saka posits that two central issues which he said appeared dominant in the discourse on civil control of the military. The first is to prevent actual military interventions that can truncate the democratization process. Such concern becomes important given the history of military incursion in Nigerian politics. Secondly, there should be fundamentals and modalities for subjecting the military for effective civilian control.

In discussing civil control of military, Huntington categorized modalities available to civilian rule into two: the objective and subjective model of control. This pattern is a replica of the formal constitutional cum legal and penetration models of civil control of the armed forces. In the objective or legal model, the military is disciplined by its professional ethics. The establishment of the military willingly accedes to civil control as enshrined in the constitution of the state and their service acts. The paramount issue of importance to the military will be the discharge of their constitutional responsibilities and service to the larger community. This model represent the observable reality in most consolidated democracy of Western Europe and United States of America. The military in these societies is highly disciplined, respects civilian authority and enjoy considerable autonomy with regards to military operational issues. Civil control manifest through the executive direction of national defense policy and planning, parliamentary oversight in defence issues, particularly on military budget and civil society advocacy and watchdog functions.

On the other hand, the subjective and penetration model, civil supremacy is assured through the employment of various non-democratic tactics such as ethnic manipulation, divide and rule, co-option of influential military figures, indoctrination, instrumental pay-offs, biased recruitment, promotions and posting of loyal officers among others. In many third world countries and especially in Nigeria’s fledging democracy, the minimal success achieved in the area of civil control of the military is largely attributed to the penetration model. Nigeria has been depending more on the subjective and penetration model for the control of the military due to her defective features of democratic system. Consequently, the military in Nigeria has been accused of insubordination and ethnic bias in its official procedures and dealings. This study recommends that Nigerian government should adopt and adapt the objective or legal model of civil control of military. It is more democratic, constitutional and emphasizes healthy civil-military relations that guarantee objective civil control and subordination of the military. The model highlights civil-military relations as indispensable prerequisite for subordination of military to civil rule.

**Civil-Military Relations in Nigeria**

Claude Welch defines civil- military relations as the interaction between the sectors of the society and the military in which they are embedded. The relationship consist of power and the control of one over the other but include mutual influence. Sheomaker explains that the interactive process in civil-military relations is would be viewed in two perspectives. According to him, the first is the interaction between the civilian leadership in government and the military. The second is the interaction between the civil society and the military that serves as its protector. Both are referred to as civil-military relations. They are governed by the supremacy of the people, the constitution, legal foundations, processes, procedures, precedents and international norms. While this definition tends to situate civil-military relation into every democratic process; Huntington looks at civil-military relations as those variables concerned with the distribution of power between the government and the military.

On the pedestal of civil-military relations, Pion-Berlin believes that civilians have grappled with the problem of how to subordinate armies to their will. He posited that political leaders have always
had to balance the twin goals of harnessing enough military force to defeat their enemies and ensure that the force be not turned against themselves or interfere in the political process\textsuperscript{45}.

In Nigeria, the 1999 Constitution provisions in relation to civil-military relations emphasized the need for proper institutions of civil control of the Armed Forces in order to get a culture that will reawaken the well-known traditional values of the military such as discipline, professionalism, hierarchy, neutrality and cohesion\textsuperscript{46}. It is agreed that good civil-military relations are prerequisite to military subordination to civil rule.

President Olusegun Obasanjo, in his address in May 1999 highlighted the determination of the new democratic dispensation to enthron a stable civil-military relation as one of the fundamental reforms of the country’s armed forces. His administration’s drive in this regard clearly underlined the belief that success of democracy in Nigeria lies in devising appropriate strategies towards ensuring a permanent subjugation of the military to civil control\textsuperscript{47}. The development of appropriate civil-military relations requires the Nigeria military to understand and abide by its role in a democratic setting and according to the dictates of the constitution.

**Provisions for Civil control of Military in Nigeria**

In opposition of autocracy, the objective of democracy is to prevent tyranny in any ramification. Clearly identified source of tyranny is the military, which officially possesses skills and weapons of enforcing direct tyranny. Democracy establishes preventive measures against possible manifestation of military tyranny against the state by the government’s possession of the resources, power and influence over the utilizations and control of the military. According to David, a standing military force with balanced government control will always be a safe company to liberty and the people\textsuperscript{48}.

In nations all over the world, the military is exclusively controlled by central government since it is designed for collective security. Similarly, in Nigeria, the 1999 constitution provides for the Exclusive and Concurrent Legislative Lists between the Federal and State governments. It places the aspect of defence and security amongst the 67 items on the Exclusive List. Related items so reserved include arms, ammunition and explosives, defence and military including any other branch of the Armed Forces of the Federation as may be established (CFRN, Second Schedule, Part 1, items 2, 17, 38, 41 and 51)\textsuperscript{49}. By that provisions, state governments have no powers of establishing parallel military. Military units and formations spread across the nation are exclusively under the Federal Government.

Following the centralization of the military, the sovereignty of the people as enshrined in the constitution upholds that “the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”\textsuperscript{50}. That dictates that state security is not a direct responsibility of the military, though only military plays the vanguard. The military is, therefore, subordinate to the civil authority directly charged with the responsibilities of providing security.

The constitutionally guaranteed role of the Nigerian Armed Forces is to protect the territorial integrity of the nation by warring off external aggression and suppressing internal insurrection. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 made provisions for the establishment and roles of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Section 216, subsection 1 and 2, a – d states that

(1) “There shall be an armed forces for the Federation which shall consist of the Army, Navy and Air Force and such other branches of the Armed Forces of the Federation as may be established by an act of the National Assembly.

(2) The federation shall, subject to an act of the National Assembly, be made in that behalf equip and maintain the Armed forces as may be considered adequate and effective for the purpose;

(a) Defending the Nation from external aggression

(b) Maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its border form violation and on land, sea and air.

(c) Suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore law and order when called upon to do so by the president, but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly,

(d) Performing such other functions as may be prescribed by the National Assembly\textsuperscript{51}.

The constitutionally guaranteed role of the Nigerian Armed Forces is to protect the territorial integrity of the nation by warring off external
aggression and suppressing internal insurrection. It is noteworthy therefore that the performance of this important role is subject to the approval of the President and the Commander-in-Chief of the armed force under such conditions as may be approved by the National Assembly. Implicit in this basic fact is the subordination of the armed forces to civil democratic authority as an aspect of democratic injunction. While Section 1 of the 1999 Constitution provides for the supremacy of the Constitution, Section 2 insists that the country shall not governed or controlled except in accordance with its provision. While Section 217 places the military under the control of the National Assembly, its command and operational use are vested in the president by virtue of section 218. These are the constitutional basis of the concept of civil control of the military in Nigeria.

In general terms, military subordination to civil rule is highly necessary and should go beyond one arm of government by aligning it with the principles of separation of power. According to Jemibewon, this implies that there should be separate executive, legislative and judicial responsibility in the subordination concept. The military is thus placed under the control of the civil rule and the rule of the law as provided in the principle of separation of powers. Specifically, the executive arm of government manages and controls the military; the legislative arm enacts laws for the management and control while the judiciary interprets the laws with powers to review military trials. This forms the structure for civil control of military in Nigeria.

Generally, the structure for civil control of military refers to the official instrument by which the military is managed, controlled, employed and compacted by the law. It is a legal matter that emphasizes separation of power in the control of military with a view to checking the risk of the military providing the vantage of meeting group desires as against a national interest.

According to Obasanjo, successful subordination of the military to civil rules means the military’s acceptance of:

- The constitution as the supreme document defining the rights of all citizens and roles of the Armed Forces.
- The elected civilian President as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and the supremacy of all elected officials at all levels.
- Civilian headship of ministry of defence and other strategic establishment.
- Civilian or legislative deliberations and decision-making over the military budget.
- The decisions regarding the goals and conduct of military operations must serve the political and strategic goals established by the civil authority.
- The right of civilian rule to review any action or decision taken by military judicial officers.

**Status of Military Subordination to Civil Rule in Nigeria**

Sixteen years into democracy, the Armed Forces have risen to their constitutional responsibilities, having confronted several challenges. The Transformation Agenda in permeating through the various branches of the Army. Today, the military is wearing a new outlook, civilizing fast, casting off the tango of earth scorched approach in dealing with civil matters or insurrection. The prevailing insecurity, wanton destruction of lives and property of innocent Nigerians, in addition to the unusual introduction of terrorism, have been confronted with honour and valour.

Consequently, since the return of democracy to Nigeria in 1999, the capability and capacity of the civil government to control and subordinate the military to civil rule has been progressively enhanced. This could be attributed to the increasing experience of the politicians in democratic priories and the strengthening of the democratic institutions due partly to the fairly long period of continuous and uninterrupted democratic government in Nigeria. Additionally, it is also a consequence of the military’s will to imbibe democratic values and its determination to subordinate itself to civil authorities, having seen that it fairs better under democracy than under military rule.

In a show of professionalism, the military has embarked on massive civic education. Its personnel, in addition to the retirements of politically tainted officers, military training was stepped up for the armed forces in addition to provision of military hardware and equipment necessary for training. Assistance was also sought from Western powers notably Britain and US in training the armed forces. The military is also facilitating the training of policy makers on military matters to ensure an effective oversight functions, as necessary. From the above reformsations, the degree to which professionalism is being pursued by the military to ensure subordination to democratic norms is commendable.
The Directorate of Army Public Relations in its Communiqué released at the end of its 2011 second quarterly study period from 16 to 18 June, notes that the army had sustained constructive measures to foster civil-military relations, especially outreach programmes and sanctions erring personnel. Also, the Communiqué stated that the military was encouraged to explore and develop the concept of legislative lobby to enhance funding for projects and programmes while the Nigerian army had been acknowledge as a major player in democracy, security and national development.

The notable military activities which are indicators that the military is becoming subordinate to civil authorities are numerous. There are various internal security operations going on in many parts of the country in support of civil rule. The military has also supported the enforcement of various state of emergency declared on some states at various times since 1999. Additionally, the military has yielded to legislative control of taking their budgets to National Assembly for approval as well as appearing before the lawmakers at different times to make clarifications on issues as demanded. The military has also subordinated its self to the judiciary by obeying court judgments even when they were against their interest. Finally, there has not been any incident of overt attempt by the military to over throw the civil government since its inauguration in 1999. From the foregoing, it would be deduced that the military is increasingly becoming subordinated to civil control in Nigeria after long sojourn in the political arena. However, this is being done amidst of extricating challenges inherent in any nascent and embryonic democracy such as Nigeria.

Conclusion

The tendency and capability of the armed forces in Nigeria to intervene in politics projects the military as a threat to democracy. The virulence of military threat to democracy in Nigeria is greatly enhanced by wide spread of bad governance and defective democratic processes. This actually was caused by the nature and character of the Nigerian state. The Nigerian state is neocolonial dependent capitalist state whose character has been deeply affected by the dynamics generated in the colonial experience. It shows that the Nigerian State, in terms of characters, is not just capitalist but also transnational in the sense that it helps reproduce crisis in process of accumulation of which it is an intricate part. This manifested itself in the character of the political ruling class after independence that failed to understand the military and had misconception about it.

Furthermore, coups and counter coups displayed the nature and character of the Nigerian State under the military. Effective civil democratic control of the military is one important way of preventing military reappearance in government and consolidating democracy in Nigeria. Consequently, the military must be subordinated and controlled to allow democracy flourish. There should be good governance and healthy civil-military relations as criteria for total military subordination in Nigeria. The 1999 Constitution has underlined the roles of the military which the executive and the legislative arms of government have control to a large extent through the constitution.

Although Bonaparte’s maxim that without an army, there is neither independence nor civil liberty may be true, it is also important that political leaders consistently remember Burke’s warning that an armed discipline body is dangerous to liberty. Military forces are maintained and employed when and wherever necessary in defence of national sovereignty but they should be subordinate to civil rule. Through the display of good governance and civil relations in accordance with the 1999 Constitution for Nigerian democracy to grow like those in Western Europe and the United States, military subordination to civil authority must prevail. This is already being witnessed in Nigerian nascent democracy and all and sundry, especially the ruling democratically elected political leaders in Nigeria must ensure that this should be sustained for democracy to endure in the country.

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