

**‘DEMILITARISM’ OR ‘ANTI-NEO-MILITARISM’:
IMPLICATION FOR AFRICA’S POLITICAL ECONOMY
IN THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND**

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‘DEMILITARISM’ OR ‘ANTI-NEO-MILITARISM’: IMPLICATION FOR AFRICA’S POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND.

ABSTRACT

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Domination is the word that best qualifies the political economy of the African State for much of this fading 20th century. Its effect manifests in the morbid poverty and underdevelopment of Africa and its people. Four agents (the slave trade, colonization, apartheid and militarism) accounted for this situation. Arguably, the first three are no more visibly present in the African socio-political scene. We may only talk of the vestiges of their influence. But militarism is not only definitely still in Africa, it will dysfunctionally follow her to the next millennium.

The paper sets out to show why demilitarization and anti-neo-militarist programmes remain good safeguards for the attainment of a stable political economy in Africa. Since the military presence in Africa’s political scene can be shown to be a form of dominance fostered on Africa internally and externally, over the majority by a few due to their vested interests. Militarism has stifled self-reliance, growth and democratic development in Africa. The paper therefore argues that a conscious project of “demilitarization” and/or “anti-neo-militarism” ought to be a minimum requirement to forestall the dysfunctional effects (especially when properly set against the backdrop of the crisis of legitimation, economic backwardness, and political underdevelopment and instability) it has brought on Africa.

The point ought to be emphasised that much of governance in Nigeria since 1960 of its independence had been under the control of the military. This has made the military institution the most visible and powerful political and economic class; with all the attendant consequences of the latter. Unfortunately, the military in Nigeria is itself a product of the colonial system. So this paper, irrespective of all its philosophical imputations, has its root in the political history of Nigeria, especially its pre-independence to post independence history.

INTRODUCTION

In the past, a few scholars (Janowitz, 1977) thought that military rule came about in Africa and a few other third-world states in the 60s and 70s due mainly to the inability of the civil political class to deliver. The grounds for this position include the view that the civil political class was corrupt, parochial, 'tribalistic' and inexperienced in the act of state management. The attendant effect of this remains the underdeveloped state of the African continent today. To some extent, this is true. Nevertheless, paradoxically, it is now well known that military rule is itself the real reason for the gross under development of the African State today. There really exist no negative traits in civil democratic class that the military over the years –of its rule – has not exhibited. One can proffer that economic poverty, political crises, human and environment abuses, conflicts and wars are highest in African countries that are most militarized. This experience brings to question and doubt Janowitz militaristic view thus: "the military is western organization structure and usage of western military technology, the nature of its training and organisation makes it in developing nations the most modern sector of society likely to bring about positive development and growth of the state. (Janowitz, 1977:13).

Here, one shall use the Nigerian situation as a classical case study. Nigeria is one of the most militarized states in the world in terms of military rule brought about by coups d'etat. Military rule is itself a form of political crisis. It invariably works against the socio-economic progress of any given people.

If Africans have problems in maintaining a sustainable democracy, it is not because of civilians. The military should be held responsible for this. Over the years civilians have treated the military as an institution devoid of politicians. Many see it not as an opposition party waiting to 'collect' power, but as a corrective institution of governance. This being the case, the military, even when it is in the Barracks acquires the status of political watchdogs waiting the most auspicious time to overthrow democratically elected government.

On handing over to civilians, the question every one should focus on thereafter should be on how to sustain 'that' democracy. The class who ought to address this problem should be those who receive the mantle of leadership from the army. It is unfortunate that when politicians acquire power in our 'new democracy', they turn their attention elsewhere. They want to 'hastily' please the electorate. They want to quickly share the spoils of office and the economy among themselves *before anything happens*; or in a simple language, before they are overthrown. This is wrong. Politicians ought to first sustain the 'logic of power'. First, by guaranteeing the existence of the democratic institutions upon which they float. Second, by checkmating other institutions that may threaten democratic institutions. And third – actually a corollary to the latter – by addressing the anomalies of military dictatorship. The point should be underscored that it is only for the purpose of clarity that these three steps have been stated. Otherwise, they are inseparable points of action.

Professor A. Osuntokun reminds us of a few things about democracy. The Professor says: Democracy is a "thing of the heart", not a 'matter of legislation alone", it ought to be 'part of 'one's inner feelings", it ought to conform "to universally ascribed norms and ways of doing things." Importantly, Prof. Osuntokun concludes that "Even in established democracies ETERNAL VIGILANCE must be the order of the day *so that* the democratic rights of the people are NOT SUBVERTED by the strong, wealthy and the powerful" (*The Guardian*, August 21, 1997).

A major reason why the African State has not had sustainable democracy is because she looks for the enemies of democracy elsewhere. She has also given to democracy what does not belong to it. The impression is generally held, especially by coupists, that corruption, violence, poor economy, failure to pay workers, fuel scarcity, etc. ought not to be witnessed under a democratic system. And where these occur, they serve as enough reasons to overthrow any political dispensation. Today, it is clear that these 'evils' worsen better under the military. The Nigerian

case demonstrates that the military are a worse manipulators of elections, plunderers of the economy, abusers of the rights – of freedom, speech, life, education, property, health, religion – of citizens. Therefore any attempt to safeguard democracy and prevent future occurrences of militarism will definitely portend well for the State's polity.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Elsewhere (Dukor, 1998:252-253), one has pointed out that the notion of the *military in power* (i.e. military rule) ought to be distinguished from other of its corollary. These are the *military institution* (a unit of coercion under the executive arm of government) and *militarism* (a form of political culture). Obviously, it is the existence of the military institution that makes military rule (i.e. military in power) possible through a coup d'état. A coup d'état is a sudden change of government by force. Those who already hold some governmental or military power bring it about. It differs from a revolution in that it is effected from above. A revolution involves the participation of the masses. Military rule which therefore comes about through a coup d'état is a rule by a cabal or junta. It is a rule by the entire personnel of the military institution. An essential feature of military rule is the cabal's engagement of non-military personnel in the military governance of the State. Those engaged are cronies who are arbitrarily appointed. And also, those through whom the military class and government seek to secure legitimization of power. It should therefore be underscored that military rule only refers to the type of government under the control of a cabal and its cohorts. The term may also loosely refer to the abnormal situation where the personnel of the army occupy political positions not traditionally meant for the army. This is usually the case where a military commander takes control over the governance of a conquered territory (colony) on behalf of his government.

Historically, as the Nigerian experience shows, military rule resulted from many factors. There are internal and external grounds for this. Internally, in the

1960's, military rule came about as a result of what looks like the messiahist mission and "puritanical outlook of the officer-corps. This makes them opposed to corruption and decadence" (Babawale, 1999:99). These grounds are arguable. The grounds are more of "reason", than the "real motive" for military take-over. The Nigeria case supports ethnic atavistic revenge and dominance, selfish ambition to enrich oneself and an outright desire to loot the State's treasury suggest why many officers have overthrown government in Nigeria.

military coups in Nigeria have been a manifestation of the crisis of hegemony between either the sections of the ruling class in 'agbada' (civilian dress) and the one in 'khaki' (army uniform) or even within the sector in uniform itself. They maintain that military coups in Nigeria form part of the struggle to establish a strong bourgeoisie state. And that the military often comes unto Nigeria politics when their opponents, be they military or civilian have been seen to be 'incapable of mediating the contradictions within their ranks, the contradiction between them and other social classes and finally that they were incapable of accumulation by foreign capital and internal dominant class' (Babawale, 1999:101; Folola and Ihonvbere, 1985:255).

This shows why the military ought to be brought to focus as part of the problem of democratization of the nascent African democratizing State.

The external reasons why military rule was attractive for a long period in African States' political history was because of the cold war between the Western and Eastern blocs, and due to apartheid in South Africa. Each of the major exponents of the ideological camps – capitalism Vs socialism and communism – found the military system – due to its autocratic structure and centralism – an easier system to influence and manipulate for its purpose. It would have been more difficult to manipulate an entire democratic political structure entailing a legislative assembly, judicial and executive arms of governance. Not even Britain could manipulate the 1st Republic government to subscribe the so-called Anglo-Nigeria defense pact. The "Mobutu's case" offers a better testimonial. "When Mobutu

took over the government in a bloodless coup in November 1965 his move was quietly applauded by Western nations hoping for an end to the turmoil that had gripped sub-Saharan Africa's second largest country since gaining independence from Belgium in 1960. Colonel Joseph – Desiré Mobutu, the 35-year-old army chief of staff, was a known quantity who had always served Western interests from behind the scenes; he assisted in removing from power nationalist Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, whose left-leaning proclivities aroused American distrust” (McCormick, 1994:223). So most military rulers invariably pitched camp with any of the two super powers that could stabilize their stay in power. Apart from this, the evil of military governance – especially as it affected the citizen of the African State - was smoke-screened by the Apartheid system. The West, East and other democratic nations saw in Racism a greater evil than the military rule. Today, except in areas of ethnic conflict and self-determination, the entire continent is visibly free from official racist policies and apartheid.

This has brought military rule and militarism to the fore. No body openly supports this system of governance without reservation. And wherever it exists it faces the crisis of legitimation. Even the military government sees itself as a transitional government hoping to “democratize” as soon as possible. Hence, in the late 80s through to the 90’s, the States of Africa were nothing but transitional states. Zartman (1994) for example has noted that

In much of the continent, elections have recently taken place, Namibia (1989), Nigeria (1993), Kenya (1992), Congo (1992, 1993), Gabon (1993), Senegal (1993), Cote d’Ivoire (1990), Niger (1993), Tunisia (1994), Morocco (1993), Madagascar (1992), 1993), Malawi (1994), Ethiopia (1992), Ghana, (1992) and/or are imminent under the current regime (Mozambique, Zaire, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda).

The above situation remains as it were in 1994. Nigeria’s transition (of 1993) quoted above only materialized in May 1999. In Nigeria, it has been a case of one cancelled or annulled transition followed by another. The cause of this is mainly

due to the fact that the ruling class – the military junta – wherever it exists in Africa finds it difficult to dispense with the *status quo* for a true democracy. However, wherever it has done so reluctantly, it waits in the fringes of the new democratic government in order to dismantle it as soon as realizable. Hence our position that militarism remains the greatest threat to democracy in Africa. The above attests to a point; that the influence of the military in Africa is quite enormous. The most evident of which is its socio-political culture of militarism. No African State is likely to be democratic unless its militaristic culture is reduced to the minimal. Indeed the degree to which the African States' military institution is de-politicized the more professional it becomes militarily. By the same parameter, the more the African States' political structure is demilitarized, the more it becomes democratic.

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MILITARY INFLUENCE AND THE SPHERE OF MILITARISM IN THE NIGERIAN POLITY

Statistics shows that Nigeria, since its independence from Britain in 1960, has been subject of military coups d'état in 1966 (twice), 1975, 1976, 1983, 1985 and a host of other “announced coups” between 1985 and 1999 resulting in the execution of perceived so-called coupist by the Babangida/Abacha dictatorship. Nevertheless, about seven coups d'état resulted in either outright or partial changes in the military leadership structure in Nigeria. Foltz (1993) provides a bird-eye view of the coup syndrome in Africa between 1960 and 1992 (see appendix 1).

The influence of military rule is diverse. It goes beyond the mere hold onto power by military rulers. After a long period of military rule, the African State socio-polity is bequeathed with the militarist culture. Militarism as a culture even has to do with a people's attitude towards (for/against) the military institution. It determines how the military considers others in the State. Like any other class that controls the State, the military, by virtue of its long stay in power, determines the law and other acceptable social values of the people. So the features of militarism include the control of the most vibrant of the people's economic sector. This

includes manufacturing, banking, politics government corporations and extra-ministerial institutions (Ogbinaka, 1998:255).

Using the Nigerian situation, one have argued elsewhere (Ogbinaka, 1998) that “The militarized process produces its own class” made up of serving and retired military brass and their cohorts. They control the State politically. They determine the fate of the economy; being the directors in the banks and other corporate sectors. The influence of militarism in Nigeria is so enormous that observers are quick to point out that the new democratic government is nothing but a reflection of the machinations of the militarists. This is evident in the executive and legislative arms of government. This is also the case in other non-governmental sectors.

The phenomenon of militarism permeates the entire psyche of the State where military rule has been predominant. Today in Nigeria, the military conceives itself and its will to be righteously what ought to prevail and determine the goal of the State. Evidently, the language of the Nigerian polity is that given by the military. The militarist on a daily basis consolidates itself as the most propertied and wealthy in Nigeria. Very few citizens can attain this status if they are not collaborators of the militarized community (Ogbinaka 1998:256).

It has been argued that there also exist the extra-military bases for militarism. This is apart from the orthodox dimension brought about by military coups d’etat in most African States. The extra-orthodox dimension to militarism is strongly advocated by Prof. C. S. Momoh. The author appreciates his views here. In most of African culture, the age group constituting the youth is brought up such that they are militaristic. It is the youth who constitute the bulk of the African traditional set-up militia. The manhood rites and even marriage rites in a few African communities is also said to account for militaristic attitude and culture that pervades the African set up today. There is also the moral dimension that causes militarism. The reaction of a people to rise against a prolonged corruption on the part of the leadership may be identified. In the face of the lack of decent and well-

defined approaches to curtail bad governance and corruption, citizens could resort to militaristic attitude as a way out. Again, a prolonged period of hardship from economic conditions can be greeted with militarist attitude from the sufferers. Poor people resort to bullets if bread cannot be guaranteed them. Obviously, these are conditions that are abundantly prevalent in most African States. In spite of the position we hold in this paper, the point should be recognised that militarism is not an essentially totally bad culture. It has a few positive angles to it. But such positive values are not enough for us to advocate its promotion in the nascent African democratizing State.

DYSFUNCTIONAL DIMENSION OF MILITARISM

Military rule and its attendant culture of militarism have bestowed nothing but backwardness on the African State. Its value has brought negative influence in terms of political culture and economic growth. As Robert I. Rotberg (1993:193) noted: “The cold war encouraged the United States to compromise its principles of liberty and freedom for anti-Communist objectives; now we can resume our unquestioned support for those – in non-government organizations as well as governments – who foster human rights and participation. Likewise, we can abjure formal relations with dictator, leaders of military juntas, and all those who rule by terror.” The essential point to underscore here is the fact that military rule shares the same characteristics with absolute monarchy of the Middle Ages. It is dictatorial. It is a rule of men, and not law. It has little respect for human rights. If it fosters good governance on a people, it is because of the personal benevolence of the military dictator and junta. Liberty and freedom of the individual in the light of the State and government cannot be properly articulated in the calculus of the militaristic State.

In the light of the above, it is apparent that there can be no real progress and development in a militaristic set-up. This is a given in the Nigerian situation where the military is itself a product of a reactionary system – colonialism. The new State

of Nigeria that emerged in 1960 inherited the “British Army” in Black skin. Of course the army under the colonial system regarded the ‘natives’, i.e. the Nigerian as enemies of the Colonial Authority, and itself to be part of the colonial government’s protective instrument. Its duties were to protect the colonial government from enemies. The immediate enemy of the colonial Lord was the colonized. This perception of the Nigerian native still exists. Under the Nigerian military system citizens are cannon foddered in order to protect the government from its internal enemies. So, more than anything, militarism has imposed a situation of alienation between “government” and “citizen” (“subject”). Most Nigerians born in the 60’s equate government with military rule. To this extent, government is feared, and looked at with suspicion.

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These dysfunctional effects are carried over to a new democratic transitional government. The effects are largely vestiges of militarism that cannot be wiped out automatically. It is mere wishful thinking to regard “elections” and “transition” to mean democracy. Democracy means more than these processes. Indeed, democracy only commences where these processes stop. And this buttresses why a new democratic State like Nigeria should put a “democratization” programme in place if its goal is to overcome militarism. This suggestion is not new. It is a dialectical off shoot of the processes of transition from one form of political ideology, value or culture into another. It rests on the logic that no new order is established that does have within it some traces of the old. And if the old influence is bad and dysfunctional, then it should be discarded. This is one’s recommendation for the influence of militarism on the new transitional democracies in Africa. This is the programme one has termed “anti-neo-militarism”. There are practical steps to achieve success in this direction. Unfortunately this is beyond the scope of this paper. One has argued elsewhere that:

Historically, the quest for the legitimate trade was juxtaposed with the anti-slave trade/slavery movement; the quest for independence, self-rule and self-determination was carried out *pari pasu* that of anti-

colonialization/colonialism. In South Africa, both anti-apartheid movement and the struggle for racial equality and democracy were jointly pursued. The same must logically and dialectically hold for any current quest for the democratization of the African militarized polity. This position offers a few advantages. The most important is that even in cases where the military hands over power in Africa, those entrusted with such power must not regard militarism to have ended. (Ogbinaka, 1998:263).

TRANSITIONAL GOVERNANCE, MILITARIST ORGANISED

DEMOCRACY AND THE CRISES OF LEGITIMATION

It is often misconceived that elections lead to 'democracy'. If this is the case, it can only be so-termed in a general sense of the word. Be that as it may, most of the so-called democratic States that emerged the last 15 years or there about in Africa can only be rightly qualified as transitional democratic government. These 'democracies' are often fostered on the States by militarists. This is usually done not out of the sense of the quest for the common good of the State and patriotism, but due to external and internal pressure. As Larry Garber and Eric Bjornlund (1992:1) observed:

Various explanations are offered for these historic developments (i.e. the initiation of transition programmes that should lead to the restoration of a democratic form of government). The collapse of the Soviet Union. The appalling state of the economy in many of the countries. The bitter toll – in terms of lost lives, refugees and starving populations – those internal conflicts have taken across the continent. The recognition of a relationship between political pluralism and economic growth. Given these circumstances, there has been renewed interest in reforming corrupt systems and finding less costly ways to manage political conflicts, with multiparty elections playing a critical role.

Also in the same vein, Marina Ottaway (1993:5) juxtaposed the act of electioneering with other essential aspects of democratization thus:

The problem is to determine what moving toward democracy means in a given specific situation. For some countries, it may mean allowing civic groups and political parties to function. For others, complex reforms may be needed before it makes sense to talk of elections. (Nigerians understood this when, in the aftermath of the 1960s Biafran crisis, they proceeded to redefine the federal system before attempting to move to democracy.) In still other cases, democratization may have to start with negotiations among armed movements on disbanding militias and forming a new army or police force.

Furthermore, Marina Ottaway added two essential points to drive home her point.

That

- (i) ...It may take years rather than months of preliminary democratization before meaningful elections can be held.
- (ii) Democratization must eventually involve competitive elections, but elections cannot be the beginning of the process – particularly if imposed from outside.

The point to underscore in this position attests to governmental legitimation being a function of given conditions being satisfied within the specific situations of any of such African State. The point will be lost if it is thought that electioneering, and/or transiting from military to civil rule (or from one-party to multiparty system) equates with democracy.

Indeed the notion of self-succession in the transition programme of a few African states has been identified to be in conformity with militarism called “The West-Coast Project”.

In governance and politics, the parties concerned usually seek ideological or theoretical justification of any particular piece of action. In reviewing these issues on the West African geo-political chessboard, both the disinterested and interested parties have ideological interest and commitment. The idea of military dictators transforming into civilian presidents have been code-named the operation – “The West Coast Project”.

And Dukor (1998:248-249) further goes on to state that the 'West Coast Project'

is like a project of neo-democracy in countries in West African sub-region. Ghana was to see the dawn of this African transition in 1992 when Lt. Jerry Rawlings transformed into a civilian presidential candidate to win Ghana's presidential election. ...In July 1996, Niger's military strongman and dictator similarly pulled off his uniform and contested the presidential election where he defeated four other candidates which included Mohammed Ousmane, whom he overthrew ...It was believed that this political agenda in the sub-region was expected to have blossomed in Sierra Leone, Gambia, Benin and so on.

The Nigeria case of 1993 seems to conform to the above agenda. Chief M. K. O. Abiola was denied the electoral victory of June 12. General Sani Abacha soon became a sole presidential candidate. Death denied Abacha this transition to become a Nigerian military leader turned civilian leader. Who knows whether the hand over to General Obasanjo – an ex military Head of State (1976-1979) – in Nigeria recently (May 1999) to become the Republic President is not in fulfillment of the "West Coast Project".

There exist much reason to consider the political transitional developments which African States are witnessing with cynical doubts. In the first place, most incumbent governments are encouraged to democratize because

Western assistance, both bilateral and through multilateral institutions, has become increasingly conditioned on criteria variously identified as "democratization" (the U.S. yardstick) and "governance" (the World Bank gauge). In practice, this has meant that economic assistance is more likely to be extended to countries where there is evidence of, or a trend towards, multiparty politics, respect for human rights, and increased attention to competency in management of the economy (Ottawa, 1993:1).

And as Ottawa further observes, African governments are therefore "beginning to comply, not necessarily because they believe in the virtues of democracy or because

of pressure from strong internal opposition parties but because they feel that the international community ...demands it". And of course, ...African leaders are now beginning to advise each other on how to hold "democratic" elections without being voted out of office. This trend could turn elections into a meaningless ritual" (Ottaway, 1993). Nothing is closer to the truth than the view that "Africa lacks most of the *background factors* that have sustained democracy elsewhere, and until recently at least the absence of these factors, combined with the absence of democratic systems" have validated why stable democratic structures could not stand in most of Africa" (Foltz 1993:2).

The above analysis suggests that the requisites for genuine democratization – in order to guarantee a much stable and better governance – ought to be identified and put in place if most of the transitional governments (e.g. Nigeria) are to survive.

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We give great recognition to a good number of such conditions. Some have been well argued by scholars of African politics. For example, Kolawole Owolabi (1999) argues that 'democracy can only be sustained in Africa if two basic principles guiding its normative conception – popular participation and accountability – are strictly adhered to". Indeed such conditions as power sharing among ethnic groups, holding of regular free and fair elections, establishment of genuine representative governance, promotion of human rights, "good governance for the common good, etc. are all well known in our political literature as prerequisite conditions for viable and sustainable democracy in Africa. Robert I. Rotberg (1993:193) has pointed out, in the same vein, that "Freed from cold war shackles, President Bill Clinton can concentrate on the spread of participatory government, the encouragement of progressive attitudes towards human rights. The satisfaction of basic human needs, the rebuilding of economies, family planning, environmental education and improvement and – hardly least – the prevention of civil conflicts. He concludes that: "The Clinton administration has an unparalleled opportunity to focus on broad, functional initiative in Africa. If our policy can rise above the usual day-to-day fire-

fighting, if we can begin to address ...the development of popular democratic political values... if we can ... help transform the evil empire of Apartheid into the benevolent economic powerhouse of the continent, then we can be certain that a new and beneficent era will have finally arrived for Africa...” (Rotberg, 1993:197).

So, in a way, apart from the listed and known conditions, assistance from the super powers like Russia, the U.S. ,Britain, could also enhance African democratization process. Yet, all these conditions jointly taken together share a common trait. They are a “positive measure” towards to sustenance of a stable political economy in Africa. We do not doubt the complimentary roles they could all play to push Africa’s democratic frontiers forward. Yet we feel comfortable to suggest that there is the need for a “negative measure” towards to sustenance of a stable political economy in Africa to be put in place. One of such is the programme against militarism. We term this as either *demilitarism programme* or *anti-neo-militarism* in Africa. This along with other essential conditions for democracy ought to be the adequate agenda and programme towards attaining democracy. The logic and dialectics of Africa socio-political development and history have suggested it. Elsewhere, we have stated it as follows:

Although practical effort is being put in place to democratize African States, it must be pointed out that the current attention turned on the military and other systems founded on authoritarianism and despotism is not surprising. To turn on the political history of Africa, we observe that after colonialism, the next greatest socio-political evil in the world was the racist apartheid system. ...Today both Apartheid and the cold war are history. This has made the focus on the military system intensive...

Now, in order to dispense with this system properly, attention must be turned to its superstructure – militarism.

This is one way any new democracy can secure stability for itself. It could also avoid the problem of legitimation the agents of neo-militarism could cause.

CONCLUSION

Even though *military institution*, *military rule* and *militarism* are interrelated concepts, they should be treated separately. Thus far, we have argued that the military institution – being part of the coercive instrument of administration of the executive arm of government – is essential. Unfortunately, it has produced two monstrous children. *Military rule* and its attendant culture of *militarism* in African States where it pervaded. Whereas military rule can be visibly put to an end, it would take a longer period to terminate militarism.

We have articulated that militarism is a situation whereby the military personnel and culture take predominance in our socio-polity. It also determines how the military class places itself over and above others in the State. They determine the law and acceptable social values. Militarism goes beyond military rule and the military institution. It pervades the socio-economic sector such as manufacturing, banking, politics, traditional institutions, government corporations and extra-ministerial institutions. The cohorts of militarism control all these.

Now, for any true and real democracy to be achieved, in Nigeria for example, a conscious and overt programme of anti-neo-militarism ought to be put in place. Some have called this the demilitarization of the African polity. Of course the main conduit for militarism is military rule. This is brought about by a coup d'état. The prevention of coup is therefore the first step and the most effective measure to prevent military rule.

The most prominent persons likely to support military rule remain those who are possible beneficiaries of the said system. If one were to individuate this, they would of course include a few persons of the military institution that have served in non-military political beats. Intellectuals, businessmen, contractors, politicians, traditional rulers, all belong to this group. Today, these elements still exist. It will be a wishful “fool-paradising” to think that militarism is no more.

For the present new transitional government in Nigeria, one should point out that beyond retiring officers and men from the army today, President Obasanjo ought

to know that protecting the new democratization process means attacking militarism. With the type of financial and other resources at their disposal, the militarists will find no difficulty creating their “new boys” in the Barracks, Cantonments and Garrisons.

Hence under the subheading “What is to be Done” (Ogbinaka, 1998:263-64), one recommended that: “The military ought to be reorganized such that the elements of political sovereignty it possesses, due to its personnel organizational structure must be stripped off it”. Furthermore, the following measures should be taken in order that democracy would be lasting “(i) the compulsory retirement of officers who have performed purely political duties while in the army, except if they are ready to face public enquiry and justify the massive wealth and property they now possess, (ii) regimentation of the army, and the empowering of the Navy and Air Force to meet the demands of modern Armies in the world, and (iii) to deliberately, as the state’s democratic policy, guide against a further extension of militarism the Nigerian public and corporate life.” If, for example, the office of the Chief of Staff of any of the arms of the forces threatens the office of the President or if alternatively, the latter lives at the mercy of the former, then something must be wrong with such an arrangement. We are therefore bold to state that beyond GOCs, we require no other higher military position in Nigeria, until the threatening vestiges of militarism wane.

It would be a grave political error if current Africa transitional governments ignore the threat of neo-militarism. The same attention given to neo-colonialism and neo-racism should be given to neo-militarism. Otherwise, there is a “coup d’etat” script waiting to be read amidst martial music. What the militarist vultures require to achieve their aim is the “appropriate time” to overthrow the so-called new democracies.

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In Nigeria, President Obasanjo has started well in this direction. But more effort is required. Many had benefited from the old dispensation. They wish it continued. They are now leaking their wounds. They are in the oil sector; they are ex-sole administrators in public institutions; chairmen and directors, contractors, traditional rulers, etc. As Africa democratizes it should know that native wisdom

demands that she recognize the enemy. And also, anticipates the intentions of the enemy.

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APPENDIX 1

AFRICAN COUPS D'ETAT: 1960 – 1992

1960	Zaire 1					
1961						
1962						
1963	Benin 1	Togo 1				
1964	Gabon					
1965	Algeria 1	Benin 2	Zaire 2			
1966	Burkina 1	Burundi 1	CAR 1	Ghana 1	Nigeria 1	Nigeria 2
1967	Benin 3	Sierra L. 1	Togo 2			
1968	Congo 1	Sierra L. 2				
1969	Benin 4	Libya	Mali 1	Somalia 1	Sudan 2	
1970						
1971	Sudan 3	Uganda 1				
1972	Benin 5	Ghana 2	Madagas 1			
1973						
1974	Burkina 2	Ethiopia	Niger	Rwanda		
1975	Chad 1	Comore 1	Madagas 2	Nigeria 3		
1976	Burundi 2	Nigeria 4	Seychell			
1977	Congo 2					
1978	Comore 2	Ghana 3	Mauritan 1			
1979	CAR 2	Congo 3	E. Guinée 1	Ghana 4	Mauritan 2	
1980	Burkina 3	Cape Verd	Guin. Biss	Liberia	Mauritan 3	Uganda 2
1981	CAR 3	Ghana 5				
1982	Burkina 4					
1983	Burkina 5	Nigeria 5				
1984	Guinée 2	Mauritan 4				
1985	Nigeria 6	Sudan 4	Uganda 3			
1986	Lesotho 1					
1987	Burkina 6					
1988						
1989	Sudan 5					
1990	Chad 2					
1991	Algeria 2	Lesotho 2	Mali 2	Somalia 2		
1992	Sierra L. 3					

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