THE NIGERIAN ARMY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE CIVIL WAR

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Abstract

Following the humble beginning of the Nigerian Army in the immediate post-colonial era, expectations were high with respect to the positive roles that the Military can play towards the economic and socio-political transformation of the country. To say that the Military had undertaken very active roles in the constructive transformation and economic development of the Nigerian nation is an understatement. There is no doubt that the Military is still bedevilled by some problems and challenges in their nationalistic tendencies and patriotism which always spur them to intervene and which some critics feel is a sign of weakness on the part of the country that is incapable of getting its democratic acts together. Using content analysis as our methodological approach, this paper attempts to evaluate the roles of the Nigerian Military towards Nigeria’s economic development since the civil war, by highlighting the roles of the various Military regimes that the nation had witnessed. This is in view of the fact that over the years, our leaders, particularly the Military had emphasized on the need for a re-orientation of the people for the pursuit of positive values which are aimed at producing a decent, humane, disciplined and self-reliant nation.

Keywords: Nigerian Army, economic development, civil war

Introduction

In 1960 when Nigeria attained political independence from the British Colonial Masters, there were high expectations that all would be well, even though tell tales of future problems were inherent. For instance, there was a faulty Federal Structure in which one of the Federating Units was bigger than the other two combined political party system based on ethnic and regional lines, whereby members lacked support outside their own constituencies. In addition, the ineptitude and the inability of the political elites to make the kind of political compromises and trade-offs that the inherited Whitehall Parliamentary system of government required ushered in the early demise or premature end of the First Republic in 1966. The nation thus experienced coup and counter-coup, culminating into three (3) years of a very bloody civil war, i.e. 1967 to 1970.

Consequently, to say that the Military has had a chequered history in Nigeria’s national economic transformation and development is to state an obvious fact, albeit both negative and positive roles. According to Ker (2004), “Nigeria was the butt of many jokes at international forah as a country incapable of getting its democratic acts together due to a kaleidoscope of coups and counter coups that punctuated the nation’s political landscape”. However, our aim in this write up is to highlight some of the positive roles that the Nigerian Army has played towards national economic development since the civil war.

Oil boom, the Nigerian Army and national economic development

Just as there cannot be lasting peace without development, so also development efforts cannot
succeed without a stable and peaceful environment (Boutrous-Boutrous Ghali). To observe that the Nigerian civil war appeared to be the tonic that the Nigerian leaders and elites in general required in order to appreciate the value of national unity and peaceful co-existence is to state the obvious. This was clearly defined in the nation’s Second National Development Plan (NDP) of 1970 – 1974 which was issued shortly after the bloody civil war of 1966 to 1970. In this Development Plan, the Nigerian policy makers defined the type of nation that Nigeria should be.

After hardship comes ease. This was the Nigerian case as the end of the civil war ushered in the Oil boom era. During this era, three (3) various Military regimes are very prominent. They include the Rtd. General Yakubu Gowon, Late General Muritala Ramat Mohammed and the Rtd. General Olusegun Obasanjo. The role(s) of each of this regime towards the economic development of the nation are discussed below.

The Yakubu Gowon regime and national economic development

Following the assassination of the late General Aguiyi Ironsi on 27th July, 1966, General Yakubu Gowon became the second Military Head of State on the 29th July 1966. In all, he spent nine (9) years. During his tenure in office, he made the following remarkable contributions to the economic development of the nation.

- Creation of twelve (12) states.
- Upward review of worker’s salary popularly known as the “Udoji Award”.
- Brought the Nigerian civil war to a halt, declaring a state of “No Victor”, “No Vanquished”.
- Programme of Reconciliation; Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (the 3 Rs). This reconciliation programme was indeed highly successful, hence an achievement of world standard and worthy legacy for emulation by nations around the world.
- Construction of Lagos-Ibadan Express way.
- National Youth Service Corpse Scheme (NYSC), a programme that has continued to remain the binding force of Nigeria’s unity till date.

The Murtala Mohammed’s regime and national economic development

The late General Muritala Ramat Mohammed who is usually referred to as the most pragmatic and action leader carried out a bloodless coup when it became apparent that general Gowon’s regime was hesitating in returning the country to a civilian regime. So on 29th July, 1975 he became the 3rd Military Head of state. Though his tenure was shortened in a bloody but failed coup on 13th February, 1976, his remarkable roles towards the economic development of the nation include:

- Creation of an additional seven (7) states, making Nigeria 19 states.
- Immediate and purposeful programme for transition to democratic rule. In this regard, transition had target dates of implementation and this was religiously followed after his assassination by his successor.
- Set up the 1975 Constitution Drafting Committee that produced the draft of the 1979 Constitution.
- Provision for the guarantee of equitable distribution of power among all the various groups that make up Nigeria, hence the enigmatic phrase, “Federal Character of Nigeria” (Maduagwu, 1999: 66–67).

It is useful to observe that this phrase “Federal Character” was entrenched in the 1979 Constitution, hence becoming the principle of political power distribution and representation in Nigeria till date. Ironically, the constitutional provision of the “Federal Character” has been misunderstood by policy makers, thus its wrong applications as it has turned out to be a controversial principle of ethnic management (Ukwu, 1987; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1987 and Maduagwu, 1999).

The Olusegun Obasanjo regime and national economic development

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Following the assassination of the late General Murtala Ramat Mohammed on 13th February, 1976, Rtd., General Olusegun Obasanjo became the 4th Military Head of state. The remarkable contributions under this regime could be recalled as follows:

- Continuation of the transition programme to democratic rule, culminating into the formation of the following political parties: Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN); Peoples Redemption Party (PRP); Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP); Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP) and National Party of Nigeria (NPN). He promptly handed over power to a civilian president led by Alhaji Shehu Aliyu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria on 1st October 1979.
- Operation Feed the Nation (OFN).
- Black Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC 77).
- Inauguration of Games Commission.

In the section that follows, we look at the role(s) of the Nigerian Army during the so-called Draconian Rule versus Maradonic Era.

**The Draconian rule versus the Maradonic era**

Under this era, the two major regimes that had left some landmarks on the Nigerian nation include the Buhari/Idiagbon regime popularly known as the “Draconian regime” and the General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida regime, popularly called the “Maradonic regime”.

**The Muhammadu Buhari regime**

It would be recalled that the civilian government led by Alhaji Aliyu Shehu Shagari of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was overthrown on 31st December 1983 when it became apparent that the Nigerian economic crisis had reached a crescendo whereby the civilian regime could no longer deny its very presence (Abdullahi, 2008). Consequently, the prevailing economic crisis, coupled with high level of corruption no doubt fuelled the desire of the Nigerian Army to intervene in a bloodless coup that ushered in the Rtd. General Muhammadu Buhari/ Olatunde Idiagbon’s regime. When they came on board, it was obvious that the country was suffering from serious problem of indiscipline; hence the core objective which this regime pursued was “War Against Indiscipline (WAI)”. As a result of this, the regime was labelled with different names as Nigerians did not like the very strict-cum-discipline and decisive measures of the regime, hence the popular slogan “Draconian Laws”. While this regime did not last, its positive impact within its short life-span left an indelible mark in sand of history as the economic and general image of the country was uplifted. Some of these positive impacts include:

- War Against Indiscipline (WAI). For the first time in the history of Nigeria, people learnt the language of due process and orderliness.
- Monthly Sanitation Exercise. The image of Nigeria's old capital city, i.e. “Lagos” as the dirtiest city in the world was not only embarrassing but very sad. Therefore, the realization that Nigerians are too dirty and that dirt is a harmful environmental practice which can create epidemics, erosion, etc, made the regime to strictly enforce this law.
- War Against Drug Traffickers. Indeed, the issue of drug trafficking during this regime was also a serious course for concern, hence death penalty was promulgated against drug traffickers. This went a long way in reducing the harmful and dangerous activities of drug barons.
- War Against Hoarding of Essential Commodities and Price Control. For the first time too, the poor masses had access to such basic necessities as soap, sugar, milk, etc.
- Change of Currency. This made the looters of the nation’s treasury to release or bring out their loots.
- Back to Land programme. This was aimed at revitalizing the agricultural sector.

Indeed, that Nigeria was at the cross-road before the intervention of this regime hence the need to take very strict and decisive measures to ameliorate the
economic decay cannot be overemphasized. As usual, an average Nigerian in their mentality prefer short-cut to success and due to the overwhelming complaints by the people, the Maradonic regime led by the Rtd. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida and late General Sani Abacha came on board following a bloodless coup-de-tat on 26th August 1985.

The Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida regime

It is useful to stress that the Rtd. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida toppled the Rtd. General Muhammadu Buhari as a result of what they termed “Draconian Rule” on 27th August, 1985. The self-styled Military President was received as a messiah and consequently took the country on a swift and smooth sail. Indeed, his style of governance was likened to the swift way in which the Brazilian footballer, Diego Maradona drifts the ball to score goal hence the accolade “Maradona”.

Indeed, to say that the Maradonic regime has contributed positively to the economic development of this country is merely stating the obvious. Among the regime’s numerous contributions include the following:

- National debate on IMF Loan, i.e. whether Nigeria should reject or accept the I.M.F loan whose negotiation had earlier commenced under the Alhaji Aliyu Shetu Shagari and Rtd. General Muhammadu Buhari’s regimes. This was his first style/ method of winning the confidence of the masses. Nigerians felt involved in taking decisions that affected their lives as all and sundry participated (laymen and intellectuals, market women, etc).
- Creation of additional eleven (11) states making Nigeria a 30 state nation.
- Better Life for Rural Women (BLP). For the first time, Nigerian women were not only seen, but heard, through recognition of the office of First Lady. We will shed more light on the BLP as we progress in this write up.
- Nigerian Agricultural and Land Development Authority (NALDA). Also, many River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA) were opened across some states of the federation.
- MAMSER: Mass Mobilization for Social Justice and Economic Recovery. (This has been transformed into the current National Orientation Agency).
- DFRRRI: Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure.
- NDE: National Directorate of Employment (still in operation till date).
- Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC). The positive roles of this commission in recent times cannot be overemphasized. (still in operation till date).
- Peoples Bank (Enabled market women and small time business owners to have access to micro credit loans without collateral security). It has been scrapped.
- Community Banks (still benefiting the society till date).
- Better salary regime for Civil Servants.
- In January 1986, regularization of Nigeria’s Observer Status at the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).
- Nigerian styled Structural Adjustment Programmes (Privatization and Commercialization). In this exercise, Civil Servants were able to acquire Shares in different companies. Also, the positive impact of privatization is best observed from the benefits of the deregulation of the telecommunication sector in Nigeria today.
- Conducted the very first most peaceful, free and fair election in the history of Nigeria, indicating that Nigerians can speak with one voice despite the heterogeneous nature of the society (annulled on June 12th 1993).
- Construction of several Trunk-A-Roads, especially the Zaria-Kaduna-Kano Dual Carriage ways.

On 26th August 1993, the Maradonic regime stepped aside as a result of the controversy surrounding the annulment of the most free and fair election in Nigeria on 12th June, 1993 and left an Interim National Government (ING) under Chief Ernest Shonekan.

The self-succession versus transition to democratic era

Two military regimes that have also made marks in the sand of time in the economic development of this
nation include those of the late General Sani Abacha and Rtd. General Abdul Salami Abubakar.

Sani Abacha regime, self-succession and the economy

The Interim National Government left behind by the Maradonic regime under Chief Ernest Shonekan was overthrown in what became popularly known as “Palace Coup” which ushered in the late General Sani Abacha/ Oladipo Diya’s regime. When this regime took over the mantle of leadership, hopes were indeed high that it will not last long as Ministers were immediately appointed from the political groups like Alhaji Babagana Kingibe, Alhaji Lateef Jakande, Chief Onagoruwa, Chief Ebenezer Babatope, etc. In addition, the regime undertook the following programmes:

- Creation of additional six (6) states making Nigeria a 36 states nation.
- Mass Transit Programme.
- Petroleum Special Trust Fund.
- New Ministry for Women Affairs.

For the first time to date, women in Nigeria had a ministry that specifically concerned women.

Most of these programmes went a long way in enhancing the economic development of the nation, especially the Petroleum Special Trust Fund. The regime however, came to an end on June 8th 1998 as a result of the sudden death of General Sani Abacha, who was bent on succeeding himself as a civilian president (Abdullahi, 2008).

Abdul Salami Abubakar regime

Following the Divine intervention that halted the late General Sani Abacha’s self-succession bid, General Abdul Salami Abubakar was sworn in as the new Military Head of State. Immediately he assumed duty, he set the boat sailing smoothly towards transition to democracy. Indeed, the role played by this regime towards stability and peaceful co-existence and economic development of the nation include:

- Release of political prisoners including Olusegun Obasanjo who came to power to as a civilian President on 29th May 1999.
- Quick and immediate hand over to a democratically elected civilian regime after creating a three (3) party system (Peoples Democratic Party [PDP]; All Peoples Party [APP] now All Nigerian Peoples Party [ANPP]; and Alliance for Democracy [AD]).
- Upward review of minimum wage for Federal Civil Servants.

Indeed, the Rtd. General Abdul Salami Abubakar regime was the shortest in the history of military rules in Nigeria and the only regime that has left a credible record of honest and transparent transition programme. Thus, the regime came as the long awaited messiah.

Arising from the above, there are some important programmes of the Military regimes that needs further clarifications with respect to their continuous positive impacts on the economy as a whole. The three (3) very important ones include the Better Life Programme (BLP)/FSP/FEAP; National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF).

The Better Life Programme

“Women are the foundation on which the superstructure of mankind is built. Every woman is a human resource, the subject and object of national development” (NAFCON, 1991). That also is the essence of the Better Life Programme when the crusade started in September, 1987. The wife of the Military President, late Hajia Maryam Babangida also like her spouse set out to be different from previous Nigerian First Ladies who never got involved in government activities. She had a mission in:

“Women who have the ears and eyes of those in the authority, who have to take initiative of drawing the attention of the government to the plight of the voiceless women of this nation”.

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Indeed, Maryam Babangida’s concern for the plight of the rural women as well as her determination to redress their precarious situation led to the formation of the Better Life Programme (BLP).

Thus, following the examples of the Better Life programmes for women under the secular set up in Europe during the French Revolution, Maryam Babangida came out bold to challenge men’s oligarchy and domination. Thus, the BLP had as its principal exponents, women who until then had been victims of many socio-cultural inhibitions in the society. The programme was aimed at:

- Stimulating women in the rural areas towards achieving a higher standard of living as well as gearing the generality of the populace into recognizing the precarious condition of women in Nigeria.
- To improve and enrich family life.
- To enlighten rural women on opportunities/facilities available to them at their local government areas.
- To raise the social consciousness of women about their rights, as well as their social, political and economic responsibilities.
- To educate women on simple hygiene, importance of child care and increase literacy (see Newswatch Magazine, 1991).

Thus, within the life span of the regime, the BLP recorded a lot of success story across the country. From its inception to 1991, the Better Life Programme recorded the following achievements:

- Cooperative societies increased from 413 at the inception of the programme to a record of 9,422 as at 1991.
- 1,435 Cottage Industries (the likes of Dawakin Tofa cottage industry in Kano state, Sokoto, Ogun, etc) came into existence.
- 1,785 Farms and Gardens were established.
- 135 Fish and Livestock Farms were also established.
- 495 Shops and Markets were established across the nation.
- 1,094 Multipurpose Women Centres also came into existence.
- The National Women Development Centre in Abuja was built for all kinds of activities, e.g. academic, social, and commercial, etc.
- BLP collaborated with the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to initiate programme aimed at identifying and developing rural exportable goods.
- Functional courses for environmental programme, awareness, adult literacy, vocational education, political enlightenment, social and health care programmes, etc were also undertaken under the BLP.

In addition to the above, the BLP also encouraged women to seek leadership positions. Thus through the BLP, the following positions were occupied by some Nigerian women:

- At least five (5) Female Federal Director-Generals.
- At least twenty-five (25) Female State Director-Generals.
- Two (2) Female Secretaries to the state governments, e.g. (Bauchi and Lagos).
- Two (2) Female Vice-Chancellors, e.g. (University of Benin and University of Abuja).

Thus on a general note, the Nigerian populace generally and women in particular became aware of the potentials of women. The Family Support Programme (FSP) and the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) under the late General Sani Abacha’s regime had similar objectives. FEAP was more or else a continuation of the BLP in a different name-tag. Currently, FSP/FEAP has been merged with the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB), denoting the relevance and essence of the programme to the nation’s economic development.

The National Directorate of Employment
The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established during the regime of Rtd Gen. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. The objective was to combat unemployment among Nigerian youths. The enabling Act CAP 250 of the Laws of the Federation (formerly Decree No.24 of 1989) empowers the Directorate to:

- Design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment;
- Articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour intensive potentials;
- Obtain and maintain a data bank on employment and vacancies in the country with a view to acting as a clearing house to link job seekers with vacancies in collaboration with other government agencies, etc (Ibrahim, 2008).

Among all poverty related programmes, the NDE has stood the test of time, and has been adjudged the most successful of the Rtd. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida’s poverty alleviation programmes. The NDE is characterized by a four (4) pronged approach:

- Vocational Acquisition
- Business Entrepreneurship Development;
- Rural Employment; and
- Training for Labour-Based Works

All these programmes were launched in January 1987 to pursue its vision of creating “Jobs-For-All” and its mission “to design and implement job creating programmes that will promote attitudinal change, employment generation, poverty reduction and wealth creation” (see NDE, 1987-2004). In its employment generation between 1987 and 2004, about 838,072 Nigerian Youths had benefitted as shown:

- Waste – To – Wealth: = 8,092.
- Resettlement Scheme: = 5,938.

Also, under its Small Scale Enterprise Scheme (SSE) that is targeted at the youths, the following breakdown reveals beneficiaries:

- Entrepreneurship Development Programme: = 1,004,013.
- Graduate Job Creation Scheme: = 2,627.

In addition, its rural employment promotion programme has benefitted about 49,072 people, with 11,335 youths benefitting from its Graduate Agricultural Self Employment programme, while 13,220 School Leavers benefitted from its Farming Scheme (Ibrahim, 2008).

In recent times, NDE has also embarked on collaboration programmes with other relevant organizations to advance loan to Nigerian people. For instance, it has collaborated with the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank (NACRDB) where about 649 trainees were granted micro-credit loan (The Job Creator, 2008). Also, every year, an average of 100,000 Youth Corps members undergo Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) in two (2) batches during the orientation programme for fresh Youth Corps members (NYSC). NDE has also trained a total of 8,689 graduates of tertiary institutions and retired private/ public sector workers under the Start – Your – Own – Business (SYOB) programme.

Indeed, NDE has done well in the empowerment of Nigerians generally and the youths in particular. Thus, the charismatic leadership and foresight of the Nigerian Army under the Rtd. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida towards the economic development of the nation has been brought to the fore.

The Petroleum Special Trust Fund
The history of the Petroleum Special Trust Fund (PTF) began with the establishment of the Decree No.25 of 1994 which was amended in Decree No.1 of 1995. On 21st March 1995, a Board of Trustees made up of distinguished Nigerians with proven integrity under the Chairmanship of the Rtd. General Muhammadu Buhari was inaugurated to manage the Fund. The Mandate of the Board include among others:

- “To utilize the gains from the increase in the price of petroleum products in completing abandoned projects and rehabilitation of decaying social infrastructure and services nationwide.
- To operate a slim but efficient bureaucratic structure.
- To be prudent and transparently accountable in managing the Funds”.

From the onset, the operational framework of the Fund was clear. Thus, to successfully implement its programmes, specialist consultants were hired to assist in the areas of planning, designing, supervision and project execution, while six (6) Zonal Offices were established for effective coverage of the expanse of Nigeria. Thus, Lagos, Enugu, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Jos and Benin City were selected as the headquarters of the six (6) Zonal Areas. The functions of the various zones among others was to identify and collect information on projects as well as inspect projects and monitor their progress based on the Consultants’ Report.

The Fund was set up as an autonomous domestic agency capable of intervening intensively in the implementation of social and infrastructural projects that can bring about the realization of its seven (7) points key sector objectives. These seven (7) objectives include:

- Roads, road transportation and Waterways.
- Education.
- Health.
- Food Supply.
- Water Supply.
- Security Services.
- Other (essential) Projects.

The short-term objective of the Fund was to resuscitate the nation’s ailing social services and infrastructures, while the long-term objective was to lay the foundation of revamping the economy for increased national productivity of goods and services with a view to improving the standard of living of all Nigerians.

Indeed, the Nigerian masses felt the impact of the Fund in all aspects of national endeavours, especially education and health sectors. For the first time, the masses could afford to purchase the PTF drugs which were highly subsidized. To say that it was a noble project is a mere understatement. This is in view of the fact that, with the calibre of personalities in charge, it could have been an avenue through which the nation could have experienced rapid and sustainable economic development in all ramifications. Unfortunately, as usual in Nigeria, nothing good ever lasts long. The current democratic regime upon its inception in 1999 scrapped the Fund, a folly and blatant mistake that many did not perceive as a result of the euphoria of freedom from the Military and the rebirth of democratic rule. To say that the nation will live to regret this terrible mistake is a mere understatement.

Conclusion

It is to be concluded that “no one is born a good citizen, and no nation is born a democracy, rather both are processes that continue to evolve over a life time.....” (Kofi Annan, 1998 cited in Briggs, 2007). In the same measure, “nations do not abandon or despair of goals because of circumstances in particular periods of their history. For nations are eternal, circumstances are temporary”( Babangida, 1987). Over the years, our leaders, especially the Military had emphasized on the need for a re-orientation of people for the pursuit of positive values which was aimed at producing a decent, humane, disciplined and self-reliant economy (Abdullahi, 2008). Indeed, their pronouncements and in most cases actions which they embark upon portrays a great desire for a “just and egalitarian society”. There is no doubt that all and sundry desire a meaningful and dynamic economic prosperity for Nigeria both now and in the future. Consequently, what occupy the uppermost part of the minds of all well meaning Nigerians is the development of our fatherland and also the transformation of the nation in a wholesome manner so that our country can be
optimally transformed to serve the interest of all. Therefore, as citizens of this great nation, we all owe it a duty to contribute our quota towards building a just society together, since human beings make their society either “just or unjust”.

**Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion above, the following recommendations are made

Firstly, it is useful to observe that in any African society and Nigeria in particular, the Military do not always intervene until they are either deliberately or inadvertently given the clarion call to intercede in protecting the country. This always manifests when it becomes obvious that things have fallen apart and the centre can no longer hold due to economic recklessness on the part of the civilian government. That the Nigerian Army had on several occasions been given the green light to save the economy from total economic collapse is not in doubt. Also not in doubt is the fact that the Nigerian Army has ruled this country for several years and despite their apparent shortcomings which are inherent in any type of government, their positive contributions to the economic development of the nation are overwhelming. Thus, as far as democratic rule is concerned in this country, it has remained a huge embarrassament, because it is underlined not only by sectional and regional interest, but also personal greed. If our nation must move ahead, the need for a parallel government whereby, the Military is given a chance to participate on 50-50 basis becomes an issue for serious national consideration. This is in view of the fact that the Military regime is characterized by charismatic leadership style that is decisive, action packed, but very few words. Thus, if they operate along the civilians in government, a lot of actions rather than words will help towards galvanizing Nigeria’s economic development that is sustainable.

Secondly, the Military has remained in the barracks for the last ten (10) years, while acting as the forerunners in the United Nations and West African Peace Keeping Force like in Liberia, Darfur, etc. By and large, we all know what is required of us to move the country forward. Individually, whether in uniform or bloody civilian, we could articulate quite well issues that are of vital importance to the growth and development of the country. It is sad to note that this element constitutes our greatest dilemma as a nation, i.e. our inability to develop a collective will on consensus measures and implement them. It is our opinion that the Military have been seriously underutilized in the last ten (10) years. It is our humble view that if they are given the opportunity to participate in running the affairs of our national government, the current stagnation inherent in our national policy implementation with its attendant beauraucratic bottlenecks will become a thing of the past. The need to make sacrifices for better collective future so as to move from our current brink of the precipice cannot be over emphasized. The time to ignore as well as put aside our gross greed and intolerable selfishness is long over due. Indeed, our politics is very critical, but the economics cannot make significant progress when the politics that drives it is wrong, complicated and self-serving.

Thirdly, the Military are first and foremost human beings and by implication they have the talents and potentials to contribute to the over all economic development of the society which are obvious as highlighted above. Therefore, they should not only been seen as relevant during the period of chaos, crisis and war, but their potentials should also be judiciously harnessed during the time of peace, thus restricting their activities within the confines of the barracks tantamount to a vast wastage of human resources of this nation. They should therefore be actively involved in all facets of our national endeavours.

Fourthly, the current democratic government (1999 to 2007) has made a huge mistake in scrapping the Petroleum Special Trust Fund (PTF). In the light of this, we suggest that the PTF should be resuscitated to continue its activities from where it stopped or start afresh by making its activities to tally with that of the current government’s seven (7) points economic reform agenda. Also, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) should be strengthened financially to enable more Nigerians benefit from its noble programmes. These two (2) programmes no doubt have made tremendous impact on the growth and economic development of this nation. These are all the brain works of the Military regimes and therefore the Military cannot just be sidelined from the nation’s governance.

On a final note, if the Military must remain behind the scene at all cost as desired by the civilians, the
political elites should be seen as doing the right thing as obtained in civilized democratic societies like that of USA and Britain. This is because, what obtains as far as our nascent democracy is concerned today is another clarion call for the Military to intervene to save the nation from total economic collapse. Whether we like it or not, Nigeria is not yet ready for full democratic system of government, hence we strongly advocate for a parallel government between the Military and the Civilian as experimented briefly during the Rtd. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida’s regime.

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