

DINING WITH THE BARREL: INTERROGATING THE ROLES OF THE NIGERIAN MILITARY IN THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS.

Joseph Okwesili Nkwede¹; Nwankwo Oliver Uchenna²; & Nwodom Destiny Uchenna

Department of Political Science
Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

³ **Nwodom Destiny Uchenna**
Department of Political Science
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

ABSTRACT

The need to ensure adequately secured environment before, during and after the electoral processes is an important component in the organization of free, fair, transparent and credible election. This, notwithstanding election as a civil matter falls behind the constitutional role of the military since their indelible roles are pigeonholed in the maintenance of peace and stability. Consequent upon the above, there are some insinuations expressed in some quarters that the military should confine itself with the constitutionally assigned roles instead of meddling into politics. This study sets out to interrogate the circumstances that led to the involvement of military in the conduct of 2019 elections in the country with a view to determining its implication in the Nigerian democratization process. To realize the set objective, this study adapts qualitative research method and data for the study were collected mainly from documents and analyzed through logical induction, using the theoretical prism of the structural functionalism. It argued that deployment of the military to the polling units and strategic locations all over the federation during the 2019 general elections created fear and insecurity among the electorates and opposition political parties. The study recommends among other things; that the constitutional base for not inviting the military should be maintained to avoid over stretching the military to the elasticity point and possible politicization of the reputation of the military; secondly, the electorates should be allowed to freely choose their most preferred candidates without creating a false political environment by the government in power.

Keywords: Military, General elections, Civil society, Electorates, Democratization.

Introduction

Elections are the major yardstick of every democratic society because it is like only condition for democratic governance, political stability and national development Adenji and Onyia (2019). One of the major national debates over the years is the roles of the military in electoral process. Olaniyan and Amao (2015) aver that between 2007-2014, one issue which has drawn criticism and public fury from Nigerians is the deployment of the military during elections in the country.

Constitutional bases for military involvement in the civil matter can be rightly captured in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which provides for the military in its section 217 makes it clear that the duties of the military, vis-à-vis the Army, Navy and Air-Force will be to defend Nigeria's territorial integrity from external aggression and securing its borders from isolation on land, sea or air, suppressing insurrection, and acting in aid to civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President subject to such condition as may be prescribed by an Act of National Assembly. The military is also to perform other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.

Although, the main function of the military is to protect the nation against external aggression or threats, occasionally, the military may be required to assist the civil authorities deal with internal violence and suppress internal tension. For instance, the military may be required to assist the police in restoring law and order in any part of the country. Section 217(c) 1999 Constitution forms the basis of involvement of the military in the internal security operations in Nigeria.

Section 8(1) of the Armed Forces Acts provides that the President shall determine the operational use of the Armed Forces. Olaniyan and Amao (2015) noted that the use of the military during electoral process in Nigeria has been a recurrent event, most notable among these elections, were the governorship elections in Edo and Ondo 2012, Anambra 2013, Ekiti and Osun governorship election in 2014. Rather than relying on the police to provide security needed during the gubernatorial elections in these elections mentioned above, the Federal Government deployed large detachment of military men to ensure peaceful conduct of the elections.

Hounkpe and Oneye (2010) posit that election security constitutes a major component of the electoral process but in respect to emerging democracies, it has been hampered by various factors, which include: faulty framework, poor technical management of elections, poor management of competition and opposition, and the role of the security forces. This situation made Igbuzor (2010) to aver that because of the greed and desperation for

power, the political actors in Nigeria have decided to re-engage soldiers outside their constitutional duties without a damn about the potential consequences.

As captured by Olokor (2019), even the nation's electoral umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) admitted that soldiers were used to intimidate and unlawfully arrest its staff during the 2019 gubernatorial election in Rivers state through its National Commissioner and Chairman of information and voter Education committee, Festus Okoye who disclosed thus: "collation centres were invaded by some soldiers and armed gang resulting in the intimidation and unlawful arrest of election officials, thereby disrupting the collation process". The act was not only condemned by the electoral umpire and also by all and sundry for attempting to subvert the will of the masses. The act was also acknowledged by the Army Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Burati in reaction to the allegation said that the military kept to their promise of ensuring that her men were above board during the election (Chukwudi, 2019).

However, many scholars and human rights activists argued that election is a civil matter that civil authority like police should play a role and not the military (Chukwudi, 2019).

Oyeyipo and Ohiku (2019) acknowledged the parliamentary dismay over the use of the military in the 2019 general elections when they captured the motion moved by the Hon. Patrick Asadu a house representative member representing Nsukka/Igbo-Eze South Federal Constituency of Enugu State. In the motion, he expressed disappointment over involvement of the military in the 2019 general election and called for probe of the militarization by the House. He argued that the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Burati directed commanders and soldiers on how to operate during the election without recourse to the relevant laws or the National Assembly and as an evidence referred to a Thisday Newspaper article of January 20, 2019, where the Chief of Staff was quoted to have said that Nigeria Army cannot disobey the order given by the President, "when President Muhammadu Buhari gave the shoot-to-kill ballot snatchers order" (Oyeyipo and Ohuku, 2019).

In similar sense, Oyeyipo and Ohuku (2019) noted that one of the election observers integrity friends for Truth and Peace Initiative (TIFPI) in their preliminary reports on the elections observed that there was alleged involvement and interference by the soldiers and other security agencies in elections in Rivers, Imo, Zamfara, Akwa-Ibom, Edo, Kogi, Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Benue and Ogun.

Against this background, this study has its core objective of unearthing the circumstances that led to the use of military in the electoral processes, and

its potential implication in the democratic consolidation with a view to finding appropriate strategy of conducting free, fair and credible future elections in Nigeria. Largely on this, the paper is structured into segments. The first section deals with the general introduction, while the second part conceptualizes the key concepts of the study. The third phase captures the theoretical anchorage and methodology. The fourth step dwells on the findings whereas the fifth segment consist of the conclusion and recommendations of the study,

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The Military

The military simply means the tripartite division of the profession of the arms, viz the Army, the Naval and the Air Force. Together, these institutions constitute the national security of any nation. They are expected to work in complementary unison in discharge of their duties toward ensuring protection of the country's integrity and sovereignty (Olukosi, 2015). Departmentalization of the military into three arms is a matter of technical specialization. In effect, the Army specializes in land soldiering, the Navy specializes in sea soldiering and the Air Force specializes in air soldiering. In spite of this technical specialization, the various arms of the military usually work in operational synergy in their major operation (Ficher, 2002). The increasing role taken by the military in the civil matter or during the electoral processes have been criticized by scholars who are of the opinion that the military are not trained to manage civil matters like other civil authority such as police. However, it must be said that the involvement of the military in the electoral processes has had its advantages, notwithstanding the negativity associated with it.

Internally, it is the job of the military to ensure that individuals and corporate bodies within the state remain obedient the state by being on the right side of the law, rules and regulations. Members of the military are recruited and adequately trained for them to cultivate and internalize a particular culture known as military culture and patriotic spirit (Udeuhele, 2019: 68). The military is characterized by the hierarchical command structure, unity of command, professional discipline, clear division of responsibilities and efficient communication system, whereas their functions are generally categorized into two vis-à-vis; the primary or traditional roles, and the secondary roles or duties. Those roles that fall within the traditional functions are; defence of the territorial integrity , defence against external order and defence and promotion of world peace and security, while those roles that fall within the category of secondary duties are but not limited to the following; engineering construction works, revenue generation activities, scientific and medical research, natural disaster rescue mission or operations

and provision of training to the civil population and/or paramilitary agencies. From the above duties or roles of the military, none falls within the involvement of the military in the electoral activities of any democratic society.

Uyangoda (2005) argues that the use of military to solve political and civil problem has been criticized by international and local observers over its roles in the 2019 general elections, especially in apparent unprofessional conduct in the gubernatorial election. The European Union (EU), United Kingdom and the Coalition of United Political Parties (CUPP) have all condemned its unbecoming conduct in the electoral process, which climaxed the conceptualization.

Security Agencies

Security is safety from harm, the degree of resistance to, or protection from harm. It applies to any vulnerable and valuable asset such as person, dwelling community, nation or organization. The roles of security agencies in the electoral processes cannot be over emphasized in achieving free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria. In view of this, Osezua (2018) argues that the successes or failure of any election depends largely on the stakeholders performing their duties (INEC), political parties, Election observers, media and security agencies performing their constitutional duties. He laments that “the security agencies can make a difference in the outcome of elections. It is therefore pertinent that security officers display the high test level of integrity, neutrality, professionalism and sense of duty. The protection of human life, electoral materials, voters and officials and the preservation of lawful and orderly electoral process necessary for free, credible and fair elections.

Accordingly, to Lai, (2013) security is indispensable to conduct free, fair and credible election. From the provision of the basic security for voters at political party rallies and campaigns to ensuring that result forms are protected, the whole electoral process is circumscribed by security considerations. Thus, without adequate security, there cannot be free, fair and credible elections.

Some of the roles of security in election are as follows: providing security for candidates during rallies, congress, conventions, electioneering campaigns and elections; safeguarding the lives and properties of citizens during the electoral process; ensuring and preserving a free, fair, safe and lawful atmosphere for campaigning by all parties and candidates without discrimination; maintaining peaceful conditions, law and order around the polling units and collation centres; providing security for electoral material at

voting centre's during transportation etc. In summary, the role of security is to ensure safety of electorate, electoral materials and electoral officers before, during and after elections.

Overview of Election in Nigeria

Election is a process and procedure through which the eligible citizens of a particular country choose their political representative whom they believed and expected to solve their social problem on their behalf at the expiration of the tenure of office or when the seat is deemed to be vacant as may be created by the constitution, resignation, impeachment or death.

Nwolise (2007) defines election as a process of selecting the officers or representatives who will hold positions of authority within it. Anifowose (2003), conceptualized election as the process of elite selection by the masses in any given political system. The most important function of any credible elections is to provide the people opportunity to select their leaders of local, states and national governments. This chance of participating in choosing the leaders at all levels as golden opportunity for public to make choices about the policies, programmes and future direction of their government.

After Nigerian independent in 1960, the hope and aspiration of Nigeria to attain nationhood began to fade, evident emanating from the way elections was conducted after the departure of the colonial British. The two democratic regimes of the first and second republics were dents on democracy. Starting from the General Election of 1964/Western Election of 1965 after the 1964 general election, there was upheaval from the election conducted in the West as a result of some manipulations and this necessitated for a fresh election in 1965. This was summarized by Dudley (1981), Anifowose (1982); Post and Vickers (1973) thus: Akintola and his party (NNDP), with the federal government's support, carried out a staggering horrific rigging machinery, thuggering, obstruction and punitive control to give NNDP overwhelming victory. There was disappointment among AG members as their attempt to vote Akintola and his party out of office failed, they resorted to widespread violence in many parts of the region and the country, which resulted to military takeover of government in January 15, 1966 and this ended the first Republic in Nigeria.

The second republic brought with it a constitution (1979 Constitution) which provided for various political parties. The (1979) general election was the second testing ground for democracy after thirteen-years of military rule which lasted from 1966-1979. Five political parties contested which include; Nigeria People Party (NPP), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), People's Redemption Party (PRP), Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP) and lastly, National Party of Nigeria (NPN) which eventually produced the first

executive president in Alhaji Shehu Shagari. The military played dubious role in determining the election outcome and they subverted and enthroned an unpopular candidate through election rigging.

In 1983, another election was conducted and the incumbent government won using tremendous rigging and violence as witnessed in the previous elections, to rationalize the military takeover of 31st December, 1983 and as a result, brought the second republic to a terminus. In 1993, the military government headed by Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida introduced two political parties; Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republic Convention (NRC). The election for those two political parties was seen by Nigeria's as the only hope to eradicate military administration in Nigeria's body politics and went to the poll massively in June 12, 1993 to support democratic emergence.

Unfortunately, when the military president (IBB) could not achieve his goal at the poll, he publicly manipulated by annulling the election results considered as the most free and fair in the history of Nigeria's election. The annulment of this election's result threatened the political stability and unity of Nigeria. Amidst the tension that gripped the country resulting from political turmoil and emanated from the assumed winner of the election who threatened mutiny if not given the mandate in the election he won with great margin. General Ibrahim Babangida stepped aside and handed over the government to an interim government led by Chief Ernest Shonuken.

The 1999 general election came up with three political parties: People Democratic Party (PDP), All Peoples Party (APP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD). After the election, the AD and APP later entered into an alliance for the presidential election which enabled them present one candidate. It must be state that the 1999 general election had so many things in common with the 1979 election including the circumstance under which they were conducted but more especially the lack of bitterness, boycotts, thuggery and other malpractices usually associated with electoral process in the country. The lackadaisical attitude shown towards the election by Nigerians gave the military junta the force hand to manipulate the election and handed power to the person the hierarchy wanted.

The 2003 general election brought fresh hope to Nigerians because the previous election handed over power from military regime to a civilian regime, as a corollary of Nigerians desperation for democratic consolidation. Aina (2006) states that the elections were adjudged as great flawed by international observers as it presented in the history of Nigeria politics the first peaceful transition in Nigeria.

However, the election was not without rigging judging from the reports gathered. Human rights watch which mentioned that the election was characterized by rigging, violence and intimidation were so pervasive and on such naked display that they made a mockery of the electoral process. Momoh (2005), described the election as democracy crippled with rigging elections and other forms of manipulations, dubbed it “presidential authoritarianism”. In his words, it is questionable whether what we had in 1999, and 2003 could be rightly qualified as election and not selection or better still allocation of positions. INEC, and the security agencies share out votes to contestants. Party primaries were mere impositions of godfather’s candidates and they were then allocated votes by INEC (Momoh, 2005).

The 2007 general elections marked the first when a third consecutive presidential election took place and the first time when one leader succeeded another in the history of Nigerian democracy. Though, the 2007 was not far from previous elections conducted in Nigeria. This time around, the election rigging went scientific as the electoral bodies make electronic voting their benchmark. In spite of the promise from INEC chairman that the election will be free and fair. Both local and international observers categorized it as rigged one. Iyayi (2007), notes that the 2007 general elections surpassed the 1999 and 2003 general elections in the level of fraud, violence and rigging.

A presidential election was held in Nigeria on 9 April, 2011. The election was originally scheduled to be held on 2 April, but was later postponed to April. A presidential election was held in Nigeria on 16 April 2011. The election follows controversy as to whether a Muslim or Christian should be allowed to become president given the tradition of rotating the top office between the religion following the death of Umaru Yar’Adua who was a Muslim and Goodluck Jonathan a Christian, assuming the interim presidency following the election widespread of violence that took place in the northern parts of the country. Goodluck Jonathan was declared the winner. The election was reported by international and local observers as run smoothly with relatively little violence or voter fraud in contrast to previous elections, in particular the widely disputed 2007 elections.

The 2015 general elections was originally scheduled to hold on 14 February, but was later postponed to March 28 (Presidential, Senatorial and House of Representative) respectively and 11 April 2015 (Governorship and State House of Assembly). General Muhammadu Buhari of opposition party was declared the winner of the election. It was the first time in the history of Nigeria that the incumbent president lost an elections president Goodluck Jonathan of the People’s Democratic Party lost his seat to Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressive Congress.

The 2019 General Elections, Presidential and National Assembly elections were scheduled for 16 February 2019, while State Governorship and State House of Assembly elections were postponed by one week after INEC cited logistic challenges (Premium Time, 23 Feb. 2019). However, President Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected for another four year term. The primary contender was president Muhammadu Buhari of APC and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the former vice president of PDP.

Unarguably, in all the brief history of the general elections in Nigeria since her independence, they have been characterized by electoral fraud, vote buying, rigging and excessive use of the military in the conduct of civil matter against the constitutional provision.

Theoretical Postulations

This study is anchored on structural functionalism. The structural functional theory (structural functionalism) is associated with Herbert Spencer (1903). The major assumption of structural functionalism approach society through a macro-level orientation; it looks at both social structure and social functions. According to Herbert Spencer (1903) he described state as “organs” that work toward proper functioning of the “body” as a whole. In the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes “the effort to input, as rigorously as possible to each feature, custom or practice, its effects on functioning of a supposedly stable and cohesive system. This view is often more than not required to as how different organs or institutions perform their roles to ensure the stability of a process and towards the promotion of an ideal society. Scholars such as Talcott parsons (1952), Emile Durkheim, Rousseau and Auguste Comte gave credence to Spencer’s postulation of structural-functionalism.

The centrality of this theory is a continuation of the Durkheimian task of explaining the apparent stability and internal cohesion need by societies to endure over time. Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore (1945) gave an argument for social stratification based on the idea of functional necessity. Robert K. Merton made important refinements to functionalist thought. He fundamentally agreed with Parsons’ theory but acknowledged that parsons’ theory could be questioned believing that it was over generalized. He identified three main limitations: functional unity, universal functionalism and indispensability. He also developed the concept of deviance and made the distinction between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions referred to the recognized and intended consequences of any social pattern while latent functions referred to unrecognized and unintended consequences of any social pattern. Merton criticized functional unity, saying that not all parts of modern complex society work for the functional unity of the society. Consequently, there is a social dysfunction referred to as any social pattern that may disrupt the operation of society.

Essentially, the propositions of this structural functional theory as theoretical framework shall be instrumental in guiding this study in analyzing and understanding the roles played by the military in the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. Knowing the constitutional roles of the military is to defend the territorial integrity from external aggression and securing its borders from isolation on land, sea and air and suppressing insurrection.

Leveraging on this, persons argues that if various organs perform their constitutional functions, there will be harmony and unity of purpose. As noted also by Comte, role conflict among different organs or body in a plural society will promote anarchy, bad governance, infiltration, abuse of human rights and inefficiency.

Methodology

Documentary design was employed in this study. Data were elicited from documentary instrument especially from secondary sources through the review of relevant text, journals, official publications, newspapers, direct observation, media commentaries and scholarly writings on the role of the military in the electoral process more importantly in the 2019 general election. The study employed content analytical method wherein data collected through secondary sources were analyzed. This approach was necessary because it helps in gaining insight from the analysis of the roles of the military in the 2019 general election. In as much as the content analytical approach was relied up to evaluate the data generated in the course of this study. For clarity and insight, content analysis is a research technique, adopted primarily for objectivity, systematization and qualitative analysis and interpretation of data.

The Military and the 2019 General Elections

One of the major effects of the military involvement in the 2019 general elections was the wide spread apathy on the side of the Nigerian voters during the 2019 general election as was captured by Ohukosi (2019), the involvement of the military in the electoral process contributed to low voter turnout. Because of the precedent of aggression in Nigerian soldiers, most electorates declined interest to the extent that they did everything possible to avoid them. The evident are much clear as can be seen, out of the 72 million people that registered for the 2019 general elections; it is only the 35.6% that voted for the presidential election. The turnout is lower compared with the 44% that was recorded in 2015. Additionally, militarizing elections in Nigeria led to loss of life. In the 2019 general elections, soldiers allegedly killed people in River state (Okechukwu, Chukwuka and Chikwado, 2019). When soldiers are given too much room to participate in politics, there is a significant risk of untold consequences. The extent of military involvement in the electoral violence in 2019 general elections is showcased in table 1 below.

Table 1: Incidence of military involvement and electoral violence in 2019 General Elections in Nigeria

S/N	Location	No of Victim/Incident	Source
1.	Presidential/National Assembly Election in Rivers State	35 Killed, across various polling stations	Civil Liberty Organization (CLO)
2.	Abonema, Rivers State	2 Killed, during the gubernatorial election	Civil Society Organization (CSO)
3.	INEC office in Bori, Rivers State	2 soldiers beat the party agents, during the gubernatorial election	Ebuzor, (2019)
4.	Umodo/Umunwala area of Owerri	Thugs assisted by soldiers killed an opposition party agent during the gubernatorial election	Ebuzor, (2019)
5.	Ajaokuta, Ijumu, Ogun State	Thugs assisted by soldiers invaded polling units, catered away the result sheets during the presidential/national assembly election	Ebuzor, (2019)
6.	INEC office at Aba, Port Harcourt road	Soldier allegedly invaded the office, during the gubernatorial election	Ebonugwo and Kumolu (2019)
7.	Mile 2 area of Lagos	A centre for democracy and development observer was arrested by soldiers, during the gubernatorial election	Centre for Democracy and Development
8.	Katsina State	20 people were abducted including INEC staff by unknown thugs during the presidential election	Centre for Democracy and Development
9.	Shendan L. G. A. of Plateau State, polling unit 15, ward 04	Election observers were abducted by political thugs during the presidential election	Centre for Democracy and Development
10.	Afaha, polling unit 2, Nsit ward, Akwa-Ibom State	Centre for Democracy and Development observer abducted by thugs and demanded for a ransom, during the gubernatorial election	Centre for Democracy and Development

Sources: Okechukwu, Chukwuka and Chikwado, 2019.

Table 1 above validates the inadequacies and weaknesses of the military in handling civil matters, most especially the electoral processes in Nigeria. It further suggests that the presence of heavy military apparatus during elections does not transcend to free, fair and credible elections. Therefore, civil matters such as elections should be handled by civil authorities such as police and the Civil Defence Corps. The activities of the military are an eloquent testimony of its meddlesomeness in Nigerian body politics.

Discussion on Findings/Analysis

The 2019 general elections in Nigeria have once more raised the issue of the roles the military should play during such event in the country. During the last general elections and the few others that took place in the past, the soldiers were called out from barracks spread in parts of the country. They came to the streets in their battle fatigue; they mounted roadblocks, fully armed. Some of the soldiers reportedly went against the rules, came close to the polling areas. They reportedly beat up people. Some shoot into the air, while others hit human targets, in the process, several lives were lost in some states, in Rivers State to be precise, many indeed died, and the military were blamed for an unprofessional conducts.

Some of the dastardly actions of the soldiers during the election were shown on the national television networks, but, in some cases, the soldiers swooped on cameraman from different media houses, seized their gadgets and even beat up the owners. The military indeed created a lot of fear among Nigerians during the elections as if the nation was in a war situation.

Also, a lot of Nigerians accused the presidency of deliberately drafted the military to aid the government to rig the election in favour of the President Buhari and the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC). While the government and the INEC believe that the presence of the military was necessary to check possible terror attacks or situation that might pose as threat to peace, across section of Nigerians maintained that the police and the Civil Defence are enough for electoral duties. They believed that elections are civil matter and should not involve the military.

The question here is “Do military personnel have roles to play during elections? This is the question in the mind of several Nigerians as many continue to relive their experiences in the hands of the military during the general elections.

Military should not have Role to Play during Elections. According to Chief Mbaukwu Ukwechi, the secretary, Democratic Alternative (DA), Owerri North, Imo State, the military has no role to play during elections at all. They are meant to defend the nation's territorial integrity and regimented in the barracks. Ethelbert Amaechina Igwe, Chairman, Young Progressive Party (YPP) Onuimo L.G.A. Imo State; said: "in the just concluded elections the military disappointed Nigerians by indulging in professional misconduct" we have enough police personnel to handle our elections and the military should not be there. He further maintained that the military has no business being part of electoral process.

Military should stay away from Nigeria Elections. It could be this that made Omoigberale (2019) to state thus: "they were called out in the just concluded elections to assist the INEC in installing their master and law makers that will work with him and that they succeeded in achieving." But in the opinion of the executive Chairman of the Centre for Anti-corruption and Open Leadership (CACOL), stated "it is not the Nigerian elections that elicited militarization. Given the circumstances the elections were conducted, the threats across the country, all hands had to be on deck to ensure that the elections were peaceful.

Largely, if INEC and political parties had done what were expected of them, there would have been no reason whatsoever to invite the military to man the polling units. But, political parties did not allow internal democracy and INEC did not do enough voter awareness during which all forms of violence, hate speeches, campaign of calumny should have been strongly campaigned against, and a very stern punishment put in place for any political party or aspirants found wanted. There is no gain saying the fact that the integrity of the military is at stake and the current hierarchy of the military is to be hold responsible.

Conclusion

It must be said without any form of ambiguity that military professionalism is at stake, viewed against its meddlesomeness in the recent general elections, it is simply unfortunate. The failure to conduct a simple act of electing the representatives seamlessly put the image of the country in a bad light. This is obviously not the change we thought we had.

The military is ever quick to cite the fact that it is acting in aid to civil authority whatever the law; military colluding with politicians is counterproductive to the rule of law and democracy. Above all, it is disservice to the military. It is right to note that election is a civic and civil affair and has nothing to do with the military.

Election approximates the democratic method, that process in which eligible adults enter the voting platform and cast their ballot and by so doing transferring their consent to constitute a legitimate government compromising that process in any way inherently delegitimizes the government that is the outcome of a rigged process. It should be emphasized that the military too as part of the citizenry are expected to vote in an elections but without open demonstration of partisanship as they reported doing in the 2019 general elections in some instances, especially in River State.

Recommendations

1. There is dear need to revisit the 2010 Electoral Act Amendment Bill, which contains provisions that restrain the military from meddling in the country's electoral process. It is regrettable that the president failed to sign that bill before the 2019 general election. This bill if received presidential blessing, will create civil environment which will transcend to peaceful, free, fair and credible electoral processes in Nigeria.
2. The constitutional base for inviting the military should be maintained to avoid over stretching the military to elasticity point and possible reducing the reputation of the military. This provision is established, the reputation of the military will be restore and the military will concentrate their effort in their war against terrorism which is the major problem of Nigeria is facing today.
3. Electorates should be allowed to freely choose their preferred candidates without creating a false political environment by the regime in power. This will promote competency, credibility, and efficiency in the management of public will and governance.
4. Military should be restrained from party politics as this has promoted political apathy in the Nigerian body politics. Civil authorities like police should be use in the future elections as this will create enabling environment for political participation to thrive.

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