

**A STYLISTIC STUDY OF THE SPEECHES OF SOME KEY
ACTORS OF THE 'JUNE 12' CRISIS IN NIGERIA (1993-1998)**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

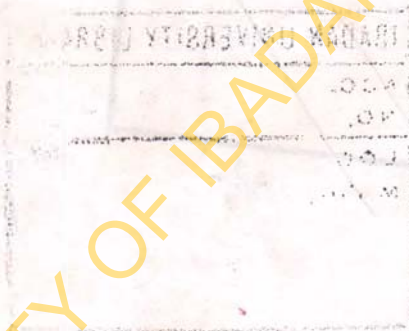
I certify that Adeyemi ADEGOJU of the Department of English,
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Dis Lettosi

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April 11, 2013

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DEDICATION

TO BUSAYO, my darling wife,

And

TOLU and TOYE, my wonderful kids.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Grammatical Conventions

Aux	Auxiliary
S	Subject
P	Predicator / Preposition
PP	Prepositional Phrase
C	Complement
NWG	Nominal Word Group
Perf	Perfective Aspect
MV	Main Verb
Conj.	Conjunction
H	Noun Head
M	Modifier
Det	Determiner
Adj	Adjective
Add	Additive

ABSTRACT

This study examines the roles played by language in the conflict generated by the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election in Nigeria (commonly referred to as 'June 12' crisis). 'June 12' crisis is so significant in Nigeria's democratisation process that the way it is played out in linguistic and non-linguistic terms deserves scholarly attention. However, extant literature on the conflict pays little attention to the manipulations of language. This study explores the various ways that language is used in defending and promoting personal and group interests, and in subverting the opponents' goals.

The study is limited to the written mode of the speeches made by the key actors in the conflict, namely Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha and M.K.O. Abiola. Twenty speeches made by these key actors which focus primarily on the 'June 12' crisis are used in the study. Out of this number, seven are from Ibrahim Babangida, seven from Sani Abacha and six from M.K.O. Abiola. The study employs descriptive and comparative analytical methods, which account for how linguistic and non-linguistic features merge, differ or subvert others. To provide an adequate theoretical orientation, it applies a revised version of the Hallidayan systemic-functional linguistic theory, whose major strength lies in its recognition of the fact that texts are produced and received in contexts of situation.

The study reveals that the discourse dwells largely on the tacit trading on ideology as each of the speakers strives to justify his own cause in the conflict while trying to criminalize his opponents. Also, M.K.O. Abiola at some point almost begins to adopt military speech style, especially in the uses of coercion in responding to the military. Strategies such as appeal to credibility, vilification of opponents, and creations of impressions about the pursuit of unity and common purpose, which are common to political speeches, also feature in the speeches.

On the whole, the speakers' manipulations of meaning have implications for political communication in Nigeria. First, meaning becomes a contested site in which the audience may easily be defrauded. The staging of power, ideology, and double-speak at the site of meaning sacrifices 'truth' and undermines mutual responsibility, the spirit of nation-building, and national reconciliation. The study thus opens up a crucial area that the national reconciliation project in Nigeria should address: the reconciliation of ethnic and national interests and the differentiation of personal from group pursuits. Further research also needs to be carried out on how the 'June 12' discourse has influenced inter-ethnic communicative exchanges in Nigeria, as well as the roles of the media in the conflict. The study indicates the need for stylisticians to be interested in discourses that present urgent societal problems.

Keywords: Stylistics, Discourse, 'June 12' crisis, Democracy, Politics

Word Count: 443

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

There has been an age-old interest in conflict as a pervasive phenomenon in social life. Commenting on the pervasiveness of the concept of conflict and the diversity of approaches to its enquiry in social research, Mack and Synder

(1957: 212) observe that:

...“conflict” is for the most part a rubber concept, being stretched and molded for the purposes at hand. In its broadest sense, it seems to cover everything from war to choices between ice-cream sodas or sundaes.

Although we would not subscribe to the above submission of Mack's and Synder's, which is arguably too inclusive, we would contend that the multifarious forms of conflict and the diversity of approaches to their enquiry are no subject for controversy in social research. Scholars have focused attention on a wide variety of conflicts and conflict situations such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, interorganizational and intergroup. In particular, war and peace, labour and management, personality, interest groups, race, ethnicity and ideology, have been central topics of conflict analysis.

Thus, there are diverse approaches towards a systematic study of conflict; several disciplines such as psychology, political science, economics, sociology, philosophy and anthropology have made the subject a 'gold-mine' of research endeavours with each discipline having its own area of emphasis which either coincides with or complements that of any other cognate discipline. Despite these disparate approaches to social conflict in social research, scholars have established in the conflict literature that conflict phenomena and situations usually have a set of properties which constitute a model for identifying and characterizing them. These properties are reflected in some existing definitions of conflict. Ruben (1978: 202), cites Miller and Simons (1974), Ronald *et al* (1974) and Keltner (1970) as having defined conflict respectively as

- (i) an incompatibility of interest between two or more persons giving rise to struggles between them;
- (ii) perceived disagreement regarding equally attractive and mutually exclusive alternatives;
- (iii) a system of relationships between two or more persons who are seeking goals that usually cannot be attained simultaneously.

It is from these definitions that scholars have identified two major mechanical models of conflict: conflict requires at least two parties, entities or units and they pursue mutually exclusive and/or mutually incompatible and opposed values (Mack and Synder, 1957; Bernard, 1957; Boulding, 1957). Dahrendorf (1959: 135), quoted by Fink (1968: 432), submits:

All relations between sets of individuals that involve an incompatible difference of objective – i.e., in its most general form, a desire on the part of both contestants to obtain what is available only to one, or only in part – are, in this sense relations of social conflict.

Mack and Synder (1957: 225) posit that conflict occurs in, affects, and in turn is affected by, a surrounding environment. Therefore, conflict must be researched and analyzed against the background of the total social system in which it occurs. This then brings us to the domain of this study which centres on intergroup/class conflict between the military and civilians in Nigeria. In this sense, we are compelled to focus on the concept of political or power conflict. Writing on political conflict, Idowu (1999: 74) argues that:

Conflicts that exert an effect, directly or indirectly, on the direction and content of public policy are political conflicts. In essence, political conflict is ultimately about publicly determined access to public goods and services. It is about the distribution of rights and privileges available in the public domain...The nature of political conflict, therefore, resides or is situated in the structure of power and the various attitudes or social behaviours that spell or dictate access to it.

Idowu's submission above sheds light on the Nigerian political terrain especially the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election. In the election, Alhaji Bashir Tofa of the National Republican Convention and Chief M.K.O. Abiola of the Social Democratic Party contested for the presidency to round off General Ibrahim Babangida's transition-to-civil-rule programme.

Before the election date, the Association for Better Nigeria (ABN), headed by Chief Arthur Nzeribe, went to court to seek an injunction to prevent the National Electoral Commission (NEC) from holding the election, thereby making a case for the military to hold on to power. This association pursued this goal vigorously and eventually enjoyed the legal backing of an Abuja High Court when Justice Bassey Ikpeke granted the injunction, few days to the election date, that the National Electoral Commission (NEC), under the chairmanship of Professor Humphrey Nwosu, should not conduct the election, declaring it unconstitutional.

In defiance of this court injunction, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) went ahead to conduct the election and about fourteen million Nigerians voted. Local and international press and even international observers adjudged the election as the freest and fairest election in Nigeria so far. Some of the election results released by the National Electoral Commission headquarters in Abuja revealed that Chief M.K.O. Abiola of the Social Democratic Party was maintaining a clear lead in all the fourteen states (even in Alhaji Bashir Tofa's state of origin - Kano - and the Federal Capital Territory - Abuja) whose results had been released. It was at this point that Professor Humphrey Nwosu reportedly received directives from Aso Rock – Nigeria's seat of power – that he should stop further release and announcement of results.

Thereafter, General Ibrahim Babangida made a nation-wide broadcast on 23rd June 1993, announcing the annulment of the election results. This was a rude shock to many Nigerians and the international community. Due to the widespread condemnation and criticism of the annulment of the election, General Ibrahim Babangida 'stepped aside' on 26th August 1993 and handed over to an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. When pressures were still on the Interim National Government to hand over to a democratically-elected government to be headed by Chief M.K.O. Abiola, General Sani Abacha took over from Chief Ernest Shonekan on 17th November 1993.

The agitations for the de-annulment of the June 12 election results were on again with the presumed winner, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, and 'pro-democracy' groups such as National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), 'Egbe Afenifere' (a pan-Yoruba socio-cultural and political group) and civil rights activists, at the forefront of the struggle. When all efforts yielded no fruitful result, Chief M.K.O. Abiola declared himself the president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 11th June 1994. This declaration is popularly known as the 'Epetedo Declaration' since it was made at Epetedo in Lagos Island area of Lagos State. Subsequently, the military junta of General Sani Abacha arrested Chief M.K.O. Abiola and charged him to court for

treason. While Chief M.K.O. Abiola was incarcerated, the struggle for his release and the restoration of power to a democratic institution was vehemently carried on by the 'pro-democracy' groups already mentioned and trade unions such as National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).

So, the annulment led to a political stalemate which involved a power tussle between the military and some 'pro-democracy' groups. Hence, we have two parties in the conflict situation seeking a mutually exclusive value – power. It is apparent in this situation that military intervention in national politics and the civilians' bid to resist the move and to restore power to a democratic institution are the major sources of this political conflict. Writing on military intervention in national politics, Oke (2001: 21-22) explains that:

There are acceptable and unacceptable ways of achieving power, be it in the state, or in religion, in the club, or at work, in a trade union or in a company boardroom. Failure to abide by the rules usually leads to crisis and condemnation. This is what often happens when 'praetorianism' (i.e. military rule) (Nordinger 1977: 3) subverts and or supplants democracy. This is what is called 'coup d'etat' ('blow of state'), which is a foul political play; it is a lawless way of acquiring political power. Indeed, it is usually said on such occasions that power had been seized from those who acquired it according to the appropriate or right rules.

Feld (1958: 85) also contends that:

Acquisition or retention of office is the major objective of political behaviour and public rejection the greatest possible disaster, not so much for individuals, whose talents will presumably provide for them when out of office, as for the state.

In this type of conflict situation, the goal is to effect a structural change in society and this has a semblance to what obtains in a totalitarian state. Dahrendorf (1958: 182) argues that 'political conflicts in totalitarian states aim more and more at sudden replacement of the ruling class'. In a similar vein, Benson (1977) and Zeitz (1980), quoted in Gricar *et al* (1981: 879), argue that conflict results from the unequal distribution of power and wealth among societal groups. They explain:

...high-power groups seek to maintain and enhance their advantages, and low-power groups who recognize their interests may organize to challenge the unfavourable distribution of resources. The resulting interactions may produce intense conflict or rapid social change.

It is interesting to note that the goal of structural change in political conflict makes a clear case for the fact that conflict is conceptualized as a fundamental, institutionalized social process which is linked to social structure, social change and social welfare. The crux of the matter, however, is the reduction and management of conflict.

For conflict to be managed or reduced, communication has a vital role to play. Scholars have been interested in the nature of conflict and its relation to communication. Worchel and Cooper (1983: 390) contend that:

Communication not only allows the parties to exchange offers and ideas, it also allows them to inform each other of their intentions and explain their behaviours. This is very important because of the disagreeing parties' tendencies to interpret each other's actions in the most negative light. Given these important functions, we might expect that simply having the chance to communicate would reduce the level of conflict.

It is evident from the foregoing that communication is inextricably bound with conflict. Ruben (1978: 202-203) is of the opinion that the most pervasive view of the conflict-communication relationship is that conflict is the direct result of faulty communication – a misunderstanding or a disagreement. Arguing further, Ruben (1978: 203), citing Freeman (1976), says that "...Guns are an indication that there has been a breakdown in communication. They are the end result of failure to communicate."

Therefore, the presence of conflict is often presumed to be a consequence – or at least evidence of a stoppage, breakdown, error or deterioration in communication. Since social conflict may be a precondition for political and economic strife and, of course, war, there is the need to circumvent or address the unwholesome scenario. Ruben (1978: 203), citing Deutsch (1974) and Miller (1973), submits that:

It seems to follow ...that communication is the best treatment for conflict. The essence of this reasoning is well embodied in the humorous, yet illuminating comment, "different communication strokes ... for different conflictful folks".

Worchel and Cooper (1983: 390), however, observe that the picture is not that simple. According to them, research shows that parties in a conflict may choose not to communicate even if the opportunity exists unless the situation or an outside party forces them to. Even then, parties in a conflict may choose to communicate very infrequently and the least communication occurs in the bilateral-threat condition.

Worchel's and Cooper's observation notwithstanding, the relations between political processes and the forms of language in which they are embedded are worthy of note. This is because the primary means of human communication is language and it could readily be used in the negotiation of meaning between the addresser and the addressee or between/among interactants in conflict situation.

For our present purposes, therefore, the place of political communication in addressing power conflict deserves due consideration.

Schudson (1997: 311) posits that:

Political communication can be understood as any transmission of message that has, or is intended to have, an effect on the distribution or use of power in society or on attitudes towards the use of power.

McQuail (1992: 472) also argues that:

... political communication has generally been associated with the expression and diffusion of ideas (thus ideologies) and also conflicts: between rival contenders for office, between parties and ideologies, between government and opposition and government and people.

It is remarkable that the socio-economic and political strife and civil disobedience that were attendant to the 'June 12' saga attest to the opposition mounted by the Nigerian people against 'the wish of the military to hold on to power'. More importantly, the parties in this conflict situation at these critical stages in the 'June 12' crisis relied heavily on the expressive possibilities of language to communicate with the Nigerian people. Hence, the potency of language as a communicative medium between the crusaders of 'militocracy' and 'pro-democracy' activists deserves attention. Above all, the stylistic means of achieving all of these would be quite revealing.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The major objective of this study is to explore the various ways that language is used as a tool in defending and promoting personal and group interests, on the one hand, and as a weapon to threaten and subvert the opponents' goals, on the other hand, in the 'June 12' crisis. In doing so, we would provide useful insights into the 'June 12' crisis, especially the role

played by communication and the appropriation of meaning as a political commodity in the discourse of the crisis.

In pursuit of this major objective, we would consider the following secondary aims:

- i. To account for the correlation between the linguistic structures/non-linguistic strategies employed in the communication processes and the extra-textual world of events;
- ii. To investigate whether certain stylistic features which have characterized political discourse in other political situations are still widely used in this conflict situation or discarded in order to meet the contingencies of the immediate situation;
- iii. To assess the relations between language use and power differences; and
- iv. To evaluate the communicative function(s) of language in the conflict situation.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Scholars have carried out a lot of research on political discourse with emphasis on the communicative strategies used in political processes and the role of the media (print and electronic) in the dissemination of political messages (see Bennett, 1971; King, 1976; Gronbeck, 1978;

Wiethoff, 1978; Bennett, 1981; Medhurst and Desousa, 1981; Ozimede, 1985; Moore, 1987; Heritage and Greatbatch, 1986; Pfau and Burgoon, 1988; McQuail, 1992; Anderson, 1997; Speier, 1998; among others). In particular, the appropriation of language as a political resource in political campaigns and the speeches of notable politicians, human rights activists, freedom fighters and social critics, has attracted the attention of scholars.

This study is, however, significant in that the extra-linguistic event on which it is based – the genesis and the attendant problems of the annulment of the 12 June 1993 election – is a recent and crucial issue in Nigeria's political history. The tussle for power between the military and civilians, and not between registered political parties, is a watershed in Nigeria's political history and the history of politics in Africa at large.

Equally, the use of language by either party in this conflict situation is remarkable. Observing that the place of language in conflict studies has been neglected, Seton-Watson (1978: 20) writes:

In the conflicts of world politics since 1945, whether we think of disputes between governments or of civil wars, insurrection and terrorism within states, manipulation of language has become hardly less important than the assassins' bombs or modern armies' hardware. This ... is no more than a plea that trained minds should address themselves to this neglected subject.

With close reference to this study, the manipulation of language in the management, reduction and (if possible) resolution of political or power

conflict is significant. Besides, it would reveal how language is used for political purposes to protect not just the interest of the main actors but possibly certain associations or ideological groups they represent, for example, the military and 'pro-democracy' associations. Furthermore, the manipulation of language would reveal the peculiarities of language use in the conflict between the military and civilians. Also, since the conflict has to do with the entire social system, the use of language between the ruler(s) and the ruled would yield interesting insights. Above all, this study is significant in that the interplay of linguistic structures/communicative strategies and the peculiar socio-political contingencies of the 'June 12' saga would be quite insightful.

1.4 The Data

The data for this study are based on select speeches of Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha and M.K.O. Abiola. All together, we have twenty sample speeches and the distributional pattern goes thus: Babangida's speeches are seven; Abacha's speeches, seven; Abiola's speeches, six. The variation in the number of Abiola's speeches from that of Abacha and Babangida rests on the fact that the speeches selected from the corpus surveyed for this study are the ones that thematically address the 'June 12' crisis. The choice does not, however, foreclose the existence of other

statements or writings in the form of press interviews or prison notes (especially by Abiola) that are relevant and serve as extensions to the select speeches.

Babangida's speeches are: 'Expediency and the Path of Honour' (EPH), 'Crisis and the Search for Peace I' (CSP_I), 'Crisis and the Search for Peace II' (CSP_{II}), 'Crisis and the search for Peace III' (CSP_{III}) and 'Crisis and the Search for Peace IV' (CSP_{IV}). 'Stepping Aside for Peace and National Concord' (SAPNC) and 'Valedictory Address to the Nation' (VAN) are the other speeches in the corpus.

Abacha's speeches are: 'A Child of Necessity' (CN), 'An Address to Opinion Leaders' (AOL), 'Speech Delivered on the Occasion of the Swearing-in of Members of the Federal Executive Council' (SDOSMFEC) and 'The Big-Stick Declaration' (BD). The collection is further composed of: '35th Independence Anniversary Broadcast' (35TH IAB), 'Nothing Is Insurmountable' (NII) and '37th Independence Anniversary Broadcast' (37TH IAB).

Abiola's speeches are: 'A Deliberate Intention to Insult and Ridicule the Entire Nigerian People' (DIIRENP), 'The Inviolability of 12 June' (I12J), 'Salute to the People' (SP) and 'Our Struggle Is Just' (OSIJ). Others are: 'Epetedo Declaration' (ED) and 'I'm Your Duly Elected President' (IYDEP). The choice of the analysis of the speeches of these

three individuals is based on the fact that they are the main actors in the 'June 12' crisis. Also, the speeches they made at critical periods of the crisis reflect the problems attendant to the struggle for power between the military and civilians.

At this point, it is relevant to note that speeches are not the only means of conveying political messages in conflict situation. Other discourses include: news reports, editorials, rallies, demonstrations, posters, cartoons, parliamentary debates, committee reports, etc. We have chosen speeches in that they are given the widest coverage and publicity. As a result, they have far-reaching effects on the populace. However, the other discourses could be subverted by repressive powers. Consequently, they may not easily find their ways into the mainstream of the communication processes except in the form of rumours or hearsays.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that apart from the main actors: Babangida, Abacha and Abiola, whose speeches are analyzed, other associations also had their own shares of the conflict, supporting either the military or the civilians with their various verbal exchanges. Such groups include: media staff (either in the print or electronic media), political activists, elder statesmen, labour leaders, military chieftains, human rights activists, democratic associations, ethnic associations, and so on. We have, however, limited this study to the main actors so that we would be able to

address the major issues that surfaced in the conflict. This is because the three individuals symbolize certain institutions/associations (military, ethnic, democratic, ideological, etc.) as a result of which there may be some intersections in the expressions of their beliefs and opinions.

1.5 Methodology

The interactants in the conflict presented the sample speeches to their audiences in both written and spoken modes. This establishes the duality of the discourse mode. Although the spoken mode would give us useful insights into the phonological choices in the discourse, we limit this study to the features that characterize the written mode in view of a major constraint: the difficulty in having access to the audio tapes of the speakers' major speeches at the archives approached for research assistance; worse still, efforts to access them in personal libraries also proved abortive. This probably arose from the volatile conflict that called for caution in individual's handling of such tapes that would normally be regarded as 'security materials'. Therefore, although the spoken mode of their speeches did not probably get transmitted beyond its first rendition, the written mode was widely produced and circulated by the print media. Our choice does not, however, foreclose the relevance of the spoken mode; we could refer to the spoken traits of the text where such reference is relevant to the analysis.

The data for the written mode are sampled from books and magazines. These sources are, no doubt, second-hand material compared with first-hand material of the anthology/anthologies of the speeches of each of the speakers in form of memoir(s). We are constrained to rely on the former sources in view of the transient roles of the speakers in the conflict, especially the untimely deaths of Sani Abacha and M.K.O. Abiola. In Babangida's case, however, anthologies of his speeches exist in volumes edited by Sam Oyovbaire and Tunji Olagunju. The first two volumes entitled *For Their Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today* do not consist of speeches of the 'June 12' crisis. Therefore, we use Volume III entitled *Crisis of Democratization in Nigeria: Selected Speeches of IBB*. Due to the secondary nature of these sources, we still have had to verify the authenticity of the data by comparing them across media.

Having clarified these basic issues, we proceed to the consideration guiding the sampling of the data. The sampling reflects the nature of the analysis, which is not only text-based but also context-oriented. So, it is based on the speeches that were made at critical stages in the crisis. In this regard, we would refer to a speaker, a communicative goal, an occasion of use or a context. This would afford us the opportunity of exploring the correlation between the linguistic structures/non-linguistic strategies and the extra-textual world of events.

In this respect, our approach to the data analysis is dual in that the formal (linguistic) properties of the discourse are analyzed along with their communicative functions. Equally, the descriptive and comparative analytical methods are employed. These methods help us to see how the linguistic and non-linguistic features emerge, merge, differ or subvert others intra-textually and inter-textually. The adoption of these methods of analysis forms a composite approach to the analysis of the conflict rhetoric, thereby supporting the objectives of the study specified in Section 1.2.

1.6 Clarification of Concepts

In order to have a clear focus and to avoid unnecessary ambiguity, we need to clarify certain concepts which relate to the study. They include: discourse, conflict, democracy and 'June 12'.

1.6.1 Discourse

The terms 'text' and 'discourse' are not synonymous although they have an interdependency relation. A text refers to a unit of language use in a passage – written or spoken – of any length but of a unified whole. Discourse could also mean a text because it is made up of linguistic units that are organized into cohesive and coherent stretches. In this regard, discourse is said to be a text, that is, language in use which could be written or spoken.

In a broader sense, however, discourse could be said to include all language units with a definable communicative function. In this sense, the unit of discourse is not the grammatically defined sentence or clause. Rather, the unit of discourse is supra-sentential in that the discourse analyst is investigating the use of language by a speaker/writer in context. This view is best characterized as a 'discourse-as-process' view where the analyst is interested in 'the function or purpose of a piece of linguistic data and also in how that data is processed, both by the producer and by the receiver' (Brown and Yule, 1983: 25).

In view of this, the discourse analyst treats his/her data as the record (text) of a dynamic process in which language is used as an instrument of communication in a context by a speaker/writer to express meanings and achieve intentions (discourse) that we treat our data for the present study.

1.6.2 Conflict

The separation of objective bases of conflict from subjective elements is often stressed in the conflict literature. Coser (1972: 233) argues that this is necessary because failure to do so results in excessively psychological explanations which cannot do justice to the structure of conflict or to the situations that give rise to it. In this light, Dahrendorf (1958: 172) argues that the task of sociology is to derive conflicts from specific social structures and not to relegate these conflicts to psychological

variables such as aggressiveness, hostility or hatred. The attitudes and states of affairs signified by these terms, according to Mack and Synder (1957: 217), may be the underlying sources of conflict or may accompany or intensify conflict. Such predispositions are not, however, sufficient conditions for the occurrence of conflict. To this end, Dahrendorf (1958: 176) posits that three questions come especially to the forefront which conflict theory must answer:

- (1) How do conflicting groups arise from the structure of society?
- (2) What forms can the struggles among such groups assume?
- (3) How does the conflict among such groups effect a change in the social structures?

This is why, in the background to the study (Section 1.1), we considered the conflicting groups arising from the structure of society and how the conflict among such groups was aimed at effecting a change in the social structure. It is against this background that we would treat the concept of conflict in this study as a tussle between two parties over the distribution of power.

It is also expedient that we draw attention to the fact that although social conflicts are about incompatible goals, the nature of the goals is another basis for distinguishing different kinds of conflict. Kriesberg (1996: 123) explains that when adversaries contest over land, money or other resources which they all value, such disputes are 'consensual'

conflicts. Alternatively, they may come into contact about differently held values, thereby seeing themselves as acting as representatives of a cause, fighting not for self but only for the ideals of a collectivity they represent. These are 'dissensual' conflicts. We would incorporate these two kinds of conflict – 'consensual' and 'dissensual' – in this study. This would provide us with a broad view of understanding the communicative import of the discourse where the main actors made speeches considered to be protecting or promoting not (only) individual interests but (also) group (ideological, ethnic, class) interests.

1.6.3 Democracy

It is the consensus of social and political thinkers that the concept of 'democracy' has different interpretations. Hence, there is no singular definition that satisfies everyone. Owolabi (1999: 4) adduces the problem of the conceptualization of democracy to two major reasons. According to him, democracy has become in current usage, another word for political decency and civilization. As an idea, democracy has become an honorific title and a moral concept, with a regime laying claim to it just for the sake of survival without any commitment to its ideals. Another reason why democracy is difficult to define is that of its ideological connotation, as the meaning that an individual scholar gives to democracy is a product of his/her ideological orientation.

Thus, it becomes very difficult to have an objective conceptualization of democracy. These viewpoints corroborate Ake's (1992: 1) argument that:

The problem is not, and never has been determining what democracy means, but the contradictions of people's responses to its perceived implication for their power and their interests.

How then do we define democracy without any controversy? Owolabi (1999: 5) cites Sartori (1987: 7) and Thompson (1994: 3) who maintain that the proper conceptualization of democracy must not lose sight of the original essence of the concept as 'demo-kratia' (rule of the people) which emphasizes the origin of the concept as a Greek word. It is in this light that the most and often quoted definition is the one given by Abraham Lincoln that it is 'a government of the people by the people and for the people'.

Irele (1998: 84), however, contends that Lincoln's characterization of democracy goes against empirical evidence in that in all the states that are even highly democratic, there is no way that we could say that the people govern themselves. At best, what happens is that the people choose representatives who represent their interests and this is done through periodic elections. The rulers who are representing the people must be accountable to the people so that the essence of democracy as rule of the people can be realized indirectly. In this respect, Irele (1998: 86) contends

that the basic ideals that are important for any democratic form of arrangement to be called a democratic state are freedom, equality, accountability to people, right to vote and to be voted for, and so on.

Although participation and accountability are the moral foundations of democracy, Owolabi (1999: 12) argues that they are not the ultimate objectives of democracy. Its ultimate objective that ought to be that of all political systems is the good life or the happiness of all. This has been the theme of political philosophy since Socrates. Relating this objective to the African experience, Ake (1992: 8) observes that democracy rather than being an end in itself, is a means to an end for it is more likely to be settled by its utility, its import for meeting significant social needs. Therefore, he argues:

We have already seen that on the popular level the demand for democracy is partly a strategy for survival and material betterment. The utility of democracy for economic growth has received considerable attention and the consensus is that democratization will help the cause of economic growth in Africa (1992: 8).

Apart from this, the entrenchment of a viable democratic system is instrumental to the practice and efforts at consolidating federalism. Shedding light on the delicacy of federalism, Tamuno (1998: 13) writes:

Federalism ... is that form of government where the component units of a political organization participate in sharing powers and functions in a cooperative manner through the combined forces of ethnic pluralism and

cultural diversity, among others, tend to pull their people apart.

It is in view of this that Amuwo and Herault (1998: 3) see democracy as a necessary recipe for true federalism. They explain that 'federalism's minimalist promissory note to permit nations and peoples forming the union, their own nationalism and self-determination is more easily endangered in a non-democratic system than in a democratic federal polity.' And with close reference to the Nigerian experience, Amuwo and Herault (1998: 5) remark that 'while federalism has brought several nations within the Nigerian polity together, actual federal practice has hardly been able to keep them together happily.'

Thus, in view of the utility of democracy for economic growth, on the one hand, and for the practice and consolidation of federalism, on the other hand, we would be able to appreciate the discourse and conflict underlying Nigeria's quest for democracy as revealed in the 'June 12' conflict rhetoric. We should, however, be wary of the interactants' appropriation of the amorphous nature of 'democracy' for personal or political gains. Besides, Afolayan (1999: 64) observes that although democratic path is the most suitable for nation-building and especially for dousing the rage of ethnicity that characterizes the African continent, the ethnic tension in most African states has served as a vitiating factor to the

democratic process. He then cautions that to make democracy relevant to the process of nation-building, the fact of ethnicity must be constructively confronted.

1.6.4 'June 12'

At a surface level, June 12 1993 was the date about fourteen million Nigerians went to the polls to elect the presidential candidate for the third republic. It was the day Nigerians, voting across regional and ethnic divides, hoped to put an end to the eight-year military rule of General Ibrahim Babangida. Unfortunately, the election results were annulled by the military. When all attempts to make the military de-annul the election results proved abortive and there was widespread allegation that the military wanted to perpetuate itself in power, 'June 12' assumed a symbolic status. To this end, it has become a signifier for 'the collective will of Nigerians' as expressed in public opinions to put an end to military governance and usher in a democratic system of governance. This represents one view of 'June 12' and perhaps the dominant one. There could be other extensions of meaning relative to the (Nigerian) people's perception of the crisis and its implications for their personal and group interests.

It is from this symbolic perspective that we would examine 'June 12' and its importance to Nigeria's political history. This would make us

focus on the major issues that surfaced during the crisis and the attitude of the major actors to the crisis.

1.7 The Organization of Subsequent Chapters

So far, we have tried to provide the background, the purpose and the significance of the study, source of the data, methodology and clarification of concepts. At this point, it is expedient that we highlight the organization of subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two is a review of scholarly perspectives on the concepts and issues relevant to this study. Chapter Three discusses the theoretical framework adopted for this study, explaining the major tenets of the chosen linguistic model(s) and non-linguistic strategies, and assessing their relevance to language use in conflict situation. The analysis of our data spans Chapters Four, Five and Six: Chapter Four discusses the persuasion and coercion strategies; Chapter Five analyzes and discusses the syntactic tactics deployed by the speakers; and Chapter Six, the lexico-semantic patterns of the discourse. Finally, Chapter Seven concludes the study, summarizing the findings and observations made in the course of the study, and giving the concluding comments. It also identifies research areas that this study has not covered, thereby opening up research directions for further explorations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is basically concerned with the review of fundamental issues relevant to the study. To this end, we bring to bear scholars' viewpoints in an attempt to establish and evaluate the theoretical and conceptual underpinning of this study. The issues to be examined include: issues in conflict, political communication, language of politics, and rhetoric and political conflict in post-colonial Nigeria.

2.2 Issues in Conflict

Conflict theory has a long and complex tradition closely interwoven with the history of the social sciences. In many disciplines and from many viewpoints, great bodies of data have been collected and countless generalizations, hypotheses, and theories have been constructed to account for social conflict phenomena (Fink, 1968: 412). These are reflected in the writings of classical conflict theorists such as Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes. Also, Marx and Engels stressed the material conditions underlying conflict, especially the class struggles based on property relations. Other social thinkers directly or indirectly inspired by social Darwinism are Ludwig Gumplowitz, Gustav Ratzenhofer, Herbert Spencer

and William Graham Sumner, who worked in the context of evolutionary thought and posited a group struggle for existence.

In the same vein, the struggle for power and influence is one of the themes of Vilfredo Pareto's theories as well as those of Mosca, Michels and Sorel. Also, in the classical tradition in German sociology from Tonnies to Simmel and Weber, conflict was considered a major social phenomenon. However, the first sociologist to focus on conflict as a process both internal and external to the individual and also to the group was Georg Simmel whose ideas have been critically restated by Lewis (1956) (see North, 1972: 226).

So far, we have shown that conflict theorists have emphasized different combinations of elements from the rich conflict tradition. At this point, it is relevant to note that general orientations toward conflict are present in all cultures and appear not only in the social sciences but also in religious, ethical, political and philosophical systems. Fink (1968: 412) comments that:

Conflict ... is a phenomenon studied in many different fields: by sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, economists and by political scientists. It occurs in many different situations: among members of a family, between labor and management, between political parties, and even within a single mind, as well as among nations.

Therefore, conflict has been classified in various ways: interpersonal, interethnic, interorganizational, industrial, international, racial, religious, community, political, and so on.

Having considered the background to the conflict tradition and the pervasiveness of conflict phenomena in social research, we would now examine the functional and dysfunctional aspects of conflict and resolution of conflict.

2.2.1 Functional and Dysfunctional Aspects of Conflict

The functional and dysfunctional aspects of conflict in social system have been a major source of debate in social theory. Mitchell (1980: 62) sums up scholars' interests in these divergent views thus:

One of the major points of discussion in conflict research during the 1960's revolved around the question whether social or international conflict could be regarded as basically beneficial or 'functional' for the social system in which it occurred, or whether the more conventional view of conflict as essentially destructive, and hence something to be avoided, was a more proper intellectual stance ...

The functionalist school posits that conflicts have beneficial effects and frequently these could outweigh their destructive effects. Prominent among those holding this view is Lewis Coser who points out that even the most violent and widespread social conflict might have some beneficial pay-offs, perhaps totally unappreciated by the involved parties or the rest of society at the time. He argues that conflict could be considered functional

both for the parties involved and for the society at large (Coser, 1956; cf. Mitchell, 1980: 62).

Worchel and Cooper (1983: 413-414), commenting on the positive functions of conflict, cite Simmel (1955) who suggests two positive roles of conflict. First, conflict gives rise to social change. Open conflict between blacks and whites in the United States, for example, has led to numerous social changes aimed at creating more opportunities in the American society. Simmel also points out that conflict between groups may result in a new unity and solidarity within each group. In the United States, the black power movement that has resulted in new solidarity among blacks was a direct result of racial conflict. Worchel and Cooper (1983: 414) further cite Deutsch's (1973: 9) summation of the positive roles of conflict:

It (conflict) prevents stagnation; it stimulates interest and curiosity; it is the medium through which problems can be aired and solutions arrived at; it is the root of personal and social change ... In addition, conflict demarcates groups from one another and thus helps establish group and personal identities; external conflict often fosters internal cohesiveness.

Although conflicts may have functional, beneficial aspects, they also have dysfunctional, costly ones. And some form of balance must be struck in realistically considering even whether a conflict is mainly productive or destructive. But there are certain difficulties in deciding

whether a conflict is functional in that the overall gains from prosecuting the conflict outweigh the costs or dysfunctional in that overall costs of the conflict outweigh the gains.

Mitchell (1980: 69-70) identifies five major difficulties. First, individuals have different views about what is beneficially functional and what is not based on differences in value systems. Moreover, it is quite possible for a conflict process to be functional at one point in time yet highly dysfunctional at another. A third problem is that the same conflict may be highly functional for particular individuals within the parties, yet highly dysfunctional for others. A fourth consideration is the frequent lack of mutuality in that a conflict may be functional for one of the parties and may be highly dysfunctional for the other. The last problem is that conflict may offer unambiguous benefits to the parties and yet be very costly for the overall social system.

In view of these intricacies, Coser (1956), quoted by Mitchell (1980: 70), has insisted that when stating that conflict is 'functional', it should always be asked: functional for whom? Furthermore, we should be aware that it would be a mistake to regard the functional and dysfunctional aspects of conflict as mutually exclusive. Mitchell (1980: 72) argues that individuals, groups and organizations do not just gain or just lose; they do both.

Since an understanding of the nature of conflict resolution is a critical aspect in the study of social conflicts, we would proceed to the next sub-section in our discussion of conflict phenomena.

2.2.2 Resolution of Conflict

Although there are many examples where conflict resulted in a violent confrontation in which both parties suffered, there are many more cases in which conflict is resolved in a peaceful, constructive manner. Commenting on the modes of resolution of conflict, Nader (1972: 240) cites Levine (1961) who distinguishes five forms of conflict-indicating behaviour: physical aggression, public verbal dispute, covert verbal aggression, breach of expectation and avoidance. Nader (1972: 240) then stresses that it is important to note, however, that those behaviours which proceed from and are indicative of conflict may also operate to resolve the conflict.

But it is noteworthy that in international and industrial relations, avoidance is impossible and, therefore, forces the development of organizational solutions. In view of this, Boulding (1957: 133) argues that the resolution of conflict depends on two factors: the reduction in the intensity of the conflict, on the one hand, and the development of overriding organizations which include both parties, on the other hand.

Worchel and Cooper (1983: 392–406), discussing the road to conflict resolution, identify seven major modes:

- a. Identifying the conflict and clarifying perceptions
- b. Reducing threat and increasing communication
- c. Bargaining strategies
- d. Using norms to reduce conflict
- e. Distributive justice: Dividing the pie
- f. Procedural justice
- g. Coalition formation

Besides Worchel's and Cooper's (1983) modes of conflict resolution, we would consider one other mode which deserves special attention in labour and international relations. This is known as arbitration, mediation or coalition. Nader (1972: 240) argues that if avoidance or physical aggression does not successfully resolve a conflict, the use of a third party to achieve settlement by arbitration, mediation, compromise, or adjudication such as councils, courts, go-betweens or 'crossers' perform these functions. Kriesberg (1996: 125) shares the same view in arguing that:

... parties not initially involved in a conflict affect its course of development by joining in to advance their own interests or by setting limits to the conflict. Intermediaries can also mitigate the undesired aspects of conflicts by mediation, thus facilitating communication and providing face-saving options.

Apart from the above conflict resolution modes, Seiler (1967), quoted in Bell and Blakeney (1977: 850), describes and rank orders five modes of conflict resolution as follows:

1. Withdrawing (where the parties avoid discussing their different interests);
2. Smoothing (where the conflict is played down or one or another of the parties gives in to keep anyone happy);
3. Compromising (where each party yields on part of its designed goals);
4. Forcing (where power is employed and victory goes to the strongest party);
5. Confronting (where underlying reasons for conflict are explored and effort directed toward redefining the problem and finding productive solutions for all parties).

Having considered the different modes of conflict resolution, we would quickly add that some modes are appropriate for some conflict systems and not others. So, modes of conflict resolution are fundamentally related to the nature of conflict. Thus, no amount of better understanding through better communication by itself, Mack and Synder (1957: 238-239) point out, is going to resolve genuine power conflict. Also, mediation, according to them, cannot function effectively if conflict is between unorganized groups, because mediation requires representatives who can speak authoritatively enough for each group that agreement becomes binding.

Up to this stage, we have had a close look at certain issues in conflict, considering functional and dysfunctional aspects of conflict and conflict resolution. In the next section, we would discuss political communication which is not only a medium of addressing conflict but also a site of conflict.

2.3 Political Communication

Bogdanor (1987: 443) defines political communication as 'the flow of messages and information that give structure and meaning to the political processes.' According to him, political communication involves not just the elites sending signals to their mass publics, but the whole gamut of informal processes of communication throughout a society which affects politics in any manner, whether in the shaping of public opinion, the political socializing of citizens or the mobilizing of interests.

According to McQuail (1992: 472), 'political communication refers to all processes of information (including facts, opinions, beliefs, etc.) transmission, exchange and search engaged in by participants in the course of institutionalized political activities.' He explains that in practice, political communication covers the following:

1. activities directed towards the formation, mobilization and deployment of parties and similar political movements;

2. all forms of organized campaign designed to gain political support for a party, cause, policy or government, by influencing opinion and behaviour (and the course of elections);
3. many processes involving the expression, measurement, dissemination, and also 'management' of public opinion (this includes informal, interpersonal discussion);
4. the activities of established mass media in reporting or commenting on political events;
5. processes of public information and debate related to political policies;
6. informal political socialization and the formation and maintenance of political consciousness (1992: 473).

According to Schudson (1997: 311), 'political communication can be understood as any transmission of messages that has, or is intended to have, an effect on the distribution or use of power in society or on attitudes towards the use of power.' One word that Schudson (1997) contends is most likely to be misunderstood in this definition is 'message'. If taken to be intentional, framed, discrete communications, then political communication, Schudson (1997) argues, is the sum total of campaign speeches, news reports and editorials, rallies and demonstrations, posters, cartoons, parliamentary debates and committee reports and votes or polls which send a message.

de Sola Pool (1972: 91) sees political communication as referring 'only to the activity of certain specialized institutions that have been set up to disseminate information, ideas and attitudes about government affairs.' According to him, this narrow definition is often implicit in institutional

studies of political communication. de Sola Pool cites the following examples: studies of psychological warfare may focus on across-the-lines broadcasts and leaflet distribution (Lasswell 1927; Lerner 1949; Daugherty and Janowitz 1958); studies of election campaigns may focus on the use of television, posters and speeches (Herring 1940; Ostrogorskii 1902; Childs 1965); studies of legislative communication may focus on letters to the Congress, committee documents and floor speeches (Schattschneider 1935); studies of administrative management may focus on office memoranda and letters (Simon 1947, 1961). de Sola Pool concludes that implicit in such studies is the notion that certain institutions have as their primary function the facilitation of the exchange and dissemination of messages. We would return to this vital issue presently.

Apart from the above enumerated studies on political communication, there are some classical contributions to the field. de Sola Pool (1972: 91) explains that among works prior to 1914 that scholars of communication would have to consider major contributions to the field would be Plato's *Gorgias*, which considers morality in propaganda, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Mill's *System of Logic*, which analyze the structure of persuasive argumentation; Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* which are handbooks of political communication for the securing of power; Milton's *Areopagitica* and

Mill's *On Liberty*, which consider the systemic effects of permitting individual variation in the flow of political messages; Dicey's *The Development of Law and Opinion in England in the 19th Century*, which considers the effect of the ideological context on public actions; and Marx's *German Ideology*, Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* and Pareto's *The Mind and Society*, which distinguish the social function from the true value of beliefs.

At this point, we return to the issue of the flow of communication through institutionalized media. Let us first consider the centrality of the print media to the emergence of democratic politics.

2.3.1 The Print Media and Democratic Politics

The close interconnection between politics and the press revolves around the advocatory or propagandist role of the press. The modern study of political communication virtually began with the study of propaganda – that form of communication in which the objective of persuasion dominates all attempts at communication. The early equation of political communication with propaganda, McQuail (1992) points out, was reinforced by the example of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, both of which used their monopoly of control of mass media for their own different projects of social transformation. Not surprisingly, the term propaganda acquired a negative connotation. It was used to indicate a form of

persuasive communication with the following features: the communication is for the purposes of the sender rather than for the receiver, or for mutual benefit; it involves a high degree of control and management by the source; the purpose and sometimes the identity of the source is concealed. Put differently, McQuail (2000: 50), cited by Salawu (2004: 263) defines propaganda as 'the process and product of deliberate attempts to influence collective behavioural (sic) and opinion by the use of multiple means of communication in ways that are systemic and one-sided.'

It is against this backdrop that we would consider the issue of ownership and monopoly of the means of communication. And at the centre of this discussion is the critical theory in media research. Anderson (1997), reviewing the critical school of thought, cites theorists such as Stuart Hall (1977) and Stanley Cohen (1972) who built their models around the premise that the media play a central role in the reinforcement of ruling class ideology, although there was disagreement as to the precise nature of the ideological role of the media and their relationship with the wider social structure. According to Anderson (1997), three main strands have emerged within the critical theory of mass communications: the political economy perspective, the structuralist approach and cultural theory.

The political economy perspective suggests that the workings of the media need to be understood in the context of their economic

determination. This strand of theory focuses upon ownership and control of the media and the impact of commercial imperatives. Structuralism as the second major strand is primarily concerned with the concept of ideology and many studies in this tradition have applied Althusser's concept of ideology to the study of semiotics. The cultural strand of theory views media institutions and cultural practices as bound up in a complex web of interrelationship.

In the final analysis, Anderson (1997) draws our attention to a classic study entitled *Policing the Crisis* by Hall *et al* (1978). In it, Hall *et al* sought to blend a culturalist approach with structuralism. Central to their approach is the concept of class-biased ideology or 'hegemony'. The notion of 'hegemony' (associated particularly with the theoretical work of Gramsci) suggests that the news media present us with a very narrow view of the world which upholds the interests of the dominant class.

Although the control of the media by the state is established in media research, we should not gloss over the fact that a free press is essential to a democracy. This view is epitomized in the libertarian theory (see Folarin, 1998). This theory emerged from a premise that the government should exist solely to serve the interests of the individual. It holds that the media should serve the people rather than the government

and that the best way to find the truth is to have as many opinions aired as possible.

Wilson (1995: 48) cites many philosophers and writers who contributed to the formation of the libertarian concept. Among them were: John Milton (1608–1674), John Locke (1632 – 1704), Isaac Newton (1642 – 1727), Adam Smith (1723–1790), Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790), Thomas Jefferson (1743 – 1826), James Madison (1751 – 1836) and John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873).

Bothered by the overwhelming control of the media by the state, Thomas Jefferson (quoted in Chaffee, 1975: 13) wrote: 'Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.' Chaffee (1975) further remarks that not so widely publicized is Jefferson's complaint during the latter stages of his presidency that 'the man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them; inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer the truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehood and errors.'

Writing in the spirit of the libertarian theory, James Madison (quoted in Wilson, 1995: 49) expresses his views on the importance of a free press to a state's experiment in democracy:

Nothing could be more irrational than to give the people power and to withhold from them information without which power is abused. A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with power which knowledge gives. A popular government without popular information or means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both.

The libertarian theory of the press was an inherent part of the American experiment in democracy because of people like Jefferson, Madison and others. The First Amendment in the Bill of Rights guarantees not only free speech but a free press as well. It is important to remember that the American experiment in democracy was based on a system of checks and balances. Three separate and independent branches of government were established – the judicial, legislative and executive branches. In addition, the First Amendment provided that the press serve as a ‘watchdog’ of government. This is why the press is often considered a fourth branch – the ‘fourth estate’ of the governmental structure.

We have so far discussed the economic and political control of the press by the state as well as the role of the media in democratic politics. Let us now discuss the role of the media in influencing voters in election campaigns.

2.3.2 Modern Mass Media and the Conduct of Election Campaigns

One dominant issue in the campaign communication literature is the investigation of media impact on voting behaviour. McQuail (1992)

observes that campaigns typically have multiple objectives: to inform about policy and proposal; to establish and modify party and leader images; to identify a party with certain issues; to attract converts and waverers; to mobilize supporters. McQuail, however, notes that despite the emphasis on persuasion and image-making, the clearest evidence from research has been of 'informational learning'. Researchers have singled out two main features of campaign learning. One of these has been known under the heading of 'agenda-setting'.

Anderson (1997) points out that the term 'agenda-setting' was first used by McCombs and Shaw (1972) to refer to the process by which issue hierarchies are mediated to the public through election campaigns. From this perspective, the news media may not tell us what to think, but they present us with a range of issues to think about. McQuail (1992: 478) explains that agenda-setting refers to 'the process whereby the volume of attention given to an issue in mass media (whether or not by design) tends to shape the public perception of what are the most salient issues of the moment.' However, the agenda-setting process has been criticized for ignoring the whole process through which social issues are taken up by the media.

This is why a few studies have attempted to go beyond the traditional agenda-setting approach. According to Anderson (1997), Lang

and Lang (1981) developed the concept of 'agenda-building'. Drawing upon an analysis of Watergate, the authors focus upon the issue of how social problems originate on the media agenda and how they are subsequently transformed into political issues. They suggest that for a social problem to become a public issue people must be able to relate it to the wider political context. The Langs rightly suggest, then, that the role of the media is primarily to forge links between social issues and the political domain in order for a topic of media or public interest to be transformed into a political issue.

A second concept that relates to political learning is that of 'knowledge-gap'. Moore (1987: 186) cites Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1970: 159). In their words, the knowledge gap hypothesis states that 'as the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socio-economic status (SES) tend to acquire this information faster than the lower status segments, so that gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase.' The consequence of this 'relative deprivation of knowledge', they argue further, is that it may lead to the 'relative deprivation of power'.

Moore (1987) then contends that election campaigns should represent an ideal setting to test the knowledge gap hypothesis. According to him, campaigns almost always represent periods of significantly

increased 'infusion of mass media information into a social system', the type of context within which the knowledge gap should increase, according to the authors of the hypothesis. Furthermore, the democratic implications of increasing knowledge gaps are perhaps more evident in electoral settings than in other periods of increased information. Moore (1987) concludes that at the end of an election campaign, the voters must make a decision and the less-informed voters are presumably less able to vote in their own interests than are the better-informed, a case where the relative deprivation of knowledge does seem to translate into a relative deprivation of power.

Wilson (1995) remarks that apart from the primary direct role of the mass media in determining election outcomes, research in the 1970s and 1980s seemed to indicate that a number of factors were causing a change in the mass media's indirect or secondary role in determining election outcomes. Prevalent among these factors were the advent of the political consultant and the prominent role the television had come to play in the American culture.

Wilson (1995) cites Blumenthal (1980:12) who comments, 'Political consultants are the new power within the American political system. The consultants have supplanted the old party bosses as the link to the voters.' Wilson (1995) argues further that political consultants are professionals with advertising and public relations skills. They employ the

procedures of opinion polling, creating images and selling images in shaping campaigns.

Television advertising is an effective medium which is employed by political consultants to sell images rather than discuss issues. The advertisements are cleverly designed and carefully produced to achieve maximum results. van Zoonen (1998) points out that political advertising, especially the 30-second campaign spot, is another typical form of popular political communication.

In spite of the role of TV advertisements in reaching out to the voting public, political observers advocate major changes in the use of television in American elections. In fact, commercial television is seen as politics worst enemy. An outspoken and popular American critic of TV, Neil Postman, (quoted in van Zoonen 1998: 194) says in a television commentary that:

In TV commercials you have a sort of compact form of all that is wrong with TV politics. Obviously, there is no time for discussion of anything or the clarification of anything, or the presentation of any rational idea. To some extent someone is going to say for sure that politics has always had an element of the irrational. I agree. What I am sorry about is that TV intensifies and amplifies the irrational, that it becomes difficult to find any piece of the rational (BBC, 1992b).

In a similar vein, van Zoonen (1998) cites the American political scientist Hart (1994b) who argues that the language of television has

become the language of politics, a postmodern language focusing on politics as the construction of images instead of the building of community. Claiming that politics has degenerated into an effort to sell the prettiest package, some political observers wish that political advertising consist only of candidates' 'talking heads'. Under this plan, no skilfully produced commercials designed to sell images rather than issues would be allowed.

It must, however, be borne in mind, at this point, that these trends should not be interpreted as a blanket condemnation of the media in political elections. Wilson (1995) remarks that some newspapers do attempt to cover issues, and the major television networks have made airtime available for presidential debates on the issues. Television news shows like 'Meet the Press' also do an effective job of getting candidates to discuss the issues. Besides, the 1990's have seen the introduction of truth boxes into the presidential elections. In the so-called truth boxes the print media analyze television political advertisements and point out if they are deceptive or misleading. Some television news programmes have also started analyzing political advertising. The effects of this analysis have been a more careful approach to political claims in advertising.

Our discussion, so far, has been based on the organized use of modern mass media for political ends, especially in the conduct of election campaigns which takes place between government (parties) and people. At

this point, we now focus attention on communication between equals, whether these are members of the same political elite or citizens or who interact and assemble together. This form of political communication revolves around the centrality of Jurgen Habermas' notion of 'public sphere' to contemporary media studies.

2.3.3 The Public Sphere

In contemporary media studies, some of the most interesting studies of political communication have been framed in terms of the 'public sphere'. Originating in the work of Jurgen Habermas, it refers both to the content of open political debate and the arenas where such debates occur. Such arenas comprise institutionally guaranteed space, as much as locations set aside for political debate (McQuail, 1992).

The public sphere, thus, refers to a crucial subset of society's locations for political discussion – neither the private household nor the formally constituted and legally authoritative political institutions but the many venues in between where persons come together to discuss public questions: political parties, the press and private associations whether their aims are directly political or primarily religious, charitable, educational or social (Schudson, 1997). Habermas (1996: 55) explains the concept of public sphere thus:

By 'public sphere' we mean ... a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed ... A portion of the public sphere is constituted in every conversation in which persons come together to form a public ... Citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion; thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and publicize their opinions freely.

According to Irele (1999: 53), Habermas develops the concept of the public sphere in one of his earlier texts, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. In the text, Habermas notes that the public sphere sprang up in the eighteenth century with the rise of the bourgeois class as well as the capitalist economy and constitutional state. This was called the 'bourgeois' public sphere. They comprised private individuals who had come together to debate among themselves and with the state authorities on the rule which should inform the conduct of the civil society and that of the state.

According to Habermas, the bourgeois public sphere initially came into being in the realms of literature and was subsequently changed into a public sphere dealing directly with political issues. In the eighteenth century, the salons, coffee houses and pubs of Paris and London were the centres of discussions and debates where male members of the bourgeoisie, nobles, and intellectuals met to discuss works of literature. Thus, these open-ended conversations were always based upon practices of exclusion

since the qualificatory criteria of being rational, male and propertied were required for participation (Stevenson, 1993/94).

While the qualifications for taking an active part in dialogue remained overtly exclusive, the claim that was being made was that this activity constituted a mouthpiece for the public. The question that now arises is: how did these privileged few go about executing their so-called 'principle of publicity'? The print media helped their discussions and debates tremendously. Whereas the early print media only disseminated information of various kinds, in the course of eighteenth century they became actively engaged in the expression of political views. Thus, the print media became an avenue of critical political debate offering an ongoing commentary on and criticism of the actions of the authorities and putting forward alternative ideas in terms of the conduct of state authorities and mobilizing public opinion. Habermas (quoted by Irele, 1999: 54) has put the point succinctly:

The bourgeois public sphere (can) be understood as the sphere of private individuals assembled into a public body, which almost immediately laid claim to ... "intellectual newspapers" for use against the public authority itself. In those newspapers, and in moralistic and critical journals, they debated that public authority on the general rules of social intercourse in their fundamentally privatised yet publically relevant sphere...

Given this exposition, it is relevant that we appraise the seemingly incongruous dispositions of the bourgeois public sphere. This then brings

to bear the need to have a close examination of the public-private dichotomy. Irele (1999: 53) expatiates the dichotomy thus:

In the modern parlance of social and political discourse, what is "public" means something that is open or available to the public. In this regard or sense, the publicness of an action is what is observable or visible, what is performed in front of spectators, what is open for all (or many) to see or hear or hear about; what is private, in contrast, is what is hidden from view, what is said or done in privacy or secrecy or among a restricted circle of people.

In this regard, how 'public' then is the 'publicness' of the bourgeois public sphere? Commenting on this, Schudson (1997) remarks that the most widely understood criticism of the Habermasian ideal of the bourgeois public sphere speaks only to the ways in which that public sphere excluded categories of persons from public participation and was defined by those exclusions. Habermas, however, provides the way out with his exposition of the theory of communicative action. He defines 'communicative action' as 'the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbal or extra-verbal) means' (Habermas, 1984 cf. Chriss, 1995: 551).

Habermas argues that in every act of speech, we are capable of immanently raising three validity claims in connection with what is said. These three validity claims could be characterized as: propositional truth claims, normative claims related to appropriateness as well as claims

connected to sincerity. Stevenson (1993/94) then argues that the three pragmatic universals provide the basis for an 'ideal speech situation'. The ideal speech situation is best represented as communication without barriers. This can only be satisfied where there is an equality of opportunity to participate in communication and where a statement is only true if it could potentially command the free consent of everyone.

Consequently, it would only be in the context of a radical democracy that would allow the social conditions for the people to become fully aware of their needs and interests. Thus, Habermas, according to Stevenson (1993/94), is able, through the theory of communicative action, to provide the philosophical basis for the reconstruction of the public sphere. Cultural traditions, for Habermas, have to be stripped of their dogmatism so that we can test the intersubjective validity of moral principles and norms of action through more symmetrical relations of power. Kaplan (1997: 332), commenting on the rational, deliberative and participatory public sphere in a democratic dispensation, writes:

Only in the 'Democratic Age' is a social space created for the permissible expression of opposed points of view and interests ... No social group is considered automatically to possess the truth. Rather the truth and power of democracy derive from the permanently open and revisable deliberations produced by public opinion ... all citizens can freely enter as equals, present their views and issues and participate in the formation of a political consensus.

It is worthy of note that the identity of modern journalism is largely dependent upon the ideals and norms of the public sphere. Kaplan (1997) contends that journalism played a prominent role in the creation of both the American Revolution and a democratic imaginary. In the USA, with the development of a national consciousness in the 18th century, newspaper readers were no longer considered devout believers, nor merely private commercial traders, but instead became citizens with rights and duties of political self-determination.

Therefore, in the revolutionaries' vision, journalism was seen as central to the functioning of the young democracy. Kaplan (1997) further explains that it was only in the pages of the press that the populace could gather together as equals in a true deliberative body. The daily paper enabled the fiction of a pure horizontal community engaged in open and rational discussion over the affairs of government. Thus, in this imagery of political republicanism, the press was defined as integral to the workings of public opinion and to the identity of the new American nation.

Since the study of political communication goes beyond research into campaigns and public opinion, we now proceed to another major area of study, which revolves around language use in the political arena.

2.4 Language of Politics

The intricate bond between language and politics is such that it becomes difficult to conceive of politics without its medium - language. O'Barr (1976: 415) contends that 'multifarious devices are employed by political actors to achieve their goals but it is hard to conceive of any political strategies which do not involve language in the sense that it is the essence of the communication system which underlies social interaction.' In order to have an insightful assessment of the language-politics relationship, we would first of all have a close look at politics and what it entails. Thereafter, we would explicate the locus of meaning in communication. It is against this background that we would in the final analysis, gauge the full import of the political potential and meaning of language.

What is politics? Mazrui (1975: 170) writes:

Politics has often been defined as a constant search for methods of resolving conflicting interests. When politics was described as a struggle to determine "who gets what when and how", conflict was at the very heart of political activity in terms of inputs of demands, which are processed within a political system, some of which then emerge as outputs of politics and services.

It is in this light that Bretton (1976) sees the treatment of politics, at the level of individual interaction, as an art. For him, it may be an art of deception. Bretton (1976: 432), having surveyed political science titles,

scholarly books as well as articles and titles in related disciplines, concludes that:

Often politics appears to mean muddling, or meddling, fudging the edges of otherwise logical and precise argument, manipulating in the dark and by devious and secretive means; politics is finessing and deceiving. Or it means conducting irregularly what by non-political methods, or in a non-political context, would be conducted with regularity.

In the same vein, van Zoonen (1998) gives an account of how popular culture views politics, contending that the theme of the ordinary man landing in a pool of dishonesty, bribery and jargon called politics is an old and enduring one in popular culture. Also, contemporary genres have exploited the contradiction between big-city, national, perverted politics and the innocence and good-heartedness of ordinary people.

She explains that a special dichotomy in these oppositions is the one between traditional femininity and politics: in one of Barbara Cartland's hundreds of romantic novels, the heroine tries to do her bit for the 19th century peace negotiations of the Congress of Vienna but is told: 'Women should stay out of politics, and out of diplomacy too. At its best it is a dirty business' (Cartland 1976: 21). Here femininity in its traditional conception of purity and virtue is an obvious antithesis to politics. She, therefore, concludes that popular culture does not seem very supportive of mainstream political practice. Suspicion and disdain for the people's

representatives reign supreme and seem to go back as far as representation itself.

Writing on the nature of language, Bretton (1976: 434) posits that language is equally 'a delicate, sophisticated instrument and a blunt tool'. He emphasizes the enormous potential of language as a multi-purpose instrument in that the same phrase, the same figure of speech can convey subtly different meanings in different situations. Thus, Bretton (1976: 440) concludes that:

We know that language is a means used by man to conceal as well as to reveal. It is often a means of deception, partly to assure survival... If we accept that survival - either physical, social or economic - is at the core of politics and that much of political behaviour is verbal, then language must be accorded a high priority in political, especially behaviorally oriented, research.

Having given the necessary background to the language-politics relationship, we now review the locus of meaning in communication.

Buttney (1986) opines that the concept of meaning has been conceived traditionally along various bipolar continua: inner-outer, private-public, subject-object, individual-collective, and personal-social. Theorists who claim that the locus of meaning resides in the left-hand pole of these continua are said to subscribe to a version of subjectivism: "Meanings are in people, not in words," or "Meaning is 'in the head' of the individual". Buttney (1986) argues further that theorists who opt for the right-hand pole

tend to be objectivists: “Meaning is contained in the message,” or “Words have meanings by their reference to objects.”

But once the locus of meaning is assigned to an internal, mental realm, the problem arises: How can one know another person’s meanings, which are contained in his or her mind when it is only the external behaviours and physical states that are accessible? This puzzle, according to Buttny (1986), has been called the ‘other minds problem’. It is interesting to note, however, that ‘Wittgenstein’s meaning as use’ perspective offers an alternative approach to meaning. For Wittgenstein, instead of the locus of meaning being ‘in’ the mind or ‘in’ the behaviours, meanings are based on the satisfaction of criteria. Criteria of meaning are dependent on context or ‘circumstances’. Circumstances include background knowledge, temporally prior events, expectations, interpersonal relationship, social institutions, and so on.

So far, we have considered the locus of meaning in communication. Now, we consider George Orwell’s conception of the decadence that has come over the English language via politics.

George Orwell’s most detailed discussion of language and writing is contained in his famous essay, ‘Politics and the English Language’. In this essay, he provides five examples of writing which he says are typical of what is wrong with prevalent political styles. He observes that two

weaknesses are common to them. The first is staleness of imagery. That is, words and phrases which are meant to conjure up vivid expressions fail to do so because the words have outlived their usefulness. The second is lack of precision, by which he means being vague or covering up what one is saying in such a mass of words that meaning becomes obscure. He concludes that this mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence is the most marked characteristic of modern English prose and especially of any kind of political writing.

He proceeds in his argument by giving detailed instances of ways in which English is being misused. His first example includes 'dying metaphors' where comparisons which used to be powerful have now lost all power due to being overused, for example, 'toe the line', 'fishing in troubled waters', 'Achilles' heel', and so on. He also attacks the use of phrases which he calls 'verbal false limbs', for example, the habit of writing a phrase such as 'render inoperative' instead of 'stop' or 'break'. Another thing he criticizes is 'pretentious diction', that is, dressing up simple statements in long words or complex terms in order to make them sound better. According to him, adjectives like 'epoch-making', 'historic', 'inevitable', and so on are used to dignify the sordid processes of international politics.

Therefore, while relating the language of politics to extra-linguistic events, he points out that political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face and which do not square with the professed aims of political parties. Thus, political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. In this regard, he concludes that political language 'is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind' (Orwell, 1965: 315).

He contends that the great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms. It is on this premise that he laments that the English language has suffered a gradual decline and that there has been a global shift towards abstraction in language use; the word has usurped the authority of the thing. He, proposing to refine and improve language, then cautions: 'What is above all needed is to let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way about.' He also cautions that in prose, one should make effort to cut out all

stale or mixed images, all prefabricated phrases, needless repetition and vagueness generally which can blur or even change one's meaning.

Having considered Orwell's conception of the politics–language relationship, we proceed to his treatment of the subject in his fictional writings.

In Orwell's first novel, *Burmese Days*, he touches on the problem of language within an oppressive social order (Rai, 1988). In another novel of his, *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell's handling of language in his effort to tell the truth is remarkable (Ferns, 1988). *Animal Farm* is one of the great allegories of modern literature. It is an early, imaginative reflection on the devices by which language was misused and distorted to reverse the truth as all political movements and ideologies have sought, consciously or not, to establish usages of words and symbols to suit their own purposes (McQuail, 1992).

Nineteen Eighty-four is considered Orwell's most successful novel and it would be our guide in paying close attention to Orwell's insight into the ideological sensitivity of language and the consequent possibilities of ideological bondage. Steinhoff (1975) argues that an important feature of *Nineteen Eighty-four*, distinguishing it from other books about the future, is Orwell's preoccupation with the ways the state can control the thoughts and emotions of its subjects without a wasteful expenditure of force. He further explains that 'thoughtcrime' 'duckspeak', the rewriting of history and 'double-think' are features of the induced schizophrenia or 'reality control'

being aimed at by the leaders. Therefore, in the state of Oceania, the party creates a totalitarian state that annihilates all opposition. In the forefront of the party stands 'Big Brother', a figure of almost mythical power. We then see Winston Smith's rebellion against the party, of his hatred of 'Big Brother', and of the 'thought-crime' which must result in his destruction.

Rai (1988) points out that the matter of language - 'Newspeak' - is central to Orwell's conception of the suffocating tyranny of *Nineteen Eighty-four* epitomized in a single ideology called 'Ingsoc'. Language is, therefore, one of the key instruments of political domination, the necessary means of the totalitarian control of reality. Delany (1988: 97), in the same vein, points out that:

Orwell imagines the ultimate abuse of language in Newspeak, consciously designed to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought - that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc - should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words.

Also, Steinhoff (1975: 169) comments:

Newspeak, like 1984 itself is a projection of existing tendencies toward the debasement of English when it is used in politics. Newspeak as a medium for doublethink is thus solidly grounded in Orwell's professional experience as a writer and in his ideas about language as an instrument for attaining power.

At this point, we return to the poser we earlier touched on: Within which locus of meaning in communication does the ascription of the

meaning of language of politics, as espoused so far, fall? Is it the epistemological dualist view or the Wittgensteinian 'meaning as use' perspective?

Let us recall that central to Orwell's quarrel with the language of politics is that there has been a shift towards 'abstraction' in language use. Therefore, the first article of Orwell's creed is that meaning is founded on things rather than words. We may then begin to wonder why Orwell persistently returns to the idea that truth lies in objects. Delany (1988) answers that it is apparently because he fears the alternative suggested in O'Brien's interrogation of Winston: 'But I tell you, Winston that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else.' (*Nineteen Eighty-four* p. 24).

It is on this premise that we submit that the interpretation of the meaning of language of politics is assigned to an internal, mental realm; it is not amenable to contextual criteria as espoused in Wittgenstein's 'meaning as use' perspective. This viewpoint becomes clearer when we compare the language of politics with the language of advertising. The ascription of meaning in the latter is based on the conventions of our use of language. This is summarized in George Orwell's view (quoted in Steinhoff, 1975: 167) that:

If you compare commercial advertising with political propaganda, one thing that strikes you is its relative intellectual honesty. The advertiser at least knows what he is aiming at - that is, money - whereas the propagandist ... is often neurotic working off some private grudge and actually desirous of the exact opposite of the thing he advocates.

Given this locus of meaning of language of politics, the object of communication in political arenas, then, may not be far removed from Speier's (1977: 471) view that:

... the object of communication is not necessarily to inform and obtain understanding. It may be not to spread knowledge to a given ignoramus but to maintain his ignorance, not to profess feelings but to hide or feign them; to lead astray rather than to guide the perplexed; not to give the best advice but the next best; not to enlighten but to obscure, to explain inadequately, to oversimplify, to slant, to popularize, to tell only part of the truth, to mask it, or simply to lie.

And the ascription of language use in this sense, we could add, exists only in the head of the individual - the propagandist - and not that the criteria of meaning are dependent on context or circumstances.

Generally speaking, our discussion of politics so far could be viewed as a warped conception of politics and all it entails. In this sense, we could be seen as holding the popular view that politics is a dirty game full of hypocrisy, pretence and deceit. Reacting to such a stance, Oke (2001: 9) writes:

Common to political scientists, politicians and political philosophers is the act of thinking politically. This act is to be contrasted with the popular, but not necessarily

true, opinion of the masses that politics is a dirty and morally deplorable activity of manouvering (sic) to gain some advantage; often undeserved, unmerited and morally unjustifiable.

Oke (2001), therefore, makes a distinction between politics as a concept and politicians as the practitioners. In his view, although some, or even many, politicians are dirty, dirtiness cannot for that reason alone be read into the meaning of politics. In his assessment of the concept, politics is:

... the network of activities of people who are related by authority with respect to the allocation of resources, power, rights, obligations, liberties, benefits and sanctions. As such politics is a socially manipulative distribution mechanism (2001:9).

... the authoritative allocation of values, being a form of activity which focuses on the quest for competitive advantage in various social situations. The element of competition here derives from the fact that politics can only exist in a situation of continuous change and relative scarcity of everything in social life (2001:10).

Although politics is not conceptually dirty, it is noteworthy that its essential organizing principles - 'socially manipulative distribution mechanism and the quest for competitive advantage' - as shown in Oke's (2001) definitions above make its practice susceptible to maneuvering by the practitioners, the so-called rules of the game notwithstanding. On a final note, politicians' manoeuvring tendencies to achieve their ultimate goals could be summed up in Oscar Ameringer's view, quoted in Wilson (1995: 300), that:

Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other.

What else could language use in this situation look like if it is not pretentious and deceptive?

We have had a critical look at the language of politics and would now discuss the rhetoric of political conflict in post-colonial Nigeria.

2.5 Rhetoric and Political Conflict in Post-colonial Nigeria

The popular conception of politics as 'who gets what when and how' centres on the foremost and pivotal concept in politics – power. Writing on the acquisition of power, Oke (2001: 21) explains:

In the bid to acquire power in any context, there are certain minimal rules and procedures to follow. The concept of power has its own language. Moreso, being the goal of a game, power has its own rules on the basis of which it and its possessors can be assessed from a variety of standpoints.

However, despite the so-called rules and procedures that guide access to power, it is practically the case that the sharing of power and its concomitants such as privileges, rights, obligations and resources among the members of a group, on the one hand, and among the different groups that make up an entity, on the other hand, has always been characterized by the generation of conflict. But what could it be that precipitates conflict in politics?

Oke (2001:25) explains that 'in politics, power is the instrument with which interests are promoted (by those who have it), and which shapes the will of those who lack it.' Explaining further, he cites Friedrich Nietzsche's view that those who have political power (the strong) will do 'whatever they can' while those who lack or have relatively less political power (the weak) will suffer 'what they must'. Given this interactive situation and its underlying consequences, conflict is inevitable as the 'victims' and 'users of political power' (Oke 2001) have opposing ultimate objectives to pursue: while the 'victims' would challenge the 'users of political power' with a view to effecting structural changes, the 'users of political power' would mount up resistance to the forces of change with a view to maintaining the status quo. This is the crux of political conflict.

It is in this light that Miall (1992), cited in Idowu (1999: 74), suggests four criteria as useful in describing a conflict situation with its attendant political dimension. Among the criteria is the fact that there must be a clear difference of opinion regarding values, interests, aims or relations that lie at the root of a political conflict. Idowu (1999), however, points out that political conflict does not lie in mere difference of opinion, values, and so on, but in the desire to resolve these differences of opinion and interests.

At this stage, it is imperative to note that in Nigeria's political history, the struggle for places of power appears to have evolved a peculiar

pattern; empirical evidence seems to demonstrate the validity of the view that political conflict in Nigeria is about identity. Iwara (2004:19) sees identity politics as: ‘ . . . politics in which considerations of ethnicity, cultural and religious affinity predominate and influence decision-making . . . ’ He argues that although identity politics in Nigeria as a subject may be very recent, the phenomenon is as old as society. Drawing on Nigeria’s political history, he makes reference to the predominance of ethnic identity in the 1959 general elections, the 1963 Northern People’s Congress – National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NPC-NCNC) coalition at the federal level plotted to excise the non-Yoruba Mid-West from the Yoruba Western Region, the January 15, 1966 coup, among others.

Apart from these events, Idowu (1999) points out that the politics of alienation and domination and their general effects on the outbreak of political conflict can be clearly illustrated in two prominent aspects of Nigeria’s history: the Nigerian civil war 1967–70 and the crisis and conflict that erupted in the wake of the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election. Idowu’s view corroborates that of Oha (1997a: 136) who points out that the country fought a thirty-month civil war in which ‘ethnic security’, ‘ethnic domination’, ‘ethnic rebellion’, and so on, were among the key words. Oha (1997a) also calls attention to the ethnic dimension in the ‘June 12’ crisis in which Chief M.K.O. Abiola, a Yoruba man, believed to have won the presidential election, was prevented from ruling.

At the socio-cultural level, interethnic cooperation has also been low. In his study of Chukwumeka Ike and Isidore Okpewho who have presented ethnic discrimination in their respective novels, *Toads for Supper* and *The Last Duty*, (Oha 1997a: 139) explains:

In *Toads for Supper*, ethnicity and ethnocentrism orchestrate a tragic end to the desire for a cross-ethnic marriage between Amadi Chukwuka (an Igbo man) and Aduke Olowu (a Yoruba lady), while in *The Last Duty*, they play a significant role in destroying Oshevire's cross-ethnic marriage, and even Oshevire himself, in a time of ethno-based war.

Generally, intergroup relations in Nigeria have been vitiated by ethnocentrism. Eteng (2004: 46) describes ethnocentrism as 'the evaluation of, and response to, other ethnic groups' total cultures or segments of them, in terms of one's prevailing cultural value standards and practices.' According to him, such evaluations often give rise to negative stereotypes, among other discriminatory practices. Besides normal everyday interactions in which negative labelling is part of the people's stock-in-trade, Oha (1997a: 142) cites Chukwumeka Ike's *Toads for Supper* where the Yoruba characters, for instance, refer to Igbo characters as 'kobokobo' (inferior person). Giving further examples, he points out that the Igbo refer to the Yoruba as 'Ndi Ofe Mmanu' (Those who cook oily soup), or to the Efik-Ibibio as 'Ndi imi nkita' (Dog-nose people) or 'Nmono' (a mimicry that suggests the vulgarity of the language, or the language as the language

of the uncivilized). The Efik-Ibibio, in turn, refer to the Igbo as 'Unene' (people who are dominance-oriented). He then remarks that these aspects of verbal hostility show the depth of ethnic divide in the Nigerian polity.

It is pertinent to note that the ethno-domination in Nigeria sometimes assumes an economic dimension. In this regard, Eghagha (2004: 151) notes: 'The main grouse of the champions of identity politics in Nigeria is with how the nation's economic resources are shared (or stolen) or utilized (or wasted).' Given this situation, the majority-minority dichotomy is brought to the fore, with the minority groups pressing for their rights. Arguing further, Eghagha comments: 'More than ever before, minority groups are pressing for their political and economic rights in the affairs of the nation. They have called for the review of the procedure or formula of sharing revenues accruing to the federation account' (2004: 152).

Such agitations have found expression in the life writings of the late Ogoni activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa: *A Month and a Day* (1995), *Second Letter to Ogoni Youth* (1992a) and *Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni Tragedy* (1992b) where he presents the Ogoni as a nation that has been 'colonized' by the major ethnic groups that have been producing Nigeria's rulers (cf. Oha, 1999: 211). Oha further notes that the trope of slavery in inter-ethnic conflict discourse is not used only in minority-majority cross-ethnic interactions but also in majority-majority inter-ethnic relations. He stresses the fact that before its use in Saro-Wiwa's *Second Letter to Ogoni Youth*,

Chukwumeke Odumegwu Ojukwu had used it mainly in some of his war speeches and in his life writing, *Because I am Involved* (1989).

Judging from the foregoing, we could establish that the major issue that has become a constant variable in the post-colonial history of Nigeria's (political) conflict is ethnicity. Summing up the scenario, Idowu (1999: 83) argues:

Over the years, successive governments and regimes are often defined in the sense of a dominant ruling group and subjected, excluded groups. This consistent pattern in the nature of governance and rule and the inordinate, unbridled ambition to perpetually dominate others, coupled with the struggle to monopolize the resource allocating elements of the state are the factors that account for the problems of citizenship, statehood and their effects on the incidence of political conflict in Nigeria.

Given this unwholesome situation, how then have Nigerian political public speakers handled the ghost of ethno-plurality and its repercussions on the individual and on interpersonal/intergroup relations in the rhetoric of political conflict?

In order to have an indepth grasp of the rhetorical style employed by political public speakers in relation to the thorny issue of ethno-plurality, we have to shed some light on the two main conflicting political sub-cultures – the military and the civilian. This is in realization of the fact that the sub-culture of the speaker necessarily becomes a variable that constrains his/her rhetorical style as the orientations of each political sub-

culture directly or indirectly affect the nature of the political rhetoric turned out by its respective members. Affirming this claim, Oha (1997b: 41) posits:

... the fact that any of these political sub-cultures controls power at any given time could affect the rhetorical style employed by a political public speaker in the country. Also a speaker's membership of these political sub-cultures could affect his or her style – since s/he must identify with the interests of his or her group or seek to accommodate the other group – and also affect the way the multicultural/multiethnic audience would receive his or her speech. S/he could be perceived as speaking as a representative of his or her ethnolinguistic or cultural group, and not as a private individual.

The political public speaker is, therefore, saddled with the responsibility of considering the interests of the diverse ethno-cultural entities in his/her discourse, as political rhetoric in such a volatile situation cannot afford to do less if the speaker is to present himself or herself as a 'nationalist'. To this effect, Oha (2000: 75) argues that 'Political rhetoric in a plural context like that of Nigeria inevitably needs to consider the realities of diversity and the desires of the collectivities that constitute the polity.'

It is in this light that Nigerian political public speakers give the impression that they show respect for group difference, reassuring the audience of ethnic security and strengthening the feelings of solidarity,

identity, or ingroupness. Oha (1997b: 45) notes that, ironically, this is not just an attempt at harmonizing the ethno-cultural diversities. He observes:

It is also an attempt by the political public speaker to "sell" his or her image as a desirable person; as a patriot who is after what is "good" and just. Thus he or she uses such a posture in seeking and enlisting support; and, conversely, putting his or her political opponents at disadvantage (1997b: 45).

Oha's view expressed above is corroborated by Afolayan's (1999: 68) assertion that 'the resultant conflictual ethnic pluralism even became a tool in the hands of opportunistic politicians who whipped up the very primordial tribal sentiments to further their selfish interests'.

Although the tactic of appealing to ethno-cultural diversities is a marked feature of Nigerian political rhetoric in times of political crisis, it is not always that political rhetoric mitigates the threat to ethno-cultural face wants of the audience. Precisely, Oha (1997b) calls attention to political speeches made in times of ethnically based conflict, for instance the Nigeria-Biafra war, in which evidence abounds of the threat to ethnic face wants in both the speeches of Yakubu Gowon and Emeka Ojukwu (see Oha, 1994).

It is expedient that we focus on how military leaders have handled the issue of ethnicity, especially in coup speeches. Oha (1997b: 49) observes that most of the military coup speeches in Nigeria, probably with the exception of the speech made by Gideon Orkar when he and his

colleagues tried to seize power from General Ibrahim Babangida on 22 April, 1990, appear to avoid threat to ethnic face wants. Adegbija (1995: 253-254), quoted in Oha (1997b), sees this avoidance as being strategic since the coup plotter-addresser is also out to enlist support and cannot afford to rouse ethnic rage against himself and against any other group he is believed to represent.

It is, therefore, the case that although the military sub-culture is characterized by coercive modes of interaction, the coup plotter-addresser is torn between the use of coercive strategies and that of persuasive strategies. Oha (1997b) argues that this becomes necessary since either of these alone may not be effective enough in such a complex mixed-audience situation. He refers to this paradoxical style as 'coercive persuasion'. This style is also found in the speeches made by military heads of government in Nigeria.

To sum up, the perception of difference that underlies inter-ethnic relations and the conflicting political cultures of the military and the civilian are the two main variables that constrain the rhetorical style of Nigeria's post-colonial conflict. This review, therefore, presents us with the historical antecedents of political conflict in Nigeria and their characteristic rhetorical style. Thus, we are provided with the background against which

we can study the conflict and the rhetorical style underlying the 'June 12' crisis.

2.6 Summary

We have attempted to shed light on some striking topics that fall within the purview of this study. In an attempt to provide an insightful review, we have juxtaposed and evaluated scholars' viewpoints and also paid attention to the interdependency relation of the topics. With this exposition, we have a background against which we can locate our subsequent discussions and analyses in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

3.1 Introduction

Our major preoccupation in this chapter is to present the theoretical orientation of this study. In this light, we explore the linguistic and non-linguistic theories that could facilitate a lucid and comprehensive analysis of the data for this study. Equally, we attempt to justify the suitability of such models to our study of language use in conflict situation.

3.2 Exploration of Relevant Linguistic Theories

With the publications of Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957) and *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965), which inaugurated and advertised Transformational Generative Grammar, Chomsky made a direct appeal to psychologists, particularly to the new cognitive psychologists. In Chomsky's conception, a theory of grammar is a psychological theory, a theory of the native speaker; rules formulated to characterize the organization of language must also characterize the knowledge of the native speaker who speaks the language. Hence language, which was formerly a relatively unpopular topic, swiftly became a major area of psychological interest and the focus shifted from verbal behaviour to the cognitive bases of language knowledge.

Other salient features of the theory are: it recognizes a level of deep structure and a level of surface structure, the two being related by sets of transformations; the syntactic component of the grammar is generative while the semantic component is interpretive. Moreover, the theory attempts to account for the ability of human mind to produce an infinite number of sentences from finite set of rules.

Although the principles of Transformational Generative Grammar could enhance important stylistic operations within the sentence, the model has some inadequacies. Among these is the poor treatment of the relationship between meaning, situation and style. Also, the model is a sentence grammar and its approach to style is likewise sentential.

Therefore, sociolinguists have contended that the problem with the Chomskyan theory is that of accounting for aspects of language in a theoretical system that conceives of language abstracted from speakers and use. It is the contention of such linguists that the most difficult aspects of language are those that seem unexplainable without referring to a speaker, a communicative intention, an occasion of use, or a context. A complete account of meaning will not be obtained by looking at language alone, language stripped of its users and intentions (Fleisher Feldman, 1986).

It is, therefore, remarkable that, since the method of analysis proposed in this study is one that necessitates recourse to the context of

situation, it is obvious that Transformational Generative Grammar would be grossly inadequate. So long as this research work dwells essentially on political communication, it is expedient that we have an insight into the purview of political communication. It is based on our understanding of its purview that we adopt a linguistic theory. Schudson (1997: 312) explains that:

Political communication is not dormant between campaign speeches, rallies, pamphlets and news reports. There is a background hum all the time. There is a political ground for which the speeches, rallies, pamphlets and reports are no more than figures, and the ground itself trembles with communicative import. No one can understand political communication by examining the texts alone; the ground against which the meaning comes to be has to be examined.

From the foregoing submission, it is relevant that we examine the Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics and then assess its suitability to the analysis of this study.

Butler (1989) remarks that Halliday's current version of systemic functional grammar, as set out in Halliday (1978), Halliday and Hasan (1980, 1985), is explicitly sociolinguistic in its orientation. The 'meaning potential' of language encapsulated in its system networks is seen as the most important form of realization of a 'higher' behavioural potential, which is itself conceived as a 'social semiotic', a system of categories with their own relative values and thus, in Firthian terms, their own meanings.

A central role in the model is occupied by the category of text. Closely tied to this is the recognition of the fact that texts are produced and received in contexts of situation. The claim that the relationship between text and context is a systematic one distinguishes this model from the Chomskyan model which preferred to view language as if it is produced by a homogeneous speech community. The term 'context of situation' originated from Malinowski who, according to Peng (1986: 93), argues that:

... utterance and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensable for the understanding of the words. Exactly as in the reality of spoken or written languages, a word without linguistic context is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself, so in the reality of a spoken living tongue, the utterance has no meaning except in the context of situation.

When Firth took over the concept of situation as an ardent follower of Malinowski, he elaborated it with some modification. According to Firth (1957: 181), a context of situation for linguistic work brings into relation the following variables:

- a. The relevant features of participants: persons, personalities
 1. The verbal action of the participants
 2. The non-verbal action of the participants
- b. The relevant objects
- c. The effect of the verbal action
To these Peng (1975: 8) adds one category
- d. The effect of the non-verbal action

Firth's elaboration sees the context of situation as an abstract representation of the environment in terms of certain general categories having relevance to the text. It is in this light that Halliday (1975: 25), says that 'The situation is the environment in which the text comes to life' (cf. Peng 1986: 96).

Peng (1986) argues that the 'situation' is a theoretical sociolinguistic construct; it is for this reason that we interpret a particular situation type, or social context as a semiotic structure. According to him, the semiotic structure of a situation type can be represented as a complex of three dimensions: the on-going social activity, the role relationships involved and the symbolic or rhetorical channel. These have been referred to respectively as field, tenor and mode. The field is the domain of social action in which the text is embedded; it includes the subject matter as one special manifestation. The tenor is the set of role relationships among the relevant participants; it encompasses levels of formality as one particular instance. The mode is the channel or wavelength selected, which is essentially the function that is assigned to language in the total structure of the situation; it is made up of the medium (spoken or written).

In the same vein, Butler (1989) argues that the context of situation is specified in terms of the values of the variables of field, tenor and mode, which were initially developed in the 60s by Halliday, Gregory, Ellis, Ure

and others. Field is “that which is ‘going on’, and has recognizable meaning in the social system; typically a complex of acts in some ordered configurations, and in which the text is playing some part, and including ‘subject matter’ as one special aspect”; tenor is concerned with “cluster of socially meaningful participant relationships, both permanent attributes of the participants and the role relationships that are specific to the situation”; and mode relates to “the particular status that is assigned to the text within the situation; its function in relation to the social action and the role structure, including the channel or medium, and the rhetorical mode” (Halliday, 1978: 142-43). Butler (1989) argues further that values of field, tenor and mode variables are claimed to have a selective activating effect on meaning choices within the ideational, interpersonal and textual components respectively.

It is against this backdrop that we discuss the most important sense of function in Hallidayan linguistics which is concerned with Halliday’s claim, first made in the late 60s, that the grammar itself is functionally organized in terms of ideational, interpersonal and textual components, or metafunctions. First, it has an ideational function in the sense that it has to convey a message about reality, about the world of experience from the speaker to the hearer. Second, it has an interpersonal function in that it must fit appropriately into a speech situation, fulfilling the particular social

designs that the speaker has upon the hearer. Third, it has a textual function in the sense that it must be well constructed as an utterance or text so as to serve the decoding needs of the hearer (Halliday, 1985).

Earlier than Halliday's discussion of these metafunctions, he had treated the essential elements of structure of scale and category linguistics as essentially grammatical functions. Also, he treated the idea of functional roles with the inclusion of transitivity functions of Actor, Goal, and so on, and the thematic functions of Theme and Rheme, and so on.

Having explicated the major tenets of the systemic functional linguistics, we now evaluate the suitability of this linguistic model to our study of language use in conflict situation. In the first place, we recall Mack's and Synder's (1957: 225) argument that conflict occurs in, affects, and in turn is affected by, a surrounding environment. Conflict must be researched and analyzed against the background of the total social system in which it occurs. This then brings to the fore our domain of study, political or power conflict in which we have chosen to analyze select speeches of the three individuals who are caught in the web of the conflict in question. In view of this, the textual and situational orientation of the Hallidayan systemic functional model would aid our study of the analysis of language use in conflict situation in that it provides the necessary theoretical underpinning for the correlation between the text analysis and

the context of situation. Further linked to these strengths of the Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics, in relation to our present study, is the importance accorded to applicability as a criterion for evaluation of the grammar. Butler (1989) remarks that Halliday has always made it plain that he is interested not simply in language in and for itself, but also what linguistic theory can offer to the applied study of texts in fields such as stylistics and educational linguistics and in the feedback which such applications can offer to the theory itself. Therefore, our adoption of this linguistic model for the stylistic analysis of language use in conflict situation would be quite insightful.

Before we conclude our exploration of the systemic-functional linguistics, we would demonstrate how the systemic linguistic theory could be expanded to accommodate insights from critical theory, especially those from Habermas and Hall that we identified in the literature review. In this respect, we discuss the relevance of the 'connotative semiotics' model - a strand of the systemic-linguistic theory outlined by Martin (1985).

A major strand of the Martinian model is the relationship between genre and ideology. According to Martin (1985: 250), quoted by Butler (1989: 16), genre is 'how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them'. Genre, in this sense, is the driving force underlying register and, ultimately, the linguistic system. The ideological semiotic.

viewed dynamically, is concerned with the taking up of options to challenge or defend particular world views.

We would recall that central to Hall's approach is the concept of class-biased ideology or hegemony which suggests that the news media present us with a very narrow view of the world which upholds the interests of the dominant class. And this practice was a salient feature of the bourgeois public sphere where those that met the qualificatory criteria of being rational, male and propertied constituted the mouthpiece for the public and their discussions and debates were helped tremendously by the print media. Thus, communication in this situation is a reflection of the relationship between genre and ideology as enunciated in the Martinian connotative semiotics model.

Butler (1989) also points out that highly relevant to the issue of language and ideology as well as to the relationship between genre and register is Lemke's work on 'intertextuality'. Lemke's (1985: 275) basic thesis is that 'every text, the discourse of every occasion, makes sense in part through implicit and explicit relationships of particular kinds to other texts, to the discourse of other occasions' (cf. Butler 1989: 18). According to Lemke, although register is a useful way into intertextual relations, the study of intertextuality requires an approach which emphasizes the global patterning of language use and social interaction rather than the relatively

local patterns which form the basis of register studies. Hence, in this study, we attempt to locate our views within previously existing knowledge of studies (in the same domain) with a view to finding out areas of overlap or divergence.

It is noteworthy that the importance of text in systemic functional linguistics is entirely consonant with the upsurge of interest in suprasentential patterning. This brings to bear some other approaches to the study of language that would be quite relevant to this study. It is in this light that we now discuss the approaches of discourse analysis and pragmatics.

3.3 Discourse Analyses and Pragmatics

Discourse analysis covers any study of systemic patterning above the sentence. Therefore, the unit of discourse is not the grammatically defined sentence or clause. This does not imply that linguistic forms are totally irrelevant in discourse processes. Rather, we would adopt a compromise position which views discourse analysis, on the one hand, as the study of linguistic forms and the regularities of their distribution and, on the other hand, as a consideration of the general principles by which people interpret what they hear or read (Brown and Yule, 1983: x).

One of the major concerns of the discourse analyst is to distinguish between the linguistic forms of utterances and the actions they perform in discourse. This is in consonance with Labov's (1972) popular assertion that in discourse analysis it is necessary to distinguish 'what is said' from 'what is done' (quoted in Coulthard, 1977: 7). This has to do with the fact that there is an indirect relationship between grammatical form and discourse function (McTear 1979: 393-394). Hence, the interpretation of a given utterance in a discourse may involve the specification of certain conditions regarding the situation of utterance and the knowledge of speaker and hearer of certain conversational maxims and social roles, rights and obligations. In this regard, we mean discourse functions which arise from some principles of interpretation, taking into consideration such notions as shared knowledge/assumed common ground, inference, reference, implicature, and so on.

Having discussed discourse functions, we need to verify their suitability to our analysis of language use in conflict situation. In the first place, our appeal to discourse functions of utterances would enable us (in the course of analyzing our data) to employ some non-linguistic models, especially in media studies. Such models would be used to explicate some communicative strategies that are used by the interactants in the 'June 12' crisis. Besides, they would enable us to take into consideration certain

models in speech studies which have philosophical and pragmatic implications. It is in this sense that we appeal to the discourse strategies used in the conflict situation, hinging our analysis on the rhetorical model and 'facework'. Let us now discuss the rhetorical model and later return to the concept of 'facework'.

As to the relevance of the rhetorical model, we would be able to reveal the correlation between rhetorical style and strategies in conflict situation. This is in line with Spencer's (1970: 612-613) view that:

Rhetorics are weapons of political struggle and their skillful use demands a thorough knowledge of rhetorical dynamics ... Every political arena is characterized by a field of potentially appropriate rhetorics ... The skillful politician thus chooses his rhetorics with an eye to his audience and the impact he desires, much as the lady of fashion selects her clothes with an eye to the occasion; in both cases rapid changes of costume are often in order.

It is against this backdrop that we explore the art of rhetoric, paying close and particular attention to the tenets of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. This discussion provides the basis for our subsequent reference to the rhetorical style of the interactants in the discourse.

Aristotle sees rhetoric as a counterpart of Dialectic for both have to do with matters that are in a manner within the cognizance of all men and not confined to any special science. Aristotle argues that his predecessors (previous compilers of *Rhetoric*) say nothing about *enthymemes* which are the body of proof but chiefly devote their attention to matters outside the

subject for the arousing of prejudice, compassion, anger and similar emotions which have no connection with the matter in hand.

According to Aristotle, *rhetoric* may be defined as 'the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever' (Aristotle, 1959:15). In his thinking, therefore, the function of rhetoric is not so much to persuade as to find out in each case the existing means of persuasion. These means of persuasion consist of proofs which are (1) inartificial and (2) artificial. The former include: witnesses, tortures, contracts and so on; they are not furnished by the rhetorician but are already in existence. However, the latter can be constructed by system and the rhetorician's efforts. Thus, Aristotle concludes that we make use of the former, whereas we must invent the latter.

He further explains that artificial proofs are of three kinds. The first depends upon the moral character of the speaker, the second upon putting the hearer into a certain frame of mind, the third upon the speech, by the speech itself. The orator persuades by moral character when his speech is delivered in such a manner as to render him worthy of confidence, by means of his hearers when they are roused to emotion by his speech, by the speech itself when we establish the true or apparently true from the means of persuasion applicable to each individual subject. To this end, the orator must be a competent judge of virtue and character; he must have a thorough

knowledge of the emotions (or passions); and he must possess the power of reasoning. This being so, *rhetoric* in Aristotle's conception, must be considered an offshoot of Dialectic and of politics (including ethics).

As regards logical proofs, Aristotle identifies two kinds. According to him, just as Dialectic possesses two modes of argument, induction and the syllogism, the same is the case in rhetoric which is composed of the 'example' and the 'enthymeme'. Accordingly, he calls an 'enthymeme' a rhetorical syllogism and an 'example' rhetorical induction. There are two kinds of example, namely one which consists in relating things that have happened before, and another in inventing them oneself. *Enthymemes* are formed from probabilities and signs. Signs are of two kinds: necessary and unnecessary.

According to Aristotle, some unnecessary signs are related as the particular to the universal. For instance, if one were to say that all wise men are just because Socrates was both wise and just, this is a sign, but even though the particular statement is true, it can be refuted because it cannot be reduced to syllogistic form. Other unnecessary signs are related as the universal to the particular, for instance, if one were to say that it is a sign that this man has a fever because he breathes hard. Even if the fact is true, this argument also can be refuted for it is possible for a man to breathe hard without having a fever. However, if one were to say that it is a sign

that a man is ill because he has fever or that a woman has had a child because she has milk, this is a necessary sign from which a logical syllogism can be constructed.

Aristotle further explains that the kinds of rhetoric are three in number, corresponding to the three kinds of hearers for every speech is composed of three parts: the speaker, the subject of which he treats, and the person to whom it is addressed. He argues that the hearer must necessarily be either a mere spectator or a judge and a judge either of things past or things to come. Therefore, there are necessarily three kinds of rhetorical speeches, *deliberative*, *forensic* and *epideictic*.

The deliberative kind is either hortatory or dissuasive; the forensic kind is either accusatory or defensive; the *epideictic* kind has for its subject praise or blame. According to Aristotle, to each of these a special time is appropriate: to *deliberative* the future; to the *forensic* the past; and to the *epideictic* most appropriately the present or sometimes the past and the future.

Finally, Aristotle points out that as there are three special kinds of rhetoric, so are there three special ends. The end of the deliberative speaker is the expedient or harmful for he who exhorts recommends a course of action as better and he who dissuades advises against it as worse.

The end of the *forensic* speaker is the just or the unjust. The end of those who praise or blame is the honourable and disgraceful.

In sum, our discussion so far has shed light on the tenets of Aristotle's rhetoric. Given the exposition of this model, we would be able to account for the rhetorical style of the interactants in the discourse, bearing in mind, however, the twin uses of the art. To this effect, Johnson (1981: 93) argues:

... it must be said that powerful rhetoric is not reserved for use in expressing and promoting only the good in humanity. Rhetorical situations also include instances that reveal the baser aspect of human nature ... The demagogue, the charlatan and the tyrant, they too can conjure the magic of rhetoric, just as can the wise, the good and the just.

At this point, we go ahead to explicate the concept of 'facework' so that our subsequent reference to its features in the data analysis would be well founded.

The concept of 'face' has attracted the attention of scholars in communication research, particularly Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) model which extended Goffman's (1967) concept of face. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) distinguish between two kinds of face: positive face and negative face. According to them, positive face is the want to be thought of as a desirable human being (or desire for approval), while negative face is the want not to be imposed on by others (or desire for

autonomy). Social actors are expected to mutually attend to both positive and negative face when engaged in social interactions. However, many communicative acts are inherently face-threatening since those acts by nature run contrary to the face wants of either a hearer or a speaker. This underscores the relevance of the politeness theory.

In the Brown and Levinson model, politeness is the expression of the speaker's intention to mitigate face threats carried by face-threatening acts. To put it differently, politeness consists of efforts to save face for another. Thus, the main function of positive politeness is to satisfy a hearer's positive face, while negative politeness acknowledges a hearer's negative face.

However, communication studies based on Brown and Levinson's model generally found that the model could not adequately explain people's facework in communicative interaction. To this end, Lim and Bowers (1991) argue that the limited explanatory power of Brown and Levinson's model becomes evident when we examine the validity of two propositions fundamental to it. First, Brown and Levinson (1978) proposed that negative politeness is more face-saving than positive politeness (the unidimensionality proposition). Thus, when people perform an act that highly threatens either face of the other, they will prefer negative politeness to positive politeness.

Second, Brown and Levinson proposed that positive politeness is approach based, while negative politeness is avoidance based (the approach-avoidance distinction). In other words, positive politeness actively gives positive face to the other whereas negative politeness passively avoids taking negative face from the other. Lim and Bowers (1991) contend that it is reasonable to conceptualize positive and negative politeness in this way if the concern is with face threatening acts that threaten negative face only.

These inadequacies of Brown's and Levinson's politeness model led Lim and Bowers (1991) to extend the model to explain various types of facework performed by communicators. Lim and Bowers (1991) distinguish two types of positive face along with the want for autonomy (negative face). They posit that humans have three distinct face wants: (a) the want to be included, or fellowship face; (b) the want that their abilities be respected or competence face; and (c) the want not to be imposed on or autonomy face (p.420). However, communicators often perform acts that cannot help but threaten one or more of the other's face wants. To this effect, socially competent people make efforts to mitigate these threats to the other's face wants. This brings to the fore the concept of 'facework'.

'Facework', according to Lim and Bowers (1991: 421), 'refers to the ways in which people mitigate or address these face threats'. They

posit that fellowship face is addressed by 'solidarity' which expresses to some degree that one accepts the other as a member of an in-group through the use of in-group identity markers, expression of empathic understanding, demonstrations of personal knowledge, and emphasis on commonalities and cooperation. Competence face is addressed by 'approbation' which shows that one appreciates the other's general abilities and particular possessions or performances as the reflections of those abilities. Approbation, therefore, is characterized by the effort to minimize blame and maximize praise of the other by voicing compliments on abilities or particular accomplishments and understatement of inabilities or unsuccessful performances. Finally, autonomy face is dealt with by 'tact' which expresses that to some degree a speaker respects the other's freedom of action or autonomy.

Thus, in the light of our explication of the different types of face wants and facework, we have tried to provide the theoretical underpinning for the use of a major communicative strategy employed by communicators in a political public address as we would later find out in the data analysis.

Up to now, we have considered aspects of discourse analysis. We now consider pragmatics - another approach to the study of language. When we refer to pragmatics as another approach to the study of language, we would examine its relationship to semantics and its own unique place

within the purview of a theory of meaning. Groenedijk and Stokhof (1978: 49) argue that 'an adequate theory of meaning for a natural language has to consist of at least a recursive specification of the truth conditions (semantics) and of a recursive specification of the correctness conditions (pragmatics) of the sentences of that language.

Therefore, they see pragmatics as a theory of meaning which gives recursive specification of the conditions under which sentences are correct relative to the information the language users have. Information used in this sense can be varied: information about reality, information about other language users, in particular the hearer, and the information about one's own mental states. In this last sense, we can formulate correctness conditions which are usually formulated in terms of intentions, preferences, etc. In view of this, we appeal to the theory of speech acts which deals with the performance of certain acts based on the speaker's intention(s).

When related to our study, the speech act theory would aid our understanding of how certain acts are performed through the utterances of the major actors in the conflict rhetoric. Generally, the performance of such acts coincides with the concept of 'facework' that we discussed earlier. We find out, for instance, that the acts of accusing / alleging, refuting, threatening / warning and commanding / ordering are face-threatening, while the acts of inspiring / urging / requesting are face-saving.

At this stage, it is relevant that we show how the aspects of discourse analysis and pragmatics that we have considered so far are systemically-oriented, that is, how they could fit into the systemic model. Consequently, we now discuss the communication linguistics model advanced by Michael Gregory and Karen Malcolm.

This model, according to Butler (1989), treats as axiomatic the principle, enunciated throughout Halliday's work, that language is essentially an interorganism phenomenon (a view which, of course, contrasts strongly with the transformational emphasis on language as a psychological, intra-organism faculty). It also attempts to strike a balance between encoding and decoding aspects of communication, claiming that the emphasis on paradigmatic relations in Hallidayan systemic theory has perhaps over-emphasized the encoding angle.

In the communication linguistics model, language is viewed both as 'a central form of intentionally communicative behaviour' and as 'the complex code realizatory cycle which such behaviour activates' (Gregory, 1985: 121; quoted in Butler, 1989: 19). On the behavioural side, Gregory recognizes three 'planes of experience': situation, discourse and manifestation. Situation is seen as 'the cultural, social and personal factors which relate language users' choices and receivers' interpretation of choices from the complex linguistic code cycle' and involves 'speech

community context' (individual, temporal, social and geographical provenance), generic situation (the experience of the participants, personal and functional relationship and medium of the discourse), 'referential realm' (selection of entities, events, attitudes, etc.), and 'referential plot' or message (the last two terms taken from Fleming).

Discourse, Butler (1989:19) argues, is equivalent to Halliday's 'text', the term being reserved for the physical record of a discourse. Relevant to the specification on the discourse plane are: register (seen in terms of field, tenor and mode); dialect and idiolect and discourse structure (cohesive relations, register consistency, staging). Finally, manifestation is the plane relating to the substance of language (phonic, graphic and other codes (gestural, etc.)).

From the exposition made so far, the aspects of discourse analysis and pragmatics that we discussed earlier, especially the link between context of situation, as a category in systemic functional linguistics theory, and the nature/demands of political communication could be integrated into the Gregory and Malcolm's Communication Linguistics model, as the analysis of the behavioural aspects of language is central to this model.

3.4 Summary

On the whole, since the Hallidayan systemic functional grammar is explicitly sociolinguistic in its orientation, the other approaches that we have discussed as part of the theoretical orientation help in extending the frontiers of the communicative dimension of the grammar. It is interesting to note that their network would provide a comprehensive theoretical orientation for our methodology.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PERSUASION AND COERCION STRATEGIES

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three, we discussed the theoretical orientation adopted for this study, exploring relevant linguistic theories and non-linguistic models and assessing their suitability to the discourse of the conflict. Having established these theoretical underpinnings, we would, in this chapter, which is among the three chapters devoted to the analysis of the data, analyze and discuss the speakers' deployment of persuasion and coercion strategies to protect their own interests, threaten the opponents' goals, and influence the hearers' opinions and attitudes.

4.2 Persuasion Strategies

As we pointed out in our exploration of the non-linguistic models adopted for this study in Chapter Three, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* marks a departure from the orientation of his predecessors in handling the art. To his predecessors, persuasive discourse was characterized by an ornate, intricate self-conscious style for the arousing of prejudice, compassion, anger and similar emotions. However, to Aristotle, the function of rhetoric is not so much to persuade, as to find out in each case the existing means of persuasion which consist of proofs referred to as 'enthymemes'. Since we

have outlined such proofs and the kinds of speech they produce in the theoretical orientation, we now pay attention to what is meant by persuasion. According to Lucas (1992: 308),

... when you speak to persuade, you act as an advocate. Your job is to change listeners' mind – to get them to agree with you and, perhaps, to act on that belief. Your goal may be to defend an idea, to refute an opponent, to sell a program, or to inspire people to action.

Although this viewpoint and many formal definitions of persuasion exist (focusing on some combination of intent, ability, methods or effects and including terms such as 'modify', 'influence' and 'shaping' to describe the act of persuasion), O'Hairr *et al* (1975: 578-579) argue that the key to understanding persuasion is knowing the characteristics that identify persuasion as a communication event:

1. One individual (the persuader) must make a conscious, intended attempt to influence one or more other individuals.
2. The persuader generates and uses a variety of messages (both verbal and nonverbal) to accomplish this intended purpose.
3. The activity of persuasion is a process in which both persuader and persuadee are active participants.
4. The goal of persuasion is to change the beliefs, attitudes, or behavior of persuadees.
5. At some level, the persuadees must have a choice – that is, they must perceive that they have an option to accept or reject the persuader's message (1975: 579).

Having identified the salient characteristics that identify persuasion as a communication event, we now consider forms of persuasive speaking based on speeches that advance four types of propositions or arguments:

propositions of fact, propositions of value, concern about a problem, and propositions of policy. O'Hairr *et al* (1975: 581-582) explain that propositions of fact assert that something is true or false; propositions of value allege that something is or is not worthwhile; the speech designed to create concern about a problem asks an audience to agree that specific conditions should be perceived as a problem requiring solution; and propositions of policy recommend a course of action or policy as necessary and desirable (or unnecessary and undesirable). It is interesting to note that the classification into these categories is often eclectic as a topic in one category could easily be made to fit into another.

At this point, we highlight the methods of persuasion which characterize the conflict rhetoric. They include: use of illocutionary strategies, establishment and propagation of credibility, deployment of rhetorical questions, and assumption of prophetic posture.

4.2.1 Use of Illocutionary Strategies

Here, we analyze and discuss the various illocutionary acts performed by the speakers in the discourse in relation to the exigencies of the conflict. First, we consider the illocutionary act of accusing/alleging, on the one hand, and the corresponding illocutionary act of refuting the opponents, on the other hand. Following Leech's (1983: 104) formalizations of the varieties of illocutionary functions, we discover that

these illocutionary acts are 'conflictive'. Also in line with Searle's (1979) categories of illocutionary acts (quoted in Leech, 1983: 106), they can be classified as 'expressives' which have the function of expressing, or making known, the speaker's attitude towards a state of affairs which the illocution presupposes. Consider the following excerpts in which the speakers accuse their opponents:

- (i) To continue action on the basis of the 12 June, 1993 election, and to proceed to proclaim and swear in a President who encouraged a campaign of divide and rule amongst our various ethnic groups, would have been detrimental to the survival of the Third Republic. Our need is for peace, stability and continuity of policies in the interest of all our people.
(Babangida, EPH: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 136-137)
- (ii) In recent times, our country has been inundated by the sporadic rise of unregistered groups seeking to play the role of political associations. Such groups have wantonly paraded themselves as advocates of democracy. They create the erroneous impression of commanding national spread whereas they are local, sectional, economically motivated and ethnic in their composition and orientation.
(Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p. 19)
- (iii) Assuming that there was good faith on the part of the government, all matters relating to the election should have gone to the tribunals set up by law for such cases, and should only have been initiated by persons or bodies that had a genuine interest in the election . . . I find the conclusion unfortunate but inescapable that the Federal Military Government is guilty of bad faith, pure and simple.
(Abiola, DIIRENP: cf. Olanrewaju, 1999: 71)

In excerpt (i), Babangida indirectly accuses the opponent by using the indefinite article 'a' in the nominal group 'a president'. With this device, it becomes convenient for him to explain away the annulment of the election, thereby justifying or defending his action. Hence, he and Abacha as shown in excerpts (i) and (ii), allege their opponents on a very crucial but delicate issue which has become ritualistic in the political discourse of post-colonial Nigeria. They try to engineer ethnocentric emotion against the presidential aspirants and those calling for the de-annulment of the election respectively. It is interesting to note that their recourse to the issue of ethnicity in a pluri-ethnic society such as Nigeria could be a good(?) scoring point for the speaker who wishes to alienate the opponents' goals from the ever ethnic-conscious audience. However, as Oha (1997b) observes, political public speaking involves subjecting the audiences to the 'weight' of words to influence their views and attitudes on certain political issues without the speakers' bothering about how such groups weigh or carry the weight of their words. Thus, the 'loaded weapon' of ethnicity has become a manipulative weapon of political deceit in the hands of political public speakers to score political goals in such a pluri-ethnic society such as Nigeria. Commenting on the complexity of the pluralism that underlies the Nigerian state, Diamond and Timberman (1995: 4) write:

Nigeria is home to more than 270 ethnolinguistic groups and two major religions, Islam and Christianity. Its complex ethnic and religious divisions are intensified rather than muted by the regional concentration of the three major ethnic groups (the Muslim Hausa-Fulani in the north, the religiously bicomunal Yoruba in the southwest, and the Christian Igbo in the southeast) and by the pronounced differences in the level of socioeconomic development across the ethnically distinct group. At the heart of the matter is an explosive contradiction between the political power of the Muslim Hausa-Fulani of the north and the socioeconomic power of the Yoruba in the industrial southwest and the Igbo of the oil-rich southeast.

So, in such a complex society, Oha (1997b: 45-46) argues that "if there is anything the ethnic groups in Nigeria, particularly the 'minorities' would like to hear said, it is that they must be protected within the nation, and that their rights as co-equals with other ethnic groups must not be denied."

However, the question that we need to consider critically is whether or not the ghost of ethnicity that haunts the Nigerian state can be divorced from socio-political and economic issues. For instance, the trappings of ethnicity which underlie the 'June 12' crisis crystalized into the heated debate in the political arena on the question of 'rotational presidency' among the six geo-political zones in the country. This soon fizzled out only to metamorphose into the concept of 'power-shift' which produced a Yoruba man as president in the person of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. In spite of this development, the Igbo and the Hausa have also started expressing fears of 'marginalization' by the Obasanjo-led administration.

This has culminated in the clamour, in some quarters, to convene a Sovereign National Conference where the knotty issue of ethnicity and other national issues threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria would be discussed and possibly resolved.

This quest, however, remained an elusive search until President Olusegun Obasanjo inaugurated the National Political Reform Conference on 21st February 2005. Critics argue that the President's conference is a ploy to protect certain (hegemonic) interests. Given this skeptical posture, leaders of the opposition, especially Chief Anthony Enahoro and his Pro-National Conference Organization, PRONACO, have threatened to stage their own Sovereign National Conference that would truly reflect the wishes of the Nigerian people. President Obasanjo has refuted this allegation, saying 'The federal government has no hidden agenda in this exercise' (Tell, No. 10, 2005 p. 30).

Although we do not have the least intention of being sentimental in this discussion, we cannot but say that the ethnic considerations which a political issue such as 'June 12' evokes would be a face-boosting strategy for the political public speaker to present self as a patriot while seeking to distance the opponents from the multi-ethnic audience. The reality, however, could be that the political public speaker exploits the presumed mitigation to ethnic oppositionality for (personal) political gains. This

undertone cannot be ruled out outright in Babangida's and Abacha's discourses in experts (i) and (ii) above.

In excerpt (iii), Abiola attempts to fault the reasons put forward by the military government for annulling the election. He accuses the government of undermining the rule of law by failing to respect the due process of law governing the conduct of election, especially the hearing of election petitions after election. Explaining one of the meanings of the rule of law, A. V. Dicey, quoted in Edeko (2002: 39), writes:

It means ... the absolute supremacy or predominance of regular law as opposed to the influence of arbitrary power, and excludes the existence of arbitrariness, of prerogative, or even of wide discretionary authority on the part of government.

Put differently, Edeko (2002: 39) posits:

The rule of law is the manifestation of law through the realization of justice by channeling the causes of men through the approved institutions of society in such a way as to meet the ends desired by the people.

In this respect, Abiola accuses the military government of 'bad faith' for annulling the election results. With this allegation, he further threatens the competence face of the military, painting a negative picture of the alleged violators of the rule of law, on the one hand, and a pitiable picture of himself and the Nigerian people that voted for him as victims of injustice, on the other hand.

It is noteworthy that the speakers also perform a corresponding illocutionary act of refuting their opponents. Consider the following:

- (iv) ... it is pedestal thinking ... and unwarranted speculations to claim that this administration was bent on staying put or sitting tight, or, as someone once put it, BABANGIDA WANTS TO SUCCEED BABANGIDA. As an administration, we are very clear and conscious of our mandate not to leave our people in chaos by retreating in disarray. (ellipses mine)
(Babangida, SAPNC: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 157)
- (v) Of recent, it has become fashionable for all and sundry to go on a binge of bashing the military. Every problem of our beloved country, and every social ill has been explained away in terms of the military . . . But suffice it for me to say that those of us in governance today did not just wake up one morning and in a fit of lust for power, thrust ourselves on a reluctant nation. (ellipsis mine)
(Abacha, AOL: Tell, July 4, 1994, p. 20)
- (vi) I am also aware of the efforts to diminish the stature of our struggle for democracy, and to portray the components and orientation of our struggle as a sectional affair. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I am pleased to acknowledge the principled positions taken by the . . . North-east Forum, Middle-belt Forum, Eastern Forum, Southern Forum, the various states in the North-west, Western Forum . . . in defence of 12 June. (ellipsis mine)
(Abiola, SP: African Concord, October, 1993, p. 64)

In extracts (iv), (v) and (vi) above, the speakers use the illocutionary act of denying to refute their opponents on some of the critical issues raised in the conflict. Babangida refutes the allegation of the bid to perpetuate the military or self in power and reiterates the

'commitment' of his administration to good and purposeful governance. It is interesting that Babangida's recurrent performance of the illocutionary act of promise without the intention of fulfilling such promises is a marked characteristic of his speeches. Elsewhere, he argues:

- (vii) Our commitment to democracy has been unshakable and our promise to relinquish military rule to democratic civil rule by 27 August, 1993 remains our collective resolve. (CSPII: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996:147)

Babangida's tendency for non-commitment, according to Oha (1997b: 48), earned him the famous semiotic 'Maradona' and that such a crafty posture is the strategy of a Machiavellian ruler or prince. Machiavelli (1961: 56) posits:

Everyone realizes how praiseworthy it is for a prince to honour his word and to be straightforward rather than crafty in his dealings; none the less contemporary experience shows that princes who have achieved great things have been those who have given their word lightly, who have known how to trick men with their cunning, and who, in the end, have overcome those abiding by honest principles.

Therefore, he argues that 'a prudent ruler cannot, and must not, honour his word when it places him at a disadvantage and when the reasons for which he made his promise no longer exist' (1961: 56). In this connection, Babangida's tendency for non-commitment in his speeches is a 'success strategy' for a Machiavellian prince who must know how to colour his actions and to be 'a great liar and deceiver'. Despite his crafty posture, his

discourse in extract (iv) is undermined by the misuse of the word 'pedestal' instead of 'pedestrian' in the noun phrase 'pedestal thinking'. This is a case of malapropism which detracts from the expertise of hired speechwriters who could have helped the speaker in preparing his speeches.

As regards Abacha's performance of the illocutionary act of refuting the opponents, Abacha seeks to absolve the military of the responsibility of the social ills suffered by the country. He also refutes the allegation of the military's lust for power. He casts the speech in such a form that coalesces the voice of self with the voice of the political sub-culture to which he belongs. This strategy tends to neutralise the claim or impression that a particular individual is responsible for the social ills. This is a constant rhetorical strategy deployed by the political public speaker to coalesce the voice of self with the voice of society or the institution he/she represents (see Oha, 2000: 83). The pluralization of identity deployed by the speaker in this context undermines his discourse as the integrity of the military institution and that of the speaker himself is prone to public contempt, the pluralization notwithstanding.

Also, Abiola refutes his opponents' negative portrayal of the 'struggle for democracy' as a 'sectional affair'. Using the maxim, 'Nothing could be farther from the truth', he attempts to redeem his own image and that of his political sub-culture. It is instructive that in his attempt to

emphasize the national spread of the support for the cause. He touches on the four cardinal points of the compass (North, South, East and West). His appeal here to geographical spread is a rhetorical device to sustain his supporters' interest and to further sway those who hold contrary views to his own side.

On the whole, it is interesting that this strategy of trading accusations and counter-accusations is a marked feature of the game of politics. Writing on the deployment of this strategy among political parties, Awonusi (1988: 152) says:

The various political parties understand the rules of this game and when, someone from a particular party is raining invective on those in another party, the members of the party under attack know how to respond in kind.

Another interesting illocutionary act performed by the speakers in the conflict rhetoric is that of inspiring, urging or requesting the audience. In Searle's (1979) formalization of illocutionary acts, quoted in Leech (1983: 106), the illocutionary act belongs to the category of 'DIRECTIVES'. The following are some excerpts:

(viii) I appeal to our fellow country men and women, and also to our foreign detractors that they should cultivate proper understanding and appreciation of the peculiar historic circumstances in the development of our country and the determination not only of this administration but indeed of all Nigerians to resolve the current crises amicably.

(Babangida, EPH: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 137)

(ix) ... I call on our media to exercise restraint and demonstrate maturity in the discharge of their duties. The Nigerian Press is one of the freest in the world. But such freedom should be matched with adequate responsibility. (ellipsis mine)
Abacha. BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p. 20)

(x) I call on you, heroic people of Nigeria, to emulate the actions of your brothers and sisters in South Africa and stand up as one person to throw away the yoke of minority rule for ever. The antics of every minority that oppresses the majority are always the same. They will try to intimidate you with threats of police action. But do not let us fear arrest. In South Africa, so many people were arrested, during campaign against Pass Laws, for instance, that the jails could not hold all of them. Today, apartheid is gone for ever. So let it be with Nigeria. Let us say good-bye for ever to minority rule.
(Abiola, ED: Tell, July 20, 1998, p. 21)

In the extracts cited above, the speakers deploy the illocutionary act of inspiring, urging, or requesting, to enlist the support of the audience for their respective causes in the conflict. While giving the directives enumerated here, they implicitly engage in using the kind of debased language that politics is noted for. Worthy of note are the expressions, 'the peculiar historic circumstances in the development of our country' and 'The Nigerian Press is one of the freest in the world' in Babangida's and Abacha's speeches respectively. The former expression typifies the slippery nature of political rhetoric in which the rhetor tries in his/her speech and writing to defend 'the indefensible' (Orwell, 1965: 311). Orwell argues further that 'political language has to consist largely of

euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness' to explain away 'arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of political parties'. The latter expression is a clear example of hyperbole, which is a marked feature of the language of politics.

Abiola conceives of the battle for the enthronement of democracy in Nigeria as the same waged by the black majority people of South Africa against the white minority rule. Here, Abiola presents us with a parallel case of argumentation in which we compare the nature of the struggle for the enthronement of democracy in Nigeria with the nature of the struggle of the black majority of South Africa against the oppressive antics of the white minority. In order to boost the confidence of the hearers he is inspiring, he recalls the eventual success story of the struggle against apartheid which, in his conception, could also obtain in the Nigerian situation if the populace would put up the same measure of spirited effort. Also, his emphasis of the majority-minority polarity and the antecedent victory of the majority over the minority in South Africa strengthens his strategy of a parallel case of argumentation.

Finally, the speakers perform the illocutionary act of thanking and praising their real or imagined supporters in the conflict. Consider the following excerpts:

- (xi) ... I wish to place on record the appreciation of this administration for the patience and understanding of Nigerians, the French, the German, the Russian and Irish Governments in the current situation. (ellipsis mine)

(Babangida, EPH: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 137)

- (xii) On behalf of the government and people of Nigeria, I wish to express profound appreciation to the international community, our foreign friends and partners for their continued understanding and support . . . I must thank our major partners in the oil industry, and others, who under very strenuous and difficult circumstances, have stood resolutely by us. (ellipsis mine)

(Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p. 20)

- (xiii) We salute all Nigerians for their patience and courage in the face of this intimidation and provocation by the military clique who are desperate to remain in office. We remember, in particular, the gallant heroes and heroines of democracy who paid the supreme price in the struggle against military dictatorship. We are committed to ensuring that their sacrifice is not in vain.

(Abiola, IYDEP: Tell, July 4, 1994, p. 15)

The pluralization of 'identity of the speakers' 'supporters' (all Nigerians) or (people of Nigeria) is rhetorically compelling. First, it is in agreement with the pluralism in the country. Second, it suggests that none of the speakers is left alone to pursue the cause he stands for as each of them boasts of the 'support' of the Nigerian people. Third, it tends to boost the morale of the (real) supporters of each of the speakers, giving them the impression of widespread (national) acceptability and appreciation of their respective causes.

However, such adulations could be expressed to win or consolidate support even when the speaker knows that such support is not already there. So, praises are a way of appealing for what is not obtainable; they have a way of creating illusory situations. Praising people in the conflict rhetoric to engineer real or imagined support could be deceptive and this is similar to tricks we find in political campaigns and advertisements.

In sum, the speakers deploy the illocutionary acts we have discussed in an attempt to enlist the people's support. In doing so, they implicitly combine the three kinds of rhetorical speeches identified by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*. Generally, the illocutionary acts are 'deliberative' as they are either hortatory or dissuasive. They are also 'forensic' as they are employed to accuse the opponents and to defend self. Finally, they are 'epideictic' as they are employed to praise the audience. Interestingly, the special time appropriate to each of these speeches, in Aristotle's conception, also comes into play for our present purposes. The speakers are exhorting or dissuading about future events, accusing or defending in reference to things done in the past, and praising concerning past, present or future events.

4.2.2 Establishment and Propagation of Credibility

Another marked persuasive strategy of the conflict rhetoric is Babangida's and Abacha's deployment of language to establish and

propagate the credibility of their respective regimes. Consider the following excerpts:

(xiv) Nigeria has come a long way since this administration assumed power and leadership about eight years ago. In the attempt to grapple with critical and monumental problems and challenges of national existence and social progress, the administration inaugurated and pursued sound and justifiable policies and programmes of reforms. These policies and programmes have touched virtually all aspects of our national life - the economy, political process, social structures, external relations, bureaucracy and even the family system. I believe strongly that in understanding, conception, formulation and articulation, these policies and programmes are not only sound but also comparatively unassailable. (Babangida, EPH: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 132)

(xv) The concept of Vision 2010 is being adopted at this stage of our development to enable us to appreciate the importance of long-term planning in achieving national self-reliance, economic strength and political stability. It arose out of our historical experience of the post-independence era, where successive national plans and strategies for development were conceived of and executed on short-term and ad hoc bases. (Abacha, NII: West Africa 30 September – 13 October 1996, p. 1548)

In propagating the credibility of his regime, Babangida touches on the ‘sound and justifiable policies and programmes of reforms’ which have ‘virtually touched all aspects of our national life’. He then contends that such policies and programmes are ‘comparatively unassailable’. This is a strategy that he uses to present the past (pre-Babangida era) attempts as ‘inferior’ and to see the present (Babangida administration) efforts as ‘superior’ and, therefore, auspicious and laudable.

It is in the same vein that Abacha sees the introduction of the 'Vision 2010' programme into Nigeria's body polity. In extract (xv), we see that in Abacha's conception, 'Vision 2010' was designed to help Nigerians appreciate the importance of long-term planning in achieving national self-reliance, economic strength and political stability. Thus, it was meant to mark a clean break from the past (pre-Abacha administration) national plans and strategies which were conceived of and executed on short-term and ad hoc bases. Elsewhere, Abacha boasts: '... the events of the past four years and the role which this administration has played in them will be remembered in the annals of this great nation as among the most momentous and constructive' (cf. 37TH IAB: *Abacha Speaks*. p. 345). We would call this strategy adopted by Babangida and Abacha in this context 'transitional appraisal'.

From a rhetorical perspective, both speakers seek to boost their competence face. But it is noteworthy that political public speakers sometimes abuse credibility strategy as their utterances often turn out to be hyperbolic. Such an exaggeration of (self) assessment(s), apart from violating the maxim of quantity in Grice's (1975) 'Cooperative Principle', is suggestive of the kind of immodest language that political public speakers are fond of using in an attempt to build (false) credibility for themselves. Worse still, the one-sidedness of the flow of information

allows such immodest (false) utterances to go unchallenged by the audience who could practically assess the true picture(s) of the situation(s).

4.2.3 Deployment of the Rhetorical Question

Simply put, the rhetorical question is posed not chiefly to elicit a verbalized answer but to make an emphatic statement. It is interesting that Babangida and Abiola pose some rhetorical questions to the audience based on certain presuppositions shared between them and the audience.

Consider the following excerpts:

- (xvi) The administration under my leadership would like to parade its credentials in the field of peace keeping and peace maintenance in different parts of the world - Africa, Asia, Europe and West Indies . . . If we can do this elsewhere why should we abandon the commitment to and advancement of peace at home? We can still further parade our credentials in the area of promoting and participating in the resolution of crisis through democratic elections in Namibia, Angola, Rwanda and Cambodia. If we can do this in far away places, why should we not champion this at home? (ellipsis and underlining mine)

(Babangida, SAPNC: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 169)

- (xvii) How much longer can we tolerate all this? For who will vote for Nigeria to get the seat if Nigeria's military rulers do not respect the votes of their own people? Is this the Nigeria we want? What have we done to deserve this when we have a president-elect who can lead a government that can change things for better? (Abiola, ED: Tell, July 20, 1998, pp. 20-21)

In extract (xvi), Babangida poses two rhetorical questions to emphasize his administration's 'commitment' to resolving the 'June 12'

crisis. He bases his argument on the achievements of his administration in promoting peace and resolving crises in crises-ridden countries. He then presents us with a parallel case argumentation expressed in the (rhetorical) structure: 'If we can do this elsewhere/in far away places ... why should we not ... at home?' The use of the modal 'can' to show ability and 'should' to show obligation and logical necessity is instructive. We would argue, however, that since political intentions are often inscrutable, the speaker's political intentions in pursuing the promotion of peace and resolution of crisis in far away places could differ from those he has in managing the crisis at home. Therefore, his use of a parallel case argumentation could just be a strategy to enable him to put up a false posture. This is a strategy of a Machiavellian ruler who must know how to colour his actions for 'no prince ever lacked good excuses to colour his bad faith' (Machiavelli, 1961: 57).

As to Abiola's choice of rhetorical questions in excerpt (xvii), two things are remarkable. First, all of them are cited from his speech 'Epetedo Declaration' which marks a landmark in the 'June 12' crisis. Second, each of the rhetorical questions occurs in a paragraph and appears as the last sentence in such a paragraph. Abiola strategically puts them in this position, having outlined in each paragraph the setbacks and deprivations Nigeria and Nigerians had suffered on account of military (mis)rule. Then

in the paragraph which immediately follows all the four paragraphs containing the rhetorical questions, he declares: 'Our patience has come to an end, as of now. From this moment, a new Government of National Unity is in power throughout the length and breadth of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, led by me, Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola, as the president and Commander-in-Chief'.

It is then the case that Abiola systematically and gradually builds into his sequence of rhetorical questions premeditated responses instrumental to his declaration. Therefore, when he eventually declares himself president and commander-in-chief, the Nigerian people would not question his act since the pattern of his rhetorical questions has reinforced his declaration.

At this point, in order to provide an insightful analysis, we would draw insights from logic, using Toulmin's model of argument. In this connection, O'Hair et al (1975: 582) argue that when one asks an audience to accept a proposition of fact, value, problem, or policy, one does so by offering good reasons – reasons that the audience will judge as either acceptable or unacceptable and hence persuasive or non-persuasive. It is in this respect that Toulmin's model of argument provides a useful approach to generating and evaluating 'good reasons'. Consider the paradigm below:

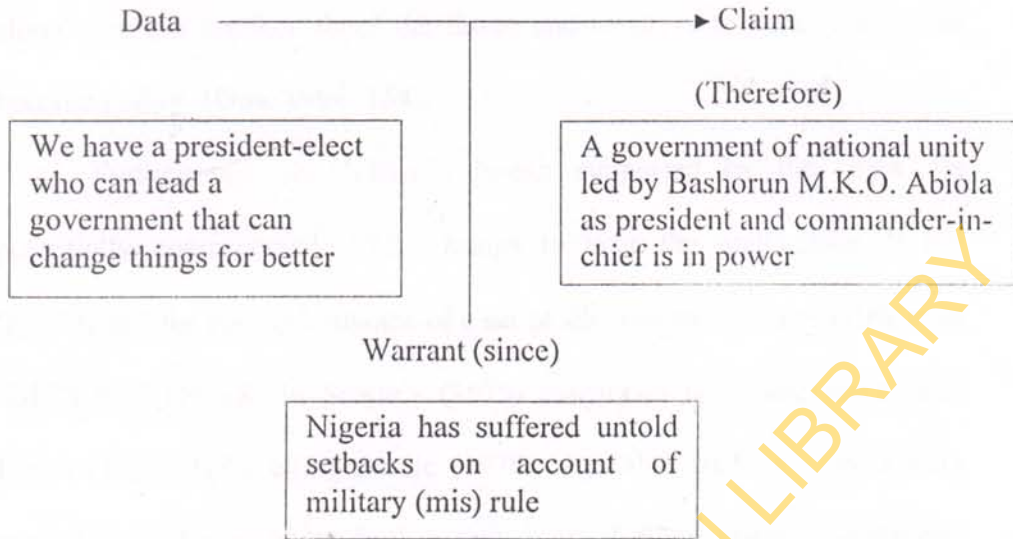


Figure 4.1: Analysis of Implied Logic of Abiola's 'Claim' in 'Epetedo Declaration'

In Toulmin's configuration, 'claim' describes the conclusion that the speaker wants the audience to accept; 'data' give support/grounding for the 'claim'; and 'warrant' shows that the data do support the claim as true or acceptable (O'Hair *et al*, 1975: 582-583). In the figure above, Abiola provides support/grounding for the 'claim', projecting his credibility as a competent leader (president-elect) who can turn the situation around. As a politician who counts on the support of the people to claim his 'mandate', Abiola could just be saying what particularly agrees with the people's opinions, beliefs and dispositions. The sense of optimism and credibility expressed in the 'data' is an attempt to tie vision to leadership, thereby

creating legitimacy for leadership. The audience is thus enjoined to 'dream along with the speaker about the future and to strive to make the dream become reality' (Oha, 1994: 154).

Furthermore, the 'claim', though supported by the 'data', 'is potentially controversial. This brings to bear the application of the 'conditions' for the performance of a set of illocutionary acts referred to as 'DECLARATIONS' in Searle's (1979) categories of illocutionary acts. Leech (1983: 106), citing Searle (1979), says that such acts are a very special kind of speech acts in that 'they are performed, normally speaking, by someone who is especially authorized to do so within some institutional framework'. This is what Austin (1962) refers to as 'felicity conditions' which an illocutionary act must fulfil if it is to be 'successful' and 'non-defective'. In this regard, Traugott and Pratt (1980: 230) argue that 'a speaker's communicative competence includes not just knowledge of what illocutionary acts can be performed in the language, but also how, when, where, and by whom they can be performed.'

As an institutional rather than a personal act, therefore, Abiola's declaration of a government of national unity headed by him as president and commander-in-chief is potentially controversial. To Abiola's supporters, he had the mandate of the Nigerian people as the presumed winner of the election. Therefore, he could claim his mandate by declaring

himself president if the military was not willing to respect the Nigerian people's wishes. However, to the military government in power then, Abiola's declaration was seen as an attempt to topple the government in power. Abacha, the then head of state, conceives of Abiola's actions thus:

- (xviii) His (Abiola's) most recent actions of declaring himself the president and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, inciting the public to insurrection and attempting to topple the Federal Government by force with a view to installing himself as President, however led to his arrest by the law enforcement agents. (parenthesis and underlining mine) (Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, pp. 18–19)

Therefore, although Abiola's movement from 'data', through a 'warrant', to a 'claim' makes his argument logical, the political implications of the 'claim' led to his arrest. This is based on the controversy that surrounds the performance of his illocutionary act of declaring himself president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

On the whole, both Babangida and Abiola use rhetorical questions to reinforce and give prominence to some crucial issues and actions in the conflict. The crux of the matter, however, lies in the political intentions and political implications of Babangida's and Abiola's actions respectively.

4.2.4 Assumption of Prophetic Posture

Although caught in a web of conflict with its attendant socio-economic and political problems, the speakers assume prophetic posture, sighting light beyond the dark tunnel. This is a persuasive strategy adopted by them in an attempt to boost the confidence of the people, assuring them that in spite of the prevailing circumstances, there is still hope. Consider the following excerpts:

- (xix) Let me emphasize that we must not lose sight of the fact *those very countries which have attained democracy did so after a long period of trials and development. We have tried and we will continue to try.* WHAT IS NEEDED IS RENEWED FAITH IN OURSELVES AND OUR CAPACITY TO ATTAIN DEMOCRATIC LIFE BECAUSE IT IS A GOOD LIFE.
(Babangida, SAPNC: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 157–158)
- (xx) Let me affirm this administration's commitment towards the success of our democratisation effort ... Experience has shown that nothing is insurmountable in the course of our national development. We should be architects of our policies in accordance with our national interests. (ellipsis mine)
(Abacha, NII: West Africa, 30 September - 13 October 1996, p.1549)
- (xxi) For too often in our national experience we have fought battles and won victories, only to fight them all over again. In the interest of our people and the future of democracy, we must endeavour to wage the battle for the constitutional soul of this country to a decisive conclusion. ... We have come a long way together ... Our struggle is just. We cannot fail. (ellipses mine)
(Abiola, OSIJ: African Concord International, 22 November 1993, p. 12)

In excerpt (xix), Babangida looks beyond the crisis into a promising and hopeful future of Nigeria's quest for democracy. He presents us with a parallel case argumentation, arguing that the countries that had achieved democracy did so after a long period of trials and development. In this sense, Babangida implicitly conceives of the June 12 crisis as part of the trials and development on the road to the enthronement of 'democratic life'. We should note, however, that recourse to parallel reasoning by political public speakers could be a convenient means of explaining away their despicable actions. Thus, Babangida's use of parallel reasoning in this speech could be a Machiavellian strategy of a prince who never 'lacked good excuses to colour his bad faith' (1961: 57).

Also, in extract (xx), Abacha reiterates the 'commitment' of his administration to a successful democratic effort. He then contends that, drawing on experience, 'nothing is insurmountable in the course of our national development'. Abacha's use of credibility strategy in this speech is the basis on which he builds the hope of the resolution of the crisis. Apart from the fact that a Machiavellian prince is noted for 'great campaigns and striking demonstrations of his personal abilities' (Machiavelli, 1961: 71), Abacha's expression of hope in the utterance 'nothing is insurmountable' is rather hyperbolic and it is an attempt to say what the people would like to hear in order for him to enlist their support.

Finally, in extract (xxi), Abiola recounts the inconclusive battles that the Nigerian people had fought prior to the 'June 12' crisis. Using the deliberative kind of rhetorical speech, he exhorts the people to press forward. He imbues the people with confidence, assuming a prophetic posture encapsulated in the utterance: 'Our struggle is just. We cannot fail.' This utterance is akin to the slogan *Aluta continua; victoria ascerta* (The struggle continues; victory is certain) which has become a stereotyped prophetic utterance used by political activists to build confidence into their supporters even when and where they can be too sure of failure.

By and large, the speakers' assumption of prophetic posture is a rhetorical strategy of creating illusions of hope in conflict for the leader must demonstrate that he/she is visionary and hence worthy of being a leader. This rhetorical strategy creates legitimacy for leadership and encourages the audience to identify with the speaker's cause in the hope that it will end in success or victory. This strategy has also been identified and studied by Oha (1994) in the war rhetoric of Yakubu Gowon and Odumegwu Ojukwu where the subjects, though finding themselves in real war situation, could see light beyond the tunnel.

4.3 Coercion Strategies

Here, we analyze and discuss the functions of the illocutionary acts of commanding/ordering and threatening/warning as a manifestation of the

speakers' bid to coerce their opponents in the conflict. While the former are 'COMPETITIVE', the latter are 'CONFLICTIVE' in Leech's (1983: 104) varieties of illocutionary acts. In the course of the discussion, we pay attention to the speakers' power differences (if any) as they affect the discourse. Let us first of all consider the illocutionary act of ordering/commanding as shown in the following excerpts:

- (xxii) . . . the following decisions come into immediate effects:
(a) The Interim National Government is hereby dissolved. (b) The National and State Assemblies are also dissolved. The State Executive Councils are dissolved . . . (d) All local governments stand dissolved . . . (e) The National Electoral Commission is hereby dissolved (f) All former Secretaries to federal ministries are to hand over to their Directors-General until ministers are appointed. (g) The two political parties are hereby dissolved. (h) All processions, political meetings and associations of any type in any part of the country are hereby banned. (i) Any consultative committee by whatever name called is hereby proscribed. (j) Decree 61 of 1993 is hereby abrogated. (ellipses mine)
(Abacha, CN: Newswatch, November 29, 1993, p. 18)
- (xxiii) ... the executive of both unions, the NUPENG, and PENGASSAN at both national and state levels are hereby dissolved. This action is with immediate effect. (ellipses mine)
(Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p. 20)
- (xxiv) From this moment, a new Government of National Unity is in power throughout the length and breadth of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, led by me, Basorun M.K.O. Abiola, as president and commander-in-chief. The National Assembly is hereby reconvened. All the dismissed governors of the states are reinstated. The state assemblies are reconstituted, as are all local government councils.
(Abiola, ED: Tell, July 20, 1998, p. 21)

(xxv) I call on the usurper, General Sani Abacha, to announce his resignation forthwith, together with the rest of his illegal ruling council . . . I hereby invoke the mandate bestowed upon me by my victory in the said election, to call on all members of the armed forces and the police, the civil and public services throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to obey only the Government of National Unity that is headed by me, your only elected president. My Government of National Unity is the only legitimate, constituted authority in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as of now (ellipsis mine).
(Abiola, ED: Tell, July 20, 1998, p. 21)

In the extracts above, Abacha and Abiola perform the illocutionary act of ordering/commanding in order to forcefully turn around the prevalent socio-political situation during the crisis. In excerpt (xxii), Abacha orders the dissolution of existing political structures, boards and committees. In every sense of it, this speech has the trappings of a military take-over discourse where military leaders, on taking over power, dissolve existing political structures to pave way for the enthronement of the new military leadership. Also, in excerpt (xxiii) Abacha orders the dissolution of the executive of NUPENG, PENGASSAN 'with immediate effect' on account of the alleged roles they played by their strike actions to agitate for the enthronement of democracy. According to Amafah (1990: 252), the expression 'with immediate effect' was prominently used during the regime of the late General Murtala Mohammed in such structures as: (a) 'You are retired with immediate effect', and (b) 'Mr X's appointment takes

immediate effect'. According to Amafah (1990), General Mohammed used this structure to indicate immediacy but it has since become a stereotype in both military and civilian discourses.

Although coercion is often associated with military life and leadership, it is interesting that the political structures that stand dissolved on Abacha's orders are ordered reinstated by Abiola in his 'Epetedo Declaration'. So, in excerpt (xxiv), Abiola orders the reinstatement of the National Assembly, state governors, state assemblies and local government councils in order to forcefully enthrone democracy. Also, in excerpt (xxv), Abiola orders the resignation of General Sani Abacha 'together with the rest of his illegal ruling council'. He proceeds to call on the police, the civil and public services to obey his Government of National Unity, which he describes as 'the only legitimate, constituted authority in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.' These coercive acts are performed by Abiola to challenge the military in the conflict.

The discourse pattern is particularly underlined by the dichotomy in their choice of words. There is the repetition of the word 'dissolved' in Abacha's discourse. Similar words used by Abacha that are suggestive of clampdown on an existing structure are: 'banned', 'proscribed' and 'abrogated'. Conversely, Abiola reverses the status quo, using the words: 'reconvened', 'reinstated' and 'reconstituted'. In all, the coercive acts

performed by Abacha and Abiola, especially in excerpts (xxii), (xxiii) and (xxiv) are typically coded in imperative structures. It is noteworthy that the subjects are focused, while the agents are effaced. This is a striking feature of truncated passive structures reflective of 'the realities of bureaucratic social structure in which it is often impossible to assign responsibilities to individuals for coercive and oppressive tactics' (Stanley & Robbins, 1977: 309).

We have earlier discussed the 'conditions' for making such declarations and pointed out the controversy surrounding them. But we would now consider Abiola's conception of the 'conditions' for performing his own acts and those of Abacha's. This brings to the fore the concept of 'authority'. Irele (1998: 78) explains that there is a distinction that is usually made between 'de facto' authority and 'de jure' authority. He argues:

... de facto authority is simply based on force or coercion while de jure is premised on rules and regulations. The mere existence of de facto authority shows that the authority no longer controls the situation, and that the obedience of the citizens is got through brute force, rather than by willing compliance based on some obligations to obey the authority because it is based on rules or the legal system (1998: 78).

He, however, contends that a firm demarcation cannot be drawn between 'de jure' and 'de facto' authority. This lies in the fact that if the force or coercion that the 'de facto' authority exercises issues out of the legal

regulations or rules, it is not a naked force or coercion. In essence, 'de facto' authority is naked power if 'de jure' authority does not exist along with it since it is the latter that confers legitimacy on the former.

Oke (2001: 20) shares the same view. He cites Bachrach and Baratz (1970: 24) who view power as embracing coercion, influence, authority, force and manipulation. In their view, coercion exists where A secures B's compliance by the threat of deprivation when there is a conflict over values or cause of action between A and B. Bachrach and Baratz (1970: 34-37), quoted by Oke (2001: 20), however, argue further:

Where authority is involved, B complies because he recognises that A's command is reasonable in terms of his own values. Such recognition is either because B acknowledges that the content of A's command is legitimate and reasonable or because the content of the command is accepted as the outcome of a legitimate and reasonable procedure.

Judging from the foregoing, we see the intrinsic connection between authority and legitimacy which invariably affects the concept of power. Abiola underscores this in the conflict rhetoric with his reference to Abacha, rightly or wrongly, as a 'usurper' and his team as an 'illegal ruling council'. On the contrary, Abiola refers to his Government of National Unity as 'the only legitimate, constituted authority in the country' which he calls the armed forces, the police, the civil and public services to obey. In essence, he sees the power wielded by Abacha in the conflict as

one based on 'de facto' authority which lacks legal regulations or rules. Conversely, he considers the power he wields in the conflict that backed by legitimacy based on the 'June 12' mandate. Writing on the legitimacy of the power of rulers, Oladipo (2001: 19) argues thus:

... the process, through which those who rule acquire power plays a significant role in determining not only the form of government but also the extent of the duty which the people have to obey the directives of those who rule.

When we extend this exposition to the political sub-cultures the speakers represent, we could infer that the power wielded by the military (represented by Babangida and Abacha) is 'naked force' or 'coercion' which lacks legitimacy, while that wielded by the civilians (represented by Abiola) is 'de jure' authority which has legitimacy, thereby giving the citizens obligation to obey that authority. Abiola's conception of this distinction brings to the fore the role-relationships of the interactants in the conflict. This is an attempt by Abiola to infringe on the competence face of the military and to further alienate its goals from the people. On the contrary, he tries to boost his own competence face and to further enlist the people's support for his own goals.

Having discussed the illocutionary act of ordering/commanding, we would now discuss the illocutionary act of threatening/warning. Let us consider the following excerpts:

- (xxvi) ... I wish to state that this administration will take necessary action against any interest groups that seek to interfere in the internal affairs of our country. (ellipsis mine)
(Babangida, EPH: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 137)
- (xxvii) This regime will be firm, humane, and decisive. We will not condone nor tolerate any act of indiscipline. Any attempt to test our will will be decisively dealt with.
Abacha, CN: Newswatch, November 29, 1993, p. 18)
- (xxviii) Government would act firmly and decisively against pretentious and unregistered groups, who are being financed by foreign interests to do disservice to the peace and unity of our country and frustrate our quest for true democracy.
(Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p. 20)
- (xxix) 'Enough is enough'.
'Enough of military rule'.
'Enough of square pegs in round holes'.
'Enough, oh enough of economic mismanagement'.
(Abiola, ED: Tell, July 20, 1998, pp. 20–21)

The excerpts above show the speakers' deployment of the illocutionary act of warning/threatening to coerce their opponents in the conflict. In excerpt (xxvi), Babangida warns interest groups against interfering in the internal affairs of Nigeria. It is interesting to note that this is the only instance of Babangida's performing the illocutionary act of warning/threatening in all his speeches sampled for this study. Throughout his speeches, we see him mitigating coercion in all its ramifications although coercion could hardly be divorced from military culture. This

does not, however, detract from the pretentious nature of Babangida's speeches. He is simply putting up a Machiavellian posture for Machiavelli writes that a prince 'must be a fox in order to recognize traps, and a lion to frighten wolves' (Machiavelli 1961: 56). But he concludes that princes 'who have known best how to imitate the fox have come off best' (1961: 57) and it seems it is the former posture that Babangida assumes in his speeches.

Conversely, Abacha's coercive disposition is revealed, first, in excerpt (xxvii) where, on taking over the reins of power, he threatens that 'any attempt to test our will will be decisively dealt with.' It is noteworthy that Abacha assumes this coercive posture in his maiden speech as Head of State and we may begin to wonder why this is so. Abacha also is simply putting up a Machiavellian disposition for Machiavelli (1961: 30) writes:

So it should be noted that when he seizes a state the new ruler must determine all the injuries that he will need to inflict. He must inflict them once for all, and not have to renew them every day, and in that way he will be able to set men's minds at rest and win them over to him when he confers benefits.

Besides, Abacha assumes the same posture in excerpt (xxviii) when he threatens that his administration will act firmly and decisively against unregistered groups allegedly doing disservice to the peace and unity of the country. He apparently adopts this coercive strategy in dealing with his opponents in an attempt to forestall real or imagined oppositions to his new

government. This is Machiavellian for Machiavelli argues that 'a new prince, of all rulers, finds it impossible to avoid a reputation for cruelty, because of the abundant dangers inherent in a newly won state (1961: 53).

Finally, the utterance 'enough is enough' which is common in Nigeria's political rhetoric, especially in the rhetoric of conflicts, is recurrent in the discourse of the 'June 12' crisis. This warning is used to put a note of finality to the opponents' actions or goals which the speakers cannot condone any further. In much the same way as Abacha uses the utterance to warn his opponents to desist from opposing his actions and goals, Abiola uses the same utterance four times with some slight modifications in his speech 'Epetedo Declaration'. In the first structure, we have the stereotyped expression. However, in the subsequent three structures, the nominal substitutes in form of object of preposition are varied to give detailed information. Also, Abiola's use of the exclamation 'oh' in this context is an attempt to whip up sentiments and to show his broken emotion. Generally, all the structures are echoisms that serve as interruptive patterns in the syntactic structure.

4.4 Summary

In sum, the persuasion and coercion strategies deployed by the speakers apparently break the norms and the demands of their respective

political sub-cultures. As military politicians, Babangida and Abacha ostensibly use persuasion strategies in an attempt to enlist and sustain the people's support. Thus, despite the association of coercion with military life and leadership, they mitigate coercion for the attainment of social and political goals. Also, as a civilian politician, Abiola resorts to the deployment of coercion strategies in an attempt to wrest power from the military. This disposition is at variance with civil life and leadership that set great store by persuasion strategies for the resolution of political conflict. This is a clear reversal of the norms and values that characterize the two political sub-cultures. Strategically, however, the interactants do not exclusively rely on either of the strategies; both are simultaneously deployed in the conflict rhetoric with the exception of Babangida who relies solely, though strategically too, on persuasion strategies.

Besides, it is imperative that we point out at this stage that the strategies that we have analyzed and discussed so far have touched on, in passing, certain linguistic traits of the discourse that would be analyzed in greater detail in the subsequent chapters. Equally, we would pay attention to the manifestations of such strategies and other similar ones at the linguistic plane in the subsequent chapters. The interdependency relation of these levels of analysis lies in the tenet of the communication linguistics model (adopted for this study) which attempts to strike a balance between

encoding and decoding aspects of communication. Thus, the interconnectivity of the behavioural aspects of language and the formal linguistic features of the discourse cuts across our analysis, as we would see in the analysis of the syntactic tactics and lexico-semantic patterns in Chapter Five and Chapter Six respectively.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SYNTACTIC TACTICS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the analysis and discussion of the syntactic tactics deployed by our subjects in the discourse. To this end, we have identified the following tactics: deployment of pronominal elements, use of adverbials, syntactic parallelism and sentence patterns.

5.2 Deployment of Pronominal Elements

The first category of pronominals that the speakers tactically deploy in the discourse is that of the plural first-person subjective/objective, reflexive and possessive pronominals. As a form of address system, such pronominals are deictic devices performing certain pragmatic functions. It is in this light that Brown and Gilman (1972: 252), while pointing out the discursal role of such pronominals, write:

The interesting thing about such pronouns is their close association with two dimensions fundamental to the analysis of all social life –the dimensions of power and solidarity. Semantic and stylistic analysis of these forms takes us well into psychology and sociology as well as into linguistics and the study of literature.

It is pertinent to note that the dimensions of power and solidarity hinted at by Brown and Gilman (1972) above are integral to the speakers' use of such pronominals in the discourse. Consider the following excerpts:

- (i) We must not deviate from the issue before us as duly identified. We must not allow ourselves to be misguided into fratricidal conflict ... We must eschew undue selfish motives, self-interest and sectional group interests and pursue with vigour national interest which is central to our country's democratic aspirations. (ellipsis mine)
(Babangida, CSPI: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 54)
- (ii) Nigeria is the only country we have. We must solve our problems ourselves. We must lay very solid foundation for the growth of true democracy. We should avoid any ad hoc or temporary solutions. The problems must be addressed firmly, objectively and with all sincerity of purpose.
(Abacha, CN: Newswatch, November 29, 1993, p.18)
- (iii) People of Nigeria, these are challenging times in the history of our continent, Africa, and we in Nigeria must not allow ourselves to be left behind. Our struggles is the same as that waged by the people of South Africa ... We in Nigeria are also fighting to replace MINORITY rule, for we are ruled by only a tiny section of our armed forces. Like the South Africans, we want MAJORITY rule today... (ellipses mine)
(Abiola, ED: Tell, July 20, 1998, p.20)

One striking tactic that cuts across the three excerpts cited above is the speakers' use of the plural first-person pronominals (we, us, our, ourselves). This creates the impression of a symmetrical relation that holds among a people fighting the same (political) cause. Thus, Babangida, Abacha and Abiola adopt the tactic of solidarity engineering. Apart from the pluralization of identity in the speakers' use of 'we' and 'us', the use of the possessive 'our' which runs through the three excerpts underscores their recourse to collective responsibility and possession. In excerpt (i),

Babangida talks about 'our country's democratic aspirations'; Abacha, in excerpt (ii), talks about 'our problems'; and in excerpt (iii), Abiola talks of 'our struggle'. It is interesting to note that none of these speakers uses either of the demonstrative adjectives (this, these) as determiners before the noun heads in these instances.

Furthermore, the use of the plural first-person pronominals as a solidarity-engineering tactic by Babangida and Abacha in excerpts (i) and (ii) respectively brings to bear the inspirational function that language serves in the army. In this regard, Amafah (1990: 75) argues that the inspirational function of language in the army is 'desired to boost the morale of soldiers, soldiers mobilized towards the achievement of a goal through an appeal to some corporate ideals (e.g. masculinity, *esprit de corps*, national survival, etc.)'. The speakers' transference of military ideals to national politics gives the audience the impression that they are committed to such ideals in the same manner in which they are duty-bound to uphold them in the military circle.

In addition, the coalescence of voices in the plural first-person pronominal forms in relation to encoding of power deserves attention. In excerpts (i), (ii) and (iii) respectively, Babangida, Abacha and Abiola use the modal auxiliary 'must' with the plural first-person pronominal form (we) to encode power and control. Each of them presents his speech in

such a way that he coalesces the voice of self, that is, the speaker's voice with the voice of the audience (society), thereby showing that he has the backing of the Nigerian people to speak on their behalf. This rhetorical style dates back to the ancient Roman empire when the emperor's consistent pronoun style gave away his class status and political views. Writing on the emperor's use of the plural first-person pronominal forms, Brown and Gilman (1972: 254) explain:

An emperor ... is the summation of his people and can speak as their representative. Royal persons sometimes say 'we' when an ordinary man would say 'I'... The usage need not have been mediated by a prosaic association with actual plurality, for plurality is a very old and ubiquitous metaphor for power.

This viewpoint corroborates that of Arendt (1970: 44) who writes:

Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is 'in power' we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name.

From the views expressed above by Brown and Gilman (1972) and Arendt (1970), there appears to be an intrinsic link between the encoding of power and the expression of solidarity in the speakers' use of the plural first-person pronominals geared towards the attainment of collective goals. To this end, Habermas (1977: 4) argues:

The fundamental phenomenon of power is not the instrumentalization of "another's" will, but the formation of a "common" will in a communication directed to reaching agreement ... "Power" would then mean the consent of the governed that is mobilized for collective goals, that is, their readiness to support the political leadership ...

It is imperative to note that there are some limitations to Habermas' view here. First, although the audience (or the people) are given the impression of being mobilized towards the attainment of collective goals, we should not gloss over the possibility of the speakers' bid to satisfy their own (selfish) ends/personal goals which may run counter to the people's will. This is based on the fact that political intentions are often inscrutable. Second, pronominal forms have a way of alienating and assimilating the other. Although the communicators in excerpts (i), (ii) and (iii) employ the assimilatory function of the pronominals in consonance with the pluralism of identity in the country, there is no doubt that they could have as well threatened the face of those who may not want to identify with their causes.

For instance, Babangida's and Abacha's use of the plural first-person pronominal forms as 'inclusive devices', (Oha 1997b: 46) argues, may be face-threatening to those groups who may not want to identify with Babangida and Abacha, on the one hand, and their respective regimes and political programmes, on the other hand, especially the Yoruba ethnic group that appears to be most aggrieved on account of the annulment of the

June 12, 1993 presidential election. Also, Abiola's coalescence of the voice of self with the voice of the people, using the plural first-person pronominals, may threaten the face of the ethnic groups that may not want to identify with the 'June 12' cause. To this end, Oha (1997b: 46-47) argues:

To include one who does not want to be included, or to attribute responsibility to one who does not identify with a cause seems to agree with the design of military dictatorship. The plural first person pronominals are, therefore, tactical means of assimilating the other and making a single voice (of the dictatorship) appear to be plural.

Although it is only Babangida and Abacha that are military, we may not be able to exonerate Abiola (a civilian) from the use of this strategy because he too could have imbibed the military dictatorial tendency. Generally speaking, however, the speakers' dictatorial tendency seems to be predicated on the monologic nature of the speeches in which the speakers' perspectives and convictions are forcefully presented to their respective audiences. Thus, the 'one-sidedness of the flow of information seems to satisfy power demands', as 'the speakers possess dictatorial executive powers/roles' (Oha 1994: 117).

Besides the speakers' use of the plural first-person pronominal forms in line with the dimensions of power and solidarity, the transmutation of identity signalled in the discourse through the shift from

plural first-person pronominals to singular first-person pronominals is noteworthy. In this wise, Brown and Gilman (1972: 253) contend that ‘a man may vary his pronoun style from time to time so as to express transient moods and attitudes.’ Consider the following:

- (iv) Let me confess that the many and varied attacks hurt me personally and expectedly my family... My worry in the past few weeks has been that the attacks directed at my person and the innocent members of my family may deter other patriots who genuinely wish to offer themselves for service to the (sic) father land to parry (sic) a while.(ellipsis mine)
(Babangida, SAPNC: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 166)
- (v) ... as the direct beneficiary of the mandate I stand firm and resolute in upholding that mandate. I shall never compromise or betray the trust reposed in me by the Nigerian people ... (ellipses mine)
(Abiola, I12J: African Concord Special, October 1993, p.24)

In excerpt (iv) above, Babangida uses the singular first-person pronominals (me, my) to narrow down identity. This expresses a momentary shift of mood which reflects a particular attitude or emotion. Thus, in this excerpt, Babangida wants to personalize the problem occasioned by the annulment of the ‘June 12’ election. This is a characteristic disposition assumed by Babangida in the discourse of the conflict in an attempt to detract from the magnitude, and national dimension of the crisis. Elsewhere, he laments:

- (vi) The implication of the conception of politics in the first-person singular, and the problem it has created for

current efforts at evolving an acceptable solution to the political impasse is to make me, **General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida**, the issue and hence the focus of all possible ways to the resolution of present impasse. (SAPNC: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III 1996: 165)

Here, Babangida still emphasizes the personalization of the problem but he seems to play to the gallery, trying to impress the audience with the 'game' he plays in, and with, language with his linguistic analysis of pronominal forms, particularly his identification of the first-person singular, at the expense of addressing issues or facing facts. This hints, at the fact that in some situations political speeches are not necessarily meant to inform or reveal to the audience hidden facts but to gloss over the issue at stake and project the image of the speaker as an intellectual. In this instance, although we do not doubt Babangida's knowledge of and competence in linguistic analysis, the trappings of the erudition of (ghost) speech writers specially trained in such an art cannot be ruled out.

As part of the use of the singular first-person pronominals to personalize the problem of the annulment of the election, Babangida frequently uses the pronoun 'I' with such verbs as 'believe', 'wish', 'feel', and 'hope' in the discourse. Also, the pronoun occurs frequently with such verbs as 'appeal', 'appreciate', 'enjoin', and 'plead' to pacify the aggrieved parties and urge them to support his own cause in the crisis situation.

However, Abiola's use of the singular first-person pronominals in excerpt (v) underscores his social role in the vanguard of the crusade against the annulment of the election. In spite of his preference for these pronominal forms, his counting on the wishes, cooperation and support of the people is worthy of note. For instance, Abiola, in this excerpt, resolves not to betray the trust reposed in him by the Nigerian people. Thus, he gives the impression that he is not a 'lone-ranger' in the struggle. Elsewhere, he assures the people:

- (vii) I am going to struggle with you for the materialization of the mandate of 12 June for the benefit of our nation and its people. (SP: African Concord, October 1993, p. 64)

Hence, the collapsibility of 'I' and 'you' in the excerpt above to produce 'we' is suggestive of collective responsibility.

At this point, it is relevant that we pay attention to Babangida's and Abacha's deployment of the second-person pronominal (you) in such expressions as: 'as you all know'; 'you are all (living) witnesses'; 'you may wish to recall'; 'as you are aware'; 'as you may be aware'; 'permit me to remind you'; 'as you are all now aware'; and 'you will recall that . . .' The use of this pronominal in the above expressions underscores what is known in discourse analysis as the notion of 'shared knowledge' or 'assumed common ground' or 'presupposition' 'defined in terms of assumptions the speaker makes about what the hearer is likely to accept without challenge'

(Givon, 1979a: 50; quoted in Brown and Yule, 1983: 29). Further still, Stalnaker (1978: 321), quoted in Brown and Yule (1983: 29), defines presuppositions thus: 'presuppositions are what is taken by the speaker to be the common ground of the participants in the conversation.' Hence, Babangida and Abacha tend to justify whatever claims they make with regard to the conflict, as they presuppose that the audience appreciate and share such claims.

In sum, the communicators' deployment of the plural first-person pronominals in the discourse has shown their manipulative uses in addressing the perception of difference that underlies the pluralism in the country and, in fact, that of the national crisis occasioned by the 'June 12' issue. Although such pronouns serve face-saving functions, they are also face-threatening, as the impression of in-groupness created by the speakers may offend those who do not identify with their causes. Besides, although such pronouns show deference to group difference and unanimity of purposes, the pursuance of personal political goals by the speakers cannot be overruled. Therefore, such pronouns could become cheap tools for political deceit. Also worthy of mention in this respect are Babangida's use of the singular first-person pronominals to personalize the problem and Babangida's and Abacha's use of the second-person pronominal (you) to

underscore the notion of 'assumed common ground' even when they have their respective causes that they sell and want the people to identify with.

5.3 Use of Adverbials

The three classes of adverbials are adjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts. In the discourse of the conflict, the place of conjuncts in discourse relations deserves attention, especially conjuncts that are used to show adversative relations. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 126) explain that conjuncts have a connective function in that they indicate the connection between what is being said and what was said earlier. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 250) explain the adversative relation thus:

The basic meaning of the ADVERSATIVE relation is 'contrary to expectation'. The expectation may be derived from the content of what is being said, or from the communication process, the speaker-hearer situation, so that here too, as in the additive, we find cohesion on both the external and the internal planes.

The above exposition made by Halliday and Hasan (1976) pictures vividly what obtains in the discourse of the conflict where each of the speakers deploys adversative conjuncts to mark a clean break from the viewpoint probably held by the audience to what the speaker wants the audience to believe or hold on to as the truth. Consider the following excerpts:

- (viii) The political issue of our time is neither electoral victory nor defeat. Rather, the issue is that of the survival of

democracy in Nigeria beyond military rule and indeed beyond the euphoria of civil rule, come August 27, 1993. (underlining mine)
Babangida, CSPII: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 147)

- (ix) I never went to court. Alhaji Tofa never did. The two political parties never initiated any litigation on any matter relating to the election. The only person who went to court was Arthur Nzeribe, in the guise of a legally banned organization called ABN. Nzeribe was not a candidate. He did not even vote. His association is not even registered. And yet the Abuja courts granted him injunctions at the unprecedented hour of 9.30pm . . . (underlining and ellipsis mine)
(Abiola, DIIRENP: cf. Olarenwaju, 1999: 70-71)
- (x) Many have expressed fears about the apparent return of the military. Many have talked about the concern of the international community. However, under the present circumstances the survival of our beloved country is far above any other consideration. (underlining mine)
(Abacha, CN: Newswatch, November 29, 1993, p. 18)

In excerpt (viii), Babangida, in a bid to make the critics of the annulment of the 'June 12' election see reason as to why the election was annulled, makes some basic clarification. In his own view, the problem of the 'June 12' election is beyond election victory or defeat. Although what people would ordinarily expect from election processes is for a winner or a loser to emerge, Babangida, in this excerpt, employs the adversative conjunct 'rather' which falls under Halliday's and Hasan's (1976: 255) classification of conjuncts used to show 'corrective relations' to express a contrary opinion. So, the proper perception of the political issue of 'June

12', in Babangida's conception, is the survival of democracy beyond military rule and beyond the euphoria of civil rule.

In the same vein, Abiola, in excerpt (ix), laments the unfortunate annulment of the 'June 12' election in mysterious circumstances. He dismisses those factors which he feels should have warranted the annulment of the election, emphasizing these with the repetition of the negative adverb 'never' to prove that such factors were non-existent. He, however, mentions Arthur Nzeribe who went to court 'in the guise of a legally banned organization called ABN'. Contrary to expectation, the Abuja courts granted Nzeribe injunction, restraining the National Electoral Commission (NEC) from conducting the election. This adversative relation is enhanced in the discourse with the use of the adversative conjunct 'and yet' which links the latter part of the discourse with the former.

Finally, in excerpt (x), Abacha acknowledges the fears of Nigerians about the return of the military to the system of governance. He, however, expresses a contrary opinion which he wants the audience to hold on to. He achieves this by introducing the adversative conjunct 'however' to stress the fact that the survival of the country is far above any other consideration. The implicature of Abacha's opinion rests on the fact that

the political sub-culture (whether military or not) is not the crux of the matter so long as the nation's interest is uppermost on the leaders' minds.

On the whole, the speakers' use of the adversative conjuncts help to shed light on the contradictions that characterized the conflict situation and balance up the opposing views, events and actions that the speakers make reference to in the discourse of the conflict.

5.4 Syntactic Parallelism

The speakers, in the discourse of the crisis, stylistically deploy parallel syntactic structures to thematize some crucial issues in the conflict situation, add some musical quality to the discourse from the rhythm created by such structures, and encode meaning in a memorable pattern. The following excerpts will suffice:

- (xi) For eight years, I have had the onerous responsibility of steering the ship of state of this great country through perilous waters of conflicts and vicious criticisms, and of propaganda and unbelief in our great mission. The challenges have been enormous sometimes daunting, but through them all, we have kept faith with the Nigerian people. We have considered no sacrifice too great, no injury too grievous and no personal comfort too important to subordinate to the needs of our great nation. (underlining mine)
(Babangida, VAN: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996:181)
- (xii) People of Nigeria, you are all witnesses that I have tried to climb the highest mountain, cross the deepest river and walk the longest mile, in order to get these men to obey the will of our people. There is no

humiliation I have not endured, no snare that has not been put into my path, no 'set-up' that has not been designed for me, in my endeavour to use the path of peace to enforce the mandate that you bestowed on me one year ago. (underlining mine)
(Abiola, ED: Tell, July 20, 1998, p. 20)

- (xiii) In their elusive search for relevance, these self-anointed saviours have deliberately ignored the obvious and widely acknowledged facts about the election - namely, that the said Presidential elections were inconclusive and no results were declared; that the elections were aborted by a previous government which was replaced by another government before this administration came into being; and that June 12 was the culminating point of several anti-democratic injustices. (underlining mine)
(Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p.18)

In excerpt (xi) above, Babangida appraises the task of leadership which his administration took with giant strides for eight years in spite of its herculean nature. It is instructive that Babangida here makes use of the metaphor of 'the ship of state'. A ship conveys people as well as goods and has to be safely guarded to its destination. Thus, his metaphorization of the task of governance in the image of 'steering the ship of state of this country' is suggestive of a mobile metaphor or kinesic semiotic in which movement rather than stagnation is the ultimate goal of the captain of the ship. However, the plain sail of the ship could sometimes be hampered by turbulent seas. In the same vein, Babangida sees the 'ship of state' as being steered through 'perilous waters'. The metaphor of 'perilous waters' here is suggestive of the risk involved in 'steering the ship of state', occasioned

by 'conflicts', 'vicious criticisms', 'propaganda' and 'unbelief in our great mission'. This metaphor reminds us of Obafemi Awolowo who once wrote:

Nigeria's ship is now in the midst of a heavy storm. That we have been invited by you at this time, therefore, to lend a hand in piloting the ship safe and whole, to the happy haven of our dreams, is at once a tribute to our reputed competence and a challenge to our skill (1981: 97).

Therefore, in order to rise to the challenge too, Babangida hints at the sense of patriotism which he and the members of his administration showed while in office. This, he emphasizes, using the parallel structures underlined in excerpt (xi). Here, the determiner 'no' (quantifier), combines with the nouns 'injury', 'sacrifice' and 'personal comfort' to suggest that he and his colleagues laid down all they could 'in the interest of the nation'. This touches on a sense of selflessness in leadership role which political public speakers always appeal to in political rhetoric.

Equally, in excerpt (xii), Abiola uses two different syntactically parallel structures. First, he emphasizes how he had stretched his patience and energy beyond limits to persuade the military to respect the 'June 12' election: '... I have tried to climb the highest mountain, cross the deepest river, and walk the longest mile ...' In these parallel structures, the collocational patterns: 'climb ... mountains', 'cross ... river', and 'walk ... mile' are thought-engaging. In all of them, we see the image of someone

performing certain arduous tasks which require energy, patience and, above all, tact.

Perhaps, at this point, we need to provide a structural analysis to shed more light on the syntactic pattern in this parallel structure: 'I have tried to climb the highest mountain, cross the deepest river, and walk the longest mile ...'

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S	P		C				C				C				
NWG	Perf	MV1	MV2	NWG			MV3	NWG		Conj	MV	NWG			
H	have	tried	to climb	M		H	(to) cross	M		H	and	(to) walk	M		H
Det				Adj.	Det	Adj.		Det	Adj.						
the				highest	mountain	the		deepest	river	the			longest	mile	
I															

Figure 5.1: Structural Analysis of an Example of Abiola's Use of Parallel Syntactic Structures

In the second pattern, 'There is no humiliation I have not endured, no snare that has not been put into my path, no 'set-up' that has not been designed for me ...', Abiola invites attention to the sacrifices he had made while pursuing 'the path of peace' to actualize the 'June 12' election. The choice of the determiner 'no' with certain nouns as in: 'no humiliation', 'no snare' and 'no 'set-up' reveals the untold hardships he had suffered.

On the whole, from a rhetorical perspective, the style adopted by Babangida and Abiola relative to their uses of the quantifier 'no' and Abiola's particular use of the superlative adjectives, 'highest', 'deepest' and 'longest' in these parallel structures shows a good dose of hyperbole that they have been able to inject into the discourse. Swartz (1976: 101) sees hyperbole as 'a special sort of political resource' that is 'used to gain particular ends and to win or retain support for special procedures or states'. Arguing further, Swartz (1976: 101) writes:

... hyperbole provides a means for focusing attention on specific aspects of reality (whether social or physical) in such a way as to bring about awareness of values and norms associated with those aspects in an emotionally charged way. (ellipsis and underlining mine)

Therefore, Babangida's and Abiola's uses of hyperbole in these excerpts is evident of political speeches which are more often than not stereotypically characterized as having a good deal of exaggeration.

Rhetorically, hyperbole (overstatement) is one of the two ways of apparently violating the 'Cooperative Principle', the other being litotes (understatement) (see Leech, 1983:145). The Cooperative Principle is a general principle of conversation supported by a number of maxims which speakers will normally obey. It is presented by Grice (1975: 45) in the following terms:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

Specifically, the maxim flouted in Babangida's and Abiola's overstatement is that of quantity:

- QUANTITY: Give the right amount of information: i.e.
1. Make your contribution as informative as is required.
 2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required (cf. Leech, 1983: 8).

Apparently, Babangida and Abiola have made their contribution more informative than is required through their hyperbolic utterances.

Finally, in excerpt (xiii), Abacha highlights the reasons why those agitating for the actualization of the June 12 election were not sincere in their crusade. He expresses these reasons, using the 'that-clause' in three syntactically parallel structures to point out as succinctly as possible such factors which the agitators did not take into cognizance. The refutation

messages designed to answer the opponents' attacks in these parallel structures are strategic.

Let us attempt to provide a structural analysis of the 'that - clauses' in the figure below:

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	S				P	C
	NWG				MV	Adj
that	M	M	M	II	were	inconclusive
	Det	Adj	Adj			
	the	said	presidential	elections		

	S		P			PP		
that	NWG		Aux	MV	P	NWG		
	M	H	were	aborted	by	M	M	H
	Det					Det	Adj	government
	the	elections				a	previous	

that	S	P	C					
	NWG	MV	NWG					
	H	was	M	M	II	M		
	June 12		Det	Adj	point	PP		
			the	culminating		P	M	
						of	Det	Adj
						several	anti-democratic	injustices

Figure 5.2 : Structural Analysis of an Example of Abacha's Use of Parallel Syntactic Structures

In these parallel structures, Abacha's repetition of the noun heads 'elections' and 'June 12' calls the attention of the audience to the thrust of the discourse. His use of the copula verb is also noteworthy: 'were' is followed by the adjective 'inconclusive' and 'was', followed by the nominal group 'the culminating point of several anti-democratic injustices'. The use of these structures helps the speaker to reinforce his perception of the subject that he tries to sell to the audience.

Having discussed syntactic parallelism, we would now examine the nature of sentences in the discourse.

5.5 Sentence Patterns

In this sub-section, we are concerned with the analysis of sentence structures with a view to bringing to bear the correlation between the nature of sentences in the discourse and the contingencies of the conflict. The first marked characteristic of sentence construction in the discourse is the preponderance of hypotactic structures which are composed of one or more main clauses with one or more embedded structures. The following examples will suffice:

- (xiv) It was obviously painful to annul the presidential election but it would have been destructive of the democratic ideals and national interest which this administration had striven for in the last eight years if it had been concluded in disregard of the factors which militated and manifested themselves before and during

the election. (Babangida, CSPI: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 141)

(xv) SEQUEL TO THE RESIGNATION OF THE FORMER Head of the Interim National Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Ernest Shonekan, and my subsequent appointment as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief, I have had extensive consultations within the Armed Forces hierarchy and other well-meaning Nigerians in a bid to find solutions to the various political, economic and social problems which have engulfed our beloved country and which have made life most difficult to the ordinary citizen of this nation. (Abacha, CN: Newswatch, November 29, 1993, p.18)

(xvi) I have deliberately withdrawn for a few days in order to devote myself along with members of the transition committee to the process of concrete planning of the structure and model of the government that would satisfy and meet the grave socio-economic and political challenges faced by Nigerians in the last few years as particularly occasioned by graft mismanagement, incompetence and insensitivity of the military dictators of the last ten years who have turned Nigeria and Nigerians into spoils of their conquests. (Abiola, IYDEP, Tell, July 4, 1994, p. 14)

Having cited these excerpts, we would now analyze each of them relative to the structural and functional classifications of the dependent structures. Let us consider each of the following figures:

Excerpt (xiv)

Dependent Structures	Structural Classification	Functional Classification
(i) which this administration had striven for in the last eight years	Clause	Adjectival clause, qualifying the noun 'national interest' in the main clause
(ii) if it had been concluded in disregard of the factors	Clause	Adverbial clause of condition, modifying the verb 'would have been' in the main clause
(iii) which militated and	Clause	Adjectival clause, qualifying the noun 'the factors' in (ii) above
(iv) which manifested themselves before and during the election	Clause	Adjectival clause, qualifying the noun 'the factors' in (ii) above

Figure 5.3: Showing an Example of Babangida's Use of Subordination in a Hypotactic Structure

Excerpt (xv)

Dependent Structures	Structural Classification	Functional Classification
(i) Sequel to the resignation of the former Head of the Interim National Government ... and my subsequent appointment as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief	Phrase	Adverbial phrase of result, modifying the verb 'have had' in the main clause
(ii) within the Armed Forces and other well-meaning Nigerians	Phrase	Adverbial phrase of place, modifying the verb 'have had' in the main clause
(iii) in a bid to find solutions to the various political, economic and social problems	Phrase	Adverbial phrase of purpose, modifying the verb 'have had' in the main clause
(iv) which have engulfed our beloved country	Clause	Adjectival clause, qualifying the noun 'the various political, economic and social problems' in (iii) above
(v) which have made life most difficult to the ordinary citizen of this nation	Clause	Adjectival clause, qualifying the noun 'the various political, economic and social problems' in (iii) above

Figure 5.4: Showing an Example of Abacha's Use of Subordination in a Hypotactic Structure

Excerpt (xvi)

Dependent Structures	Structural Classification	Functional Classification
(i) in order to devote myself along with members of the transition committee to the process of concrete planning of the structure and model of the government	Phrase	Adverbial phrase of reason, modifying the verb 'have withdrawn' in the main clause
(ii) that would satisfy and meet grave socio-economic and political challenges	Clause	Adjectival clause, qualifying the noun 'the government' in (i) above
(iii) faced by Nigerians in the last few years	Phrase	Adjectival phrase, qualifying the noun 'the grave socio-economic and political challenges' in (ii) above
(iv) as particularly occasioned by graft mismanagement, incompetence and insensitivity of the military dictators of the last ten years	Phrase	Adverbial phrase of reason, modifying the verb 'faced' in (iii) above

(v) who have turned Nigeria and Nigerians into spoils of their conquests	Clause	Adjectival clause, qualifying the noun 'the military dictators of the last ten years' in (iv) above
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Figure 5.5: Showing an Example of Abiola's Use of Subordination in a Hypotactic Structure

From the foregoing analysis, we would argue that the instances of subordination in the hypotactic structures are used by the speakers to provide supposed answers to some likely questions – 'where', 'which', 'when', 'why', 'what' – which the audience could have in mind. The result could, however, be counterproductive as such long and winding structures arising from heavy subordination could be too tasking on the audience's ability to comprehend, within a very short time, the messages contained therein. This could result from the fact that the audience might not be able to catch up easily with the pace of delivery of the speeches. This might be intentional, though; speakers do not necessarily use language to inform or enlighten but sometimes to confound the thoughts of the addressee.

Nevertheless, there are some cases in the use of hypotactic structures in the discourse where the speakers do not pile up dependent structures as in the examples we have just considered. Instead, we have cases of the tactical use of one or two dependent clauses to emphasize the

basis on which each of the interactants would not give in to the opponent's position in the conflict. Consider the following:

- (xvii) Because of the rejection by the political parties of the fresh presidential election option, and also because of the imperative need of meeting the August 27 deadline for the termination of military rule, government has accepted to institute the Interim National Government. (underlining mine)
(Babangida, CSPIV: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 154)
- (xviii) It is important to emphasise that the Constitutional Conference remains the only viable option if we are to avoid the path of chaos and anarchy. (underlining mine)
(Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p. 19)
- (xix) I am the custodian of a sacred mandate, freely given, which I cannot surrender unless the people so demand ... (underlining and ellipsis mine)
(Abiola, DIIRENP: cf. Olanrewaju, 1996: 72)

As shown above, the underlined dependent structures underlie the crux of the conflict as each of the speakers maintains a position contrary to that of his opponent: Babangida and Abacha are advocating Interim National Government and Constitutional Conference respectively whereas Abiola reiterates his avowed commitment to the 'June 12' struggle. What is particularly striking in Abacha's discourse in excerpt (xviii) is the way in which he dictatorially presents his conviction of the viability of the Constitutional Conference as 'the only viable option'. Similarly, Babangida had earlier on assumed the same dictatorial posture: 'Holding fresh election is the most credible option conceivable in view of the

annulment of the June 12 election' (CSP III: *Selected Speeches of IBB* Vol. III, 1996: 150). He, however, hurriedly handed over to an Interim National Government when 'the most credible option' was not feasible.

At this point, it is relevant to say that although there is the preponderance of hypotactic structures in the discourse, there are cases when the speaker's thoughts expressed in such structures are concluded with a (short) simple sentence. Consider the following:

(xx) It is indisputable that democracy is the highest form of government precisely because of its emphasis on freedom and equality. It is, therefore, no wonder that as a form of government, democracy has been the great desire of many peoples in different ages. It is also equally indisputable that as a form of government, democracy requires an uncommonly high level of sophistication of society, personnel and behaviour in order for it to be attained and maintained. As an administration we realize this universal crave and we have been working towards this goal. We will achieve it. (underlining mine)
(Babangida, SAPNC: *Selected Speeches of IBB* Vol. III, 1996: 157)

(xxi) It is in this context that all of us must see the present political impasse which resulted from the annulment of the 12 June, 1993 presidential election. Just as the cynics thought that the parties would not be able to produce their Presidential candidates after the botched direct primaries of last year cynics are quick to throw up their hands again at the impossibility of finding an acceptable solution to the present political impasse. We should prove them wrong. (underlining mine)
(Babangida, SAPNC: *Selected Speeches of IBB* Vol. III, 1996: 159)

In extract (xx), Babangida piles up hypotactic structures and uses a paratactic structure in the last but one sentence. A paratactic structure is composed of two or more units with equal grammatical importance. He concludes his argument with the (short) simple sentence: 'We will achieve it'. Also, in extract (xxi), he concludes his argument with the (short) simple sentence: 'We should prove them wrong'. The length and patterning of these (short) simple sentences alter the rhythm of the discourse. Also, the sentences come as a surprise or resolution which would catch the attention of the audience.

Further still, there are cases when simple sentences are used in a sequence. The following extracts will suffice:

(xxii) We have put in our best. We have had sleepless nights. There have been periods of joy, sadness and frustration. There have been periods of satisfaction and sense of fulfilment. There have been periods of dismay and disappointments. In all these, our countrymen have shown understanding; they have kept the faith; they have made sacrifices. I cannot expect more. I salute you all.
(Babangida, SAPNC: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 166)

(xxiii) The people of Nigeria have spoken. They have loudly and firmly proclaimed their preference for democracy. They have chosen me as their president for the next four years. They have determined that 27 August, 1993, shall be the terminal date of military dictatorship in Nigeria. On that date, the people of Nigeria, through their democratic decision of 12 June 1993, expect me to assume the reins of government. I fully intend to keep that date with history.
(Abiola, DIIRENP: cf. Olanrewaju, 1999: 72)

- (xxiv) Many have expressed fears about the apparent return of the military. Many have talked about the concern of the international community. However, under the present circumstances, the survival of our beloved country is far above any other consideration. Nigeria is the only country we have. We must therefore solve our problems ourselves. We must lay very solid foundation for the growth of true democracy. We should avoid any ad hoc or temporary solutions. The problems must be addressed firmly, objectively, decisively and with all sincerity of purpose. (Abacha, CN: Newswatch, November 29, 1993, p.18)

In all the above excerpts, we have sequences of simple sentences except for one instance in excerpt (xxiii) where there is the hypotactic structure: 'They have determined that 27 August 1993 shall be the terminal date of military dictatorship in Nigeria' and another instance in (xxiv) where there is the hypotactic structure: 'Nigeria is the only country we have'. The speakers deploy the simple sentences in quick succession to capture every bit of the series of actions that took place in the conflict situation or the action(s) they intended to perform or expected the audience to perform.

Finally, the sentence construction of the discourse shows the thematization of the adjunct element. This focusing device signals that an item has thematic status when it is put first in the clause. Following the terminology of the Prague school of linguistics, Halliday (1985) uses the term 'Theme' as the label for this function. He explains further:

The Theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned. The remainder of the message, the part in which the Theme is developed, is called in Prague school terminology the Rheme. As a message structure, therefore, a clause consists of a Theme accompanied by a Rheme; and the structure is expressed by the order – whatever is chosen as the Theme is put first (1985: 38).

Halliday points out that the Theme is not necessarily a nominal group; it may also be an adverbial group or prepositional phrase. The following are examples where the Theme is an adverbial group:

- (xxv) Exactly one year ago, you turned out in your millions to vote for me, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, as the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (underlining mine)
(Abiola, ED. Tell, July 20, 1998, p.20)
- (xxvi) On June 11, 1994, at your request, I claimed the sacred and popular mandate which you gave me as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces at the Presidential election of June 12, 1993. (underlining mine)
(Abiola, IYDEP: Tell, July 4, 1994, p. 14)
- (xxvii) In the weeks since the 12 June presidential election, my commitment to the cherished values of friendship has been confronted with the concern for the demands of statecraft. (underlining mine)
(Babangida, SAPNC: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 165)
- (xxviii) Since the commencement of presidential primaries, this administration has been eagle-eyed and critical of electoral conduct so as to protect the cause of national unity, political stability and democracy. (underlining mine)
(Babangida, CSP II: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 146)
- (xxix) In the past few weeks, we have witnessed actions and pronouncements which have had the unfortunate effect

of heightening political tension in our country.
(underlining mine)
(Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p.18)

(xxx) THREE MONTHS AGO, I received the report as well as a draft Constitution prepared by the (National Constitution) Conference. (underlining mine)
(Abacha: 35TH IAB: West Africa, 9-15 October 1995, p. 1556)

In the excerpts above, the elements which occupy the adjunct slot emphasize the temporal frame when certain actions took place in the course of the 'June 12' crisis. By thematizing such elements, the speakers try to refresh the memory of the audience of historic moments in the course of the 'June 12' crisis. Thus, they tend to justify further actions in the course of the crisis based on the retrospective look they take at major actions in the crisis. Time, in this sense, becomes an important signifier in the discourse of the crisis. We should, however, be wary of the fact that the speakers could exploit such temporal deixis for mischievous purposes.

Apart from the excerpts already discussed, Abiola tactically deploys the thematization of the adjunct elements, specifying the time frame within which he hoped to turn around the lot of the Nigerian people after the formation of his Government of National Unity. The following are extracts drawn from his speech 'I 'm Your Duly Elected President':

(xxxi) Within 30 days, we shall resume the federal system of government which the armed forces have failed to operate for 24 out of 33 years of our independence

because of their central command and vertical hierarchical structures.

From now onwards, all Nigerians will be equal before the law. There will be equality of opportunity and freedom to pursue the course of happiness as every individual desires.

With immediate effect, education throughout Nigeria will be made available to all children free of fees, levies or any imposition to give equality of opportunity to all our children regardless of the circumstances of their parents.

Very soon, health care delivery from primary to tertiary level will be seen as a right by all our people so that both urban and rural Nigerians will get equal treatment. (underlining mine) (IYDEP: Tell, July 4, 1994, pp.4-5)

In the sentences above, Abiola thematizes the underlined adjunct elements to reassure the people of the urgency with which the Government of National Unity headed by him would touch the lives of Nigerians for the better. In this connection, he tries to bring out the sharp contrast between two different temporal frames: twenty-four out of thirty-three years of Nigeria's independence during which the military had ruled and the inauguration of a Government of National Unity headed by him. The implicature of this is that if the military had ruled for this number of years and had not supposedly addressed these issues, a democratically-elected government headed by him would turn the situation around. From a rhetorical perspective, Abiola seems to capitalize on the hope and anxiety of the people to get their support for the 'June 12' struggle. As a politician,

he uses the medium to pursue with renewed vigour his campaign motifs, reiterating what would naturally interest the people in order to sway them to his own side. Thus, even though Abiola superficially seems to raise the hope of the people, he could be capitalizing on that hope as a politician just to suit the people's yearnings and aspirations without a corresponding sense of commitment.

5.6 Summary

Our analysis and discussion have shown that all our subjects deploy almost the same range of syntactic tactics in their discourses. Interestingly too, they capitalize on the slippery nature of political rhetoric to abuse such tactics by confounding the thoughts of the audience, on the one hand, and laundering their own (political) image, on the other hand. Therefore, beyond the superficial formal syntactic characterization of the discourse, we have also tried to draw attention to the rhetorical import underlying such characterization.

CHAPTER SIX

LEXICO-SEMANTIC PATTERNS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we are concerned with the exploration of the lexico-semantic patterns of the discourse, taking into consideration the contextual elements that constrain the stylistic choices. The exploration would touch on tactical use of lexical items, lexical stereotypes in political speech and writing, and lexical cohesion.

6.2 Tactical Deployment of Lexical Items

The speakers in the conflict tactically deploy lexical items to show their attitudes to the crisis, defend their own positions while attacking the opponents', and present negative and malignant images of the opponents, their actions and goals in the 'June 12' crisis. In order to provide a clear focus for our analysis and discussion, the choice of lexical items is analyzed in line with the following parameters: annulment of the election, labelling of opponents, labelling of opponents' actions, labelling of actions performed by self, and finally the 'June 12' crisis/period. Each of these parameters would be analyzed and discussed by turns.

6.2.1 Lexical Items Referring to the Annulment of the Election

Babangida	Abacha	Abiola
a painful decision, a rather disappointing experience	unfortunate annulment	an abominable act of naked political armed robbery, a tragic mistake of purporting to abort a pregnancy after the baby had been born, a cynical and contemptuous abrogation of solemn commitments and fixed programmes

Figure 6.1: A Juxtaposition of the Speakers' Deployment of Lexical Items Referring to the Annulment of the Election

Babangida refers to the annulment of the election as a 'painful decision'. Here, 'decision' which is an abstract noun has been characterized as something that can cause pain, as it takes the adjective (painful) attributively. This is a reference to Babangida's personal feelings. So, he uses transferred epithet, as the adjective would have been normally used predicatively. Perhaps it is interesting to further note that Babangida argues that his administration 'took the painful decision in good faith and in the interest of stability and security of the nation as well as for the advancement of democracy in Nigeria'. The antithetical structure of this utterance is worthy of attention. Let us have a look at the paradigm below for a better understanding:

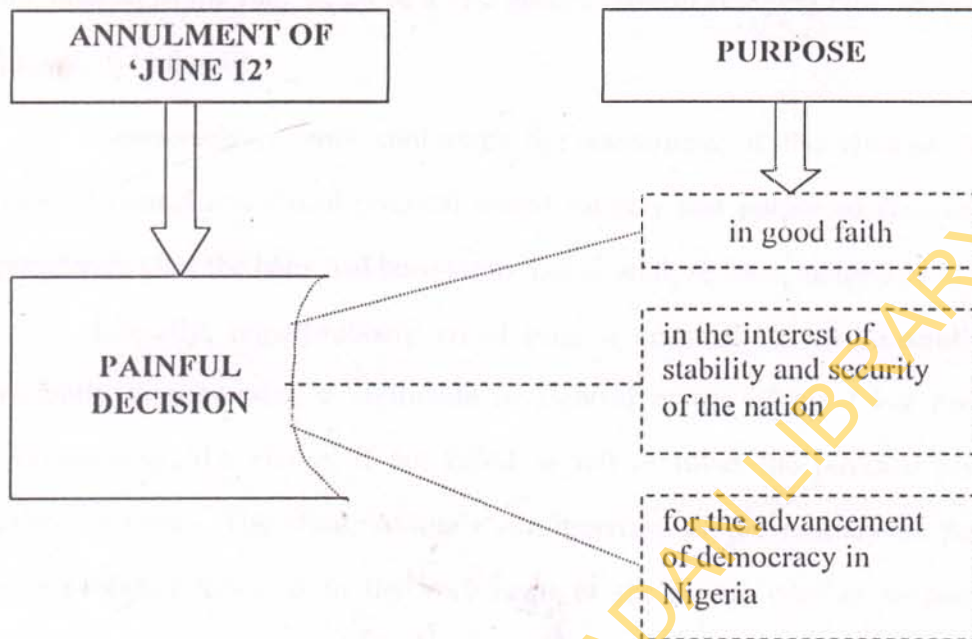


Figure 6.2: A Configuration of Babangida's Antithetical structure Explaining the Rationale behind 'June 12' Annulment

Here, Babangida tries to explain away the annulment of 'June 12', hinging the action on the supposed positive results it would yield despite the fact that the action was widely condemned as an unprecedented vice. By putting forward this argument, he is displaying a Machiavellian disposition:

... he (the prince) must not flinch from being blamed for vices which are necessary for safeguarding the state. This is because, taking everything into account, he will find that some of the things that appear to be virtues will, if he practises them, ruin him, and some of the things that appear to be vices will bring him security and prosperity. (parenthesis mine) Machiavelli (1961: 50)

So, in the spirit of Machiavelli, the action Babangida tries to justify as being in the interest of the state could be a vice geared towards bringing him 'security and prosperity' after all.

Conversely, Abiola configures the annulment of the election in two striking metaphors: naked political armed robbery and purported abortion of a pregnancy after the baby had been born. Let us analyze these metaphors in detail.

Literally, armed-robbery could refer a criminal act of forcefully and violently dispossessing a legitimate or rightful owner of his / her property. Consequently, the victim, if not killed, is left to suffer the physical loss and mental torture. Therefore, Abiola's configuration of the military as political armed-robbers takes us to the very heart of the power conflict between the military and the civilians. Abiola tries to paint the picture that the military had abandoned their primary responsibility of defending the territorial integrity of the country and had dispossessed the civilians of 'power' – the civilians' exclusive property. This is where the question of the political connotation of the armed robbery act comes in.

Another similar image in which Abiola configures the military is that of 'thieves of the people's mandate'. In a similar vein, a thief steals what does not legitimately belong to him or her. Also, Abiola specifically refers to Abacha as the 'usurper' (a person who has taken over somebody else's authority or power illegitimately). The following configuration attempts to capture the military-civilians relationship with regard to the 'June 12' crisis:

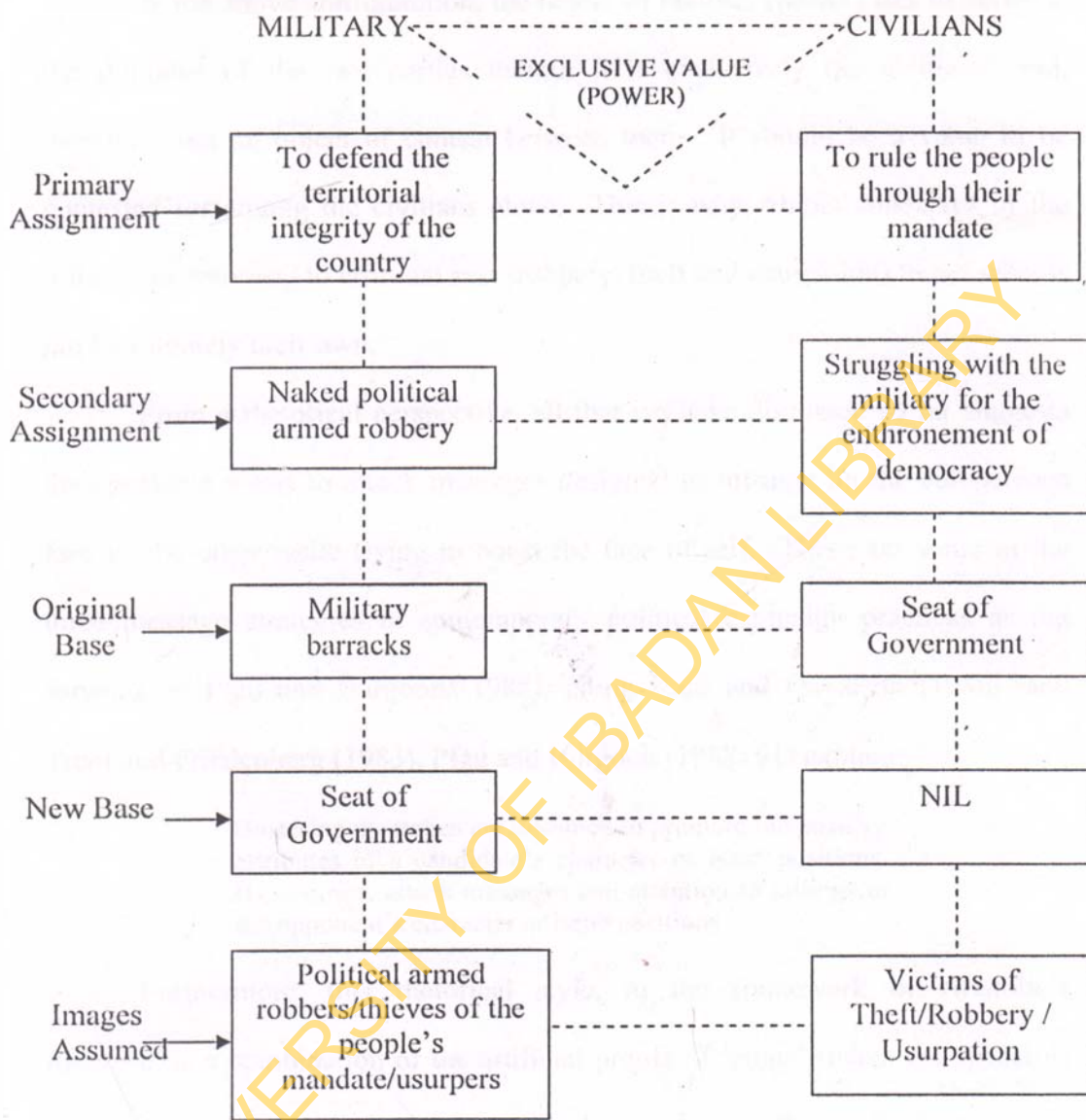


Figure 6.3: Abiola's Configuration of the Military-Civilians Relationship in the 'June 12' Crisis

In the above configuration, the object of conflict (power) lies in between the domains of the two parties though it is exclusively the civilians' and, therefore, not an object of contest between them. It should be a value to be contested for among the civilians alone. This is why Abiola conceives of the military as resorting to criminal acts (robbery, theft and usurpation) to get what is not legitimately their own.

From a rhetorical perspective, all that we have discussed so far suggests the speaker's resort to attack messages designed to infringe on the competence face of the other while trying to boost the face of self. These are some of the three message strategies in contemporary political campaign practices as put forward by Pfau and Burgoon (1988), citing Kaid and Davidson (1986), and Trent and Friedenber (1983). Pfau and Burgoon (1988: 91) explain:

Bostering messages are designed to promote the positive attributes of a candidate's character or issue positions. By contrast, attack messages call attention to failings in the opponent's character or issue positions.

Furthermore, this rhetorical style, in the framework of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, is a combination of the artificial proofs of 'ethos' (when the speech is delivered in such a manner as to render the speaker worthy of confidence) and 'pathos' (when the speaker tries to rouse his/her hearers to emotion). Above all, Abiola's discourse in this regard is the 'forensic' kind where the speaker accuses the other but defends self.

Having analyzed the metaphor of 'political armed robbery', we would pay attention to that of the purported abortion of a pregnancy after the baby had been born. Although Abiola uses 'abortion' literally to refer to the termination of the Babangida administration's transition programme prior to the 'June 12' election, 'abortion' assumes a metaphorical significance as it relates to the termination of the 'June 12' election.

Thus, we have two different cases of abortion in this discourse. The former is premature, while the latter is presumably post-natal. The latter case is nothing but a sheer absurdity which by no stretch of the imagination can ever be a reality. In effect, the thrust of Abiola's argument is that the 'June 12' election could not have been annulled when the election processes had been concluded and a president-elect was already bracing up to be sworn in. This is what he refers to as 'a tragic mistake of purporting to abort a pregnancy after the baby had been born'.

Also, Abiola's personification of the 'June 12' election is contained in his conception of the election in the image of 'a new born child' which would not be killed 'because the midwife is a bad woman'. Thus, Abiola's personification of the election is an attempt to show the injustice and crime against infancy – infanticide. This would further rouse the people's resentment against the annulment of the election.

On the whole, the speakers' tactical deployment of lexical items to refer to the annulment of the election has shown their attempt to defend their own positions in the crisis while trying to infringe on the opponents' competence face. While Babangida uses only the former, Abiola combines both.

6.2.2 Lexical Items Referring to the Labelling of Opponents

BABANGIDA	ABACHA	ABIOLA
over-articulate section of the elite and its captive audience, the so-called custodians of democracy . . . taking with them the innocent and the gullible, some global policemen of democracy, foreign detractors, cynics, critics	detractors, sceptics, self-anointed saviours, unregistered groups, advocates of democracy, erring organisations, paid agents of incitements and confusion, reckless press	politicians in uniform, soldier politicians, tiny clique of military adventurers, thieves of the people's mandate, an arrogant and self-serving cabal, a small clique in the military

Figure 6.4: A Juxtaposition of the Speakers' Deployment of Lexical Items Referring to the Labelling of Opponents

The strategy of labelling opponents in derogatory terms or portraits is a constant in political speech and writing. As a result, we find in the above figure Babangida, Abacha and Abiola trying to destroy the image of their opponents. Labelling of opponents in negative terms in political rhetoric sometimes transcends interpersonal relations to ideological/party relations. In the present discourse, the speakers malign their opponents' competence face. This is an attempt to present the opponents as undesirable elements whose causes the populace should dissociate themselves from. Conversely, the speakers strive to justify the legitimacy of their own causes which the opponents are working

against, hence Babangida's and Abacha's reference to their opponents as 'cynics', 'sceptics', 'detractors' and 'critics'.

However, Abiola's labelling of the opponents is directed at individuals in the military and (implicitly) the military as an institution. Worthy of attention is his reference to the opponents as either 'tiny clique of military adventurers' or 'a small clique in the military'. Abiola's emphasis of the numerical strength of the opponents is instructive. For instance, in delineating the two camps in the crisis, he declares:

- (i) From now on, the struggle in Nigeria is between the people and a small clique in the military determined to cling to power at all costs . . .

It is inconceivable that a few people in government should claim to know so much better about politics and government than the 14 million Nigerians who actually went to the polls on 12 June. (underlining and ellipsis mine)

DIIRENP: cf. Olanrewaju, 1999: 72)

This declaration made by Abiola brings to the fore the 'us-them' dichotomy in the 'June 12' crisis as the people of Nigeria and Abiola (us) pitch battle with the military - (the enemy, them). The following paradigm attempts to capture the relationship:

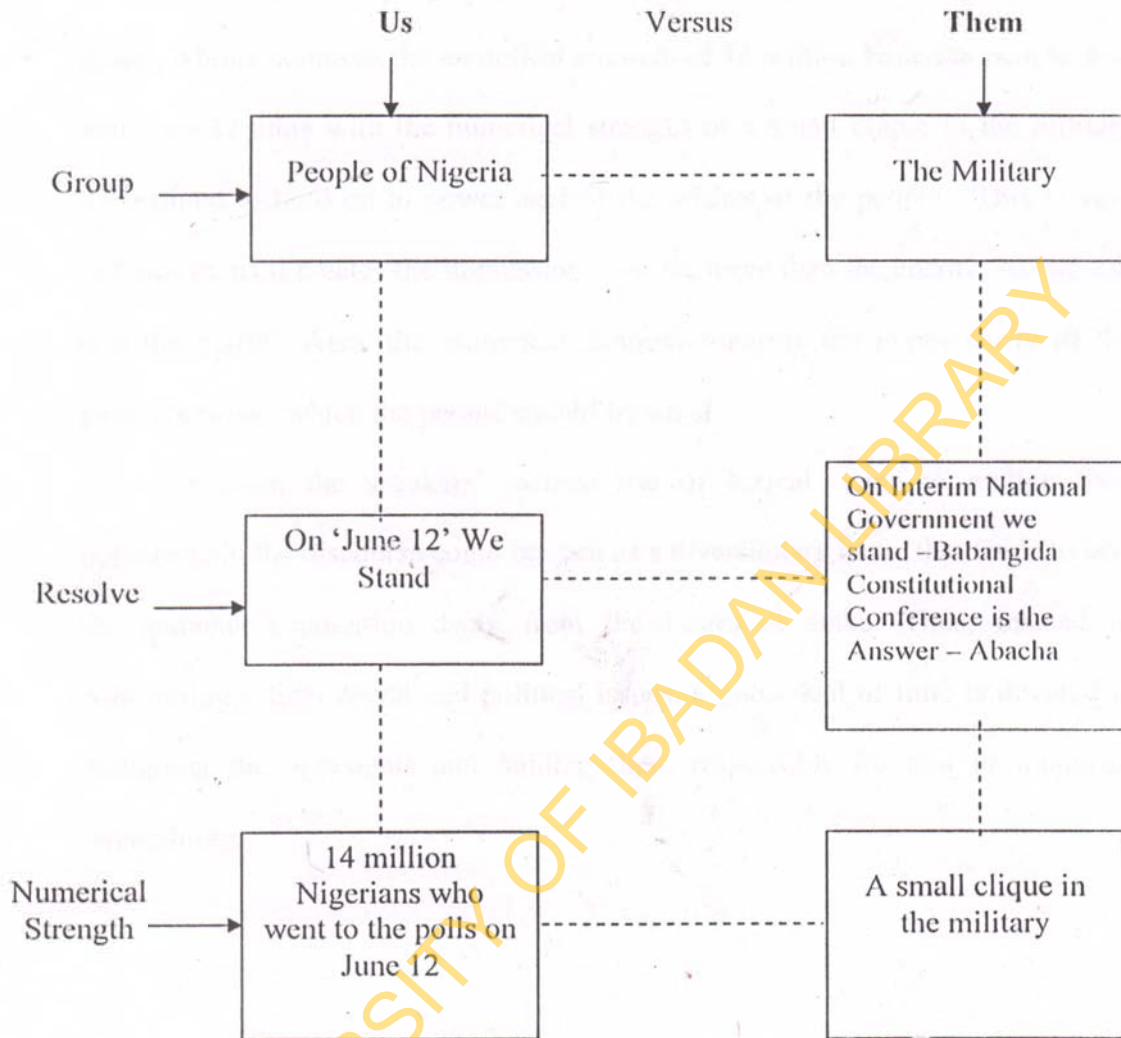


Figure 6.5 :A Configuration of Abiola's Use of 'Us-them' Dichotomy

As shown in the above configuration, Abiola portrays the people of Nigeria and the military as two distinct groups set on a collision course. However, the military is seen as the 'enemy' whose ambition is to cling to power, 'foisting itself upon the people of Nigeria against their wishes.' In order to boost

the confidence of the people and maintain the feeling of solidarity in the 'us' group, Abiola contrasts the numerical strength of 14 million Nigerian people who voted on 12 June with the numerical strength of a small clique in the military determined to hold on to power against the wishes of the people. This is very instructive, as it creates the impression: 'we are more than the enemy; so, we can win the battle'. Also, the numerical contrast suggests the unpopularity of the enemy's cause which the people should frown at.

In sum, the speakers' tactical use of lexical items to malign their opponents in the discourse could be seen as a diversionary tactic that tends to take the audience's attention away from the issues at stake. Thus, instead of confronting salient social and political issues, a good deal of time is devoted to maligning the opponents and holding them responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing.

6.2.3 Lexical Items Referring to Actions Performed by Opponents

Babangida	Abacha	Abiola
excesses in political process, unpatriotic exuberance, political eccentricity, diversionary and perpetual agitation, irreconcilable antagonism, provocation, flagrant disregard for law and order, alarmist pronouncements, divisive and instigatory initiatives, partisan calling, private, parochial and self-serving agendas, partial and other parochial considerations	Misguided acts, shameless tactics and insincerity, evil motives, economic sabotage, unsavoury acts of junk journalism, a systematic destruction and strangulation of our economy, self-seeking and mindless actions, wilful destruction, vested political interests, frustrated personal political ambitions	tactics of divide and rule, bribery, disinformation, political perfidy, (vile) propaganda, military about-turns

Figure 6.6: A Juxtaposition of the Speakers' Deployment of Lexical Items Referring to Opponents' Actions

A careful look at the figure above shows that Babangida and Abacha employ similar lexical items to label their opponents' actions. Such actions tend to portray the opponents as the trouble-makers, the rebels, the critics, the dissidents, the destructive elements, the saboteurs, the non-conformists, the ambitious, and so forth. Also worthy of attention is the speakers' reference to their opponents' actions as being geared towards gratifying self interests.

These attack messages infringe on the competence face of the opponents and suggest the unpopularity of their causes from which the people should dissociate. This accusatory strategy is a verbal propaganda ostensibly used by the speakers to divert the attention of the people from the issues at stake.

As to Abiola's use of lexical items to label opponents' actions, he also has the forensic motif which is aimed at accusing the opponents. From the figure above, Abiola uses lexical items that tend to cast serious shadows on the leadership qualities his opponents may profess to possess. Such actions as 'tactics of divide and rule', 'bribery', 'disinformation' and 'political perfidy' tend to detract from the legitimacy of the exemplary leadership such opponents may put up in a pluralistic country as Nigeria.

More importantly, Abiola's portrayal of the military role in governance as 'military about-turns' deserves analysis. In the military parlance, 'about-turn' is a command to soldiers on parade to turn round and face the opposite direction. This is the literal sense of the use of the lexical item. However, in the conflict rhetoric, 'about-turn' is used as a parody which assumes a metaphorical significance as shown in the discourse below:

- (ii) We are tired of the military's repetitive tendency to experiment with our economy. Today, they say: "No controls". Tomorrow, they say: "Full controls". The day after, they say: "Fine tuning". The next day, they say: "Devaluation". A few days later, they say: "Revalue the same naira upwards again". Abi? All we can see are the consequences of this permanent game of military "about-turns": high inflation; a huge budget deficit; enormous foreign debt; repayment burden; dying

industries; high unemployment and a demoralised populace.

(Abiola, ED: *Tell*, July 20, 1998, p. 20)

In this regard, military 'about-turns' refers to the inconsistencies in the military's system of governance. The implication of this is that the military abandoned their primary assignment for which they were duly trained and made incursions into governance whose challenges and intricacies they could not cope with, hence their 'permanent game of military about-turns'. This is an attempt to picture the military as not being able to make steady progress in the economic sector, as they had to turn around (as they do on the parade ground) to take steps in the opposite direction.

We may have to comment here that Abiola's picture of the military appears to be an oversimplification of the role of the military in governance. A good number of soldiers are intellectuals and they know a lot about governance, their incursion into politics and the mode of acquiring power notwithstanding. Are the civilians necessarily experts or saints in politics? Have the civilians not functioned as military apologists, sycophants and accomplices? In this connection, Diamond and Timberman (1995: 6) argue:

... although civilian politicians have been in power nationally for only about 9 of the country's 34 years of independence, their irresponsible actions have allowed the military to perpetuate the myth that it is the only group with the organization and cohesion needed to save Nigeria. The military now claims that democracy breeds

tribalism and that only military rule can guarantee national unity.

Assessing the role of the civil society, Diamond and Timberman (1995: 8) further explain:

... Nigerian politicians have generally been opportunistic, undemocratic, and easily corrupted. Many traditional rulers and religious leaders have been coopted or tainted by their association with military dictators ... this raises difficult questions about who Nigeria's "real democrats" are.

Therefore, when we merge the opposing views we have so far considered, we discover that military and civilian politicians have in their own respective ways contributed to the socio-political and economic problems of Nigeria; Abiola's portrayal of the military as an endangered species in government could be a propaganda weapon to influence the people's views and attitudes on the role of the military in national politics.

6.2.4 Lexical Items Referring to Actions Performed by Self

Babangida	Abacha	Abiola
consensus building, compromise, dialogue, consultation, deliberations	consensus building, compromise, dialogue, consultation, deliberations	sweet reason, negotiation, dialogue, peaceful approach, appeals

Figure 6.7: A Juxtaposition of the Speakers' Deployment of Lexical Items Referring to Actions Performed by Self

It is interesting to note that all the speakers, as shown in the above figure, employ similar words to picture their respective actions, thereby trying to boost the image of self as peace-loving, reasonable and, therefore, exemplary. This is an attempt to project self as treading the path that would engender the resolution of a national crisis. But these speakers could put up this disposition just to say what particularly agrees with the people's opinions, beliefs and dispositions. If this were not so, why do conflict situations get protracted and most often unresolvable given the interactants' professed pursuit of dialogue, compromise, and so forth? Typical of political writing and speech, such lexical items are used to give 'an air of scientific impartiality to biased judgements' (Orwell, 1965: 307).

We perhaps need to emphasize that Babangida and Abacha particularly see their actions as being taken in 'national interest', 'nationalist considerations', 'responsibility of statesmanship' and 'demands of statecraft'. Babangida's and Abacha's appeal to nationalistic and patriotic sentiments brings to bear 'nationalism' as an inalienable virtue of the military. Amafah (1990: 73), reviewing the virtues of the military as an institution, writes:

... the army is a regimental society which places premium on masculinity, speedy and mechanical obedience to commands, absolute leadership, comradeship and the preparedness to make the supreme sacrifice in the interest of the nation. (ellipsis and underlining mine)

Judging from this, we have the impression that Babangida and Abacha have transferred this military virtue of ‘putting service to the country and to humanity above self’ to national politics, especially in a conflict. However, this could be a ploy used by them to pursue their respective personal goals and selfish interests camouflaged as services to their mother/fatherland. Corroborating this view, Amafah (1990: 21) observes:

... it is only proper to state that the regularity of coups and the Nigerian soldier’s quest for political power, sometimes even when this is uncalled for, has gone a long way to undermine some of the values he is supposed to represent. So threatened are the values of discipline, being a gentleman, comradeship and patriotism that they have become more notional than real. (ellipsis and underlining mine)

6.2.5 Lexical Items Referring to the ‘June 12’ Crisis / Period

Babangida	Abacha	Abiola
Temporary political difficulties, problems and dilemmas of democracy and development, the problems of evolution, inevitable dilemmas of democratization	a most trying period, a time of chaos and crisis	a trying period, a long night

Figure 6.8: A Juxtaposition of the Speakers’ Deployment of Lexical Items Referring to the ‘June 12’ Crisis/Period

From the above figure, Babangida employs lexical items that are at variance with those used by Abacha and Abiola. Babangida sees the ‘June 12’ crisis as that of ‘temporary political difficulties’, ‘problems and dilemmas of

democracy', 'inevitable dilemmas of democratization', and so forth. These lexical items appear to be euphemistic, as they tend to detract from the magnitude of the crisis. Reviewing the 'June 12' crisis and its attendant problems, Diamond and Timberman (1995: 1), however, comment:

But underlying and shaping these relatively recent developments are a number of highly divisive regional, ethnic, religious, political, and social issues that have vexed Nigeria for decades. As a result, the annulment of the June 12 election has provoked a crisis not merely of democracy but of nationhood.

In view of Diamond's and Timberman's (1995) submission and the realities of the 'June 12' crisis, Babangida appears to trivialize the crisis. Nevertheless, his assessment of the crisis as 'temporary' or 'inevitable' could be a strategy of reassuring the people of the certainty of victory. By putting up this disposition, Babangida attempts to portray self as a visionary leader who is worthy of followership.

Abacha and Abiola, however, see the crisis period as 'a (most) trying period'. This is a common metaphor in political and war rhetoric. It conjures up the picture of a situation in which no one should seek any respite yet until the coast is clear. It is noteworthy, however, that Abiola sees the 'trying period' as that which through God's guidance will pass away. He argues, '. . . politicians across the divide saw these times as nothing more than a trying period, whose cup with God's guidance, shall surely pass away' (DIIRENP: Olanrewaju, 1999: 71). Abiola's use of 'cup' in this context is an allusion to Jesus Christ's use of 'cup' in

his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane shortly before his arrest and trial. He prayed: 'My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt' (Matthew 26: 39).

Here, Jesus saw his impending arrest and trial as 'cup' (an unpleasant experience) which He wished would pass from Him if it were the will of His Father. Similarly, Abiola sees the 'June 12' 'trying period' as 'cup', however, relying on God's guidance for a 'breakthrough' or victory. Awonusi (1988: 154) notes that politicians often draw on the Bible for their imagery, allusions and quotes, as this is demonstrated by Abiola in this context. Reliance on God for victory or resolution in a conflict is a constant. In the war rhetoric of Gowon and Odumegwu-Ojukwu also, dependence on God for guidance is a marked rhetorical strategy (see Oha, 1994). This strategy is deployed by political rhetors to keep the people reassured of the certainty of victory and more importantly to suggest that they are men of faith who are confident of successfully leading the people out of crisis.

Apart from Abiola's conception of the 'June 12' crisis period as 'a trying period', he also sees the period as 'a long night':

(iii) It has been a long night.
But the dawn is here.
Today, people of Nigeria, I join you all in saying
"Enough is Enough!" (underlining mine)
(ED: Tell, July 20, 1998, p. 20)

Abiola's reference to night in this discourse resonates with the archetypal metaphor of night and darkness which has been the subject of many discourses. For instance, in the story of creation recorded in the *Holy Bible*, darkness assumes a metaphorical significance: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep' (Genesis 1: 1-2). Besides, in the literary world, an example that readily comes to mind is Oswald Mtshali's 'Nightfall in Soweto' with the opening stanza:

Nightfall comes like
a dread disease
seeping through the pores
of a healthy body
and ravaging it beyond repair.
(Adapted from Senanu and Vincent, 1988: 257)

Also, in political rhetoric, the archetypal metaphor of night and darkness is popular, for instance, in the world war speeches of Winston Churchill and in the war speeches of Gowon and Odumegwu Ojukwu (see Oha, 1994). We are also compelled to make reference to Obafemi Awolowo's popular use of the archetypal metaphor:

... for some time to come the present twilight of democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law, will change or might change into utter darkness. But after darkness – and this is commonplace – comes a glorious dawn.

It is, therefore, with a brave heart, with confident hope, and with faith in my unalterable destiny, that I go from this twilight into darkness, unshaken in my trust in the providence of God that a glorious dawn will come on the morrow (1981: 5).

It is interesting to note that whenever and wherever nightfall/darkness is mentioned, the opposite day (light) or dawn comes into play. This is why the Bible passage we cited earlier goes further: 'And God said, let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good . . .' (Genesis 1: 3 - 4). Similarly, in Oswald Mtshali's poem 'Nightfall in Soweto', the last stanza reads:

Nightfall! Nightfall!
You are my mortal enemy.
But why were you ever created?
Why can't it be daytime?
Daytime forever more?
(Adapted from Senanu and Vincent (1988: 257))

Thus, the light–darkness or night-day/dawn archetypal metaphor has rhetorical significance. Night and darkness are usually tied to the negative: failure, death, fear, sorrow, uncertainties and horror. On the contrary, dawn and (day)light are associated with the positive: sight, freshness, respite, strength, hope, safety, life and warmth. By configuring the 'June 12' crisis as a long night, therefore, Abiola attempts to evoke the concomitants of night to characterize the crisis. Expectedly, he later makes reference to dawn to announce the breaking forth of a new day, as he braces up to declare himself president at the formation of a Government of National Unity. The rhetorical significance of Abiola's deployment of darkness – light metaphor in the discourse is compelling. Writing on the rhetorical significance of darkness–light differentiability, Osborn (1967: 241), quoted in Oha (1994: 155), argues:

Because of their strong positive and negative associations with survival and developmental motives, such metaphors express intense value judgements and may thus be expected to elicit significant value responses from an audience. When light and dark images are used together in a speech, they indicate and perpetuate the simplistic, two valued, black-white attitudes which rhetoricians and their audiences seem so often to prefer.

Up to now, we have discussed the tactical deployment of lexical items in the discourse. But there is the need for us to critically examine the recurrence of some of the lexical items in political speech and writing and the semantic implications for the political public speaker and the audience.

6.3 Lexical Stereotypes in Political Speech and Writing

According to Quasthoff (1978: 3), the notion of 'stereotype' is susceptible to two different interpretations:

The word 'stereotype' is used only in at least two different ways: as a technical term which has its origin in social psychology and refers to a certain kind of prejudice, and in everyday language, where it means something like 'constantly repeated', 'meaningless' with respect to verbal clichés.

In this connection, it is the second alternative we favour relative to political discourses. For our present purposes, therefore, we take stock of some lexical items in the discourse which have become commonplace in political discourses and are often exploited by political public speakers to present false postures. Following Orwell's categorization in his famous essay 'Politics and the English

Language', we would consider dying metaphors, pretentious diction, and meaningless words.

Dying Metaphors: According to Orwell, these are worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves. In the conflict rhetoric, we find the following: 'move the (our) country forward', 'bar of history', 'threshold of a new era', 'laying/building the foundation of . . .', 'advance the course of . . .', and 'bequeath to posterity'. Others include: 'we have come a long way', 'Nigeria has come a long way', 'Rome was not built in a day', and 'what we do for our country is vastly more important than what we get from it'. There is also the use of the incompatible metaphor 'epileptic convulsions' which is tautological. Babangida uses this metaphor while arguing that the annulment of 'June 12' saved Nigeria from being plunged 'into a Third Republic with epileptic convulsions in its democratic health'. According to Orwell, this lack of precision portends that the writer either has a meaning and cannot express it or he inadvertently says something else or he is almost indifferent as to whether his words mean anything or not.

Pretentious Diction: In the conflict rhetoric, adjectives such as 'inevitable', 'veritable' and 'lasting' (as in 'lasting solution', 'lasting peace' and 'lasting democracy') are used to dignify sordid political processes and the speakers' actions. It is in the same sense that the following nouns are used: 'commitment',

'compromise', 'goodwill', 'good faith', 'selfless service', 'national interest', 'consensus', 'dialogue', 'a spirit of give-and-take', 'demands of statecraft', and so forth. However, the speakers resort to blackmail as an alienation strategy. Thus, their opponents are referred to as: 'detractors', 'cynics', 'critics' and 'sceptics' even when such opponents could be pursuing just cause(s). All these words are abused by political public speakers for political gains. In addition, the following foreign words are used in the speeches of Babangida: 'modus operandi', 'ad infinitum' and 'ancien regime'. Such words and expressions, according to Orwell, are used to give an air of culture and elegance.

Meaningless Words: A number of words have been perverted in political discourses and we find them being exploited by the speakers in the conflict rhetoric due to their meaningless or rather their semantic vagueness. Such words include: 'freedom', 'equality', 'sacrifice', 'democracy', 'patriotism', 'legacy', 'compatriots', 'survival' (of our country), (political/economic) 'reform', 'free press', 'justice', and 'injustice'. We would later discuss the recurrence of 'democracy' in the discourse. Also worthy of attention is the recurrence of the lexical items 'justice' and 'injustice' in the conflict rhetoric. For instance, Abacha uses them recurrently. However, Oha (1997b: 47) notes:

... but it is obvious that the meanings he attaches to these terms are not the same as those attached to them by those he is attacking . . . In essence, what is "justice" to Abacha is "injustice" to those advocating for the de-annulment of the June 12, 1993 election (and vice versa).

Oha (1997b) then submits that the strategy of using words that defy meaning, or words that are capable of being interpreted differently by different individuals and groups, may be a strategy of the Machiavellian ruler who must not “ensnare” himself or herself by keeping to his or her words. This characteristic ‘double-speak’ in political language also applies to other words such as: ‘freedom’ and ‘equality’ for in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-four*, ‘freedom is slavery’, and in *Animal Farm*, ‘all animals are equal but some are more equal than others’.

By and large, the speakers’ (mis)use of the ready-made words and phrases in the conflict rhetoric has semantic implications for them, on the one hand, and for the audience, on the other hand. As to what political public speakers stand to gain, we cannot but cite Orwell in his celebrated essay, ‘Politics and the English Language’, when he submits:

... modern writing at its worst does not consist in picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images in order to make the meaning clearer. It consists in gumming together long strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else, and making the results presentable by sheer humbug. The attraction of this way of writing is that it is easy (1965: 309).

Since there is a yawning gap between political public speakers real and declared aims, they could easily turn to long words and exhausted idioms to ensure that the audience is perpetually kept ignorant. Thus, their goal could be to perpetuate the

double-speak ideologue 'ignorance is strength' (cf. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*) for the ignorance of the audience would strengthen the political public speaker's pursuit of his/her real aims couched in long words and exhausted metaphors.

6.4 Lexical Cohesion

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 318) explain that two of the common ways of creating cohesion in a text are reiteration of lexical items and collocation. They explain the notion of lexical reiteration thus:

Reiteration is a form of lexical cohesion which involves the repetition of a lexical item, at one end of the scale; the use of a general word to refer back to a lexical item, at the other end of the scale; and a number of things in between - the use of a synonym, near-synonym, or superordinate (p. 278).

From the foregoing, reiteration is a general phenomenon encompassing such cohesive devices as repetition, the use of synonym, near-synonym and superordinate. It is interesting that repetition of lexical items is a major cohesive device employed by the speakers in the discourse. Consider the following excerpts:

(iv) ... we have always striven ... to build the foundation of lasting democracy. Lasting democracy is not a temporary show of excitement and manipulation by an over-articulate section of the elite and its captive audience. Lasting democracy is a permanent diet to nurture the soul of the whole nation... lasting democracy must be equated with political stability ... we require nothing short of a foundation for lasting democracy. (ellipses and underlining mine)

(Babangida, EPH: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 134)

- (v) There is no Nigerian today who does not desire democracy. Even in the military there is a ground swell of opinion on the need to establish and uphold a culture of true democracy in our country. It is also evident that past military leaders have lent their voice of support for the installation of a viable democracy in our country. (Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p. 19)
- (vi) In setting up a cabinet, all the zones in the country will be represented, women will be represented, the human rights organisations such as the Bar Association, the Medical Association etc., will be represented. I will set up a students' affairs commission in which students, elected by students, will be represented. (Abiola, IYDEP: Tell, July 4, 1994, p. 14)

In excerpts (iv) and (v) respectively, Babangida and Abacha deploy repetition of lexical items to enhance cohesive relations. Babangida reiterates the lexical items 'lasting democracy' five times in excerpt (iv), while Abacha reiterates the lexical item 'democracy' three times in excerpt (v). At a superficial level, Babangida's and Abacha's emphases of the lexical item 'democracy' could be taken to mean that they are truly committed to the cause of democracy in Nigeria moreso that the Nigerian people would earnestly wish to be reminded from time to time that these military leaders also crave for democracy.

However, from a semantic viewpoint, the word 'democracy' is one whose meaning is notoriously fluid and subject to abuse by its users. In this connection, Orwell in his famous essay 'Politics and the English Language' argues:

It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the

defenders of every kind of regime claim that it is a democracy ... words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different (1965: 308).

Thus, Babangida and Abacha in these excerpts could be paying lip service to the cause of democracy in Nigeria without a corresponding sense of commitment or it could be that the kind of democracy they profess to defend is one geared towards satisfying their own personal goals and not the people's.

In excerpt (vi) Abiola reiterates the lexical items 'will be represented' to underscore one of the major gains of a democratic system of government that his Government of National Unity would pursue, thereby trying to douse the fear of marginalization by (minority) ethnic groups and other interest groups. Although Abiola tries to boost the fellowship, autonomy and competence face wants of the people in this excerpt, he seems to be selling political ideas, saying what has to be said in order to make the people support him. He is promoting his image and marketing himself as a desirable leader and giving legitimacy to his Government of National Unity. But his ideas sound rather Utopian and suggest the ideal in contrast to what is really practised in governance. This emphasizes the yawning gap between 'nominal democracy' and 'real democratic practice'.

To sum up, the speakers in the discourse seem to capitalize on the crisis situation to deceive the people with their pretentious discourse. This is undoubtedly the style of political speech and writing. Having considered the

speakers' use of repetition of lexical items to emphasize certain issues, we would now analyze and discuss the striking collocational patterns of the discourse.

Collocation is the type of cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur. The cohesive effect of such lexical items depends on their tendency to share the same lexical environment, that is, to appear in similar contexts. Thus, collocation, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 287),

... is a cover term for the cohesion that results from the co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or the other typically associated with another, because they tend to occur in similar environments ...

Bearing this in mind, we would proceed to consider the following excerpts:

- (vii) Nobody can deny that this administration has defined clearly the directions for our political and economic development. We have taken more than the fabled step towards a journey of a million miles.
(Babangida, SAPNC: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol. III, 1996: 166)
- (viii) At no time in the eight years of this Administration have the darts been so dangerously and viciously focused on my person than now.
(Babangida, SAPNC: Selected Speeches of IBB Vol III, 1996: 165)
- (ix) The vigilance and firm measures taken by the security and law enforcement agencies and the refusal of our citizenry to be made the cannon fodder for the fulfilment of an individual's personal ambition have combined to foil the plans of those who wished to disrupt our national peace and harmony.
(Abacha, AOL: Tell, July 4, 1994, p. 20)
- (x) It is instructive to emphasise that this administration did not initiate the problems associated with the annulled

election. Instead, it was in accord with the collective will of well-meaning Nigerians, that we assumed the task of seeking to solve the problems occasioned by the aftermath of that annulment.

(Abacha, BD: Tell, August 29, 1994, p. 18)

(xi) I assure all Nigerians that the government they voted will, by the grace of God, soon assume office to bind the wounds of our toiling masses ... (ellipsis mine)
(Abiola, OSIJ: African Concord International, 22 November 1993, p. 12)

(xii) My government will accept full responsibility for all actions, legal, contractual or otherwise, of the outgoing regime ... Persons who transact business with the illegal regime thereafter do so at their own risk.
(Abiola, IYDEP: Tell, July 4, 1994, p. 14)

In excerpt (vii), Babangida draws collocates from the semantic field of mobility: 'have taken ... step towards ... a journey of ... miles' to emphasize the extent to which his administration had been 'successful' in governance. More importantly, his reference to the kinesic metaphor of 'taking step' is instructive. He seems to rely on the fact that stagnation is what is frowned at in human endeavours in life. Therefore, so long as he is 'taking step towards a journey' it shows that he is a visionary leader. But is the speaker responsive to the Nigerian people's desired time to end the journey or is the speaker taking them on the proverbial "Israelites' journey" in the *Holy Bible*? These questions make clear the characteristic vagueness of political writing or speech.

Furthermore, Babangida employs the images of warfare in excerpt (viii) to depict the criticism he had received for allegedly annulling the 'June 12' election. Thus, we have the collocational pattern: 'darts ... dangerously ...

viciously ... focused ... on person'. These collocates create a mental picture of the archer-target relationship where the action of the archer in shooting the arrow or dart at the object and the expected result could be best described as being 'dangerously' and 'viciously' motivated. But from a rhetorical perspective, Babangida's discourse here conjures up certain metaphors classified by Awonusi (1988: 153) as 'violence-related metaphors' fondly deployed by Lloyd George and Harold Wilson (former British prime ministers) in their discourses.

Similarly, Abacha uses the collocates: 'The vigilance ... and firm measures ... taken by the security ... and law enforcement agencies ... to foil ... the plans ... to disrupt ... national peace ... and harmony' in excerpt (ix) to give an insight into the security situation in the country during his regime and the steps taken to forestall the breakdown of law and order. These collocates create the impression that the speaker is in control and tend to give legitimacy to his administration as one that could protect the lives and property of the entire citizenry and defend the territorial integrity of the nation.

Furthermore, Abacha attempts to absolve his administration of any blame concerning the annulment of the 'June 12' election in excerpt (x). Here, he uses the collocational pattern: 'did not initiate ... the problem' but assumed the task of seeking 'to solve ... the problems'. This collocational pattern emphasizes the 'messianic' mission of his administration that he attempts to sell to the people. This immediately conjures up Abacha's reference elsewhere to his administration as 'a child of necessity'.

This metaphor of 'child of necessity' deserves a careful analysis. Why is the administration a 'child'? A child, literally, is a young, innocent and helpless human being that needs the attention of adults for succour so that it could grow into maturity. Also, a child is considered a blessing/gift to its family and generation and no one can tell what the child has in store to offer its generation. Therefore, Abacha personifies his administration as a 'child' to solicit the people's support and attention in order to ensure that it grows into maturity to be a blessing unto the nation.

From a rhetorical perspective, Abacha's 'child of necessity', not just a child, tends to emphasize necessary condition for leadership and followership which is not after all new in the history of political institutions. Machiavelli records such political antecedents thus:

... for the Israelites to be ready to follow Moses, in order to escape from servitude, it was necessary for him to find them, in Egypt, enslaved and oppressed by the Egyptians. For Romulus to become king of Rome and founder of his country, he had to have left Alba and been exposed to die when he was born. Cyrus needed to find the Persian rebellious against the empire of the Medes, and the Medes grown soft and effeminate through the long years of peace. Theseus could not have demonstrated his powers had he not found the Athenians dispersed. (1961: 18-19)

Thus, Abacha seems to capitalize on the socio-political situation in Nigeria during the 'June 12' crisis as the necessary condition for his coming to power,

hence his reference to his administration as 'a child of necessity'. This is an attempt to give legitimacy to his administration.

Similarly, Abiola uses the collocates: 'the government ... voted for ... will assume ... office' in order 'to bind ... the wounds ... of the toiling ... masses' in excerpt (xi) to conjure up the image of a battered people who would receive healing at the enthronement of democracy. These collocates 'bind ... the wounds' drawn from the semantic field of therapy are a common metaphor in conflict rhetoric. It is noteworthy that the use of such a strategy in political rhetoric in Nigeria had been identified and analyzed by Oha (1994) in respect of the Nigeria-Biafra war rhetoric. Generally, the use of such 'disease-remedy metaphors', according to Awonusi (1988: 153), citing Halverson (1971: 103), allows destructive impulses to be "channeled in the 'respectable' figures of surgery and given a civilized guise". Therefore, by deploying this common metaphor in excerpt (xi), Abiola suggests that he is a physician, not a killer, who is to be desired and accepted by the people because he means well. It is pertinent to note that Abiola's advertisement of the self as a physician is also a common image that political rhetors often assume to show that they could diagnose societal ills and prescribe appropriate antidotes. Also, Abacha exhorts the members of his team not 'to be swayed by base sentiments nor detract from the supreme responsibility of healing the national wounds' (cf. SDOSMFEC: *Abacha Speaks*, p. 7). It is noteworthy that Odumegwu-Ojukwu (1989: xiii) assumes the

image in his book *Because I am Involved* when he diagnoses Nigeria's ailments which affect the future of politics in the society.

Finally, in excerpt (xii), Abiola declares the illegality of the Abacha regime and enjoins the people not to have anything to do with it. Strategically, Abiola uses the collocational pattern that has the trappings of a paid advertorial slot in the media entitled 'Disclaimer' or 'Wanted' where an establishment or an institution informs the public of an individual who no longer represents its interest. So, we have the pattern: 'Persons ... transact ... business ... with the illegal regime ... at their own risk' used by Abiola as an attack message typical of conflict rhetoric to infringe on the competence face of the other. This criminalization strategy further ostracizes the other from the Nigerian people.

To sum up, the instances of repetition of lexical items and collocational patterns that we have analyzed so far are veritable cohesive ties in the discourse. But beyond this level, we have tried to juxtapose some other striking discourse strategies (implicitly) deployed by the speakers.

6.5 Summary

Our exploration of the lexico-semantic patterns of the discourse has further revealed the evasiveness of meaning which characterizes political rhetoric. All the speakers, regardless of their political sub-cultures seem to have imbibed the striking features of the language of politics such as staleness of

imagery, lack of precision, perversion of lexical items, and the deployment of lexical items to launch vitriolic attack on the opponents. These meaning-distorting devices become ready-made tools in the speakers' hands to execute their own political agenda while ostensibly deceiving their hearers. Thus, meaning in political discourse becomes an exclusive resource to which only the speaker has access for the political rhetor seldom says what he/she means or means what he/she says.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

In the three preceding chapters, we analyzed and discussed the persuasion and coercion strategies, syntactic tactics and lexico-semantic patterns deployed by the speakers in the discourse. This chapter concludes the study, giving the summary of the findings and the observations made in the study. Also, it provides concluding remarks with close reference to the instrumentality of language to achieve social and political goals. In the final analysis, it suggests further areas of research arising from the limitation of this study.

7.2 The Summary of the Findings

One of the marked characteristics of the discourse is the intricate relationship between genre and ideology. Recall that in the Martinian connotative semiotics model, 'genre is the driving force underlying register and, ultimately, the linguistic system', while ideology has to do with 'the taking up of options to challenge or defend particular world views'. The notion of ideology is further clarified by Davis and Walton (1977: 317) who see ideology as 'a representation of sets of events or facts which consistently favours the perceptual framework of one dominant group'.

Apparently, in the conflict rhetoric, the speakers' speeches dwell largely on the tacit trading on ideology and this tends to give impetus to the expression of their goals and aspirations. It is interesting that each of them tries to justify the cause he stands for in the conflict. Babangida ties the failure of his administration to conclude the democratization effort to the excuse that the 'June 12' election could not guarantee the foundation of a 'lasting democracy'. Abacha absolves his administration of the annulment of the election and puts up a messianic posture in the conflict. However, Abiola conceives of his opponents' actions as a ploy by the military to hold on to power indefinitely. He, therefore, sees the 'June 12' election as an expression of the Nigerian people's will to wrest power from the military. These are the contrasting views in the discourse for which the speakers rely on the multi-purpose instrumentality of language to address.

Another salient characteristic of the discourse is the reflection of the interactants' power differences. To this effect, we considered their role-relationships or social roles and how these constrain the power they wield in the discourse. We also explored the speaker-audience relationship in the discourse.

A major event that sheds light on the interactants' role-relationships, especially Abacha's and Abiola's, is Abiola's 'Epetedo Declaration'. Here, Abiola refers to Abacha as the 'usurper' and the military, 'thieves of the people's mandate', while he declares himself commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The definition of these social roles significantly constrains the discourse, giving

us insight into whose power in the crisis is a demonstration of brute force (*de facto* authority) and whose power is backed by legitimacy (*de jure* authority).

Implied in Abiola's owner-usurper polarity is the fact that he has the authority to enjoy and command the obedience of the citizens by willing compliance, while the military resort to brute force to get the obedience of the citizens. This is where the differences in the power of the two speakers, who engage in the actual struggle for power, lie in constraining the discourse. It is against this background that we gauged the speaker-audience relationship in the speeches of Abacha whose Machiavellian posture is demonstrated in his heavy reliance on brute force to address the agitations for the actualization of the 'June 12' election by pro-democracy groups and trade unions.

Based on the role-relationship assumed by Abiola as the 'victim of usurpation', he deploys the emotive use of language to create a bond of unity and common purpose between him and the people in order to fight the military (their enemy). In pursuance of this cause, he resorts to the deployment of provocative and inciting language. In fact, the feeling of resentment against the military which he attempts to arouse in the Nigerian people's minds could be best captured as the configuration of the military as an 'endangered species' in governance.

At this point, it is pertinent to note that Abiola's challenge of the military over the retention and acquisition of power sheds light on the military-civilians

discourse. Abiola's recourse to the deployment of coercion strategies is compelling. The questions that arise in this situation are:

- (i) If the military is noted for coercion, what has come over the civil society that it also resorts to coercion?
- (ii) Does it in any way demonstrate the 'fire for fire' strategy one would normally expect in a power conflict?
- (iii) Is it a manifestation of a complete infestation of Nigeria's political class and, in effect, her political discourse by military culture and orientation?

Regardless of one's political leaning, the trappings of the predominance of military culture, hence the militarization of the discourse could not be mistaken. In particular, Abiola's use of such expressions as 'with immediate effect', 'within 30 days', 'from now onwards', and so on, typifies military dictatorial tendencies that civilians seem to have imbibed. In this connection, Amafah (1990: 251) observes:

As should be expected, because the Nigerian soldier has been shuttling between military service and politics for upwards of twenty years in our national life, NAE (Nigerian Army English) has left its marks on Nigerian English language usage. (parenthesis mine)

He further explains that though an expression such as 'with immediate effect' initially represented a case of register shift, it has come to represent purposefulness and sense of mission in Nigeria's register of governance (1990: 252).

On the whole, the discourse strategies that characterize the conflict rhetoric are not after all alien in political rhetoric. Such features as the propagation of credibility, labelling of opponents in derogatory terms, creation of the impression of unity and common purpose, persuasive and emotive use of language, and so on, are the hallmarks of political rhetoric. They are just activated by the speakers to address the major issues and the attendant problems of the crisis. It is on this note that we now give the concluding comments on the study.

7.3 Concluding Comments

That communication has a vital role to play in political processes is incontrovertible. However, the appropriation of the communicative potentials of language to achieve social and political goals calls for a critical look. For instance, in the conflict rhetoric, instead of the speakers' engaging the minds of the audience in constructive reasoning and closing the ranks of Nigeria's ethno-linguistic and religious fractionalizations, they capitalize on the oppositionalities for (personal) political gains.

Babangida and Abacha promise to continue striving towards laying a solid foundation for democracy in Nigeria. In addition, they promise to guarantee the protection of the ethnic groups from both internal and external domination. On the contrary, Abiola promises to champion the Nigerian people's cause to wrest

power from the military and redress, as a matter of urgency, the wrongs of military (mis)rule. Apparently, the speakers' promises touch on the very existentialist questions of the Nigerian people.

To this effect, these propagandistic tendencies would easily tear the Nigerian people into two opposing forces, promising to better their lot by offering divergent but equally attractive gestures. This shows the extent to which political public speakers could deploy language to deceive their hearers.

The pitiable condition of the audience is brought into a sharp focus when we remember Shakespeare's memorable verse:

There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
(Adapted from *Macbeth*, Act I Scene IV)

For our present purposes, the parody of the verse could read:

There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the 'language'

This is because language could be a delicate tool in the hands of the political public speaker to deceive his or her hearers or conceal facts from them.

If these are the echoes from the conflict rhetoric, then communication seems to be far from being one of the major instruments for the resolution of conflict. It is rather worrisome that when ethnolinguistic and religious diversities continue to threaten the corporate existence of the Nigerian state, Nigerian political public speakers have added a fourth dimension – pretentious rhetoric – to further threaten the fragile entity. Thus, when they chant their 'commitments'

and 'selfless service' to 'nation-building', their linguistic styles and the nuances of such styles inexorably rock the very foundations of the nation they profess to build.

All in all, although the 'June 12' crisis now seems to be confined to 'history', Nigerians have a lot of lessons to learn from (the discourse of) the crisis. Regrettably the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel once asserted that the only thing that people learn from history is that nobody ever learns anything from history.

This assertion gives a picture of (total) political amnesia, 'that part of the political memory which neutralizes itself, and plunges the inner recesses of the mind into political oblivion' (Mazrui, 1981: 3). Mazrui sees political amnesia as a pre-condition for national reconciliation but advocates that it has to be partial in that 'nation-building entails a capacity for selective reminiscences' (1981: 4). This also applies to group-relations generally where accord between groups 'necessitates a cultivated ability to emphasize the positive aspects of their relationship, whilst trying to control and underplay the negative aspects' (Mazrui, 1981: 5). This is what Nigerians ought to have on their minds while reminiscing about the 'June 12' crisis. The negative aspects of the conflict should be downplayed while the positive should be emphasized in order to restructure group relations between the military and the civilians in relation to power play in national politics. This corroborates the view that although conflicts could have

destructive effects on the parties involved and/or the rest of the society, their main beneficial aspect is that they give rise to social change.

7.4 Further Research Directions

In this study, we have tried to examine the appropriation of language as a political resource in the conflict rhetoric, analyzing, in the main, speeches of the major actors in the power play, namely Ibrahim Babangida, M.K.O. Abiola and Sani Abacha. This delimitation is, however, a pointer to further research directions.

First, the verbal exchanges among ethnic leaders and the reactions of key military and civilian figures, elder statesmen and human rights activists, have a great deal of import for the conflict rhetoric. Similarly, the instrumentality of language in the reactions and position statements of labour unions with respect to their leaders' perception of the socio-economic and political consequences of the crisis on national 'destiny' deserves careful and indepth analysis.

Furthermore, the role of the media (print and electronic) in the conflict, especially in their newsreporting, editorial comments, interviews and political cartoons is compelling. Besides, the constraints on the media such as ownership influence and control, information gagging, and the proscription of media houses by repressive powers would reveal the precarious condition of the media in times of national crisis. Equally noteworthy is the flourishing of junk-journalism during the crisis and its role as an alternative medium of information dissemination.

The foregoing are veritable research areas that require further rigorous explorations in subsequent scholarly endeavours.

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Appendix A: Selected Speeches of Ibrahim Babangida

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13

Expediency and the Path of Honour*

I address you today with a very deep sense of world history and particularly of the history of our great country. In the aftermath of the recently annulled presidential election, I feel, as I believe you yourselves feel, a profound sense of disappointment at the outcome of our last efforts at laying the foundation of a viable democratic system of government in Nigeria.

I therefore wish, on behalf of myself and members of the National Defence and Security Council and indeed of the entire administration, to feel with fellow country men and women for the cancellation of the election. It was a rather disappointing experience in the course of carrying through the last elements of the programme of transition to civil rule.

Nigeria has come along way since this administration assumed power and leadership about eight years ago. In the attempt to grapple with critical and monumental problems and challenges of national existence and social progress, the administration inaugurated and pursued sound and justifiable policies and programmes of reform. These policies and programmes have touched virtually all aspects of our national life - the economy, political process, social structures, external relations, bureaucracy and even the family system. I believe strongly that in understanding, conception, formulation and articulation, these policies and programmes are not only sound but also comparatively unassailable. I believe too, that history, with the passage of time, would certainly score the administration high in its governance of our country.

Let me also express my deep conviction that the core strategy and

* Address to the Nation on the occasion of the annulment of the Presidential Election of 12th June, 1993 on Saturday 26th June, 1993.

structures of our reform policies and programmes as enunciated in 1986/87 would, for a very long time, remain relevant and durable in the course of changing our country positively. I believe that at the exit of the administration from power, we would leave behind for prosperity, a country with an economy the structures of which have been turned around for good. The average Nigerian person has come to reconcile himself or herself with the fact that his or her social progress remains essentially in his or own her hands in collaboration with other fellow Nigerians and not merely relying on what government alone could provide for him or her. The days are gone for good, when men and women trooped to government establishments for employment and for benevolence.

This administration has built the foundation that would take Nigerians away from their previous colonially induced motivations and the encumbrances of colonialism. We have laid the foundation for self-reliant economic development and social justice. We have established a new basis in our country in which economic liberalization would continue to flourish along side democratic forces and deregulated power structures. In all this, the average Nigerian person has more than ever before, come to imbibe and to assimilate the values of hardwork, resilience and self confidence.

It is true that in the course of implementing our reform policies and programmes, and especially because of the visionary zeal with which we approached the assignment and responded to incidental pressures of governance, we engendered a number of social forces in the country. This is so because we sought to challenge and transform extant social forces which had in the past impeded growth and development of our country. We also sought to deal with the new forces to which our programmes of action gave rise. Thus, in dealing with the dynamics of both the old and new social forces, we ran into certain difficulties.

In particular, during the course of handling the interlocking relationship between the old and new political forces and institutions, some problems had arisen, leading us into a number of difficulties and thereby necessitating our having to tamper with the rules and regulations laid down in the political programme. As a result, the Administration unwittingly attracted an enormous public suspicion of its intentions and objectives. Accordingly, we have experienced certain short-falls and conflicting responses to the pulls and pushes of governance in the course of policy implementation.

I believe that areas of difficulty with the transition programme, especially from the last quarter of 1992 to the recently cancelled presidential election derived primarily from the short-falls in implementing the programme. They also derived from the number of actions which, though

objectively taken, may have caused a deviation from the original framework and structure of the programme.

It is true that by the cancelled presidential election, we all found the nation at a peculiar bar of history which was neither bargained for, nor was it envisaged in the reform programme of transition as enunciated in 1986/87. In the circumstance, the administration had no option but to respond appropriately to the unfortunate experience by terminating the presidential election and judicial actions related to the election. Our action is in full conformity with the original objectives of the transition to the civil rule programme. It was also in conformity with the avowed commitment of the administration to advance the cause of national unity, stability and democracy. In annulling the presidential election, this administration was keenly aware of its promise in November, 1992 that it would disengage and institute a return to democracy on 27 August, 1993. We are determined to keep the promise. Since this transition and indeed any transition must have an end, I believe that our transition programme should, and must come to an end, honestly and honourably.

History would bear witness that as an administration we have always striven, in all our policy decisions, to build the foundation of lasting democracy. Lasting democracy is not a temporary show of excitement and manipulation by an over-articulate section of the elite and its captive audience. Lasting democracy is a permanent diet to nurture the soul of the whole nation and the political process. Therefore, it is logical, as we have always insisted upon, that lasting democracy must be equated with political stability. Informed by our sad experience of history, we require nothing short of a foundation for lasting democracy. As an administration, we cannot afford to lead Nigeria into a Third Republic with epileptic convulsions in its democratic health. Nigeria must therefore confront her own realities. She must solve her problems notwithstanding other existing models of democracy in other parts of the world.

Bad Signals

In my address to the nation in October 1992, when the first presidential primaries were cancelled, I had cause to remind our fellow country men and women that there is no where in the world in which the practice of democracy is the same, even if the principles are similar and the intellectual traditions and cultural foundations are the same. The history of our country is not the history of any other country in the world which is either practicing advanced democracy or struggling to lay the foundation for democracy. Yet, in spite of the uniqueness and peculiarities of Nigeria, there are certain pre-requisites which constitute an irreducible minimum for democracy.

Such essential factors include:

- a) Free and fair elections;
- b) uncoerced expression of voters preference in elections;
- c) Respect for the electorate as the unfettered final arbiter on elections;
- d) Decorum and fairness on the part of the electoral umpires; and
- e) Absolute respect for the rule of law.

It is absolutely necessary to recall here that it was precisely because the presidential primaries of last year did not meet the basic requirements of free and fair elections that the Armed Forces Ruling Council then had good reason to cancel those primaries. The recently annulled presidential election was similarly afflicted by these problems. Even before the presidential election, and indeed at the party conventions, we had full knowledge of the bad signals pertaining to the enormous breaches of the rules and regulations of democratic elections. But because we were determined to keep faith with the deadline of 27 August, 1993 for the return to civil rule, we overlooked the reported breaches. Unfortunately, those breaches continued into the presidential election of 12 June, 1993, on an even greater proportion.

There were allegations of irregularities and other acts of bad conduct levelled against the presidential candidates but NEC went ahead and cleared them. There were proofs as well as documented evidence of widespread use of money during the party primaries as well as the presidential election. These were the same bad conduct for which the party presidential primaries of 1992 were cancelled. Evidence available to government put the total amount of money spent by the presidential candidates as over Two Billion One Hundred Million Naira (N2.1bn). The use of money was again the major source of undermining the electoral process. Both these allegations and evidence were known to the National Defence and Security Council before the holding of the 12 June, 1993 election. Again, the National Defence and Security Council overlooked these areas of problems in its determination to fulfil the promise to hand over to an elected President on due date.

Apart from the tremendous negative use of money during the party primaries and presidential election, there were moral issues which were also over looked by the Defence and National Security Council. There were cases of documented and confirmed conflict of interest between the government and the two presidential aspirants which would compromise their positions and responsibilities were either of them to become President. We believe that politics and government are not ends in themselves. Rather, service and effective amelioration of the condition of our people

must remain the true purpose of politics.

It is true that the presidential election was generally seen to be peaceful. But the election was neither free nor fair; and there was in fact a huge array of election malpractices virtually in all the states of the federation before the actual voting began. There were authenticated reports of election malpractices against party agents, officials of the National Electoral Commission and also members of the electorate.

If all of these were clear violations of the electoral laws, there were proofs of manipulations through offer and acceptance of money and other forms of inducement against officials of the National Electoral Commission and members of the electorate. There were also evidence of gross errors on the part of NEC in the process of authentication and clearance of credentials of the presidential candidates. Indeed, up to the last few hours to the election, we continued in our earnest steadfastness with our transition deadline, to overlook vital errors and steps. For instance, during the Council's deliberation following the court injunction suspending the election, majority of members of the National Defence and Security Council supported postponement of the election by one week. This was to allow NEC enough time to reach all the voters about the postponement, especially in the rural areas. But persuaded by NEC that it was capable of relaying the information to the entire electorate within the few hours left before the election, the Council unfortunately dropped the idea of shifting the voting day. Now, we know better! The conduct of the election, the behaviour of the candidates, and the post-election responses continued to elicit signals which the nation can only ignore at its peril.

It is against the foregoing background that the administration became highly concerned when the political conflicts and breaches were extended to the judiciary. It must be acknowledged that the performance of the Judiciary on this occasion was less than satisfactory. The Judiciary has been the bastion of the hopes and liberties of our citizens. Therefore, when it became clear that the courts have become intimidated and subjected to the manipulation of partisan actors and vested interests in the political process, then the entire political system was in clear danger.

This administration could not continue to watch the various High Courts carry on their long drawn out processes of contradictory decisions while the nation slides into chaos. It was under this circumstance that the National Defence and Security Council decided that it is in the supreme interest of law and order, political stability and peace that the presidential election be annulled. As an administration, we have had special interest and concern not only for the immediate needs of our society, but also in laying the foundation for generations to come.

To continue action on the basis of the 12 June, 1993 election, and to

proceed to proclaim and swear in a President who encouraged a campaign of divide and rule amongst our various ethnic groups, would have been detrimental to the survival of the Third Republic. Our need is for peace, stability and continuity of policies in the interest of all our people.

Foreign Meddlers

Although the National Electoral Commission and the Centre for Democratic Studies officially invited foreign observers for the presidential election, the administration also considered it important for Nigeria as a democratic society, that our activities and electoral conduct should be open not only to the citizenry of our country but also to the rest of the world. In spite of this commitment, the administration did not and cannot accept that foreign countries should interfere in the internal affairs of Nigeria and undermine the country's sovereignty.

The presidential election was not an exercise imposed on Nigeria by the United Nations or by the wishes of some global policemen of democracy. It was a decision embarked upon independently by the government and the people of Nigeria and for the interest of our country. This is because we believe, just like the leaders of other countries, that democracy and democratization are primary values which Nigerians should cultivate, sustain and consolidate so as to enhance freedom, liberties and social development of the citizenry.

The actions by these foreign countries are most unfortunate and highly regrettable. There is no where in the history of our country or indeed of the Third World where these countries can be said to love Nigeria or Nigerians any more than the love we have for ourselves and for our country. Neither can they claim to love Nigeria anymore than this administration loves our country. Accordingly, I wish to state that this administration will take necessary action against any interest groups that seek to interfere in the internal affairs of our country.

In this vein, I wish to place on record the appreciation of this administration for the patience and understanding of Nigerians, the French, the German, the Russian and Irish Governments in the current situation. I appeal to our fellow country men and women, and also to our foreign detractors that they should cultivate proper understanding and appreciation of the peculiar historic circumstances in the development of our country and the determination not only of this administration but indeed of all Nigerians to resolve the current crises amicably.

Action Package for final Disengagement of Military Rule and Return to Democracy

The National Security and Defence Council has met several times since the 12 June, 1993 election. The Council has fully deliberated and reviewed the avowed commitment of the administration to bequeathing to posterity a sound economic and political base in our country; and we shall do so with honour. In our deliberations, we have also taken note of the extensive consultations with other members of this Administration, with officers and men of the Armed Forces and with well meaning Nigerian leaders of thought. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to handing over power on 27 August, 1993

Accordingly, the National Defence and Security Council has decided that by end of July 1993, the two political parties, under the supervision of a recomposed National Electoral Commission, will put in place the necessary process for the emergence of two presidential candidates. This shall be conducted according to the rules and regulations governing the election of the President of the country. In this connection, government will consult with the two political parties and the National Electoral Commission as to the best and quickest process of conducting the election.

In the light of our recent experience and, given the mood of the nation, the National Defence and Security Council has imposed additional conditions, as a way of widening and deepening the base for electing the President and sanitizing the electoral process. Accordingly, a candidate for the coming election shall:

- i) Not be less than 50 years old.
- ii) has not been convicted for any crime.
- iii) believes, by act of faith and practice, in the corporate existence of Nigeria.
- iv) does not possess records of personal, corporate and business interests which conflict with the national interests.
- v) Has been a registered member of either of the two political parties for at least one year to the election.

All those previously banned from participating in the transition process other than those with criminal records, are hereby unbanned. They can all henceforth participate in the election process. This is with a view to enriching the quality of candidature for the election and at the same time tap the leadership resources of the country to the fullest. The Decree to these effects will soon be promulgated.

I wish finally to acknowledge the tremendous value of the patience and understanding of all Nigerians especially in the face of national provo-

cations. I urge everyone to continue to keep faith with the commitments of this administration. I enjoin you to keep faith with the unity, peace and stability of our country for this is the only country that you and I own and call our own. No where else in the world, no matter the promptings and inducements of foreign countries, can Nigerians ever be regarded as first class citizens other than in Nigeria. Nigeria is the only country that we have. We must therefore renew our hope in Nigeria, and renew faith and confidence in ourselves for continued growth, development and progress.

14

Crisis and the Search for Peace I: Dialogue with State Governors*

Gentlemen, you are welcome to this very important meeting. You will recall that this type of meeting had, in the past, provided opportunities not only for a Federal Military Government statement on the state of affairs of the nation, but also the platform for dialogue, serious discussions and resolutions, and at times for handing down directives on matters that affect the well-being of the country. Today's meeting, coming shortly after the cancellation of the presidential election, must be regarded as crucial and critical to the furtherance of understanding and appreciation of the political matters of the moment.

As I have said in my broadcast to the nation on Saturday, 26 June, 1993, we share with the entire citizenry the rather disappointing experience in the course of carrying through the last main event of the transition to civil rule programme. If we have wept or laughed, it is because we are neither savages nor fools. Weeping or laughing in a situation such as we have gone through are appropriate reactions because we are all involved. We can only plead in our further reaction to the political situation that we should not allow ourselves to be victims of prejudice, motivated by pride or vanity either as individuals or groups. As you all know, this administration has been conscious that in our perceived responsiveness to the political process of democratization, our judgements could not be too explicit. Since our vision, mission and direction have been to establish a solid foundation for a better and a new democratic Nigeria, we have had to continue to re-examine and re-evaluate political actions within space and time.

We have had to turn around at the presidential election because we

* Address to the Civilian Elected Executive Governors of the States on 29th June, 1993.

had to be wiser for the nation than for ourselves and the presidential candidates. There is no denying the fact that the nation matters more than individual ambitions and friendship. The democratization process of the last eight years was meant to teach lessons in self-appraisals for leadership responsibilities at whatever level. It is true that the National Electoral Commission (NEC) was set up as an umpire to ensure a free and fair contest in the race for political offices in the country under the new democratic dispensation. But then, the onus still rests squarely on the individual to engage in self-assessment and appraisal of self-interest *vis-a-vis* that of the nation. NEC was not to be used as a route to escapism without corresponding individual responsibility. Since the commencement of presidential primaries, this administration had been eagle-eyed and critical of electoral conduct so as to protect national unity, political stability and democracy. It was obviously painful to annul the presidential election but it would have been destructive of the democratic ideals and national interest which this administration had striven for in the last eight years if it had been concluded in disregard of the factors which militated and manifested themselves before and during the election.

No leadership of the Third Republic should take Nigeria and Nigerians for granted or for a ride. Responsible political leadership should begin faultlessly with rudimentary elements of appropriate party membership, and of valid registration as an electorate to merit further consideration for elective office. Similarly, good electoral conduct on election day should begin with exemplary leadership from presidential candidates. The reports in these regards did not portray seriousness and commitment of the presidential candidates to leadership of an exalted nature. Beginning from party conventions at which presidential candidates were corruptly determined and right through the presidential election of 12 June, 1993, the emergence of excessive electoral malpractices was evidenced by the corruption and financial inducements of the entire electoral process. Nigeria is not for sale to the highest bidder, and rich persons are not necessarily the philosopher-kings. Leadership aspirants and followers must watch and resist the temptation to corrupt the electoral process. *Besides all this, the election of 12 June has raised serious moral questions. We have incontrovertible evidence of confirmed conflict of interest between government and the presidential candidates which would definitely compromise the latter's position and their responsibilities were either of them to become President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Personal economic interests should not be allowed to conflict, let alone exceed national interest. And more seriously, should this administration have proceeded to present a President-elect who, for all practical purposes, would not have commanded the respect, loyalty*

and co-operation of the Armed Forces? Should this administration have gone ahead to compromise the defence and security of this nation, and thus make the Third Republic moribund at birth? Should this administration allow the new political structures which brought your administrations and legislative bodies into being be allowed to be dissolved by any imminent convulsion? In addition to all this, strong ties with neo-colonialists by any of the Presidential candidates could not be said to be in the best permanent interest of Nigeria. In annulling the presidential election, it required the courage and commitment of this administration to act in the way it did.

We would like to re-emphasize at this point that Nigeria has come a long way. Undoubtedly, Nigeria has experienced profound social, political and economic transformation since this administration assumed power and leadership in August 1985. As elected Governors, you are some of the beneficiaries of the political structural adjustment which has altered the internal political configuration of the country for good. You are now charged with the management of our peoples and resources.

Furthermore, you are witnesses to the new democratic political processes which this administration has enunciated and implemented beyond you as Governors, are various legislative bodies firmly established at the national, state, and local levels. The democratic successes so far recorded represent our ardent commitment to a democratic Nigeria. The mere fact that this administration planned and substantially implemented the transition to civil rule programme underscores the fact that we could not have started what we cannot finish. We did not plan for a diarchy and we would not operate such an arrangement. Our commitment to democracy is emphatically unshakeable and our promise to relinquish power by 27 August, 1993 is equally unequivocal. We are resolved to relinquish power as a regime on the fateful day of 27 August, 1993.

But before then, we all collectively have a task to perform. As Governors of the burgeoning component states of this federation, you should see yourselves more and more as the alter-ego of the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The position confers on you enormous responsibilities, jointly and severally, as the custodian of the spirit and letter of an indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state of Nigeria! The expectation is therefore not misplaced that by your words and actions you must acknowledge that you hold power in trust for the peace, unity and benefit of all citizens under your charge, and indeed all the people of this great country. Our unity in our diversity must be evident at all times in spite of our different political and religious persuasions.

Gentlemen, let me draw your attention to the essence of our politi-

cal problem. The political issue of our time is not electoral victory or defeat. *The issue from the point of view of this administration is the survival of democracy in Nigeria beyond military rule and beyond the euphoria of the return to civil rule. We believe that a solid foundation for the flowering of democracy after the exit of the military should represent a political triumph for the nation.* The role of an elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is very important and significant in the realization of our country's democratic aspirations. *A President with impeccable credentials and a viable political structure should emerge to nurture and sustain the Nigerian democratic process.* Every Governor, every Legislator and, indeed, every Nigerian, must see this as a worthy cause and the only way and hope of guaranteeing political stability and social and economic prosperity for all Nigerians.

In the quest to realize the country's democratic aspirations, *what we need now is not heat but the supply of light.* There has been too much heat both from within and outside the country since the cancellation of the presidential election. This necessitated the issuance of a notice to all of you to remind you of your responsibilities as Chief Executives and Chief Security Officers of your respective states. Given the unusual interest of foreign powers and some adverse public sentiments expressed by some communities of interest within the Nigerian polity, we do not need to be reminded that the nation is at the throes of testy times. The times will, however, only be tempestuous if by acts of omission or commission we encourage actual breakdown of public order and public safety in the federation or any part thereof. We believe that as Governors, you should not only be vigilant but also discourage any public danger that could constitute a threat to public order, public safety and unity of the of the federation. We also believe that, since as Governors you are in the forefront of sentiment and opinion moulding in your various states, you are all in a position to nip in the bud distress signals from anywhere which could lead to organized violence. We all know that nothing good comes out of violence. Decidedly, violence can never build a better society and it should be avoided at all cost.

You may wish to recall that this nation had witnessed organized violence before. The bitter and excruciating experiences of the civil war should come readily to mind. The disruption and disorder which it unleashed on Nigeria were incalculable and very harmful as they nourished impoverishment, social and economic decay. Innumerable lives were lost in the process. And in the end, it dawned on all Nigerians that the civil war was senseless and unnecessary. The process of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction was not easy. In our time, Nigerian communities cannot tolerate any mob rule let alone another civil war. Yet the past civil

war occurred partly because organized violence at the top was not only allowed to seep through to the bottom but mainly because the bad signs of the conflagration were not controlled early enough. Certainly, we cannot afford that negligence and we must deliberately strive to avoid the pitfalls that resulted in the unfortunate civil war.

Gentlemen, as I end this address, I venture to say that the political purpose of the Federal Military Government is beneficent for all Nigerians and generations to come. We must not deviate from the issue before us as duly identified. We must not allow ourselves to be misguided into fratricidal conflict and internecine wars, like the one that is currently tearing apart Liberia, Somalia and the Sudan before our very eyes. We must eschew undue selfish motives, self-interest and sectional group interests, and pursue with vigour the national interest which is central to our country's democratic aspirations. Our collective understanding and wisdom as well as our unanimity of purpose should not only propel us to a peaceful resolution of the political issue before us, but compel our foreign detractors to look elsewhere for interference and trouble. Furthermore, I invite you all to join the National Defence and Security Council to remain vigilant for, as Benjamin Franklin once said, "They that are on their guard and appear ready to receive their adversaries, are in much less danger of being attacked than the supine, secure and negligent". Lastly, I invite you to very sober and fruitful deliberations on the path to the resolution of the political issue.

15

Crisis and the search for Peace II: Dialogue with Traditional Rulers*

Your Royal Highnesses, I warmly welcome you to this important dialogue. You will recall that his forum had, in the past, provided the needed opportunities for the Federal Military Government to brief you on the state of affairs of the nation. At the same time, it has become a platform for dialogue, discussions and resolutions of matters that affect the well-being of the country. Today's meeting, coming shortly after the cancellation of the presidential election, must be seen as critical to the understanding and appreciation of the moment.

As I noted in my broadcast to the nation on Saturday, 26 June, 1993, this administration shares with the entire citizenry the rather disappointing experience in the course of carrying through the last main event of the transition to civil rule programme. I wish to plead with you, in our further reaction to the political situation, that we should not allow ourselves to be victims of prejudice, neither should we be motivated by pride or vanity in our response. As you are aware, our vision, mission and direction as an administration is to establish a proper foundation for a better and a new democratic Nigeria. In our effort to do so, we have had to continue to re-examine and re-evaluate our political actions within space and time.

As operators, we have been more concerned about our nation than for ourselves. We will, and you must join us, to continue to do so as a matter of course. We hold it as a matter of truth that the nation is far more important than individual ambitions and friendship. Thus, the democratization process of the last few years was meant to teach lessons in self-

* Address at a meeting with traditional rulers on Friday, 2nd July, 1993.

appraisals for leadership and responsibilities at all levels.

Permit me to remind you, once again, that Nigeria has come along way since this administration assumed power and leadership about eight years ago. In our attempt to deal with a number of critical and monumental problems we have had to put in place and pursued sound and justifiable policies and programmes of reform. No doubt, these policies have touched virtually all aspects of our life. But, they were necessary if we had to rescue the nation from the path of chaos and instability. I believe also that in conception, formulation and articulation, these policies and programmes were sound and unassailable. In the course of implementing our reforms, and especially because of the visionary zeal with which we had approached our assignment, we have had to change the course of transition programme. By so doing, we had to cope with new problems as well as resolve the old ones. Thus, we sought to challenge and transform extant social forces which had in the past impeded growth and development of our nation as well as deal with the new forces to which our programmes of action gave rise. Such a dynamic approach was bound to give rise to some difficulties as a result of which this administration unwittingly attracted an enormous public suspicion over its intentions. I wish to reassure you, that our measures and reactions have been governed largely by nationalist considerations and the welfare of our people. I have indeed owned up to the fact that the changes in the transition programme especially the recent cancelled presidential election derived primarily from these considerations.

Since the commencement of presidential primaries, this administration has been eagle-eyed and critical of electoral conduct so as to protect the cause of national unity, political stability and democracy. While it was painful to annul the presidential election, yet to do otherwise would have been destructive of the democratic idealism and national interest for which this Administration had striven strenuously in the last eight years. Thus, we had wanted to ensure that no leadership of the Third Republic would take Nigerians for granted nor for a ride.

The briefs which you would get at this dialogue would demonstrate and portray to you the nature and commitment of the presidential candidates to leadership of this exalted office. You would also be led into evidence of electoral malpractices as well as the confirmation of serious moral questions and conflict of interest between government and presidential candidates. Our position had been that personal economic interests should not be allowed to conflict, let alone, exceed national interest.

You are all, as a matter of course, living witnesses to the new democratic political processes which this administration had enunciated and implemented. Presently, we have legislative bodies firmly established at the national, state, and local levels. The success which we had so far re-

corded represents our ardent commitment to the evolution of a democratic country. As a matter of fact, the point that this administration purposefully planned the transition to civil rule programme underscores the fact that we could not have started what we did not intend to finish. We never planned for a diarchy and we would not operate it. Our commitment to democracy has been unshakable and our promise to relinquish military rule to democratic civil rule by 27 August, 1993 remains our collective resolve. However, we all have tasks to perform before that date. As royal fathers, you should see yourselves as fathers to all Nigerians. That position confers on you enormous responsibilities, individually and severally, as co-defenders and custodians of the spirit and letter of an indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state of Nigeria. Needless to remind you that you should see your power and influence as being held in trust for the peace, unity and benefit of all Nigerians. You must protect our unity in diversity, and you must help to nourish it.

It is important that I draw attention to the essence of the present political impasse. The political issue of our time is neither electoral victory nor defeat. Rather, the issue is that of the survival of democracy in Nigeria beyond military rule and indeed beyond the euphoria of civil rule, come August 27, 1993. This Administration believes that a solid foundation for the flowering of democracy after the exit of the military should represent a political triumph for the nation. The role of an elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is very important and significant in the realization of this democratic aspiration. An ideal President and a viable and keenly competitive political structure should emerge to nurture and sustain the Nigerian democratic process.

Given the unusual interest of foreign powers and some adverse public sentiments expressed by some communities of interest within the Nigerian polity, we do not need to be reminded that the nation is at the throes of testy times. The times would, however, only be tempestuous if by acts of omission or commission we encourage actual breakdown of public order and public safety in the federation or any part thereof. We believe that as Traditional Rulers and Royal Fathers, you should all discourage any public acts and utterances that could constitute danger and a threat to public order, public safety and the existence of the federation. You are all in an enviable position to nip in the bud any distress signal that could lead to organized violence in our country. We all know that violence can never bring about a better society and we should avoid political violence at all cost. I do not need to remind you of the experiences of the civil war. Neither do I need to tell you of the disruption and disorder which it unleashed on Nigeria. We can neither afford to be negligent nor a repeat experience of acute crises.

In our continued effort to put in place measures that could buoy confidence and assuage strained nerves, the government has decided to proscribe all anti-democratic organizations. Furthermore, a recomposed National Electrical Commission (NEC) has been established. At the same time, a body made up of eminent Nigerians shall be formed which would liaise between government and NEC for routine administrative matters. Furthermore, in order to avoid the repeat of past mistakes, the jurisdiction of the Courts shall be ousted in relation to injunctions on matters relating to nomination, and the holding and announcement of election. At the same time, an Election Petition Tribunal would be established from which appeals could go to the Supreme Court.

Finally, in welcoming you, once again to this meeting, I would like you to feel fully free to raise any issues of interest for clarification or for information during this deliberation. By all means please share with me and this administration the enduring thought and deep concern for the unity, peace and stability of our country.

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Crisis and the Search for Peace III: Dialogue with Senators*

I address you today as senior citizens and statesmen of our country. The events of the past few weeks in our country require, for resolution, the wisdom and experience of our nation's senior citizens and statesmen. Indeed, this administration has since its assumption of office, pursued the path of dialogue in coming to terms with the problems which face our nation. We have similarly been in consultation with a wide spectrum of the Nigerian society in the attempt to arrive at an acceptable solution to the present political impasse. My meeting with you today, must therefore be seen as part of the search for an acceptable resolution of the problems arising from the annulment of the presidential election of 12 June.

I have had occasions in the past to call attention to the responsibility of statesmanship in confronting the problems of development. The particular problems which manifested in the present political impasse must be seen as a significant challenge to those who occupy leadership position in our country. Let me state that no country is ever completely rid of problems. As leaders, we must rise up to the challenge posed by problems, not through alarmist pronouncements and divisive and instigatory initiatives but by collective and concerted action.

The transition to civil rule programme of this administration was designed as a general handing-over process to a civilian political class terminating with the installation of an elected civilian President at the centre. The success of this administration in installing elected governments at the local and state levels is now part of our contemporary history. The Distinguished Senators here gathered and the Honourable Members

* Address to the Honourable Senators on 23rd July, 1993.

of the House of Representatives were all duly elected as representatives of our people to the National Assembly; so it is right to say that democracy exists immeasurably in our country.

Our attempt at filling the executive position at the national level must be seen as the process of attaining full democracy. You will all recall that it was the botched presidential election scheduled for December 1992 that led to the extension of the hand-over date to August 27, 1993. Unfortunately, government has had to cancel the election which was conducted on 12 June, 1993. The reasons and reasoning which informed this decision should not delay us here as they had been well-articulated in previous government statements. It is only pertinent to underscore the resolve of government to move ahead with the transition process and ensure the handing over of power to a democratically elected President.

Let me reassure the nation through you, again, that this administration will hand-over to a democratically elected President. Our decision to hold fresh election must be seen as part of the effort to ensure the full implementation of our disengagement agenda. Holding fresh election is the most credible option conceivable in view of the annulment of the June 12 election. No other mode for selecting the President of Nigeria's Third Republic would be proper, legitimate and acceptable if indeed we are talking of a democratic Third Republic. Any other option cannot but be undemocratic and must therefore be discouraged.

I am not unaware of the position which rejects fresh election. To enter into a debate on the merit or otherwise of this position is hardly useful. It suffices it to say, however, that government is committed to fresh election because we cannot return to the election of June 12, 1993. Government is committed to the holding of fresh election as the only basis for the emergence of the President of the Third Republic.

Distinguished Senators, I am quite aware of the partisan basis of your membership of this exalted Assembly. But I am also aware that you are national leaders in your own right whose claims to leadership transcend partisan boundaries. As elected representatives, you all have a responsibility to articulate to our people the sincerity of government's position on matters of public concern. In my earlier interaction with opinion leaders, I was struck by their abiding faith in the unity of our country. I was impressed by the willingness to evolve solutions through constant dialogue. These leaders demonstrated a sense of commitment to the survival of our country. This is not to suggest that there were no points of divergence. Rather it is to say that there was the compelling spirit of accommodation even in the face of these divergencies.

I am reassured about our people's commitment to living together as brothers, sisters and kindred. Our recent history of internal war had more

than demonstrated the futility of allowing our differences to degenerate into irreconcilable antagonism. We must prevail on those of our country men and women who feel angered by the action of government and their perception of events to allow for the possibility of reconciliation. Those who are old enough would recall the folly of war. Nigeria has come a long way since the unfortunate incidents of the civil war. We need to remind ourselves that the events which led to that unfortunate incident in our country's annal were clearly avoidable. Those who instigate our people into violent acts must be reminded of the difficulty of halting the process once it is started.

I urge you, Distinguished Senators, to rise above your partisan calling. There is a compelling need to save our country from the verge of partisan division. As leaders of your respective parties, I call on you to prevail on your parties to tread the path of unity and stability of our country. As representatives of our people, I urge you to present faithfully our genuine concern to ensure a successful hand-over of power to a civilian President who would be elected fairly and freely. As elders and senior citizens I prevail on you to invoke your moral leadership on our country men and women. This country needs your leadership at this point in time. I urge you not to fail Nigeria.

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Crisis and the Search for Peace IV:

Dialogue with Political Party Leaders*

Gentlemen, the superiority of the dialogue over other possible and competing modes of arriving at decisions is what the leadership of the two political parties amply demonstrated by the joint statement on the current political situation released on July 8, 1993. Let me seize the opportunity, once again to express my personal appreciation and that of this administration to the leadership of the two parties for bringing to the fore and invoking the familiar capacity of the Nigerian politician for brinkmanship.

The content of the joint statement is now public knowledge and part of our political history. But let me make some general comments on the core elements of the statement in order to properly situate our discussion today.

Although proposed as one of two options, the choice of an Interim National Government by the two parties is decidedly an exercise in consensus-building. This administration has always maintained that a measure of progress and maturity, politically speaking, is the capacity to build consensus around issues of national concern. We have always maintained that there are issues which are clearly beyond partisan, partial and other parochial considerations.

The bipartisan acceptance of an Interim National Government has been forwarded to this administration. In considering this recommendation, government is quite mindful of and sensitive to the concern expressed by a large number of Nigerians regarding the viability of the August 27, 1993, deadline for military withdrawal were fresh presidential election to

* Address to political party leaders on the Interim National Government (ING) on 31st July, 1993.

be conducted at this time.

It must be stated, however, that the electoral option remains the most acceptable way for filling political roles in any democracy. Let it be known that there is, seriously speaking, no alternative to the choice of a President for Nigeria other than by democratic elections. Sooner or later, elections would have to be held to determine the true wishes of the people of Nigeria.

The option of an Interim National Government should therefore be seen for what it is. It is an interim measure and must, to that extent, be seen as part of the overall conception of the transitional agenda of this administration. It is the accepted option, given the current dangerous trend towards undue polarization of our body politic. The option is therefore a welcome strategic device to provide the political system with a cooling off period during which we shall reflect on the current crisis and find a way out of it. At the end of the period, Nigerians should have been given a broader basis for political participation and electoral choice.

We should, therefore, see the Interim National Government as a consensual arrangement for concluding the transitional process of the administration which was disrupted by the imperative need to nullify the June 12 presidential elections, albeit within the overall commitment to ensure the termination of military rule on August 27. In so far as the Interim National Government is a continuation of the transitional agenda begun in 1986, it shall have and enjoy the full powers to carry out its mandate as has been enjoyed by the administration.

The establishment of an Interim National Government has consequences for political arrangements in the weeks before August 27 and beyond. Some of the issues attendant on the choice of an Interim National Government were articulated in the joint statement of the two parties. The issues touch, in the main, on the nature and character of the Interim National Government, its composition, *modus operandi* and tenure.

We should seize the opportunity offered by this period of rethinking to introduce economy into our system of governance at all levels. It is very obvious that the cost of governance has been rising beyond what the capacity of the economy can accommodate. We need to divert more resources to productive sectors and to meet the welfare needs of our people rather than to spend our lean and dwindling resources to service politics.

There is also a need to open up the system to allow more people to participate in political processes and structures. From now on, therefore, all persons must be guaranteed the opportunity of participation in the political process. It is therefore necessary for us to begin to create structures and institute processes that would encourage and enhance voluntary participation, especially by various elements in our politically mature and

active civil society.

The decisions which we may reach at this dialogue shall be governed by the foregoing and shall be anchored on the integrity of the two-party system. The two-party system has served us well as a viable and useful instrument of resolving conflict; and, in our view, the two-party system constitutes the most credible vehicle of transition from military to democratic government.

Our investment in the establishment and nurture of the two parties is a worthwhile one and I hope those who are given the opportunity of leading them will equally serve them with patriotic disposition. There is a need to revisit the perennial problems of party nomination, party finance, party-government relations and party administration. Ideally the goal should be towards a self-sustaining two-party system. The aim in this respect shall be ideally to ensure the emergence of a self-sustaining two parties that are clearly less dependent on government.

Because of the rejection by the political parties of the fresh presidential election option, and also because of the imperative of meeting the August 27 deadline for the termination of military rule, government has accepted to institute the Interim National Government. This is to allow for the process of handing-over between this outgoing administration and the incoming interim government.

Therefore, the outgoing administration will soon commence the process of handing over to the incoming Interim National Government. It is expected that the commencement of the Interim National Government at this time will allow for a smooth handing-over. Thus, the Interim National Government shall serve for a limited period to be determined by you, and as defined by the nature of the specific assignment, duties and responsibilities which you shall assign to it.

In general, the duties and responsibilities of government during the interim period shall be:

- a) To ensure effective administration of the country. In this regard, government must, in the interim period, be empowered to steer the ship of state through all national and international circumstances, and be able to effectively protect all our citizens.
 - b) Pay special attention to the material well-being of our citizens. Government shall in the interim period make deliberation efforts to streamline the economy for the incoming administration.
- But, more especially, the assignments of the Interim National Government shall among others be to:
- a) Oversee the elections to the Local governments already

scheduled for December 1993;

- b) Bring to conclusion, the long march to democracy by the elections of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- c) As part of its mandate for executing successive elections, government shall in the interim period consciously encourage the promotion of genuine efforts at monitoring and observing elections. To this end the Interim National Government shall preserve and invigorate existing arrangements for co-ordinating domestic monitoring and international observer groups;
- d) All necessary apparatus and process shall be put in place by government to ensure the smooth and orderly handing-over of power to a democratically elected President at the end of the interim period.

In conclusion, the charge to the present Transitional Council which involves the implementation of the handing-over process should commence immediately you finish your assignment. As such, the Transitional Council is hereby directed to anticipate the immediate needs of the incoming interim administration and assure it of logistical support as well as provide it with critical information and orientation for a successful take-off.

Government has taken the foregoing decisions in the national interest and with a view to concluding the Transitional Programme on schedule. God Bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

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Stepping Aside for Peace and National Concord*

Eight months ago, I was a guest of the distinguished Senators and Honourable Members here gathered at the inauguration of the National Assembly of Nigeria's Third Republic. That was a momentous occasion. In spite of the uncertainties of the latter part of 1992, the inauguration was held amidst pomp and pageantry.

It was a typical Nigerian affair with your good selves, your families, friends and well-wishers being part of the historic occasion. The limelight of the occasion, notwithstanding, no one, I believe, was in any doubt or under any illusion about the setback to the transition programme which led to the inauguration of the National Assembly by a military President.

The inauguration, you will recall, was a significant compromise borne out of the reality of the political circumstance in which we found ourselves at the time. The event reflected the capacity and willingness of your good selves and our people to rise to the challenges posed by our peculiar political predicament. I recall vividly the many and varied positions and viewpoints held by some of the enlightened ones among us on the desirability and, indeed, the wisdom of inaugurating the National Assembly at the time. At the end of the day, good sense prevailed; the National Assembly was formally constituted and your distinguished and honourable selves commenced the rudiments of legislative business by sharing legislative power with the National Defence and Security Council.

The circumstance of the latter part of 1992 is not qualitatively too different from our current political experience. And let me confess that no

* Address to the National Assembly on the National Crisis sequel to the cancellation of the 12th June, 1993 presidential election on 17th August, 1993.

issue, I dare say, has brought out the best qualities in all of us, especially our capacity as a people to meet the challenge of nation-building through dialogue, compromise and consensus-building, than the current political situation. An enduring legacy of this Administration is the deliberate and conscious effort at promoting consensus through dialogue. In the past several weeks, Nigerians of all walks of life have conferred, consulted and dialogued on the future of our country. We pushed ourselves hard, sometimes close to the limits. We have offered differing and sometimes conflicting viewpoints, as to be expected. But we never lost sight of the end-goal which is to move our country forward.

From the foregoing, it is pedestal thinking, and unwarranted speculations to claim that this administration was bent on staying put or sitting tight, or, as someone once put it, BABANGIDA WANTS TO SUCCEED BABANGIDA. As an administration, we are very clear and conscious of our mandate not to leave our people in chaos by retreating in disarray. Our search for options to overcome the present political problems was borne out of the need to ensure a stable political order for the realization of democracy.

The Universal crave for Democracy

It is indisputable that democracy is the highest form of government precisely because of its emphasis on freedom and equality. It is, therefore, no wonder that as a form of government, democracy has been the great desire of many peoples in different ages. It is also equally indisputable that as a form of government, democracy requires an uncommonly high level of sophistication of society, personnel and behaviour in order for it to be attained and maintained. As an administration we realize this universal crave, and we have been working towards this goal. We will achieve it.

When Nigeria from the epoch of the nationalist movement to the present administration committed itself to building a democratic nation, we were setting for ourselves a very high and enviable goal.

This administration from its inception is fully aware and confident that when Nigeria finally achieves democracy with all its institutional and behavioural requirements, we shall have joined a very select group of nations in the world. Precisely because of the nature of the democratic form of governance, only very few nations in the world today have been able to attain it. This fact becomes obvious when we note that less than 25 per cent of the countries represented in the United Nations can be considered truly competitive democracies.

What I am trying to put across is to emphasize the level of difficulty and intricacy which the process of democratization entails. Let me em-

phasize that we must also never lose sight of the fact that those very countries which have attained democracy, did so after a long period of trials and development. We have tried and we will continue to try. WHAT IS NEEDED IS RENEWED FAITH IN OURSELVES AND OUR CAPACITY TO ATTAIN DEMOCRATIC LIFE BECAUSE IT IS A GOOD LIFE.

Our programmed Democratization

It will also be recalled that when this administration embarked on the democratic journey into the Third Republic, we were not unaware of the difficulties we would have to encounter. Given the nature of the enterprise and the nature of our social system, we knew that only a systematic programme of phased transition would be required. And in this enterprise our records of phased democratization are open for all to see that we have made tremendous progress.

To start with, and in contrast to the preceding regime, we liberalized political discussion as a necessary condition for democratic discourse and political interactions. This process of vitalizing political discussions culminated in the national political debates and the accomplishment of the Political Bureau Report. It then became necessary for the articulate Nigerian public from every part of the country to debate and fashion out a new Constitution which was to serve as the terminal goal of military rule.

As we look at the Nigerian political terrain, we can objectively assess the measure of success in the establishment of the target of the Third Republic. After the uncontrolled scramble in the formation of political associations and their failure to comply with minimum and reasonable requirements of national spread within the constitutional constraint of a two-party system, this administration found a truly Nigerian solution in the present two national political parties - the NRC and the SDP. Our recent crisis convinced me, I must confess, as to the efficacy of our two party system. It is your system and I call on our people through you to make the two party system work.

You will recall that when this decision was taken, many cynics did not believe that Nigerians would come forth to register as members of these two parties. They even did not believe that the two political parties could contain all the political currents that could flow into the political process. But we now know better, and it is on record that not only did two great national parties take root, but also been the bedrock of the continuous accomplishment of the democratic institutions of our Third Republic.

Accordingly, under the platform of the two national political parties, Nigeria established democratic governments in 593 Local Govern-

ment Areas in order to bring government closer to the vast majority of our population. With that grass-roots level of government established, we confidently moved on to the State level. After successful governorship primaries, we conducted the elections of the Governors and the members of the State Assemblies. These representatives of their respective constituencies have been, for the past two years, wrestling with the intricate process of democratic governance in the 30 States of the federation. THESE PRACTITIONERS OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT WILL BE THE FIRST TO INFORM US OF THE JOYS AND DIFFICULTIES OF POPULAR GOVERNMENT. Most have braced up to the task, knowing that Rome was not build in a day.

We then boldly proceeded to the next level of government. On 4 July 1992, successful nationwide elections were conducted into the National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives). Your esteemed selves are the product of that event. Accordingly, this esteemed Assembly came into being after its inauguration on 5 December, 1992.

The foregoing is not always admitted and appreciated by our detractors, critics and cynics. We have, indeed, achieved well over 95 per cent of our democratic project.

The Presidential Election

In order to complete the democratization process at the federal level, the two political parties engaged in their own internal process of producing presidential candidates. We are all witnesses to the difficult and tortuous route we were forced to take in order to produce the presidential flagbearers to participate in the election. These are clear indications of the difficult road to democracy and our determination to get there in spite of obstacles.

It is in this context that all of us must see the present political impasse which resulted from the annulment of the 12 June, 1993 presidential election. Just as the cynics thought that the parties would not be able to produce their Presidential candidates after the botched direct primaries of last year cynics are quick to throw up their hands again at the impossibility of finding an acceptable solution to the present political impasse. We should prove them wrong. Viewed from the advantageous hindsight of our past successes in navigating the Nigerian ship of state through previous troubled waters on our determined journey to democracy, we should see the present political impasse as a temporary problem. Given the resilience of the prodigious intellect of the Nigerian political elites, we must not allow the present problems to overwhelm us.

The history of journeys to democracy worldwide has rarely been a

track record of straight boulevards strewn with roses. Most nations that are now established democracies went through very difficult and rocky roads to accomplish, their national goals. In some cases, because of the intransigence of members of their political elites, the movements to democracy were very costly and brought great suffering to their peoples. Some of these nations executed their kings and queens. Some fought their Wars of the Roses. Many took centuries to arrive even at universal adult suffrage which is the assumed basis of our present democratic experiment.

Transition as a Learning Process

The underlying philosophy of the transition programme of this administration is that it is a learning and withdrawal process. We have, indeed, come a long way in this interplay between learning and withdrawal that the inability to conclude the transition agenda through the installation of an elected President casts serious doubt on the original genuine conception. The setback of the latter part of 1992 and the few weeks since the 12 June presidential election notwithstanding, the learning process conception of our transition process remains sound in theory, commonsensical and salutary in practice. Some critics have said that this Administration has elevated the philosophy of learning process to the status of a permanent *alibi*. I disagree because this was not the intention. I also disagree because this has not been the practice in the implementation of the transition agenda. The learning process conception of this transition programme is premised on the assumption that the evolution of a stable democratic political system requires 'trial runs' and that appropriate and acceptable behaviour for a stable political life cannot be decreed 'with immediate effect'.

Our political learning experience during the transition period was intended to be cumulative. That was the reason why the transition programme was broadly spaced so as to allow for political learning, institutional adjustment and a reorientation of political culture at sequential levels of politics and programme, beginning with the local government and ending at the federal level. As an administration, we have not deviated from this publicly declared procedure. Sometimes, however, the learning process conception of our transition programme is misconstrued to mean that withdrawal must automatically take place once a stage in the transition is reached. Those who hold this view are in error. They miss a fundamental reality of learning that advancement to the next higher level is not necessarily automatic. This administration had since the commencement of the transition programme resisted the temptation of moving to the next

stage when we were convinced that the required learning had, indeed, not taken place. By periodically halting the transition train, this administration has been consistent in undertaking a critical assessment of the immediate past stage in the transition programme and in instituting corrective measures, where necessary, in the overall interest of the nation.

We had intervened decisively in the political process but with due explanation and justification. We had also reversed some of our decisions when confronted with superior arguments and justification. Lately, we intervened to correct the observed anomalies in the electoral process which would have led to the installation of a civilian President for the Third Republic. You are all aware of the effort of this administration to resolve the resultant impasse through consultations and dialogue with different interest groups in our country. These groups include traditional rulers, religious leaders, organized labour and most importantly, the leadership of two political parties. With these consultations, we have gained some significant respite. The culmination of efforts at consensus-building through dialogue was the tripartite committee headed by the Vice President, Admiral Augustus Aikhomu which deliberated on the proposed Interim National Government for the country.

The Interim National Government is a product of dialogue and consensus. It marks the triumph of dialogue over other possible and competing modes of arriving at decisions. Let me seize the opportunity once again to express our appreciation to the tripartite committee headed by Vice President Augustus Aikhomu for the speedy conclusion of its historic assignment.

We have arrived at the decision to institute an Interim National Government by a spirit of give-and-take. We have made tremendous progress in moderating hitherto rigid positions on the current political impasse through dialogue. The administration has, on its part, shifted ground from its insistence on the holding of fresh presidential election before 27 August. The two political parties have equally moderated their extreme positions on the solution to the political impasse. By bending over backwards, the parties to the political impasse demonstrated their commitment to moving our country forward.

The detail of the outline of the Interim National Government would be released soon. But the underlying premise of an interim arrangement remains the same. As I reiterated to Vice President Aikhomu's committee at the commencement of its assignment, there is, seriously speaking, no alternative to the choice of a President of Nigeria other than by democratic elections. Yet, the interim arrangement remains the most feasible under the circumstance. Let me restate, once again, that the Interim National Government option must be seen as part of the overall conception

of the transition process.

Elements of the Interim National Government

The significant properties of the Interim National Government are as follows:

- a) the Interim National Government is the heir-apparent to the present Military Government at the federal level in lieu of a democratically elected federal executive;
- b) the Interim National Government is not and cannot be a transitional government. It is not an extension but a replacement of the present Transitional Council;
- c) although headed by an appointed rather than elected person, the Interim National Government, in order to be effective, must operate as a constitutional government with constitutionally specified powers during the interim period;
- d) the legislative arm of government at the federal level must exercise its powers under the Constitution as a necessary complement and balance to the full executive powers of the Interim National Government.

The Interim National Government is a consensual arrangement for concluding the transition process which was disrupted by the inconclusive June 12 Presidential election while at the same time ensuring the exit of the military at its appointed date. Perhaps because of the impossibility of holding fresh presidential election now, but more because of the imperative need to meet the deadline of military withdrawal from the political arena, government has accepted to institute the Interim National Government. This is to allow for the commencement of the process of handing-over between the out-going Transition Council and the incoming Interim Government.

Government has given serious thought to the Report of the tripartite Committee headed by the Vice President, Admiral Augustus Aikhomu. Government wishes to restate its earlier definition of the duties and responsibilities of the Interim National Government as follows:

- a) to ensure effective administration of the country through power to steer the ship of state in all national and international circumstances and be able to effectively protect all our citizens;
- b) to pay special attention to the material well-being of our citizens;
- c) to oversee the elections to local governments already due in December, 1993;
- d) to encourage the promotion of genuine efforts at monitoring

and observing elections;

- e) to bring to conclusion, the long march to democracy by overseeing the elections of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;
- f) to put in place all necessary apparatus and processes which will ensure the smooth handing-over of power to a democratically elected President at the end of the interim period. Government is of the view that the foregoing duties and responsibilities should be discharged by the Interim National Government within a reasonable period.

Interim National Government and the National Assembly

It is clear from the foregoing elaboration of the elements of the Interim National Government why I am in your midst today. The National Assembly will in the months ahead be performing crucial roles in the affairs of our country. Together with the Interim Federal Executive, the National Assembly will take the leadership in steering the ship of state during the interim period for the good governance of our nation.

As you very well know, the federal level of government is not just the Executive branch. The Legislature should be the basis of the democratic legitimacy of the new Interim National Government. This is so because in this last stage of our drive towards the full realization of the Third Republic, the National Assembly is that body at the federal level which has the grass-roots constituency and therefore the anchor of popular rule. Being popularly elected it should now provide the link between the Interim National Government and the representative will of the people.

Accordingly, the National Assembly has been designed to play a key legislative role in the present dispensation as a deliberative balance to the Executive branch. The National Assembly, in addition to its deliberative powers, also has confirmatory functions.

Let me recap what now can be said to be the elements of constitutional democracy which we now have and which you can comfortably work with as legislators:

- (a) Interim provisions will form part of the law to be enacted by decree of the Federal Military Government. This will be the supreme law of the land during the interim period, and will be binding on all organs of government. The interim provisions shall invalidate all acts of government which are inconsistent with it. Furthermore, the latter provisions shall be made unalterable by any one arm of the government acting alone or with the concurrence of the State Houses of Assembly or Local Gov-

- ernment Councils or any other bodies not at present known to our Laws or any unelected representatives of the mainstream of our political or democratic institutions;
- b) an appointed civilian Head of the Interim National Government whose powers will be as stipulated under the Law. The method of appointing the Head of the Interim National Government shall be spelled out in the interim provisions of the Law and appointment of secretaries shall also be set out in the interim provisions of the Law. Other relevant executive bodies like the National Electoral Commission, National Council of State, etc., will have their powers and functions clearly set out by the interim provisions of the Law.
 - c) the Enabling Decrees of the existing elected National Assembly shall be incorporated into the interim provisions of the Law as the legislative organ of the Interim National Government, with the full amplitude of powers as provided in the said law;
 - d) the Enabling Decrees of the existing elected legislative and executive organs at the state and local government levels shall likewise be incorporated into the interim provisions of the law;
 - e) the Enabling Decrees of the existing Judicature, the guarantee of fundamental human rights and necessary adaptations from the 1989 Constitution shall likewise be incorporated into the interim provisions of the Law.

What we shall be having from the commencement of the Interim National Government shall be government with democratic institutions and under the Law.

In order to smoothen the interaction between the National Assembly and the Interim National Government, a National Assembly Liaison will be established as a matter of utmost urgency so as to facilitate the flow of communication between the two arms of government.

The Role of the Armed Forces in the Interim Period

Let me reiterate that in the wake of government's acceptance of the interim government arrangement, speculations were rife concerning the status of the Armed Forces in the arrangement. I wish to emphasize that the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are constitutionally empowered to defend the government and people of Nigeria from internal and external threats. To this extent, I want to assure our citizens, through your good selves as their representatives, that the Armed Forces would be alive to its responsibility and defend the Interim National Government as

required by law.

Beyond this broader concern about the status of the Armed Forces in the interim, is a specific and special concern about my own role as President, Commander-in-Chief. This is not an unusual preoccupation. It is one that has dogged this administration since inception. The concern derives from a curious conception of politics in the 'first person singular', whereby the activities of government are reduced to the whims of one actor, in this case, General Ibrahim Babangida, who is at once powerful and supreme. Significantly, this characterization has tended to reduce government to a private activity over which a powerful and supreme actor holds sway. This is both unfortunate and untenable.

I have had occasion in the past to reject this uncharitable conception of the military administration over which I preside. I have argued and demonstrated that the reality of the operation of our Administration in the past eight years does not lend credence to this warped conception of government as a one man show. Politics and government, in my view, is a collective activity. Those who have been privileged to participate in this administration know as a matter of fact that decision-making in the past eight years has been a collective enterprise.

The implication of the conception of politics in the first-person singular, and the problem it has created for current efforts at evolving an acceptable solution to the political impasse is to make me, *General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida*, the issue and hence the focus of all possible ways to the resolution of present impasse. At no time in the eight years of this Administration have the darts been so dangerously and viciously focused on my person than now. On previous occasions, it was quite easy to wade through the storm of personalized political brickbats by invoking the collective spirit and the resolve of the military government. But this is a different period, and the times portend great danger to our collective efforts at nation building.

In the weeks since the 12 June presidential election, my commitment to the cherished values of friendship has been confronted with the concern for the demands of statecraft. I have had to jettison the natural instinct of friendship for the higher need to serve the greater glory of our fatherland. These friends, in turn, acknowledge our friendship built over many years of give and take. I love my friends. But I also love my country. *It is the height of patriotism that whenever the love for one's country is in conflict with any other love, the love for the country takes precedence.*

The decision which the administration took in respect of the 12 June presidential election remains, in my judgement, the best for our country. The decision obviously hurt my friends and I, for this purpose and on this occasion, wanted to be counted on the side of the national and collective

interests. That my friends see my action as an act of betrayal is regrettable and unfortunate. Were they to have a large heart, perhaps, they would have been able to see through the broader, patriotic zeal which propelled the Administration under my leadership into taking the action we took. Let me confess that the many and varied attacks hurt me personally and expectedly, my family. A private hurt must, however, not be allowed to infiltrate and derail public decision making. My worry in the past few weeks has been that the attacks directed at my person and the innocent members of my family may deter other patriots who genuinely wish to offer themselves for service to the father land in the future to parry a while. My advice to such patriots is not to be deterred because all great men in history went through trying periods.

It is unfortunate that I have been portrayed as the issue, and obstacle to civil democratic rule by those who are supposed to know better. I know as a matter of fact that this perception of me is not correct. But that does not really matter now. What matters the most is the peace and progress of our dear country. Patriotism, honour and a sense of higher values demand that I do something personally about this uncharitable perception of my person and the Administration over which I preside. This is what I shall now proceed to do.

Stepping Aside

Distinguished Senators and Honourable Members, I have always regarded governance as a continuous process and development as infinite. Nobody can deny that this administration has defined clearly the directions for our political and economic development. We have taken more than the fabled single step towards a journey of a million miles. A lot remains to be done and there is need, as in all human affairs, for fresh hands to move us forward to the next sign posts in our collective march towards the political and economic development of our great country.

We have put in our best. We have had sleepless nights. There have been periods of joy, sadness and frustration. There have been periods of satisfaction and sense of fulfilment. There have been periods of dismay and disappointments. In all these, our countrymen have shown understanding; they have kept the faith; they have made sacrifices. I cannot expect more. I salute you all. I believe the time has come for my administration to give way, as our contribution to a number of developments which we feel would take Nigeria beyond the present impasse to the next stage in our march towards lasting civilian democratic governance at all levels. Following lengthy deliberations with the National Defence and Security Council, I have insisted as my own personal sacrifice and in order to cre-

ate a new atmosphere for the solution of the present impasse, to step aside as the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

My stewardship will be placed before you

As I take my exit, the records of our stewardship will always be available for posterity because for the first time we have run the most documented administration in the history of administrations in this country. I shall also be prepared and ready at the end of the Interim National Government to pass on my experience in defence and security and any information relevant to our nation and the state to the elected President if he so demands.

Consequently, during the period of the interim administration, I, **General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida**, who, by the *Grace of Allah*, served this country in the capacity of President, Commander-in-Chief, 1985 to 1993 will place before this august body - the National Assembly the - full account of my stewardship. I hope others will follow suit so that we can put to rest the usual craze for petition writing by our compatriots or swearing to affidavits by publicity seeking Nigerians who are bent on maligning those who served this country in one capacity or the other.

A Call for Co-operation and Sacrifice

The acceptance of an interim government arrangement is a testament to our resolve to move our country forward in spite of temporary political difficulties. The consensus on the Interim National Government calls for continuous co-operation within the political leadership as well as between the leadership and the mass of our people.

The success of the Interim National Government calls for the co-operation of all Nigerians. As senior legislators, you have a primary responsibility to present thoughtfully to our people, the imperative of the political contrivance which the political leadership of our country has resolved to give a chance in furtherance of our collective destiny. Our people need to be reassured that the co-operation required of them is for the collective good. The political leadership must reciprocate the sacrifice that our people make. Too often our people fail to see any reciprocation by those who make passionate appeals for their co-operation. The sacrifice required in our present situation is at once total and collective. The political class must rise to the challenge of our current political predicament.

On the needlessness of Diversionary Agitation'

Any governmental arrangement requires a modicum of peace and stability to achieve results. The Interim National Government can least afford the diversionary and perpetual agitation of the minority elements in society which are reluctant to be part of the solution to the problems of Nigeria. We have in the past few weeks witnessed the highly provocative, divisive and potentially destabilizing designs of the so-called 'custodians' of democracy, good governance and human rights associations or groups. The architects of these agitations are not known to, and are clearly estranged from, our legitimate political system. Rather they push for their private, parochial and self-serving agendas on our urban streets and pages of newspapers taking with them the innocent and the gullible. They threaten fire and brimstone. They tread the path of confrontation and sometimes treason. They are a small group, but they make the most noise like the proverbial empty barrel. Their patriotism is suspect especially in their reliance on external power base for support.

Distinguished Senators and Honourable Members, you have a responsibility to deflate the unpatriotic exuberance of the misguided few among us. Their actions constitute an affront on your credentials as representatives of our people. They do not have any stake in the unfolding political process hence they are able to afford the luxury of political eccentricity. They are disrespectful of your mandate, and they seize on the attraction of populist rhetoric to unleash vicious attack on the political leadership. They are after you, not me; they do not want to operate through the two-party system. Please invite them to join your parties and work their way up from the grass-roots as you did.

Expectations from Foreign Friends

What we now have is democratic enough for you to market. I urge you to mount a campaign of enlightenment for your colleagues in the Inter-Parliamentary Union or in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. You should individually and collectively constitute yourselves into spokespersons and defend the gains of democratization in Nigeria. You owe this as a minimum responsibility to your exalted position as true representatives of our people. The elements of a constitutional government which have been put in place at the local and state levels in the country must be emphasized. Our new Interim National Government, even though untested, is constitutional and it spells out the boundaries of rulers and it guarantees individual liberty.

Our country's Senior Legislators should, as a matter of primary responsibility, enlighten our brothers and sisters in the diaspora especially Members of the Black Caucus (MBC) of the United States Congress that what we are doing here will neither deflate the image of the black man nor is it different from the democratization process that took many years to fashion out in their present home. You should inform them and assure them that Nigeria will continue to be a source of inspiration to black people all over the world. Let me appeal to my brothers and sisters in diaspora that democracy and democratization in Nigeria are on course. Let me assure them that at nothing has been done to stultify democratization in our country.

We are still full of the spirit which makes us freedom fighters and a member of the frontline states. Our credentials in the fight for the restoration of human dignity to black people anywhere, still remain unassailable. The rush to judgement and even condemnation by members of the Black Caucus (MBC) about events in Nigeria, is borne out of a breakdown in communication. There is no military dictator here in Nigeria as the military in Nigeria has always frowned at dictatorial practice.

The administration under my leadership would like to parade its credentials in the field of peacekeeping and peace maintenance in the different parts of the world - Africa, Asia, Europe and the West Indies. We are doing this because of our commitment to the need to promote peace and peaceful coexistence of nation-states and cultural and ethnic groups. If we can do this elsewhere why should we abandon the commitment to, and advancement of peace at home? We can still further parade our credentials in the area of promoting and participating in the resolution of crisis through democratic elections in Namibia, Angola, Rwanda and Cambodia. If we can do this in far away places, why should we not champion this at home? I am quite sure that we know what democracy means and what democratic elections entail. We should, therefore, totally reject the viewpoint of some countries whose credentials historically and globally are not as glorious as Nigeria's credentials. We should, in addition, totally reject any attempt by any country no matter how powerful to tarnish our image in the world. Our intellectuals should understand our current crisis in the wider perspective of the world's quest for democracy instead of running to testify before the Parliament of other sovereign nations, running down their country and downgrading their own nation's Assembly.

Do they love more the so-called mature democracies who talk down on African leaders, whether military or civilian; who want democracy on their terms and at their pace, and whether or not such demands is in keeping with our own temperament and culture? I am sure that our intellectuals are not unmindful of the fact that no two democratic cultures or demo-

cratic forms are ever the same. In any case, these mature democracies are not one and the same in terms of their democratic experiences. There are threads tying them together as democratic countries but that is where the similarity ends. They certainly do not have the same democratic form or democratic substance. Our orientation to politics has just got to be different.

We expect our foreign friends whose current leaders are enjoying the coastal breezes of established democratic institutions and processes, to look back into their own history and therefore to exercise more patience with Nigeria. The present negotiated choice of an Interim National Government by the Nigerian political elites is once again an imaginative and peaceful solution to the inevitable dilemmas of democratization. Permit me to submit that patience, not pressure, encouragement, not rage, should be the posture of our foreign friends in whose footsteps we are courageously following in our journey to the Nigerian variant of the universal ideal of democracy. Those who care for our great country must demonstrate their love through positive contribution and constructive criticisms. As we move ahead in our tortuous journey, I urge you to keep the faith alive. As I leave you, I plead with you most sincerely not to lose sight of the end-goal, the dream land of a democratic, stable and self-sufficient Nigeria.

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The Valedictory address to the Nation*

On 27 August 1985, I addressed for the first time as President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria. In that position, I became effectively the Head of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria. Today, my exit from office reminds me of my entry into the political arena eight years ago.

When some of us in the military took over the reins of power from our predecessors, we were inspired by patriotic zeal, the belief in the greatness of our country given her enormous and abundant natural resources; her hard-working, enterprising and highly motivated populace; and the past sacrifices of those who had laboured so hard that we may remain united. We had dreams of a great country based on economic reconstruction, social justice and self-reliance. These three cardinal principles formed the philosophical cornerstones of our administration; they formed our articles of faith which we did our best to transform into reality.

We were determined to create a country which, through exemplary leadership, unwavering commitment to the cause of Pan Africanism and the promotion of the interests of African peoples both at home and in the diaspora, would truly play the role of the "Giant of Africa" which history and destiny had thrust upon us. We were committed to programmes and policies that would enhance and advance the quality of life of all Nigerians, especially the teeming millions in the rural areas as well as women whose potential contributions to the development of our country had not been fully tapped and developed.

* Address to the Nation on 26th August, 1993

Though aware of past failures and despite commendable efforts, we were determined to lead our country through a carefully crafted and cautiously implemented programme of political reform that would finally end the shame of our previous inability to establish durable, stable and a home-grown democratic culture. Above all, we were determined to bequeath to future generations a united country where Nigerians would no longer be judged by their ethnic origins or religious preferences, but would enjoy the privileges as well as the responsibilities of citizenship wherever they live. To some, these were mere dreams, but we were persuaded that with the understanding, forbearance, and co-operation of Nigerians we would turn our country around socio-culturally, politically and economically.

Right from the beginning, our administration was committed to the proposition that the problems of the polity, economy, and social structure in Nigeria were interrelated and had to be tackled simultaneously. Similarly, we reasoned that our programmes of reform must emphasize the close relationship between institutions, structures and the attitudes of our people. What we set out to do, therefore, was a fundamental restructuring of our country socially, politically and economically. Needless to say that such drastic approach to the transformation of society could never be fully implemented in the tenure of one administration nor without significant social and political costs. But we were undaunted because we wanted to make a start. We wanted to lay a solid foundation with the hope that the course of nationalism and structural transformation would have taken its own dynamics as an irreversible process upon which our successors would make improvement.

The tasks we set for ourselves were arduous and daunting but we were determined to pursue them with single-mindedness and conviction, characteristic of our military profession. Indeed, there is no great country without a set of past leaders who had had no lofty dreams about the future of their countries. For us, there was no alternative course of action, given our circumstances. We set out to create a democratic polity which provided for all our citizens full participation in the decision-making process that affected our lives and, above all, improvement in the well-being of our people.

The Economy

In the area of the economy and the attempts to embark on economic reconstruction, we introduced measures and put in place institutions that, by and large, have set us on the road to genuine economic self-reliance. No one can deny the tremendous rural developmental efforts and the rapid transformation of our rural communities through provision of basic

infrastructures like water, light, roads and primary health care, as well as manifest empowerment of our women in general, and the rural ones in particular.

Needless to say that the economic and structural reform of the magnitude we embarked upon was bound to inflict unintentional and unavoidable pain on some sections of our society. Government was conscious of this and took appropriate actions to cushion the impact on the more vulnerable sections of our society. We were aware of problems of implementation of some of our laudable programmes caused primarily by what we now know as the 'Nigerian factor'.

On balance, however, the revolution we started in the economy continues to positively manifest itself in various sectors. It is perhaps too early to take stock of our achievements in this respect in its totality. I am not unaware of the present deterioration in the quality of life of certain segments of our people, and the escalating costs of basic commodities even in our rural areas. These, I am convinced, are not unconnected with a hostile international economic environment as well as the actions of some unpatriotic and exploitative actors in our society. Nevertheless, we are convinced that we have left behind durable and realistic bases that should provide for forward movement in this area.

Often, people forget our past experience of long queues for essential commodities; inability of state governments to pay salaries for six months or more; gross misuse of import licences and over-invoicing; and the exploitation of the economy by a symbiotic class of middlemen whose offices existed only inside their brief cases, as they moved their so-called company headquarters from one hotel to the other.

Indeed, it is often not remembered that dependent and fluid national economies, like ours, are difficult to restructure and to turn around. It entails pains and sacrifices. We were aware of this, but we believed, as we still do, that the magnitude of the problem should not stop us from trying. Not to tackle an apparently gargantuan obstacle is cowardice; to tackle it and fail is a necessary experience for further attempts; to overcome it eventually is a glowing legacy for future generations. We saw major economic obstacles, and we attempted to tackle them. We cannot, in all modesty, claim total success since the process is still unfolding and the process may even take generations to bloom. But we started; we tried and we took off. It is now left to our successors to build on our foundations. Since this is not an account of the stewardship of my team, I leave the assessment to posterity.

Political Programme

You will recall that in my address to the nation on the political programme on 1 July, 1987, I informed the nation of the kind of political system we intended to bequeath to history. If I may remind you, I stated then that:

From our past experience, our political programme must be gradual, purposeful and effective. It must aim at laying the basic foundation of a new socio-political order. We must create a new set of values and a new set of political attitudes or political culture aimed at ushering in a new social order. For this administration, this is a challenge we shall face with the resolve and fortitude characteristic of our military profession. We are committed to laying such foundation for political stability as to render military intervention an unnecessary vehicle for alternating or changing government.

I wish to reiterate even today our solemn commitment to the above statement. Indeed, it is in fulfilment of this promise that we pursued the transition programme meticulously and with immense missionary zeal. As critical transformers of our society motivated by a messianic vision of our responsibilities, we may have given cause to our critics to confuse our commitment to seeing our programmes succeed and endure, with unwillingness to hand over the reigns of power. Even in the face of our recent difficulties, our faith in the democratic process has not been shaken.

The decision to hold fresh election in view of the annulment of the 12 June, 1993 election must be seen as part of our faith in the democratic process. It was never our intention to hang on to power *ad infinitum*. That would have rendered all our efforts to establish a democratic polity a waste of time. It would have made nonsense of our piecemeal, meticulous and interfaced transition programme. To hold on to power indefinitely would have contradicted our commitment "to laying such foundation for political stability as to render military intervention an unnecessary vehicle for alternating or changing government."

It is important to recall the course of the transition programme since it was inaugurated in July, 1987. Following the excellent work of a body of experts called *The Political Bureau* in 1986, government received the very detailed study together with recommendations of the Political Bureau in March, 1987. The report and recommendations of the Political Bureau were duly examined by another small panel whose report subsequently became the Government White Paper. Let me say that a major concern of this administration with regard to the programme of return to civil rule had been, not of merely returning power to civilians. In fact, as

we indicated on a number of occasions to the nation, our administration had also been concerned with creating a new platform for the emergence of a new political elite. The need for this action was underscored by the Political Bureau itself. Our concern had been for the country to return to a Third Republic with a leadership that could cope with the dynamics of our plural and complex society in a nation which is undergoing the process of rapid development.

The transition programme was designed as a gradual and phased democratic process beginning from the local government and terminating with the installation of a democratically-elected President at the federal centre. We wanted to create a grass-roots democratic process so as to weed out 'absentee landlord-politicians' who live in the cities and visit the villages only during electoral periods. Before I recall the major and solid achievements of the programme, it is important to indicate here some of the difficulties which necessitated certain detours in the course of its implementation.

We intervened decisively and severally in the political process of transition, but not without justification. We also reversed our decisions when confronted with superior arguments and justifications. Because we were objectively worried and concerned about the behaviour of some members of the political class during the First and Second Republics, the administration decided to place a ban on certain categories of politicians. While the ban placed on certain politicians was generally acclaimed by Nigerians, it should also be recalled that the administration was criticized and harassed by those affected; by sections of the media; and by so-called human rights activists who believe that historical progress can be recorded without any costs to society. These activists also peddled ignorance of the problems of human rights in advanced countries when such countries were at our stage of development.

The administration was vilified to no end because of the ban. It was in order to restore the rights of those who were previously banned that the administration lifted the ban at the end of 1991. Our efforts at generating new elites had to bow to apparently popular demands. The exclusion, through the ban, of certain politicians from active political participation and their subsequent re-entry into the political process, just as we had anticipated, created enormous difficulties for the transition programme. I wish to affirm again that both the ban and its subsequent retraction were carried out in the interest of democracy and of the nation. However, in the process new problems arose which demanded new solutions.

In addition, the administration had to undertake major structural reorganization of the federation through the creation of a total of eleven new states in 1987 and 1991; and 288 new local government areas be-

tween 1989 and 1991. This reorganization of the federal system was intended to give meaningful context to our policy of grass-roots democratic governance and economic participation among Nigerians. It is needless to say that the exercise, noble as it was, introduced enormous shocks into the transition process. Again, new political prescriptions became necessary to contain the impact of the shocks.

Lest we forget, let me mention the process of establishing the two political party system. The administration found enormous reasoning and judgement in the establishment of the two-party system as recommended by the Political Bureau. With the benefit of hindsight, we can today claim that, but for the two-party system which provided enormous leverage for the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious basis of our electorate, we might not have been able to contain some of the recent excesses in the political process. Similarly, the role of the two political parties in mediating our federal system as well as complex social structures have contributed immensely to the relative peace and stability of the country.

On the whole, some of these detours in the transition programme threw a lot of challenges to the administration and to the civil society. I believe that, contrary to some other viewpoints, the gains of the democratic process in the past eight years had enormously enriched the Nigerian political and democratic culture.

The achievement of this administration in installing democratically elected governments at the local and state levels is a measure of our determination to build democracy on a solid and viable basis. We have operated, in the past three years, elected local governments on the basis of the two political parties. We have also operated elected state governments successfully since 1992. Indeed, the election and existence of the National Assembly since July, 1992, is a testimony of the success of the transition programme.

The relationship between the three tiers of our federal system is one that Nigeria did not experience during the First and Second Republics. The local, state and federal governments have continued to work harmoniously together for the unity and progress of our country. In effect, the painful experience of the failure of two attempts to hold and/or conclude the presidential elections must be seen in the context of the total experiment which we inaugurated in 1987. On balance all democratic structures, except the Presidency, are in place and functioning well.

For those of our country men who are in a hurry to write an epitaph to democracy in Nigeria because of the difficulties encountered in the presidential election of 12 June, 1993, it may be useful for them to remember that democracy means much more than a mere successful holding of election, important as this exercise might be. Perhaps, even more

important, democracy involves the creation and establishment of appropriate institutions and culture to moderate and absorb the shocks of democratic growth and development especially in the formative and fragile phases.

Democracy also means the establishment of values of conflict resolution. Our ability to resolve past and present conflicts by ourselves demonstrated clearly that our skills in democratic maturity is on the ascendant. In this regard, I believe we have scored impressive successes. I have in mind here the existence of a judicial system insulated from executive pressures and influences; the Code of Conduct Bureau and Code of Conduct Tribunal to act as a watchdogs and ensure the highest standards of efficiency and integrity in the public services of the country; the National Population Commission which, successfully conducted the 1991 census exercise in our country; and the existence and operation of the National Revenue and Fiscal Mobilization Commission which has tried to evolve an adequate formula for the extremely contentious issue of the equitable allocation of federally derived revenue to the component units of our country. Furthermore, there are the National Council on Intergovernmental Relations which has tried to mediate in conflicts among component units of the country towards the creation of a more harmonious federation; and a National Electoral Commission which is a statutory body charged with the responsibility of conducting all elections as well as monitoring the political parties to ensure that they operate in such a manner as to strengthen the democratic foundation of our country. No impartial and objective observer, especially those familiar with the past history of this country, can fail to recognize the creation and effective functioning of these bodies as important gains of the democratic system which this administration established during the past six years of its tenure.

On June 12, 1993 and its Aftermath

It is now public knowledge that the June 12, 1993 presidential election was annulled by this Administration. I had reiterated that the administration took the painful decision in good faith and in the interest of stability and security of the nation as well as for the enhancement of democracy in Nigeria. The annulment might have created tension and a sense of frustration in some quarters, but it was most certainly not intended as a sabotage of the expectations of the electorate.

The events of the past weeks represent a significant leap forward in our collective search for solution to the country's problems generated by this inadvertent development. This administration had undertaken serious dialogues and consultations with broad segments of the political class in-

cluding the two political parties in order to resolve the consequential problem of the annulment episode.

And we have all together to dialogue so as to move the country forward by unknottting the thorny problems of our collective existence. We had shunned the divisive tendencies which reared their ugly heads in recent weeks. Nigerians everywhere, individually and severally, have chosen to remain one people under God. We are determined not to let temporary setbacks upset the building blocks of unity set by our past heroes.

Let me assure you all that the Interim National Government which will be formally instituted today with the swearing-in of its members by the Chief Justice of the Federation is a product of the Nigerian ingenuity at consensus-building and bipartisan appreciation of the problems and dilemma of democracy and development. No one should be under any illusion that the option of Interim National Government was an easy, straightforward and non-controversial choice among competing options for resolving the political crisis. The Interim National Government represents a delicate balance between contending forces of 'extremist persuasion'. Its adoption is a classic case of the moderation of extremism among Nigerians. I salute the courage, patriotism, dedication and commitment of all our compatriots who helped us to arrive at a political arrangement which Nigerians could live with, in the interim.

I plead, once again, with you all to give the Interim National Government a chance. I appeal for the co-operation of our people with the new men and women at the helm of our nation's affairs. I plead, in particular, with the political leadership, especially those who felt aggrieved by the annulment of the June 12 presidential election to give peace a chance.

I intimated, during my address to the joint session of the National Assembly on 17th August 1993, of the decision I took, after consultation with my Service Chiefs, to step aside as President, Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and co-operate with the interim administration. I have decided to stand by that decision. I appreciate the overtures and to some extent the concern of some very well meaning Nigerians to reverse that decision. I remain eternally grateful to all of them, and would like to assure them that I appreciate their concern and sentiments especially at this time of my career. I believe the time has come for me, and all my Service Chiefs including the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff and Inspector General of Police to give way to a new set of leadership to propel our march towards lasting civilian democratic governance at all levels of our country.

It is my belief that governance is a continuous process, and national development is infinite. I leave office after eight years of momentous period of our nation's history. No one would deny the fact of the clear direc-

tion which we gave to our country. But a lot remains to be done in our collective march towards the achievement of political and economic development. It is in this connection that I congratulate our men and women who patriotically agreed to serve in the Interim National Government and wish them every luck and success in their enviable assignment.

Need for Vision

When we took over the reins of state power in 1985, we did so because we had a vision. As you may be aware, it is vision that gives our leadership or indeed any leadership, the sustained power to transform identified problems into a working agenda so as to push the frontiers of progress forward. Thus, our leadership had a vision of a radically different Nigeria situated in, and proceeding from new economic and political foundations; in pursuit of which novel methods and processes became necessary.

Since the envisioned end result was clear, the methods and side-effects that were undesirable were very easily detected and removed. Thus in the economic sphere, processes that perpetuated over dependence and bureaucratic bottlenecks were jettisoned. Similarly, in the political sphere, because the envisioned goal was a political system built from bottom up, deriving its legitimacy from the vibrant will of the grass-roots, we also jettisoned actions and tendencies that obstructed the growth of genuine social forces.

It is in this connection that I must remark that in the last four years, we have witnessed the emergence of a new political class. Each democratic process that we have put in place has thrown up a wider set of civilian leaders who are more and more rooted in the philosophy of grass-roots empowerment. Today there is a new Nigerian political class clearly distinguishable from the *ancien regime*.

Attributes

Let me recognize and salute our officers and men of the armed forces who have held this country together and will continue to hold this country together. Let me recognize and appreciate their valour across the world. In the years to come, the armed forces will not only be the defender of our nation and its Constitution, but will be ready to respond to the demands of peace anywhere in the world. Our armed forces have sacrificed a great deal and I would like to salute in particular those heroic men and women, who during the life of this administration, paid the supreme sacrifice in the defence of their fatherland at home and abroad. In this regard I want to mention specially our gallant officers and men who have served and

continue to serve tours of duty in Liberia. I am gladdened by the fact that recent events have vindicated the correctness of our action in assisting proper developments in the West African Region.

This address will be incomplete if special tribute is not paid to distinguished scholars from all fields, who have rallied round my administration from its inception. They have brought their individual knowledge to fertilize public policy and I hope they will continue to serve this nation in any capacity which future administrations may so decide.

I wish also to recognize leaders of groups in the civil society - labour, women, business, professional and religious organizations, the media, and students - for their various contributions to the building of our virile country.

May I also pay tribute to men and women of the public service without whom, this, or indeed any administration would not succeed. I hope they will continue to render their services to future administrations in our march to national greatness, honour and development.

My gratitude is without bound to our most respected royal fathers who have served as sources of inspiration to me and my administration, and as volunteer 'fire fighters' in many communal and national crises. I hope they will continue to place their wise counsel at the disposal of successive administrations, for on this, communal peace order, and tranquility in this nation is assured.

I must put on record that our journey to the democratic Nigerian Third Republic has been pursued on the vessel of our two national political parties. It is a great pleasure to note the resilience of our two political parties not only meeting the challenges of internal democracy within their respective parties, but also in successfully throwing up able men and women at each turn on this democratic journey. Leadership is the business of facing problems and finding solutions.

I must say that I have been very much impressed by the sincerity of purpose, the sense of realism which engender compromise shown by the leadership of the two great parties. They have truly put the interest of our nation ahead of all other interests, and have toiled with us to find a viable solution to the most recent crisis of our nation. Their faith in the oneness of this country, and their wide reach into all communities of this country, have made them one of the great assets of this nation. I am confident that in the years ahead even greater accomplishments will be theirs for the credit and glory of our fatherland. Let me, in addition, call on the leaders of the two political parties to take up the challenge to attract into their fold, our distinguished citizens currently operating their insular politics outside the wide embrace of the political mainstream.

By way of homily, let me say that administrations and regimes come

and they go, but our great country Nigeria remains. For eight years, I have had the onerous responsibility of steering the ship of state of this great country through perilous waters of conflicts and vicious criticisms, and of propaganda and unbelief in our great mission. The challenges have been enormous sometimes daunting, but through them all, we have kept faith with the Nigerian people. We have considered no sacrifice too great, no injury too grievous and no personal comfort too important to subordinate to the needs of our great nation. We have not shied away from any controversy because we firmly believe that out of the debates, discussions and consensus arrived at such moments, we can better determine that path of greatness for our country. In all our actions, we have placed national unity, social integration, stability, economic self reliance and, above all, democratization of our nation over and above any personal conveniences.

In all these we have been inspired by the notion that what we do for our country is vastly more important than what we get from it. Our achievements may not measure up to our dreams but no one can fault our resolve and determination to achieve the goals we set for our nation. Through the twists and turns of fortune we now find ourselves on the threshold of a new era for our country. You can be rest assured that whether as your President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces or as a private citizen, I will consider no contribution too great for the progress and survival of Nigeria, as a united, strong and prosperous country.

May the Almighty Allah bless you all. MAY WE CONTINUE TO BE INSPIRED BY THE SACRIFICE OF OUR FATHERS TOWARDS BUILDING A NATION BLESSED WITH DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS AND INSTITUTIONS AND BASED ON THE DEMANDS OF OUR SOCIETY.

Appendix B: Selected Speeches of M.K.O. Abiola

Pages 69 – 72 culled from Olanrewaju, O. (1999)

Generalissimo: The Life and Legend of M.K.O. Abiola.

Ibadan: Pelcas Prints & Publishers.

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**A DELIBERATE INTENTION TO INSULT AND
RIDICULE THE ENTIRE NIGERIAN PEOPLE**

*[Being text of Bashorun Abiola's press statement on the Federal
Military Government's pronouncement of Wednesday June 23,
1993, on the transition programme.]*

"The Federal Military Government issued a short statement

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terminating, by fiat, the entire transition programme. The very manner in which the statement was made public indicated a deliberate intention to insult and ridicule the entire Nigerian people. The statement was undated, unsigned, unauthorised, and made on a plain sheet of paper. But for the fact that it was distributed to the Press by the Chief Press Secretary to the Vice-President, it could very well have been issued by the Association for Better Nigeria.

The effect of this statement was to render everything done in the last six years in promotion of the transition programme an absolute nullity. There have been disqualifications, postponements and cancellations before. But never before has there been such a cynical and contemptuous abrogation of solemn commitments and fixed programmes.

In the three previous abortions of the transition programme, the whipping boy was the political class, who were derided and reviled as corrupt and selfish. But this time around, this same political class conducted itself, in the campaign leading to the June 12 election, and on June 12 itself, with unprecedented dignity and restraint, to avoid offering the authorities any excuse that could once again be used to abort the transition process.

Most reasonable observers concluded that the election of June 12 was the freest and fairest in Nigerian history. The international community unanimously confirmed this verdict. But because the purported ineptitude of the political class could not be blamed, this time, we are now being told that it is the judiciary that must be held responsible for the termination of the transition programme.

Before making the personal decision to vie for the president, knowing fully well the misfortune of other distinguished Nigerians in the recent past, I consulted widely, and sought assurances that I would not be chasing shadows. These assurances were given, in some cases from the highest levels of government including the President himself. I was therefore convinced that the commitment to civilian rule, come August 27 this year, was firm, settled and irrevocable. I could not imagine that the purported transgressions of the judiciary could possibly be used as the excuse for cancelling the election of June 12.

I never went to court. Alhaji Tofa never did. The two political parties never did. The two political parties never initiated any litigation on any matter relating to the election. The only person who went to court was Arthur Nzeribe, in

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the guise of a legally banned organisation called ABN. Nzeribe, was not a candidate. He did not even vote. His association is not even registered. And yet the Abuja courts granted him injunctions at the unprecedented hour of 9.30 p.m. which, in retrospect, now seem contrived and deliberately intended to cause the greatest possible confusion. And NEC too was suspended and all its actions to date cancelled. But you do not take the extreme measure of killing a newborn child just because the midwife is a bad woman.

In spite of this development, politicians across the divide saw these times as nothing more than a trying period, whose cup with God's guidance, shall surely pass away.

... The judiciary was peripheral to the election process. Assuming that there was good faith on the part of the government, all matters relating to the election should have gone to the tribunals set up by law for such cases, and should only have been initiated by persons or bodies that had a genuine interest in the election.

Instead, we are being told that the judiciary behaves so badly that I, Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola should be penalised for its conduct. It is incredible. In view of all this, I find the conclusion unfortunate but inescapable that the Federal Military Government is guilty of bad faith, pure and simple. No one has accused me of any offence against any known electoral law or regulation. The people of this country went to the polls on Saturday, June 12, 1993 and without let or hindrance chose me as their president. The figures say so. The agencies of government, MAMSER, Centre for Democratic Studies and the Presidential Election Monitoring Group say so. The International Observer Group says so, NEC knows so and says so. In its affidavit to the Court of Appeal, NEC said the results were ready and known. I won. Yet the Federal Military Government, on the most unconvincing and disingenuous premise, that the judiciary caught itself in a web of ludicrous contradictions, has decided to cancel the election and its result. I say categorically, that this decision is unfair, unjust, and consequently unacceptable.

Prior to June 12, 1993, it was possible for the Federal Military Government to claim that those who spoke their minds and opposed its policies represented none but themselves, and were self-appointed critics who had no mandates from the people of this country. That situation changed

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on June 12. As I speak today, I am by the infinite grace of God, and the wishes of the people of this country, the President-elect of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I am the custodian of a sacred mandate, freely given, which I cannot surrender unless the people so demand, and it is by virtue of this mandate that I say that the decision of the Federal Military Government to cancel the election of June 12, 1993 is invidious, unpatriotic, and capable of causing undue and unnecessary confusion in the country.

I, therefore, call on all our people who have yearned and worked for a speedy return of our beloved country to civilian democracy to reject any act by anybody, which takes away their inalienable and fundamental human rights to decide who governs them.

No other institution or group can confer legitimacy on the Presidency except through a free and fair election throughout Nigeria, based on universal adult suffrage such as the one in which I was elected President. I also call on the International Community and all democratic forces to stand by the Nigerian people in our just struggle for democracy freedom and justice in our fatherland.

From now on, the struggle in Nigeria is between the people and a small clique in the military determined to cling to power at all costs. We are fully convinced that a majority of the Armed Forces are law abiding and wish for Nigeria to become a democratic nation. It is inconceivable that a few people in government should claim to know so much better about politics and government than the 14 million Nigerians who actually went to the polls on June 12. It is a gratuitous insult to suppose that any government, no matter how impressed it is by its own knowledge and wisdom, should, against the people's will, continue to make laws and regulations whose only permanent characteristic is inconsistency. The people of Nigeria have spoken. They have loudly and firmly proclaimed their preference for democracy. They have chosen me as their President for the next four years. They have determined that August 27, 1993 shall be the terminal date of military dictatorship in Nigeria. On that date, the people of Nigeria, through their democratic decision of June 12, 1993 expect me to assume the reins of government. I fully intend to keep that date with history."

The Inviolability Of 12 June

By M.K.O. Abiola

SINCE the 12 June election, some events have taken place within our history that are necessary to put the facts straight for posterity.

The election of 12 June, in its significance, is not an event of personal nature but a major historical development to our Nigerian nation, to our growing democracy and to all Nigerians as individuals.

It has become important to make this statement in view of numerous threats to my personal security about which the government has kept public silence and has been potentially implicated. I am constrained to take measures to preserve my security in order to be in a vantage position to advance the cause of democracy in Nigeria and the 12 June mandate.

From the beginning, it is important for me to state that the historical moment of 12 June is not an accident nor was it a sudden occurrence on the political plane. It was part and parcel of the terms the transition programme conceived and designed by the Babangida military administration.

As part of that elaborate process and after the unfortunate disqualification of the presidential aspirants in September 1992, a process called option A4 was introduced. This process entailed a candidate satisfying various membership and electoral requirements at Ward, Local Government, State and National Levels. I was adjudged by the National Electoral Commission to have satisfied all these requirements and was issued a certificate of clearance.

After the National Convention of SDP in which I emerged the winner on 27 March, the NEC expressed satisfaction with that convention and commended the caretaker committee for a job well done. Despite this, the NEC required me and my running mate to go through a screening exercise which was also duly completed. Through this period, nothing was mooted or alluded to the effect that anything was found wrong or wanting in the nomination process I went through in my final screening. My running mate was equally cleared in the same vein.

The historical moment of 12 June is not an accident nor was it a sudden occurrence on the political plane.

As a law abiding citizen, I complied with all campaign requirements before addressing rallies throughout the country. In fact, there is no communication from the National Electoral Commission (NEC) or my party, the SDP, suggesting any non-compliance with campaign requirements or any other regulation.

Indeed, on the eve of the election, I received messages of commendation for a campaign well done from senior members of government who also appealed that I should accept the verdict whoever was successful.

On 12 June itself, the election day, it became historical in a number of ways. Although the National Electoral Commission (NEC) appeared not to be fully prepared for the election, Electoral Officers received the maximum co-operation of the electorate and with the lack of weather disruption in any part of the country, the election was adjudged the fairest and freest in the electoral history of Nigeria by International Observers and the voters themselves. The process of collation of results were peacefully collated in polling booths, wards, local government areas and state collation centres. They were duly authenticated and signed by electoral officials and party agents at these various levels. Copies were made available to SDP agents at all these levels.

Indeed, by the time the results were ready for collation and announcement by Chief Electoral officer in Abuja, all leaders of the parties at State and National levels were in possession of the results and had known the winner. It is therefore, inaccurate or even incorrect to keep calling for the release of the results as if they had not been known. What has simply happened is that some people in Abuja were not pleased with the pattern of results that emerged after confirming the authenticity of the results in 14 states and Abuja.

These results were displayed on NEC score board. Even as this was being done, the results were already completed and authenticated. What was left was the recording on NEC score board. The sequence of events since then is now well

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known history.

On 26 June, President General Ibrahim Babangida formally announced the cancellation of these results on the basis of spurious excuses such as that:

- there was low turnout of voters in some parts of the country resulting from uncertainty as to whether the election would hold or not;
- the winning candidate could not be guaranteed to continue with the outgoing administration's policies;
- the commitment of the winner to the nation's unity is suspect;
- the business of the winner is in conflict with national interest; and
- the electoral process was corruptly influenced with money at all levels.

A further excuse was later provided suggesting that the military would not have the winner as their commander-in-chief. A cursory look at these excuses would suggest that they are mere allegations which require the verdict of an election tribunal or a competent court of jurisdiction to adjudicate. These excuses were plain after thoughts. For if they were genuine, they should have provided sufficient grounds for disqualification before the election.

It has since become clear that neither the domestic population nor the international community has been convinced by these allegations as they stand rejected and condemned.

Since the cancellation, the government has embarked on several schemes designed to suggest that the 12 June election never took place or if it did, the results were not conclusive. Plans of election and interim or national government are designed to eclipse the reality of 12 June.

In view of the forgoing, I wish to appeal to the Nigerian people and state as follows:

- the election of 12 June was the most successful and significant political achievement of Nigeria people since independence;
- the determination of the electorate in giving such a mandate can only be equated with the determination of the early nationalists leaders to rid this country of colonial rule. Such a great effort and achievement by the

the decision of government not to recognise the 12 June verdict represents a greater threat to unity, peace and stability of the country and to democracy

- Nigerians should not be wasted;
- as the direct beneficiary of the mandate I stand firm and resolute in upholding that mandate. I shall never compromise or betray the trust reposed in me by the Nigerian people;
- it is disheartening to hear the discordant messages from the SDP. As a Social Democratic Party, it is significant the decisions and actions of its leaders be guided by a properly constituted democratic majority;
- so far, this does not appear to have been the case with respect to 12 June; furthermore, the gains recorded by SDP through my efforts to unify the plenty and to bring the progressives to electoral victory for the first time in Nigeria should be defended, rather than abrogated by the party leaders;
- the small clique which has been acting without authority on behalf of the party should avoid the risk of losing the support by listening more to the grassroots than to the selfish motivations of some party leaders;
- the decision of government not to recognise the 12 June verdict represents a greater threat to unity, peace and stability of the country and to democracy. For instance, to refuse to recognise the verdict of 12 June is to create a floodgate for interest groups and political forces to reject results which do not favour them. There is also the issue of precedence that a decree invoked to cancel an election can be relied upon by a future President to cancel other elections in which he is defeated. If we take these two consequences together, it becomes very clear that there may be no opportunity in the history of accepting election verdicts.

I wish to appeal to SDP to provide the necessary political leadership which the Nigerian people have conferred upon it. And to the people, I call on them to reject all schemes contrived to supplant 12 June.

I have no doubt whatsoever that the resolute commitment to the democratic tradition is the only antidote to dictatorship, whether military or not.

Salute To The People

By M. K. O. Abiola

WHEN I left the shores of Nigeria on 3 August I explained in a statement that it had become imperative for me to reach out to the International Community so as to further "advance the course of democracy in Nigeria". It was a step that I was evidently constrained to take in the arduous process of giving effect to the popular mandate given our ticket on the platform of the Social Democratic Party.

I want to express my gratitude to God for my safe return and for finding all of you well and supportive. I thank Nigerians for their steadfastness and commitment to the defence of democracy, justice and the mandate of 12 June despite all the odds against them.

The mission abroad was to sensitize international opinion on the nature of our struggle for democracy. I was well received by all the countries I visited and I am very pleased at the outcome of the trip.

But 12 June remains a reality and refuses to vanish. The truth of the matter is that 12 June, as a struggle, is not a problem for Abiola and Kingibe alone, but a problem for all Nigerians. They all voted so massively and decisively on 12 June for change, democracy, development, progress, unity, human rights, peace, social justice, etc. These are principles for which Nigerians should continue to struggle in their entirety.

I am going to struggle with you for the materialization of the mandate of 12 June for the benefit of our nation and its people.

During my absence, I received several messages and suggestions on the need to make peace and to ensure the continued unity and stability of Nigeria. Several well-meaning Nigerians have appealed to me to contribute towards unity, peace and stability of our nation.

Now that I am back, it is my intention to work with the people and for the people in order to realize the objective of peace and unity within the context of 12 June. It is a statement of political fact that all problems can be resolved through dialogue. Indeed, even wars are finally resolved around the conference table.

Therefore, I am ready and willing to talk to anyone and encourage any discussions with any group of people as long as such discussions will take place on the basis of justice, fair-play and the people's will as expressed on 12 June.

I am also aware of efforts to diminish the stature of the struggle for democracy, and to portray

the components and orientation of our struggle as a sectional affair. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I am pleased to acknowledge the principled positions taken by the SDP governors, the SDP National Consultative Forum, The National Assembly, North-East Forum, Middle-Belt Forum, Eastern Forum, Southern Forum, the various states in the North-West, Western Forum and other patriotic professional groups and individuals from all over the Federation in defence of 12 June.

I am also happy to acknowledge the strong support of the Pro-Democracy Groups, Campaign for Democracy, Nigeria Labour Congress, Mass Media, Women Organisations, Professional Groups, Student Organisations and Peasant Organisations and other groups which rose in unison in the defence of the people's mandate expressed on 12 June.

I congratulate all Nigerians in their various groups and communities for resisting all efforts to divide and manipulate them. This fact has been amply demonstrated by statements of various leaders and groups and by the various communiqués issued at various fora.

It is important to state that the central character to the problem, that is General Babangida (rtd) is out of the scene. His involuntary removal from power is as a result of the unambiguous resolve by the overwhelming majority of Nigerians that they insist on 12 June and pressures of the Western democracies. The patriotic resolve of the overwhelming majority of officers and men of the Armed Forces is also acknowledged. I wish to reiterate my implicit confidence in members of our Armed Forces in performing their constitutional role. I am always proud of them. It is therefore my wish to cultivate a basis to move forward rather than exacerbate the tension in the nation.

We must take advantage of this new beginning to positively resolve our problems in a peaceful and just manner. I have therefore come back not to cause or encourage any moves towards antagonism and polarization of the nation but to encourage and participate in a new spirit of a nation building on the basis of mandate of 12 June.

I thank you all for your support and may God guide all of you safely as you return home. I also thank you for this overwhelming reception which will remain an indelible testimony to the resolve of the Nigerian people's unshakable resolve and commitments to the course of democracy, the rule of law, justice and the indivisibility of our fatherland.

But 12 June remains a reality and refuses to vanish. The truth of the matter is that 12 June, as a struggle, is not a problem for Abiola and Kingibe alone, but a problem for all Nigerians.

"Our Struggle Is Just"

-- Abiola

SINCE the purported annulment of the presidential election of June 12, two questions have been crying out insistently for answers. The first is: where does sovereignty reside in Nigeria?

The second is this: Is ours to be a government based on the caprice of one man or even several men, or is to be a government based on civilized laws?

The 1989 constitution which the best legal minds in our country say is now the fundamental law of Nigeria, and indeed the entire corpus of modern political and juristic thought, provides a clear and unambiguous answer to the first question. Sovereignty belongs to the people, from whom the government derives its power and authority.

On June 12, the good people of Nigeria exercised that sovereignty with a clarity of purpose and a resonance that our country has never before witnessed. However, judging its own interests superior to the collective wisdom of the sovereign people of Nigeria, an arrogant and self-serving cabal declared the result of that exercise annulled, and with it the hopes and aspirations and dreams so eloquently expressed in it.

The sad consequences of that act have been with us ever since. The country is paralysed. Everything is at a standstill. Tension pervades the entire Nigerian landscape. Our people cannot plan, for they do not know what the

future holds. They cannot order their lives. They cannot dream great dreams or entertain great hopes. Far from easing their pain, the government that was foisted upon them in place of the one they elected continues to deepen it.

The law suit on which judgment has just been given was instituted in an effort to answer the second question I posed earlier, namely: Is ours to be a government based on the caprice of one man or several men, or is it to be a government based on civilized laws?

The High Court has stated clearly and eloquently that our country is a government based on civilized laws, not on the caprice of rulers. This is a significant victory for the people of Nigeria. And it takes us one step closer to the establishment of government based on the consent of the people; any other form of government is a pretence, a sham, and a travesty.

For too often in our national experience, we have fought battles and won victories, only to fight them all over again. In the interest of our people and the future of democracy, we must endeavour to wage the battle for the constitutional soul of this country to a decisive conclusion, so that it will never be necessary to wage it again. If the process seems slow. I say to you all: Patience and calm.

We have come a long way, together. Our struggle is just. We cannot fail. The harder and longer the struggle, the sweeter the fruits of victory.

Meanwhile, I appeal to all Nigerians to be calm, especially with regard to the provocative 600 increase in fuel price announced without any prior consultations and or public debate, in the most insensitive manner and with flagrant disregard for the escalating inflation which has made life almost impossible for the mass of the Nigerian people.

Specifically, I will fulfil my campaign promise by ascertaining the cost of production of fuel before any price increase which will be done in stages to cushion crushing impact of inflation on the people. Coupled with this will be the adjustment of allowances and wages as appropriate, to enable ordinary family to cope. This hopefully, will relieve the hardship of the most hard-pressed segments of Nigerian people, who over the last few years could hardly make ends meet.

I assure all Nigerians that that government they voted for will, by the grace of God, soon assume office to bind the wounds of our toiling masses and enthrone probity and democracy, and involve all Nigerian people in all the critical issues that affect their day-to-day lives.

Finally, I promise all Nigerians that in whatever step that may be taken to give effect of the mandate of June 12, the unity of Nigerian and the overall well-being of all our people will be the most paramount consideration. And the path of peace and national reconciliation will be pursued regardless of the sacrifice that may have to be made.

God bless you all.

** Statement by Bashoran M. K. O. Abiola on the historic judgment on the illegality of the Interim National Government at (ING).*



Epetedo Declaration

People of Nigeria,

Exactly one year ago, you turned out in your millions to vote for me, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, as the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. But politicians in uniform, who call themselves soldiers, but are more devious than any civilian would want to be, deprived you of your God-given right to be ruled by the president you had yourselves elected. These soldier-politicians introduced into our body politic, a concept hitherto unknown to our political lexigraphy; something strangely called the "annulment" of an election perceived by all to have been the fairest, cleanest and most peaceful ever held in our nation.

Since that abominable act of naked political armed robbery occurred, I have been constantly urged by people of goodwill, both in Nigeria and abroad, to put the matter back into the people's hands and get them to actualise the mandate they gave me at the polls. But mindful of the need to ensure that peace continues to reign in our fragile federation, I have so far tried to pursue sweet reason and negotiation. My hope has always been to arise whatever remnants of patriotism are left in the hearts of these thieves of your mandate, and to persuade them that they should not allow their personal desire to rule, to usher our beloved country into an era of political instability and economic ruin. All I have sought to do, in seeking dialogue with them, has been to try and get them to realise that only real democracy can move our nation forward towards progress, and earn her the respect she deserves from the international community.

However, although this peaceful approach has exposed me to severe censure by some who have mistaken it for weakness on my part, those with whom I have sought to dialogue have remained like stones, neither stirred to show loyalty to the collective decision of the people of their own country, nor to observe Allah's injunction that they should exhibit justice and fair-play in all their dealings with their fellow men. Appeals to their honour as officers and gentlemen of the gallant Nigerian armed forces, have fallen on deaf ears. Instead, they have resorted to the tactics of divide and rule, bribery and political perfidy, disinformation and vile propaganda. They arrest everyone who disagrees with them. Even the 71-year-old hero of our nation, Chief Anthony Enahoro, was not spared. How much longer can we tolerate all this?

People of Nigeria, you are all witnesses that I have tried to climb the highest mountain, cross the deepest river and walk the longest mile, in order to get these men to obey the will of our people. There is no humiliation I have not endured, no snare that has not been put into my path, no "set-up" that has not been designed for me, in my endeavour to use the path of peace to enforce the mandate that you bestowed on me one year ago. It has been a long night. But the dawn is here. Today, people of Nigeria, I join you all in saying "Enough is Enough!"

We have endured 24 years of military rule in our 34 years of

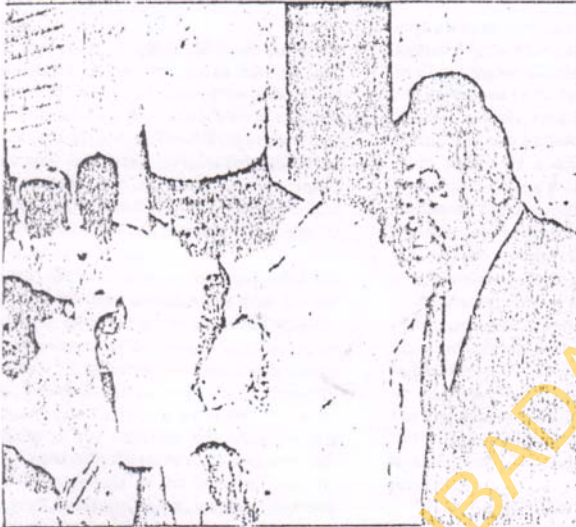
independence. Military rule has led to our nation fighting a civil war with itself. Military rule has destabilised our nation today as never before in its history. Military rule has impoverished our people and introduced a dreadful trade in drugs which has made our country's name an anathema in many parts of the world. Even soccer fans going to watch the Green Eagles display in America are being made to suffer there needlessly because Nigeria's name is linked with credit card fraud and "419."

Politically, military rule has torn to shreds the prestige due to our country because of its size and population. The permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council that should be rightfully ours, is all but lost. For who will vote for Nigeria to get the seat if Nigeria's military rulers do not respect the votes of their own people? Enough of military rule.

We are sickened to see people who have shown little or no personal achievement, either in building up private businesses, or making a success of any tangible thing, being placed in charge of the management of our nation's economy, by rulers who are not accountable to anyone. Enough of square pegs in round holes. We are tired of the military's repetitive tendency to experiment with our economy. Today, they say "No controls." Tomorrow, they say: "Full controls." The day after, they say: "Fine tuning." The next day, they say: "Devaluation." A few days later they say: "Revalue the same naira upwards again." Ah! All we can see are the consequences of this permanent game of military "about-turns": high inflation; a huge budget deficit; and an enormous foreign debt repayment burden; dying industries; high unemployment and a demoralised populace. Our youth, in particular, can see no hope on the horizon, and many can only dream of escaping from our shores to join the Brain Drain. Is this the Nigeria we want?

We are plagued also by periodic balance of payments crises, which have led to a perennial shortage of essential drugs, that has turned our hospitals and clinics into mortuaries. A scarcity of books and equipment has rendered our schools into desolate deserts of ignorance. Our factories are crying for machinery, spare parts and raw materials. But each day that passes, instead of these economic diseases being cured, they are rather strengthened as an irrational allocation of foreign exchange based on favouritism and corruption becomes the order of the day. Enough, oh enough of economic mismanagement!

People of Nigeria, during the election campaign last year, I presented you with a programme entitled: "Hope '93." This programme was aimed precisely at solving these economic (problems) that have demoralised us all. I toured every part of Nigeria to present this programme to you, the electorate. I was



Abiola - Making the declaration

questioned on it at public rallies and press conferences and I had the privilege of incorporating into it much of the feedback that I obtained from the people... Because you knew I would not only listen to you, but deliver superb results from the programme, you voted for me in your millions and gave me an overwhelming majority over my opponent. To be precise, you gave me 58.4 per cent of the popular vote and a majority in 20 out of 30 states plus the federal capital, Abuja. Not only that, you also enabled me to fulfil the constitutional requirement that the winner should obtain 1/3 of the votes in 2/3 of the states. I am sure that, when you cast an eye on the moribund state of Nigeria today, you ask yourselves, "What have we done to deserve this, when we have a president-elect who can lead a government that can change things for the better?"

Our patience has come to an end, as of now. From this moment, a new Government of National Unity is in power throughout the length and breadth of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, led by me, Basorun M.K.O. Abiola, as president and commander-in-chief. The National Assembly is hereby reconvened. All the dismissed governors of the states are reinstated. The state assemblies are reconstituted, as are all local government councils. I urge them to adopt a bi-partisan approach to all the issues that come before them.

At the national level, a bi-partisan approach will be our guiding principle.

I call upon the usurper, General Sani Abacha, to announce his resignation forthwith, together with the rest of his illegal ruling council. We are prepared to enter into negotiations with them to work out the mechanics for a smooth transfer of power. I pledge that if they hand over quietly, they will be retired with all their entitlements, and their positions will be accorded all the respect due to them. For our objective is neither retribution nor witch-hunting, but an enforcement of the will of the Nigerian people, as expressed in free elections conducted by the duly constituted authority of the time.

I hereby invoke the mandate bestowed upon me by my victory in the said election, to call on all members of the armed forces and the police, the civil and public services throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to obey only the Government of National Unity that is headed by me, your only elected president. My government of National Unity is the only legitimate, constituted authority in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as of now.

People of Nigeria, these are challenging times in the history of our continent, Africa, and we in Nigeria must not allow ourselves to be left behind. Our struggle is the same as that waged by the people of South Africa, which has been successfully concluded with the inauguration of Mr. Nelson Mandela as the first African president of that country. Nelson Mandela fought to replace MINORITY rule with MAJORITY rule. We in Nigeria are also fighting to replace MINORITY rule, for we are ruled by only a tiny section of our armed forces. Like the South Africans, we want MAJORITY rule today; that is rule only by those chosen by all the people of Nigeria as a whole in free and fair elections. The only difference between South Africa and Nigeria is that those who imposed minority rule on the majority were white, while the majority were black. But minority rule, whether it is by black or white, remains minority rule, and must be booted out.

I call on you, heroic people of Nigeria, to emulate the actions of your brothers and sisters in South Africa and stand up as one person to throw away the yoke of minority rule for ever. The antics of every minority that oppresses the majority are always the same. They will try to intimidate you with threats of police action. But do not let us fear arrest. In South Africa, so many people were arrested, during the campaign against the Pass Laws, for instance, that the jails could not hold all of them. Today, apartheid is gone for ever. So, let it be with Nigeria. Let us say good-bye for ever to minority rule by the military. They talk of treason. But haven't they heard of the Iwona treason trial in South Africa? Did those treason trials halt the march of history?

People of Nigeria, our time is now. You are the repository of power in the land. No-one can give you power. It is yours. Take it! From this day, show to the world that anyone who takes the people of Nigeria for fools is deceiving himself and will have the people to answer to.

God bless you all.

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Long live the Government of National Unity.

Full text of the proclamation speech by M.K.O. Abiola on Saturday, June 11, 1994, announcing the formation of a Government of National Unity in Lagos.

'I'm Your Duly Elected President'

— M.K.O. Abiola

My Fellow Nigerians,
On June 11, 1994, at your request, I claimed the sacred and popular mandate which you gave me as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces at the presidential election of June 12, 1993. I invoked the mandate bestowed upon me by my victory in the said election, to call on all members of the armed forces, and the police, the civil and public services throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to obey only the government of national unity that is headed by me, your duly elected President. My government of national unity from that date remains the only legitimately constituted authority in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Since the above address, General Abacha has intensified his efforts at the old jamboree of one-way consultations with the top echelons of our people in a futile effort to hang on to power forgetting that after the Nigerian people have spoken in a free and fair presidential election, piecemeal approach to national consultation becomes irrelevant. I have deliberately withdrawn for a few days in order to devote myself along with members of the transition committee to the process of concrete planning of the structure and model of the government that would satisfy and meet the grave socio-economic and political challenges faced by Nigerians in the last few years as particularly occasioned by graft, mismanagement, incompetence and insensitivity of the military dictators of the last 10 years who have turned Nigeria and Nigerians into the spoils of their conquests. I have also taken the opportunity to move round and talk to Nigerians in all walks of life to get their own impression on the way forward.

We are all aware of the oft-repeated recognition by the leadership of our armed forces that their role is to protect the territorial integrity of the nation from the barracks. The time is long past when the armed forces leadership should rescue itself with honour by returning to those barracks they have vacated for 24 out of our 33 years of independence. My government will accept full responsibility for all actions, legal, contractual or otherwise, of the outgoing regime up to and including today's date. Persons who transact business with the illegal regime thereafter do so at their own risk.

In the light of the unwarranted economic and political crisis which the various military juntas have imposed on the Nigerian peoples, there is sufficient evidence to all concerned patriots that in the composition and allocation of functions under the government of national unity, we must operate a policy that brings on board the major political tendencies, platforms and interest groups. Consequently, after a thorough consultation with the transition committee and respected leaders of various interest groups in the country, we have decided that allocation of ministerial and ambassadorial positions, various commissions, boards and parastatals would be distributed equitably among the major zones of the country and interest groups in

such a way as to ensure that as from now, Nigerians will be equitably treated. Furthermore, access to political and economic opportunities shall, as a matter of national policy, be open to all Nigerians as of right. My government rejects the winner-take-all approach and will invite to serve notable, credible and committed patriots of both political parties and also include worthy non-partisan people.

In setting up a cabinet, all the zones in the country will be represented, labour will be represented, women will be represented, the human rights organisations will be represented, the professional organisations such as the Bar Association, the Medical Association, etc., will be represented. I will set up a student affairs commission in which students, elected by students, will be represented.

As indicated in my proclamation address, the only constitutional body charged with approval of nominees to cabinet positions is the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which has not been allowed by the military junta to resume as proclaimed by its president, Senator Ameh Ebuti. Our government will ensure that the Senate holds its meeting soon to consider the list of ministers that will be submitted for their approval. Pending the appointment of ministers, the directors-general will take charge of each ministry and extra-ministerial department.

Within 3 months, the government of national unity will ensure that Nigerians are back to work again, with factories operating at full capacity, with foreign investments flowing in and new factories springing up. Because Nigeria will no longer pursue dubious economic policies like a lone economic ranger in the world, we have clear assurance that prevailing crisis in our relationship with the international financial authorities will be resolved quickly. We will join the rest of the world in pursuing sound economic policies to resolve our problems.

Within 30 days, we shall resume the federal system of government which the armed forces have failed to operate for 24 out of the 33 years of our independence because of their central command and vertical hierarchical structures.

From now onwards, all Nigerians will be equal before the law. There will be equality of opportunity and freedom to pursue the course of happiness as every individual desires.

From now onwards, every Nigerian will be involved in decisions of government that affect him. Prices of essential commodities like fuel will be based on full discussion through committees of the National Assembly so that not only prices, but cost of production and consequences of price hikes whether on fuel, telephone or any other item would have been considered.

With immediate effect, education throughout Nigeria will be made available to all children free of fees, levies or any imposition to give equality of opportunity to all our children regardless of the circumstances of their parents. Education is an investment in the

June 12 Crisis

future. We owe that to our children. All arrears of salaries to teachers and all outstanding awards will be paid to all teachers within 60 days.

Very soon, health care delivery from primary to tertiary level will be seen as a right by all our people so that both urban and rural Nigerians will get equal treatment. All outstanding awards and salary arrears to all personnel in the medical departments will be paid within 60 days. Within 100 days, food at affordable prices will be available, if necessary by temporary importation. Urgent studies have been commissioned and preliminary arrangements are already being made in that direction. After proper consultation, our traditional institutions will flourish and be made to contribute meaningfully to government. There will be ample opportunities for our God-given culture to bloom, and to flourish not for the sake of nostalgia but to encourage tourism and increase our foreign exchange earnings.

From now onwards, all impediments to the growth and development of all Nigerians shall be a matter of the past so that in the next few years not even the sky shall be the limit to the ambition of any of our citizens. In the shortest possible time, our reputation as 419ers, drug pushers and as a citadel of corruption will be wiped out and a new image substituted of a people who fought gallantly for democracy,



press freedom, and independent, well-funded and incorruptible judiciary, respect for life and property, and a modern, powerful renaissance Africa.

As a matter of priority, my government will put an end to the current deprivations of the rank and file of the Nigerian Armed Forces and the Nigerian Police some of whose salaries have not been paid for up to three months. We shall improve their housing and welfare provision commensurate with the sacrifice they make for the safety and security of all Nigerians.

Our government will tackle the issue of corruption very strongly by ensuring enhanced degree of transparency in our governance. We shall publish monthly report and values of oil liftings, all government contracts shall be by public tender and all major contract awards will

be published with details of the report of the tenders' board and comparable prices of similar contracts awarded by other African or other nations. All enterprises involved in public expenditure must have public auditors, who must publish annual reports. It will be a criminal offence, punishable by a jail term, for any public officer to refuse to cooperate with a public auditor. All public officers involved in major contract awards must publish their net worth statement annually. Government will not give any protection whatsoever to any official to prevent the press from doing their duties of holding any official accountable for his stewardship. These measures are in addition to what already exists, all of which we pledge to enforce rigorously.

I will later address the nation on the issue of sovereign national conference, which proceedings will start within the 100 days of my inauguration.

Within 30 days, all democratic structures will return to office to perform their constitutional duties in accordance with their oath of office and allegiance based on the people's mandate. Military officers posted to political duties shall return to their formation for re-posting.

From now onwards, all ministers, governors, legislators, members of the Nigerian Armed Forces, security services, police as well as officers and men of the civil and public services will truly be servants and not masters of the people.

Our main objective is to ensure that, by the end of our first year in office, every Nigerian, everywhere in the global village will be able to say "yes, I am a Nigerian and I am proud of it."

I must pay special tribute to the international community for their concern to see democracy restored in Nigeria. We recognise that their countries which have remained the beacons of democracy do not recognise individuals or personalities. We, however, expect them to continue their support for the democratic forces in Nigeria and to accord prompt recognition to our government of national unity.

I extend our hands of fellowship to all Nigerians no matter their political preferences to identify with and participate in this government of national unity. The crucial lesson that Nigerians must have learnt from the event of the last nine years is that credible political leaders of whatever persuasions, must abandon the policy of winners-take-all and so provide unity and consensus on fundamental issues of public interest. The tiny clique of military adventurers who have consistently and illegally used the military institution to forcefully overthrow constituted authorities must never be allowed at another gamble in our nation.

Nigerians must rise up to protect democracy and our divine right to elect leaders to govern us and for specified period of time. We must adopt an immutable twin policy of non-recognition and non-fraternisation with any military dictators whose only authority is based on their misuse of guns and ammunitions bought by Nigerians for the defence of our territorial integrity.

We salute all Nigerians for their patience and courage in the face of this intimidation and provocation by the military clique who are desperate to remain in office. We remember, in particular, the gallant heroes and heroines of democracy who paid the supreme price in the struggle against military dictatorship. We are committed to ensuring that their sacrifice is not in vain.

We assure all Nigerians and our friends of our determination to ensure that the nightmare of military dictatorship is finally over.

God Bless Nigeria!

Text of an address read by Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola at a public rally in Lagos, June 22, 1994.

Appendix C: Selected Speeches of Sani Abacha

Pages 6 – 9 and 344 – 363 culled from Abacha, Sani (n.d)
Abacha Speaks. Abuja: Federal Ministry of Information &
Culture.

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A Child of Necessity

Excerpts of the maiden broadcast by General Sani Abacha, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces on Thursday, November 18, 1993:

SQUEL TO THE RESIGNATION OF THE FORMER Head of the Interim National Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Ernest Shonekan, and my subsequent appointment as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief, I have had extensive consultations within the Armed Forces hierarchy and other well-meaning Nigerians in a bid to find solutions to the various political, economic and social problems which have engulfed our beloved country and which have made life most difficult to the ordinary citizen of this nation.

Ernest Shonekan took over as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces at a most trying time in the history of the country. Politically, economically, and socially, there were lots of uncertainties. Things appeared bleak and the atmosphere was heavy with uncertainties. However, driven by a belief in himself, his countrymen, and love for his country, he accepted to face the challenges of our time, I will, therefore, like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to him for his selfless service to the nation. He showed great courage by taking on the daunting task of heading the Interim National Government, even a greater courage to know when to leave.

Many have expressed fears about the apparent return of the military. Many have talked about the concern of the international community. However, under the present circumstances the survival of our beloved country is far above any other consideration. Nigeria is the only country we have. We must therefore solve our problems ourselves. We must lay very solid foundation for the growth of true democracy. We should avoid any ad hoc or temporary solutions. The problems must be addressed firmly, objectively, decisively and with all sincerity of purpose.

Consequently, the following decisions come into immediate effect: (a) The Interim National Government is hereby dissolved. (b) The National and State Assemblies are also dissolved. (c) The State Executive Councils are dissolved. Brigade Commanders are to take over from the governors in their states until administrators are appointed. Where there are no Brigade Commanders, the Commissioners of Police in the state are to take over. (d) All local governments stand dissolved. The Directors of Personnel are to take over the administration of the local governments until administrators are appointed. (e) The National Electoral Commission is hereby dissolved. (f) All former Secretaries to federal ministries are to hand over to their Directors-General until ministers are appointed. (g) The two political parties are hereby dissolved. (h) All processions, political meetings and associations of any type in any part of the country are hereby banned. (i) Any consultative committee by whatever name called is hereby proscribed. (j) Decree 61 of 1993 is hereby abrogated.

A Provisional Ruling Council, PRC, is hereby established. It will comprise: (a) The Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of

the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Chairman. (b) The Chief of General Staff as Vice-Chairman. (c) The Honourable Minister of Defence. (d) The Chief of Defence Staff. (e) The Service Chiefs. (f) The Inspector-General of Police. (g) The Attorney General and Minister of Justice. (h) The Internal Affairs Minister. (i) The Foreign Affairs Minister. (j) The National Security Adviser.

Legislative powers will reside in the Council. States will be governed by civilian administrators to be appointed later.

Also a Federal Executive Council will be put in place.

Our security system will be enhanced to ensure that lives of citizens, property of individuals are protected and preserved. Drugs trafficking and other economic crimes such as 419 must be tackled and eliminated.

On the current strike throughout the nation following the increase in the price of fuel, I appeal to all the trade unions to return to work immediately. We cannot afford further dislocation and destruction of our economy.

On the closed media houses, government is hereby lifting the order of proscription with immediate effect. We, however, appeal to the media houses that in this spirit of national reconciliation, we should show more restraint and build a united and peaceful Nigeria.

The events of the past months, starting from the annulment of June 12 presidential election, culminating in the appointment of the former head of state, Ernest Shonekan, who unfortunately resigned yesterday, are well-known to you. The economic downturn has undoubtedly been aggravated by the on-going political crisis.

We require well thought-out and permanent solutions to these problems if we are to emerge stronger from them. Consequently, a Constitutional Conference with full constituent powers will be established soon to determine the future constitutional structure of Nigeria. The Constitutional Conference will also recommend the method of forming parties which will lead to the ultimate recognition of political parties formed by the people. While the Conference is on, the reorganisation and reform of the following major institutions will be carried out:

The military, The Police, The Customs, The Judiciary, NITEL, NNPC, NEPA, The Banking Industry and Higher Educational Institutions.

This regime will be firm, humane and decisive. We will not condone nor tolerate any act of indiscipline. Any attempt to test our will, will be decisively dealt with. For the International Community, we ask that you suspend judgment while we grapple with the onerous tasks of nation-building, reconciliation and repairs. This government is a child of necessity with a strong determination to restore peace and stability to our country and on these foundations, enthrone a lasting and true democracy. Give us the chance to solve our problems in our own ways.

SPEECH BY THE HEAD OF STATE,
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED
FORCES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
NIGERIA, GENERAL SANI ABACHA, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE SWEARING-IN OF
MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL ON 27TH NOVEMBER, 1993.

I rejoice with the distinguished appointees to the Federal Executive Council. It is quite an accomplishment to be considered for such position of honour from among a reservoir of qualified Nigerians.

The honour thus bestowed on you by the government should and must be reciprocated by dedication, commitment and selfless service to our country.

You are coming on board at a time of daunting socio-political difficulties. The times dictate that your involvement in the intricate business of governance should go far beyond routine requirements.

I am however, greatly encouraged by the assemblage of politicians of national stature, highly rated technocrats and other experts in the present Federal Executive Council. Your wealth of experience and track record of success will see us through the myriad of social-political difficulties confronting the nation.

The stark realities of our present situation require that we all, particularly leading political actors in the still-born Third Republic, should eschew narrow partisanship in the true spirit of national reconciliation.

The burden of nation building particularly in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like ours is over-bearing. It

is for this reason that you cannot allow yourselves to be swayed by base sentiments nor detract from the supreme responsibility of healing the national wounds.

Our prevailing socio-political circumstances impose a duty on all Nigerians to eschew political bitterness and irreconcilable dissensions. It is in this spirit that I appeal to you to regard "June 12" as a watershed in our nascent political history.

The lessons of "June 12" should equip us with the necessary experience, zeal and determination to forge ahead with the sacred task of laying the necessary foundation for an enduring democracy. It will be a great disaster if we repeat the same mistakes that found us in a political doldrum.

It is no accident that we have brought together in the Federal Executive Council, people of varying political persuasions and expertise. This is a conscious act of policy designed to build confidence among ourselves and to diffuse tension in the society.

Political alienation as a policy is a very dangerous thing to embark upon. It can only keep us away from the substance of our socio-political problems. Reconciliation and consensus are better antidotes to our current political ailments.

We must stop this drift immediately, and take appropriate measures to arrest the economic hardships our people are made to suffer as a result of our political malaise. There is a limit to human endurance.

The Honourable Ministers have to bear in mind that the development imperatives at this time of need are very impelling. For this reason, you have to develop appropriate policies and programme to accelerate the pace of development with emphasis

on the well-being of our people.

The problem of development planning in Nigeria has its roots in plan implementation. The results that are achieved at the end of our plan periods have usually been below set targets due to problems associated with mismanagement, fraud, lack of commitment and general ineptitude.

We must change the old ways of doing things which have done more harm than good to the system. There is an intrinsic relationship between plan formulation and implementation. Managers of the system must therefore, learn to make effective use of resources in the development process.

You will have to bear in mind that accountability is the cardinal principle of this Administration. This is why we have taken pains to appoint credible and highly experienced Nigerians into key positions in Government. Our people deserve the best and I believe that we have the resources to guarantee every Nigerian a reasonable standard of living if only the resources at our disposal are properly managed.

As you assume the mantle of leadership in your various ministries, you should bear in mind that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of our public utilities. These organisations have not justified the huge investments on them over the years. In this regard, the activities of the National Electric Power Plc (NEPA), the Nigeria International Telecommunication (NITEL), the Nigerian Railways and recently, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), have come under heavy criticisms from the consuming public.

Efforts to commercialise them have not yielded appreciable results. The supervising ministers must brace up to revitalise these organisations so that Nigerians can derive greater

benefits from their existence. Something must also be done immediately about the present scale of urban decay. A situation in which public highways are being turned into refuse dumps and refuse left uncollected by the appropriate authorities for weeks, has created environmental pollution which is injurious to health.

At this juncture, may I remind our public servants that the effective everyday link between the government and the governed, is its administrative machinery represented by the civil service organisations. Unfortunately, one of the greatest irritations that those dealing with public officials in Nigeria have to endure, is the indolent and nonchalant manner in which routine and simple tasks are tackled. The artificial hurdles erected by bureaucrats have hampered our development efforts. This Administration cannot and will not tolerate the continuance of this deplorable state of affairs.

We cannot afford to fail with the galaxy of tested and experienced public officers assembled as ministers. Given your proven track records in various fields of human endeavour, Nigerians would expect a high level of performance from you. What is even more satisfying is the bi-partisan composition of the Federal Executive Council. We just have to get things working again. This is a task that must be done in the interest of present and future generations of Nigerians.

Congratulations, welcome on board and goodluck in your assignments.

Democracy According To Abacha

In an address to opinion leaders, the head of the military junta insists that only his regime's constitutional agenda can take the nation to the promised land

As you are aware, many thought that the events of the past two weeks were going to impact so adversely in our peaceful progress towards a democratic transition. In many ways, they were right in that some attempts were indeed made to disrupt the process and bring the nation back to the precipice from which we pulled it on November 17 last year.

The vigilance and firm measures taken by the security and law enforcement agencies and the refusal of our citizenry to be made the cannon fodder for the fulfilment of an individual's personal ambition have combined to foil the plans of those who wished to disrupt our national peace and harmony. Of course, we do recognise that there is still a simmering outrage and indignation out there.

Some have not yet, and may still never be able to get over the unfortunate annulment of the June 12 elections. It is natural that the anniversary of that event would engender an outpouring of emotions. But we must move on; the nation must move on reinforced by the proper lessons of that bitter experience. The important point is that we must resolve never to have a repeat performance.

Of recent, it has become fashionable for all and sundry to go on a binge of bashing the military. Every problem of our beloved country, and every special ail has been explained away in terms of the military. Ironically, many who themselves were in the military and in governance in their own times, have found it now convenient to use the military as scapegoat for our national ills. I am not about to answer rich and every charge. But suffice it for me to say that those of us who are in governance today did not just wake up one morning and in a fit of lust for power, thrust ourselves on a reluctant nation.

The truth of the matter is that some of you were present today, and many who are now extending otherwise appeared to us to intervene did arrest the drift of those dark days. Even the



Abacha: A serious pose to restore democracy that rang hollow

representatives of some foreign governments made similar appeals to us to save the nation from imminent collapse and disintegration. We responded patriotically and in accordance with our professional calling.

We believe that we have achieved the first major objective of our intervention, that of maintaining the corporate existence of our country as one indivisible nation, and creating the atmosphere of peace and security in which our people can pursue their legitimate business without fear of what tomorrow may bring. For this, we owe no one any apology and we certainly intend no one to disrupt our people's peace and

security. Vigilance will be maintained and our citizens will be protected.

We are now concentrating on the second major objective of our intervention - the restoration of democracy in our beloved nation. Let no one confuse issues or mislead our foreign friends and well wishers by giving the impression of a nation in dichotomy as far as commitment to democracy is concerned. Civilians or military, politicians or other professionals, we are all as a people yearning for democracy. We are all yearning for the rule of law, a free press and fundamental human rights. The label "pro-democracy" is nobody's monopoly. This is the

mood of the nation, this is the wind-sweeping across Africa and the entire world. We cannot see, and we are not, indifferent or impervious to its impact.

However, every nation must strive to implant its own democratic culture and its own democratic institutions in the light of its experience and values. In our short thirty-three plus years as an independent nation, we have been exposed to a variety of experiences and we have faced and overcome a multitude of vicissitudes. Not the least is the experience of the unfortunate annulment of the June 12 presidential election and its aftermath.

The constitutional conference which will be inaugurated as scheduled on June 17 is central to our planned return to democratic governance. Perhaps, the appellation "constitutional" has misled many to think that the conference will merely draft yet another constitution. Far from it, it is our intention that the conference will debate the fundamental issues that will enable us to move forward in unity and harmony, with justice and equity.

We are determined to monitor and review the economic policies in place with a view to taking corrective measures as appropriate. The solution to the problems of the economy which are structural and deep-rooted does not lie in simple quick-fix prescriptions.

The objective conditions of the international environment such as prevailing oil prices, the indiscipline of the operators of our market, and the silence of our people in the face of sheer exploitation by some businessmen, all contribute to the plight of the common man. The bottom line is that we intend to make the welfare and prosperity of our people the focus of our economic policies.

You might well wonder why we considered it necessary to incite and discuss all these with you. The point is that in the light of the apparent challenge to our national resolve in the past two weeks and our reaction to it, the opinion has been expressed that we should dialogue with all segments of society. It is in this spirit that we had a very fruitful exchange with our traditional rulers yesterday. Today, we are continuing the dialogue with you because as opinion leaders in your own communities, we believe you can enrich the national discourse on the way forward. Indeed, we shall not stop here. Even with those who disagree with us and our views, we are prepared to engage in constructive dialogue based on a sincere desire to contribute rather than mindless determination to confront.

This is to complement rather than substitute for the constitutional conference which is the democratic forum for such a healthy exchange between Nigerians. ■

The Big-Stick Declaration

Any expectation that the Abacha junta could be willing to accommodate demands for actualisation of June 12 were dashed by his nationwide broadcast of Wednesday, August 17. Below is the full text of the speech:

Fellow Nigerians,
In the past few weeks, we have witnessed actions and pronouncements which have had the unfortunate effect of heightening political tension in our country. We have also recorded a period of flagrant disregard for law and order by some groups and individuals in some sections of our country. We are witnesses to the attendant economic hardships and growing sense of insecurity which have progressively assaulted our people, due to the misguided acts of a few individuals and groups. Government fully appreciates the painful sacrifices which the majority of our people have had to make during this trying period, in the overall interest of our beloved nation.

Recent developments in our country have clearly exposed the shameful tactics and insincerity of certain groups and individuals whose evil motives against our nation have been perpetrated under the guise of advocating for the de-annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election. In their elusive search for relevance, these self-anointed saviours have deliberately ignored the obvious and widely acknowledged facts about the June 12 election - namely, that the said Presidential elections were inconclusive and no results were declared; that the elections were aborted by a previous government which was replaced by another government before this administration came into being; and that June 12 was the culminating point of several anti-democratic injustices.

It is instructive to emphasise that this administration did not initiate the problems associated with the annulled election. Instead, it was in accord with the collective will of well-meaning Nigerians, that we assumed the task of seeking to solve the problems occasioned by the aftermath of that annulment. This effort was enthusiastically received and endorsed by all parties and the overwhelming majority of Nigerians across our country. The composition of our cabinet and our programme of action reflect the compromises and good faith received from all interested parties.

Our general understanding of the effect of the annulled election was that it was of national concern and so should be addressed nationally. The June 12 issue was considered by all, as the culmination of several dashed electoral hopes, which included the abrupt disqualification of 23 aspirants in mid-1992. Ironically, it was this particular injustice, after all, which enabled Chief Abiola and some others to make their bid for the Presidency. Therefore, it is important to state that the circumstance of the annulment ought not to attract the imputation of ethnicity or personalisation as may be presently canvassed. The crisis ought to be a national one in which no ethnic group should seek any undue prominence.

In spite of several distractions, the focus of the government remains a search for a lasting national solution. To this end, the Constitutional Conference is the high point of our programme of action. Its aim at bringing together representatives of all our people for a national dialogue on a wide spectrum of issues which have confronted us as a nation has been successful. The Conference is unique in its form and circumstance. The membership which cuts across all strata of our society has not been based on any political party or interest group. So far, the high quality of its membership has been the cast iron shield that has protected the Conference in the face of the constant battering by its detractors. We pray all will be well with this veritable historic institution.

It must be pointed out to those who immodestly seek to compare themselves

and our situation to the South African experience that our Constitutional Conference is comparable to the CODESA process. As you are all now aware, this government made no contribution to the Conference agenda and has not placed any limitation on their discussion. In fact, it is now public knowledge that the issue of June 12 presidential election has been freely discussed and canvassed at the Conference. Such is the spirit we should advance if we are genuinely committed to salvaging our nation from its present predicament.

If we must ensure the steady and upward growth of this nation, there is need for all of us to deliberately cultivate the desire for peace and stability. Our country is striving to develop a culture of democracy and this calls for an attitude of give and take. We are a nation of over 250 ethnic groups inhabiting the 30 states and the Federal Capital Territory of our country. The reality of our circumstance is the need for us to strengthen our inter-dependence on one another and improve our internal cohesion. In a multi-ethnic society such as ours, there is the overall need to protect all and sundry against internal or external oppression, deprivation or relegation. We should acknowledge justice as a sacred tool for ensuring the advancement of our people.

I must reiterate the desire of this administration to institute a tradition of insulating the judiciary from political control. We believe that the judiciary is the vital custodian of our individual liberties and so should be courageous, impartial

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and honest at all times. Government has listened with sympathy to all those requesting that the present charges against Chief M.K.O. Abiola should be terminated from court. This government has always expressed its commitment to dialogue as a means of resolving our internal differences. We have demonstrated this by our individual and collective efforts at holding consultations with all strata of our society.

You will recall that, in spite of these overtures and good gestures by government, Chief M.K.O. Abiola flagrantly perpetuated acts which breached the laws of the land but government in its magnanimity never gave him serious attention. His most recent actions of declaring himself the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

inciting the public to insurrection and attempting to topple the Federal Government by force with a view of installing himself as President, however led to his arrest by the law enforcement agents. This step taken by the law enforcement agents is a legitimate exercise in the performance of their duties. Government does not and should not interfere in the court process. We believe that whatever reliefs Chief Abiola desires from the law court would be appropriately handled by the court if such reliefs are properly sought.

I must stress the unflinching commitment of this administration to an early return to civil democratic rule. We came into office at a time of chaos and crisis. There is absolute need for political and social peace to enable us accomplish our task. During the past nine months, we have had to cope with unnecessary turmoil capable of derailing our programme for an orderly return to civil rule. We know there may be sceptics regarding the sincerity of our intentions. But in the past months we have endeavoured to assure the public and in fact the world at large of our sincerity and credibility.

In recent times, our country has been inundated by the sporadic rise of unregistered groups seeking to play the role of political associations. Such



TELL Photos

groups have wantonly and recklessly paraded themselves as advocates of democracy. They create the erroneous impression of commanding national spread whereas they are local, sectional, economically motivated and ethnic in their composition and orientation.

There is no Nigerian today who does not desire democracy. Even in the military there is a ground swell of opinion on the need to establish and uphold a culture of true democracy in our country. It is also evident that past military leaders have lent their voice of support for the installation of a viable democracy in our country. No true national patriot would disparage his fatherland with foreign connivance with the hope of instituting democracy on the debris of his country. Government would act firmly and decisively against pretentious and unregistered groups, who are being financed by foreign interests to do disservice to the peace and unity of our country and frustrate our quest for true democracy.

It is important to re-emphasise that the Constitutional Conference remains the only viable option if we are to avoid the path of chaos and anarchy. I urge all well-meaning Nigerians to continue to give the Conference the necessary support to carry through its assignment. Government is impressed with the seriousness so far demonstrated by the Conference. Our commitment to ensuring its success is now irreversible. In the circumstance, it should now be helpful for individuals and groups across the country to participate in a healthy consideration of the issues being canvassed.

Accordingly, government now considers it expedient to relax on the wholesale

This administration would not stand by and watch the wilful destruction of the economic lifeline of this country. Nations have been known to go to war upon the mere threat to their economic interests... Enough is now enough

ban on politics. Individuals or groups may henceforth canvass political ideas. This would give a welcome boost to the efforts of the Constitutional Conference and provide a veritable prelude to more successful and vigorous politics in the future. However, for now, no political parties can be formed until modalities for them, as may be recommended by the Constitutional Conference and approved by the Provisional Ruling Council, are announced. A reasonable period of renewed healthy political culture needs to be nurtured again in our country, leading to actual formation of political parties and elections into offices.

Meaningful progress cannot be achieved in our overall national endeavours if the projected economic and social goals of this administration are not allowed to be realised. The attempt to destroy the economic lifeline of our nation is a national tragedy. The recent activities of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas (NUPENG) workers and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) amount to economic sabotage which carries severe penalties under our laws. These organisations have embarked on a systematic destruction and strangulation of our economy. Strategic installations, including refineries, power stations and pipelines have been vandalised.

This administration would not stand by and watch the wilful destruction of the economic lifeline of this country. Nations have been known to go to war upon the mere threat to their economic interests. Government had remained silent not because it is weak to act. Our deliberate silence was to give the erring organisations time to do some re-thinking and retrace their steps. Unfortunately, it is obvious that this is not the case. Enough is now enough.

We do not intend to jeopardise our economic interests either in the short term nor in the long term. We are also mindful that we do not destabilise our sub-region economically and socially. As a nation, we are determined to continue to play our rightful role in advancing the world's economic order. Government therefore would henceforth deal decisively with any attempts by hired or paid agents who, under any guise, threaten our fundamental economic interests.

Labour organisations are essential and integral part of our national development structure. This administration has given respect and recognition to the labour movement, and encouraged the body to fulfil its legitimate responsibilities to workers. The role of labour movement in our social welfare and economic development is therefore crucial. It is for this reason that government considers it regrettable that certain union leaders have betrayed the unique trust accorded them both by their members and the nation. It is a betrayal of the confidence reposed in a leader of a Trade Union for him to fraudulently utilise the machinery of his union to advance his personal, political and economic interests.

It is evident that the leaderships of the NLC, NUPENG and PENGASSAN have vested political interests. The leadership of these unions are opportunistic as they have callously pronounced their motive for strike action as political. Government recognises that the Secretary General of NUPENG, was in the executive of a banned political party. Government also recognises the frustration of the NUPENG Secretary General in his failed bid to use his position to secure the employment of OMPADEC Chairmanship.

Only recently, the Secretary General, with the connivance of a section of the press, displayed an unwholesome disservice to the sensitivities of our people by irresponsibly concocting his arrest by law enforcement agents. This was unmindful of the undue tension which his action would create for the already stressed populace. It is rather worrisome, that the platform of such a non-political association as a labour union has been pronounced as the springboard for realising frustrated personal political ambitions. It is evident that the membership of NUPENG and PENGASSAN nationwide are not in support of these self-

seeking and mindless actions of their leaders.

It is therefore evident that the recent strike action embarked upon by a section of NUPENG and PENGASSAN is not only illegal but ill-intentioned. The short and long term desire is to sabotage our country's economy. It is selfish in motive, ruthless in execution and sadistic in expectations. It is deliberately aimed at hurting innocent citizens and designed to permanently impair the progress of our nation. We have come to the point when this situation can no longer be tolerated. It is in the overall national interest that these unpatriotic acts being perpetrated by the leadership of NUPENG and PENGASSAN will be dealt with decisively. Accordingly, the executive of both unions, the NUPENG and the PENGASSAN at both national and state levels are hereby dissolved. This action is with immediate effect. A sole administrator will be appointed immediately to oversee the affairs of both unions.

The Honourable Minister for Labour and Productivity would immediately take appropriate steps in this direction. I appeal to the workers of both defunct unions, who I believe are peace loving and desirous to continue their honest quota to the advancement and progress of our fatherland, to return to work immediately. Government guarantees full and adequate protection to all workers in the discharge of their legitimate duties. Any further acts of vandalism by individuals or groups to the nation's strategic installations would be firmly and promptly dealt with.

The recent activities of the Nigeria Labour Congress fall into the same category as that which had been demonstrated by NUPENG and PENGASSAN. The Nigeria Labour Congress has long derailed from its status as the umbrella union of Nigerian workers with the basic aim of advancing workers' welfare. The Nigeria Labour Congress under its present leadership did in fact declare its intention to actually participate in politics. This was clearly in disregard to the enabling law by which the Congress was established. It is to be noted that a leading member of the present executive of the NLC was shortlisted as a running mate of a Presidential candidate in the annulled June 12, 1993 election. With the benefit of hindsight, it is probably an error of judgment that the NLC did not go the same way as the proscribed political parties.

In spite of these shortcomings, this administration believes in the protection and facilitation of a general workers' forum which the Nigeria Labour Congress represents. However, recent events point to the fact that the leaders of the NLC no longer command respect of the overall membership of the affiliate unions. The divergent pronouncements, intransigence and defiance of the leadership of the NLC currently being displayed by her affiliate unions clearly indicate that the leadership of the NLC is weak and completely hamstringed. The leadership has lost control of the union and no longer commands respect. This is a trend which is dangerous for a vast and developing nation as ours.

Government is desirous to arrest this situation from further deteriorating and to pave the way for an effective leadership of the union. Consequently, government hereby dissolves with immediate effect the leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress. An Administrator will be appointed immediately to run the affairs of the union. The Honourable Minister for Labour and Productivity is also to take appropriate steps in this direction.

We have been receiving reports from several agencies that have been monitoring the performance of the economy and we realise that our high hopes for economic rejuvenation are yet to be realised. Government is desirous to alleviate the hardship currently being experienced by our people. This is particularly in the areas of transportation, food, health and shelter. I have therefore directed the appropriate ministries and agencies to look into relevant aspects of our regulations with a view to bringing desired relief to the economy. We are also instituting viable options that would assist the continued growth and unhindered operation of the private sector. I should reiterate that those involved in strikes and economic sabotage at this critical moment of our history are unmindful of the serious strain which their actions impose on the vast majority of our citizens. There is no better time than now for all of us to show love for ourselves and loyalty to our fatherland.

With regards to the Press, I call on our media to exercise restraint and demonstrate maturity in the discharge of their duties. The Nigerian Press is one of the freest in the world. But such freedom should be matched with adequate responsibility. There is a great deal of misinformation being freely passed to the public. It is worrisome that some sections of our press have by their actions threatened our national unity and security and have ridiculed our national pride as a people. The embarrassment of our citizens in the outside world is often predicated on false and damaging impressions which some sections of our press

have unpatriotically championed.

This administration remains committed to maintaining its track record of not muzzling the press or impairing its ability to perform its duties. Government would not shirk her responsibility to protect the rights of her citizens against the unsavoury acts of junk journalism. The Press should remain steadfast to its cardinal objectives of educating, informing and entertaining and not constitute itself into paid agents of incitement and confusion. Our quest for a peaceful transition to civil democratic rule must not be jeopardised by a reckless press.

It is pertinent to stress that this Administration does not represent any political party of whatever persuasion and of any period of our history. We know we have brought into the mainstream of our Administration eminent Nigerians and political leaders from the past political parties. This is with the hope that balance, experience and maturity which are so dearly needed at this period of our national history would be freely placed at our nation's disposal. At this crucial time, we need an efficient, cohesive and high calibre team in the affairs of the state. I congratulate all the members of our team who have made enormous sacrifices for our country at this time. In order to meet the challenges of the prevailing circumstances, and to execute efficiently the programmes we have set for ourselves, it is imperative that we continue to strengthen and rejuvenate our team. It is therefore now imperative for us to restructure and strengthen the machinery of government at this time.

It is noteworthy that a majority of foreign nations appreciate the problems of evolution which our country is passing through at this time and the need to offer us their co-operation and genuine goodwill. On behalf of the government and people of Nigeria, I wish to express profound appreciation to the international

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community, our foreign friends and partners for their continued understanding and support in our effort to chart a new course for our country. We are also aware of the interference of some foreign interests in our internal affairs and their bid to undermine our national sovereignty and interests. We still urge them to show greater understanding and appreciation of our socio-political transition problems. We will continue to solicit your co-operation in the months ahead as we execute the rather difficult tasks that we set for ourselves knowing fully well that the management of our country is in our own hands. I must thank our major partners in the oil industry, and others, who, under very strenuous and difficult circumstances, have stood resolutely by us. We urge you to continue in this spirit.

Finally, I salute all Nigerians for their endurance and understanding in the face of the hardships and deprivations which have attended the recent strike actions. I also commend the Nigerian Armed Forces, the Nigeria Police and other security forces for the mature and patriotic manner they have managed our crisis so far. They have ably demonstrated their commitment to the service of their fatherland. We must all put the survival of this country above all other considerations. We will not accept a situation where any Nigerian cannot feel secure in any part he chooses to live, in his country. This country belongs to all of us. No Nigerian must be made to become a migrant in his own country. Government would be unrelenting in ensuring that our country remains a safe haven for all our citizens for the pursuit of their legitimate goals and objectives. We implore all our citizens to join hands in our endeavour to make definite progress towards instituting a stable, progressive and enduring democracy in our country. We cannot afford to fail.

Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Thank you.

NIGERIA

ABACHA'S ANNIVERSARY BROADCAST

In his national broadcast to mark the 35th anniversary of Nigeria's independence the head of state, General Sani Abacha, announced a timetable for the return of democracy in October 1998. He also commuted the sentences passed on the recently convicted coup plotters and lifted the ban imposed on some newspapers. Below are excerpts from his address

THREE MONTHS AGO, I received the report as well as a draft constitution prepared by the [National Constitutional] Conference. On that occasion, I made a commitment that on October 1 1995, I will unfold the next stage of our political programme. Since then, we have embarked upon wide consultation designed to cover the variety of opinions representing the complexities and vastness of our fatherland. A subsequent review committee met and their work enriched some of the conclusions of the Constitutional Conference. Similarly, a constitutional analysis committee was established to examine the provisions of the draft constitution and highlight their implications for the future good governance of our country. The work of the analysis committee was followed by meetings of the Federal Executive Council and the Council of State. These consultations were climaxed by the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) in session.

Yet in order not to confine ourselves to institutionalised sources, we carefully studied the views we received from a wide range of other contacts. Having considered all these views and in the overall national interest, the PRC made some modifications in the 1995 draft constitution before its approval. I congratulate most warmly our fellow Nigerians for making this major breakthrough in our national history. We now have to consolidate all these gains and move our nation forward. Our new constitution in which bold attempts to redress the factors and forces that have impaired our political stability and national integration will certainly provide the necessary base.

THE ECONOMY

A strong political system is nurtured by a sound and stable economic transition. In spite of the enormous resources available to us and despite the potential for developing these resources, we continue to face the same socio-economic problems that have hindered the growth of our national development. Failed economic policies only partly explain our dilemma. As a people, we must admit that poor performance and the failures of implementation have accounted for our disturbing record of repeated false starts. If we are to build a strong political system, we must realise that this must be anchored in an equally strong

economic base.

The budget deficit of 1993, which rose as high as N90bn, was a disturbing source of inflation. I am pleased to report that as a



Abacha: head of state

result of our determination to reduce that scale of deficit budgeting and to eventually eliminate deficits altogether from our national budget, the size of the national deficit as of June 30 1995 has declined to N16bn. The further good news is that after the supplementary budget is approved, the 1995 deficit is expected to be further reduced to N13.08bn or 1.22 per cent of the GNP.

Our policy of fiscal discipline and the deregulation of the foreign exchange market have given birth to plentiful dividends. The naira exchange rate to the dollar has stabilised for almost a year now. Our banking sector had largely become associated with the frequency of distress as a result of the indiscipline, mismanagement, fraud and default by the supervising authorities. We have since embarked on the sanitisation of this sector of our national economy. A decree was promulgated and a tribunal set up to deal with those who hide behind corporate masks to perpetuate criminal acts and desecrate our banking institutions. Fellow Nigerians, I can assure you that this exercise will be continued and intensified.

Our economy's overdependence on revenue from petroleum products has been a major handicap. Accordingly we set about the task of diversifying the economy with the revival of agriculture and the exploitation of solid minerals. Within the period of

transition, therefore, government will maintain a policy of consolidation of the economic reforms which have had such remarkable success.

Within the period of transition, government will take appropriate steps to pay internal debts and contract liabilities. Efforts have been made to dismantle all impediments to the inflow of foreign investment into Nigeria. We repealed the Foreign Exchange Act of 1962 and the Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree. An Investment Promotion Decree has now been promulgated to create a conducive environment for investment. We cannot achieve a stable democratic polity in the midst of dishonesty and corruption. These vices have crippled our various institutions which otherwise would be viable assets to our economic recovery.

In this regard, we have in the last two years studied carefully the structure and functions of various public organisations and parastatals which are basic to the growth and development of our nation. A government white paper on the panel reports on the NNPC, Central Bank of Nigeria, Nigerian Customs Service, NITEL, Nigeria Airways, Nigerian Ports Authority, Nigerian Airports Authority, the judiciary, the police and civil service are being considered and will soon be made public. The federal ministries have already started to implement these recommendations which are consistent with our policies to improve the performance and operations of the public sector.

POWER SHARING

Some of our political controversies, which have almost become part of our national way of life, are transient in nature, but others have to be faced and tackled. The Council, in its deliberation, understood the origins of the sympathy for the principle of rotation, which we all recognise as a way of satisfying the fears of marginalisation. At the end of careful study of the issue, the PRC decided that, in the higher and long-term national interest, the proposal of rotational power sharing should be accepted. This option will apply to all levels of government. The PRC has also endorsed a modified presidential system in which six key executive and legislative offices will be zoned and rotated between six identifiable geographical groupings. In the implementation of this provision, the

country has been divided into six zones: North-East, North-West, Middle Belt; South-West, East Central and Southern Minority. The national political offices, which will be filled by candidates on a rotational basis, are: the president, vice-president, prime-minister, deputy prime-minister, Senate president and the speaker of the House of Representatives. This power sharing arrangement, which shall be entrenched in the constitution, shall be at federal level and applicable for an experimental period of 30 years.

With regard to the longstanding issue of revenue allocation, government has approved the recommendation that a fixed percentage of 13 per cent of all revenue, accruing to the Federal Account directly from natural resources, shall be set aside as derivation. This is to compensate communities which suffer severe ecological degradation as a result of the exploitation in their areas.

PLOTTERS' SENTENCES

The treasonable acts of those recently convicted of plotting to take power by force can only be explained by their desire to fulfil their urge for naked power. This trial, unlike others before it, proceeded carefully and thoroughly in order to ascertain all the circumstances of the incident.

We are quite capable of making the distinction between friends who are genuinely concerned for the peace and stability of our nation and others who have tried to intervene for their own self-interest. Nonetheless, Nigeria cherishes her cordial relations with the world beyond our borders. In consideration for the earnest plea of our friends and in the spirit of national reconciliation, which has been the centrepiece of this administration's policies, government has decided to commute the sentences on the coup plotters. This situation will be reviewed at the appropriate time.

THE ABIOLA ISSUE

Those who describe Chief Abiola as a political prisoner seek to trivialise the grave offence for which he is charged. Chief M.K.O. Abiola cannot be in any doubt, whatsoever, that the election, which he claims to have won, was an inconclusive exercise which has been declared illegal by a competent court of law. He must also be aware that the political parties, which contested the ill-fated election, had mutually agreed to the formation of an interim national government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. That patriotic decision was made by them not only to break the deadlock of the prevailing political stalemate, but also to remove the risk of an escalation towards the breakdown of law and order. When a deterioration later set in to weaken this arrangement, Chief M.K.O. Abiola not only publicly called upon the military to intervene, he actively participated in selecting the broad-based cabinet of the new administration. It is, therefore, the considered view of this administration

that the ongoing judicial process should continue its course.

CIVILIAN RULE

In order to properly address these issues and to establish the foundation of a durable democracy, we estimate that the time required will cover a period of no more than 36 months. A detailed and carefully considered programme of sequence of events that will lead to that deadline has been worked out. This sequence will begin with a stage-by-stage phased handing over at the local government level. It has been calculated that a completion date, at the

level of the presidency when the final tier of a democratically elected civil government shall be installed should be feasible for October 1 1998.

This administration has no interest in the destruction of any media organisation, but it is our duty to continue to protect the public interest. However, it is our desire at this time to give assurance to all Nigerians and our friends abroad that we mean well. Consequently, *The Punch* and *National Concord* are hereby de-proscribed. It is hoped that following this gesture, these media houses would now operate responsibly within the law and in the national interest. **W4**

'Nothing is insurmountable'

General Abacha delivered a bullish anniversary broadcast on October 1. The following are excerpts

WITH OUR POLITICAL transition programme very well on course, the prospect for stability, peace and unity will continue to be greater. The successful conduct of the local government elections earlier in the year, formation of political associations and the process of registration as political parties, administrative reforms undertaken in the civil service are all positive signs of bright prospects for our nation.

The concept of Vision 2010 is being adopted at this stage of our development to enable us to appreciate the importance of long-term planning in achieving national self-reliance, economic strength and political stability. It arose out of our historical experience of the post-independence era, where successive national plans and strategies for development were conceived of and executed on short-term and *ad hoc* bases.

Our nation has, in the last three decades, missed the opportunities to harness its resources properly, control areas of wastage and utilise such resources for development-orientated projects and programmes. We have also realised that in all that we did, the mobilisation of our population in the rural areas towards meaningful development has not been effectively achieved. This state of affairs has led to a continuous rural-urban drift, creating serious socio-econom-

ic problems for our people.

It is our hope, therefore, that a solid foundation for our progress and success should

be achieved within the framework of Vision 2010. The first step is to identify where we went wrong and then consolidate our gains as a nation. Happily, this is a time to do so, having achieved within the last two years a substantial level of macroeconomic stability, unity and peace. This is a period of stock-taking, a period to get the correct bearings for our nation, a period during which all hands should be on deck. We should prevent a reversal of our major gains while exploring new grounds that should



Gen Abacha: incumbent head of state

launch our nation successfully into the 21st century. The prospects for success are brighter now than ever before and we must be relentless in our efforts. The future generations of Nigerians would expect from us this enormous but noble responsibility. It cannot be delayed any further. Accordingly, I urge our countrymen and women to be part of this nation-building process.

To ensure the success of the Vision 2010 government has now decided to set up a high-powered committee headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan, former Head of State and industrialist of international repute, to focus in clear focus and channel the course of Vision 2010. The committee, which will be composed of representatives from all

tors of our economy and public life, will be charged with the responsibility for defining for our nation its correct bearing and realistic sense of direction. It will, specifically, examine those aspects of our economy which should be developed and strengthened. It will set goals and appropriate targets for our economic growth and social stability. Our vision should focus on such important indices as Gross Domestic Product, illiteracy level, employment prospects, inflation control, health services delivery, agriculture, industrialisation and development of science and technology.

Let me restate the fact that no nation can grow and develop without its own vision, its own original ideas, its will and determination to achieve true independence and sovereignty. We are not unaware of the social crisis that has adversely affected the growth and stability of our nation in the last three decades of the attainment of our political independence. The problems of unemployment, crime and poverty, which have affected our society for a time now, must be addressed on both short and long-term bases. Already, government has taken all the necessary steps to deal with these problems effectively. The various policy measures introduced in the last two years are meant to tackle such problems. The various projects being implemented under the Petroleum Trust Fund and the National Rolling Plan will have a long-term stabilisation effect on the social sector in particular and on the nation in general.

In the realisation of the problems that have brought about economic recession and instability in our country, this administration introduced some far-reaching measures to sanitise the system and instill some discipline in the operation of the economy and public service management. Already, the Failed Banks Decree, which has come into effect, has sent positive signals for recovery and sanitisation in that sector. The policy will be maintained and further extended to other sectors with similar problems. The Failed Parastatals Decree will come into effect before the end of this year.

As I have always stated, positive growth and development of our economy cannot be achieved without serious restructuring and sanitisation of the system that supports our socio-economic and political development.

As part of the ongoing transition programme, this administration has undertaken to examine the issue of state creation, local governments and boundary adjustments. Accordingly, I inaugurated the committee on Wednesday, December 13 1995, to study all demands for new states, local governments and boundary adjustments in all parts of our country. The committee's terms of reference charged them to consider each case on its own merit and make appropriate recommendations for the consideration and approval of the Provisional Ruling Council. In view of the enormity of the assignment, it took the committee a longer time than scheduled to submit the re-

port.

I am happy to state that government has now studied the report of the committee and decisions on their various recommendations have now been taken by the Provisional Ruling Council. The principle adopted for the creation of states and local governments was to ensure a fair spread and balancing within the geopolitical zones of the country, applying such criteria as population and landmarks among others. Accordingly, six new states are hereby approved, one each from the six geopolitical zones of the federation, as follows:

- Bayelsa State, with headquarters at Yenagoa, is created out of the present Rivers State. Bayelsa shall comprise eight local government areas

- Ebonyi State, with headquarters at Abakaliki, is created out of the present Abia and Enugu States. Ebonyi State shall comprise 13 local government areas

- Ekiti State, with headquarters at Ado-Ekiti, is created out of the present Ondo State. Ekiti State shall comprise 16 local government areas

- Gombe State, with headquarters at Gombe, is created out of the present Bauchi State and shall comprise 11 local government areas

- Nassarawa State, with headquarters at Lafia, is created out of the present Plateau State and shall comprise a total of 13 local government areas

- Zamfara State, with headquarters at Gusau, is created out of the present Sokoto State and shall comprise a total of 13 local government areas.

In considering the creation of new local government areas, the Provisional Ruling Council approved equitable distribution of the number of local governments based on a 30 per cent increase over the existing number of local governments in each of the states in the federation. A total addition of 182 local government areas are hereby approved. The details thereon will be released soon.

As we are very much aware, the exercise of state and local government creation entails considerable amounts of administrative work to ensure a smooth take-off. Government, therefore, expects that all those charged with the responsibility of ensuring the success of the exercise would do so with a great sense of responsibility and commitment.

As you are aware, the process of the formation of political associations and their registration as political parties commenced in accordance with our political programme of transition. To facilitate the success of this process, the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria [Neccon] issued the necessary guidelines to ensure that associations, applying to register as political parties, achieve the required national spread and the necessary structures that will make them viable organs of unity and cohesion. It is important to state that in a democratic process, the political party is the main vehicle for promoting unity and mobilisation of the

people. Political parties should be strong enough to mobilise support and sustain themselves against the intense competition for elective offices at the various levels of our political system. Political parties must have properly articulated statements of their mission and objectives within the framework of wider national goals and objectives.

It is for all these reasons that the commission issued such guidelines. Government concern in all these processes is for the evolution of strong and viable parties that form the structures necessary for achieving the democratisation of our polity. It is also the desire of this administration to see that the political parties that emerge are national in character and can work in unison and partnership in our nation-building process.

On the whole, government is pleased with the level of enthusiasm and interest demonstrated by the various associations in response to the lifting of the ban on political activities. At this point, I would like to reiterate my appeal to our politicians that if we are to succeed, there has to be a disciplined and orderly conduct of partisan politics. They should avoid the pitfalls of the past, learn from the bitter experiences we have passed through and build a strong and virile democratic culture. They should work in close cooperation with Neccon in the task that lies ahead.

I am happy to state now that the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria has, in accordance with its guidelines, made a comprehensive assessment of the status of all political associations in their verification exercise. The report of the commission has been very carefully studied by the Provisional Ruling Council in order to ensure that the rules governing the promotion of political parties have been strictly adhered to. From the deliberations of the commission's report, government is satisfied that the commission has treated each political association fairly and equally. The commission has now released the results of their findings and the list of political associations which have met with the minimum requirements for registration as political parties. As I stated earlier, political parties have enormous responsibility in our national development. Members and their leaders should adhere strictly to the rules of the game. They should avoid all past mistakes that had impeded our progress as a nation. They should be conversant with the provisions of our constitution and all the electoral laws governing orderly conduct of politics.

Let me affirm this administration's commitment towards the success of our democratisation effort. I appeal to you all to give the maximum support towards the government's efforts to establish the formation of an enduring democracy for the good governance of our nation ...

Experience has shown us that nothing is insurmountable in the course of our national development. We should be the architects of our policies in accordance with our national interests.

WA

NATIONAL BROADCAST BY THE HEAD OF
STATE, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, GENERAL SANI
ABACHA, GCON, ON THE OCCASION OF
NIGERIA'S 37TH INDEPENDENCE
ANNIVERSARY ON OCTOBER 1, 1997.

Fellow Nigerians,

It is with a genuine sense of accomplishment and with gratitude to God that I join you, my fellow countrymen and women, in marking the safe passage of another eventful year in the history of the independence.

On the occasion of the 37th Anniversary of that first day of October in 1960, when our beloved country shook off the bonds of colonial rule and we Nigerians took on the immense tasks of nation-building, our thoughts must inevitably turn in the past. Today, however, fellow Nigerian, although I enjoin you to let us draw strength and wisdom from the past, I call upon you to focus more purposefully upon the great and exciting challenges that lie before us.

All over the world, the peoples of the various nations are acutely aware of the prevailing psychological import as the 20th century rapidly draws towards a close and the imminent advent of a bright new 21st century opens a vision of unquantifiable opportunities for a new world order.

It is with this deep sense of history, duty and the heavy burdens of destiny that this Administration has pursued a programme of innovative stewardship, transparent leadership and a realisable transition schedule which will culminate in an elected civil government on October 1, next year. .

We are all well aware of the antecedents which created the special circumstances that ushered in this administration four years ago. Such were the political and economic conditions, as well as the widespread threats to the security of law abiding citizens. It was true that the very survival of our nation hovered on the precipice of collapse.

Today, thanks to your resilience, your perseverance and our united resolve not to lose our sense of purpose, we have put the worst behind us, so that now we can truly look forward to the future with justifiable optimism. I salute you, my dear countrymen and women without whose support and encouragement we could not have achieved these gains.

With the support of the overwhelming majority of the people of this great country, we have successfully dispelled those clouds of gloom and despair that hung over our national life at the inception of this administration. Working together with our patriotic and law abiding citizens, the well meaning leaders of our society indeed, with professionals from all fields of national endeavour, we have overcome the political crises which engulfed our nation and brought our beloved fatherland to the brink of anarchy and disintegration.

Permit to state, with modesty that the events of the past four years and the role which this administration has played in them will be remembered in the annals of this great nation as among the most momentous and constructive.

In my maiden address to the nation on November 17, 1993, I was emphatic that the survival of this nation as a united and indivisible entity takes precedence over all parochial considerations. We pledged our commitment to restoring peace and stability to our beleaguered country to convene a Constitutional Conference to discuss and resolve all issues of

concern to our country and to reform our inefficient social and economic institutions. You will agree with me that we have kept these promises.

Fellow Nigerians, The citizens of our country have over the years demonstrated their ability as a people to resolve their differences themselves and to live together in peace and harmony. It was in recognition of this and in keeping with our abiding faith in dialogue, conciliation and consensus building that at the inception of this administration we convened the National Constitutional Conference.

Despite the unfortunate distractions occasioned by the regrettable actions of some individuals who chose to place their personal ambitions above over-riding national interests, and notwithstanding the misplacement of our sovereign rights by certain sections of the international community, we have continued to pursue our objective of bequeathing to the nation a strong, vibrant and effective political and socio-economic framework. We have always considered these objectives fundamental prerequisite for our future national development.

I would like to express profound appreciation to all our citizens for the great support which enabled us to proceed successfully with these objectives. The National Constitutional Conference has met and done its work. The members worked very hard indeed in prosecuting their very important national assignment. An important outcome of their deliberations is the political transition programmes which is being steadfastly implemented and which will be by the grace of God terminate on the 1st October, 1998 with the entry into office of an elected civilian administration.

The submission in 1996 of the Draft Constitution, marked an important phase of our political programme. It was our hope

that the Constitutional Conference would help greatly in finding a lasting solution to the incessant problems of political instability that had plagued our nation over the years. We are glad that indeed the conference produced useful and innovative features that should with faithful application allay for instance existing fears of the domination of one section of the country by the other. It is important that we establish a sense of belonging among all the sections of our country so that all the citizens of Nigeria may once again be proud to be members of this nation.

We must bear in mind however, that the institutional safeguards we provide are not in themselves conclusive guarantees of peace and stability. Much will depend on the major actions and operators who elect to guide and guard our nation under the new Constitution.

Fellow Nigerians, the success of any experiment in political engineering ultimately depends on the watchfulness and commitment of the people. For our new political structures to work, we all must imbibe the spirit of give and take, fairplay, justice and respect for the rule of law.

It is noteworthy and happily satisfying that the overwhelming majority of our people and their leaders are participating enthusiastically in the implementation of the political transition programme. Thus, the spirit and letter of the first stages of the transition programmes have been successful fulfilled. The National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) which has since been established has indeed now settled down to its tasks. All restrictions on political activities have been lifted and the five registered parties are now firmly established and ready to participate in the remaining elections of the transition period.

Already, NECON has successfully completed four of its

major assignments under the transition programme. These include the registration of voters' and production of an authentic voters registry which took place in February this year, the delimitation and delineation of local government election wards, Federal and state constituencies as well as senatorial districts, the conduct of local government elections on political party basis and the revision and updating of the voters' register which has just been concluded.

Fellow Nigerians, in response to the yearnings of our people and in keeping with our commitment to make the benefits of government more accessible to the greatest numbers of our citizenry, I announced on October 1 last year, the creation of six new states and 183 new local government authorities. This was after a careful review of the report of the panel constituted to study and make recommendations on states and local governments creation as well as boundary adjustments. In keeping with this administration's policy to redress grievances and to fine-tune policy implementations, steps are now being taken to review specific issues that have raised genuine concerns.

It is important to reiterate that our policies in the social and political realms in the past four years have revolved around the process of establishing peace and stability in our country and the felt need to put our economy on a firm footing. We are convinced that in order to ensure a stable and lasting civil rule for our people a solid economic base is a major prerequisite.

Consequently, we have evolved and introduced measures to curb inflation, strengthen the value of the Naira, encourage savings and productivity, stimulate investment and create employment. We have also taken steps to address the problems of deficit financing and excessive money supply in the economy. In addition to these measures, we have tackled the necessary task of checking corruption and other traits which have impacted

negatively on our national life.

We devoted special attention and immense resources to checking the menace of drug trafficking, drug abuse, money laundering and business scams and their attendant evils on our society. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) was recognised, strengthened and properly equipped to operate more efficiently. As a result of its efforts and other measures taken by this Administration, drug dealers and their collaborators no longer find it easy to carry on their nefarious trade through our country. To completely stop the drug menace requires international co-operation. We therefore call the international community to co-operate with us through exchange of relevant information and other necessary assistance in the fight against drug trafficking. To further this objective, we have already entered into bilateral agreement with several countries to deal with this issue of global concern.

With regards to money laundering and business scams a special unit established within the Central Bank of Nigeria to work in conjunction with the NDLEA has continued to function effectively in tracking suspicious financial transactions. Its work has achieved remarkable results as borne out by the drastic reduction of this unwholesome practice in our society.

. Fellow Nigerians, it is evident that we have striven to entrench probity, accountability and transparency in our public sector and national economy, especially the financial sector. The civil service, the key agency for the formulation and implementation of our national policies and action plans has also been reformed and placed on a better footing to carry out its very crucial duties.

We introduced a policy of guided deregulation of the economy and government is moving towards disengaging from

economic activities that can be effectively undertaken by the private sector. This Administration's economic agenda has also involved determined action to move our economy away from its over-dependence on the export of a single product - crude oil.

The thrust of Government policy in the oil industry has been the diversification of our revenue base from crude oil exports by the implementation of several gas-based projects. In the past four years, significant progress has been made in the execution of the Liquefied Natural Gas Project, the Escravos Gas Project, the West African Gas Pipeline Project and the Petrochemical projects.

The restoration of order and security to the country together with Government's commitment to ensuring future political stability through its political transition programme has created a climate of confidence for the International Investment community in the oil sector. Consequently, our joint venture partners and indigenous oil companies have kept the tempo of investment in the petroleum sector at a high level, while Government has provided necessary incentives to raise the profile of crude oil production and build up existing reserves. As a result of these efforts, our crude oil reserves have risen from 20.8 billion barrels in 1994 to about 25 billion barrels today.

My dear countrymen, the Petroleum Trust Fund, which was established to manage the proceeds of the correct pricing of our petroleum products which we effected in 1994 is now fully operational and its beneficial impact is already being felt by our people. This will increase remarkably in the coming months. In keeping with our pledge to deploy funds accruing to the Fund for rebuilding our country's socio-economic infrastructure, the Petroleum Trust Fund has already committed funds in excess of N30 billion to road rehabilitation nationwide.

There is no doubt that with the continued prudent deployment of funds, the activities of the PTF will help significantly in reflecting our economy and achieving rapid improvements in important sectors of our national life such as education, healthcare delivery, water supply, transportation and other social services as well as security, law and order.

In spite of the adjustment in pricing, petroleum products in Nigeria remain the cheapest in the world. Consequently, the criminal act of smuggling petroleum products intended for domestic consumption across neighbouring international borders remains an attractive stock in trade among unpatriotic elements whose greed have contributed immensely to the periodic plaques of long queues at filling stations. This situation is compounded by widespread hoarding, diversion and adulteration. However, the products importation programme embarked upon by the Federal Government saved the situation. It is the desire of Government to continue to provide our people petroleum products at affordable prices. Those who engage in acts which threaten to frustrate this liberal policy are enemies of the people who thoroughly deserve our condemnation.

Government has therefore reviewed appropriate actions which will guarantee uninterrupted supplies to our people while the merchants of the nefarious illegal exports must henceforth expect to face severe penalties.

Government has also noted with concern, the incessant sabotage of oil production facilities, pipelines and flow lines carrying crude oil to export terminals. Apart from the inherent risk to lives and property, these activities of some unpatriotic Nigerians can lead to grave economic consequences. Government is therefore developing fresh strategies to cope with these acts of sabotage and decisive actions will be taken against those responsible. To promote peace in oil producing areas,

however, a new strategy is being worked out to coordinate community relation programmes to enhance grassroot benefits. The pooling of community relation programmes and a well-articulated and balanced implementation programme will soon be given effect to further meet the needs and aspirations of oil producing communities.

In the agricultural sector, this Administration has been facing up to the challenges of making the millions of Nigeria's small-scale farmers the primary beneficiaries of funds invested in the sector. For far too long, the subsidy on fertilizer meant to assist farmers, became a source of easy money for those who diverted fertilizer shipments, smuggled the commodity out of the country or sold at prices below the cost of production to textile factories and the makers of ammunition and explosives used for various social ceremonies.

In 1997 alone, this Administration prevented the Landing-over of more than N19 billion to persons engaged in such unwholesome and unpatriotic activities. Government is however, working out a comprehensive package of relief measures that will have a direct impact on the farmers and substantially increase their output levels and boost their earnings. These measures are in the final stage of formulation and will be announced before the end of the year.

It is uplifting that as we come into the final year in office of this Administration, the nation is experiencing relative macro-economic stability as a result of the policy measures and actions we have taken. Earnings from our non-oil sector have increase over the past four years, our foreign reserves have risen and we now have a favourable balance of payments, stricter fiscal discipline and a reduced rate inflation which has fallen to 17.5% in June this year from 72.8% in December, 1995.

Furthermore, the exchange rate of the Naira has stabilised over the past four years and our external debt stock fell to US\$28.060 billion in December, 1996 from over US\$32 billion a year earlier. Interest rates have stabilised creating a better investment climate.

Despite the success of our efforts to combat inflation, Government is not unmindful of the adverse effect it has had on the purchasing powers of the vast majority of salary and wage earners in the country, especially those in the public sector. Ways and means of effectively addressing the critical socio-economic problems of our people's dwindling purchasing power remains under active consideration by Government.

In my 1997 budget address, I announced that each state of the federation could establish its salary structure. It was hoped that this measure would encourage states that could afford to do so, to undertake an upward review of public sector remunerations. On its part, the Federal Government has almost concluded a review of the salaries and allowances payable to workers in its employment, including the armed forces and police. It is expected that the outcome of this exercise will be implemented soon.

On educational sector continues to be troubled by the severe strain and stress occasioned by many years of bad planning and short-sightedness. The problems of the sector took a turn for the worse with the down-turn in our economy we have relentlessly and vigorously fought to overcome. We have continued to do our utmost to ameliorate the inherited problems contained in our education system. With recent improvements in our national finances we shall soon be in a position to deploy even more resources to the rehabilitation of this crucial sector of our national growth and development.

Relative stability and sanity have been restored in our schools in the past one year through various decisive policy initiatives. For the first time in many years, schools began and concluded an academic session without disruptions occasioned by strikes, closures or students unrest. However, the seeming proliferation of the menace of secret cults in our institutions of learning has been a set-back amid an otherwise overall improvement in standard behaviour. Measures to stamp out the phenomenon of cult mayhem in the campuses have already come into force, but it is obvious that total eradication must include the active cooperation and vigilance of parents.

In our traditional society, a child's behaviour is judged to reflect his home environment and family pride. Responsibility for a child's behaviour outside the home has always therefore been as much that of the school authorities as that of the parent. We must return to these values.

Positive measures have been taken to improve the quality of learning in our schools. The 25-man Committee on the Review of Education established by this Administration to undertake a fresh study on the problems of the educational sector is expected to submit its final report soon. We expect that its findings and recommendations will greatly assist government in evolving further measures to revamp this vital sector of our national life.

Another source of hope for the educational sector is the Educational Tax Fund established through Decree No. 7 of 1993. About N7 billion has been realised thus far by the Fund and its disbursement will begin as soon as the board of trustees which will manage it has been put in place. As prescribed in the decree, all federal, state and local government educational institutions will benefit from the proceeds of the Education Tax which will be distributed as follows:-

Universities	-	25%
Polytechnic	-	12.5%
Colleges of Education	-	12.5%
Secondary Education	-	10%
Primary Education	-	40%

Fellow Nigerians, peace and stability are necessary preconditions for any form of development. This Administration therefore remains firmly committed to the maintenance of law and order and the protection of lives and property of all citizens and foreign residents in our country. There is an absolute need for vigilance especially at this stage of our socio-political transition programme. We cannot deviate nor should we permit ourselves to be diverted from the course we have chosen for ourselves.

We have to bear in mind at all times that the responsibility of maintaining law and order is not that of security agencies alone, but of all Nigerians. Those who plant bombs to kill and maim innocent citizens have declared war on their country. A people who have experienced the bitterness of civil war know that there is nothing to be gained in violence but mutual misery. Let me on your behalf warn those trying to introduce the alien culture of urban terrorism that the Nigerian people are not prepared to be dragged into dastardly acts that will destroy their friends and relatives in the name of politics.

I invite all loyal Nigerians to continue to engage in the political process, and I wish to use this occasion of our National Day to appeal to those who may consider themselves aggrieved and alienated to endeavour to find relevance within that process.

Confrontation and violence which place the self-righteous dissidents outside the political process are self-defeating and merely exclude the perpetrator from serious consideration as a builder.

Being fully conscious of its responsibilities, Government has moved swiftly to tackle the rising crime levels in some of our urban centres. Incidents of armed robbery, car-snatching, urban terrorism and assassinations pose a great challenge to our national security and law enforcement agencies with the support and facilities they require to perform their duties more efficiently.

I am glad that as I speak today, the massive anti-crime operation launched in Lagos, our largest city and the acknowledged economic centre of our country, as well as the crime waves in other towns across the land have started to yield positive results. Criminal elements are now finding it much more difficult to operate and law abiding citizens can now go about their affairs with a greater sense of security.

As we move with determination towards the democratisation of our polity, It is disappointing that Nigerian continue to be wrongly characterised by some irredeemable detractors as a country where there is an institutionalised and rampant denial of fundamental human rights.

This unfortunate state of affairs is due in great part to the campaign of misinformation and misrepresentation waged against us as a people by itinerant dissidents and their sensationalist and ill-informed collaborators in sections of the international community and foreign media

The truth is that having achieved the urgent and primary aim of our Administration with the restoration of order, peace

and stability to our country, we have progressively liberalised our nation's socio-political environment and inaugurated a National Human Rights Commission last year. The commission has been given the task to investigate all alleged cases of human rights violations in our country and to make appropriate recommendations to government for the prosecution of violators and the provision of remedial measures to victims.

The right of Habeas Corpus has been restored to persons demeaned under Decree 2 of 1984 as subsequently amended, and a panel has since been constituted to carry out a periodic review of the cases of all persons detained under this decree. Government has since ordered the immediate release of many detainees against whom no formal charge has been made.

Since its inception, this Administration has pursued a pragmatic and dynamic foreign policy. We have continued to play a responsible role in the international system and have generally operated in a manner to safeguard our national interests.

Despite attempts by some misguided persons and assisted by a hostile section of the international community to wage an ill motivated campaign against our country, we are satisfied that Nigeria's international stature has remained undiminished. We have continued to play our traditionally constructive roles within our sub-region, within Africa and indeed on the larger international arena.

In the past few years, we have responded to the dictates of the emerging world as it became necessary for Nigeria to look to other parts of the world to make new friends. This seems to be normal practice by all nations and our country should not be an exception. In this regard, we are satisfied with the remarkable level of response we have received. We have been

able to expand our circle of friends. This has enhanced in no small measure our international image. We will continue to build upon these achievements to facilitate the attainment of our foreign policy objectives. However, our arms and doors remain open to all those who wish to be friends and cooperate with us. We are conscious of the fact that true friendship can only be nurtured on the matrix of mutual understanding, trust and respect.

Nigeria is a peace loving country and we have always sought to maintain peaceful and cordial relations with all nations of the world. It is our policy to maintain a brotherly and harmonious relationship with all our neighbours and it has been our historic commitment to play a special role in our sub-region and in our continent, Africa.

Our sub-regional Organisation, ECOWAS has served as a strong rallying point for us and our neighbours have shown once again confidence in our commitment by honouring us with the leadership of that body now for two consecutive years. We have led the way in the establishment and successful operation of an African mechanism for conflict resolution in our continent. This is borne out of our recognition of the fact that peace and stability for our peoples are fundamental pre-requisites for economic and social development of our nations.

When I addressed the nation on this occasion last year, the conflict in Liberia was far from resolved. Today, however, it is gratifying for me to say that with determination and our strong collective resolve, we have finally achieved peace in that sister country on the basis of the Abuja Peace Agreement. I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate my brother Heads of State of ECOWAS for their steadfastness which made the realisation of our objective possible. I wish also to pay tribute to the gallantry of the men and women of ECOWAS some of

whom paid the supreme sacrifice to ensure that peace reigned once again in Liberia. In the same breath, we wish to express our appreciation to members of the international community and organisation for their support in the achievement of the ECOWAS Peace Plan for Nigeria.

Regrettably however, events in neighbouring Sierra Leone took a turn for the worse following the violent overthrow of the legitimate government on May 25, 1997. The sad events in Sierra Leone, no doubt, pose new challenges to the ability of the sub-region at conflict resolution. We already have experience which we will bring to bear in our search for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

In this regard, we call on the illegal regime in Freetown to resume serious negotiations and dialogue on the ECOWAS objectives of: (i) the early reinstatement of the legitimate Government of President Tejan Kabbah; (ii) the return of peace and security; and (iii) the resolution of the issue of refugees and displaced persons. We also call on the international community to give full support to ECOWAS effort to resolve the crisis and in particular, to workout with ECOWAS credible modalities for extending needed humanitarian relief to distressed Sierra Leonean, who are suffering as a result of the excesses of the illegal regime.

We must not forget that ECOWAS is essentially an economic grouping. It is therefore imperative that we fully integrate the economics of the sub-region to ensure our collective economies development. We cannot effectively begin to build a valuable African Economic Community until the sub-regional economic groupings which constitute its building blocks are fully operation. There is need therefore for member states of ECOWAS to work in concert to achieve its objectives.

Nigeria is strongly committed to multi-lateralism as an instrument of promoting international peace and cooperation. We will continue to ensure our full support to and active participation in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Non Aligned Movement (NAM) and the United Nations (UN). In order to remain relevant to the needs of all its members, it is important for these organisations to adapt to a changing international environments. It is in this context that we welcome the reforms of the UN proposed by its Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. We will actively take part in the consideration of these reforms which we hope, will establish a revamped United Nations of shared values and interests and promote a more enduring concept of the equality of member states.

The reforms will be incomplete without the reform of the Security Council, which has responsibility for the maintenance of world peace and security. The reform of the Council will entail its restructuring and expansion to reflect the increased membership of the United Nations and the need for the Organisation to reflect the interests of all its constituent regions. We support the decision taken at the 33rd Summit of the OAU in Harare last June which called for Africa to have two permanent seats with full veto powers in an enlarged and expanded Security Council.

With regard to the Commonwealth, Nigeria harbours no regrets for the enormous contribution we have made to that Organisation over the years. We will continue to seek the understanding of all the members of the Organisation of the situation in Nigeria. It is our hope that the Commonwealth leadership will embrace fairplay, genuine dialogue and negotiations in order to resolve the unfortunate impasse between the Association and Nigeria. On our part, Nigeria will always adopt a constructive posture in all these matters in spite of the unfair targeting of our country by a few influential members of

performance in the Atlanta Olympic Football Competition were not flukes. We will fully support our endeavour in France '98.

Fellow Nigerians, it became obvious that we need to confront future challenges to us as a people, in a well structured manner. We have confronted this challenge that of moving beyond immediate and inherently temporary solutions, to the need for a carefully phased medium and long term approach to national development. Thus was established the Vision 2010 Committee headed by former Head of State, Chief Ernest Shonekan. Its assignment was to formulate an intellectual basis on which we should build a stable and prosperous nation. The Committee's Report which I had the honour of receiving formally yesterday has mapped out a viable set of principles and pragmatic action plans pointing the way forward for our nation. Building on the foundations of our current achievements, the Vision 2010 Committee's Report provides the context for accelerated economic growth and long-term development in all sphere of our national life. As its inspiration, I assure you that this Administration will keep faith with its recommendations, Accordingly, we shall before the end of our tenure, introduce the measures immediately required to begin the programme's implementation in the firm belief that succeeding administrations will carry it through to a successful conclusion with the support of all our people and friends of the nation.

My fellow Nigerians, I remain a firm believer in the great future envisioned for our fatherland by its founding fathers. As I have often stated, we must set aside all our differences and work together as one people and one family for the attainment of our dream of a strong, stable and prosperous society. We must dream great dreams for our country and transform our thoughts into positive action. We must develop greater pride and belief in our capabilities and potential and assume our destined role as the largest black nation on earth. It should be

for us a commitment to transform these past difficult years into the golden years of Nigeria's final take off, Nigeria should be launched into a safe orbit of a strong, stable and happy country; a nation of sustained growth and development, a people of contented leaders and citizens working harmoniously together with a fresh young generation actively being prepared to inherit the fatherland.

Finally, I wish, once again to thank all our people for their support and understanding over these past four years. Your dedication and willingness to make sacrifices for the cause of a better future for our children has helped to bring us this far.

As we enter the last year of this Administration, we shall continue to count on your support and cooperation.

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria. May God bless you all.

Thank you.