

Violence: Violence has become widespread in large part because it is the means by which the business of government is conducted. Lacking authority, government relies on violence which ordinary people imitate.

Civil-Military Relations: With nearly thirty years of military rule, Nigerian political processes, the economy, and even our social structure have become militarized. Transition from military rule to civil and democratic rule has not been accompanied by any measures of demilitarization, in large part because the military establishment has insisted on assuming responsibility for preparing for democracy a nation it has forcibly ruled.

Civilianization: Our post-military affairs have been ready-made for the prolongation of de facto military rule. It is the bold-faced assumption that the affairs of the post-military state can only be effectively managed by the former military rulers that constitutes the essence of the theory of civilianization. It is under its imperative that Olusegun Obasanjo has been elected President of Nigeria. This theory involves far more than the transformation of military rulers into pseudo-civilian leaders. More dangerously, it permits the operation of centralized structures and processes that empowered military rule to continue into post-military civil politics. That is how West Africa has become infamous for being a zone of civilianized regimes in Ghana, Benin, Togo, Gambia, and now Nigeria.

POLICY OPTIONS

The political and constitutional questions facing civilianized President Obasanjo cannot be clearer. Will he return to the path of more centralization? Or will he return Nigeria to its beloved federalism which military rule has all but destroyed?

States' Rights: Neglected in Nigeria's political debates are the rights of states. Ordinary Nigerians value their states if they are meaningful. A renewed federal pact must articulate the rights of states which should include exercising a choice of having their own constitutions, flags, civil police formations, and reasonable allocation of funds from the Federation account. Each of the present 36 states in Nigeria is bigger, in land area and population, than Gambia and will be able to thrive with proper constitutional arrangements.

Federal Government as a Government of Last Resort: We must rethink the meaning and place of the Central government. One sad consequence of over-centralization is that the Federal Government appears as the first layer of governance, rather than assuming secondary roles that will be invoked when the