INTRODUCTION

With the advent of independence in the late 50's and early 60's euphoria and new hopes swept through Africa as nation after nation attained self-government. There were new dreams and expectations as the colonial masters packed their bags and handed over the instruments of power to the indigenous peoples. To most Africans this was the end of a long freedom struggle in which so many had suffered. It was the end of slavery, human degradation and exploitation.

However, since emergence of the new era of self-government, the nationalists and the politicians who fought for this great victory were becoming more self-seeking, power-hungry and ambitious. Some were out seeking instant wealth for themselves, their friends and relatives. Nepotism became rampant, common-place and a norm. Others were out experimenting on new and foreign ideologies in the name of African socialism. These were ideologies that had no bearing or relevance to the improvement of the lives of the ordinary man. Some of these governments started openly courting the Eastern bloc for advice and guidance. It did not take the ordinary citizens long to realize that these so-called progressive governments were not delivering the goods fast enough. Corruption had become an accepted way of life. Mismanagement of the economy coupled with sheer incompetence had led to runaway inflation and unaffordable prices. Unemployment and crime rates were on the increase. Yet the greedy get-rich-quick politicians continued getting richer. These were the kind of situations to be found in Ghana, Sudan, Somalia, Uganda and other countries when their governments fell to the military.

In the majority of the coups that have occurred, the military has deemed it a national and patriotic obligation to rescue the country from total collapse and thereby restore lost national prestige. Although these coups d'etat have been executed in the guise of national interest and patriotic duty, more often than not, the results of military
rule in the vast continent have been very disappointing indeed. Besides being unable to solve the problems they set out to solve in the first place, military regimes in some cases have created situations that did not exist with civilian governments. Military rule has not necessarily been free of incompetence; military regimes have turned out to be more corrupt, oppressive and downright inefficient than the civilian governments they deposed. Soldiers have been known to be more of wealth-seekers, property, grabbers and bribe-takers. They have openly engaged themselves in self-enrichment activities through the barrel of the gun and through intimidation. They have become better embezzlers than their forerunners.

Thus in this essay we shall discuss and examine the failures of military rule in African state adopting military rule in Uganda and Central Africa Republic as a case study. These two countries were chosen for specific reasons. Uganda and Central Africa Republic was ruled with iron fisted dictators who trampled on human rights, killed lots of citizens, diverted public funds and did all kinds of evils.

However, for conceptual clarification, we shall first examine some basic concept like what is Military and Military Coup d’état.

**WHAT IS MILITARY**

A military is an organization authorized by its greater society to use lethal force, usually includes use of weapons, in defending its country by combating actual or perceived threats against the state. The military may have additional functions of use to its greater society, such as advancing a political agenda e.g. communism during cold war era, supporting or promoting economic expansion through imperialism, and as a form of internal social control

**WHAT IS MILITARY COUP D’ÉTAT**

Military coup d’état is the sudden, extrajudicial deposition of a government, usually by a small group of the existing state establishment, typically the military, to replace the deposed government with another body, either civil or military. A coup d’état succeeds if the usurpers establish their dominance when the incumbent government fails to prevent or successfully resist their consideration of power.
MILITARY RULE IN UGANDA (FAILURES)

Uganda is a former British colony in East Africa. It became independent on October 9, 1962 after being a colony of Britain since 1894. The country is an ethnically diverse nation with a deeply ingrained intellectual and artistic culture. Upon independence, the young country was ruled by Milton Obote. However, few years after independence, the country like many African countries was entrenched in military coups and dictatorship. Uganda experienced different military coups that set the young nation into economic backwardness and civil unrest. Idi Amin, one of the worst dictators in Africa ruled Uganda with an iron grip. Amin's rule was characterized by human rights abuses, political repression, ethnic persecution, extrajudicial killings, nepotism, corruption, and gross economic mismanagement. The number of people killed as a result of his regime is estimated by international observers and human rights groups to range from 100,000 to 500,000. However, other military regimes like that of Tito Okello ruled in Uganda, but for the purpose of this analyses, focus shall be accrued to that failures of Idi Amin’s Military Regimes.

At first military rule in Africa was initially welcome by the masses who were disheartened by the corruption, nepotism greedy aggrandizement and looting of national treasurer by the civilian leaders who assumed the mantle of leadership after 1960s. The military intervened to correct this wrong but however became the wrongs itself as it was seen in Uganda during Idi Amin’s era, corruption became the order of the day. Amin was most definitely a greedy man, giving himself many titles and selfishly directing most of Ugandans’ money towards military aid, he lived in luxury leaving his people to suffer economic horrors.

Furthermore, military rule in Africa failed in the area of human rights abuses. Most military regimes did anything possible to suppress opposition. Hence killings people, making arrests and committed various human rights abuses. Uganda during military rule suffered numerous human right abuses. Idi Amin for instance began mass executions upon the Acholi and Lango, Christian tribes that had been loyal to Obote and therefore perceived as a threat. He also began terrorizing the general public through the various internal security forces he organized, such as the State Research Bureau (SRB) and Public Safety Unity (PSU), whose main purpose was to eliminate those who
opposed his regime. When the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) hijacked an Air France flight from Israel to Paris on June 27, 1976, Idi Amin welcomed the terrorists and supplied them with troops and weapons, but was humiliated when Israeli commandos subsequently rescued the hostages in a surprise raid on the Entebbe airport. In the aftermath, Amin ordered the execution of several airport personnel, hundreds of Kenyans whom were believed to have conspired with Israel and an elderly British hostage who had previously been escorted to a nearby hospital. Throughout his oppressive rule, Amin was estimated to have been responsible for the deaths of roughly 300,000 civilians.

Military rule has also failed generally in Africa due of their failure of curbing ethnicity and nepotism, one of the ostensive reasons they gave for ousting civilian government. During most military regime in Africa, nepotism became the order of the day. Amin for instance promoted many of his staunchest supporters, both enlisted personnel and officers, to command positions. Nepotism received widespread publicity, as a number of laborers, drivers, and bodyguards became high-ranking officers, although they had little or no military training. Army recruiters suspended educational requirements for military service, sometimes forcing groups of urban unemployed to volunteer. This had economic implications for the young state and ethnic differences became the order of the day.

Economically, the military rulers in Africa failed to bring about economic development to their regimes. This was due to the widespread corruption, money laundering and luxurious lifestyle of the military leaders themselves and their subordinates. During the period of military rule in Uganda, there was gross economic mismanagement. In fact Amin during his regime expropriated businesses and properties belonging to the Asians and handed them over to his supporters. The businesses were mismanaged, and industries collapsed from lack of maintenance. The expelling of Uganda’s Asian population, which numbered between 50,000 and 70,000, resulting in a collapse of the economy as manufacturing, agriculture and commerce came to a screeching halt without the appropriate resources to support them. These policies and actions greatly deteriorated the economy of Uganda which is still undergoing recovery.
Central Africans, whose country was once known as the “Cinderella” of the French Empire, have never had an easy time of it. When French colonists arrived at the end of the nineteenth century, they found sultans connected to trans-Saharan economic and social networks. Much of the area was both a zone of raiding (for slaves, ivory, and other goods) and a zone of refuge for those fleeing raiders, processes that played out in dynamic tension with each other and contributed to the diversity and mobility of the area’s people. The French saw their main task as removing the sultans, because they, as “foreigners,” had no right to rule over Central Africans. Penury and corruption plagued the colonial government. The combination of slave-raiding and forced labor depopulated much of the country (even today, only about four-million people call this Texas-size territory home) and impoverished what had in many cases been prosperous agrarian communities.

These problems did not disappear with independence in 1960. The French admitted that of all their former colonies, this was the one they had least prepared for independence. Central African politicians learned quickly that the powers that be of françafrique cared about stability (preventing “another Congo”) more than anything else. Substantive democracy was among the victims of this stability-centric view, which remains one of the main ways international actors engage with CAR politics. French-organized bloodless coups became the norm.

Whereas in the 1970s, many Central Africans shared in a sense of possibility, by the 1980s a precipitously declining economy left more and more in situations of duress. At the same time, as the region was becoming more militarized, France pulled out most of the several-thousand soldiers they had based in CAR. A rapidly eviscerating CAR state was left on its own in a dangerous region.

From 1979 up till 2002, Central Africa Republic had been entangled in numerous coups attempts most successfully; popular among these military dictatorship are that of Jean-Bédel Bokassa, André Kolingba, and Francois Bozize.

Military regimes like it has been stressed has been characterize with human right abuses all over Africa. The Central Africa Republic witnessed different human right abuses during its military regimes, thousands of innocents civilians were killed
and so many suffered in prison. Jean-Bedel Bokassa became notorious for his alleged involvement in the massacre of civilians, including schoolchildren, in 1979 shocked the world and led to his overthrow by Dacko, with the aid of French forces. He personally supervised judicial beatings and introduced a rule that thieves would have an ear cut off for the first two offenses and a hand for the third. At the height of this reign of terror, he was alleged of cannibalism. One of his former cooks, Philippe Linguissa, recalled how he’d been called to prepare a special feast for Bokassa. The main course was a human corpse that the emperor kept stored in his walk-in refrigerator. Among the other military rulers Bokassa trampled on the human rights of his people most.

Furthermore, in Central African Republic like other African states, military regimes co-exited with especially from the top as the general became wealthier and the masses became poorer. The fourteen years of reign of Bokassa was characterize by looting of the state treasury at the expense of the extravagant lifestyle of the rule class. In 1977, in emulation of his hero Napoleon, he crowned himself emperor of the Central African Empire in a ceremony costing $20 million, practically bankrupting the country. Moreso, André Kolingba who ruled for five years (1981-1986), he ruled as a military dictator more corrupt than brutal. This corrupt practices and other policies of the military has rendered the country one of the poorest countries in Africa

It should be noted that most military coups Africa always promised to transit to democracy ‘as soon as possible’. However, most of those dates were found out to be mere rhetoric’s. Most of the leaders became power hunger that they will crown themselves ‘president for life’. This failure to bring about transformation was what characterised military regimes in Uganda and Central Africa Republic.

**CONCLUSION**

In retrospect, the results of military rule in West Africa have been very disappointing indeed. Besides being unable to solve the problems they set out to solve in the first place, military regimes in some cases have created situations that did not exist with civilian governments. Military rule has not necessarily been free of incompetence, corruption and maladministration that their civilian predecessors were alleged to have encouraged. Soldiers have been known to be more of wealth-seekers, property grabbers and bribe-takers. They have openly engaged themselves in self-
enrichment activities through the barrel of the gun and through intimidation. They have become better embezzlers than their forerunners. After decades of coups and military rule, the coup has not improved the West African economic conditions; the coup has not been a source for political stability. Rather than solve contemporary political and socio-economic problems, military coups d'etat in West Africa have tended to drive the sub-continent into even further suffering and turmoil. And then there is that aura of insecurity and uncertainty.

However, mention must be made of some military regimes who did more good than arm in their bid to transform their country. In Nigeria for instance, Murtala Mohammed fought against unproductivity, he brought policy that was for the good of the nation. Gowon was able to reintegrate the East of Nigeria in a loving compassionate way that you will wonder if he is actually a soldier, Gen. Buhari fought hard against corruption and indiscipline that had become a cankerworm in the annals of the society. Moreover, Colonel Muamma Gaddafi is a military officer who seized power from the Libyan Monarch in 1969. Colonel Muamma Gaddafi as a military leader, was able to transform Libya to the envy of the world so much that other nationals including Nigerians are queuing at the Libyan embassy for her visa. Ghana was also transformed from a corrupt and poverty stricken nation into a transparent and an accountable nation by a military officer, Flight lieutenant, John Jerry Rawlings.11

In sum, the military really failed because they failed to deliver their promise of staying temporarily, they abused human rights and were majorly interesting in enriching themselves. Hence, it is obvious that Generals cannot rule a state, the state is not a barrack!
WORKS CITED
4. Ibid