

IMPACT OF BIAFRAN WAR ON NIGERIAN POLITICS

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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CERTIFICATE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THIS DISSERTATION ENTITLED
"IMPACT OF BIAFRAN WAR ON NIGERIAN POLITICS" SUBMITTED
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
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THIS IS AN ORIGINAL WORK.

WE RECOMMEND THIS DISSERTATION BE PLACED BEFORE
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PROFESSOR VIJAY GUPTA
SUPERVISOR

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CHAIRPERSON

Dedicated to my Parents
AND
LOVE (Debjani)

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CHAPTER - I

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, which is one of the most populous country in African continent got a unique place in the history of Africa. The country remained under direct colonial rule only for sixty years (1901-60) and the freedom struggle did not bring too much turmoil in comparison to the one which the country faced after the Independence in 1960. Immediately after independence the country faced secessionist problems, civil wars and frequent military coups. The significant aspect is that in the case of Nigeria military coups have taken place toppling the military regime not the civilian regimes only. Again, the major aspect is that the country's political as well as military head have not been able to control the situation. The major cause of the continuing political crisis is that the military rulers belonging to certain ethnic group are behind the crisis and as a result the blood shedding is going on.

Before studying the topic we need to analyse the country's structure then only the scene can be clear to focus upon the issues.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a coastal state on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea, with Benin to the West, Niger to the North, Chad to the North-East, and Cameroon to the east and South-east. It has an area of 923.768 sq.km. (356.669 sq. miles) placing it as the 14th in size among African countries. At the Census of November 1991 Nigeria had 88,514501 inhabitants and a population density of 95.8 inhabitants per sq.km.

Population Distribution

The Nigerian population is extremely diverse well over 250 ethnic groups are identified, some numbering fewer than 10,000 people. Ten groups, notably Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, Ibo, Kanuri, T.V., Edo and Nupe, Ibido Ijab, account for nearly 80% of the total population. Much of the population is concentrated in the southern part of the country as well as in the area of dense settlement around Kano in the north. Between these two areas in the sparsely populated middle belt.

Urban life has along history in Nigeria, with centres of population such as Kano (mid 1935) estimate 399,000) Zaria (224,000). Ife (176,000) and Benin (136,000) dating from the middle ages. Recent economic development however has stimulated considerable rural urban migration and led to the phenomenal growth of such cities as Lagos, Ibadan,

Kaduna and Port Harcourt. In December 1991, the Federal Capital was formally transferred to Abuja from Lagos however, a number of governmental department and non-government institutions have remained in the former capital Lagos.

In 1860, a British Consul had been established at Lokoja at the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers and the trade of the Delta Region was then worth £1 million annually to Britain.

Britain began its colonial rule on Nigeria in 1861 with the annexation of Lagos. Although the British missionaries had already started working on the coastal area quite early but in real sense the penetration of the British started 1861 onwards only.

By 1871, Lagos had £500,000 of trade annually and become self-sufficient. By the late 1870s four companies were operating in the Delta alone and it was then that the figure of Taubman Goldie emerged to consolidate the companies into the United African Company (UAC). It was Goldie's ambition to add the region to the British empire and this he duly accomplished. In its early days the UAC had the power to make treaties and controlled its own fleet of gunboats. To ensure the company could combat French

competition, Goldie 'went public', so increasing the capital from £100,000 to £1 million.

In the meantime, the "Scramble for Africa" had got underway in earnest. In 1884, a German protectorate was proclaimed over neighbouring Cameroon and at the Berlin Conference 1884-1885 the powers recognised that British influence was paramount in the Delta area. Britain granted a Royal Charter to the Niger Company in 1886 and gave it political authority in the areas it controlled. The Company took over Nupe and Iloorin in 1898 and founded the West African Frontier Force to protect its acquisitions from the French. In Southern Nigeria, the Benin empire was the last to hold out, but by the turn of the century it had succumbed to British power.

In 1900, the British Government took over all the UAC territories and established three protectorates: the Niger Coast Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. Sir Federick Lugard was appointed High Commissioner for the Northern Protectorate, where he introduced his system of indirect rule and carried out the subjugation of the area. The name Nigeria was coined in 1897 by Flora Shaw in an article in The Times of London. In 1914 the three Protectorates were united to become the colony and protectorate of Nigeria. Effectively, the British rule over Nigeria, starting with

the creation of the three protectorates in 1900, lasted exactly sixty years.

British established a system of indirect rule that is through things and chiefs, over larger part of Nigeria. This was not only less costly but guaranteed stable pol. environment from which economic surplus could be extracted without undue disruption. The policy worked quite well in the North but much less smoothly in the South -West, where non of the traditional rulers had ever extracted taxes. The imposition of the colonial taxes had wide spread resentment among the Yorubas of the South-West. In the South-east, inhabited by Ibos, the policy was even less successful, largely because the British colonial office did not understand, the political guthority and structure that prevailed in that part of Nigeria. Consequently, it became difficult for the British to completely subjugate the Ibos in the order a s they had done with the people of other parts of Nigeria in Africa.

Early conversion of Ibos to christianity and benefitly from its education programme led to the rise of intellectuals like Azikiwe the first President of Independent Nigeria.

Early resentments of the colonial rule of the whole Africa led to the demands of the independent Nigeria.

particularly in the period of end of First World War and the Second World War, 1922-1945.

Nationalist agitation began to grow in the 1930s and was given a tremendous boost by the events of the Second World War. From the mid-1940s onwards a series of constitutional changes (and the politics surrounding their attainment) took steps towards self-government and independence. This process dominated the last fifteen years of British rule. Though it always resisted colonialism, Nigerian nationalism did not have to fight as for example Kenya or Ghana did. The modern nationalist struggle could perhaps be dated from 1937 when Dr. Azikiwe returned home, already famous from his activities abroad, to found his West African Pilot, which for the next fifteen years was to be identified with struggle towards independence. The Second World War gave a major boost to nationalism in Nigeria as it did elsewhere. During the war and after the passing of the 1940 Commonwealth Development and Welfare Act by Britain, which stipulated among other things that unions should be formed there was a major advance in the Nigerian trade union movement. From two unions with 5,000 members in 1940, the figures rose to 85 unions with 30,000 members by the end of the war. This promising growth of unions and union activity was to lapse for a long period after the war. First,

however, came the general strike in 1945 which was a landmark in terms of new labour pressures upon the colonial government in terms & Political parties.

The North was dominated by Northern People's Congress (NPC), led by Sir Ahmadu Bello; the east was dominated by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) and the west by Chief Obafemi Awotowo's.

After Dr. Azikiwe the second major nationalist figure to emerge was chief Awolowo. He went to study law in London in 1944, returning home in 1949 to found the Action Group and so counter the political success up to that time of Azikiwe's NCNC. By 1950 the two major Southern parties - the NCNC and the Action Group. With their respective Ibo and Yoruba bases came to be balanced in the North by the Northern People's Conference (NPC).

Thus by the beginning of the 1950 the stage had been set for the political struggles and regional rivalries that were to dominate Nigeria both up to independence, and for the six years after that, until the political collapse that produced military rule and the civil war.

The decade and a half from 1950 to 1965 was a period of intense political activity in Nigeria. Extreme diversity and regional pulls demanded the politics of compromise while in fact, the process that took place led to the emergence of

the North as the preponderant political power within the federal situation. Nationalism in these years became a dual process (i) the nationalism that led to independence and the end of the colonial era and (ii) the tribal nationalisms of Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa-Fulani that constantly threatened the Central authority. The key political figures during this period were the Sardauna of Sokoto in the North and his principal lieutenant Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who became first Federal Prime Minister; Chief Awolowo in the West and his principal political rival there, Akintola; and Nnamdi Azikiwe in the east. These, however, were only the top names; the extravagance and corruption of politicians became notorious so that when the crisis that swept them aside came in January 1966 many Nigerians felt that a new era had dawned.

During the 1950s the three leading political figures (Sardauna, Awolowo and Azikiwe) concentrated upon their regions as the basis of their political power - though Azikiwe especially attempted to establish a national following and the Centre remained weak and ineffective. The (Richards) Constitution of 1946 was reviewed due to surmounting pressure that speeded up the movement towards self-government. In the period of 1945 to 1960, five constitutions were enacted, leading first to self-government

and then to independence. During the 1950s some of the wide divergences of outlook between North and South Nigeria emerged. The Sardauna of Sokoto for example, argued that the process of independence should be held back because the North was not ready for it. The 1954 Constitution deprived the central government of its right to approve regional legislation and the small list of exclusive federal subjects was confined to defence, foreign policy and communications. There was a concurrent legislative list - affairs that both the central and regional governments could deal with - that included Commerce, agriculture, labour and industrial development while all the other subjects were regional. While regional premiers were created at this time, there was yet no federal Prime Minister, and the federal government continued to be run by the Governor general. Nonetheless, the 1954 election for the federal government was the first on a national scale. No party obtained a majority : the NPC won 19 out of 184 seats, the NCNC got 61 seats and two formed a coalition while the Action Group made up the opposition. Then in 1957 the eastern and western regions became self-governing though the North did not do so until 1959. Sir Abubakar became the first Federal Prime Minister (he was the deputy leader of the NPC) while the Sardauna of Sokoto preferred to remain a

regional Prime Minister. The period up to independence was dominated by the questions of the minorities and the possibility of more regions. A further divisive development at this time was the tendency for a majority for political party in one region to lend its political support to minority groups in the other regions. Shortly before independence, the Minorities Commission produced a list of civil rights to be written into the Constitution. The elections of 1959 the year before independence gave a majority of the NPC. NCNC coalition which was to last until 1964; Awolwo and his Action Group became the opposition. Then on 1 October 1960, Nigeria became independent and celebrated the event in suitably lavish and splendid style.

With independence, Nigeria embarked - apparently upon a democratic British pattern of politics both at the Centre and in the regions. But the federal structure was too weak to bear the strains of the powerful pulls from the regions for long. It faced emergency within two years and had broken down in disorder at the end of five years. In a sense, the period 1960-66 was a necessary prelude to the eradication of overt British political influence and set the sense for the subsequent Nigerianisation that had to come in political and other ways. In November 1960 Ajikiwe became the first Nigerian Governor General. During the first five

years of independence, Nigeria was especially to find its feet in terms of foreign affairs. Although its approach to international affairs began conservatively, it was soon clear that a so called 'moderate' approach was by no means a certainty. Nigeria broke off relations with France over that country's Saharan Nuclear testing to find itself the only African nation to have done so. In December 1962 it abrogated the defence treaty with Britain. In terms of the divisions within Africa at that time, it was to emerge in 1961 as the leader of the moderate Monrovia group of states as opposed to the more radical Casablanca group, led by Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Toure of Guinea. On 19th January, 1962, , however, when representatives of the two groups met in Lagos, they did come near to finding agreement and their deliberations foreshadowed the later creation of the organization of African unity. The last Major Nigerian initiative in foreign affairs in this period was the Commonwealth Conference on Rhodesia held in Lagos literally on the eve of the first Military Coup that toppled the civilian government. It was the first Commonwealth Conference ever to be held outside London.

The first six years of independence were deeply troubled ones for Nigeria. In the western region the deep rift in the Action Group between the supporters of Awolowo and

those of region's Prime Minister Akintola threatened by 1962 to split the region disastrously. Attempts to dismiss Akintola as premier led to disturbances in the Assembly and the Federal Government declared a state of emergency in the region. Restriction orders were then served on the leading politicians; the regional Governor was suspended for exceeding his constitutional powers; there was a major inquiry into corruption. Then came the treason trial of Awolowo and 27 others which was to last eight months and provide major controversy as to its rights and wrongs then and subsequently Awolowo was found guilty of treasons and sentenced to ten years imprisonment, reduced to seven on appeal. Chief Antony Enahoro was repatriated from Britain to face charges of complicity in the same plot and he was sentenced to 15 years, later reduced to ten. Akintola then became the head of a reconstituted western government. These troubles destroyed the regional power of the Action Group. The Federal Government then created the fourth region of Midwest.

An attempt at a census in 1962 was cancelled because of distorted figures. A new census was carried out in 1963 (still the basis for calculations in Nigeria) when published in 1964 the figures showed that Nigeria had a population of 55.6 million making it the tenth most populous country in

the world. More controversial was the fact that it gave the population of the North as 30 million which, since seats in the Federal house were allocated according to population meant that the north had a built-in political majority over the south.

There was a successful general strike in 1964, when more than 80,00,000 workers came out and the government was forced to accept higher wage levels that it had previously been willing to concede. Then came the federal elections of 1964 election day was set for 30 December and by the time the elections took place mammoth malpractices had been revealed. In the new year, a crisis followed when in his capacity as President (Nigeria had meanwhile become a Republic) Azikiwe held back as long as he could before calling upon Abubakar again to form a government. Towards the end of the year the Western region elections produced near chaos and another major crisis loomed as 1966 opened. The Commonwealth Conference in Lagos in January 1966 provided a brief interregnum, but even as the Commonwealth Prime Ministers departed the storm broke.

The first republic collapsed in January 1966: that year was to see two military coups and the polarisation of the political forces in the eastern region and civil war became inevitable. The military plot of 14-15 January 1966 in

which Abubakar, Akintola and the Sardauna of Sokoto were killed swept away the old political system. The Army Commander, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi, then became temporary head of state and tried to hold a deteriorating position of the next six months. His most decisive action was the abolition of the regions on 24 May 1966, when he proclaimed a Unitary Republic of Nigeria. This followed the first massacres of Ibos in the north at the end of May and the possibility of northern secession was then widely discussed.

At the end of July 1966, came the second military coup that overthrew Ironsi, though his death was not confirmed for six months. Major General Yakubu Gowon then became supreme commander and effectively head of state on 29 July 1966, a position he was to hold for exactly nine years. In the following months acrimonious discussions took place between the Federal Government and Ojukwu for the eastern region; in September-October the second wave of massacres of Ibos took place in the North and resulted in the trek back of Ibos to the eastern region from many parts of Nigeria. Perhaps a million Ibos returned. The demand for secession grew in the East. In January 1967, a meeting took place in Ghana in an attempt to settle the deadlocked dispute. On 26 May 1967 Gowon announced the division of the country into twelve states and on 30 May, Ojukwu announced the secession of Biafara. Civil War swiftly followed and was both bitter and bloody.

CHAPTER - II

CHAPTER-II

BIAFRA

The Eastern region of the Southern Nigeria was named Biafra by the secessionists in 1967. Biafra covered about 29,000 square milis. It was the most developed part of the continent, with more industry, the highest per capita income, the highest purchasing power, the greatest density of roads, schools, hospitals, business houses and factories in Africa.

In potential it has been variously described as the Japan, the Israel, the Manchester, and the Kuwait of this continent. Each appellation refers to one of the many facts that cause surprise to the visitor who thought all Africa was uniformly, backward. Through years of exploitation, most factories, investments and public services were fixed in other parts of Nigeria, though often staffed by Easterners. This left the Eastern Region a long way short of its full development potential. Even in the south the major petroleum companies failed to boost oil production to its potential, preferring to keep the oil fields there ticking over as a useful reserve while Arabian fields were sucked dry.

The use of the comparison with Japan refers to the population. Rarely among Africans, they have the gift of unceasing hard work. In the factories the workers turn in more manhours per year than else where, and in the farms the peasants produce more yield per acre than in any other country. It may be that nature's necessity has bred these traits, but they are also backed by the ancient traditions of the people. In Biafra personal success has always been regarded as meritorious; a successful man was admired and respected. There is no hereditary office or title. When a man dies his success in life, his honours, his prestige and his authority are buried with him. His sons must fend for themselves on the basis of equal competition with the other young men of the society.

The Biafrans are avid for education and particularly for qualifications in one of the technical professions. It is clearly indicated in the writing of Mr. Frederick Foresyth like this :¹ a village carpenter has five sons. The father works from dawn till dusk; the mother has a stall in the market; the four junior sons sell matches, newspapers red papers, all so that the senior son can go through college. When he is qualified he is duty-bound to pay the

1. Foresyth, Fredrick, The Story of Biafra p.107.

way through college of the second brother; after which the pair will pay for the education of the third, fourth and fifth. The carpenter may die a carpenter, but may leave five qualified sons". For most Biafrans no sacrifice is too much for education. Communes of village farmers will club together to build a structure in their village-not a recreation centre swimming pool or stadium, but a school. A village that has a school has prestige.

Because they are convinced that 'no condition is permanent in this world' (an Ibo motto) they are adaptable to a degree and prepared to learn new ways. Where others mutably their poverty or backwardness as the will of Allah, the Biafran sees both as a challenge to his God-given talents. The difference in attitude is cardinal, for it spells the difference between a society. Where western capital will seldom bearfruit, and a society destined to succeed.

It is their hard work and their success that contributed to make the Biafrans unpopular in Nigeria, and particularly in the North. Other characteristics are adduced to explain the antipathy they manage to generate; they are pushful, uppity and aggressive say the detractors; ambitious and energetic say the defenders. They are money-loving and mercenary says one school; canny and thrifty says

the other. Clannish and unscrupulous in grabbing advantages, say some; united and quick to realize the advantages of education, say others.

The reference to Manchester refers to their flair for trade. Rather than work for a boss on a salaried wage scale the Biafran would prefer to save for years, then by his own lockup shop. This he will keep open all hours of the day and night as there is a chance of a customer. Having profited, he will slough the money back into the enterprise, buy a breakability shop, then a chain of shops. With several thousands in the bank, he can be found going about on a bicycle. Throughout Africa one will find Arab traders (Lebananese or Syrian), or Indians. These peoples have wandered across the world with their talent for trade, under-cutting local traders and driving them to the wall. But they will never be found where the Biafrans operate.

The reference to Israel refers obviously to the persecutions that have touched them sooner or later wherever they have. Set up shop. Mr. Legume's reference to the gathering in of the exiles into Israel after the last war was perhaps closer than he realized at the time; having got their backs to the wall the Biafrans love now got nowhere else to go. That is why they prefer to die in their home

land than give in and live (the survivors among them) like the wandering Jew. Colonel Ojukwu once told.

Quoting to Col. Ojukwu Mr. Frederick Forsythe writes that once Col. Ojukwu himself told that "What you see here is the end of a long road; a road that started in the far North and has led finally here into the Ibo heart-land. It is the road of the slaughterhouse".²

'Kuwait' refers to the oil beneath Biafra. It has been postulated that if the Biafrans had had as their homeland a region of semi-desert and scrub they would have been allowed to depart from Nigeria with cries of 'Godriddance' in their ears. One foreign businessman remarked succinctly during a discussion about this war 'Its an oil war' and felt obliged to say no more. Beneath Biafra lies an ocean of oil, the purest in the world. You can run Biafran crude straight into a diesel lorry and it will work. Approximately one tenth of this field lies in neighbouring Cameroon, about 3/10th in Nigeria. The remaining six tenths lies under Biafra.

The government of Biafra is a disappointment to those who come seeking a totalitarian military dictatorship. Colonel Ojukwu rules with a surprisingly light hand, but

2. Fresyth-Freedrick, The Story of Biafra p.-109.

this is incumbent on any man who rules the Biafrans. They do not take kindly to government without consultations. Soon after taking power as Military Governor in January 1966 Ojukwu realized he had to have a closer line to the broad masses of the people, partly because of their characteristic and partly through his own predilecations.

He could not reconstitute the discredited Assembly of the old politicians, and General Ironsi was against (For the movement) other forms of assembly, preferring to let the military Regime find its feet first. So ojukwu quietly began drawing up plans for a return to civilian rule, or at least a joint consultative body through which the people could lit their wishes be known to the Military Governor and in which could seek the wishes of the people.

After the coup of July he got his chances, and the plans went ahead. After the declaration of secession from Nigeria Col. Ojukwu who took over the administration of eastern region that was Biafra reconstituted the administration. From each of the twenty nine Divisions of the Region he asked for four nominated representatives and six popular delegates. The nominated posts although named by his office, were ex officio nominations, such as the Divisional Administrator, the Divisional secretary, etc. The six popular delegates were chosen by the people through

village and clan chiefs, and the 'Leader of Thought' conferences. This gave him 290 persons. To these he asked for another forty-five representatives of the professions to be added. Delegates were chosen and sent from the Trade-Unions, The teachers conference, the Bar Association, the Farmers Union, several other sections of the community, and most important, the Market Traders, Association-imposing and outspoken Market Memmis.

This group formed the consultative Assembly, and was soon recognised, with the. Advisory Council of chiefs and Elders, as the Parliament of Biafara. Colonel ojukwu did not take no major decision without consulting them, and had followed their wishes on Biafran policy. For immediate administration he constituted the Executive Council which met every week and of which only one member other than colonel ojukwu was in the Armed Forces.

From its first meeting on 31 August 1966, thirty three days after the Gowon Coup, the Assembly was consulted at every stage since the creation of Biafra. In view of subsequent claims the Ibos dragged the non-Ibo minorities unwillingly into their act of separation, it is significant that of the 335 members of the Assembly 165 are non-Ibo minority group men as against 169 Ibo-speaking members.



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This gave the minorities a higher proportion in the Assembly than their respective populations inside the country.

The assembly took the decision to mandate colonel Ojukwu to pull out of Nigeria. Far from being unwilling victims of Ibo domination and from being coerced into partition against their will, the tribal representatives of the minorities had their full say, and were active participants in the policy to pull out. As stated earlier there were non-Ibos in eastern region in Nigeria, the one declared as Biafra. These non-Ibos were unwilling to gain the separation because they thought that separation could not solve their problems. But they were forced to join the Ibos.

By and large the leaders among the minority groups, having given their allegiance to Biafra, were forced to flee to escape persecutions when the federal army came in. This left vacant good jobs, houses, offices, cars, privileges. It was not difficult for the Nigerians to find other local people to fill these vacancies on the condition of full collaboration with the occupying forces. But an examination of the men who now fill the posts allocated to local people under the Nigerian rule will normally reveal that they were very small fry when their more talented kinsmen ran the province for Biafra.

Immediately after conquest many local people stayed behind in the minority areas, converted by previous federal publicity to the view that Biafra had been a mistake and that cooperation with the Nigerian Army would be better. Some of these local dignitaries sincerely believed in their conversion, others saw self-advancement of self-enrichment from the property of the dead or fled leaders of yesterday. But since the midsummer of 1968 more and more reports have come into Biafra of a growing dissatisfaction with life under the conquerors.

Very often the biggest wave of refugees into unoccupied Biafra came out with the fall of a province, but a few weeks later when the Nigerian Army's method had been tasted later still more alienation of the local leaders took place, as the federal soldiers killed Goats, Chickens, Cattle and Pigs for their own Kitchens; harvested unripe Yam and Cassava Crops for their own diets; took local girls and used them as they wished; stopped protests at this behaviour by punitive raids against protesters forced villagers to watch public executions of honoured village chiefs and local elders; closed down schools and turned them into barracks for the army; enriched themselves in black market deals in relief food supposed to be destined for the needy, looted desirable property and sent it back home; and generally it be known

that they were there to stay and intended to live off the land, and live well.

Before the summer an increasing number of chiefs were sending emissaries through the lines to Ojukwu. Convinced by now, if not before, that his rule was infinitely preferable to that of the Nigerians. One of the reasons why Colonel Ojukwu's rule was appreciated—there had certainly been grievances under the former rule of the politicians was the change in status of the minorities. When the politicians were in power the Ibo-speaking groups dominated the Assembly and some minority areas felt neglected in the apportionment of funds, facilities and investment. Colonel Ojukwu shopped that.

One of the first proposals of the consultative. Assembly was for the abolition of the British-drawn twenty-nine Divisions and their replacement by twenty provinces, the boundaries to be drawn along tribal and linguistic lines. The proposal came from Mr. Okui Arikpo, one of the members for Ugep, a minority area inhabited by one of the smallest groups, the Ekoi. If there had been such a thing as 'Ibo domination' so widely referred to in Nigerian propaganda since the war started, this idea would have cut it to the bone since the plan also called for a side degree of autonomy within each province, and eight of twenty provinces had

non-Ibo majorities inside them yet the plans was hailed by the Assembly (with its Ibo majority), welcomed by colonel Ojukwu and it soon became law. On the basis of this, Mr. Arikpo told ojukwu that he deserved a ministerial post, but the latter thought it otherwise. Arikpo then disappeared to Lagos where he was then commissioned for foreign affairs.

Now that Ojukwu was anything against minority men in top posts; on the contrary, minority spokesmen had a greater say in government than ever in the previous history of the Eastern Region. The chief of General Staff and acting Head of State in the absence of colonel Ojukwu, Major General Philip Eifiong, was an Efik. The chief secretary and Head of the civil service, Mr. N.U. Akpan, was an Ibibio. The Commissioner for Special Duties, one of colonel ojukwu's closest confidants. Dr. S.J. Cookey, was a Rivers man, as was Mr. Ignatius Kogbara, Biafran representative in London. The Executive council, the foreign missions, the ministerial posts, the civil service, the peace negotiating teams had all been heavily staffed with minority men.

Ironically the massacres of 1966 and the similarly brutal treatment accorded during the present war by the Nigerian Army to Ibo and non-Ibo populations had done more to weld Biafra into a single nation than any other factor. The displacement of millions of refugees, the intermingling,

the common suffering, the collective in powerishment had together done what other African leaders had been trying to do for years; they had created a nation out of a collection of peoples.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE WAR

The military and civilian killings of Nigerians by Neigerians in 1966 constituted the worst tragedy for this country. There was no human being with a soul, blood and life who saw but was not revolted at what happened. Discussing the terror and impact of the civil war N.U. Akpan describes visiting the region.³ "I have never been able to forget the shock I received when I went down to the railway station..... told to me by very responsible persons as an eye-witness account".

Unfortunately not many in the East of Nigeria fully knew the horrible situation. This could be seen from the obvious horror which struck the Ibos and chiefs of western Nigeria who visited Enugu a few weeks later, and were taken to the general hospital to see the wounded and maimed. They (visitors) were all so shocked that they could not enjoy the hospitality offered to them, and before returning home they

3. Akpan, N.U. The struggle for secession 1966-1970.

surrendered everything they had, collectively and individually, in the form of money to the Rehabilitation commission. The same feeling was evident in the team of top civil servants who visited Emugu from Lagos and were taken to the same hospital. But what they saw was only a fraction of the story.

On the other hand, individual civilians were determined to avenge the deaths of their parents, husbands, wives and children; soldiers, the deaths of their colleagues; and the Ibo people the honour of their race. Their leaders were giving frequent speech as "how dare anyone even conceive that Ibo blood could be shed in such a wanton way, and imagine that nothing would be done about it impossible"! This, it must be stated, was reported to be the type of feeling in the North following the killing of the most prominent Northern political and military leaders in an Ibo-army mutiny as the event of 1966 was officially described. The killing of Easterners in the North and elsewhere pattern that year was partly motivated by that feeling.

Thus, even if there had been no secession to induce the federal Government to start the war, there would sooner or later have been civil or tribal war started by the Ibos. The difference would have been that such a war would not have been as serious as the one which focussed, would have

been more easily contained, would have been less destructive, would have lasted only a short time, and would never have assumed international importance.

Governor Ojukwu in fact made it clear to chief Awolowo and others of the national conciliation committee, which visited Emugu from Lagos months before the civil war; that the place of meeting between the people of the east and those of the North would be the battle field. Now, the matter of fact is that how much the visiting team took this statement seriously.

one needs to have been in Emugu and other main towns in the East on July 6th 1967 to appreciate the paradoxical jubilation and enthusiasm with which the people welcomed the news of federal military initiative. The enthusiasm was symbolised in the Governor broadcast of June 30th 1967, six days before the start of the civil war:

⁴ "Our soldiers are ready...fellow countrymen, proud and courageous Preforms , this is your moment.

Governor Ojukwu himself was not averse to a fight between the East and the North. indeed, he considered, it his duty to his people to avenge the death of those, including his military colleagues. Who had been killed in the

4. Autobiography of Ajuskwu-1982.

north. The point is that neither her nor others ever thought that the fight should assume the magnitude and proportions which it did. Nor did the federal Government.

The second point is that while every Ibo person, with the sympathy of many Non-Ibos, itched for a fight with the Hausas because of the events of 1966, the majority of them. If given a chance to express their opinion, would have rejected secession outrightly most people regarded secession, when it came, as unfortunate, while others felt that the situation might be readjusted when civilian rule returned.

But, again, in spite of the reasons given the secession which occurred in 1967—an eventual secession of the East from the East of the federation was likely, even if there had been no provocation in 1966. In 1965, anticipating a possible review of the Nigerian constitution, the Okpara Government of Eastern Nigeria sent out a delegation led by Mr. C.C. Ojekwu, then attorney General and minister of justice of Eastern Nigeria to visit many countries of the world and study their constitutional systems, Their subsequent report contained that the secession is the ultimate solution of all the problems of the Easterners. This clear--report was given keeping the future aspects of the easterners not only

in political section but scientific, economic and administrative.

The most servant protagonists of secession were a few individuals with private and personal ambitions, and other who had come home after the massacre of 1966, embittered by the gluing atrocities committed against them and their kith and kin.

Among the latter were those who genuinely believed that secession was the only way of ensuring for themselves and their children, security of persons and property. They considered themselves rejected and unwanted, by the east of Nigeria.

Those who had lost their humans and business undertakings (and there were many of these) in other parts of Nigeria could not imagine how they could ever be expected to associate themselves again with a section of the country which had acted so cruelly towards them.

There was a third group, who in secession a means of being able to build up sufficient military forces to protect their nationals in parts of Nigeria and beyond.

They could not understand what their people had done, in trading and other activities, which the Lebanese and systems from war away countries were never molested for fear

that their respective countries might react diplomatically or with force against Nigeria.

Secession, the Third group believed, would also give them an international presence and identity which would in turn give them a voice in world organisation like the United Nations. This group pointed to small countries the world over, including such neighbouring ones as Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia and others with populations of less than a million inhabitants smaller in population and perhaps in area as well than some administrative provinces in Eastern Nigeria. These countries had a voice and an international presence in the councils of the world, and could raise a hue and obtain action and attention from the United Nations. If a single citizen of their country were molested let alone killed, by citizens of another country Eastern Nigeria had a population of fourteen millions ranked quite highly among the most populated areas in the world, and yet could not reach out the world when thousands of its people were wantonly massacred outside their region of origin.

Intellectuals constituted this last group, and spared no efforts in trying to prove how different the East was from the North, and to some extent the West in culture and other attributes. They showed how uncertain and insecure the Nigerian association had been for them over the years.

and argued how viable, progressive and potentially great were the people of the East. Particularly the Ibo race, it--- alone to develop at their own pace. This they tried to prove during the civil war and did indeed impress friends and foes in their dogged determination, resourcefulness, endurance and exploits. Mr. Nelson Ohah in his article Drum Magazine wrote :

"Almost everybody was crying for a showdown the intellectuals, professionals, big money men, house wives, motor touts, spivs and pimps. The Eastern Region at that time was ripe for the misfortune that followed. And Emeka Odumegwu exploited the situation to suit his private ambitions.... History, I am sure, will be kind to him. After; he did not do it because he was cleverer than his victims: he did it because his victims - primed with craze for revenge, escapism, greed and foolishness were so ready for destruction and only needed a command. Ojugwu's greatest crime today is that he gave that command".⁵

But Mr. Nelson's assessment is something indiscriminate confusion and condemnation of all in the fact as we see that not everyone was motivated by greed, not all how the same influence in shaping the destiny of the people, no body was

5. Otlah Nelson, 'Drum' June 1970.

willing for destruction and exploitation by others than to domination and exploitation by others. The minority (non Ibo groups) believed that their greatest chance and scope lay in the context of Nigeria as one country.

All the same, even among the Ibos, the great majority of the ordinary people could not see the secession as the best answer to their problems and difficulties as members or even neighbours of the Nigerian Federation. Ojukwu almost certainly did not initially believe in secession but in the unity of Nigeria. This was evident both in his attitudes and postures. But the bitter truth was that he had made himself a helpless prisoner - a prisoner of his personal glory, ambitions and idiosyncracies, a prisoner of the will and caprices of those he trusted and upon whom he heavily relied, a prisoner of fear and self-deception and finally, a prisoner of the mob.

WAR AND THE FAILURE OF BIAFRA SECESSION

By early 1966 Nigeria might well be regarded as a country ripe for revolution. Yet the events which occurred on the night of January 14-15 were more surprising and more shocking than any close observer of the Nigerian scene could ever have predicted. Groups of middle ranking army officers, Ibo in origin but avowedly unaffectedly by "tribal

considerations", operating simultaneously in Lagos and in the Northern and Western regional capitals, Kaduna and Ibadan, murdered four of Nigeria's leading politicians the Federal Prime Minister, Tafawa, Balewa; the primiers of the North and of the West, the Sardana of Sokoto and Chief Akintola; and the vastly corrupt Federal Finance Miniser, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh-together with almost all of the most senior Northern and Western army officers. But the young officers failed to set up a government of their own choice and had to see power pass into the hands of the commander of the Noigerian army, another Ibo but one not involved in the coup, General Ajuiyi, Ironsi, and to the military governors appointed in each of the regions. On the other hand, as a purely destructive operation, the coup proved brilliantly effective. Amid scense of popular rejoicing in the South, the 'old gang' of corrupt politicians were driven from office. It seemed a Nigerian 1789, the birth of a new era, a second chance to fulfil the high hopes of 1960.

It was not surprising in the Nigerian context that Ironsi, as an Ibo, shoould turn for advice to other Ibos. Particularly to these who occupied senior civil service posts in Lagos. The new military government found itself in an exceptionally difficult position. Almost all Nigerian

politicians had been discredited; Ironsi himself was a non-political soldier; many of his advisers harbored "ingrained technocratic sentiments" and regarded "the vocations of politics" with contempt. Yet the country's problems were essentially political in nature and needed to be tackled with tact and imagination. The solution proposed by the military government was in accordance with the ideas advanced by the NCNC in the early 1950's. Excessive "regionalism" had been, it was argued, a major cause of the downfall of the old regime; Nigeria needed a strong central government to preserve its unity with substantial Ibo communities settled in every region it was much easier for Ibos than for any other ethnic group to think in terms of national unity. Northerners viewed the situation quite differently. Their two leading politicians, Tafawa Balewa and the Sardauna, had been murdered by Ibo officers. By most Northerners "strong central government" was equated with a sinister plot to achieve Ibo domination suddenly, in May, after the military government had issued a decree formally abolishing the federation and transforming the old regions into "groups of provinces", northerners hit back in a series of murderous attacks on Ibos living in the main centers of the North. This savage pogrom appears to have

been "both organized and spontaneous" with former NPC politicians urging on the urban mobs.

In June many Northerners began seriously to consider the possibility of secession. But at the end of July another violent episode gave a new twist to the political situation. Northern troops stationed in Lagos and Abeokuta mutinied, murdered many of their Ibo officers, and arrested and shot Ironsi. A young Northern officer, Colonel Yakubu Gowon, now became "Supreme Commander" Gowon represented a new type of Northerner, for he was a Christian from the Middle Belt, and his sudden rise to power could be seen as symptomatic of the emergence of a powerful new force in Nigerian politics, that of the Northern Middle Belters. In the days of NPC domination in the North, many Middle Belters had seen themselves as an oppressed minority. Unable to achieve their goal of a separate Middle Belt region, the Tiv, the largest ethnic group in the area, had turned so violently against the NPC supporters in their midst that the regional government had brought troops into the Tiv districts in 1960 to restore order. Now in 1966, the Middle Belters found themselves in an unexpectedly powerful position, for their numbers far exceeded all other ethnic groups among the soldiers of the Nigerian army.

With order re-established after the counter coup of July, Nigerians could turn to the major political problem that confronted their country, that of discovering a new political formula acceptable to all sides. Meetings of "leaders of thought" were held in the regions and a constitutional Review Conference met in Lagos. Its most prominent members were politicians with a record of sustained opposition to the old Federal regime -- Awolowo, recently released from prison, Aminu Kano, leader of the radical Northern Elements' Progressive Union and J.S. Tarka, leader of the United Middle Belt Congress. The discussions revealed that a remarkable shift had taken place in the views of the various regional representatives. Easterners abandoned the idea of a strong central government and talked in terms of a loose confederation of regions. Northerners, on the other hand, ceased threatening secession and suggested that each region should be broken up into a number of separate states. Catastrophically, these discussions were interrupted by one of the most horrifying outbreaks of violence that Africa has ever known. Allegedly provoked by reports of attacks on Hausa Communities in the Eastern Region. Northern mobs, assisted by mutinous soldiers, launched a renewed attack on the Ibos in their midst. At least as many as 10,000 Ibos are reckoned to have been

killed in these September massacres, and about 1 million panic-stricken Ibo refugees streamed back from the North and West to an already densely populated Eastern region.

The Ibos could now claim with some justification that a Federation which offered them no guarantee of safety beyond their Regional borders was a meaningless political structure. Rapidly the gulf between the East and the rest of Nigeria widened, with Colonel Ojukwu, military governor of the Eastern Region, assuming the role of popular leader within his own region. On May 30, 1967, Ojukwu, in response to immense popular pressure, proclaimed the transformation of the Eastern Region into the independent Republic of Biafra. On the same day Gowon made an equally momentous announcement: The regions were abolished and Nigeria was to be divided into twelve states with the Northern Region divided up to six states the image of a monolithic North, capable of dominating the rest of Nigeria, was finally shattered. But the new constitutional structure was still unacceptable to the Ibos, for the former Eastern Region was divided into three states, two of which - Rivers and South-East would probably be dominated by the Ijaw, the Ibibio, and other non-Ibo peoples, leaving to the Ibos the small East-Central state with the Federal government branding Ojukwu's proclamation as "an act of rebellion", war became inevitable.

WAR AND THE FAILURE OF BIAFRA SECESSION

When the Gowon Army marched into Biafra his army was much more powerful than the Biafrans. The Nigerian Army, was an agglomeration of over 85,000 men armed to the teeth with modern weapons, whose government had uninhibited access to the armories of at least two major powerlands and several smaller ones, which had been endowed with limitless supplies of bullets, mortars, machine-guns, rifles grenades, bazooks, guns, shells and armoured cars. This was supported by numerous foreign personnel of Technical experience who have concerned themselves with the efficiency of radio. Communications, transport, vehicle maintenance, support weapons, training programmes, military intelligence, combat techniques and services. To these had been added several scores of professional mercenaries, Soviet non-commissioned officers for operation of the support weapons, and ample replenishments of lorries, trucks, jeeps, low-loaders, fuel, transport planes and ships, engineering and bridge building equipment, generators and riverboats. The war efforts of this machine had been backed by an air force of jet fighters and bombers armed with cannon, rockets and bombs, and a navy equipped, with frigates, gun-boats, escorts, landing craft, barges ferries and tugs. The personnel had have been

lavishly supplied with boats, belts, uniforms, helmets, shovels, paunches, food, beer and cigarettes. On the other hand, the Biafran Army, was a Volunteer force representing less than one in ten of those who have presented themselves at the recruiting booths for service. The Biafran faced the problem of arming those who were prepared to fight. But the Biafran Army managed to keep going. On an average, they received at least for the first sixteen months, two or sometimes one ten-ton plane load of arms and ammunition per week. The standard infantry weapon had been the reconditioned Mouser bolt-action rifles, supported by small quantities of machine pistols, sub-machine guns, light and heavy machine guns, and Pistols, Mortar barrels and bombs, artillery Pieces and shills, had been minimal, bazookas almost, non existent.

Forty percent of Biafran fighting manpower was equipped with captured Nigerian equipment, including an assortment of highly, prized armored cars taken when their crews were caught unawares and ran away. Also contributing to the fire power had been home made rockets, land mines, antipersonnel mines, stand cannon, booby, traps, and Maltov cocktails, and to the defence had been added devices such as tank pits, tree-trunks, and pointed stakes.

Without any new vehicles for a year and a half, the Biafarans had kept going on repaired, patched, and cannibalized transport and latterly home-refined petrol. Spare parts, had been either taken from wrecked vehicles or machine tooled.

As regards foreign assistance, despite all that had been said of hundreds of mercenaries, the score over the first eighteen months had been: Forty Frenchmen in November 1967 who also left in a hurry after six weeks, when they decided it was too hot for them; and another group of sixteen in September 1968 who stayed four weeks before coming to the same conclusion. Those who had actually fought along with the Biafran forces had been a small handful comprising a German, Scot, South African, Italian, Englishman, Rhodesian, American (one each), two Flemings and two Frenchmen. Another half-dozen individual soldiers of fortune had drifted in for varying periods of one day to three weeks. With rare exceptions the difficulty of the combat conditions, that there must be easier ways of earning a living have kept most visits down to short duration. The only two men who ever completed their six month contracts were the German Rolf Steiner, who suffered nervous breakdown in his tenth months and had to be repatriated, and

the South African, Taffy Williams. Who completed two contracts and went on leave in the first few days of 1969.

In the final analysis the contribution of the white man to the war on the Biafran side must be reckoned as well under one percent.

Most have been as little more than things in uniform and the riff raff of the cargo did not even bother to volunteer to come out to Biafra at all. Those who did fight at all, fought with slightly greater technical know-how but no more courage or ferocity than the Biafran Officers. The lack of contrast between the two is underlined by Major Williams the one man who stuck by the Biafrans for twelve months of combat, and the only one who emerges as a figure really worth employing. The famous Nigerian expert Frederick Forsyth when visited the war torn area this fellow told Mr Frederick Forsythe that, "I have seen a lot of Africans at War, but there is nobody to touch these people. Give me 18000 Biafrans for six months, and we'll build an army that would be invincible on this continent. I have seen men die in this war who would have won the Victoria cross in another context. My God! Some of them well good scrappers".⁶ The above lines clearly indicate the strength and the fighting capability of the Biafran Army. 1st September of 1967 the

6. Forsyth, Fredrick, The Story of Biafra, p.116.

'Times' Magazine wrote an article on Biafra which also highlights upon the thrilling attitude for the war on both the sides. The magazine writes, "The War began in a spirit of confidence on both sides. General Gowon told his people and the world he had undertaken a short, surgical police action".⁷ The over confidence of General Gowon can be seen in this way that he was perceiving the victory in days rather than weeks. But the high spirit of the Biafran army checked the ambitious feeling of General Gowon and the war continued for 30 months. This war could have prolonged more if the economic blockade was not imposed upon the region which cut the supplies of all the essentials for the people. A time came when the food stock was shorted out and people were dying of starvation. Nothing left for them. International help also could not come to the fore front as the Nigerian Government managed not to allow any NGO's outside the country to come for the help of Biafrans.

Whenever the things started becoming against the expectations of General Gowon he restored some degree of discipline to the armed forces. The double attack from the north and west of Biafra was launched and a naval blockade was imposed. The Ibos achieved a series of initial success only

7. Times Magazine, I September 1967.

in the beginning but by late 1967 the War had degenerated into a violent campaign of attrition. During 1968 most major towns of Biafra were captured by federal forces of Nigeria, and in January 1970 Biafran Force surrendered after Ojukwu's departure into exile. During the war military casualties reached an estimated 100,000 but between 500,000 and 2 m. Biafran civilians died mainly from starvation as a result of the blockade imposed by the federal Government.

The collapse of the Biafran Army, though abrupt was not unexpected by the Biafran leadership. General Ojukwu saw the signs more clearly than others, but continued to inspire false confidence. The army had shown signs of complete exhaustion both through hunger and grave physical strain. No member of the Biafran Army had been allowed on leave, or even had days off since the start of the War. It was indeed one of the miracles of the tragedy that they lasted so long. When General Ojukwu knew that the game was nearly up, his tactics appeared to be that of holding on for as long as possible in the hope as he very often openly and tactlessly told the world that the Nigerian army would crack up first, either through exhaustion or through some political event on the Federal side. In this he was encouraged by reports given by foreign visitors who had been in contact with Nigeria, and also by Biafran intelligence

agents. There was also the hope that some peace settlement would be reached even though on the Biafran side, because of the rigid and arrogant position held, never did enough to encourage such efforts.

General Ojukwu did not normally tell the whole truth about the military situation. Where he did he would gloss over known difficulties. Every military reverse or critical situation was always explained away with assurances that something was going to be done to achieve a miracle. Thus, on a certain date in November or December, when Ojukwu called a meeting of all senior army officers, and invited leading civilians to attend as well, many of the people began to wonder. All the military commanders and officers, except, those who could not leave the fronts because of operations, attended the meeting. The leading civilians invited also attended as did the head of the Biafran police.

General Ojukwu opened the meeting by stating plainly that he had called in the military leaders so that they might say in the presence of Biafran elders whether they still had the will to continue the fight. One did not have to be a psychologist to see from the faces of those present that, even if the spirit was willing, the body was definitely and absolutely weak. Given the chance to speak their minds, some of them would have done so. But Ojukwu

never allowed them that chance. He proceeded at once to state firmly that as far as he himself was concerned he saw no alternatives but to fight on. It was what Biafra expected everyone, and any thing different would be a betrayal of the cause. He was sure, no one present in that room could even conceivably be a party to such an unpardonable betrayal. All that was required was some reorganisation of the army. He seasoned his long speech with much blackmail and intimidation. Anyway the following day a proposal related to the matter came from General Ojukwu but now the situation had worsened to that extent that there had been fervent prayers everywhere for these to end. God answered the prayers as the Biafran army bowed down before the federal Army of Nigeria on 12th January 1970 ending a bloody war of 30 months.

CHAPTER - III

CHAPTER - III

IMPACT ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The secession of Biafra from the country was on the one hand a fatal blow to the unity of the Federal Government of Nigeria but on the other for the Easterners this was the end of their problems. As they always instigated their leader for this historical decision. In fact history has so many evidences which gave them boost support to think over the issue to declare a separate independent state based on their (Ibos) own majority, own government, own institution, own social and economic developmental programmes. The advent of the Nigerian Civil War influenced a great deal the shape of the second National Development Plan, 1970-75 issued in conformity with the needs for national unity, economic integration and reconstruction. A major objective of the plan was to insugerate a new "industrial policy" aiming at the "even development and fair distribution of industries in all parts of the country". It was stated that the economic rationale was to be observed while complementing the objectives of the plan. For example, the plan stated that purely economic consideration would guide the auauthorities with regard to the location of those industries sponsored by the feeral and the state Governments. A measure of administrative discrimination would, however, be allowed in favour

of less industrially developed towns and districts when considering the marginal levels of selective incentives. When the Ibos faced the severe jolt in the form of July massacre they were not even willing to listen anything except the creation of their independent state in the name of 'Republic of Biafra'. Actually the ethnic diversity of the society and its distribution all over the country is the root of the problems in Nigeria. The problem started becoming serious when in Jan. 1966 military coup took place in which all the Fulani (northerners) leaders as well as the military heads were killed and Ironbi (Ibo) became the military head of the country. This military coup transferred the power from Fulani to Ibos group which was unbearable to the northerners who were out numbered in population. They were quite jealous of the progress and developmental attitudes of the Ibos right from the very beginning. And this military coup (Jan. 1966) added the fuel to this fire of jealousy. This followed the heavy bloodshed of the Ibos throughout the country in which all the military and civilians (Fulanis) took part to finish all the Easterners who were left to the northern side. Bloodshed was so heavy that the people who any how managed to escape from the northern region psychologically terrified to that extent that they simply shed the tears without telling anything. This was due to heavy impact upon their minds. This massacre played the

role of catalyst in reaction of making an independent state of Biafra. Later on the heavy fighting for 30 months in fact brought the region to the acute shortage of all the essential materials as the Federal Government of Nigeria sanctioned the blockade upon the region. This blockade played the immense role in making the Biafran people isolated from the other parts of the country. Again Nigerian Government played a diplomatic role in managing to check the assistance to the Biafrans from the foreign countries. This was the main reason that Biafrans had to bow down before the Federal force of Nigeria which took place in Feb. 1970.

After the defeat of the Biafrans the secession was automatically ended. Now, the biggest problem before Mohammed Gowon was to keep the country intact. He was of the view that unless and until the growing power of Ibos is not cut short this secessionist tendency will again grow up. For it he first of all removed all the major and top posts from the Ibos. Ibos were debarred from all the higher posts in Governmental offices. Military was reorganized. Not even a single Ibo top officer was recruited in Nigerian army. This brought a wide impact. Because the recruitment was done by the higher officers and earlier they were doing some favouritism belonging to different groups. So, it was automatically a seize of the fate of the Ibos when they were deprived of their recruitment rights in the army. As we see

that right from very beginning the military is playing the major role in country's every activities so, it was quite obvious that when the most important field of the country is checked for certain group their fate will be checked.

Mohammed Gowon had his own explanations. He was of the view that unless and until the country remains united, there could not be any target of progress achieved in the fast running world in the period of cold war when all the developing countries or underdeveloped countries were tilting towards either of the two super powers. So, to keep the country on the path of rapid development it was essential to keep the country united. He had the bitter experience of Biafran war so he was not ready to take any risk in appointing the forces from the eastern of Ibos group. This was a moral zolt to their feelings. This psychology of Mr.Gowon compelled him to take the drastic step to clean the army from the Ibos so that further any secessionist problem may not be errupted.

The second wide spread impact was perceived on the ban of Student Movements all over the country. As we know that Students are the most intelligentsia class who are also the rulers and statesmen of the future of any country are really the revolutionary group. Student organisations can bring any change to any country. And specially in the case of Nigeria where education was very popular among the Easterners gave a

threat to General Gowon and he took a serious step upon it and immediately banned all the Students Organisations as well as Student's movements so that any revolution might not take place.

Again the next section which became the victim of the Gowon regime was the Trade Unions. It also could not escape from the impact of the war which took into its grip.

The most important and widely perceived impact was the ban upon the press. Press is considered as the spokesman of the country. It also shows the way whenever the government and its policy is not better for the country. Only through the press we can come to know about any country's social, cultural, economic etc. Sphere even sitting in any part of the world. As the Gowon's approach was not justified during the war and after the war so it was quite natural that press became hostile to the Government. As a result was that, the ban was imposed upon the press in later phase.

Actually, the Nigerian press was the most outspoken, volatile, witty and free in black Africa. Its criticisms of Government and establishment are far ranging and pointed; its pursuit of the pompous and incompetent can be very funny as well as relentless; its coverage can be exceptionally wide and also, sometimes, quite parochially narrow. There never seems to be any lack of space for Nigerian writers who in consequence go on at length. Its 'in memorium' pages

provide special social commentary on Nigerian society Focussing upon the style of Nigerian Press Guy Arnold writes,¹ "Its English has a vigour and style of its own that will distinguish Nigerian English from the original in the same way that the idioms of American English have grown apart from those of the original.

The relationship between press and Government was an uneasy yet on the whole healthy one of tensions and pressures. There were wide press criticisms of all aspects of government as well as consistent calls for changes - a return to civilian rule being one of the most important of these calls.

From time to time the government put a variety of pressures upon the press; sometimes its reporters had been failed; once a state governor had a member of the press beaten; and sometimes the press found it wise to say nothing. In July 1975 - shortly before the coup during Gowon's regime the Federal Military Government announced that it was to give financial support to newspaper organisations to encourage wider circulation so that all papers could be seen throughout the country. Six weeks later the new Government took control of the country's largest independent newspaper, the Daily Times and Sunday Times, as well as the New Nigeri-

1. Guy Arnold, Modern Nigeria, p.163.

an which had previously been owned by the six northern states.

Anyway, the fall of Biafra created a good image of the Gowon over the general masses who believed in the unity of the country. But this feeling was only among the northerners and press took Gowon always on its target for his approach towards the easterners. But sudden fall of the Gowon regime after the military coup of 1975 the press I do not know why it became a little generous who were not leaving any stone unturned to criticise the military ruler. After the fall of Gowon the Nigerian observer writes -

"There was no doubt that General Yakubu Gowon made serious mistakes particularly by surrounding himself with lots of dead weights and tolerating some immatured military governors who dismissed commissioners at will, ordered canning of journalists, degraded university intellectuals and insulted elders, but he was gentleman. Even though many went to his detention camps but he was never a tyrant".

Anyway, whatever the newspapers and the journals wrote after the fall of the Gowon regime they were totally against him. And this resulted into the imposition of Government clutch over the press was there. Because Gowon was still scared that if the press again started fanning the zeal of the Ibos this secession come to happen again. And he was not

ready to face any war again like Biafra so, this was the problem of Gowon.

IMPACT OF THE WAR ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Biafran War left a deep impact on Nigeria's foreign policy. The impact was felt in both the directions i.e. relations with her immediate neighbors in West Africa; and relations with the rest of Africa and the world. Nigeria was able to come during 67-70 armies engagement on Biafran question that the First Bomb dropped in Lagos by the Biafran rebels was made in South Africa. This determined her approach to the issue of white minority rule in South Africa. It was realised that apartheid regime threaded the security of Africa. In the developments particularly 'General Gowon' rule Nigeria persistently provided, material and military assistance to SWAPO and became very vocal contributing immensely to the decolonization process in Africa.

With peace at home after the military engagement General Gowon as the chairman of OAU travelled extensively to various parts of Africa. As pro-Olajide Aluko started in African Affairs (Vol. 72 (287) April 1973), "With peace, stability and unity at home it has become more possible than ever before the the federal Government to concentrate on important African issues".²

2. Omolodu Olatuoji: Nigeria Africa and the World: S. C. Saxena (ed) 5 June 1981, 30, Sardar Patel Marg, N. Delhi, P. XVIII.

It can be said that the lesson of the Biafran civil war, the all around economic development, the substantial increase in Foreign exchange reserves and her growing military strength brought Nigeria out in the open and forced her to abandon the low profile in foreign policy that characterised the earlier period. Nigeria played a dominant role in drawing up the Lusaka Manifesto. This manifesto is an extension of the decolonization clause of the OAU Charter. Both the OAU Charter and the Lusaka Manifesto gave priority to peaceful solutions over those which resulted in bloodshed. The OAU eradicate all forms of colonialism from the continent of Africa the member states would resort to peaceful settlement of all disputes by negotiations, mediation, conciliation and arbitration. "On the objective of liberation as defined thus we can neither surrender nor compromise. We have always preferred and will still prefer to achieve it without Physical violence".³ Before the declaration of Biafra basically Nigeria's foreign policy was moderate. It maintained a low profile, almost a conservative in foreign affairs, although it did abrogate the defence treaty with Britain in 1962 and oppose the French Saharan nuclear tests. With the start of Biafran War Nige-

3. Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Manifesto on Southern Africa: Lusaka Manifesto AHG/44 1969. P. 15.

ria's foreign policy came of age. Guy Arnold writes, "4The harsh realities of big power politics and would be intervention in its affairs taught it the most practical lesson of all as far as foreign policy is concerned : that other nations will only help in order to reap advantages for themselves, otherwise they oppose or remain neutral."

Under Gowon after the end of Biafra Nigeria's foreign policy in the period 1970-75 emerged as far more radical than during the period from independence in 1960 to 1966. From the end of the Biafran War Nigerian essays into foreign affairs have shown a marked lack of rhetoric and a sensible understanding of the basis of power. It is Nigerian economic strength (the market it offers and its oil) which provides its major weapon in its foreign affairs.

The international involvement in the war especially that of Britain, Russia and France of the great powers but of many others besides-was a major factor helping to shape the subsequent Nigerian view of what it's foreign policy should be. Indeed in the five years that followed the end of the war Gowon showed a marked preference for foreign affairs - some of his critics would say, to the neglect of home for foreign affairs and though throughout that period Nigerian world impact was considerably less than it might

4. Arnold, Guy, Modern Nigeria. p.135.

have been, the country also came to feel its strength and realise the extent of the influence it might wield.

During the commonwealth conference held in Singapore in January 1971, for example, it was probably for more Nigerian Pressures (which included the threat to switch arms purchases from Britain) than the rhetoric and appeals of Tanzania and Zambia that helped hold British government back from what otherwise might have been a headlong rush into selling arms to South Africa. During that year Nigeria became more confident and so more involved in the questions relating to arms for South-Africa, dialogue, the proposed British-Rhodesia deal, and the question of an OAU High command. It also emerged as a militant champion of the Southern Africa liberation movements.

Relations with Britain were slow in recovering following the war. They began to look-up in 1972 when Lord Carrington (Britain's Minister of Defence) visited Lagos and issued the invitation to Gowon to visit Britain. Another year was to pass, however before this took place and then - despite hard work by the British Foreign office - only after Nigeria had obtained certain commitments as to what Britain would not do with regard to developments in Rhodesia and Southern Africa. For Britain Nigeria had been the greatest of its African colonies, and despite ups and downs in rela-

tions, including potentially disastrous British fence - sitting during the early stages of the civil war, the two-way relationship was never marred by the social overtones that affected Britain's dealings with those territories complicated by sizable white settler minorities. The obvious close connections relate to trade, army traditions, language, law and a number of other affinities that exist as a direct leftover of the imperial age. In London, Gowon certainly showed that he knew how to play upto his audience. Better relations were materially helped by the fact that in 1973 10 percent of Britain's oil came from Nigeria while, after South Africa, by far the largest British investment stakes on the continent were in Nigeria.

Soon after London visit General Gowon went on a State visit to Russia. He was then criticised in Nigeria for having gone to London first : Russia, after all, had provided far more military assistance in terms of value) to the Federal Government during the war including aircraft which Britain had refused and had done so more promptly than Britain. And Russia by 1974 was supplying substantial technical assistance to Nigeria as well as providing her with several thousand scholarships a year.

Later in 1974 Gowon visited China, completing a second of the big powers to demonstrate Nigeria's essential non-

aligned stand in world-affairs. The result of his visit to China in September 1974 was an increase in Chinese agricultural technical and cultural assistance and exchanges.

Relations with USA have never been especially warm : partly, perhaps, stemming from the unfortunately gauche remark of Dean Rusk at the outbreak of civil war when he said.⁵ We regard partly because of a genuine remoteness of the USA from Nigerian Affairs, even though black Americans have endeavoured to identify closely with Nigeria, and partly because of more than one awkwardness in American dealings with Nigeria and the failure to arrange a Nixon-Gowon meeting when the latter attended the UN, or when the American diplomatic corps refused to vacate a building in Lagos after being requested to do so by the government until the Nigerians actually surrounded it with troops. However, as the American Post Dispatch said in August 1975, following the coup in Nigeria, "⁶In as much as Nigeria supplies five percent of America's oil, there may be some diplomatic response in the US to the coup in black Africa's richest nation". Although potentially there were enormous cultural ties between the two countries the relationship between

5. West Africa, 22 July 1967.

6. Quoted in Evening Times, 4 August 1975.

Nigeria and USA in Post Biafran War was mainly a commercial one.

At the end of 1975 and early 1976 Nigeria and Russia came closer together over the question of Angola. In October 1975 Nigeria took delivery of the first batch of Soviet-built supersonic Mig 21 fighters as a first phase in modernising her air-force : the air-force already had both Mig 17 fighters and Ilyushin 28 bombers as part of its fleet from the days of the civil war. As the war in Angola worsened and the Russians and Cubans as well as the South Africans became involved Nigeria became one of the first African states to recognise the MPLA as the government of the country. At the emergency session of the OAU held in Adis Ababa at the beginning of 1976, Nigeria took a strong line in support of the MPLA when a decade locked position ensued - 22 for MPLA and 22 against.

Over Angola the government adopted one of the most positive leads that Nigeria has taken over any African issue for a long time. Having recognised the MPLA government itself, Nigeria then proceeded to canvas other African states to persuade them to follow its lead, in the event its diplomacy may well have been a deciding factor in achieving majority recognition for the MPLA. The commissioner for Youth and Sports, General Olufemi Olutoye (who also played a

diplomatic role) went to a number of American capitals to persuade their governments of the need for a stand over the Angola issue, the commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Colonel Joseph Garbo as well as the then chief of staff Supreme Headquarters, General Olusegun Obasanjo, threw their weight behind a campaign to obtain majority African recognition for the MPLA. Both Olutoye and Obasanjo visited Ghana's Acheampong within a week of each other and then, following a visit by the MPLA Prime Minister, Lopo do Nascimento, Ghana recognised the MPLA. Other countries such as Libya, Niger and Chad were also influenced by Nigerian pressures.

During the Angolian crisis The U.S. President Ford circulated African heads of state with his views on the question. The Nigerian reaction was to publish his letter in full and the reply in which the President was accused of 'arm-twisting' and 'insulting the intelligence' of African leaders. President Ford was told in no uncertain terms that Africa was not prepared to bow to the dictates of a super-power.

The reasons for the strong stand taken by the Mohammed Gowon Government over Angola were important and indicated a new line in foreign policy. First, and very clearly at the time, there was vacuum in African leadership over Angola and other issues, Nigeria was the African state most able to

fill such a vacuum and give a lead, and here it showed itself prepared to do so in forthright terms. Second, it was determined to come out in opposition to South Africa whose defiance of Africa over apartheid and Namibia was now blatantly reinforced by its intervention in Angola. Nigeria argued correctly that the Republic had to be stopped and shown that it could not pursue its aims in black Africa by arms with impunity. Even a limited South African success in Angola would have set back by years the revolutionary changes at last taking place in that part of the continent. Third, Nigeria brushed aside American and western arguments about Russia in Angola : the Russian had helped Nigeria in the War without ending up running the state, but in any case Nigeria saw it as racist neocolonialism for the west to instruct Africa about the dangers of accepting Russian assistance. This new and tough approach to an African problem an approach it was prepared to back by precise diplomatic continental hole for Nigeria.

The commonwealth, although often decried by the Nigerian press, played an important role in Nigerian foreign policy. Nigerian accession to it in 1960 ensured that South Africa would be forced out a year later, almost literally the last action of the Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, before he was killed in what were the beginning of the

civil war' was to chair the Lagos commonwealth conference of January 1966 on Rhodesia, while the Federal Government was prepared to turn to the commonwealth for possible help with mediation before the civil war actually got moving. Unobtrusive Nigerian diplomacy at Singapore probably did more than anything else to temper the intention of both Health and Home to resume the Sale of Arms to South Africa, at the Oflawa meeting of August 1973 General Gowon played a central role over the main issues of arms to South Africa, Rhodesia and support for Namibia, as he was to do again at the Kingston meeting 18 months later. The commonwealth provides Nigeria (as it did its other members) with an extremely useful firm for effective diplomacy as well as a special means of exerting pressures upon Britain.

Nigeria which had concluded an earlier agreement with the EEC in 1966 that was never satisfied, approached the EEC in the 1970s with caution, then in forthright terms it condemned the idea of Yaounde style association with the European common market for itself or other commonwealth African countries, preferring for a straight trade agreement. Subsequent Nigerian championship of the 'Associables and Associates' was a key factor in winning reasonable terms for the African countries in the battle that led to the Low convention of January 1975. At that convention it was

agreed to abandon reverse preferences and to adopt export stabilization schemes, and both these achievements were due mainly to Nigerian leadership. Nigeria in fact could have stayed clear of the negotiations since its oil gave it the leeway to do so. It did not, and the success of the negotiations from the African point of view resulted from Nigeria's correct use of its diplomatic strengths in relation to Europe : it had the bargaining power in both its products and the market it offered, making it a most attractive potential partner for the EEC. It knew this and used it significantly in the bargaining that took place.

The Southern Africa dominates much of the continents diplomacy and in the case of Nigeria also profoundly affected relations with Britain. During the first five years of the 1970's Nigerian leads on Southern Africa had a substantial modifying effect upon British policies while over this period it shifted steadily into the radical camp. Nigeria quarreled with Britain over the November 1971 Home-Smith proposals for Rhodesia. It gradually increased its backing for the various liberation movements, it applied sanctions to Rhodesia, it turned down the tempting Worth African offer of a deal (gold or oil), it gave qualified support to the Kaunda-Nyerere detente exercise that started late in 1974 though making plain it was ready for a switch back to

guerrilla tactics if it failed, and its recognition of MPLA at the end of 1975 was probably decisive in influencing the course of events that followed.

Since 1970 oil wealth has enabled Nigeria to become an aid donor. Only a modestone but nevertheless a donor. At the end of 1974, for example, arrangements were completed for the IMF in Washington to borrow \$ 120 million from Nigeria to help finance oil credits for other countries, then the world Bank borrowed \$240 million at 8 percent interest. In the commonwealth which has a number of specialised agencies for technical assistance Nigeria was then only developing country to have increased substantially its aid contributions. It did it for the commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) which supplies technical assistance to promote economic and social development in the developing countries of the commonwealth. Nigeria raised its contribution for 1974-75 to £ 430,000 and agreed to maintain it at that level for a further two years provided the advanced economics such as those of Britain and Australia also kept their contributions at comparable levels.

On a bilateral basis Nigeria disbursed an estimated £ 2 million in relief to the Sahel countries following the draught and these included Ethiopia and Somalia outside West Africa. It provided make with two gifts £ 25000 each in

1973, it made available to Botswana technical assistance in the form of legal and police personnel, it gave the newly independent Guine Bissau N 5000000, it provided aid for Zambia after Smith closed the border in January 1973 and Zambia was faced with a mammoth rerouting exercise for her copper, and at the Kingston commonwealth conference it promised aid to mozambique in the event of the latter closing its borders to Rhodesia and so losing its revenue from the transit of Rhodesian goods.

Indeed, by 1975, Nigeria was in the position of receiving suppliants for its assistance. In July of that year, on his way to Monrovia to attend Liberia's 128th anniversary of independence, king Moshoehoe II of Lesotho stopped off in Lagos for talks with General Gowon. The king sought technical assistance from Nigeria to help Lesotho's development programme, he also explored the possibility of training 'young nationalists of Lesotho' in Nigeria.

The end of Biafra War brought the prestige to the Federal Government of Nigeria and it started moving very fast to become a big power specially in Africa. We clearly get evidence upon the every matter related to either African issues or any world issues in the field of either oil or economic investments as we see that sometimes it acted as the effective spokesman over the EEC issue. Important

enough strategically enough and economically to carry growing weight with the great powers, Nigeria played an expanding role in the councils of the OAU, the commonwealth and OPEC. All these activities made up its general foreign policy. of most immediate concern to Nigeria, however, must be its relations with its neighbours of West Africa and here it faced the greatest difficulties and the biggest challenges. It does so quite simply because of its size in relation to all the other countries of the region : the population of the 15 members of ECOWAS comes to 125 million and nearly two thirds of that number were Nigerians. As a result the others were scared of its economic and political domination if, therefore, it was to lead West Africa effectively it might do so with circumspection.

Nigeria had cultivated relations with its West African neighbours since 1970 and Gowon believed in sharing Nigerian economic prosperity as a means of drawing the countries of the region closer together, showing a passionate determination to bring English and French - speaking states of the region into closer relations and harmony. Perhaps in the long run the creation of ECOWAS may go down as General Gowon's greatest achievement. Money power was always a most effective instrument of policy though, if mishandled or overused, it may backfire upon its user. Between 1970 and

1975. Nigeria made some substantial grants to Togo, Dahomey, and Niger to help balance their budgets and reduce their dependence upon France. Most of Nigeria's Sahel relief funds went to Niger, Chad, upper Volta and Mali. General Gowon worked on the assumption that half the division in West Africa were the artificial leftovers of the colonial age and that what the countries shared in common of past background, culture, commercial ties and interests could more than compensate for the differences of language, law and political approach that marked off Anglophone from Francophone countries. In this his judgment was clearly right.

There were never any questions of ECOWAS being in compatible with the various existing organisations in the region (most of them between two or three countries) such as the Chad Basin commission, the organisation of Senegal River States, the River Niger commission, the Nigeria-Niger Joint commission, the Liberia-Sierra Leone or the Ghana-Togo commission. Nothing in the projected West African Economic community need be at cross-purposes with these various commissions which were developed to answer specific purposes. Part of the difficulty in forming a West African regional association undoubtedly lay in the patterns of relations left behind by the colonial division of the area,

with states divided as between Britain and France, and many of them looking outside Africa rather than to their neighbours. The Nigerian approach under Gowon was pragmatic and realistic : a stage-by-stage advance that never attempted to be too ambitious too quickly. The fact that General Gowon won the support of Houphouet Boigny to the idea of trans cultural regional grouping for economic purpose perhaps ensured that the treaty would come into being, for traditionally the Ivory coast had been against such groupings as unrealistic.

Nigeria had a major vested interest in improving the overland communications facilities of the region, for its own chronic port congestion difficulties led in 1975 to an exploration of the possibilities of imports coming in to Ghana or Benin and then cross land to Nigeria. In any cases Nigeria was the starting-on finishing-points for two of Africa's planned major new highways the trans Saharan highways and the trans African highways and both these will have an important impact upon ECOWAS. In economic terms Nigeria could become the factory for Western Africa with a series of new or improved highway (both road & rail) radiating outwards from it. The easing of border requirements (to cut down smuggling), the adoption of common road, rail and coastal shipping practices as well as legal and other re-

quirements (all envisaged in the ECOWAS Treaty) are essential steps towards greater regional co-operation. They were also a prerequisite for any growth of Nigeria's economic impact upon the area for at present the bulk of its trade - and certainly more than need or should be the case was outside the continent to Europe rather than with its neighbours. During the 1970s Nigeria did undertake some development deals with its neighbours of potentially great significance. In February 1973, For Example, it agreed to export crude oil to Sierra Leon's refiners and to import Sierra Leone high-grade iron-ore for its proposed steel industry In fact the ore proved so low-grade that this Sierra Leone mine has ceased production. Sierra Leone also agreed to import Nigerian Coal and Nigeria took Sierra Leon's scrap rails for use in its coalmines. Also that year Nigeria invested N 65800 in Guinea's Iron ore mines, acquiring a 5 percent holding in the Guinea company.

As Nigeria has felt itself becoming an economic gaint so, more and more, it has wished to pursue policies commensurate with its power. The development of ECOWAS was its major contribution to African unity in the period 1970-75. The commissioner for foreign Affairs over this period, Dr. Okoi Arikpo, was constrained to say, however, that it was a false and pernicious idea that Nigeria's economic and polit-

ical weight would be a threat to its smaller neighbours' May be, the statement needed saying as it the key to any West African regional grouping : its has tried hard to co-operate with its smaller neighbours and help them without appearing to dragoon them in to a pattern of its devising, it is by no means an easy political exercise.

In January 1975 Gowon visited Dahomey (Benim) and Togo and in the former country it was agreed to establish jointly owned sugar-and cement - producing complexes which will only be 160 kilometers from major Nigerian Markets. Thus Nigeria pursued its policy of establishing factories in neighbouring countries. In Togo a £ 15 million oil refinery being constructed, & would be commissioned in 1977. When that happens Nigeria will import phosphates from Togo in exchange for crude oil Nigeria is also involved in a joint project for an oil refinery in the Ivory coast.

Thus, we see that the end of Biafra create a wide range for Nigeria to make its Foreign policy strengthened. This was also due to the feeling that victorious are always welcomed. Again the 80 decade basically shown the Gowon's mighty influence over the people as well as towards the other African countries. And the oil field of Nigeria also gave it the chance to the international Forum.

CHAPTER - IV

CHAPTER-IV

CONCLUSION

Nigeria was the creation of colonialism. The British had joined many ethnic groups and set them under one authority with four main regions - Eastern, Western, Northern and Lagos.

The Biafran problems began with 14 January 1966 coup staged by a small section of the army in which a number of political leaders were killed. A Supreme Military Council was established under major Ironsi. But the inexperience of the regime rekindled regional fears, particularly among northerners. An attempt of the unitary system replacing the federal structure touched off unrest and a second military coup on 28th July ousted Ironsi, who was killed and this coup brought Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon to power. As tribal tensions by this time was at a fever fitch. Thousands of Ibos living in north were massacred and in retaliation, northerners were killed in the eastern region. The northerners gone secessionist threats and similar threats came from the eastern region by the Military governor of the Eastern region Lt. Col. Ojukwu. In response to these demands the Fedral government announced the replacement of Nigeria's four regions with 12 states and of the same time it declared a state of emergency.

On 30 May 1967 the former eastern region formally declared secession. It broke away from Nigeria declaring itself an independent republic of Biafra, with Ojukwu as its head. The Federal Army responded and on 6th July the first shots were fired in what was to be a bitter two-and-a-half year long civil war. Death toll was very heavy. The Biafrans surrendered finally on 15th January 1970 and General Gowon continued to rule.

The end of Biafran episode left a deep impact on Nigeria, i.e., its economy, polity and social life. The impact has been so deep that Nigerians have lived constantly under dictatorial regimes. All efforts to go back to civilian rule have miserably failed. Civil rights have been denied and democratic institutions have been sacked despite the criticism of the world. Press and Media has been suppressed. Students and other civil movements have been repressively crushed.

The major setback came to the people who were the residents of Biafran region. In defeated Biafran, life and had been hard after the War. Some opportunities went straight to work for the General Gowon regime; the great masses of farmers, small traders, artisans and clerks, living in an area split into tiny different states and

deprived of all Federal Funds despite the vast oil revenues that came from beneath their feet.

One most remarkable aspect is that during this period the military has become so powerful that it seems that never civilian rule will come to the country. The obvious reason is that after the end of secession the people of the country (except eastern region) were told that military rule was the best model to govern a divided country specially a country like Nigeria. The military rule has turned the people of Nigeria into muted men, and their real views have been known. The rulers have imposed personal rule. These men are more interested in their personal careers than in the welfare of their people.

Since the Biafran war the unchallenged military regimes have become the institution of governing the country. But during 1970's it has become a big problem for the country to maintain the level of military expenditure. The military expenditure has exceeded the required limits a Nigerian economy, and the government records indicate that the exceeded expenditure has estimated 3 times to over £ 100 million during 1970-71, as opposed to of 32 million in 1969-70. There are 200,000 men in arms which is a heavy load for any country to carry. One of the problems in the period 1970-75 has been that the huge wartime army has not been

provided with the standard of accommodation required for a peacetime force and during that particular time there was no question of reducing its size. This has become a heavy burden upon the Government expenditure.

With the end of the Civil War, Nigeria has witnessed a peaceful reconciliation that has virtually no precedent in the history of Civil Wars. General Gowon government created a mood of reconciliation.

In the post Civil War era a number of significant trends have been noticed in Nigerian politics:

(i) The government has become increasingly centralised.

The powers of the Federal government has grown steadily while those of the states has constantly eroded. Oil revenues accrued to the central government and with vast increase in these revenues that has been a corresponding increase in the powers of the centre. Power lies in the hands of military.

(ii) The award of over inflated contracts to Nigerian agents of foreign firms has become the major avenue of capital accumulation. Income inequalities have continued to increase rapidly. Food prices and rents have increased making life of poor salaried class almost impossible. Corruption has reached new levels of a peak as public life become infected by moral squalor and financial acquisitiveness.

The ideological basis of new foreign policy has been outlined requiring Nigeria to have a place for Africa in its foreign policy. The first and most significant expression of the new policy has been Nigeria's strong support to Anti-racist movements in South Africa and Namibia. Nigeria had also extended support to MPLA in Angolan War. It effectively rallied OAU to back MPLA. Nigerian support to MPLA legitimised presence of Cuban force in Angola.

Despite the ever-increasing involvement with Western countries, Nigeria remained unmoved by Western attempts to raise a fear of Cuban Troops, Russian intentions or Marxist involvement among African nations.

Nigeria openly criticised western support to South African racist regime. Involvement in Economic Community of West African states and foreign policy stand made post Biafran Nigeria a strong state, which could not be set aside by powerful nations like Britain, France and USA.

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