U.S. /NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE NIGERIA/BIAFRA WAR 1967-1970

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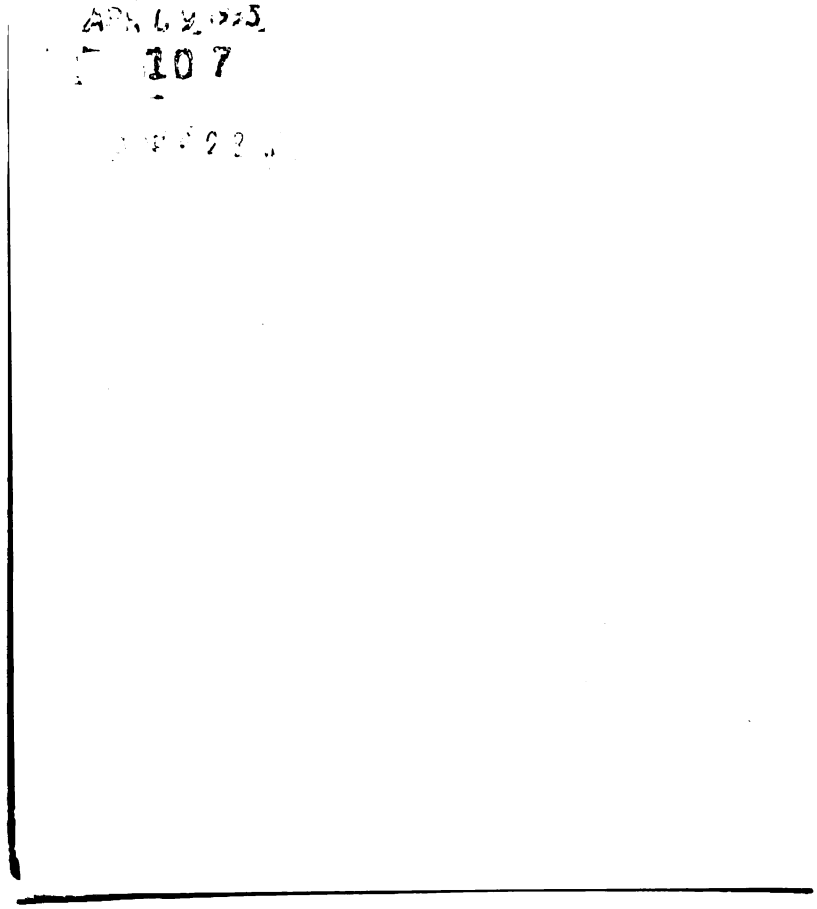

ABSTRACT

U.S./NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF
U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE
NIGERIA/BIAFRA WAR
1967-1970

By

Levi Akalazu Nwachuku

In 1967, the Nigerian federation disintegrated as a result of the secession of the former eastern region which declared itself the "Republic of Biafra" on May 30. Consequently, a civil war erupted. It lasted from July 6, 1967 to January 12, 1970. The conflict attracted world attention and many countries involved themselves in different ways. Russia and Britain supplied arms to the Nigerian Federal Government; France expressed sympathy for the Biafran cause; Egypt supplied Nigeria with military pilots and Portugal served as a diplomatic service center for Biafra. While the majority of independent African nations supported Nigeria's territorial integrity, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Tanzania and Zambia accorded Biafra diplomatic recognition.

An attempt is made in this work to analyze the role of the United States in the Nigeria/Biafra War, especially

to verify two popularly held notions: one, that the U.S. government took a neutral stance and two, that many parallels could be drawn between the Nigerian conflict and the nineteenth century American Civil War.

Since the war is a very recent event, some government documents which deal with the official attitude of the U.S. are not within the reach of scholars. It would be revealing, for instance, to know what transpired in the National Security Council meetings which were held to discuss the Nigerian problem. Also, private correspondences of the ambassadors (Elbert Matthews and later William Trueheart) to their superiors at the Department of State would shed greater light on an understanding of the official policy towards the Nigerian War.

I relied heavily on congressional records and hearings, public statements of the presidents and government officials. Also interviews I had with some government officials and individuals whose organizations were involved in relief programs for Nigeria were very fruitful.

The following major conclusions emerge from the research: despite its declared posture of neutrality, the U.S. government played a crucial role; it was not neutral. Its concern was the survival of Nigerian unity and thus during the war, it directed its policy towards that end. Though it was deeply disturbed by reports of starvation in

the Biafran enclave, its efforts to send adequate relief to the starving people of Biafra was, more often than not, hampered by political considerations. There was a general reluctance among the American public to encourage an overt U.S. government intervention especially in the military aspect. The public feared that its government had already over extended itself in South East Asia. The involvement of the U.S. public in the Nigerian war was largely humanitarian. It cared very little about the right or wrong of the conflict.

Essentially the policy of the United States government, especially in the political aspect, followed the Russian and British patterns. They were committed to maintain the integrity of Nigeria as a united nation. However, the U.S. executed its policy differently from the others. It shunned overt military assistance, but preferred to achieve its objective by quiet diplomacy.

The historical differences between Nigeria and the U.S. especially in their cultural and societal structure underline a major problem which makes an analogy between the civil wars of the two nations a fruitless effort.

U.S./NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE NIGERIA/BIAFRA WAR 1967-1970

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CIVIL WARS: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS, SUDAN, ZAIRE AND NIGERIA, A CASE STUDY

A civil war is an internal conflict[1] which the people of a country fight amongst themselves generally within national boundaries. Most civil wars of this century have increasingly witnessed external involvements, which have proven crucial and decisive. Nevertheless, the chief actors in a civil war are the people involved in internecine strife, and it is they who suffer or benefit.

Civil wars are very much a part of human history. For thirty years (1618-1648) Germany was embroiled in a war in which the states fought one another. Between 1642-1649 England was involved in a war in which the royal forces (Cavaliers) lined up against the Parliamentary forces

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[1]Martin Edmonds regards a civil war as a "specific and exceptional form of internal conflict, an intra-societal conflict," see "Civil War: A Taxonomy and Typology" in Robin Higham, ed., Civil Wars in the Twentieth Century (Lexington, 1972), pp. 11-25.

(Roundheads). The United States, also, did not escape the frustrations of a civil war for she engaged in it from 1861 to 1865.

In the present century, many nations have been tormented by civil war. It was a traumatic experience for Russia in 1917. Spain fought hers in 1936. Zaire's war, from 1960-1962, almost degenerated into an unmanageable coflict, and Nigeria experienced the agony of a horrifying civil war from 1967-1970.[2]

In order to analyze and assess civil wars in their true historical perspective, it is important to examine each case in its own setting. The socio-economic and political-cultural background of a country largely determines the causes, direction and focus of its internal strife. Because "secession" has been a common factor in many major civil wars, there is the urge to interpret the causes of civil wars in the context of secession. In this light, the American Civil War could be explained in terms of an attempt by the southern states to secede from the union; the Nigerian Civil War resulted from the creation of Biafra; and the Sudanese War was occasioned by the southern struggle to break away from northern political

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[2]Other civil wars of this century include the Laotian, 1959-62; the Lebanese 1959-62; the Chinese, 1945-49; and the Burmese, 1948-1954.

domination. In the above context, a civil war could thus be interpreted as a struggle by a nation to combat centrifugal and particularistic forces which threaten its solidarity. Such an interpretation betrays a lack of historical understanding of factors which underlie specific cases of civil wars. As the Pakistani war in 1972 demonstrated, secession sometimes becomes the effect, and not the cause of a civil war.

The theoretical analyses of civil wars in Africa based on the experiences of Nigeria, Zaire and Sudan will deal primarily with causation. In his discussion of the etiology of internal wars, Harry Eckstein stressed two factors, "preconditions" and "precipitants." He stated that "a precipitant is an event which actually occasions the war" while "the preconditions are those events which make it possible for precipitants to bring about political violence."[3] However, it is important to note that the precipitants of a civil war may not relate to the preconditions. In essence, it may not often be possible to tell the preconditions by analyzing the precipitants. This dilemma poses the need to study each set of factors independently of the other.

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[3]Harry Eckstein, "On the Etiology of Internal War," History and Theory, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1964/65), p. 140.

Also what Eckstein has called "preconditions" and "precipitants" can be reduced to such terms as "remote" and "immediate" causes. The remote causes can be traced to the totality of the history of the nation involved while the immediate causes would be spontaneous incidents which the political leadership can not contain.

In analyzing the preconditions for a civil war in the three selected countries--Nigeria, Zaire and Sudan--the following propositions are important:

1. Politico-cultural heterogeneity which results in the development of nationalism within each cultural boundary. In this respect, the nation is victimized by micro-nationalisms which withdraw allegiance from the national consciousness.

2. Process of uneven development and progress among different ethnic groups within the nation. The less developed and progressive group regards itself as dominated by the more progressive group and feels the urge to gain security by controlling its own political destiny. As in the case of Katanga, the more progressive group sometimes finds

satisfaction in severing political ties with other groups that are less economically advantaged.

3. Policy of colonial masters. The desire of the colonial powers to create a nation from pluralistic societies, while erecting barriers which inhibit total integration of the different component groups. Nations that evolve in this fasion tend to endure only with the political presence of the colonial power.

The causes of the civil wars in the three selected countries will be analyzed against the background of the three propositions.

Sudan

Sudan is a large country comprising almost one million square miles.[4] It has been victimized by chronic internal divisiveness which became more acute since independence in 1956. The provinces of the southern

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[4]See P. M. Holt, A Modern History of the Sudan, From the Funj Sulfanate to the Present Day (New York, 1961), p. 4.

Sudan--Bahr el-Ghazal, Equatorial and Upper Nile--maintain a political, economic and cultural outlook different from the north. The differences in the outlook of the two regions was molded primarily by the nature of their respective contacts with the outside world. Northern Sudan had for several thousand years been in almost continuous contact with Mediterranean, and, to a greater degree, Middle Eastern peoples.[5] The influx of Arab people into the region led to the creation of a large Arabicized and and Muslim population.[6] Some critics consider the Northern Sudan to be more of an Arab than an African country.[7]

The South presents a different politico-cultural orientation, and the population is predominantly African.[8] Its contact with the outside world began only during the middle of the nineteenth century.[9] The swamp and sudd formed by the rivers that have run off the slopes of the Nile-Congo Divide greatly contributed to the relative

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[5]See Mandour Eh Mahdi, A Short History of the Sudan (London, 1965), pp. 27-28.

[6]Ibid.

[7]See Voice of Southern Sudan, Vol. 1, No. 1 (April 1963), p. 1.

[8]Joseph Oduho and William Deng, The Problem of the Southern Sudan (London, 1963), pp. 9-10.

[9]Mohamed Omer Beshir, The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict (London, 1968), pp. 9-12.

isolation of the Southern Sudan. The absence of geographical barriers between it and its southern neighbors, Zaire, Uganda and Kenya, made for much easier communication between it and the latter. Thus, Southern Sudan's development took an African focus. Politicized southerners stress their cultural differences in relation to their northern neighbors and emphasize their Africanity.[10] That the Southern Sudan regarded itself as a separate politico-cultural entity is reflected in the speech of Aggrey Jaden at the Khartoum conference in 1965.

> The Sudan falls sharply into two distinct areas, both in geographical area, ethnic group and cultural systems. The Northern Sudan is occupied by a hybrid Arab race who are united by their common language, common culture and common religion, and they look to the Arab world for their cultural and political interpretation . . . the people of the Southern Sudan . . . belong to the African ethnic group of East Africa, they do not only differ from the hybrid Arab race in origin, arrangements and basic systems but in all concernable purpose. With this real division, there are in fact two Sudans and the most important thing is that there can never be basis of unity between the two. There is nothing in common between the various sections of the community; no body of shared beliefs, no identity of interests . . . and above all, the Sudan has failed to compose a single community . . . The two communities can never see face to face even in enforced assimilation.[11]

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[10] Voice of Southern Sudan, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 1-2.

[11] Round-Table Conference on the Southern Sudan, Khartoum, March 1965, speech by Aggrey Jaden (Sudan Information News Agency Documents, n.d.), p. 144.

The south, convinced that they are a people set apart by virtue of historical and cultural factors, regarded any form of unity under the influence of Northern Sudan as imperialism.[12] This southern view compels one to conclude that only the eradication of the political and cultural differences which exist between the two sections and the cultivation in both sections, especially in the south, of a spirit of belonging to the national institutions, can eliminate the threat of a civil upheaval.

The schism created by the historical and cultural diversity of the country is aggravated by the uneven political and economic development of the two sections. The north's regular outside contacts gave it a considerable advantage over the south. The north maintains many commercial enterprises whereas the south depends largely on subsistence agriculture.[13] The south has blamed this lag on the north, contending that the north encourages and sustains southern economic backwardness. Oliver Albino stated four instances in which the Arab North suppressed

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[12]See "Southern Sudan To-day: A Test Case in Afro-Arab Cooperation," Voice of Southern Sudan, Vol. 1, No. 1, (April 1963).

[13]Beshir Mohamed Omer states that the south "lags behind the north in this [economic] respect" see The Southern Sudan, p. 4.

economic undertakings in the south.[14] Southerners have argued that the north sees southern economic backwardness to its advantage for it enables them to exert political control over the south.[15] This thinking contributed to the south's determination to demand an antonomous politcal existence. Southerners see in such a demand a guarantee for an existence that is free from northern political domination and economic exploitation. Aggrey Jaden has stated that "only freedom can allay the Southern Sudanese allegation of economic exploitation."[16] If there had been an equal economic progress in both sections, the south would not have feared domination from the north. Joseph Garang, Minister of State for Southern Affairs, emphatically stated that "the cause of southern problem is the inequality which exists between the north and south by reason of an uneven economic, social, and cultural development."[17]

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[14]Attempts to install the following four industries were thwarted by Arab controlled northern government, and the industries were established in the north: Messrs. Bauxal and Co. for sugar production; a paper factory firm; a fish-canning plant; and a meat factory. See The Sudan: A Southern View (London, 1970), pp. 88-110.

[15]Ibid., p. 91.

[16]Khartoum Conference, p. 141.

[17]See "Regional Autonomy for the South: Speeches by Joseph U. Garang, Minister of State for Southern Affairs," A Revolution in Action, No. 2 (Khartoum, n.d.), p. 8.

The British Colonial Policy

The Sudanese have felt that British policy largely created the problem of internal divisiveness in their country. The Sudan Ministry of Southern Affairs expressed this feeling when it said that "the root of the problem of the Southern Sudan can be found in the annals of yesterday's African colonial era."[18]

An examination of British policy in Sudan reveals that while it aspired to build a unified nation, Britain nevertheless encouraged measures which only served to inhibit progress towards the goal of national unity. In this regard, H. A. MacMichael's statement is instructive:

> The policy of the government in the Southern Sudan is to build up a series of self-contained racial and tribal units with structure and organization based, to whatever extent the requirements of equity and good government permit, upon indigenous customs, traditional usage, and beliefs.[19]

Briefly, some of the measures which inhibited rather than fostered progress toward unity were:

Religious Policy:

Christian missionaries were allowed to proselytize among the southerners, but their activities were prohibited

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[18] Ibid., p. 2.

[19] See strictly confidential memorandum on southern policy, January 25, 1930 by Sir Harold MacMichael, Bahr el-Ghazal cs/I.C.I. in British Southern Policy in the Sudan (1965), p. 1.

in the Muslim north or among the Muslims. This policy is borne out by Evelyn Baring Cromer's statement in a private letter to Lord Lansdowne. He said, "I have no objection to giving the missionaries a fair field amongst the black pagan population in the equational regions, but to let them loose at present amongst the . . . moslems of the Sudan would, in my opinion, be little short of insane."[20] Missionaries were influential in molding the developmental outlook of colonial societies. Thus the Southern Sudan developed along Christian lines while the north developed within a framework of Islamic tradition. This contrast was detrimental to the course of unity. Cultural differences could have been attenuated if both sections were exposed to the same religious influences.

Educational Measures:

Missionary societies were responsible for providing education in the Southern provinces although the British government subsidized the schools.[21] This was the pattern of educational development in many British colonies. The flaw in regard to Sudan, as in Nigeria, was that Christian

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[20]See Cromer to Lansdowne, March 9, 1900 (F.O. 633), Vol. 8/P.R.O. in Muddathir Abdel-Rahim, The Development of British Policy in the Southern Sudan 1899-1947 (Khartoum, 1968), p. 5.

[21]See Annual Report of 1926 (Sudan No. 2, 1927) Introduced by Muddathir Abdel-Rahim, The Development of British Policy, p. 16.

missionary educational activities were restricted to a particular section--those areas inhabited by non-Muslims. It would have served the cause of unity if the different peoples of Sudan were exposed to the same educational influence and at an equal pace. Evidently, the British government did not realize the importance of such a measure, for when in 1926, an Inspector of Southern Education was appointed, he was instructed to begin his assignment by first visiting Uganda "in order to study the methods adopted there, among a population somewhat similar" to those that inhabited the Southern Sudan.[22]

Thus, southern education took the orientation of its east African neighbors, whereas in the north education followed Islamic tradition. Arabic was the language of instruction in the northern schools and as Joseph Garang stated, "it became anathema to speak Arabic in southern towns" and "its teaching was prohibited."[23] The problem of the different educational measures was aggravated by the southern feeling that theirs did not measure up to the

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[22]See Command Paper No. 2991, 1927, p. 73.

[23]See A Revolution in Action, No. 2, n.d., p. 12. For the British attitude toward the use of Arabic language in the south, see Private Memorandum in CS/I.C.I., Jan. 25, 1930, from the Civil Secretary's Office to the Governors of Upper Nile, Oongalla and Bahr el-Ghazal provinces, reproduced in British Southern Policy, the memorandum stated inter alia, that "the restriction of Arabic is an essential feature of the general scheme . . ."

northern standard.[24] It is in this context that Godfrey Morrison commented that "the educational backwardness of the south as compared to the north has had dire consequences, adding even at the present time to all the other points of division, and sharpening the superiority/inferiority syndrome which seems still to lie at the heart of the southern problem."[25]

Administrative Policy:

The administrative policy of Britain in Southern Sudan also helped to solidify the socio-cultural divisions between the north and south. For instance, the inhabitants of Darfur were allowed entry into Bahr el-Ghazal only by permits from the governors of the provinces involved.[26] Also traders from Northern Sudan were not permitted to establish their businesses in the Southern Sudan. Efforts were made to replace the northern traders in the southern provinces with locals.[27] This policy of division was

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[24] See Voice of Southern Sudan, Vol. I, 1964/64, pp. 7-8.

[25] Godfrey Morrison, The Southern Sudan and Eritrea: Aspects of Wider African Problem, Report No. 5, (1971), p. 10.

[26] See agreement between Governor Dupuis of Darfur and Governor Ingleson of Bahr el-Ghazal at Safaha on March 28, 1935 reproduced in British Southern Policy in the Sudan, p. 1.

[27] See letter B.G.P./SCR/1 C/9 from Governor of Bahr el-Ghazal Province to the District Commissioners, June 10, 1930 in British Southern Policy in Sudan, p. 2.

instrumental in the promulgation of the "closed districts" measure which took effect in 1922.[28] This edict enabled the governors of the southern provinces to reserve their provinces for the southerners.[29] It is, however, ironic that the British government regarded this policy of "separation" as a "protective barrier which it had been necessary . . . to build up against exploitation by northern merchants and others."[30] In retrospect, it appears as if the policy did not, in fact, ban northern exploitation; the south consistently has argued that it has been exploited by the north. In this wise, the policy was a protective barrier against progress towards a united Sudan.

Nigeria

Nigeria is a socio-culturally heterogenous nation. Until 1963 when the mid-west region was created, Nigeria was administratively divided into regions corresponding to the three major ethnic groups, the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Ibo in the east and the Yoruba in the west.

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[28] For details of the promulgation of "closed district" measures see Laws of the Sudan (Sudan Government, 1941), pp. 132-143.

[29] Mohamed Omer Beshir, The Southern Sudan, p. 42.

[30] Harold MacMichael, The Sudan (London, 1954), p. 117.

Because of the cultural and historical differences among the ethnic groups, each region developed in its own way. The three major political parties, the Northern Peoples Congress, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens and the Action Group, were ethnically-oriented. Each region developed its own local consciousness[31] to the extent that each had the potential for nationhood.

Given the above circumstances, Nigerians identified more with their respective regions and less with the "concept" of Nigeria. Thus "Nigeria" as a nation was the creation of the colonial power which ruled over the different indigenous peoples. The amalgamation of the peoples, despite their ethnic differences and wishes,[32] made Nigeria a potential target for a civil strife.

The pattern of political and economic development in Nigeria stimulated internal instability. Before independence, the western and eastern regions were politically more articulate than the north.[33] Thus, the north saw independence in a different context from the east and west. While the latter regions felt that the former was slowing down progress towards independence, the north believed

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[31] See Victor Olorunsola, "Nigerian Cultural Nationalism," African Forum, III, No. I (Summer 1967), pp. 78-89.

[32] See Nigerian reactions to the amalgamation in Chapter II.

[33] See Ahmadu Bello, My Life, (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 110-112.

that the southern regions would, by dint of their political sophistication, dominate Nigeria after independence.[34] Such thinking resulted in political competition among the regions rather than political harmony.*

As in politics, economic progress was uneven among the regions, with the north lagging behind the east and west.[35] The former felt a sense of insecurity and believed that its survival was possible only if it were left to determine its own political destiny. An integrated economic policy ensuring equal development in all the regions could have helped the process of national integration. But policy failed to focus in this direction, and the result was regional/ethnic economic and political competition in which one region regarded the other as an alien competitor. John R. Harris and Mary P. Rowe noted that indigenous entrepreneurial establishments were ethnically oriented, in which case, they served as a disintegrative force.[36]

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*It turned out that the more populous north dominated Nigerian politically after the country's independence.

[34]This fear was well expressed by Ahmadu Bello, My Life, pp. 110-120.

[35]Ibid., p. 111.

[36]See "Entrepreneurial Attitudes and National Integration: The Nigerian Case," in Robert L. Melson and Howard Wolpe, eds., Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism (East Lansing, 1971), pp. 145-163.

British colonial policy also provided a cause for a civil war in Nigeria. The country was a British device. Its endurance depended largely on how well British integrative measures worked. An examination of London's role indicates that its policies served British political and administrative interests at the expense of Nigerian unity. The regionalization of Nigeria fostered ethnic politics and thus helped to widen ethnic divisions in the country.[37] Political parties had strong ethnic foci and competed with one another. If Britain had not encouraged political decentralization, ethnic differences could have been submerged in a strong allegiance to the concept of a "Nigerian nation." The dilemma created by political decentralization became compounded by the fact that one region--the north--was given the advantage of sending twice the number of representatives as the other two to the Federal Parliament. This had the adverse effect of tilting political power favorably to the north and creating a condition for suspicion in the other regions.

Also, the British policy of "indirect rule" contributed to the intensification of cultural divisions among the regions. That system encouraged the maintenance

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[37] See for instance Richards' Constitution, 1946, which decentralized Nigeria. Reactions to it were negative. See AWO (Cambridge, 1960), p. 47; also Zik (Cambridge, 1960), p. 100.

of the traditional values of each ethnic group, especially the Hausa-Fulani, at the expense of the development of national consciousness. If Britain had ruled directly and adopted uniform administrative measures for all the regions, the different ethnic groups could have nurtured a sense of attachment and belonging to the Nigerian government. In light of this, the Nigerian colonial experience was the seed of her civil war. The seed flowered when Britain, the symbol of unity departed.

The Congo (Zaire)

Zaire's civil war, which culminated in Katanga's declared secession, was more the result of Congo's colonial experience than its pre-colonial historical background. The centrifugal forces which encouraged Katanga's secession were rooted in Belgium's colonial administration.[38]

In his desire to attract commercial and industrial enterprises to Katanga province, Leopold II adopted measures which essentially gave provincial control to commercial and industrial companies. In 1891 Albert Thys and

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[38]Contrary to this view, Philippa Schuyler contends that the Belgian government bears no responsibility for the Katanga secession. She argued that the Lunda and Bayeke tribesmen had nourished a historic desire to restore their ancient kingdom of Katanga to its previous greatness. See Who Killed the Congo (New York, 1962), pp. 207-208. Also Smith Hempstone argues that "ethnic, linguistic, geographic, economic and political [factors] have conspired to create a feeling of separateness in Katanga." See Katanga Report (London, 1962), p. 32.

his company, the Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l'industrie (CCCI), received from Leopold II the right to organize the occupation and exploitation of Katanga.[39] In 1900, the CCCI transferred its responsibility to the Comité Special du Katanga (CSK), formed by the Congo Free State and Compagnie du Katanga. For ten years (1900-1910) the CSK maintained the administration of Katanga. In this regard, Katanga was a quasi-independent state within the larger Congo state. Even when the Belgium government took over the administration of Katanga in 1910, it placed it in a privileged position. Katanga was administered by a vice-governor-general who could act independently from the capital at Boma.[40]

This autonomy and also the large influx of Europeans[41] gave Katanga an identity and outlook different from the other provinces. The extent to which European settlers contributed to Katanga's secession is manifested in their reaction to any measure that would integrate Katanga politically with the other Congolese provinces. In 1920,

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[39] Crawford Young, Politics in the Congo: Decolonization and Independence (Princeton, 1965), p. 482.

[40] Ibid.

[41] In 1956, Katanga had 31 percent of the total European population of the Congo, see Rene Lemanchand, "The Limits of Self-determination," p. 406.

Europeans in Katanga attempted to remove the intermediate links between the Minister of Colonies and the Province of Katanga by suggesting that the Government General should be transferred from the Congo to Brussels. They also reacted negatively when in 1933, provincial vice-governors were stripped of their legislative powers in favor of centralization under Leopoldville.[42] Edouard Bustin argued that "the significance of this state of things hardly needs to be emphasized, and it has rightly been considered the deepest root of Katanga's separation."[43] From an economic and political standpoint, the European settlers made the idea of secession attractive.[44]

Having created a condition in which Katanga developed economically and politically along different lines from the other provinces, the Belgian government held Congo together only by its political presence. Thus when the Belgians departed, Katanga saw an opportunity to withdraw from the political union. In light of this, the responsibility for the civil upheaval in Congo falls heavily on the Belgian colonial policy.

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[42] Jules-Gerard-Libois, Katanga Secessions (Madison, 1966), p. 9.

[43] See Edouard Bustin, "The Congo," in Gwendolen M. Carter, ed., Five African States, Responses to Diversity (Ithaca, 1963), p. 40.

[44] Rene Lemarchand, "The Limits of Self-determination: The Case of the Katanga Secession."

An examination of the forces that have produced conditions for civil upheaval in three selected countries--Nigeria, Sudan and Zaire--poses a major historical question: To what extent should civil wars in independent African countries be attributed to indigenous factors, and to what degree are they traceable to colonial policies?

In the analysis of the etiology of civil wars in some African countries much emphasis has been placed on tribalism.[45] It is contended that the tribal orientation of many African nations produced centrifugal forces which are inimical to social and political harmony within those nations. Since civil wars hardly erupted during the colonial regimes, it could be plausibly argued that these governments contributed to the political stability which the colonies enjoyed. That civil wars began only after the departure of the colonial masters seems to buttress the above contention. However, an evaluation of the causes of civil wars, using the three countries as case studies, compels one to conclude that colonial policy was a significant, and perhaps the major cause of civil wars in independent African countries.

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[45]See James S. Coleman, "The Problem of Political Integration in Emergent Africa," Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March, 1955), pp. 44-57; Immanuel Wallerstein, "Ethnicity and National Integration in West Africa," Cahiers d' Etudes Africaine, Vol. 2, No. 3 (October, 1960), pp. 129-39.

Tribal consciousness and ethnic allegiance which have undermined the stability and national cohesiveness of some African countries, Nigeria in particular, were strengthened by colonial policies. In Nigeria, for example, "indirect rule," which was not uniformly applied to all the major ethnic groups, produced a condition whereby each ethnic group responded self-consciously to the colonial situation.

The system was a failure among the Ibos in the east and to a lesser degree among the Yorubas in the west.[46] Thus in the latter regions, Britain adopted a policy of "direct rule," bringing its influence and culture to them. On this score, the eastern and western societies became a hybrid of British and indigenous cultures, while the northern society was scarcely permeated by British culture. Essentially what this policy did was to create a Nigerian society that is divided not by tribal differences, but by an uneven exposure to colonial influences. The impact of ethnic differences among the Nigerians was not a crucial factor in causing the civil war, but colonial legacies, the competitive economy, political parties, and competing religious beliefs (Islam and Christanity) placed the respective ethnic groups in an uneasy mood of "survival of the fittest." Under such circumstances, a civil strife was bound to occur.

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[46] See John Hatch, Nigeria: The Seeds of Disaster (Chicago, 1970), pp. 191-201.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND TO THE NIGERIA-BIAFRA WAR

Nigerians will always remember 1966 as the year in which the country's stability was tested and found wanting. Problems that have nagged it prior to, and after independence exploded into a tragedy that tore it into pieces for almost four years. Few crises in Africa could rival the magnitude of the Nigerian disaster. The misery incurred and the loss of human lives resulting from that conflict defy accurate analysis. The conflagration soon became an international concern. It will be a long time before one fully can understand the nature of international involvement. However, the war between Nigeria and Biafra made one point clear: diplomacy makes strange bed fellows.

Nigeria is a country of many ethnic groups. Largest are the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the west and the Ibo in the east, each of which takes continuing pride in its cultural and historical individuality. The Ibo dispersed from Awka and Orlu,[1] located in the

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[1] G. I. Jones, The Trading States of Oil Rivers (London, 1963), p. 30. Okoi Arikpo has suggested a southward migration of the Ibos, but fails to designate an origin point. See Okoi Arikpo, The Development of Modern Nigeria (Baltimore, 1967), p. 17.

geographical area which the Ibo occupy today. There are, however, some Ibos, the Onitsha Ibo, in particular, who, because of some institutional similarities with Benin, argue that they originated in western Nigeria.[2] The origin of the Ibo is still a matter of speculation. For the present we shall have to maintain (until further research reveals otherwise) that the Ibo originated from their present homeland.

The Hausa-Fulani

To understand the forces which later led to the civil war in 1967, it is important to examine the socio-cultural and political differences among the three major ethnic groups. Organized hierarchically and feudalistically, the Hausa-Fulani comprise the major northern ethnic group. The Fulani have controlled the political and economic life of northern Nigeria since their conquest of Hausaland in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Their government is theocratic, based on Islamic traditions, with power held by sultans and emirs. Because of their Islamic religion and racial admixture, the Hausa-Fulani are inclined to look to North Africa and other Muslim areas for their affiliation.[3]

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[2]Nnamdi Azikiwe, My Odyssey (London, 1970), pp. ii-ix.

[3]This had an impact in shaping Nigerian foreign policy. Efforts were made to develop fraternal ties with the Muslim countries. See J. S. Coleman, "The Foreign Policy of Nigeria," in Joseph E. Black (ed.) Foreign Policies in a World of Change (New York, 1963), pp. 382-383.

In order to retain their authority, the sultans and emirs have been reluctant to divorce politics from religion. In a theocratic polity, such as Hausa-Fulani society, the sultans and emirs who are spiritual leaders wield authority. It would thus be to their advantage to maintain the theocracy of the society. Their position was strengthened when the British introduced the system of "indirect rule" into Northern Nigeria at the turn of the twentieth century. This system recognized the authority of the spiritual leaders and made them spokesmen of their people. On this score, the sultans and emirs had a double advantage of enhancing their authority from both the Islamic religious tradition and the British colonial power. The masses entrusted their fate to them and as a result failed to develop political consciousness. Thus a majority of the Hausa-Fulani, in comparison with their counterparts in the other regions of Nigeria, remained politically under-developed.

Since the colonizers recognized and accepted the position of the Hausa-Fulani rulers, the British political presence was tolerated. The late Premier of Northern Nigeria, Ahmadu Bello, pointed to this fact in his auto-biography: "The handful of British officers were in full control . . . it was the will of Allah that they should

be there; they were not evil men and their administration was not harsh."[4] Ahmadu Bello saw the colonial masters as an instrument of destiny and as representative of God's will.[5] The psychology of accepting foreign domination had developed among the Hausa in their traumatic experience with the Jihad. They, therefore, regarded British presence as either a replacement of their former overlords or as a continuation of foreign domination. In either case, it did not make any political difference to them.

Two years after the eastern and western regions of Nigeria became internally self-governing in 1957, the Northern Region also achieved that status. Its reluctance to assume political responsibility could be understood in terms of its fear of domination by the more modernized and politically articulate southerners. This fear made the northerners look upon the southerners as would-be colonizers who would likely replace the British. Gaskiya Ta fi Kwabo, a Northern weekly, expressed this fear editorially:

> . . . Southerners will take the places of the Europeans in the North. What is there to stop them? They look and see it thus at the present time. There are Europeans but, undoubtedly, it is the Southerner who has the power in the North. They have control of the railway stations; of

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[4]Ahmadu Bello, My Life (London, 1962), p. 2. For similar statements of praise for British rule in Northern Nigeria, see Ibid., p. 105.

[5]Ibid., p. 17.

> the post offices; of government hospitals . . . the majority employed in the Kadune Secretariate and in the Public Works Departments are all Southerners; in all the different departments of government it is the Southerner who has the power . . .[6]

However, a survey of the Northern Civil Service in 1958 indicates that though only few northerners occupied positions in the high administrative class, the bulk of the positions were filled not by southerners, but by European expatriates.

TABLE 1

NORTHERN CIVIL SERVICE, 1st JUNE 1958

	Northern Nigerians	Southern Nigerians	Expatriates
Superscale	5	-	195 + 17
Administrative and Professional	69	23 + 3	612 + 400
Executive and Higher Technical	237 + 8	261 + 7	124 + 341

Source: B. J. Dudley, Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria (London, 1968), p. 220. Adapted from Northern House of Assembly Debates August 4, 1958 Cols. 731-732. The number after the "plus" symbol indicates the number of employees under contract.

[6]An editorial published in Gaskiya Ta fi Kwabo, February 18, 1950, as quoted in James S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism (Berkeley, 1960), p. 362.

Building on the fears of southern domination, the northerners hoped that British rule would continue, for it afforded them psychological protection against, what seemed to them, southern economic and political exploitation. They endorsed a longer period of political training as essential for their political survival.[7] Thus, when Anthony Enahoro, a member of the Action Group party from western Nigeria, introduced a bill calling for self-government in 1956, the northerners opposed it and suggested that the words "as soon as practicable" should be substituted for "1956."[8] However, in the light of the reality of Nigerian politics, the northern fear of southern domination does not seem justifiable, for the northerners authoritatively exercised political power from the time Nigeria became sovereign until the collapse of the first Republic. They were aware of the great influence they wielded in Nigerian political scene. A northern member of Parliament expressed this knowledge when he said:

> The stand of the N.P.C. [Northern Peoples Congress], as I observe it and as published previously, is that the North has arrived and that the North has emerged triumphant and will

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[7]Bello, My Life, p. 111.

[8]Michael Crowder, A Short History of Nigeria (New York, 1966), p. 284. For a detailed account of Enahoro's motion and Northern Reaction see Anthony Enahoro, Fugitive Offender; the story of a Political Prisoner (London, 1965), pp. 121-132.

> continue to arrive. To be a bit more serious, I put it to our southern friends and brothers in the words of Caesar 'We came, we saw, we conquered.' That means that the North has arrived, has seen and has conquered.[9]

In 1949, the north's major political party, the Northern Peoples Congress, convened.[10] Its political consciousness was a reaction to southern nationalism.[11] The party's philosophy was primarily clannish[12] and conservative, reflecting an attitude of "the north for the northerners." A northern politician commented on the conservatism of the region's political machinery in his letter of resignation from government service.

> I resigned because I refuse to believe that this country is by necessity a prisoner of Anglo-Fulani autocracy or the unpopular indirect system.
>
> I resigned because there is no freedom to criticize this most unjust and anachronistic and un-Islamic form of hollow institutions promulgated by Lugard.
>
> I resigned because I fanatically share the view that the nature of administration, as they stand today, coupled with all their too trumpeted 'fine tradition' are woefully hopeless in solving

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[9]Alhaji Muhammadu Gawyarma, speech, March 23, 1964, Government, Nigeria, House of Representatives, Debates, Col. 683, (1964).

[10]Richard Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties (Princeton, 1970), p. 93.

[11]Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, p. 360.

[12]Membership was open only to 'people of Northern Nigerian descent.' See "The Northern Peoples Congress" Constitution reproduced in B. J. Dudley, Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria, pp. 314-323.

> our urgent educational, social, economic, political and even religious problems . . .[13]

Margery Perham also noted the conservatism of the Northern Peoples Congress, in contrasting the political outlook of the party with a southern group, she said, "the N.C.N.C. [National Council of Nigerian Citizens] may well cry forward while the N.P.C. cries back!"[14]

The Yoruba

The predominant ethnic group in the Western region are the Yoruba, whose institutional kingships maintained political stability.[15] Though his person as well as his office was venerated, the king did not possess unlimited power. His policies were subject to reviews by a council of elders, and it was possible to criticize him and even to demand his resignation.[16] Thus, in many ways, the monarch was a constitutional figurehead who primarily symbolized unity.

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[13]Aminu Kano, "My Resignation," Daily Comet (Kano) (November 11, 1950), as quoted in C. S. Whitaker, Jr. "Three Perspectives on Hierarchy," Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, Vol. 14 (1965), p. 9.

[14]Margery Perham, "A Prospect of Nigeria," The Listener (October 20, 1960), p. 667. For a descriptive analysis of the N.P.C. structure see C. S. Whitaker, "Dysrhythmic Process of Political Change," World Politics, Vol. xix (1967), pp. 190-217.

[15]There were occasions when the king was incapable of maintaining political order and civil wars broke out. See Robert Smith, Kingdoms of the Yoruba (London, 1969), pp. 133-189.

[16]Ibid., p. 113.

The Yoruba have a penchant for commercial city-life.[17] Notwithstanding their urban-mindedness, they seldom mix easily with foreigners, whom they feel have nothing to offer to them culturally. This xenophobia has tended to shape and dictate their political goals. The Action Group, the major political party in Western Nigeria, founded in 1951, was an outgrowth of the Yoruba cultural organization, "Egbe Omo Oduduwa." The party's initial goal was to coordinate the activities of the different Yoruba groups and associations. From the start, Yoruba politics were Yoruba-oriented and western Nigeria centered.

The party's adherents were mostly businessmen whose primary interest was in local politics because their business was locally rooted. Along with school teachers and lawyers, the party's membership represented, perhaps unconsciously, a political club of the well-to-do and the elite. The masses were inclined to scorn nationalist politics as they felt that it was a means whereby ambitious young men could secure themselves well paid positions.[18]

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[17]Robert Smith, Kingdoms of the Yoruba, p. 107.

[18]P. C. Lloyd, "The Development of Political Parties in Western Nigeria," American Political Science Review, Vol. 49 (1965), p. 698.

The Yoruba masses were seemingly apathetic towards involvement in nationalist aspirations.[19] This apathy encouraged the tribal orientation of their politics and led to their demand for a Yoruba state. A clause in the constitution of Egbe Omo Oduduwa indicated this view:

> To accelerate the emergence of a virile modernized and efficient Yoruba state with its own individuality within the Federal State of Nigeria . . . [and] to unite the various clans and tribes in Yorubaland and generally create and actively foster the idea of a single nationalism throughout Yorubaland.[20]

The demand by the Egbe Omo Oduduwa for a Yoruba national state was soon mellowed by the more nationalist-oriented Action Group members when they began to advocate a federation made up of internally autonomous states. The states were to be created on a linguistic and cultural basis. Obafemi Awolowo, the Action Group's leader, made this position an issue in the constitutional conferences preceding Nigerian independence. He noted the many cultural groups and indicated his belief that a federation of the three existing regions would not safeguard the

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Constitution of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Ijebu Ode, 1948), as quoted in J. S. Coleman, "The Ibo and Yoruba Strands in Nigerian Nationalism," in Robert Nelson and Howard Wolfe (eds.) Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism (East Lansing, 1971), p. 82.

interest of the minor ethnic groups within the three regions.[21] The implementation of Awolowo's political blueprint would have created a situation in which every linguistic group irrespective of its size, could have demanded a state for itself. Nevertheless, the Action Group were so committed to federalism that their political slogan in the 1951 election campaign was "unity through federation."[22]

Unlike the Northern Peoples Congress of the Hausa-Fulani, the Action Group felt less at home with British rule. However, the mass of the Yoruba had no dislike for the British Administrative officers, evidently because of their distrust for their local politicians.[23] The party quickly found faults with the new Constitution of 1952 especially since it did not envisage the type of federalism which the party advocated.[24] Unfortunately, the Yoruba, as exemplified by their political party, regarded the Ibos as rivals, not as comrades in the fight against colonial rule. To a great extent, the founding of the Action Group

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[21]Obafemi Awolowo, Path to Nigerian Freedom (London, 1947), pp. 53-54.

[22]Obafemi Awolowo, Awo, p. 180.

[23]P. C. Lloyd, American Political Science Review, p. 696.

[24]Obafemi Awolowo, Awo, pp. 227-228, 232.

party was meant to counteract what some Yorubas felt to be the monopolistic influence of the Ibos in Nigerian politics.[25] In this light, Yoruba suspicion of the Ibo and their belief that the Ibo threatened their economic and political progress made cooperation for a truly unified Nigeria almost impossible.

The Ibo

The Ibo are the major ethnic group in what was formerly Eastern Nigeria. They are an agricultural people, with a segmentary political system and a social organization based primarily on kinship, lineage and age-group. In the absence of centralized authority,[26] the Ibos have shown, through political democratization, a high regard for individualism and egalitarianism. Since they believe that one's personal achievement should determine his political, social and economic status and role in the society, the Ibos tend to be aggressive and emulative. This tendency was evident in their relationship with the British colonialists. The Ibos are very receptive to change and have evinced the ability to adapt to different

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[25] Ibid., pp. 171-172, also Nelson and Wolfe, Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism, p. 66.

[26] Lord W. M. H. Hailey, Native Administration in the British African Territories (London, 1950-1953), p. 155.

cultures and environment.[27] Dense population in their homeland, combined with the desire for social and economic advancement, has greatly spurred Ibo mobility.[28] Their respect for healthy competition, admiration for individualism and receptivity to change gave them an edge in progress over the other ethnic groups.

The ubiquitousness of the Ibos in Nigeria allowed them a national orientation. The National Council of Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.), the major political party in eastern Nigeria, though dominated by the Ibos, was regarded as a national party by its founders. It was indeed, "the only nationwide political party in Nigeria up to 1955."[29] After World War II, the Ibos played a significant role in Nigerian politics. They spoke out vehemently against colonialism. Their political role soon evoked suspicion from the other ethnic groups, particularly the Yorubas, who saw Ibo political activities as a desire to dominate Nigeria.[30]

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[27]Simon Ottenberg, "Ibo Receptivity to Change," in W. S. Bascom and Melville J. Herskovits (eds.) Continuity and Change in African Cultures (Chicago, 1959), p. 130.

[28]Kenneth Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1855 (Oxford, 1956), p. 28.

[29]Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik, a selection from the speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe (London, 1961), p. 315.

[30]Sklar, Nigerian Political Parties, p. 57.

A distinguishing feature of Ibo political awakening was its national posture. The N.C.N.C., which later became Ibo-based, was inaugurated in Lagos, a non-Ibo territory. Membership in the party included different tribal unions and associations,[31] though in its early period participants were largely southerners.[32] By contrast, neither the N.P.C. nor the A.G. had any founding member who was from a different region, let alone a different tribe.

The Ibo disposition to Pan-Nigeria is attributable to their political culture. In the absence of a centralized monolithic Pan-Ibo structure, the Ibos were free to broaden their political activities beyond their ethnic boundary. Tribal allegiance which was characteristic of the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba was lacking among the Ibo. While the Action Group and the Northern Peoples Congress were respectively an outgrowth of tribal organizations, the major Ibo political party (N.C.N.C.) encouraged all anti-colonial dissidents to join. The Ibo distaste for imposed authority made British rule repugnant to them. They felt that unified political action through a national political party well would serve the cause of nationalism and end British colonialism.

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, p. 265.

The national orientation of the Ibos also can be explained in the light of their propensity to accommodate unity in diversity. Despite their different clans, the Ibos can unite politically and economically to achieve a communal goal. They regarded the overthrow of the colonial regime as a national goal which could be accomplished through united effort, irrespective of socio-cultural ethnic differences. It was, therefore, no surprise that the N.C.N.C. disagreed with chief Bode Thomas, an N.C.N.C. member and a Yoruba, when, in 1947, he suggested that political parties be regionalized.[33]

After World War II, inter-tribal hatred grew intensely, especially in Lagos, and the political cohesiveness which the Ibo and the N.C.N.C. had worked to establish and maintain began to erode. The disintegration was hastened and accomplished by the Richards Constitution of 1947, which regionalized Nigeria and made the major ethnic groups responsible for the political development of their respective geographical areas.[34] Professor Kenneth Dike pointed out the implication of that constitution for national unity when he stated that:

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[33]Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik, p. 322.

[34]Allan Burns, A History of Nigeria, 7th Edition (London, 1969), p. 251.

> Undoubtedly the Richards Constitution is a dividing line in Nigerian constitutional development. Before it the keynote in Nigerian politics was unification towards a centralized state and the realization of a common nationality . . . but with the Richards Constitution this tendency towards unification was on the whole arrested.[35]

With the constitutionalization of regional and tribal politics, the Ibos began to organize themselves into unions, especially in towns where they lived among other ethnic groups. The Pan-Ibo movement became essentially a defense mechanism against the hostile attitude of the other major tribes.[36] The Civil War made it possible to realize the intensity of anti-Ibo feeling in Nigeria. The war afforded other ethnic groups the opportunity to express their dislike of the Ibo. The Ibo was readily identified with the desire to "colonize, cheat and dominate; lacking in human tolerance and possessing uncontrollable restraints."[37]

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[35]Kenneth Dike, 100 Years of British Rule in Nigeria, 1851-1951 (Lagos, 1957), p. 43.

[36]For instance in 1953 there were disturbances in the north in which the northerners were pitted against the Ibos. See reports on the Kano Disburbances, 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th May, 1953 (Kaduna, Nigeria, 1953), p. 21, reproduced in J. S. Coleman, Nigeria, pp. 399-400. Coleman also stated that Ibos suffered discrimination, especially in regard to housing in Lagos. These experiences inspired the Ibos to organize themselves into unions for their welfare.

[37]Samson O. O. Amali, Ibos and Their Fellow Nigerians (Ibadan, 1967).

The Ibos understood the political mood as being anti-Ibo. They saw themselves as an oppressed, unwanted and exploited people. Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Ibo and the former President of the Nigerian Republic, once stated that the British had been out-spoken in asserting that the Ibo was "the most hated in Nigeria." He felt that the discrimination against the Ibos and also their "victimization" were, perhaps, divinely ordained.[38] Russell Warren Howe's remark in this regard is instructive. ". . . the Ibo characteristics of eloquence, ambition, ability to read and write, a gift for organization and personal charm have combined to make them both indispensable and disliked."[39] Unfortunately, the dislike for the Ibo was expressed not only in Nigerian political life but also in its social and economic aspects.

The British and Nigerian Unity

Many factors contributed to the British occupation of Nigeria. There was the suspicion that either France or Germany would acquire Nigeria if Britain remained aloof. Commercial interests in Britain agitated for British control of Nigeria. The slave trade and the British attempt to

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[38]Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik, pp. 242-248 passim.

[39]Russell W. Howe, "Nigeria at War;" Editorial Research Reports, February 28, 1968, p. 160.

suppress it also facilitated the conquest of Nigeria. It has also been suggested that British occupation of Nigeria and other colonies in Africa was an accidental by-product of British attempt to safeguard the Nile.[40] A past Governor of Nigeria added that "philanthropy was not the least of the influences that led us to take up the burden of ruling Nigeria."[41]

British occupation of Nigeria was not peaceful. The imperialists encountered resistance from some of the indigenous leaders, and had to resort to military subjugation. By 1900 Britain had been able, with a few exceptions,[42] to pacify the different peoples of Nigeria and to begin a reign that lasted until October 1960, when the peoples of Nigeria regained their sovereignty.

At the time of British pacification, Nigeria was a geographical area, "an arbitrary bloc"[43] inhabited by heterogeneous tribes that had no cultural and political ties with one another. From this standpoint, Britain inherited nations rather than a nation. In 1954, Alan Burns, a past colonial Governor, stated that

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[40]See Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism (New York, 1968).

[41]Alan Burns, A History of Nigeria, p. 306.

[42]It was not until 1903 that parts of Kano, Sokoto and Arochuku were pacified.

[43]Michael Crowder, A Short History of Nigeria (New York, 1966), p. 235.

> There is no Nigerian nation, no Nigerian language but more than 200 languages, and no Nigerian tradition. The very name of Nigeria was invented by the British to describe a country inhabited by a medley of formerly warring tribes with no common culture, and united only in so far as they are governed by a single power.[44]

The British task, therefore, was to create a nation out of the nations. The creation of Nigeria was accomplished, if only theoretically, when, on the recommendation of Frederick Lugard, the north and the south were amalgamated in 1914. The compelling factors for the consolidation and the process of the administration of the unified regions raise some crucial points about the British contribution towards Nigerian unity.

British administrative convenience largely influenced decision to amalgamate. It unified regional administrative functions and made the task of governing the different peoples less complicated. Britain was then able to use the economic resources of one region (the south) to subsidize the governmental operations in the other (the north). This transfer relieved the British treasury of excessive financial drain.[45] In this light, the amalgamation was not concerned

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[44]Sir Alan Burns, "The Movement Towards Self-Government in British Colonial Territories," Optima, Vol. IV (June, 1954), p. 9.

[45]For the background of the amalgamation see A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria: A Documentary Record (London, 1968), also A. O. Anjorin, "The Background to the Amalgamation of Nigeria," Odu, Vol. 3, (January, 1967).

with unifying the Nigerian peoples. Its goal was to achieve a coordinated and economically-efficient administrative system. Margery Perham commented that Lugard's "task . . . was to unify administrations, not peoples."[46] Since the over-riding interest was British, the Nigerian peoples were not consulted.[47] This oversight, was perhaps the major tragic flaw in the episode.

The political measures taken by the British after the amalgamation appear to have encouraged the maintenence of regionalism.[48] As Kirk-Greene observed: "Lugard opted to retain the classic cleavage between the North and the South, a status quo which he felt to be sanctioned by cultural history and one that he knew and understood."[49] In the experimental stages of the unification, it doubtlessly would have been beneficial to the cause of unity for the major ethnic groups to have been given the opportunity fully to participate in a common political forum. A common political association for all the different groups would have cemented the bonds of unification and paved the way for inter-tribal and inter-regional understanding.

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[46]Margery Perham, Lugard: The Years of Authority (London, 1960), p. 413.

[47]Obafemi Awolowo, Awo, p. 207.

[48]Times, March 9, 1951, p. 306.

[49]Kirk-Greene, Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria: A Documentary Record, p. 12.

Unfortunately the Constitution of 1923 did not create any provisions for northern participation in southern politics.[50] This lack of political interaction made the north and south relate to each other primarily through Britain.

To rectify the inadequacy of the 1923 constitution, the British government promulgated another constitution which took effect in 1947. They hoped that this constitution would ensure unity, despite the country's cultural diversity. Arthur Richards, then Governor of Nigeria, in recommending the constitution stated:

> The problem of Nigeria today is how to create a political system which is itself a present advance and contains the living responsibility of further orderly advance in a system with which the diverse elements may progress at varying speeds, and amicably and smoothly, towards a more closely integrated economic, social and political unity, without sacrificing the principles and ideals inherent in their divergent ways of life.[51]

Far from achieving this end, the constitution encouraged separate political development among the major ethnic groups. It emphasized decentralization by which a large measure of political authority devolved on the regions.

Nigerian nationalists quickly pointed out the inherent disunity embodied in the Richards Constitution.

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[50] Coleman, Nigeria, pp. 196-198; Burns, Nigeria, pp. 243-244.

[51] Cmd 6599: "Proposals for the Review of the Constitution of Nigeria," March 5, 1945, reproduced in Times (March 6, 1945), p. 172.

> The Richards Constitution divides the country into three zones which are bound to departmentalize the political thinking of this country by means of the bloc vote. Whether Richards intends to or not, it is obvious that regions will now bend more towards Pakistanization than ever before, and our future generations will inherit this legacy that is born out of official sophistry. If, therefore, there spring forth schools of thought tomorrow making requests of a parochial nature which would ordinarily rend this country into a multiplicity of principalities, mow it down . . . as one of the crops to be harvested from this curious constitution.[52]

As if to perpetuate separate regional identities, the British demonstrated no uniformity of political attitude toward the country's different regions.[53] They seemed to be politically biased in favor of the northern region.

At the Ibadan Constitutional Conference in 1950, the north demanded, on the basis of population, half the seats in the central legislature. It made this demand a condition for further participation in the constitutional proceedings.[54] The British granted the demand, though they realized the political implication of such a measure. When the west demanded that Lagos be made part of the western region, the British staunchly resisted the demand.[55]

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[52]Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik, p. 100. Chief Obafemi Awolowo also commented that the Richards Constitution maintained the division of Nigeria, Awo, p. 47.

[53]John Hatch, Nigeria: The Seeds of Disaster (Chicago, 1970), pp. 177-178.

[54]Kalu Ezera, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria, 2nd Edition (London, 1964), p. 116.

[55]For the constitutional crisis see Ibid., pp. 184-188.

The other regions, however, were not in favor of annexing Lagos to the western region, and Britain thus may have acted on the wishes of the majority. Still, if Britain had respected southern feelings, it would not have conceded northern demands.

Another aspect of British policy which hampered attempts at national unity was the power struggle between the northern administration in Kaduna and the central government in Lagos. Robert Heussler so concluded that "all through the 1920's there was bad blood between Lagos and Kaduna."[56] Administrative competition only served to ossify the individuality of the regions, quite possibly the intention of the northern officials. Sir Richmond Palmer, lieutenant governor from 1925 to 1930, felt that the cultural differences among the different regions "were real" and could not be prematurely eradicated by "a paper unity." Such a unity would make the Muslim north subservient to the "semi-Europeanized south." Administrators therefore were inclined to preserve the traditional values and systems of the different regions. Christian missionaries and educators were scarcely allowed to practice in the north. Soon after independence, the north recognized

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[56]Robert Heussler, The British in Northern Nigeria (New York, 1968), p. 56.

that it was educationally backward and blamed this retardation on the British.[57]

The British system of "Indirect Rule"[58] (a system whereby the Colonialists governed the indigenous people through traditional or appointed chiefs) proved dysfunctional to Nigerian unity. The system aimed at preserving the traditional institutions. As Frederick Lugard, the advocate of "Indirect Rule," stated:

> I . . . continually emphasized the necessity of recognizing, as cardinal principle of British policy in dealing with natives, that institutions and methods in order to command success and promote the happiness and welfare of the people must be deep rooted in their traditions and prejudices. Obviously in no sphere of administration is this more essential than in that under discussion [Indirect Rule] . . .[59]

The policy of encouraging the development and maintenance of regional socio-economic and political structures could have

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[57]M. Mohammed Sarkin Bai, House of Representatives Debates, Col. 664 (April 2, 1962).

[58]For a general account of "Indirect Rule" in Nigeria, see Lord Frederick Lugard, The Dual Mandate, 5th Edition (London, 1965), pp. 94-97. W. R. Crocker, Nigeria: A Critique of British Colonial Administration (London, 1936), pp. 213-222. Ntieyong U. Akpan, Epitaph to Indirect Rule: A Discourse on Local Government in Africa (London, 1956), pp. 26-30. Margery Perham, Lugard: The Years of Authority, Chapters 22-24. O. Ikime, "Reconsidering Indirect Rule: The Nigerian Example," Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol. IV (December 1966), pp. 539-558.

[59]Frederick Lugard, Dual Mandate, p. 211.

served a healthy purpose had the intent been to create autonomous political entities. The basic need nonetheless was to submerge particularistic developments in favor of a national institutional and ideological allegiance. Indirect Rule fell short of this objective. Thus with the connivance of the colonial government, the north developed along traditional Islamic lines, with taints of feudalism, while the southern regions progressed along lines of their respective political and social cultures, but greatly influenced by westernism. Ethnic interest took precedence over national consciousness, and members of one region saw the others as competitors rather than as citizens of the same country.[60]

Seen in proper perspective, the policy of "Indirect Rule" polarized the country socially and politically. The north committed itself to building a politically homogeneous society capable, eventually, of dominating the entire country,[61] whereas the southern regions concerned themselves with the over-throw of colonial government and with the

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[60]Obafemi Awolowo, Awo, pp. 163-165; Awolowo emphasized that southern residents in the north were obliged to confine their activities to the areas set aside for the abode of strangers.

[61]Dudley, Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria, p. 220. Bello also hinted on the ancient Fulani prophecy of dipping the Koran in the Seas, Bello, My Life, p. 16.

establishment of a politically and economically unified nation.[62] Indirect Rule strengthened the phenomena which made Nigeria a nation of nations lacking national consciousness. The disastrous consequence of this situation was manifested when the British, who hitherto had represented the national symbol of authority, transferred power to the peoples of Nigeria in 1960. Nigeria's history since then has largely been the story of a nation desperately in search of a national symbol of allegiance, a consensus leadership and a national ideology. National cohesiveness eluded the Nigerians when the colonial power left.

Indigenous Reactions to the Unification

The initial response of a majority of the ethnic groups to Nigerian unification was negative. When the Lagos colony was united with the southern protectorate in 1906, there were apprehensions among the Yorubas who felt that the peoples united had different cultural background. They became even more disturbed when the large Yoruba populations in Ilorin and Jebba were made part of the northern provinces.[63] Yoruba fears that unification would

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[62]The nature of political unity was an issue in the pre-independence years. Awolowo advocated a federation of states created along ethnic and linguistic lines. Azikiwe called for a federation of eight states primarily based on ethnic considerations.

[63]A. O. Anjorin, "Background to Amalgamation," pp. 78-80.

create a situation in which certain groups would be subjected to others was reflected in later years in the demand by Egbe Omo Oduduwa for a separate Yoruba state and in the advocacy of the Action Group party for a federation created along lines of ethnic particularisms. During the 1954 Constitutional Conference in Lagos, the Action Group demanded that the right of any region to secede should be stated in the constitution.[64]

Information on the reaction of Eastern Nigeria is obscure. One can infer from later political and economic developments, however, that the easterners endorsed the unification and regarded it as marking the birth of Nigeria.[65] The easterners also were committed to seeing that the unification succeeded. It was not, therefore, surprising that the N.C.N.C. was elated when Oliver Littleton, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, warned the Action Group in 1953, that the British government would not tolerate any attempt at western region secession.[66]

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[64]CMD 8994 of 1953 quoted by Ezera, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria, p. 189.

[65]A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria, p. 27.

[66]Ezera, Constitutional Developments in Nigeria, pp. 186-188.

The amalgamation disturbed the northerners, who worried about its possible consequences on their traditional society and its "Islamic past."[67] Ahmadu Bello, in his autobiography, best illustrated the reactions of the northerners to the amalgamation of the country. Obsessed by the southern demand for self-government in 1956, a demand which seemed premature to the northerners, Bello commented:

> The mistake of 1914 has come to light and I should like to go no further. I was referring to the amalgamation that took place in that year between the old independent governments of northern and southern Nigeria.[68]

Still to emphasize northern dissatisfaction with the amalgamation, Bello further stated:

> Lugard and his amalgamation were far from popular amongst us at that time. There were agitations in favor of secession; we should set up on our own; we should cease to have anything more to do with the southern people; we should take our own way.[69]

Although it is hazardous to suggest might-have-beens in history, one is nonetheless tempted to conclude that had Britain consulted the peoples of Nigeria in regard to the amalgamation, its implementation should not have been effected when it was, since support for it was very luke-warm in the

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[67] See N.P.C. motto "One North, One People, Irrespective of Religion, Rank or Tribe," as quoted in B. J. Dudley, Parties of Politics in Northern Nigeria, Appendix IV.

[68] Bello, My Life, p. 133.

[69] Ibid., p. 135.

west and totally absent in the north. The foregoing account of the British policy towards Nigerian unity leads to two conclusions. One, though the British paved the way for the eventual political unity of Nigeria, they encouraged intersectional rivalies. Mention already has been made of the administrative rivalry between the north and the south (Kaduna vs. Lagos). That rivalry between the British administrators filtered down to the indigenous ethnic groups and created a condition for inter-ethnic competition. Two, the reasons given by Lugard for the amalgamation[70] compel one to attribute the unification of the country to a historical accident caused by the British desire to make their administration convenient and practicable.

The Collapse of Unity

The history of Nigeria from Independence in 1960 until 1970, when the Nigerian/Biafran War ended, impels one to conclude that the British freed a country which had far too little internal cohesion. While the British partly were responsible for the institutionalized regionalization of the country,[71] it must also be stated that their presence retarded the inevitable post-independence

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[70] Kirk-Green, Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria, pp. 224-246.

[71] Obafemi Arolowo argues that British policy maintained the divisiveness in the country. Obafemi Awolowo, Path to Nigerian Freedom, p. 32.

political disintegration; it was barely seven years after their departure that the fragile unity collapsed. It is ironic, and also dismaying, that Britain was again the instrument that led the Nigerian peoples to a second experiment in unity. This phenomenon underscores a gloomy fact--the undying British influence in Nigeria.

The Action Group and the Western Region Crisis

The crises which brought about the collapse of unity did not follow on the heels of Nigerian independence in 1960; almost two years elapsed before they began to emerge. These two years of comparative political quietude presented the world with a vision of a stable power in Africa. The illusion was dispelled in 1962, when an intra-party dispute erupted in the Action Group Party.

The Action Group became the opposition party in the Federal Parliament after the 1959 elections. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, who hitherto had been both the leader of the Action Group and the Premier of the western region, became the opposition leader in the Federal Parliament. Chief Samuel Akintola, the deputy-leader of the party, became the Premier of the region. Chief Akintola soon clashed with Awolowo and the young radicals of the party who advocated an ideology of "democratic socialism." The conflict led to an open split in the party hierarchy during the party's

annual meeting at Jos, on May 20, 1962. The charges which Akintola levied against Awolowo strongly suggest that the split was not so much over political ideology as over power. Akintola remarked that his greatest problem "had been the insatiable desire of Chief Awolowo to run the western government from outside."[72]

The open split led to a decision by the western Regional House of Assembly to strip Akintola of his premiership. Sir Adesoji Aderemi, the Governor of the region, observed that Akintola had lost the confidence of the House members and, on their recommendation, dismissed him and appointed Alhaji Dawuda S. Adegbenro as the region's premier.[73] Akintola refused to honor the governor's decision, and a political impasse developed. The Federal Government intervened, refused to uphold the governor's recommendation, declared a state of emergency, and suspended the region's sovereignty.

Dr. Moses Majekodunmi, a Yoruba medical officer, was appointed administrator, with full powers to act for the Federal Government, and he remained in power for six months.[74] The crisis was no longer left to the region for

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[72] West Africa, May 26, 1962, p. 579.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Frederick A. O. Schwartz, Nigeria: The Tribes, the Nation, or the Race--The Politics of Independence (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 131-136. Walter Schwartz, Nigeria (London, 1968), pp. 128-130. K. Ezera, Constitutional Developments, pp. 270-273.

a solution. It took a national focus. The Federal Government's take-over of the western region had no precedent in the political history of the country. The fact that Lagos was controlled by two political parties hostile to the A.G. makes it difficult to see in the emergency declaration anything short of an attempt to deal a shattering blow to an opposition party.[75]

The declaration of emergency afforded the Federal Government an opportunity to appoint a commission under the chairmanship of G. B. A. Coker to inquire into the financial relationship between the Action Group and the statutory corporations of the western region. Akintola's charge that £45 million profit of the western region Marketing Board had almost been wholly exhausted at the time Awolowo left office[76] may have contributed to the decision to set up the inquiry. After ninety-two sittings, the commission concluded that it saw "evidence of prudent and considered management and investment of public funds," but also discovered "reckless and indeed atrocious and criminal mismanagement and diversion of public funds . . ."[77] It would

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[75]For details of the crisis see Richard Sklar, "The Ordeal of Chief Awolowo, 1960-65," in Gwendolen M. Carter ed., Politics in Africa: 7 Cases (New York, 1966), pp. 119-165.

[76]West Africa, May 26, 1962, p. 579.

[77]Report of the Coker Commission of Inquiry, Vol. I, 1963, p. 3, quoted by W. Schwartz, Nigeria, p. 138.

seem by its conclusion that the commission contradted itself in its findings.

The Treason Trial of Chief Obafemi Awolowo

The crisis in the western region was the forerunner of a series of political uncertainties in Nigeria. While the Coker Commission was in progress, Chief Awolowo and some members of his party were charged with treasonable felony. To understand the background of the trial, it is pertinent to examine the implications of the nature of Nigerian politics. The ethnic and regional orientation of the country's political parties resulted in the absence of an organization that could command national followership. In order to form a national government, it was necessary to construct a coalition of any two regional political parties, as was the case when the N.P.C. (Northern) and the N.C.N.C. (Eastern) coalesced in 1960, or a broadly based government in which all the major parties were represented. The latter alternative was tried after the 1964 federal elections.

Since the political parties were ethnically based, a coalition of any two was seen as a coalition of the ethnic groups. Thus the first federal coalition government was seen in terms of Hausa-Fulani and Ibo domination of the Nigerian political scene. The political party that was not in power saw itself and the region it represented as being

at the mercy of the ethnic groups in power. Inspired by the rewards of political power, each of the major political parties worked hard to gain control of the federal government. It is in light of the above that one has to analyze a planned coup d'état by Chief Awolowo and thirty other members of the A.G.

Awolowo and his supporters had been frustrated by their failure to secure a place in the arena of Nigerian political power. They felt that they had been at the vanguard of the fight for the country's independence and were entitled to the honor of being the rightful rulers when the British departed. Chief Anthony Enahoro, one time Minister of Home Affairs in Western Nigeria and also a former opposition spokesman on foreign affairs in the federal Parliament, expressed this feeling when he said:

> For myself, the quest of the "Holy Grail" of independence had occupied the greater part of my adult life. Now, in the moment of victory, I would have loved to see the honours taken by those who had led the quest, but the Galahads and their companions-in-arms were on the sidelines. The situation was without parallel anywhere. The midnight ceremony was a highly emotional occasion as Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa took his place at the floodlit flagpost. The stage effects were perfect. But there was something missing from the central scene. Dr. Azikiwe should have been there, Chief Awolowo should have been there. But they, like myself, were spectators. Strange, the ways of Providence.[78]

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[78]Enahoro, Fugitive Offender, p. 173.

It was Anthony Enahoro who, at the constitutional conference in London in 1953, suggested self-government for Nigeria in 1956.

Excerpts from "Flashes of Inspiration," Awolowo's personal diary, further indicate Awolowo's and the A.G.'s fond hopes. Drawing faith and inspiration from the words of Jesus Christ, "all things whatsoever ye pray believe that ye have them already and ye shall have them," Awolowo said:

> I will undoubtedly become Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria as of the forthcoming federal elections [1959]. I can even make a picture in my mind of myself occupying the office of the Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria. I thank God Almighty in advance for granting me the object of my desire.[79]

It will, however, be a distortion of motives if the attempt of Awolowo and his supporters to overthrow the federal government is seen solely in terms of a desire to gain power. He and his colleagues were more concerned with the implementation of parliamentary democracy in Nigeria. Enahoro had emphasized their determination to make Nigeria "a beacon of parliamentary democracy in Africa."[80] They detested the feudal inclination of the Hausa-Fulani political ethos. Awolowo had said, "the fight now is a fight in which disguised

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[79]Quoted by W. Schwarz, Nigeria, pp. 139-140.

[80]Enahoro, Fugitive Offender, p. 173.

imperialism, Fulani feudalism and mushroom capitalism are welded together in an unholy alliance to continue the oppression and exploitation of the common man."[81] During the treason trial he further stated:

> Since 1957 I have fought as your lordship remarked with an established vigour against feudal system in the northern region and for its eradication. I have also fought to prevent the spread of this system to other parts of Nigeria.[82]

When Judge Sowemimo sentenced him to jail, Awolowo cautioned that his imprisonment reflected the undemocratic system of the Federal Government and warned that his sentence indicated that "the twilight on democracy might change into darkness."[83]

The fact that a feudalistically-oriented political party (the N.P.C.) would have a major share of the control of the Federal Government heightened the A.G.'s frustration over its failure to control Lagos. Awolowo and his party would have been content with a liberal and democratic political party in control of the federal government, and they invited the N.C.N.C. (liberal and democratic) to join them in a coalition government. They indicated their desire to concede the Primeministership to the N.C.N.C. leader.[84]

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[81] West Africa, January 5, 1963, p. 19.

[82] The Story of Treason Trial, (Yaba, n.d.), p. 22.

[83] Ibid.

[84] See Enahoro, Fugitive Offender, p. 184; W. Schwarz, Nigeria, p. 145.

For lack of substantive evidence, it would be unfair to suggest that Awolowo's projected attempt to seize power at the national level was British inspired. Nevertheless, an isolated episode in the Coker Commission of Inquiry places any claim to British neutrality in doubt. Chief Okorodudu, Queen's Counsel, who assisted in the Coker Commission, read a letter to the Commission which quoted Mr. Harold Macmillan as having said that "only Chief Awolowo, leader of the Action Group, and his former deputy chief Akintola could lead Nigeria as a stable, progressive and liberal country."[85] Patrick Dolan and Associates, a public relations firm, negotiating for Roy Thomson to buy shares in the Amalgamated Press of the A.G., is said to have written the letter to Awolowo, Akintola and Shonibare. Part of the letter read:

> In addition I know you will be happy to hear that in discussing the line up of the political parties and political leaders in Nigeria, Macmillan told Roy Thomson that he should back Awolowo and S. C. Akintola.[86]

The commission, however, did not examine the authenticity of the letter, but treated it with indifference.

The treason trial and the imprisonment of Awolowo and the other defendents widened the political cleavage

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[85] West Africa, July 28, 1962, p. 831.

[86] Ibid.

between the western region and the others. The Action Group had suspected that the N.P.C./N.C.N.C. coalition government would seek to annihilate them by taking over the administration of the western region and had contemplated pulling out of the federation if Lagos took such an action.[87]

The Census Crisis 1962-63

The census crisis shook the solidarity of the coalition government. The post-independence census was very important for the regions, especially because regional representation in the Federal Parliament was proportional to the population. The north's political domination depended on its large population. The other regions felt that an accurate 1962 census would reject their large populations and diminish the north's power in the central government.

The census of 1953 may not have accurately enumerated the correct population of the southern regions. In the eastern region some of the people were afraid that they were being counted for tax purposes and thus avoided the census. Also some communities that engaged in illegal trade such as smuggling avoided census officers and were not counted. In the western region, boundary and chieftancy disputes created conditions whereby an accurate count was

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[87]Enahoro, Fugitive Offender, pp. 167, 170-171 passim.

not possible.[88] To the southern regions, the 1962 census was therefore very important. Besides its effect on the allocation of seats in the parliament, it would also guide the Federal Government in the distribution of regional economic and welfare programs. Walter Schwarz put it correctly when he said, "from the outset, the . . . [census] was submerged in politics, with politicians and tribal leaders out to win."[89]

Unfortunately, the census was a failure. The Federal Government did not publish the results, and there were allegations that the eastern and northern regions had inflated their figures. J. J. Warren, the Federal Census Officer, wrote the census off "as false and inflated."[90] Had the 1962 census results been accepted, the north would have lost its numerical dominance, since it had 22.5 million people as against 23 million in the Southern Regions, including Lagos.[91] Because of its political strength in the Federal Parliament, it is reasonable to suggest that the north was instrumental in the invalidation of the 1962 census.

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[88] Federal Ministry of Information, Population Census of the Western Region of Nigeria 1953. Lagos: The Government Statistician, 1956. Federal Ministry of Information, Population Census of the Eastern Region of Nigeria 1953. Lagos: 1953.

[89] W. Schwarz, Nigeria, p. 158.

[90] Ibid., p. 159.

[91] Ibid.

The unity of the country hung on balance by the census controversy. The political mood of the south was one of disenchantment, bordering on an inclination towards political separation from the north. Ezera described the mood: "Opinion in the south was rapidly and widely inclining to the dangerous view that secession of the south from the north would be the only answer to a continued northern domination."[92] A re-count undertaken in 1963 gave the northerners numerical superiority over the other regions. The Eastern Region rejected the results.

The census of 1963, like its predecessor, suffered from malpractice and corruption. The Federal Government did not ease the situation when it seemed to condon the corruption.[93] One of the by-products of the census controversy was the weakening of the coalition between the N.P.C. and its junior partner, the N.C.N.C. leading to dissolution in 1964. It would seem that the situation afforded the northerners an opportunity to see Ibos as foreigners who could be expelled from the north at the discretion of the northern government. In this regard, it is enlightening to read the remark made about the census

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[92]See Ezera, Constitutional Developments, pp. 281-282.

[93]On April 17, 1972 I interviewed a former employee of the Census Office who was still employed by that office in 1963. I was surprised to learn that the Federal Government offered some of the employees money in order to cover up certain anomalies.

by a member of parliament from the eastern region and a reply to that remark by a northern member of parliament:

> Since the publication of the preliminary figures [Census 1963] which the N.C.N.C. rejected, Nigerian unity seems to be in mortal peril. Northern minister of Land on behalf of his government promised to dispossess the Ibos of their property as well as the earlier threat to remove them from the service of that region.[94]

In reply the northern member of parliament said "it is no concern of this parliament what they do in the north, let them [Ibos] go home."[95] The prime minister denied the truth of the remark made by the eastern parliamentarian.[96]

Lagos University Crisis 1965

That the gulf of ethnic animosity had been broadened by the census issue was manifested in the crisis which arose over the appointment of the vice-chancellor of Lagos University in 1965.[97] Dr. Eni Njoku, an Ibo, was appointed vice chancellor of the University of Lagos in 1962 by the prime minister for an initial three year period, after

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[94] House of Representatives, Debates, Col. 1418 (April 1, 1964).

[95] Ibid.

[96] House of Representatives, Debates, Col. 1419 (1964).

[97] For descriptive analysis of the episode see Arthur Nwankwo and Samuel Fejika, Biafra: The Making of a Nation (New York, 1969), pp. 55-71.

which he could be re-appointed.[98] At the expiration of Dr. Njoku's first term of office, the provincial council of the university refused to re-appoint him, arguing that "a change was desirable in order to facilitate the smooth and harmonious running of the affairs of the university."[99] The council recommended that Dr. S. O. Biobaku, a Yoruba, should be appointed. Many students, primarily Ibos, protested against the non-reappointment of Dr. Njoku and the provisional council regarded the protest as a manifestation of fear by the Ibos that other ethnic groups in the country were out to supplant them every where. It is hard not to see an element of tribalism in this episode. Tables 2 and 3 indicate that although the university is located in an area which is geographically Yoruba, there were more easterners on the faculty and even in the student population, easterners were in greater proportion. There may have been a desire by the Yoruba to place their own person at the head of the institution. That the crisis was tribally-oriented was reflected in a speech made in parliament by J. O. Ede, a northern member. He said, "the sole cause of trouble in the university is the obstinacy of the Ibo man who is

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[98] See Sections 6(2)(a) and 6(4) of the University of Lagos Act, 1962, reproduced in University of Lagos--Change in Vice-Chancellorship, an official publication (Apapa, Nigeria: n.d.), p. 3.

[99] Ibid., p. 1.

fighting a life and death battle."[100] Such a statement was tragic in the light of the fact that members of parliament were looked upon as the guardians of the country's unity. Some of their statements only served to fan the flame of disunity.

TABLE 2

STAFF POSITIONS, UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS 1964-65
(excluding the Medical School)

Grade	Expatriates	Nigerian East	Nigerian Others	Total
Professor	14	2	-	16
Associate Professor	3	-	2	5
Senior Lecturer	5	7	2	14
Lecturer	4	16	11	31
Assistant Lecturer	7	3	6	16
Total	33	28	21	82

Source: The other senior members of staff, The University of Lagos, "The Inspired Crisis Over the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, March 24, 1965," (Lagos, n.d.), p. 21.

[100] See Nigeria Parliament, House of Representatives Debates, April 23, 1965 col. 1320.

TABLE 3

STUDENTS' POSITION, UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS 1964-65
(excluding the Medical School and evening students)

Faculty and Year	Federal	West	Mid-West	East	North	West Cameroons	Foreign	Total
Arts								
Year 1	-	13	8	11	-	2	3	37
Business								
Year 1	-	17	10	22	-	-	-	49
Year 2	-	12	11	32	4	-	-	59
Year 3	-	10	2	14	3	-	-	32
Engr.								
Year 1	1	17	2	17	2	-	-	39
Law								
Year 1	-	4	4	14	-	5	-	27
Year 2	-	7	3	18	-	1	-	29
Year 3	1	3	2	8	-	-	-	14
Science								
Prelim-inary	-	15	3	9	3	-	-	30
Year 1	1	10	2	9	-	-	-	22
Total	3	108	50	145	12	8	3	338

Source: Ibid., p. 22.

During all the crises, the federal government was unable to exert positive and fruitful influence. It seemed to have been overtaken by the rapid succession of events. The result was the widening of the credibility gap between it and the people. The workers became disillusioned, especially over the failure to implement the recommendations of Morgan's commission on salary. Their disenchantment found expression in a general strike which followed soon after the census crisis. The labor unions blamed the plight of the workers on the policy of "economic conservatism" pursued by the "autocratic Northern Region and the Fulani tyranny of the N.P.C."[101]

Political Re-alignments and the Federal Elections of 1954[102]

The rumblings of the workers' strike scarcely had died down when the 1964 federal elections plunged Nigeria into a conflict which polarized it into two hostile political camps.[103] Two major political parties replaced the former parties. The N.C.N.C. and its affiliates coalesced with

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[101] William H. Friedland, "Paradoxes of African Trade Unionism: Organizational Chaos and Political Potential," Africa Report (June, 1965), pp. 6-13.

[102] For a descriptive account see W. Schwarz, Nigeria, pp. 164-190. John P. MacKintosh ed., Nigerian Government and Politics (Evanston, 1966), especially Chapter XIII; Richard Harris, "Nigeria: Crisis and Compromise," Africa Report (March, 1965), pp. 25-31.

[103] See West Africa, January 2, and 9, 1965.

the A.G. and its allies to form the United Progressive Grand Alliance (U.P.G.A.). In response, the Northern Peoples Congress and its allies joined with Akintola's Nigerian National Democratic Party (N.N.D.P.) to form the Nigerian National Alliance (N.N.A.). The N.N.A. enjoyed strong support in the north, and the U.P.G.A. was southern based and supported. Both political parties looked to the federal election to test their national strength and popularity.

The political atmosphere had been tense. The U.P.G.A. alleged that there were rumors of plans by the N.N.A. to harass their members and candidates during the campaign and election. In the west, the N.C.N.C. headquarters in Ibadan were attacked, followed by the burning of A.G. cars and the damaging of the houses of prominent U.P.G.A. members, S. O. Osokoya and Chief Lanlehin.[104] Against this background the U.P.G.A., therefore, decided to boycott the elections.[105] However, in spite of the decision to boycott, the elections were held. The N.N.A. won more seats since none of its candidates participated in the boycott. As the results of the elections showed, the decision of U.P.G.A. to boycott seemed unwise and wasteful. See Table 4 for election results.

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[104] West African Pilot, May 24, 1964 reproduced by John P. MacKintosh (ed.) Nigerian Government Politics, p. 577.

[105] Walter Schwarz, Nigeria (New York, 1968), p. 164-169.

TABLE 4

THE 1964 FEDERAL ELECTION RESULTS
(Total votes cast: approximately 4,000,000)

Region	Allocated Seats	N.N.A.	U.P.G.A.	Independents	Seats not filled no polling
North	167	162	4	1	0
East	70	0	19	0	51
West	57	38	18	1	0
Midwest	14	0	13	0	0*
Lagos	4	0	0	1	3
Totals	312	200	54	3	54

*Unreported.

Source: Richard Harris, "Nigeria: Crisis and Compromise," p. 30.

To save the federation, the political leaders agreed to form a broadly based government in which the major political parties participated. However, one could also detect northern influence in that broadly based government.[106]

Western Region Election, November, 1965[107]

The virus of political instability which had afflicted the federal government spread to the western region and created an imapsse in that region's 1965 elections. The

[106] W. Schwarz, Nigeria, p. 175.

[107] Ibid., pp. 178-190.

drama of chaos reached a climax when the elections degenerated into a campaign to plead the cause of the Yoruba. The manifesto of the Nigerian National Democratic Party testifies to the feeling of alienation which had gripped the Yorubas.

> Since 1944 the people of western region have been feeling as if they did not belong to the federation of Nigeria. They have not been in a position to share the amenities and fruits of labour emanating from the Federal Government and which other parts of the country share and openly flaunt before their eyes.[108]

The election results gave victory to Akintola's N.N.D.P., although the results were contested by the U.P.G.A., led by Alhaji Adegbenro, on the grounds that the election was unfairly carried out. Allegations of election rigging were widely heard. Even E. E. Esua, the Federal Electoral Officer, admitted that there were anomalies in the electoral process.[109] With the refusal of Adegbenro to conceed defeat in the election, the western region was submerged in a state of "suspended revolution," since political authority could no longer be located.[110] The situation heralded the beginning of the final assault on the stability of the federal government.

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[108] W. Schwarz, Nigeria, p. 179.

[109] Ibid., p. 127.

[110] See Peter Amann, "Revolution: A Redefinition," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. LXXVII (1962), p. 39. Amann states that a state of suspended revolution occurs when "there is the prolonged coexistence of two or more antagonistic governmental power centers which are unable and unwilling to eliminate each other."

The Coup d'état, January 15, 1966 and the Subsequent Break Up of the Nigerian Federation[111]

The series of crises which began with the census controversy of 1962 and reached an anti-climax in the western region election of 1965 dramatized the inability of the federal government to run the country effectively. Popular suspicion of the government reached an unprecedented high. It was at this juncture that the army, intervened, to right the wrong of the government and purge the country of "corruption, nepotism, internal strife and disunity."[112] On January 15, 1966, a military coup ended the first Nigerian Republic, and the country faced a future of uncertainties. The coup claimed the lives of some of the country's political leaders whose influence had determined the shape of events in Nigeria's history since its independence.

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[111]For detailed account see W. Schwarz, Nigeria; Arthur Nwankwo and Samuel Ifejika, Biafra; Wilton Dillan, "Nigeria's Two Revolutions," Africa Report (March, 1966); Gally Brown Peterside, "Nigeria in Perspective," Ibid.; John de St. Jorre, The Brothers' War: Biafra and Nigeria (Boston, 1972); Nigerian Crisis, 1966 (Enugu, 1967), January 15, Before and After Nigerian Crisis, 1966, Vol. 7 (Enugu, 1967).

[112]See Major C. K. Nzeogwu's broadcast over Radio Kaduna at midday, January 15, 1966 reproduced in A. H. K.' Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, p. 125.

Public reaction to the military coup, particularly in the southern regions, was one of jubilation.[113] The psychology of rising expectations gripped many Nigerians because they felt that the army, unpolluted by the corruption of politics, would be better able to lead the country into progress and stability. The maintenance of national unity seemed an important and necessary task for the military government, and it therefore issued Decree No. 34 which abolished the federal system in favor of a unitary one.[114] However, a section of the country, the north, was not enthusiastic about the decree and openly opposed it.[115] The negative reaction to the decree indicated that the military government had misread the mood of the nation that it opted to govern.

The January 15 coup turned out to be a prelude to Nigeria's disintegration. Barely seven months thereafter, a second coup took place on July 29, 1966. General J. T. U. Aguyi Ironsi, who had taken over the instrument of government

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[113] The Problem of Nigerian Unity (Enugu, 1966), p. 21; John de St. Jorre, The Brothers' War, p. 42; Wilton Dillan, "Nigeria's Two Revolutions," Africa Report, pp. 9-12; W. Schwarz, Nigeria, p. 199.

[114] Federal Ministry of Information Press Release No. 610/1966, as quoted in A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, pp. 174-177.

[115] See broadcast by Military Governor of the north on May 29, 1966; also broadcast by Military Governor of the east over Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Service on May 30, 1966. In particular, Major Hassau's address to the special meeting of the northern chiefs in Kaduna June 1, 1966. These broadcasts are reproduced in A. H. M. Kirk-Green, Crisis and Conflict, pp. 177-184.

after the overthrow of the first Republic, was brutally assassinated. Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowan, a northerner, became the commanding officer of the Nigerian army and the Head of the Military Government. The July coup d'état was a reaction of the northerners[116] who, as a result of the first coup, had lost their political power at the center. It was accompanied by the wanton massacre of Nigerians of eastern origin,[117] which the Military Government could not control and which resulted in the mass exodus of easterners to their homeland.[118] At this point, Nigerian unity suffered its greatest setback, and the head of the Military Government reflected the situation in his broadcast.

> I have now come to the most difficult part, or the most important part, of this statement. I am doing it conscious of the great disappointment and heartbreak it will cause all true and sincere lovers of Nigeria and of Nigerian unity. . . . As a result of the recent events and the other previous similar ones, I have come to strongly believe that we cannot honestly and

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[116] See Colin Legum, "The Tragedy in Nigeria," The Observer (October 16, 1966).

[117] Estimates of the easterners killed during May and September 1966 are between 10,000 and 50,000. See C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, Biafra, Random Thoughts (New York, 1969), p. 17; Ojukwu, The Ahiara Declaration (Geneva, 1969), p. 5. "Program," Nigerian Crisis 1966, Vol. 3, (Enugu, 1967); The Verbatim Report (Aburi, Ghana, 4-5 January, 1967), p. 30.

[118] Jonathan Kwitny states that "no reasonable man could have hoped to stop the exodus from the north after the events [massacre] there this summer (1966)." See Kwitny, "Nigeria in Focus," The New Leader (January 16, 1967), p. 15.

> sincerely continue in this wise, as the basis of trust and confidence in our unitary system of government has not been able to stand the test of time . . . suffice to say that, putting all considerations to the test--political, economic, as well as social--the base for unity is not there or is so badly rocked not only once but several times.[119]

The statement was ominous for the cause of Nigerian unity, for subsequent developments appear to have been determined by sentiments of disunity.

The pogrom which took place before and after the second coup d'état strained the relationship between the north and the east, and the inability of the Federal Military Government to stop the killings made the easterners fear that their general security could not be guaranteed by the Military Government. This fear was touched upon when Colonel Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, the Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, made the secession proclamation, saying, inter-alia "aware that you [Easterners] can no longer be protected in your lives and in your property by a government based outside Eastern Nigeria . . . I do declare that all political ties between us and the Federal Republic of Nigeria are hereby totally dissolved."[120]

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[119]Lt. Col. Gowan's broadcast on the assumption of office, August 1, 1966, quoted in A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, p. 197.

[120]Declaration of Biafran Independence, made at Enugn on May 30, 1967 reproduced in A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, pp. 451-452.

Thus six years after independence, the solidarity of Nigerian unity was tested and found wanting. A military coup d'état in January 1966, followed by a civil upheaval later in the year, created a situation which led to the disintegration of the country in 1967: on May 30 of that year, the Eastern Region seceded and declared itself the Republic of Biafra. To nullify the secession, Nigeria declared war on July 6, 1967.[121] Nonetheless, united Nigeria had ceased to exist, and for thirty months (July 6, 1967 to January 12, 1970) two states--Biafra and Nigeria--were at war with each other. To the Nigerians, this struggle was a war for unity, to preserve the federation.[122] But to the Biafrans, it was a war for survival, to save a people from the throes of extermination.[123]

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[121]See Gowon's address to the First Civilian Members of the Federal Executive Council on June 12, 1967. He said, "I have taken the irrevocable decision to crush Ojukwu's rebellion in order to re-united Nigerians residents in the three eastern states with their brothers and sisters in other parts of Nigeria," Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, pp. 453-454.

[122]See Gowon's address to the First Civilian Members of the Federal Executive Council, 12 June 1967, Ministry of Information Press Release No. 1295/1967, as quoted in A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, pp. 453-455; Towards One Nigeria, Nos. I to IV (Lagos, 1967); Rex Niven, The War of Nigerian Unity 1967-1970 (London, 1967), especially the introduction, p. 5; "The Nigerian Impasse," Current History (May, 1969), p. 295, John H. Orick states that "although the idea of a unified Nigeria was attractive, few people really understood the point of restoring to the federation a recalcitrant tribe with which relationship had always been uneasy."

[123]See C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, Biafra, Random Thoughts, p. 37.

CHAPTER III

NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY: 1960-1970

1960-1965*

One of the problems that confront new nations is the formulation of their foreign policy. They have difficulty stopping themselves from seeing, and dealing with, the world outside their boundaries through their erstwhile colonial masters. This problem is complicated when, consciously or not, some of the more advanced nations tend to relate to the developing countries through former overlords. Unfortunately, the advanced nations, as well as the former colonial masters, regard former dependencies as still within the metropoles' spheres of influence.

In order to demonstrate sovereignty, African statesmen have proclaimed 'non-alignment' as the cornerstone of their foreign policy. In this regard, Fred L. Hadsel correctly states that "non-alignment was one formulation of an overriding aspiration, that of preserving the independence

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*I have divided this into two periods. The first period covers from independence in 1960 to the end of the First Republic in January 1966, the second, the policy of the Military Government up to 1970.

of the African nations . . . a call to judge foreign policy primarily on the basis of new found freedom."[1] Nevertheless, the persistence of colonial influences and the realities of international relations have made 'non-alignment' a declaration of principle rather than a practical goal.

Nigeria, a quondam colony and a member of the world community, has not escaped the dilemma of formulating foreign policy in face of its colonial heritage and world pressures. In the formulation of its foreign policy towards Africa, Western Europe and the United States, the Commonwealth and the Communist bloc, certain factors have been decisively influential. These are the nation's size, its comparatively peaceful and gradual transition to independence, its heterogeneous society, its need for foreign aid and for internal development, the political and economic attitude of its neighbors and not the least, Nigeria's fear of being branded an imperialist stooge.

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[1]Fred L. Hadsel, "Africa and the World: Non-alignment Reconsidered," The Annals, Vol. 372 (July 1967), reproduced in Irving Leonard Markovitz ed. African Politics and Society (New York, 1970), p. 434. But L. Gray Cowan has suggested that the refusal of African states to be identified with any ideological camp results from their "realistic appraisal of their position as weak, new states in the international community," see L. Gray Cowan, "Political Determinants," in Vernon McKay ed., African Diplomacy: Studies in the Determinants of Foreign Policy (New York, 1967), p. 132.

Africa

Nigeria's size and potential inclined it's rulers to think in terms of a leadership role in the continent.[2] They felt that the other African nations would naturally look to Nigeria for such an assignment. Jaja Wachuku, former Foreign Minister, reflected this view when he said, ". . . Nigeria considers it her duty to instil confidence in the new African states."[3] It was, therefore, a disappointment when Nigeria did not gain the prominence, at least in symbolic terms, in African affairs that would befit her size and potential. A member of parliament expressed this disappointment when he commented:

> After the Cairo conference [March 1961] it was reported by the Prime Minister that Nigeria had lost nothing. We lost the secretaryship; we lost the Headquarters and we initiated much of the actions about the O.A.U. and yet we have lost nothing.[4]

Though Nigeria felt that it was entitled to a leadership position in Africa, it did not want to take advantage of such a position and subvert other countries or impose its

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[2]See Nigeria Parliament, House of Representatives Debates, April 5, 1960, Cols. 654-667.

[3]Jaja Wachuku, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy," in Millan Maclure and Douglas Anglin eds. Africa: The Political Pattern (Toronto, 1961), p. 72.

[4]See House of Representatives Debates, September 24, 1964, Col. 2272. See also speech by F. C. Ogbalu, ibid., March 13, 1964, Col. 33. See also speech by U. U. Eko, ibid., March 23, 1964, Col. 675.

domination on them. Rather it evisaged its leadership role in terms of maintaining peace. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the former President of Nigeria, stressed this view:

> In the arena of world politics, Nigeria should not seek to impose its leadership on Africa or elsewhere and it should not attempt to browbeat the rest of Africa or force any nation to bend their knees in acknowledgement of the existence of a colossus that it is. Rather a free Nigeria should dedicate itself to cooperate with Africa and the rest of the world towards the maintenance of peace everywhere in the world.[5]

This non-aggressive posture was manifested in Nigeria's attitude towards the island of Fernando Po. Nigerians formed the bulk of the population of the island and there had been suggestions that Nigeria should annex it,[6] but it refused and continued to respect the territorial and political integrity of the island.

In light of its desire for peaceful relations with its neighbors, Nigeria became obsessed with any attempt by any African country to interfere with, or subvert, the territorial integrity of another. Nigeria's sour relationship with Ghana in the first half of the 1960's could be

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[5]Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Nigeria in World Politics," Presence Africaine, Vols. 4/5, Nos. 32/33, 1960, p. 30, quoted by James S. Coleman, "The Foreign Policy of Nigeria," in Joseph E. Black and Kenneth W. Thompson eds. Foreign Policies in a World of Change (New York, 1963), pp. 400-402. For a similar statement see Prime Minister's speech to the U.N. General Assembly on October 8, 1960 in Nigeria Speaks (Ikeja, 1964), p. 67; Jaja Wachuku, "Nigeria's Foreign Policy," p. 71.

[6]See speech by F. C. Ogbalu, House of Representatives Debates, March 27, 1962, Col. 314.

explained in this context. Ghana's harboring of Nigerians charged with treasonable felony was regarded by the Nigerian government as a subversive act.[7] Unfortunately, the strained relationship has been attributed to rivalry between them.[8]

Notwithstanding its inclination towards a leadership role, Nigeria took a conservative posture in regard to colonialism in the continent. Though opposed to colonialism, it was cautious in advocating what would be considered a hasty transfer of power to former colonies. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the late Prime Minister, made this explicit when he said:

> Our belief in the fundamental rights of all African states to freedom and independence does not imply that independence be granted without regard to economic, sociological and political factors affecting the state concerned.[9]

Because it experienced many constitutional developments, and with calculated gradualism attained independence without any chaos attributable to political immaturity, Nigeria felt

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[7]See House of Representatives Debates, April 21, 1965, Cols. 1128-1140 passim.

[8]See W. Scott Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy (Princeton, N.J., 1970), pp. 77-81; James S. Coleman, "The Foreign Policy of Nigeria," John P. Mackintosh ed. Nigerian Government and Politics (Evanston, 1966), p. 280.

[9]Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, "Nigeria Looks Ahead," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 41 (October 1962), p. 138.

that the achievement of independence required an appreciable period of political training.[10] It also feared that "premature" independence could engender ominous consequences for a former colony.[11] Guided by this thinking, Jaja Wachuku sponsored a motion in the United Nations which called for the total elimination of colonialism in Africa "by before and not later than December 1970."[12] Anthony Enahoro, an opposition member in the federal parliament regarded such a stance as a "gross betrayal of African Revolution."[13]

Racial Discrimination

Though Nigeria took a conservative and cautious stance about the elimination of colonial rule in Africa, its position in regard to racial discrimination was one of open attack. It was unequivocal in denouncing South Africa's "apartheid" policy. Even before independence, Nigeria's parliament took steps against South Africa's racial policy by calling for an end to trade relations between the two countries.[14] In his inaugural address as Nigeria's first

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Both Balewa and Wachuku pointed to the Congo debacle as the tragedy of premature independence. See House of Representatives Debates, April 17, 1961, Col. 1748 and November 20, 1961, Col. 3118.

[12] Ibid., November 20, 1961, Cols. 3118-3120.

[13] See Anthony Enahoro's speech, Ibid., March 28, 1962, Col. 411.

[14] Ibid., April 5, 1960, Col. 667.

indigenous Governor-General, Nnamdi Azikiwe said, "we cannot concede that it is in our national interest to fraterize with such nations which practice race prejudice and we must not acquiesce in such an outrageous insult on the black race."[15]

It was in keeping with the above statement that, during the meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference held in London in March 1961, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa supported the move which ousted South Africa from membership in that organization.[16] It should, however, be pointed out that Nigeria's approach to South Africa's racial attitude was moderate. Balewa indicated this preference by his fear that an unreasonable approach to the South African problem would "only make the condition of the black race [in South Africa] difficult."[17] Believing that there should be an avenue of communication between Nigeria and South Africa, Balewa would accept a request for an exchange of ambassadors and would not decline an invitation to visit

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[15]Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Respect for Human Dignity," An address delivered on the occasion of his inauguration as the Governor-General of Nigeria, October 1, 1960 (Lagos, 1960), p. 15.

[16]See House of Representatives Debates, April 17, 1961, Col. 1748.

[17]Prime Minister's speech, Ibid., April 5, 1960, Col. 698.

South Africa, for he saw in such connection an opportunity to make that government change its racialist policy.[18]

Pan-Africanism[19]

Nigeria's enthusiasm for active participation in African affairs was indicated by a parliamentary motion calling for the establishment of a ministry of Pan-African Affairs.[20] Though the motion did not pass, the attempt to create such a ministry demonstrated a desire to give Africa a special position. Nevertheless, Nigeria's stance in regard to Pan-Africanism did not reflect the lively interest which the afore-mentioned motion had embodied.

Nigeria's posture was moderate, if not conservative, when compared with the stance taken by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Its moderate approach was largely influenced by its own historical experience. It has not been easy for it to forge unity from among the diverse peoples in its territorial confines. This experience made it feel diffident about the feasibility of effecting political unity on a continental

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[18]See Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr. Nigeria: The Tribe, The Nation, or the Race--The Politics of Independence (Cambridge, 1965), p. 217.

[19]Pan-Africanism in this context is defined as a movement for the political unification of the independent African states. It is the process of creating a united states of Africa.

[20]See Motion by Kalu Ezera and E. C. Akwiwu, House of Representatives Debates, April 19, 1960, Cols. 1432-1439.

level without a gradual and adequate preparation. Anthony Enahoro, a former member of the Nigerian Parliament, illuminated the cautious approach, when in discussing Pan-Africanism he said:

> . . . I would like to impress on all of us the importance of Nigerian experiment . . . because I think that success in Nigeria may well point the way to peaceful development in other parts of Africa.[21]

In other words, Nigeria should build her political unity first before encouraging continental unification. Thus Pan-Africanism would be meaningfully and enthusiastically endorsed only when and if it had become practicable.

Also Nigeria felt that it was visionary to think in terms of an all-African government that would entail the surrender of individual national sovereignty. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, referring to such idealism, said regarding Pan-Africanism, "we have thought it sensible to distinguish between ideals and reality."[22] And Nnamdi Azikiwe considered it "folly" to ask independent African nations to surrender their hard-earned sovereignty in the name of Pan-Africanism. He said:

> It will be capital folly to assume that hard-bargaining politicians . . . will . . . easily

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[21]American Society of African Culture (ed.) Pan-Africanism Reconsidered (Berkeley, 1962), p. 72.

[22]Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, "Nigeria Looks Ahead," p. 137.

> surrender their newly-won political power in the interest of a political leviathan. It has not been possible in Europe or America and unless Africa is different from other continents the verdict of history on this score remains to be challenged and altered.[23]

Refussing to endorse immediate political unification of the independent African states, Nigeria instead advocated "functional collaboration" as a practical step towards continental unity.[24]

It is significant that in favoring functional co-operation among the sovereign nations, Nigeria was guided by a policy of staunch disapproval of intervention in the internal affairs of other states. It felt that to ask any African state to surrender its sovereignty in order to achieve political unification was essentially an interference with that country's political integrity. Thus to maintain the sanctity of the colonial boundaries, Nigeria associated itself only with projects that involved economic cooperation.[25]

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[23]Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Nigeria in World Politics," Presence Africaine, Vols. 4/5 (1960-1961), p. 27. For a similar statement see Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's speech Nigeria Speaks, p. 68.

[24]See Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's address to the Conference of African and Malagasy Heads of State at Addis Ababa, on May 24, 1963 in Nigeria Speaks, pp. 154-164. See also his speech to the Lagos Conference of January 1961, Ibid., p. 112.

[25]For Nigeria's participation in economic cooperation with particular reference to West Africa see I. William Zartman, International Relations in the New African States

Britain and the Commonwealth

Prior to independence, Britain was responsible for Nigeria's foreign policy. When it achieved independence, Nigeria decided to reconsider its relations with other nations from an independent posture. That decision was difficult to execute because the bond of relationship between Nigeria and Britain could not be easily loosened, let alone abolished. Nnamdi Azikiwe correctly stated that:

> We should reckon with our British connection and our unanimous desire to become fully-fledged members of the British Commonwealth . . . we should value our British connection as a pearl of great force because it has enabled us to pass through an apprenticeship in the art of the science of constitutional government.[26]

To Nigeria Britain was a father and its policy towards Britain was anything but unfriendly.

Nigeria was inclined, on some occasions, to identify its interest with Britain, as manifested in the defense agreement signed by the two nations.[27] The pact was abrogated two years after Nigeria attained independence. Pressure

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(Englewood Cliffs, 1966), pp. 134-136; 153-155. Also Adebayo Adedeji, "Prospects of Regional Economic Cooperation in West Africa," The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 8 (1970), 213-31.

[26]Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Nigeria in World Politics," pp. 23-24.

[27]See Federation of Nigeria, "Draft Defense Agreement," Sessional Paper, No. 4, 1960.

from the opposition party and university students compelled the government to annul the pact but its signature had signalled the nature of Nigeria's post independence relation with the erstwhile colonial master.

Britain on its side made attempts to woo independent Nigeria to its ideological posture. When, on March 20, 1964, Sir Alec Douglas Home, then British Prime Minister, addressed the Nigerian Parliament, he deprecated the "evils" of communism and implicitly suggested that Nigeria, though unaligned, should understand London's anti-communist stance. Part of this address read thus:

> So long as the challenge by the communists to our way of life was there, the courtries of the Atlantic Community, Mr. President [Nnamdi Azikiwe], had no choice but to meet it, whatever the cost you may think in wastage of man power and material wealth. And perhaps it is difficult sometimes for a country which rightly wishes to be unaligned to understand our problem . . . But India knows it now, and many a newly independent countries knows the meaning of subversion.[28]

The institutional and ideological attachment of Nigeria to Britain after independence threatened to negate the validity of its sovereignty. A member of Nigerian Parliament expressed this fear when he said:

> I feel ashamed, . . ., to see Nigerian soldiers wearing badges with inscriptions, 'Member of the Queen's Own Nigerian Regiment.' One sees the 'Royal Nigerian Army,' the 'Royal Nigerian Navy' . . . We

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[28]See House of Representatives Debates, March 20, 1964, Col. 485.

> must not be a nation, there must also be something which must make us really proud of this nation. These royalties no matter how desirable, they make us appear small in the eyes of the world and in the comity of nations.[29]

There can be little doubt that the desire to escape the ever hovering shadow of British influence inspired Nigeria to seek a republican status so that its foreign policy would bear an impress of true sovereignty and originality.

In its relationship with the Commonwealth Nigeria took a posture which seemed to vindicate its sovereignty. It was attracted to that organization not so much because of its colonial experience but because the nature of the Commonwealth appealed to it. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa stressed the point that the Commonwealth was a club of political equals, in which each member's sovereignty was respected.[30] Thus membership, at least in political terms, would not imperil the integrity of the participator.

Nigeria regarded the racial attitude of South Africa as indicative of that country's denial of the sovereignty of black African nations in the Commonwealth.

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[29]See speech by Mbazulike Amechi, ibid., March 28, 1962, Col. 405; see also Kalu Ezera's speech advocating abolition of foreign titles, ibid, January 9, 1964, Cols. 3282-3283. See also I. S. Onwuchekwa's motion on renaming of monuments bearing colonial names, ibid., April 7, 1964, Cols. 1854-1858.

[30]See Prime Minister's speech on Foreign Policy, ibid., August 20, 1960.

Abubakar Tafawa pointed out that "so long as one member openly advocated racial discrimination it was impossible to accept that the Commonwealth was indeed an association of free and equal nations . . ."[31] South Africa's membership, with its "apartheid" policy, challenged Nigeria's fundamental belief in the dignity of man[32] and the political equality of sovereign nations. Thus, it was not only vocal in the denunciation of South Africa's racial policy but it also joined other members in the Commonwealth in a successful demand for that country's expulsion.[33]

Common colonial and political experience had fashioned the Commonwealth countries into an organization of sister nations. It becomes somehow difficult for member states to pursue meaningful independent policies in foreign affairs, especially in economic matters. In foreign trade, members generally favored Commonwealth markets, and a fair proportion of Nigeria's trade leaned towards the British and Commonwealth markets. As Tables 5 and 6 indicate, from 1961 to 1966 a little over 39 percent of Nigeria's average

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[31]Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's speech, House of Rep. Debates, April 17, 1961 quoted by Reuben Frodin, "Nigeria and the World Outside," American Universities Field Staff Reports Service, W. African Series, Vol. IV (May 25, 1961), p. 9.

[32]See Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Respect for Human Dignity."

[33]See Prime Minister's speech, House of Representatives Debates, April 17, 1961.

monthly imports were from the Commonwealth countries, and approximately 43 percent of her average monthly exports were received by the Commonwealth countries. These data do not seem to support any argument in favor of an economic influence largely determining Nigeria's affiliation with the Commonwealth.

TABLE 5

PATTERN OF NIGERIAN IMPORT TRADE WITH COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES, 1961 TO 1966 (MONTHLY AVERAGE OR CALENDAR MONTHS IN £ THOUSAND)

Period	Total Monthly Imports	Commonwealth Countries				
		U.K.	Canada	Hong Kong	India	Others
1961	18,534	7,099	139	350	577	373
1962	16,917	6,152	225	362	425	196
1963	17,290	5,904	76	431	264	353
1964	21,143	6,556	151	388	346	441
1965	22,929	7,088	170	299	330	692
1966	21,365	6,359	260	151	264	709
Total*	119,178	39,158	1,022	1,982	2,206	2,765

*Approximately 39 percent.

Source: Digest of Statistics, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January 1968),(Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Office of Statistics), p. 35. Ibid., Vol. 16, No. 1, 1967, p. 35.

TABLE 6

PATTERN OF NIGERIAN EXPORT TRADE WITH COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES, 1961-1966 (MONTHLY AVERAGE OR CALENDAR MONTHS IN £ THOUSAND)

Period	Total Foreign Exports	Commonwealth Countries U.K.	Canada	Ghana	Others
1961	14,456	6,380	42	183	130
1962	14,042	5,889	143	104	96
1963	15,808	6,184	156	208	134
1964	17.888	6,761	206	331	222
1965	22,355	8,485	208	164	125
1966	23,671	9,094	539	117	216
Total*	108,220	42,793	1,294	1,107	923

*Approximately 43 percent.

Source: Digest of Statistics, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 1968 (Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Office of Statistics 1968), p. 35, Ibid., Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 37.

In international issues, Nigeria rarely took positions which conflicted with those of the Commonwealth and Britain in particular. Though in the Congo crisis, many Commonwealth countries followed different lines of action,[34] Nigeria's stance coincided with London's,[35] which supported United

[34]The Congo crisis demonstrated a deep cleavage among the Commonwealth countries, especially the African members. Though members agreed on U.N. mediation, Kwame Nkrumah advocated U.N. mediation but through independent African states, see Africa Report (October 1968), p. 8.

[35]See Reuben Frodin, "Nigeria and the World Outside," p. 10.

Nations mediation. As expressed by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa: "we also believe that the Congolese people were right to appeal to the U.N.O. for help and advice in rebuilding their country rather than to turn to any individual power."[36]

Nigeria's reluctance to pursue a policy that might strain its relationship with Britain was very evident in the Rhodesian crisis. Though opposed to the manner in which Britain handled Ian Smith's unilateral declaration of Rhodesian independence in 1965, it was unwilling to endanger its friendly relation with Britain by severing diplomatic relations, as the Organization of African Unity had called upon its members to do.[37] It is fair to conclude that the attitude of the first Nigerian Republic towards Britain and the Commonwealth was greatly cordial, often bordering on admiration and esteem.

The United States and the Western bloc

In stipulating the basic principles of Nigerian foreign relations, Abubakar Tafawe Balewa said,""we consider it wrong for the federal government to associate itself as a matter of routine with any of the power blocs."[38] Both

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[36] See Prime Minister's speech in Nigeria Speaks, p. 63.

[37] See West Africa, December 18, 1965, p. 1427.

[38] See Prime Minister's Foreign Policy speech, House of Representatives Debates, August 20, 1960.

Nnamdi Azikiwe, the former president, and Jaja Wachuku, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, re-affirmed the policy of non-alignment in many of their speeches.[39] Nevertheless, Nigeria's heavy leaning towards the United States and the Western bloc has belied the validity of this policy.

Nigeria had been trained in the "democratic" system of Western Europe. It imbibed its capitalistic economic system and saw in it a true expression of individual economic freedom. In this wise it regarded socialism as a "canker-worm" which not only "destroys the economic fabric of the nation, but also brings about the complete subordination of individual freedom."[40] Thus despite an avowed commitment to a policy of non-alignment, Nigeria's long association with Western institutions made the pull towards a pro-western bloc posture very difficult for it to resist. Dr. F. U. Okeke, a member of Nigerian Parliament, pointed out that:

> We cannot in a day or two, even in a matter of years, dispel the principles which we have imbibed from democratic countries like Britain and America. Certainly we are a

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[39]See Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Nigeria in World Politics," pp. 19-30; see also "President Answers Questions Posed by Miss Barbara Hepburn of the U.S.A.," in Selected Foreign Policy Statements, 1960-1964 (Lagos, n.d.), pp. 99-101; see also Foreign Policy statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, House of Representatives Debates, September 4, 1961.

[40]See Festus Okotie-Eboh, Budget Speech (Lagos, 1965), p. 3.

> democracy if you ask which camp we belong to, we have been under democratic principles and institutions for over one hundred years . . . we do not know the ideology of Communism or totalitarianism yet or any other ideology. The one we have had is democratic principles which is pro-western attitude.[41]

Against this background, Nigeria made a mockery of "non-alignment" as the basis of its foreign policy. When the President in his opening speech in Parliament said that "my government will continue to pursue our policy of non-alignment in the field of foreign relations,"[42] a member of Parliament made the following remark:

> For a number of years we have been preaching this policy of non-alignment. It is my view that the time has come to define the limit of this policy. I say this because it seems we are 99.99 percent pro-west in our foreign policy.[43]

An opposition member in the parliament even expressed fears that the country's pro-western bloc stance would easily make it a "military appendage of the N.A.T.O."[44]

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[41]House of Representatives Debates, April 14, 1962, quoted by Claude S. Phillips, The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy (Evanston, 1964), p. 103.

[42]See House of Representatives Debates, 1st Session, Second Parliament, March 24, 1965, Col. 2.

[43]See speech by E. E. Inyang, House of Representatives Debates, March 25, 1965, Col. 85.

[44]See speech by J. S. Tarkar, Ibid., April 3, 1962, Col. 764.

Long before its independence, Nigeria had diplomatic socio-economic, religious and educational relations with the western bloc countries. For instance, from 1957 to 1960, forty Nigerian diplomats were in training in the United States and in other Western European countries.[45] For the academic year 1953/54 there were 276 Nigerians studying in the United States and in 1958 some 25 private United States agencies and foundations instituted an educational exchange between the United States and Nigeria. In the same year there were 80 U.S. grantees exchanged under the International Educational Exchange Program in which 13 Americans and 67 Nigerians participated. Through the 1958 fiscal year, the U.S. made available $1.3 million for the Technical Cooperation program in Nigeria.[46] As Nigeria approached its independence, the U.S. opened a commercial bank, Bank of America,[47] and through its Development Loan Fund, the U.S. government loaned £ 1.1 m (approximately U.S. $3.08 m) to the Nigerian Railway Corp. for reconstruction of rail lines between Enugu and Makurdi.[48]

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[45]Vernon McKay, Africa in World Politics (New York, 1963), p. 399.

[46]See International Education Exchange and Related Exchange of Persons, Activities for Ghana, Region of Trans Volta Togoland, French Togoland and Nigeria (Washington, 1969), p. 77.

[47]Opened on August 2, 1960, see West Africa, July 9, 1960, p. 779.

[48]Ibid., October 29, 1960, p. 1235.

One year after Nigerian independence the ten nations that gave it aid were all in the western bloc. These were Britain, the U.S., West Germany, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Israel, Pakistan, Netherlands and Canada.[49] In the first two years of its independence it received loans in the amount of £ 20,115,000. These loans were from the U.K., Israel, the U.S. and International Bank for Reconstruction.[50] Since financial assistance requires that goods be procured from the country giving the assistance,[51] Nigerian imports, especially machinery and equipment, leaned heavily towards the Western bloc. Douglas Anglin states that in 1962 about 70 percent of Nigerian imports came from Western Europe, the older Commonwealth and the U.S., while 90 percent of her exports went to those countries.[52]

In summing up, the First Nigerian Republic was enormously oriented towards the western bloc. The legacy of her colonial experience seems to have made such inclination inevitable. During her colonial days the doors to

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[49] House of Rep. Debates, November 20, 1961, p. 46 quoted by Claude S. Phillips, The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy, p. 101.

[50] See House of Rep. Debates, April 2, 1962, Cols. 643-644.

[51] See Festus Okotie-Eboh, Budget Speech, p. 14.

[52] Douglas Anglin, "Nigeria: Political Non-alignment and Economic Alignment," p. 249.

the Eastern and Communist bloc nations were virtually closed to her. The reality of the world it experienced was only that of the Western bloc countries; thus when independence dawned on it, Nigeria carried this legacy along to its nationhood, and could not help but see, at least initially, the world through Western eyes.

The U.S.S.R. and the Communist bloc

When Nigeria attained independence, there were pressures on the government to broaden the country's sphere of international relations to include the Communist bloc. For instance, one of the issues which occupied the attention of the "All-Nigerian Peoples Conference" organized by Kingsley O. Mbadiwe in 1961 was Nigeria's attitude towards the Communist bloc. In its recommendation, the Conference called upon the government to "desist from Communist witch-hunting which involved passport denial to Nigerians wishing to travel to East European countries and China, non-hiring of expatriate professors, lecturers and graduates from East European countries and banning of importation of literature from East European countries."[53] When asked to open embassies in Communist countries, the government complained that it had inadequate financial resources and lacked

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[53]See Claude S. Phillips, The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy, p. 58.

trained personnel.[54] Only in 1962 was the Nigerian passport made "valid for travel to all parts of the world," including the communist countries.[55]

Nigeria also showed some reluctance in accepting scholarships from the Communist bloc. A member of parliament suggested that since an American was in charge of the ministry responsible for scholarships, United States' scholarships were all taken, while it took two to three months to consider the ones from the socialist countries.[56]

In its economic relations Nigeria adopted a liberal policy, for it was willing to open its doors to the communist bloc countries. This stance was indicated by Festus Okotie-Eboh, late Finance Minister, who a few months before Nigerian independence said, "our policy will be to promote multilateral trade over as wide an area as possible . . ."[57] It was in this spirit that he led an economic mission to Moscow in 1961 to find ways of improving economic ties between

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[54] House of Rep. Debates, April 10, 1964, Col. 1822.

[55] Ibid., April 12, 1962, p. 10 and April 14, 1962, p. 28 quoted by Claude S. Phillips, The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy, p. 104.

[56] See Emere's speech, House of Rep. Debates, September 25, 1964, Col. 2383.

[57] See House of Rep. Debates, April 4, 1960, Cols. 581-582; but it has been suggested that Nigerian economic policy leaned favorably toward the Western bloc, and that her non-alignment was political only. See Douglas Anghn, "Political Non-alignment and Economic Alignment,"

Nigeria and the U.S.S.R.[58] In the same year, Nigeria signed trade pacts with Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria.[59]

China also followed the examples of the East European countries in cultivating economic relations with Nigeria. In April 1961 a Chinese delegation visited Lagos to discuss possibilities of diplomatic relations, trade and cultural contacts. In June a Nigerian delegation returned the visit.[60] One might ask why Nigeria, despite its professed policy of non-alignment, waited for almost one year after independence before undertaking a meaningful economic and diplomatic relationship with the communist bloc countries. The following explanations would help to provide an answer:

1. Soon after its independence, the western bloc nations guaranteed loans and aid for Nigeria's internal development. It has earlier been stated that in the first two years of independence, Nigeria received loans in the amount of £ 20,115,000, all from countries in the western bloc, as Table 7 indicates. Under the circumstances,

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[58]Harold D. Nelson et al., Area Handbook for Nigeria (Washington, 1972), p. 262, see also Douglas Anglin, Nigeria's Political Non-Alignment, pp. 249-252.

[59]Harold D. Nelson et al., Area Handbook for Nigeria.

[60]Robert Legvold, Soviet Policy in West Africa (Cambridge, 1970), p. 151.

TABLE 7

NIGERIA'S EXTERNAL LOANS 1960-1962

Description and Total Amount of Loan and Country of Origin	Amount Drawn Since 1960	Repayment Terms	Project
£ 3 million, U.K. Exchequer 1960-85	3,000,000	Repayable by annual equal installments in 25 years.	Re-lent to Eastern and Northern Regions for capital development.
£ 12 million, U.K. Govt. Commonwealth Assistance 1960-80	8,665,000	Repayable in 20 yrs.	Project in federal capital development programme.
£ 3 million, Israel loan	919,730	Each slice repayable in 7 years.	Part on lent to Eastern Region & part retained by federal govt. for capital dev. programme projects.
£ 10 million International Bank for Reconstruction & Dev. Loan to Nigerian Railway Corporation	3,071,000	Repayable in 16 yrs.	Borna Railway extension.
U.S. Govt. Loan to Nigeria Ports Authority	237,000	Repayable in 12 yrs.	Construction of warehouse at Apapa.
U.S. Govt. Loan to Nigerian Railway Corp.	1,070,000	Repayable in 20 yrs.	Railway track relaying.
U.K. Govt. special list 'B' interest-free loan.	3,152,258	No fixed repayment schedule; repayable in installments as officers retire.	Payment as compensation to retiring British Officers.
Total £	20,114,988		

Source: Federal Parliament Debates, April 2, 1962, Cols. 643-644.

Nigeria could afford to ignore financial assistance from the communist bloc nations. It should be noted that during the war years Nigeria made approaches to the community bloc partly because the western powers could not afford it enough military and economic assistance for its needs.

2. Nigeria was at first skeptical about communism, for it had been portrayed as a bugbear which stifled individual freedom and produced totalitarianism, as implied in Sir Alec Douglas Home's speech to the Nigerian Parliament. That speech painted communism with a subversive brush. Nigeria, closely tied to Britain and other western democracies, could not open its arms to the communist countries.

3. Nigeria's experience with the western powers had demonstrated that economic aid from them morally obligated it to take a pro-west posture. Such a position belied its professed non-alignment. Thus, it felt that assistance from the communist powers would, as with its experience with the western powers, morally tie it to the communist ideological stance. In this light, Nigeria might lose some of her important western allies and the financial aid that they provided.

The understanding that a non-aligned country should not inherit the foreign policy prejudices of her former

colonial master was instrumental in effecting Nigeria's change of policy towards the communist countries. In addition it discovered that diplomatic and economic relations with the communist bloc powers would not necessarily lead to subversion in Nigeria, nor would it cause a cut in the amount of aid from the western powers. In this instance, the experience of Ghana and the U.A.R. is instructive. These countries had good relations with the communist powers, yet there was no appreciable diminution of aid from the western powers. This shows that in an era of "cold war" a truly non-aligned developing nation stands to gain, for the powers engaged in cold war contend for its support. This lesson was not lost on Nigeria, for during its civil war it was able to receive both military and economic aid from both camps.

The First Republic: Concluding Remarks

An examination of the foreign policy of Nigeria prior to January 15, 1966, provides the following conclusions:

1. Nigerian foreign policy was influenced largely by its colonial experience. Hence the policy guiding its relations with other countries was, to a great extent, predicated on a model established by the ex-colonial master.

In the light of this, it was difficult for Nigeria to truly be non-aligned.

2. In its economic relations with other countries, Nigeria was guided more by pragmatic considerations than by ideological commitment. On this basis, it had trade relations with, and received loans and aid from any donor country, regardless of ideological differences. It traded freely with South Africa and Portugal, though Portuguese colonialism and South Africa's "apartheid" policy were strongly disapproved by Nigeria.[61]

3. Because of the heterogeneous nature of her society, it was difficult for Nigeria to formulate a foreign policy based on "national" interest. Nigeria was made up of nations, each with its peculiar interests. Thus the role of the federal government was to find means of accommodating the diverse interests. This had a deleterious impact on Nigerian foreign policy. Foreign policy was executed on an ad-hoc basis to meet specific issues. Sometimes a dual policy was adopted on an issue. Nigeria-Israeli relations provide a case study. Because the northern Nigerian government was not well disposed

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[61]Nigerian imports from South Africa from 1959 to 1964 amounted to 3,164 in £ N Thousand and 1,515 in £ N Thousand from Portugal in the same period. See U.N. Yearbook of International Trade Statistics 1963 and 1966, pp. 537 and 605 respectively.

towards Israel, aid from the Jewish state was dispensed between the southern regions and the Federal Government only. (See Table 7 for the allocation of Israeli aid.) Another instance of an uncoordinated foreign policy stand was in the question of Pan-Africanism. The Federal Government had regarded as unrealistic an attempt to create a politically united Africa, but Dr. Michael I. Okpara, former Premier of Eastern Nigeria, in an address presented to its Royal Highness, Princess Alexandra of Kent, on October 8, 1960 said, inter alia: "we are committed to the union of African states. For we believe that only thus can Africa emerge as a third world force for peace . . ."[62]

Foreign Policy 1966-1970

Since the major factors that contributed to the overthrow of the civilian government were, to a great extent, internal, the Federal Military Government was mainly concerned with the domestic problems that often accompany abrupt change of governments. It thus paid little attention, at the beginning, to the country's external relations. Evidently it found nothing wrong with

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[62] See "Loyal Address presented to Her Royal Highness, Princess Alexandra of Kent on the occasion of her visit to the Legislature of the Region by Dr. The Honourable M. I. Okpara, Premire of Eastern Nigeria, 8 October 1960" (Enugu, n.d.), p. 4.

the First Republic's foreign policy, since it promised to honor it and also pledged to respect the existing treaties.[63] This stance, however, changed when domestic developments began to determine the direction of the new regime's foreign policy.

The secession of the former eastern region on May 30, 1967, presented the Federal Military Government with three major concerns. First, it became increasingly interested in sustaining the concept of a united Nigeria. Secondly it felt the greatest need to gain world sympathy and support for a unified Nigeria; and last, the failure of the "police action" quickly to break Biafra's strong and heroic resistance intensified domestic problems. Thus, "to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done," became the government's slogan. These problems compelled a review of internal and external policies. The First Republic had formulated its foreign policy when the nation, though not united, was not at war with itself. On this score, it is reasonable to suggest that the Federal Military regime could not successfully use the foreign policy instruments of its predecessor. It is against this

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See Yakubu Gowon, "An Address delivered to Representatives of the Nigerian and Overseas Press, radio and television houses, at the National Hall, Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos, August 4, 1966," reproduced in Operation Reconstruction (Lagos, 1966), p. 10.

background that Nigeria's relations with Africa and the world during her war with Biafra will be examined.

Africa

The recognition of Biafra by four African countries (Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Gabon and Zambia) threatened to undermine Nigeria's fight for a unified country. To stop further developments in this direction, Nigeria embarked upon a policy that aimed at gaining support for her cause. This policy involved an active participation in, and support for, the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.);[64] an enlivened interest in the liberation movements in the continent; and a strengthening of friendly relationships with the Arab nations of Africa.

All through its war with Biafra, Nigeria drew support from the O.A.U., which affirmed its dedication to a unified Nigeria.[65] The support from the O.A.U. results from Article III of its Charter.[66] It felt that an independent Biafra would constitute a threat to the territorial

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[64] Nigeria has continued its active support for the O.A.U. Its contribution towards the upkeep of the organization for 1970-71 rose 47 percent over that of 1968-69. See Olajide Aluko, "The Civil War and Nigerian Foreign Policy," Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 42 (April 1971), p. 187.

[65] See "O.A.U. Communique," issued at Kinshasa, 14 September 1967, reproduced in A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, Vol. II, Document 134, pp. 172-173.

[66] See Charter of the Organization of African Unity (Addis Ababa, May 1963), p. 8.

integrity of Nigeria. Nigeria, on its side, successfully appealed to the fears of countries such as Ethiopia and Sudan that suffered nightmares about secession movements. Hence, it reminded Africa that Biafra's success would encourage the Balkanization of the continent.[67] Though there was no historical justification in Africa for this contention, Nigeria effectively used this African "Domino" hypothesis as grist for its foreign policy mill.

As a result of the influence of the Northern Region in the pre-civil war federal government, Nigeria had developed a close association with the Arab states of Africa. This relationship proved very beneficial to the Federal Military Government (F.M.G.) during its war with Biafra. The Arab states, Egypt, Sudan and Libya in particular, came to the aid of Nigeria against Biafra. Egyptian pilots and technicians readily offered their services[68] and became the strength of the Nigerian air attacks. Sudan and Libya were also sources of weapons for Nigeria.[69] It is difficult to regard the pro-Nigerian stance of the Arab

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[67]See "statement issued in Lagos on 26 April 1968 on Nigeria's Agenda for Peace Talks," reproduced in A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, pp. 217-218; see also Chief Anthony Enahoro, "Nigeria's Struggle for Survival," statement at a press conference in London, July 17, 1967 (New York, 1967), p. 8. For the Balkanization theory see "Africa's Divided House," Time, (January 26, 1970), p. 20.

[68]See John de St. Jorre, The Brothers' War, p. 219.

[69]Ibid.

states as a manifestation of their commitment to African unity.[70] Religious affinity, more than any other factor, pulled them to the Nigerian side.

Pan-Africanism

Nigeria's concept of Pan-Africanism--functional cooperation--during the civil war remained essentially the same as during the civilian regime. The F.M.G.'s policy vis-à-vis Pan-Africanism advocated the territorial political status quo of the independent countries. In the many official statements on the need for unity, the F.M.G. never really supported the idea of a continental political union. In this regard two factors guided Nigerian policy. First, it adhered to the country's old tradition of skepticism about the viability of a political union of Africa. Second, the Charter of the O.A.U. forbade interference in the internal affairs of member-states and called for the respect of the territorial integrity of the independent states. It would seem that political Pan-Africanism, which involves a demolition of territorial boundaries and invalidation of the sovereignties of the independent states, would contravene the Charter. Nigeria, a member of the O.A.U. and also in need of that organization's support

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[70]John de St. Jorre states that Arab nations' support for Nigeria was based on grounds of African unity. See The Brothers' War, p. 219.

in its war with Biafra, could ill afford to infringe on the Charter.

In the light of the above factors, Nigeria has primarily been concerned with advocating the need for the territorial integrity of the independent African nations.[71] However, despite its skepticism about the practicability of a continental political union, Nigeria has encouraged a close, albeit, functional, association with other west African countries.[72]

Britain and the Commonwealth

The pre-military regime had a close association with Britain, and that intimate relationship increased rather than diminished during the civil war. When the military coup d'état toppled the First Republican government, Britain advised the F.M.G. to take a strong pro-unity position. Though the head of the F.M.G. admitted that there was no basis for unity,[73] he yielded, his authority, to the British pressure for a unified Nigeria.[74]

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[71]See speech by Yakubu Gowon, Press Release No. 704, July 14, 1970 (Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information).

[72]See for instance, Adebayo Adedeji, "Prospects of Regional Economic Cooperation in West Africa."

[73]See Yakubu Gowon's broadcast, August 1, 1966, reproduced in Operation Reconstruction, p. 7.

[74]See for instance John de St. Jorre, The Brothers' War, p. 294 for pressure on Yakubu Gowon to maintain a strong unified Nigeria position.

That Nigeria first approached Britain for arms to crush the Biafran regime underscores the cordial relationship between the two countries. It rightly felt that, as a British creation, it was reasonable to request British assistance to restore normalcy in the country. Britain's initial reluctance to honor Nigeria's request was probably due to an erroneous belief that the F.M.G. would be able to end the war in a matter of a few weeks. In any case, from the beginning Britain served as a diplomatic vehicle for Nigeria's cause.[75]

The Communist bloc

The secession of Biafra created two sovereignties within Nigeria, each determined to gain sympathy and diplomatic recognition from foreign powers. Thus, despite its ideological leaning towards the western bloc powers, the F.M.G. also essayed to remain on good terms with the communist bloc countries. The pre-civil war regime had shown reluctance in receiving aid offered by U.S.S.R. and other communist countries, at the initial phase of independence, but the F.M.G. took the initiative in requesting

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[75] Colin Legum and John Drysdale eds. Africa Contemporary Record: Annual Survey and Documents, 1969/70 (London, 1970), p. B562, see for pressure by the British government on Sierra Leone dissuading that country from recognizing Biafra. Also for the U.S.-British pressure on France not to supply arms to Biafra, see Spotlight on Africa, Vol. 2 (December 1968), p. 2.

assistance, especially in war materiel, from the communist bloc countries.[76]

It has been suggested that Nigeria applied to the communist bloc nations, the U.S.S.R. in particular, because Britain failed to honor its initial request for military assistance (arms) to end the civil war.[77] This represents a simplistic interpretation of the factors which determined the Federal Military Government's positive stance towards the U.S.S.R. and the other communist countries. Even if Britain had granted Nigeria's initial request for arms without any equivocation or reluctance, Lagos would still have made overtures to Moscow. The fact that a subsequent increase in British arms supply did not diminish Nigeria's close association with the U.S.S.R. buttresses the above view.

Two factors account for Nigeria's liberal attitude towards the communist-bloc countries. First, domestic developments dictated a friendly relationship with all countries. Nigeria felt that if it turned its back on any power bloc, Biafra would draw such a bloc to its side. This would certainly be detrimental to the cause of a

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[76] Edwin Ogbu and Anthony Enahoro visited Russia in July 1967 for arms deal, see Robert Legvold, Soviet Policy in West Africa, p. 323.

[77] See John de St. Jorre, The Brothers' War, p. 183.

united Nigeria. In light of this, Nigeria could not, though ideologically inclined to the western powers, afford the luxury of writing off the communist bloc. Secondly, Nigeria hoped that its overtures to the communist countries would alert the western powers, Britain in particular, to the need of assisting it, lest it falls into the communist orbit. Far from driving away the western powers, Nigeria was able to gain from both blocs. Britain increased her arms supply, and Nigeria became an object of competition between the two power blocs. Britain would be unhappy to see its creation fall into the communist camp for British investment had been enormous.[78]

On the above score, it is fair to suggest that no amount of the influence of western powers could have deterred Nigeria from cultivating a meaningful, cordial relationship with the communist powers. It is not surprising then, that on January 16, 1967, Abdul Aziz Atta, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, announced that Nigeria would accept loans from the socialist countries.[79]

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[78]For arguments on British support for Nigeria, see The Economist August 30, 1967, p. 13. See also Elspeth Huxley, "Sacred Cow," National Review (November 1968), pp. 962-and 975.

[79]See Le Monde, January 18, 1967, p. 6, quoted by Robert Legvold, Soviet Policy in West Africa, p. 319.

As Nigeria opened its arms to all power blocs, the communist countries availed themselves of the opportunity and increased their economic transactions in the country.

Conclusion

One factor which has distinctly dramatized itself in the foreign policy machinery of the Federal Military Government is the sense of nationhood which the civil war produced. The states opposed to Biafra's self-determination developed a strong sense of nationhood--Nigeria. Particularistic tendencies were subdued by an allegiance to the concept of "one Nigeria." It became easier to formulate foreign policy under the given circumstances. The F.M.G. could make foreign policy proclamations in the name of a nation--Nigeria--united behind it. It could refer to "national interest" as the basis for its foreign relations policy. Its predecessor faced the problem of formulating foreign policy based on the multi-interests of the nations which made up Nigeria. Foreign policy in this case was often uncoordinated and sometimes ambiguous, reflecting the internal incoherence of the nation.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLITICAL ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE NIGERIA/BIAFRA WAR

Nigeria has been one of the favored recipients of United States' aid to Africa. Prior to its independence in 1960, the United States government demonstrated its interest in Nigeria's economic development. By 1955, the United States had begun to channel assistance via Britain into Nigeria,[1] and by 1956, ten U.S. projects had been approved for Nigeria.[2] These projects were for livestock disease control, irrigation, conservation and manual training, for a total commitment of $700,000.[3]

Soon after independence, President John Kennedy sent a special mission to Nigeria to study its new six-year development plan so as to determine its eligibility for a

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[1]U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Briefing on Africa, Hearing, before a subcommittee on Africa, House of Representatives, 86th Cong., 2nd sess., January 20, 26, 27 and May 16, 1960, p. 12.

[2]U.S. Congress, Senate, Economic Aid and Technical Assistance, Report of Senator Theodore Francis Green on a study mission, 85th Cong., 1st sess., February 21, 1957,

[3]Ibid.

long term U.S. aid commitment.[4] For the United States' fiscal year 1964, Nigeria was one of six select countries (India, Pakistan, Turkey, Columbia and Chile were the others) which received 64 percent of U.S. development assistance.[5] Since 1962, when Nigeria's six-year development plan began, the U.S. has provided economic and military assistance. Loans and grants from the U.S. ranged from $25 million in 1962, $30.2 million in 1963, $51.6 million in 1964, $36.4 million in 1965 to $30.5 million in 1966,[6] the year in which the First Republic ceased to exist. A member of parliament, expressing appreciation for U.S. assistance, praised the Kennedy administration for its concern with Nigeria's economic development.[7]

In examining the interest of the U.S. in Nigeria, the following factors become important:

1. Nigeria's size: The U.S. saw a promising potential for stability and progress in Nigeria's largeness. Using itself as a case study, the U.S. felt that its progress and lead in material advancement could be attributed

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[4] Nigeria Speaks, p. 105.

[5] U.S. President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966), Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-64, p. 395.

[6] U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loans Authorization, July 1, 1965-June 30, 1971 (Washington, 1972), p. 108.

[7] Ibrahim Gusan, House of Representatives, Debate, March 21, 1964, Col. 635.

to economics of scale. Thus it favorably viewed developing nations with large populations.

2. Nigeria's ideological orientation: Nigeria's colonial experience has very largely accounted for its pro-west stance. David Apter, testifying before the Senate Sub-Committee on Africa, commented that "Nigeria is much more of a western country than we [Americans] tend to think it is."[8] Thus from an ideological standpoint Nigeria was a safe ground politically for the U.S. and other western democracies.

3. Leadership role: The prospect that Nigeria would assume a leadership role made it desirable for any big power interested in Africa to gain Nigeria's friendship, and Nigeria demonstrated a willingness to open its doors to the U.S. Addressing the U.S. House of Representatives in July 1961, Sir Abubakar Tafuwa Balewa, the late Prime Minister of Nigeria, expressed his country's admiration and respect for the American people and their way of life, particularly the American love of freedom.[9]

On January 15, 1966, a military coup ended the First Republic. Events thereafter led to the secession

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[8]U.S. Congress, House, Briefing on Africa, Hearing, before the subcommittee on Africa, January 20, 26, 27, 1960, p. 104.

[9]Nigeria Speaks, p. 104.

of the former eastern region.[10] The big powers were initially reluctant to choose sides. Nevertheless, on September 22, 1966, Elbert Matthews, the U.S. Ambassador, and Sir Francis Cumming-Bruce, his British counterpart, visited Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, the military governor of the eastern region, and advised him against taking any steps towards secession.[11] This action demonstrated a U.S. and British desire to maintain a unified Nigeria. However, the U.S. did not place the Nigeria/Biafra development on its high priority list.

The U.S. government was lukewarm about taking an open and positive stance in the conflict and regarded it as Nigeria's internal problem. Thus when the Federal Military Government (F.M.G.) of Nigeria requested arms from the U.S., it was turned down.[12] The refusal of the U.S. to become openly involved could be attributed to the following factors:

1. U.S. concern with Africa has been minimal when compared with the British and the French. As it had no

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[10]See Chapter II for details.

[11]N. U. Akpan, The Struggle for Secession (London, 1971), pp. 49 and 74.

[12]"Internal Matter--L.B.J. Refuses Military Help to Nigerians," New York Courier Express, July 11, 1967.

colonies in Africa,[13] it felt less obligated to formulate an independent policy towards the continent.[14] It regarded Africa as primarily the concern of the colonial powers,[15] and often preferred to defer to the interest of these powers in issues involving Africa.[16]

2. The U.S. regarded the crisis as an internal African problem and felt that the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) was in a better position to intervene to secure peace in Nigeria. President Lyndon B. Johnson, in a message to the 5th Annual Conference of the O.A.U. meeting in Algiers on September 13, 1968, said, ". . . and it is to you--the Assembly of the O.A.U. as the highest voice and conscience of Africa--that the world now looks to break that Nigerian deadlock."[17] This position was

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[13]Liberia was a protectorate of the U.S. until that country declared its independence in 1847, but the U.S. did not recognize that independence until 1862.

[14]U.S. Congress, Senate, U.S. Foreign Policy: Africa, A study prepared at the request of the committee on foreign relations, by Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, No. 4, October 23, 1959, 86th Cong., 1st sess., (Washington, D.C., 1959), p. 1.

[15]See Arnold Rivikin, Africa and the West: Elements of Free World Policy (New York, 1962), pp. 50-60; also U.S. Foreign Policy: Africa, p. 13.

[16]U.S. Foreign Policy: Africa.

[17]U.S. President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, Book 2, p. 960.

reiterated by Secretary of State William Rogers when he said, ". . . the U.S. has honored the wishes of the African nations to settle the conflict under their own auspices . . . we continue to support the efforts of the O.A.U. . . . to bring the fighting to an end."[18]

3. The U.S. Congo operation in 1964 aroused considerable controversy in Africa. In a joint venture on November 24 and 26, 1964, Belgium and the U.S. launched an air-borne rescue mission in which white hostages in Stnaleyville were safely evacuated.[19] And when in 1967, President Johnson sent three U.S. transport planes to the Congo, Congress criticized the move, expressing fears of a Southeast Asia-type of involvement in Africa.[20]

4. U.S. policy in Africa had, to a large degree, been founded on "cold war" diplomacy. Nicholas deB Katzenback, Under Secretary of State, stated that " . . . it is fair to say that at one time the rationale of our whole policy towards the less developed world was put largely in terms of the threat of communist influence

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[18]William Rogers, "U.S. Foreign Policy: Some Major Issues," prepared for delivery before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March 27, 1969, Department of State Bulletin, Vol. LX, No. 1555, p. 311.

[19]Kwame Nkrumah, Challenge of the Congo (London, 1967), pp. 261-262.

[20]New York Courier Express, July 11, 1967.

and penetration. And this remains an extremely important consideration in our policy."[21] In his special message to the Congress on Foreign Aid, President Johnson also drew attention to communist activities aimed at dominating the less developed nations.[22]

But Africa began to lose its importance when the threat of communist domination of less developed nations became considerably attenuated towards the very end of the 1960's.[23] With the loss of Africa's strategic importance from an ideological standpoint, the U.S. began to treat Africa lightly, sometimes with detached interest.[24]

5. The Vietnam war: During the Nigeria/Biafra war, U.S. attention was primarily engaged in the Southeast Asian war in which it appeared the U.S. government was inextricably involved. The war had not only been costly but

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[21]Nicholas deB Katzenback, U.S. Policy Towards the Developing World, Address made before the World Council at Los Angeles, August 8, 1968, Press Release No. 185, Department of State Bulletin, August 26, 1968, p. 211. For a similar view see Richard D. Stebbins, The U.S. in World Affairs, the 1967 Council on Foreign Relations (New York, 1968), p. 235.

[22]U.S. President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, Book I, 1963-64, p. 394.

[23]U.S.-China rapproachment and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (S.A.L.T.) have greatly thawed the "cold war" and consequently the threat of East-West confrontation has become less noticeable.

[24]Elizabeth Drew, "The Reports," The Atlantic (June, 1970), p. 6.

was also embarrassing to the U.S. government. Criticism was levelled from within and outside the U.S. There was, thus, an unwillingness to become involved in or support any other foreign war. The U.S. did not want to be seen in the role of "the policeman of the world." Its intervention in the Congo in 1964 had been criticized and evidently it was no longer prepared to incur the ill-feelings of African countries.

Executive Posture

The Nigeria/Biafra war began during the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson, who took the position that, as an African problem, the conflict should be deferred to the O.A.U. Johnson therefore refused a request by Yakubu Gowon, Head of the Federal Military Government (F.M.G.) for U.S. arms.[25] The war had gone on for more than one year before the president instructed Nicholas deB Katzenback, Under Secretary of State, to set up a "task force" to study the alleviation of starvation in the war devastated areas.[26] Johnson's statements about the conflict dealt essentially with the human suffering which the war engendered. He emphasized that ". . . the political dispute underlying

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[25]"Internal Matter," New York Courier Express, (July 11, 1967).

[26]See New York Times, (November 27, 1968).

this war is a Nigerian and an African one."[27] President Johnson emphasized his policy of non-involvement in the political aspect of the Nigerian war, he avoided using the word "Biafra" in all his public statements.[28] One could infer from this that the president did not want to imply any recognition of Biafra. This posture would seem to betray a lack of neutrality if only politically.

President Johnson's neutrality was threatened by the fact that humanitarian involvement could not be divorced from political connotation. The Federal Military Government of Nigeria had regarded starvation as a legitimate weapon of war.[29] Thus any power attempting to relieve the starvation in Biafra would be regarded by the F.M.G. as aiding the "rebels." But the president's concern with the starving civilians seemed to have overridden his fear that Federal Nigeria might accuse him of support for Biafra. Hence, in the fall of 1968, he summoned Nicholas deB Katzenback, and said, ". . . damn it Nick, I want you to do something about this problem [starvation in Biafra]; we're not going to

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[27]U.S. President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, 1969, p. 1115.

[28]Ibid., pp. 1115, 242, 482, 508, 639, 381, 580, 679.

[29]See Newsweek (September 30, 1968), p. 23. See also Daily Mirror (London) June 13, 1968).

leave office here without having done our best."[30] But in March 1968, President Johnson had announced his intention not to seek re-election to the presidency. Thereafter, he was a lame duck and must have felt that he would be ineffective in pushing for an increased relief to the starving victims of the Nigerian war.

Nixon's Response

In a 1968 campaign speech, Richard Nixon warned that ". . . genocide is what is taking place in Biafra . . . and starvation is the grim reaper." He suggested that ". . . this is not the time to stand on ceremony or observe the diplomatic niceties."[31] That statement evinced Nixon's deep concern for the suffering Biafrans. In January 1969, Mrs. Nixon took part in a "Mercy Collection" on the steps of St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York City, for Biafran relief.[32]

Thus, when Richard Nixon won election, it was expected that he would shape a U.S. policy sympathetic to Biafran cause. The fact that two days after his inauguration,

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[30]A source close to the White House, it added, ". . . I think it was an honest effort to try to get something started behind the scenes and initiate some serious efforts."

[31]Richard M. Nixon, Policy Statement (1968), Nixon Campaign, New York.

[32]Charles Goodell, "Biafra and the American Conscience," Saturday Review (April 12, 1969), p. 26.

on January 22, 1969, he ordered the National Security Council (N.S.C.) to study the Nigeria/Biafra problem and recommend to him possible options of policy[33] seems to have underlined the sincerity of his sympathy for the Biafrans. Soon the president discovered that the "diplomatic niceties" which he mentioned were inhibiting an effective policy towards relief and also presented a problem for him. His major policy statement on the conflict reflected this predicament. He stated that ". . . political and military issues impeded efforts to expand relief to the devastated areas in Biafra." But the president did not want this dilemma to deter him from carrying out the ". . . moral obligations to respond effectively to humanitarian needs" of the war-torn Biafran enclave. He, therefore, drew a "sharp distinction" between relief and politics. He emphasized the urgency not only for the U.S. but also for other foreign powers to cooperate and insure that adequate relief flowed into Biafra.[34]

The president, however, discovered that it was easier for him to make policy statements in favor of increased relief to the Biafran enclave than to accomplish

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[33]In an interview with a White House official. This official stressed that President Nixon was very interested in Biafra.

[34]U.S. President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, 1969, pp. 125-226.

its execution. He correctly pointed out that ". . . neither money, food nor means of transport obstructs expanding relief, rather it is the problem of devising a modus operandi that would be acceptable to both Nigeria and Biafra."[35]

Congressional Response

Hearings in the Congress on the Nigeria/Biafra war reveal that congressional concern with the conflict was primarily humanitarian; the war was regarded as a Nigerian internal problem. The late Senator Robert Kennedy made this point when he said,

> The U.S. government has consistently made known that it regards the present crisis in Nigeria as strictly an internal matter which can only be resolved by the leaders and people of Nigeria. Accordingly, we have not permitted the sale of arms from U.S. sources directly to that country nor for ultimate use there. The U.S. has made every effort to avoid any action which could be interpreted as interference in Nigeria's affairs.[36]

One can clearly understand, therefore, why the Congress avoided any resolution that was political in intent. However, as the following pages show, some senators, in the course of debates, questioned the wisdom of neglecting the political issues of the conflict.

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[35] Ibid., p. 126.

[36] Letter from Senator Robert F. Kennedy to the Biafra Students' Association, (East Lansing, October 31, 1967).

On October 4, 1968, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held an open hearing on Nigeria/Biafra relief situation.[37] Some senators and some members of organizations involved in relief programs were invited to testify. Their testimonies demonstrated a concern over the failure of the U.S. government to ensure that adequate relief got to the desired destination. But statements of Senators Edward Kennedy and Edward Brooke and C. Robert Moore, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, are instructive to the extent that they reveal differences in official U.S. perceptions of the Nigeria/Biafra conflict.

In his testimony, Senator Kennedy argued that the U.S. should take the initiative to place the relief program on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.[38] But Moore argued against the suggestion, stating that the O.A.U., at its meeting at Algiers on September 16, 1968, had resolved by a vote of 33 to 4, not to allow the U.N. to intervene ". . . in any action detrimental to peace, unity and territorial integrity of Nigeria." He further stated that there was insufficient support among the U.N. membership for a useful consideration of the Nigeria/Biafra question.[39] The essence of Moore's statement was that a

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[37]U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearing, before a subcommittee on African Affairs, October 4, 1968.

[38]Ibid., p. 2.

[39]Ibid., p. 7.

U.N. debate on the conflict would be a "diplomatic" victory for Biafra at the expense of Nigeria's fight for unity. Moore's argument implied that the U.S. was not prepared to pursue a course of action that could be interpreted as threatening Nigeria's integrity.

Senator Brookes' testimony amply demonstrated a plea for the recognition of Nigeria's fight for unity. He opened his statement with an indictment of Colonel Ojukwu as ". . . a man who felt compelled to lead his people away from union and into a tragic and futile battle."[40] He felt that the U.S. humanitarian involvement in Biafra could strengthen the latter's resistance capabilities and thus prolong the war. Concluding his testimony, Senator Brookes quoted Senator Pearson's statement to support his stance, ". . . let us never forget that not only do we want the war halted and further starvation prevented, but we want to do it in such a way as to insure a strong Nigeria . . ."[41]

Thus, of the three testimonies, two took a pro-federal Nigeria posture, while Senator Kennedy questioned the wisdom of what could be regarded as orthodox support for the Federal Military Government of Nigeria.

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[40] Ibid., p. 26.

[41] Ibid.,

Further congressional debates on the conflict indicated overwhelming support for a U.S. policy which concerned itself only with the humanitarian aspect of the Nigeria-Biafra impasse. The Senate's concurrent resolution of January 22, 1969, supported this view.[42] During the debate for the resolution, Senator Pearson of Kansas argued strongly for an increased, but also effective, relief program for the war victims. However, he emphasized that although Washington was concerned with ending the military conflict, it could not be the world's policeman, especially as the Nigerian conflict did not offer a threat to the security of the world or the U.S.[43]

The Senate's reaction to the war was guided by the fear that the U.S. had already over-extended itself militarily in Southeast Asia. Thus, Senator Hugh Scott approvingly reiterated that the resolution ". . . does not have any military overtone, nor any sense of military involvement."[44] Senator Byrd said he felt satisfied that the relief aircraft were to be "non-combat" ones.[45]

However, Senator Kennedy, a co-sponsor of the resolution, impressed upon his colleagues that the

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[42]See Congressional Record, Senate, January 22, 1969, p. S729.

[43]Ibid., p. S728.

[44]Ibid., p. S729.

[45]Ibid.

Nigeria/Biafra war could not correctly be regarded as an internal African or Nigerian problem. He called it ". . . a great power struggle" which the U.S. could not realistically divorce itself from.[46] Kennedy's argument did not yield a positive result so far as a change of policy was concerned. The fear that Nigeria/Biafra war might become an African "Vietnam" made the Senate very cautious in making recommendations of a military and political nature. Senator Byrd's question to Senator Pearson, sponsor of the resolution, during the debate reveals the extent of the Senate's apprehension:

> I should like to ask the able Senator [Pearson] if in his judgement, this resolution does not allay the fears that some might have, namely, that otherwise we might be getting into another Vietnam-type situation.[47]

Senator Pearson pointed out that U.S. personnel would not fly relief planes.

In February 1969, two fact-finding missions visited Nigeria and Biafra. One was sponsored by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, under the chairmanship of Representative Charles C. Diggs, and the other was organized and undertaken by Senator Charles Goodell. From February 7-20, the mission of the House Foreign Affairs

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[46] Ibid., p. S730.

[47] Ibid., p. S729; also Representative Donald Lukens, "The Right to Live," The Reader's Digest (May 1969), p. 77.

Committee was in Nigeria studying the relief, military and political situations of the country. The mission concluded that it ". . . believes that the posture of the U.S. concerning the Federal Military Government of Nigeria is correct in recognizing it as the only legal government of that country."[48]

The "mission" also stressed that the Nigerian war was an African problem. This underscores the position Presidents Johnson and Nixon had emphasized. The mission's recommendation implicitly called for a continuation of the existing policy of support for the F.M.G. of Nigeria.

The mission led by Senator Goodell also visited Nigeria and Biafra in February of the same year. Abe Nathan, an Israeli, advised Senator Charles Goodell on the condition of affairs in Biafra. The senator, was accompanied by Professor Jean Mayer, Harvard University, Dr. Roy Brown, Tufts University, Dr. George Axinn, Michigan State University and George Orick, a former consultant to U.N.I.C.E.F.

Goodell's study mission drew attention to the enormity of starvation in Biafra and called upon the U.S. government to assure an adequate food supply to the starving people in the war-torn enclave. The study mission

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[48]U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Report of Special Fact-Finding Mission to Nigeria, February 7-20, 1969, 91st Congress, 1st sess., 1969.

specifically advised that the president should appoint a relief coordinator who should not only advise the president on effective measures for letting food into Biafra, but who should also be stationed in that war devasted area.[49]

The study mission dramatized its importance in three respects:

1. It was primarily a mission aimed at bringing the Biafran plight to the American people.[50]

2. In an interview with the writer, Senator Goodell stated that he received assurances from the U.S. government that there would be an adequate food supply to Biafra. It is reasonable to suggest that President Nixon's appointment of Dr. Clyde Ferguson, as Relief Coordinator, resulted from the recommendations of the study mission."[51]

3. It stressed the need for a cease-fire, U.S. mediation and a negotiated peace. In essence, the mission recommended that the U.S. should not take a posture of detached concern in the political aspect of the

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[49]"Report of the Biafra Study Mission," Congressional Record, 91st Congress, 1st Session, Vol., 115, No. 33, February 25, 1969, pp. S1975-1987.

[50]Charles Goodell, "Biafra and the American Conscience," pp. 24-27, 102.

[51]Relief Coordinator was appointed on February 22, 1969. See statement to that effect Evening Standard (London, July 2, 1968).

Nigerian/Biafran conflict. The study mission observed that humanitarian efforts would not achieve the desired goal if the political issues which produced the conflagration were not solved. Senator Goodell put this clearly when he said, ". . . I make further recommendations in the political arena. There can be no acceptable solution to this massive human tragedy without a political solution."[52]

On January 27, 1970, fifteen days after the end of the war, the Subcommittee on Africa of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs held a hearing on the postwar situation in Nigeria.[53] The hearing examined U.S. policy in the war and analyzed both the merits and shortcomings of that policy. A major part of the hearing centered on the influence Russia might have gained in Nigeria.

Representative Charles C. Diggs, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, mentioned a newspaper report which credited the Nigerian victory largely to Russian support.[54] Representative Diggs further commented that all the elements of a cold war situation were present in the Nigeria/Biafra conflict, and Representative Benjamin Rosenthal felt that the Russians had gained a stronghold in Lagos and that such a development was detrimental to the broad overall policy

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[52] Report of the Biafran Study Mission, p. S1976.

[53] U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Postwar Nigerian Situation," Hearing, before the subcommittee on Africa, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, January 27, 1970.

[54] Ibid., p. 5.

objective of the U.S.[55] The realization that Russia's open military and diplomatic support for the Nigerian war aims might have endeared it to Nigeria brought expressions of regret about the failure of the U.S. to have taken an open, but also active, political role in the conflict. Representative Diggs expressed the disappointment when he said, ". . . what bothers me is we really failed to settle the political questions that are involved in this situation."[56] In the same vein, Representative Rosenthal said, ". . . I have a gnawing feeling that while we may have played a very important, useful and generous role in terms of relief and assistance, it may be we were just a little too hesitant at the right moment to take action such as an arms embargo."[57] But there was, also, the feeling that the posture taken by the U.S. was viable. Representative Jonathan Bingham indicated this thinking when he said, ". . . I don't see any course that we could have better taken than the one that we did, that leads me to say I think the Department [of State] did about as well as could have been done in this situation."[58]

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[55] Ibid., p. 17.

[56] Ibid., p. 16.

[57] Ibid., p. 15.

[58] Ibid., p. 18.

The hearing also discussed the degree to which the U.S. followed the British lead. There were comments to the effect that the U.S. largely followed the initiatives of Britain. Representative Rosenthal, commenting on the U.S. policy, said, ". . . now, what we have continued to do is to tie our tail to the British kite . . . it would be a new start for us to try and show some independent effort rather than continue to follow their [British] lead."[59]

The Department of State and the Nigeria/Biafra Conflict

The Department of State was the machinery of American policy in the Nigerian conflict. From the start of the war it was unequivocal in its support for a united Nigeria. Before the former Eastern Nigeria proclaimed its independence, Elbert Matthews, the U.S. Ambassador in Nigeria, flew from Lagos to Enugu to caution Lt. Colonel Ojukwu against any attempt at secession.[60] Soon after the secession, Ambassador

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[59] Ibid., pp. 17-18. Also speech by Senator Eugene McCarthy, "Biafra-Nigeria Peace," remarks prepared for delivery on Senate floor, May 16, 1969. But a White House official told the writer that British influence was very minimal in determining U.S. policy.

[60] N. U. Akpan, The Struggle for Secession (London, 1971), Akpan states that the visit was paid on September 22, 1966, pp. 49-74.

Matthews emphatically stated the pro-Nigerian posture of the U.S. in his letter to the Nigerian-American Chamber of Commerce in Lagos:

> The facts are simple. My government recognizes the Federal Military Government as the government of Nigeria. We have repeatedly made known our complete support of the political integrity of Nigeria. Many times we have expressed our hopes that Nigeria would continue to remain a united country. This is not only an official view, but one that is also felt by American businessmen . . .[61]

Matthews' position is reflected in a statement read by a Department of State spokesman to news correspondents on February 5, 1968, in Washington, D.C. Part of the statement read:

> We have been concerned with a number of insinuations recently alleging U.S. support of the 'Biafran' regime. I wish to make very clear that the U.S. continues to recognize the Federal Military Government as the only legal government in Nigeria. We do not recognize 'Biafra' nor, so far as we know, does any other government in the world.[62]

Joseph Palmer, II, who was the first U.S. Ambassador to independent Nigeria, and who during that country's war with Biafra was Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, was an eloquent supporter of a united Nigeria. In a speech made before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations,

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[61] Daily Times (Nigeria, July 27, 1967).

[62] Bulletin of the State Department, (February 26, 1968), p. 278.

Palmer stressed that African opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of a united Nigeria and that largely for this reason, the U.S. from the beginning of the conflict continued to recognize the Federal Military Government of Nigeria.[63]

Because of its support for the Federal Nigeria cause, the Department of State often suppressed information that would embarrass or cast an unfavorable light on Nigerian war activities. Embassy officials failed to report intelligence of the Nigerian invasion of the mid-west which was scheduled for August 4, 1967.[64] The invasion demonstrated Nigerian atrocity on innocent civilians. A pro-federal Nigeria source even admitted that it would be conservative to place the number of Ibos killed in cities like Ughelli, Benin City, Warri, Sapele, Agbor and Ibuso at ten thousand.[65] Also, the Niger Tide incident in the fall of 1967 in which the Nigerian Commander Adekunle took some Ibo workers aboard an American vessel and murdered them was not officially reported to Washington.[66] One should

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[63]Department of State, Press Release No. 206, (September 12, 1968). Also, in support of Palmer's posture see statement by David D. Newsom, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, to the subcommittee on Africa, (October 4, 1968), p. 2.

[64]Bruce Oudes, "The U.S. and the Nigerian War," West Africa (September 8, 1972).

[65]John McLaughlin, "Nigeria-Biafra; A Matter of Accommodation," America (February 8, 1968), p. 164.

[66]Interview with White House official.

not, therefore, regard the failure of the U.S. Embassy to report to Washington all the activities of the war, especially those that might embarrass Nigeria, as a manifestation of negligence or careless omission on their part, but rather as a calculated diplomatic technique to sustain the Nigerian cause.

The commitment of the Department of State to a pro-federal cause was also demonstrated by its diplomatic and political attitude towards the U.S. humanitarian involvement in the crisis. It undertook a role that reflected the position of the F.M.G. of Nigeria. It felt that a quick military defeat of Biafra was necessary to establish credibility for the cause of the F.M.G. Ambassador Matthews made this view known to Representative Donald Lukens during the latter's visit to Nigeria in December 1968.[67]

The desire for a quick defeat of Biafra inclined the Department of State to disapprove a negotiated peace. Thus, Joseph Palmer vehemently opposed a U.S. initiative in appointing or recommending a political mediator in the Nigerian crisis. A negotiated peace could result in some concession for Biafra. Nigeria would feel that the U.S. was, in essence, declaring a diplomatic war on her.[68]

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[67] The Economist (January 11, 1969), p. 31; also, D. Lukens, "The Right to Live," The Reader's Digest (May 16, 1969), pp. 77-78.

[68] Interview with a White House official.

Another policy outgrowth from the Department of State's desire for a "quick kill" of the Biafra regime, was that the former felt reluctant to carry out an effective relief program that might be regarded as aiding the Biafrans in their war effort. Anthony Enahoro, Nigeria's Commissioner for Information, had said in London that starvation was a legitimate instrument of war, that an enemy could be starved to surrender.[69] It is in the light of this, that one has to examine the attitude of the State Department to Biafran relief.

It was barely eleven months after the outbreak of the Nigerian/Biafran war when Joseph Palmer took an official tour of some African states.[70] He visited Cameroon, a neighboring country to Biafra, from June 18-21, 1968, and urged that country not to allow its airstrip to be used for "activities connected with the war."[71] Such an action impeded delivery of adequate relief into Biafra. Leslie Kirkley of Oxfam, a famine expert, estimated at the end of June 1968 that if substantial relief was not brought into Biafra by the beginning of August, some 400,000 Biafran children would have died.[72]

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[69] Daily Mirror (London, June 13, 1968).

[70] Lee Anspitz, "Biafra and the Bureaucrats," Forum, Vol. V, No. 2 (February 1969), p. 7.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Evening Standard (London, July 2, 1968).

Guided by the policy of maintaining a posture of respect for Nigerian political integrity, the Department of State evaluated relief operations into Biafra against a background of political and diplomatic interpretation which the F.M.G. of Nigeria might give. Thus, it was diplomatically important for the State Department to have the approval of the Nigerian government to implement an effective relief program into the Biafran enclave.[73]

On this score, the reluctance of the State Department to "offend," or arouse Nigerian sensitivities, largely explains the ineptitude which characterized its handling of the Biafran relief. However, the State Department was not uninterested in the human suffering of the Biafran people, but its first priority was the desire to end the war in Nigeria's favor as well as to uphold the political integrity of the Federal Military Government.[74] Thus, it viewed relief programs mainly in terms of their political and diplomatic connotation. In this vein, Palmer doggedly resisted the idea of appointing a relief coordinator, which he regarded as an affront to the Federal Military Government,

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[73]William Rogers, Secretary of State, often dragged his foot when asked to push for an effective relief program for Biafra. He would always point out to the president that there was more than one side involved in the conflict, implying that Nigerian wishes should not be ignored. Interview with a White House official.

[74]Elizabeth Drew, "The Report," p. 10.

for he felt that such an appointment would be regarded as substitute political mediation.[75]

However, despite Palmer's opposition to having a relief coordinator, President Nixon appointed Dr. Clyde Ferguson to examine the starvation problem in Biafra and coordinate the relief services to that enclave.[76] Eight months after his appointment, Ferguson sent Dr. Karl A. Western to Biafra. Dr. Western was an employee of the Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, Georgia. He examined about 3,000 Biafrans in 36 villages and submitted the report of his findings to Dr. Ferguson by November 26, 1969. Dr. Western stressed that almost one-third of the Biafran population suffered endema, a disease associated with starvation, and that ". . . about two-thirds had lost a dangerous amount of weight." When Ferguson briefed relief officials and congressmen on December 15, 17 and 22, he failed to emphasize the deplorable endema rate in the Biafran enclave which Dr. Western's report asserted.[77] This omission made it difficult for the State Department to take an objective view of the human suffering in the

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[75]Interview with a White House official.

[76]Statement on the appointment of a Special Coordinator on Relief to Civilian Victims of the Nigerian Civil War. U.S. Presidents, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, pp. 125-126.

[77]"How the State Department Watched Biafra Starve," Forum, Vol. VI, No. 3 (March 1970), p. 9.

former eastern region of Nigeria. The effect was that it accelerated the process of Nigerian victory, for starvation weakened Biafra's sustaining power and made its defeat inevitable. Barely a month before Biafra's collapse, Ferguson stated that ". . . for Biafra a delay in its food distribution of twenty to thirty days would be catastrophic. The present state of malnutrition would bring about mortality on a colossal scale."[78]

At the collapse of Biafra, January 12, 1970, the State Department continued its usual policy of respecting Nigerian feelings in the crisis. The Nigerian government asserted that both relief and reconciliation should be left to it. The State Department acquiesced to this position,[79] rather than indicate to the Nigerian authorities the enormity of post-war relief problems. The relief problems were believed to be such that the Federal Military Government could not by itself handle them successfully. For instance, Dr. Ferguson had said on January 23, eleven days after Biafra's collapse, that ". . . the famine in Biafra was three times greater than those during the

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[78]Ferguson's briefing to relief officials, December 15, 1969, p. 3.

[79]Statement by David D. Newsom before the Subcommittee on Africa, House of Representatives, January 27, 1970, p. 2.

blockades of Leningrad and the Western Netherlands in World War II."[80]

On the basis of Ferguson's assessment, it was important that the State Department should have conveyed the urgency of stepped-up relief operation into the former Biafran enclave. Far from taking this step, William Rogers, Secretary of State, vetoed a proposition which called for pre-positioning helicopters near the Biafran enclave. Rogers felt that relief and reconciliation following the end of the war was Nigeria's responsibility.[81] In the same vein, Elliot Richardson, Under Secretary of State, in a speech to editors, said, ". . . we must avoid an approach to the situation which could be counter-productive by appearing to exhibit a lack of confidence either in the sincerity or the capacity of the Nigerian government . . ."[82] But, Richardson conceded that ". . . the actual movement of food and medicine certainly fell short of even the Nigerian government's estimate of the need." He further suggested that Nigeria was unprepared for the task of handling the relief operation in Biafra because the latter's collapse came so suddenly.[83]

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[80]"How the State Department Watched Biafra Starve," p. 11.

[81]Elizabeth Drew, The Reports, p. 10.

[82]Ibid., pp. 10 and 14.

[83]"A Reply from Elliot Richardson," Forum, p. 28.

On the basis of Richardson's statement, it is reasonable to suggest that the State Department understood that the F.M.G. of Nigeria could not cope with the enormity of the post-war relief problem, but in keeping with its policy, it preferred not to interfere with what it considered Nigeria's internal problem. Elizabeth Drew's analysis in this regard is germane:

> To the State Department, the central facts were that Nigeria was a sovereign nation, and that others could not supply relief unless the Nigerians agreed. Therefore, the prevailing view was that it was important to avoid making statements that would embarrass the Nigerians or to press them so hard that they become angered. . . . This view was shared by the embassy in Lagos, which was anxious . . . to maintain good relations with the existing governments.[88]

The State Department therefore was reluctant to impress on the Nigerian government the need to treat the Western Report with urgency. In an inter-agency meeting held on January 15, 1970, three days after Biafra's capitulation, to determine the solution of post-war problems in Biafra, Roger Morris, assistant to Henry Kissinger, charged with the handling of Biafran affairs, suggested that the Western Report should be the basis for relief planning and added that the Nigerian government should be alerted to Dr. Western's findings. Morris' proposal was

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[84]Elizabeth Drew, The Reports, p. 10.

not adopted and the State Department continued on the old war-time basis.[85]

However, four days after the inter-agency meeting, on January 19, Dr. Western briefed the State Department on his findings in Biafra. Together with his colleague, Dr. Foege, he emphasized that one and a half million Biafrans were in dire need of emergency assistance. He also added that since the collapse, thousands of Biafrans had died. Commenting on the briefing, an official of the State Department said, ". . . it was the first time we'd had an oral briefing on Dr. Western's figures. It clarified some of the questions."[86] This briefing brought a change in the attitude of the State Department towards the Biafra relief situation, for it persuaded William Trueheart, the U.S. Ambassador in Lagos, to give the Western Report to the Nigerian government. Ambassador Trueheart confirmed that the report was given to the Nigerian Ministry of Health by an A.I.D. (Agency for International Development) doctor on January 21.[87]

At this point, it was important for the State Department to persuade the Nigerian authorities of the authenticity of the report and the urgency required to

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[85] Ibid., pp. 14, 21.

[86] Ibid., p. 21.

[87] Ibid.

salvage the situation, in which case, a massive relief intervention was imperative. But intervention was to come on Nigerian terms,[88] for the cornerstone of the State Department's policy was the maintenance of long term cordial relationships with the F.M.G. This is understandable as the Nigerians were trumpetting the importance of Russian assistance during the war.[89] In this regard, Elizabeth Drew was correct when she said, ". . . the State Department's primary mission is diplomacy and not relief."[90]

The Public Posture

In examining the posture of the American public in the Nigeria/Biafra war, it is important to understand an element of distinction between the perception of the U.S. government and that of the public in regard to the conflict. The former was to a large degree guided by diplomacy, effects on foreign policy goals, and the latter by a plethora of factors--humanitarian, personal convictions

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[88]The Nigerian government did not want air force planes to bring relief. To give due respect to Nigerian wishes, the U.S. painted over the military insignia on the air force planes and dressed the military crew in civilian clothes. Interview with a White House official.

[89]Nigeria's Ambassador, George Kurobo in Moscow said at the end of the Nigerian civil war that the Federal victory was due "more than any other single thing, more than all other things together, to Soviet assistance." See West Africa (January 31, 1970), p. 150.

[90]Elizabeth Drew, The Reports, pp. 28, 30.

and by the kinds of information they received from the war areas.

The analysis of the public posture is largely based on the statements of individuals and groups in congressional hearings, conferences and personal interviews. From these statements one discovers that the attitude of the American public centered largely on the starvation in the war-devastated area. On October 4, 1968, the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing on the Nigeria/Biafra relief situation. Members of the public were invited to testify. Those testifying avoided expressing opinions about the political issues of the conflict. Rather they urged the U.S. government to devise an effective means of increasing relief to the starving civilian masses.[91]

On May 22, 1969, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, organized a one-day conference to examine U.S. policy in the Nigerian conflict. The participants were mainly academicians and journalists. Their views emphasized caution for U.S. foreign policy makers. Though they decried starvation in Biafra and suggested ways to end it, they did not regard

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[91]U.S. Congress, Senate, "Nigeria-Biafra Relief Situation," Hearing, before the Subcommittee on African Affairs, October 4, 1968.

political independence for Biafra as a solution for the problem. They felt that a unilateral effort by the U.S. to mediate could be given a negative political interpretation and thus it seemed advisable for the United Nations Organization to act as the venue through which the goal of mediation could be accomplished.[92]

The attitude of the public towards the war could also be analyzed from the proceedings of a conference held by the "Coalition of Citizens' Committee on the Nigeria/Biafra Crisis." On April 11, 1969, a group of people concerned with the human suffering in the Nigerian crisis met and formed in Washington, D.C. the "Coalition of Citizens' Committee on the Nigeria/Biafra Conflict." The committee was made up of representatives of thirty other committees[93] that had been formed in different states for the purpose of helping to alleviate the human tragedy of the war. On June 11, the committee met in Washington, D.C. to discuss the problems of the crisis. The accent of the conference was on how to end the war and the starvation it produced. Of the six keynote speakers, only

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[92]Michael A. Samuels, ed., The Nigeria/Biafra Conflict: Report of One-day Conference (Washington, D.C., 1969), pp. 58-59.

[93]For the names of the representative committees see Coalition of Citizens' Committee on the Nigerian/Biafran Crisis, Congressional Symposium on Nigeria/Biafra (Washington, D.C., 1969).

one argued that the U.S. government should lend support to Biafran independence.[94]

In the conferences and congressional hearings, participants demonstrated a good grasp of the political issues of the Nigerian crisis, for some of them effectively discussed the history of the crisis in their statements or testimonies. Thus, the failure of the public[95] to express its opinion or make recommendations on the political issues was not so much as a result of ignorance of what the war was all about, as it was the public's unwillingness to advise their government on a course of action that might prove politically inexpedient, more so, at a period when the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia had become a thorn in the American flesh. It is by this reason that public reaction to the Nigerian crisis revolved solely around the issue of starvation. The question of Biafran political independence sat lightly on the American public. As Robert West stated, ". . . I believe the question of secession

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[94]Floyd McKissick, "Why the U.S. Should be Concerned with the Nigerian/Biafran War," pp. 3-5.

[95]The "public" in this context is limited to those who expressed their view in conferences, hearings and personal interviews.

is no longer an open question . . . it is settled. The real question is how to bring war to an end."[96]

The Academicians*

The African Studies Association (A.S.A.) did not as an organized body discuss the issue of the Nigerian crisis nor give a collective opinion on the conflict. An Africanist stated that the A.S.A. generally has a tradition of non-political involvement, and in regard to the Nigerian crisis, not enough was known to make possible any meaningful academic involvement.[97] Nevertheless, some individual members of the association expressed their views through newspaper and journal articles and through testimony and speeches in hearings and conferences.

Among those Africanists who expressed their feelings on the conflict, one can observe differences in their perception of the Nigeria/Biafra war. Robert Armstrong denounced Biafran secession and advocated that the U.S. government sell arms to the Nigerian government. He regarded

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*In this context, those American scholars whose field of interest is Africa.

[96]Coalition of Citizens' Committee on the Nigeria/Biafra Crisis, Congressional Symposium on Nigeria/Biafra (Washington, D.C., 1969), p. 14.

[97]Interview with Harold Marcus, Associate Professor of African History, Michigan State University.

Biafra as a police state, and urged that ". . . we [U.S.] should do everything possible to help Nigeria in other substantial ways. We should do everything to bring Enugu to reason."[98] Opposed to the above position were Richard Sklar and Stanley Diamond. These two Africanists advocated the recognition of Biafra as an independent sovereign state,[99] thus opposing the official policy of their government towards the war.

The seeming indifference of the Africanists to the Nigeria/Biafra crisis suggests an abdication of responsibility by the scholars. It might be argued that scholars should not involve themselves in the political affairs of a nation, but intellectual honesty and professional obligation demand an objective, scholarly discussion of a political issue. The scholars, after all, are experts in their particular areas of interest and their opinion becomes important in a crisis such as Nigeria's. Unfortunately, the desire for personal gain, to gain access to research opportunities in a given country, makes the scholar suppress

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[98] Robert Armstrong, Issues at Stake (Ibadan, 1967).

[99] Richard Sklar, "Dialogue: The U.S. and the Biafran War," Africa Report (November 1969), pp. 22-23; Stanley Diamond, "The Biafran Possibility," Africa Report (February 1968), pp. 16-19.

a view which might cost him the opportunities he otherwise could have had.[100]

Analysis of the foregoing chapter suggests the following conclusions:

1. The U.S. government was not neutral in the Nigerian/Biafran war. It maintained a pro-federal Nigeria posture and adopted policies to sustain that position. There were 3,000 U.S. citizens in Lagos during the war; their security was important and the U.S. could ill afford to be diplomatically hostile to the Nigerian authorities.[101]

2. The policy makers saw the crisis through Nigerian eyes, since the U.S. had no officials in Biafra[102] who could give an authentic intelligence report of the conflict. Thus the official U.S. policy was not based on an objective evaluation of the crisis.

3. Much as Americans were disturbed by the human suffering produced by the war, and although they did a lot, by contributions and donations, to alleviate the starvation, there was a general public reluctance to speak out openly in favor of a political settlement.

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[100] Stanley Diamond, "The Responsibility of Scholars," in Nigeria: Model of a Colonial Failure (New York, 1967).

[101] Interview with a White House official.

[102] Ibid.

4. The Nigeria/Biafra crisis was ill-timed in the light of U.S. commitment in Vietnam. The Vietnam experience cautioned Americans against military intervention in foreign lands. On account of this, the U.S. gave up its traditional role of leadership and allowed the British and the Russians to take initiatives. Thus, because of Russia's leading role in that crisis, one that contributed to the success of Nigeria's cause, it has been argued that Nigeria's victory, ". . . was, in truth, a Soviet victory and an American defeat."[103]

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[103]John F. Satterlee, "Biafra's Vale of Tears," The Elephant's Roar, Vol. 4, No. 2 (January 24, 1970).

CHAPTER V

UNITED STATES HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE NIGERIAN CONFLICT

Americans have an impressive record of helping people who are materially less fortunate than they are.[1] They have also evinced their readiness and willingness to answer humanitarian calls in times of disasters.[2] Thus, when the Nigerian/Biafran war broke out, the Americans became concerned with what to do to alleviate the human suffering produced by the war.

The Human Tragedy of the War

War produces human miseries in different forms and dimensions. The Nigerian civil war created starvation

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[1]The record of U.S. Foreign Assistance program and the Public Law (PL) 480, under which food is sent to countries in need, creditably demonstrates U.S. humanitarian concern.

[2]See "When Disaster Strikes--The U.S. Responds," War on Hunger, Vol. III, No. 1, (January 1969), p. 21. For a detailed account of U.S. humanitarian efforts throughout the world see U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Assistance to Refugees Throughout the World Findings and Recommendations of the Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees, November 3, 1969, 91st Congress, 1st Session.

and refugee problems. The magnitude of these problems increased as the war continued. As the Federal Military Government (FMG) began its conquests, it inevitably caused refugee problems, particularly in the river areas and the south eastern provinces of Biafra. These zones were generally designated "liberated" by the F.M.G. and solving the problem of human dislocation became the prime concern of the Nigerian government. On July 10, 1967, it announced that it had established a National Rehabilitation Commission and had allocated $2,800,000 as the first installment of an emergency relief program in the liberated areas.[3]

In these federally-controlled areas, nutrition problems aggravated the refugees' problems. By April 1969 more than 1,000,000 people in these areas were in need of relief[4] and about 552,000 patients were waiting for treatment in relief camps.[5] These conditions were beyond the ability of the F.M.G. to handle and it became necessary to

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[3]See "Emergency Relief in Nigeria and the Biafran Enclave," A.I.D. Foreign Disaster Relief Report Reprint (Washington, D.C., 1969), p. 42.

[4]U.S. Congress, House, Foreign Affairs Committee, Report of the Special Coordinator for Nigerian Relief, Hearing, before a subcommittee on Africa, 91st Congress, 1st Session, April 24, 1969, p. 3.

[5]U.S. Congress, House, Foreign Affairs Committee, Report of the Special Fact-Finding Mission to Nigeria, 143, 1969, p. 55.

ask the Nigerian Red Cross to request the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In the Biafran enclave, the plight of the civilians was more depressing. The economic blockade and influx of refugees from the northern region as a result of the 1966 massacres combined to create a condition of mass starvation and frustrating human dislocation. To meet this disaster, the Biafran regime established the Rehabilitation Commission charged with setting up refugee camps, nutritional clinics and feeding centers, and on January 17, 1969, General Ojukwu, the Biafran Head of State, launched an Emergency Food Production Program which he called the "Land Army."[6] This self-help measure failed, as Table 8 graphically demonstrates. Under the given conditions, it became obvious that only a massive infusion of relief from outside could salvage the situation.[7]

This human tragedy produced by the war evoked sympathetic humanitarian response from the U.S. government and the public. Americans who felt the need to stop

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[6]See C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, Biafra: Random Thoughts (Baltimore, 1969), pp. 66-73.

[7]Senator Charles Goodell and his mission stressed the need for increased relief operation to save Biafran children. See "Report of the Biafra Study Mission," Congressional Record, Vol. 115, No. 33, pp. S1975-S1987. See also editorial, "For Eight Million Lives," The Washington Post (November 18, 1968), p. A20. See particularly Frederick Forsyth, The Biafra Story (Baltimore, 1969), pp. 175-196.

starvation in the war-torn enclaves formed relief organizations. The naval and land blockade of Biafra necessitated an airlift of food. In this regard, U.S. church organizations, in cooperation with their European counterparts, played an invaluable role. Nevertheless, such a role could not have been successful without support from the U.S. government and the American public.

TABLE 8

ESTIMATE OF FOOD PRODUCTION DEFICIT
WITHIN BIAFRA FOR 1969*
(In Thousands of Tons)

Agricultural Product	Production Estimate For 1969	Net Requirement For 8,000,000 People	Anticipated Deficit
Maize	27.5	71.7	44.2
Rice	10.4	27.1	16.7
Yams	760.0	1,977.0	1,217.0
Cassave	401.3	1,043.4	642.1
Cocoyam	103.3	267.8	164.8
Beans	2.6	6.8	4.2
Groundnut [Peanut]	2.6	6.9	4.3
Melon	5.5	14.2	8.7
Vegetables	55.0	145.8	90.8
Fruit	17.0	68.0	51.0
Meat	13.0	35.0	22.0
Poultry	2.6	6.7	4.1
Fish	2.9	64.5	61.6
Eggs	2.6	3.1	0.5

*Based on Agricultural Development in Nigeria, 1965-1980, FAO, Rome, 1966, p. 393.

For a detailed account of the nutritional problem in the Biafran enclave see "Report of Dr. Karl A. Western on Nutritional and Health Conditions in Biafra, October-November, 1969," reproduced in Relief Problems in Nigeria-Biafra, Hearing, before the subcommittee to investigate problems connected with refugees and escapees of the Senate Judiciary Comm., 91st Congress, 2nd session, Part II, pp. 212-273.

The U.S. Government[8]

Though the U.S. government was committed to helping relieve starvation in the war areas, its political posture compelled it to avoid direct involvement in the Biafran enclave.[9] Thus, it channeled its aid through church and private organizations which were sending relief directly into Biafra.

As the Nigeria/Biafra war progressed, the U.S. government officially declared Nigeria a disaster country and authorized A.I.D. contingency funds to relieve disaster in that country. It also contributed to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) which was helping the Nigerian Red Cross in the relief and rehabilitation program. The following contributions were made by the U.S. government: (Source: Emergency Relief in Nigeria, p. 44.)

June	1968	$ 100,000
July	1968	1,000,000
November	1968	2,500,000
February	1969	620,000
March	1969	6,000,000
April	1969	1,000,000
May	1969	5,450,000
June	1969	3,000,000

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[8]For the following account, I have depended largely upon "Emergency Relief in Nigeria and the Biafran Enclave," A.I.D. Foreign Disaster Relief Report Reprint.

[9]See Chapter IV.

Thus as of June 30, 1969, Washington had donated $21,970,000 to the ICRC for relief operations.

Through A.I.D., the government also contributed money to the U.S. mission in Lagos for the purchase of vehicles to be used in the distribution of relief supplies. For these operations, the government allocated the following amounts: (Source: Emergency Relief in Nigeria, p. 44.)

June	1968	$100,000
August	1968	250,000
October	1968	250,000
April	1969	19,600
June	1969	579,400

In addition, there was a $3,000,000 grant for a relief and rehabilitation program. Total U.S. cash commitment for this project was $65,996,300.[10] These cash donations were frequently followed by consultations with officials of ICRC and the Nigerian government.[11]

U.S. respect for Nigerian integrity was paramount in the execution of relief operations. This respect is borne out by the recommendations of a team of State and A.I.D. officials who visited Lagos on October 1, 1968. This team comprised Joseph Palmer, II, Secretary of State for African Affairs, W. Haven North, Director of A.I.D.'s Office of Central and West African Affairs, and Edward Marks

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[10] Emergency Relief in Nigeria, p. 45.

[11] Ibid., p. 46.

and William B. Wheeler, both of U.S.A.I.D. After their evaluation of the relief situation, they recommended that relief and rehabilitation should be "Nigerianized."[12]

Lagos, therefore, became the clearing house for the relief programs. As Nigeria was at war with Biafra, it could be expected that starving Biafrans would not receive adequate relief. There were thus expressions of regret that the humanitarian efforts of the U.S. government failed to achieve the desired goal, since the major sector of the starving areas could not obtain the relief intended for them.[13]

It seems paradoxical that the U.S. government was willing and often donated money for relief operations in Biafra, while not supporting that regime's cause. Nigerian authorities had charged that feeding the starving Biafrans ". . . would encourage the rebels to continue to resist and prolong the war."[14] But in reality there was no

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[12] Ibid., pp. 46-7.

[13] This view was expressed in an interview with a White House official. See also Ojukwu, Random Thoughts, p. 76. But Ambassador C. Clyde Ferguson, the Relief Co-ordinator, argued that the U.S. government was very active in seeing that food got through to the Biafran enclave. See "Relief Problems in Nigeria-Biafra," pp. 33-38.

[14] See Africa Confidential (January 3, 1969), pp. 3-4. The implication of the Nigerian opinion is that U.S. sympathy for the starving Biafrans was essentially for the Biafran government.

inconsistency in the policy of the U.S. government. It followed the stipulation of the F.M.G. in its conduct of the relief operations. For instance, when the Nigerian government opposed relief flights into Biafra at night and recommended that day flights would be acceptable, the State Department endorsed that position and blamed the Biafran leadership for not agreeing to the proposal of the Nigerian authorities.[15] The U.S. government clearly defined its humanitarian objectives, stressing that concern for civilian plight should not be regarded as support for the secessionist regime of Biafra, but rather should be seen in the light of U.S. "moral obligations to respond effectively to humanitarian needs."[16]

Joint Church Aid (J.C.A.) U.S.A.

The Joint Church Aid was a consortium of Church World Service (C.W.S.), U.S., American Jewish Committee, Catholic Relief Services, U.S. (C.R.S.) Caritas International and Nordchurchaid (an ad hoc organization of Nordic Church agencies). Its objective was to acquire and fly aircraft for the American segment of the mercy

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[15]See Robert J. McClosky, U.S. urges Nigerian Cooperation: Briefing for news correspondents, December 5, 1968; also his reply to a query, December 6, 1968, Dept. of State Bulletin, Vol, LIX, No. 1539 (December 23, 1968), p. 658.

[16]U.S. President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the U.S., Richard M. Nixon, 1969, p. 126.

air-bridge to Biafra.[17] Sao Tome was the base of the cooperative airlift to Biafra.

The consortium's primary interest was in the Biafran enclave. And because it did not concern itself with relief problems in the federally controlled areas, the F.M.G. regarded it as "persona non grata."[18] On January 8, 1969, J.C.A. signed an agreement with the U.S. government procuring from the latter four Boeing Stratofreighters, each of which cost $3,670,00. The Stratofreighters were cargo aircraft, formerly flown by the U.S. Air National Guard. U.S. government support for the efforts of the J.C.A. was mainly reimbursement for airlift of the relief materials. To this effect, the U.S. government contributed $4,324,323.80 for the period January 1, 1969 to December 31 of the same year.[19]

The Stratofreighters made their first landings at Uli airport on January 27, 1969. The relief planes were often beset with problems. The Uli airstrip lacked essential measures of safety and the ever-hovering Nigerian Migs often threatened the security of the crews. Also the

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[17]See Joint Church Aid, U.S.A., Flying the American Stratofreighters in the Sao Tome-Biafra Airbridge: Annual Report, 1969.

[18]See C. Clyde Ferguson's statement on "The Postwar Nigerian Situation," U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearing, before the subcommittee on Africa, 91st Cong., 2nd Session, January 27, 1970, p. 7.

[19]Joint Church Aid-U.S.A. Annual Report 1969, Appendix IIA.

lack of strong workers for the unloading of relief materials usually caused unnecessary delays. Despite these problems, the J.C.A. successfully ran 1,192 relief flights into the Biafran enclave and in cooperation with its overseas affiliates, it carried 35,902 metric tons of food into that hunger-torn enclave.[20]

Though the J.C.A.'s "mercy" operations concentrated on Biafra, to the displeasure of the F.M.G. of Nigeria, it was not politically committed to Biafran self determination. There seems to have been no partiality in its relief operations, since the member churches which made up the consortium indeed gave more aid to the F.M.G. of Nigeria than they did to Biafra. For instance, the Church World Service-U.S.A., a member of the J.C.A., contributed from January 1, 1968, to November 1, 1968, 22 tons of food valued at $230,023 to Biafra while for the same period it contributed 531 tons of food, valued at $596,150 to the F.M.G. of Nigeria.[21]

Also, the Catholic Relief Services had a program in Nigeria since 1959. When the Nigerian crisis began in July, 1967, the C.R.S. cooperated with the ICRC and the

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[20] Ibid., Appendix I, also Ingvar Berg, Nordchurchaid: A Report of its Operations, mimeograph, p. 17.

[21] See Diaster Memo No. 10: Nigeria--Civil Strife, Table I.

Nigerian Red Cross in administering relief in the federally held territories. From January 1968 through June 30, 1969, the C.R.S. successfully shipped 10,504 tons of supplies into Biafra, while for the same period it sent 30,667 tons of food to Nigeria.[22]

It was the failure of the J.C.A. to operate its relief program with the approval of the F.M.G. or to channel its activities through the ICRC that gave it a poor political image in the eyes of the Nigerian government.[23] Nevertheless, it would be unfair to suggest that a mercy airlift, undertaken solely on humanitarian grounds by a non-political, voluntary agency, such as the J.C.A., supported the political aspiration of the Biafran regime. It is reasonable to suppose that the J.C.A. could not undertake a project that would be embarrassing to Washington. That the U.S. gave financial support to its operations demonstrates that the government [U.S.] did not regard its activities as sustaining Biafra's political cause.

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[22] A.I.D. Foreign Disaster, p. 70.

[23] For instance in a note of February 28, 1969 the Nigerians stated, ". . . some volunatry relief agencies chose to operate independently in total disregard of the F.M.G. authority over its own auspices. It further stated that voluntary agencies should coordinate their activities with the ICRC." See Nordchurchaid, p. 23.

By its efforts, the J.C.A. redeemed the conscience of a world in which governments are more preoccupied with the politics of international relations, quite often, at the expense of humanity's needs.[24] If the J.C.A. had allowed its activities to be determined by political considerations, it would not have saved the many lives it did in the Biafran enclave. Besides feeding the hungry in the enclave, it airlifted children, who would otherwise have died for lack of adequate medical attention, to Sao Tome, where the children, some of them orphans, lived normal lives.

Besides the J.C.A., there were other U.S. religious organizations active in the relief operations for both Nigeria and Biafra. The Church World Service, Catholic Relief Services, American Jewish Committee, American Friends Service Committee, Lutheran World Relief and Mennonite Central Committee were all intensely involved in the humanitarian efforts in the Nigerian strife.

Church World Service (CWS)

Since 1967, this organization had been providing relief in Nigeria. By September 1968, it had recruited an eight man medical team, a food distribution officer and a relief coordinator, all working under the auspices of the

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[24]In this regard see John Arden, "Apathy, Atrocity Ignorance and Biafra," in Peace News (September 27, 1968), p. 7.

ICRC and Nigerian Red Cross. In the former Eastern Region, the CWS concentrated activities in the federally controlled areas. But as a member of the JCA, it also contributed to the airlift of food into Biafra. For the period January 1968 to June 1969, CWS successfully arranged the shipment of 3,636 tons of food supplies to Biafra and 3,703 tons to the Nigerian government for distribution in the federally held areas of Biafra. The table below shows a breakdown of its reported contributions to the relief programs.

TABLE 9

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS TO RELIEF PROGRAM

Operations	Amount
1,703 tons of supplies, value and shipping costs	$2,004,652
Cash donations for Nigeria	125,000
Airbridge	75,000
To Nordchurchaid for three flights from Europe to Sao Tome	230,000
JCA-U.S.A.--three flights from Amsterdam to Sao Tome	37,000
Cash contributions to JCA, May, 1969	150,000

Source: Adapted from A.I.D. Foreign Disaster, p. 72.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

As mentioned earlier, CRS had been in operation in Nigeria since 1959. When the war broke out in July 1967, it provided fifty tons of food and sixty-seven tons of clothing to the Biafrans. It reassigned five Americans already serving in other African countries to Nigeria to assist the Nigerian Red Cross. In cooperqtion with the Catholic Medical Mission Board of New York, the CRS procured the services of eight registered nurses to serve on mobile medical and relief teams in areas controlled by the Federal Military Government.[25] It also participated in the mercy airlift operated by the JCA. From January 1968 to June 1969, it organized the shipment of 30,667 tons of supplies to Nigeria and 10,504 to Biafra. Below, in Table 10 is a breakdown of reported contributions by CRS

TABLE 10

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES CONTRIBUTIONS TO RELIEF PROGRAM

Operations	Amount
2,585 tons of high protein food, medicines and medicaments and other emergency supplies, value plus shipping cost	$3,604,842
Cash provided for local purchase of food	44,000
Cash donated to ICRC	5,000

Source: A.I.D. Foreign Disaster, p. 71.

[25] A.I.D. Foreign Disaster, p. 20.

American Friends Service Committee and Mennonite Central Committee

In 1968, the American Friends Committee sent a three man observer team to both Nigeria and Biafra, and, with the Mennonite Central Committee, sponsored a medical program in Biafra. In June 1969, both committees paid $25,000 for processing and shipping 100 tons of stock fish donated by Norway. The total reported contribution by the two organizations was $184,691.[26]

Other church agencies and their contributions to the Nigerian/Biafran relief projects were as follows: The Christian Children's Funds, Inc. which began emergency relief in 1969, cooperated with the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam) in supporting a medical team of ten persons in Biafra. It also provided feeding stations, supplemental clothing and other supplies where needed. Its total contribution to Biafran relief through June 1969, has been estimated at $45,000.[27]

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee spent $6,000 in food and medicine for the victims of the Nigerian war. It operated through the Nigerian Christian Council. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Inc.

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[26] Ibid., pp. 69, 74.

[27] Ibid., pp. 72-3.

contributed $20,000 for agricultural supplies, medicines, costs and resettlement of thirty families in Awo Omamma in Biafra. Also, the Seventh Day Adventist Welfare Service was primarily engaged in the shipment of medicines donated by U.S. pharmaceutical companies.[28]

Ad hoc Organizations

Many voluntary organizations were formed for organizing relief programs for the civilian victims of the Nigerian/Biafran war. One such group was "Operation Outrage" founded on October 14, 1968, by students at the Catholic University of America.[29] Its efforts were non-sectarian and non-political but its goals were humanitarian in nature. It stated that:

> We understand fully the complexities of the political situation in Nigeria and we are aware that because of politics many people are hesitant to take a stand. We take no stand in the Nigerian-Biafran war, nor do we point the finger of accusation or blame at either side but we do take a stand against the death by starvation of thousands of people.[30]

Operation Outrage launched a campaign seeking greater relief efforts from the U.S. government. It urged Americans to write the president and members of the congress urging

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[28] Ibid., p. 75.

[29] The source for the following information is "Operation Outrage: Background," mimeograph (n.d.).

[30] Ibid., p. 2.

the initiation of an airlift to Biafra. It distributed literature on the tragedy in Biafra and sponsored visits, rallies, church services and newspaper advertisements. It held its first demonstration at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. On that occasion, it raised $1,000 and urged Americans to contribute the price of their thanksgiving meal to feed the Biafrans. It distributed its financial proceeds to the heads of other relief services--the Biafran Relief Services Foundations and the United Jewish Fund.

There were also other U.S. voluntary agencies which contributed to the Nigerian-Biafran relief operations. The list below indicates some of the agencies and their contributions: (Source: A.I.D. Foreign Disaster, p. 75.)

Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, Inc.	$30,000
American Committee to Keep Biafra Alive	$20,000
Biafra Relief Service Foundation	$50,000
B;nai Birth Foundation	$250,000

Also the U.S. pharmaceutical firms donated drugs, antibiotics and other medical supplies to solve some of the health problems created by the civil war. Some of the contributions and the value of the drugs were: (Source: A.I.D. Foreign Diaster, p. 76.)

Abbott Universal, Ltd.	$ 30,000
Ayerst Laboratories	$ 12,000
Ciba Pharmaceutical Co.	$ 3,058
Cyanamid International	$ 39,816
Hoffman La Roche, Inc.	$ 5,500
Johnson and Johnson	$ 3,000
Lakeside Laboratory, Inc.	$ 1,060
Meed Johnson Laboratories	$250,000
Merck, Sharp & Dohme	$ 2,408
Miles Laboratories, Inc.	$ 42,000
Park Davis	$ 13,260
Pfizer International	$166,127
A. H. Robbins Company	$ 2,300
Schering Corporation	$ 5,000
Upjohn International	$ 12,260
Wyeth Laboratories	$104,590

An important, but not much publicized project was "Aid for Biafran Children" (ABC),[31] initiated by the editors of Saturday Review. In September 1968, when the food blockade of Biafra was very severe and many Biafran children were dying from protein shortage, the editors of the Saturday Review felt that it might be useful to evacuate some Biafran children. They envisaged a plan whereby approximately 150 Biafran orphans would be airlifted to the U.S. for medical treatment.

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[31]Source for the following project, Norman Cousins, "ABC," Saturday Review (February 1, 1969), pp. 20-21; and also, "Last Flight Out of Biafra," Saturday Review (January 24, 1970), pp. 22, 45.

To carry out this project, the sponsors contacted hospitals in the New York metropolitan area and asked each to accept responsibility for one or more Biafran children. Fifty hospitals offered their services, and Pan-American Airways offered a plane for the flight to the U.S.; the New York Center of the American Friends Services Committee agreed to take charge of the convalescent care of the children when released from the hospitals.

Before proceeding to implement the airlift of the Biafran children, the sponsors of the project first sent a team, comprising Dr. Omar Fareed, of the Carr Foundation in Los Angeles, and Dr. Fergus Pope, of the Mayco Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, to Biafra for observation and study. The team met with some Biafran officials and discussed the ABC project. From the on-the-spot evaluation of the situation, it was decided that instead of airlifting the Biafran children to the U.S., it would be better to undertake a large mobile medical program directed by both Biafran and American doctors who would work directly in the Biafran villages.

With the generous contributions of the Americans,[32] mobile medical units were established in Biafra to cater

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[32]See Norman Cousins, "ABC," Saturday Review (February 1, 1969), p. 21.

for the health needs of the war victims. The mobile units were organized by Drs. Fareed and Pope and were later directed by Dr. David Taylor. While the ABC project saved many lives, the project is far more important for what it demonstrated. Some Americans were prepared to risk their lives in order to save innocent children's lives while the U.S. government proved incapable of accomplishing this moral act because diplomatic and political considerations were often uppermost in the minds of policy makers. ABC recognized where the hunger and medical need was most acute and proceeded to go into the area and do something about it.

When the success of the project is evaluated, Norman Cousins, who was the editor of the Saturday Review, will occupy an eminent place. He regarded the success of the program as a personal responsibility and, beyond that, he felt that America had a moral duty to come to the rescue of the suffering and starving Biafrans.[33] Moreover, Cousins also felt that the end of the Nigerian conflict would not necessarily terminate the ABC project, for in his last editorial on the work of the ABC, written twelve days after the war's end, Cousins said, ". . . ABC will not be discontinued. Far from it. The work we have been doing will

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[33]See Norman Cousins, "What to do About Biafra," Saturday Review (December 21, 1968).

have to be multiplied many times."[34] The ABC project is yet another testimony to the vital role which some individual Americans played in the humanitarian aspect of the Nigerian conflict.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)[35]

The ICRC was part of U.S. humanitarian activities in the Nigerian war. It is, thus, worthwhile to examine its role in the relief operations. On July 11, 1967, five days after the outbreak of the war, ICRC sent delegates to Lagos to survey prisoners on both sides of the war; during the same month, it established a medical team in the federally captured areas and another in the Biafran enclave. On April 10, 1968, the Federal Military Government formally and officially approved the recommendation of the Nigerian Red Cross that ICRC take major responsibility in Nigerian relief operations in both the Federal and the Biafran sectors of the war.

Activities in the Federal Areas

In the Nigerian controlled areas, ICRC had twenty-five distribution centers, providing 4,600 tons of food

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[34]See Saturday Review (January 24, 1970), p. 45.

[35]Source for the activities of the ICRC is primarily A.I.D. Foreign Disaster Relief.

every month.[36] At such places as Port Harcourt, Calabar, Uyo, Enugu, Agbor and Asaba, it had a total stock pile of supplies of 30,000 tons of food, half of which was donated by the U.S. government.[37] Its monthly budget for relief services in these areas was about $1,970,000.[38] In co-operation with the National Communicable Disease Center of the U.S. Health Service, ICRC undertook an epidemiological survey of starvation and famine and by June 30, 1969, it had sponsored twenty-eight health and medical teams in the federal areas.

Activities in the Biafran Enclave

In November 1967, the Federal Military Government gave permission to the ICRC to fly into Biafra.[39] This permission was for daylight flights but it extended de facto to night flights, much to the dissatisfaction of the F.M.G., which regarded the night airlift as a violation of Nigerian stipulations. This reaction culminated in the shooting down of an ICRC plane bound for Biafra on June 5, 1969.[40]

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[36] A.I.D. Foreign Disaster, p. 56. It would appear that the tons of food distributed were between 4,000 and 4,600. See U.S. Congress, House, Report of Special Fact-Finding Mission, p. 50.

[37] A.I.D. Foreign Disaster, p. 57.

[38] Ibid.

[39] West Africa (June 21, 1969), p. 697.

[40] Ibid.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the ICRC continued its relief program in the Biafran enclave. By the end of June 1969, it had delivered 21,000 tons of relief supplies to Biafra.[41]

Besides food supplies, it also provided medical assistance to those who needed it. Its medical assistance program handled 10,000 monthly hospital cases. By June 15, 1969, under its auspices, 726,851 Biafrans were vaccinated against measles and 1,826,131 against small pox. For this service U.S. A.I.D. made a direct allotment for the procurement of the vaccines and the employment of professional assistance.[42] ICRC's expected monthly budget for Biafran relief was $1,300,000.[43]

In the humanitarian aspect of the Nigerian war, the ICRC occupied a unique place in that it was the only organization that was officially approved by the Nigerian government to supply relief to the two fighting sides. In essence, the ICRC, as a non-political organization, had the rare opportunity of communicating with both the Nigerian and Biafran authorities. It could have been a major force for mediation on the relief question and could have been, therefore, a major catalyst for political negotiations, but

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[41] A.I.D. Foreign Disaster, p. 53.

[42] Ibid., p. 54.

[43] Ibid.

its failure to accomplish these ends compels one to conclude that the ICRC was perhaps more interested in fulfilling its humanitarian duty, than ending the cause of human tragedy. It is in this vein that one described the ICRC as one of the "unsung villains of the Biafran peace."[44]

Nigerian Reaction to U.S. Humanitarian Involvement

The Federal Military Government regarded starvation, indeed human suffering, as a legitimate weapon of war against its opponent. This is reflected in the statement made by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Nigerian Commissioner for Finance during the civil war. He said, ". . . all is fair in war, and starvation is one of the weapons of war."[45] In this thinking, the Nigerian government felt that any effort to alleviate its opponent's hunger and human suffering was aiding and sustaining its war efforts.[46] Against this background the F.M.G. stipulated that relief for Biafra should be channeled through Lagos and operated on national terms. Nigeria was greatly disturbed when the ICRC began night airlifts of food into the Biafran enclave, thus contravening specific instructions about day-light flights over-flying

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[44]The remark was made to the writer in an interview with a White House official.

[45]West Africa, (July 5, 1969), p. 790.

[46]West Africa (June 21, 1969), p. 697.

federal areas. Reacting to this, Nigeria warned that it would shoot down planes violating the government's instructions. ICRC planes were shot down and Dr. August Lindt, the ICRC relief Coordinator resigned in frustration.[47]

The Joint Church Aid, whose humanitarian activities in Biafra were largely financed by the U.S. government, also incurred the criticisms of the Nigerian government. Laurie S. Wiseberg summarized the factors which influenced the Federal Military Government against relief agencies operating in Biafra.

1. It regarded the night flights to Biafra's Uli Airport as a violation of its airspace.

2. It felt that Biafra could be receiving arms under cover of relief.

3. It felt that foreign currency became available for Biafra's use through relief workers.

4. As the relief agencies treated with the Biafran authorities, the F.M.G. felt that Biafra would regard such a relation as a legitimization of their regime.

5. The relief agencies, by their airbridge operation to Uli, were providing communications support to the Biafrans.

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[47] Ibid., p. 702.

6. Relief sustained Biafra's resistance.[48]

Perhaps more important than the above factors was the impact that relief activities had on world conscience. Relief agencies drew world attention to the Biafran plight and aroused sympathy, though non-political, for Biafra. To the world, though not its governments, Biafra became synonymous with misery and suffering and the political aspect of the war was submerged in a moral crisis which relief agencies precipitated by their activities.

Nigeria's negative, sometimes hostile, reaction to the U.S. humanitarian involvement should be seen in the above context. When the U.S. government decided to sell eight C-97 Stratofreighter cargo planes to both the ICRC and JCA, Joe Iyalla, the Nigerian Ambassador in Washington, vehemently protested to the State Department. Yakubu Gowon, Head of F.M.G., also asked the U.S. ambassador in Lagos to clarify the U.S. position on that deal. An official Nigerian statement said, ". . . the move [U.S. action] might have grave repercussions as the Federal Government took a grave view of the decision which if carried out would directly or indirectly increase the arms carrying capacity

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[48]See Laurie S. Wiseberg, The Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970: A Case Study in the Efficiency of International Law as a Regulation of Interstate Violence (California, 1972), p. 37.

of the rebels." Continuing, the statement said, ". . . the U.S. decision would also encourage resistance and prolong the war, as the Biafrans would now think that the U.S. was prepared to intervene in their favor to balkanize Nigeria."[49]

The U.S. government made its position clear in an official statement, which stipulated the conditions under which the planes were sold:

1. Their use would accord with the strictly humanitarian purposes and operations of the total ICRC relief effort.

2. They were to be used solely for the relief of noncombatants in transporting urgently needed food and other non-military supplies.

3. Workable procedures would be instituted for cargo inspection.

But the statement added that the U.S. was morally obligated to aid civilians in both sectors of the war.[50]

U.S. motives in supplying relief to the Biafran enclave became even more suspect by the Nigerian government

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[49] West Africa, (January 4, 1969), p. 25.

[50] See statement by U.S. Embassy in Lagos, December 31, 1968, Bulletin of the State Department, Vol. LX, No. 1541, (January 6, 1969), p. 31.

when Washington admonished the Soviet government for supplying arms to the Federal Military Government.[51] Chief Anthony Enahoro, Nigeria's Commissioner for Information said, ". . . the U.S. was playing a game which they alone understand." He further added that ". . . Ojukwu's [Biafran leader] boys were known to be very active in the U.S." The statement continued, ". . . the Federal Military Government expects its friends particularly in the west, not to do anything to hamper its current efforts to defend the territorial integrity of the Federation of Nigeria . . ."[52]

Given these circumstances, the Nigerian government misrepresented the humanitarian involvement of the U.S. government in the Nigeria/Biafra conflict. It is, however, difficult to understand Nigeria's apprehension, since the U.S. government consistently, in words and action, took a pro-federal stance, sometimes at the expense of civilian suffering in Biafra. Because of this U.S. position, the Biafran authorities could see U.S. relief program as tantamount to feeding a cow for slaughter. This thinking is borne out by the statement which the Biafran leader made:

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[51] Ibid. (September 11, 1967), p. 320.

[52] West Africa (September 2, 1967), p. 1157. See also M. Usenekong, "The Two Faces of the U.S.," in Towards One Nigeria (Lagos, n.d.).

". . . the U.S. gives me milk and butter so that when I am a corpse, as needs I must be, my skin will still be smooth."[53]

When the war ended, the Nigerian government still showed its displeasure at attempts of private organizations in the U.S. to raise funds for Biafran relief. Joe Iyalla warned the State Department that ". . . the operation of the 'Biafra International Foundation' and the 'Nigeria War Victims Relief Foundations' would adversely affect the good relations and traditional friendship with the United States." He further stated that ". . . the officials of the two foundations had been responsible for prolonging the Biafran secession." In response, the State Department assured the ambassador that appropriate agencies of the government were investigating the activities of the foundations.[54]

It would be misleading to argue that Nigeria's negative reactions to U.S. humanitarian activities in Biafra strained relationships between the two countries. Their relationship continued on as friendly a basis as before the civil war. As David D. Newsom, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, commented after the war,

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[53]See C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, Random Thoughts, Vol. II (Baltimore, 1969), p. 89.

[54]See New York Times (September 27, 1970), p. 22.

". . . our relations with Nigeria remain good. The forthcoming visit of the Secretary of State [William Rogers] should serve to strengthen them."[55] There was no serious rupture in that friendly relationship. The U.S. continued to train some Nigerian army officers[56] and her total economic and military programs in Nigeria for 1967-1970 increased over those of 1962-1966.[57] A serious rupture in the relationship could have affected the U.S. aid program for Nigeria.

Conclusion

The humanitarian efforts of the U.S. government in the Biafran enclave was, to a good degree, hampered by the fear of what political interpretations the Nigerian government might give to such efforts. The U.S. did not consider relief apart from the political repercussions that were potentially involved. It was conscious of the impact of feeding a people and having to suffer retribution of one

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[55]See statement of Hon. David D. Newsom, U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, The Post War Nigerian Situation, Hearing, before a subcommittee on Africa, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, January 27, 1970, p. 2.

[56]In an interview with Senator Charles Goodell, August 19, 1969.

[57]Total U.S. economic and military programs for Nigeria in the period 1962-1966 amounted to $173.6 m and $192.2 m for the period 167-1970. See Overseas Loans and Grants, p. 110.

kind or another. Thus, though the incidence of starvation was greater in the Biafran enclave, the U.S. government was inclined to contribute more towards relief for the federally controlled areas. For instance, it made available $21,970,000 to the ICRC (whose activities were mostly concentrated in the federal areas) and $301,355 to the A.I.D. mission in Lagos. These allotments were for the period from the beginning of the war to June 30, 1969. For the same period, it contributed $9,309,000 for airlift support and transportation costs to the voluntary agencies that operated relief in Biafra.[58]

The U.S. political posture influenced the relief efforts of some voluntary agencies. The American Red Cross (AMRC) and the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE), disturbed that sympathy for the starving Biafrans could be regarded as sympathy for the regime, preferred to concentrate their relief programs in the Nigerian controlled areas.[59]

The preference of the U.S. government to channel relief through the Nigerian government made it difficult

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[58]U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Assistance to Refugees Throughout the World, Findings and Recommendations of the Subcommittee to investigate problems connected with refugees and escapees, 91st Congress, 1st Session, November 3, 1969, p. 44.

[59]See A.I.D. Foreign Disaster, p. 73.

for food to reach the Biafran enclave where it was most needed. The Biafran leader commented, ". . . anyone genuinely interested in sending relief to us should do so direct to Biafra."[60] In this context it is frustrating to conclude that the humanitarian efforts of the U.S. government neglected the areas for which they were most needed. A White House official put it clearly when he said, ". . . but the real shameful irony of it is that not only did we not get people fed, not only did we fail to save a number of lives, we should have saved, we can't even produce for the American taxpayer the goddam materials that were sent out there [Lagos] to do the job."[61]

For most voluntary agencies and private organizations, the commitment to solving the human tragedy (starvation, refugee problem) of the war outweighed the fear of the political costs involved in relief operations in the Biafran enclave. They demonstrated their indifference to the political issues of the war. They were not concerned with the right or wrong in the conflict: all they cared for was feeding the children and the civilians in the war-devastated areas. Germane to this was a comment by an observer: ". . . in the end I just didn't give a . . .

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[60]Ojukwu, Random Thoughts, p. 76.

[61]In an interview with a White House official.

whether Biafra was independent or not. What I cared about most of all was that you not have whatever political entity that succeeded there over the corpses of a million people."[62] This underlines the attitude of most voluntary and private agencies that were engaged in the relief activities in the Nigerian/Biafran war. With a deep humanitarian concern, the agencies were able to execute their mission without political consideration. They deserve greater credit than governments for helping alleviate the human suffering in the war-torn areas.

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[62]In an interview with a government official.

CHAPTER VI

NIGERIA/BIAFRA WAR AND THE U.S. CIVIL WAR: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

At the outbreak of the Nigeria/Biafra war, parallels were drawn between it and the 19th-Century American Civil War. West Africa, a London-based magazine, lengthily pointed out what it considered to be the similarities between the two historical episodes:

1. In both conflicts, each side thought it would defeat the other in a matter of weeks.
2. The Southern secessionists, like the Biafrans, were labelled 'rebels' by their opponents.
3. The Confederates believed that the Unionists were fighting them primarily because of their cotton, just as the Biafrans believed that the F.M.G. was fighting for the oil in the former Eastern Region.
4. "There was an obsession in the Federal Military Strategy [U.S.] with taking the Secessionist Capital of Richmond, as there

was with the taking of Enugu," the capital of Eastern Nigeria.

5. If it had been fashionable then to use the word genocide, the Southern secessionists would have certainly labelled Union war activities as genocide, in the same way as the Biafrans regarded the F.M.G.'s conduct of the war.

6. The collapse of the Confederate resistance rendered their paper money worthless in the same manner as Biafran currency became worthless after the war.[1]

Nigeria also saw similarities between its cause and that of the Union in the American Civil War.[2] General Yakubu Gowon, Head of the Nigerian Military Government, seems to have drawn inspiration from Abraham Lincoln, after reading Carl Sandburg's biography of Lincoln. The similarities between the two events were so genuine to General Gowon that he remarked at one time that ". . . he could recognize the Grants and Shermans [Union Generals] among

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[1] West Africa, (August 30, 1969), p. 1020. For further analogies between the two events see Newsweek (September 30, 1968), p. 18; Time (January 26, 1970), p. 20.

[2] Aliyi Ekineh, "The Cause we are Fighting For," in Towards One Nigeria, No. 2, p. 16.

his own commanders."[3] It was important for Nigeria to draw such parallels, especially as it needed the diplomatic support of the U.S. It was, thus, necessary to remind the Americans that the Federalists fought the Confederates from 1861-1865 to maintain the union of the American nation and that in the same vein, the Nigerians were fighting the Biafrans to maintain the unity of Nigeria.

While it is fashionable to generalize about historical episodes, such analysis, often based on superficial examinations, may lead to a distortion of historical facts and consequently blur important issues. History never repeats itself in the same manner and context, and on this score, it would be a disservice to history to draw an analogy between historical events based on superficial evaluations merely to satisfy political aims. The Nigeria/Biafra war, primarily because it had an element of "secession," should not be regarded as the 19th-Century American Civil War repeating itself in a 20th-Century black African nation.

For a fruitful comparison of the two episodes, it will be necessary to examine and evaluate the different aspects of the conflicts in their totality. It is, therefore,

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[3]"General Gowon: The Binder of Wounds," Time (January 26, 1970), p. 22.

intended to examine the basis of the analogy between the two civil wars before drawing a meaningful historical parallel.

The U.S. Civil War 1861-1865

There seems to be no consensus among American historians on the causes of their civil war.[4] In this light, it would be appropriate to analyze and evaluate the different factors and events which contributed to the conflict.

1. Rival interpretations of the constitution: The South felt that there was no provision in the Constitution which prohibited secession. Its leaders emphasized that the "Articles of Confederation" out of which the Constitution developed was simply a "contract of alliance"[5] dissolvable at will. That Virginia, Massachusetts, South Carolina and New York,[6] expressly reserved the right of

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[4]Thomas J. Pressly, Americans Interpret Their Civil War (New York, 1965), pp. 321-323; Howard K. Beal, "What the Historians Have Said About the Causes of the Civil War," in Theory and Practice in Historical Study: A Report of the Committee on Historiography, Social Science Research Council Bulletin, No. 54 (1946).

[5]Jefferson Davis, "To the Confederate Congress, April 29, 1861," in Frank Moore, ed., The Rebellion Record, Vol. I (New York, 1861), pp. 166-172.

[6]Wood, Birkbeck, Ward and Edmonds, J.E., A History of the Civil War, p. 2.

withdrawal, at the time of accepting the Constitution, should it be misapplied to their injury, appears to lend credence to the constitutional interpretation of the South. Doubtless the South also drew inspiration from the Hartford Convention of 1814, in which some New England states led by Timothy Pickering expressed their resolution to withdraw from the Federal Union.[7] Not only did this episode help the South to justify its thinking in favor of secession, but it also made it regard the Federal Government as an instrument constitutionally created to guard the rights of the states.[8] It should not interfere in the desire of any state to secede.

On the contrary, the North regarded the South's constitutional interpretation of the nature of the union as misleading. Abraham Lincoln, in his "Message to Congress in Special Session, July 4, 1861," stated that the states were the creation of the Union, in which case, the Union was older than the states. Lincoln argued that the absence of a provision for secession in the Constitution did not imply that it approved it. Continuing his address, President Lincoln contended that since it was the duty of every state to uphold the integrity of the Union, secession

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[7]Richard Hofstadter, et al., The American Republic, Vol. I (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964), p. 347.

[8]Dwight L. Dumond, The Secession Movement (New York, 1968), p. 3.

of any state would only wreck the Union. The South, he said, should be more indebted to the Union because it [the Federal Union] either bought or conquered the land of some of those states.[9]

These conflicting views on the interpretation of the constitutional nature of the Federal Union reveal the depth of cleavage that existed between the two sections.

Sectional Differences

Some writers emphasized that politico-cultural and institutional differences between both sections contributed a good deal to the conflict. James Truslow Adams in his America's Tragedy went to great lengths to describe southern political culture. He argued that from 1830 the South lagged in every direction; that something pathological was discernible in its intellectual life. The South, suffering from an inferiority complex, found an escape by "withdrawing itself into something of a dream world of its own" and in time "evolved the theory that they belonged to a superior race."[10]

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[9]See President Lincoln's Special Address to the Congress, July 4, 1861, in John G. Nicolay and John Hay, Lincoln: Complete Works (New York, 1907), pp. 55-66.

[10]James Truslow Adams, America's Tragedy (New York, 1935), pp. 56-96.

It is also felt that the predominance of Anglo-Saxons in the southern population greatly influenced that region's political culture. Alan Nevins felt that Anglo-Saxon culture in the southern rural setting encouraged class stratification and vestigial feudalism. Southern life was more aristocratic than the northern and the South lacked, "a great predominant body of intelligent, independent, thoughtful and educated farmers" which the North possessed. Nevins observed that such a situation was "the main flaw in American social homogeneity," but above all, "the passionate Southern pride" made it claim superiority over Northern culture. Nevins felt that by 1857, "South and North were rapidly becoming separate peoples" and pessimistically stated:

> This schism in culture struck into the very substance of national life. Differences of thought, taste, and ideals gravely accentuated the misunderstandings caused by the basic economic and social differences; the differences between a free labor system and a slave labor system, between a semi-industrialized economy of high productiveness and an agrarian economy of low productiveness. An atmosphere was created in which every episode became a crisis, every jar a shock.[11]

The Issue of Slavery

It has been strongly argued that slavery was the primary cause of the Civil War. James Ford Rhodes, though

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[11]Alan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, Vol. II (New York, 1947), p. 554.

admitting that it was risky to assign a single cause to any historical event, stated that ". . . of the Civil War, it may safely be asserted that there was a single cause, slavery . . ." The question may be isolated by the incontrovertible statement, that if the negro had never been brought to America, the American Civil War could not have occurred.[12] In support of this contention, Alan Nevins pointed out that the Civil War was ". . . a war over slavery and the future position of the Negro race in North America."[13]

The above factors created a condition that made for easy rupture in the relationship between the North and South. However, later generations of American historians have felt that the above factors could not have necessarily caused the war. James Randall cautioned that "cultural variations," economic competition or sectional differences do not necessarily produce war. Rather, the political leadership of the 1860's blundered and proved incapable of finding a solution to a problem created by "false fronts," "made-up incidents" and "propaganda" that was essentially

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[12]James Ford Rhodes, Lectures on the American Civil War (New York, 1913), pp. 2, 6.

[13]Alan Nevins, The Emergence of Lincoln, Vol. II (New York, 1951), p. 470.

false in intent. In essence, Randall felt that it was "human failure" that produced the Civil War.[14]

Yet a British writer observed that the sustenance of the American Federal Union depended in large measure on compromises between its two sections. He argued that the decade succeeding the 1850's ". . . witnessed the failure of the politicians to maintain a compromise. Sectional attitudes had become hardened and the respective sections became prisoners of the attitudes which they had done so much to create."[15]

In light of these various interpretations, the American Civil War may be said to have resulted from a combination of factors ranging from the conflict over constitutional interpretation, sectional differences, the question of slavery, personal ambition of southern politicians, to the human failure of the political leadership in the decade preceding the Civil War. Whether these factors were weighty enough to cause the disruption of the American Federal Union remains an academic question, but the war became inevitable when President Abraham Lincoln

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[14]James G. Randall, "The Blundering Generation," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 27 (1940), pp. 3-28.

[15]Alan Barker, The Civil War in America (London, 1961), p. 61. For the impact of sectional differences, see particularly, Edward A. Polland, The Lost Cause (New York, 1867), pp. 45-62.

summoned the Federal Union army to meet the challenges posed by the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter.

Nigeria/Biafra War

The background factors of the Nigerian Civil War have been examined.[16] Emphasis was placed on the lack of "national consciousness" among Nigerians as the major factor which contributed to the disruption of that nation's unity. The ethnic nature of Nigeria's politics created a condition in which allegiance to the region, not necessarily to the tribe, was dominant. Most literature on the causes of the Nigerian war has dwelt much on the ethnic differences among the peoples of Nigeria.[17] Such an interpretation suggests that the Civil War was the inevitable outcome of the sectional and ethnic differences which characterized Nigerian society. In this regard, undue importance may have been attached to this factor for it lends to a conclusion that "tribalism" caused the Nigerian conflict.

Anthony Enahoro, Nigerian Commissioner for Information during the crisis, suggested six factors which contributed to the war:

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[16]See Chapters I and II.

[17]See for instance, Walter Schwarz, Nigeria (London, 1968); John Hatch, Nigeria: The Seeds of Disaster (Chicago, 1970); P. C. Lloyd, "The Ethnic Background to the Nigerian Crisis," in Panter-Brick, pp. 1-13.

1. Heterogeneity of Nigerian society.

2. "Economic motivation" for secession. The region that feels economically well-off desires to secede.

3. "Lack of social interaction among the tribes."

4. "Pattern of political and constitutional development during the years of struggle for independence." Nigeria lacked a "unitary nationalist movement" for independence, rather there were three major movements which were tribally oriented.

5. "Under-development" characterized by "poverty, shortage of employment, misery, corruption and nepotism, created loss of confidence in the government's ability to provide the necessities of life for the people."

6. "The collective failures of Nigerians in the years 1960-1966." These failures were manifested in the "rigging of elections," "Parliamentary ineffectiveness," and "premature assumption of responsibility by the army as a result of British departure."[18]

Nevertheless, some have felt content to assign the cause of the Nigerian crisis to what they considered a peculiar "Ibo political and social culture." They contend

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[18]See "Enahoro Presents Federal Case to U.S.A.," in Kirck-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, pp. 350-355.

that the Ibos lacked "restraints" and "human tolerance" as well as lacking the art of good neighborly relations. These characteristics, they believe, produced conflicts between the Ibos and other Nigerians.[19]

But there are also those who have argued that urbanization and modernization in Nigeria created situations which brought the different ethnic groups into conflict in their respective quest for accommodation within a modernizing nation. In this thinking, the Nigerian Civil War was the result of "the widening social horizon and the process of modernization at work within the national boundaries."[20] In urbanized societies, opportunities for progress are never uniform for all ethnic groups. The less progressive within the society would begin to develop a sense of self-awareness and would feel that it had been left out. Thus it expresses its frustration in organizing itself into a solidarity group to fight those it considers roadblocks to its progress.

The different factors examined seem plausible as the causes of the Nigerian Civil War, but they were not decisive in bringing it about. The causes should rather be

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[19]Samson Amali, The Ibos and Their Fellow Nigerians (Ibadan, 1967).

[20]Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective," The American Political Science Review, Vol. LXIV (December, 1970), p. 1113.

sought in the events which immediately preceded it. It was not so much the massacre of the easterners in September 1966, nor was it the wanton killing of Ibo army officers following the northern-organized coup in July 1966, nor was it the mass exodus of the easterners to their crowded homeland, that caused the Nigeria/Biafra war. Though these events were traumatic, they did not cause an absolute breakdown in communications between the eastern region and the other regions.[21] For despite the occurrence of these events, the eastern region was prepared and willing to find a viable means of accommodation within the existing framework. Its willingness to attend the Aburi Conference, even after the massacres and the human dislocations, and its positive contributions to the proceedings of the conference demonstrated that the eastern region still felt that there was a hope for a united Nigeria.

A careful examination reveals that the blockade of the eastern region bears responsibility for the Nigeria/Biafra war. That blockade, which in retrospect was an unwise political measure, heightened the tension and the sense

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[21]Nevertheless John St. Jorre has strongly argued that the events of 1966, especially the September massacre, proved very decisive for the East's determination to secede. He said, "the September massacres were the clinching factor which transformed secession from a contingency plan . . . into an inevitability." The Brothers' War, p. 114. For a similar view see "Enugu, The Psychology of Secession," in Panter-Brick.

of insecurity which the events of 1966 had set in motion. It was regarded as a measure aimed at destroying the eastern region.[22] This fear compelled General Ojukwu in his address to the Constituent Assembly on May 26, 1967, to choose between ". . . continuing the present statement and drift," and "ensuring the survival of our people by asserting our autonomy."[23]

The Easterners could not but see themselves as economic and political slaves of Lagos. Cut off from communication with the outside world, their economic existence depended on the sufferance of the Federal Military Government. General Ojukwu felt that Biafrans in such a condition were living as slaves, and maintained that Biafrans would not accept such existence.[24] Believing that the solution to their plight was the control of their own political destiny, they declared themselves independent, and in response, the F.M.G. declared war on them.

In comparing the American Civil War with the Nigerian in regard to causes, there seems to be no similarities. Besides differences in the geographical, historical

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[22]See Ojukwu's address on "Economic Blockade" to diplomatic representatives in Eastern Nigeria, April 24, 1967. Biafra, Vol. I, pp. 124-127.

[23]See address of His Exellency, the Military Governor, May 26, 1967 (Enugu, 1967).

[24]See Biafra, Vol. II, p. 37.

and cultural backgrounds of the two nations, five dissimilarities in causal factors can also be discerned:

1. In the U.S., no military coup created a setting for the subsequent outbreak of a civil war.

2. Northerners in the U.S. did not massacre the Southerners, neither did the federal government in Washington, D.C., blockade the South before the outbreak of war.

3. In the American Civil War it was the secessionists who initiated the war. The federal government was drawn into it in order to defend its integrity.[25] Whereas in the Nigerian case, it was the Federal Military Government that declared war on the secessionists.

4. In the Nigerian episode, the secessionists did not claim their right to secede from the Nigerian constitution. They felt pushed out of the federation.[26]

5. The Easterners in Nigeria did not secede in order to preserve the institution of slavery. On the contrary, they broke away from the federation in order to free themselves from what they considered a life of slavery. But in any analysis of the causes of the American Civil War,

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[25]See President Lincoln's message to the Congress, July 4, 1861 in John G. Nicolay and John Hay, eds., Abraham Lincoln: Complete Works (New York, 1907), pp. 55-66.

[26]See Biafra: Random Thoughts, Vol. 5, p. 9.

one finds evidences to show that the Confederates fought primarily to defend their right to maintain the institution of slavery.

As one examines other aspects of the two events, he also discovers a lack of parallels. The difference in the professional background of the respective leaders undermines any serious attempt to draw an analogy in their conduct of the war. One, Abraham Lincoln, a politician, saw the conduct of the war from a political standpoint, and the other, General Yakubu Gowon, a soldier, looked at the conduct of the war in largely military perspectives.

As a politician, President Lincoln was reluctant to endorse war as an appropriate means of solving the problem posed by Southern secession; when told that the Confederate army had attacked Fort Sumter, he seemed to have vacillated about sending the federal army against the secessionists.[27] He regarded war as the last alternative to allowing the American Union to disintegrate. This is borne out by the statements in his second inaugural address, March 4, 1865. Part of it read thus:

> . . . both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other [federal government]

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[27]W. Birkbeck Wood and J. E. Edmonds, A History of the Civil War in the United States 1861-65 (New York, 1905), pp. 10-17.

> would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.[28]

Military men glory in having the opportunity to demonstrate their skills. General Gowon was no exception. Therefore solutions to political problems were seen primarily in military terms. Regarding the proclamation of Biafran independence (which, of course, was a peaceful act) as "defiance of authority" General Gowon stated that ". . . it has become inescapable to use force . . . to crush this rebellion."[29] To him, it was an "irrevocable decision."

Under the circumstances the American Civil War was fought with restraints. The Union army avoided attacks on civilians, churches, hospitals or market places.[30] But in the Nigerian war, indiscriminate federal attacks on hospitals, churches, civilians and market places were commonplace. For instance, one such indiscriminate bombing of a market place, "Otuocha Market" in Onitsha Province, on

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[28]John B. Nicolay and John Hay, eds., Abraham Lincoln: Complete Works, Vol. II, p. 657.

[29]See Major General Yakubu Gowon, "Operational Code of Conduct for the Nigerian Army," reproduced in Kirk-Greene, Documentary, Vol. I, p. 456.

[30]See U.S. Congress, House, Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, Vol. I, 37th Congress, 3rd Session, 1863.

September 16, 1968, produced a casualty of 510 civilian deaths and over 1,000 injuries.[31]

British Attitude Towards the Two Wars

It is important to compare official British attitude to both conflicts, more so, as both countries were, at one period, British colonies. At the outbreak of the American Civil War, England, respecting the sovereignty of the U.S., was reluctant to mediate and instructed Lord Lyons, its ambassador in Washington, D.C., to exercise care in offering advice ". . . unless asked for by the contending parties themselves."[32]

In keeping with the above posture, the British government, on May 13, 1861, proclaimed its neutrality,[33] but also recognized the belligerent status of the Confederates. Such recognition implied that Britain did not regard the civil war as a rebellion of a section of the country against its government, but as a regular war between two governments. It might have been pleasing to the British

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[31] Biafra: Random Thoughs, p. 345. For an account of similar war atrocities see Jim Miles, "Biafra: Eye Witness Report," The Catholic Review (August 2, 1968); Peter Schwarz, ed., Biafra (New York), p. 36.

[32] Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol. CLXII, pp. 1207-09.

[33] Ephraim Douglass Adams, Great Britain and the American Civil War, Vol. I (Gloucester, Mass., 1957), p. 94.

government if the Confederates had succeeded in their attempt at secession. This contention is supported by the fact that Prime Minister Palmerston, on September 14, 1862, wrote Earl Russell of the Foreign Office proposing that France join hands with Britain in suggesting to the Washington government mediation "on the basis of a separation." Russell, favoring such a plan, added that ". . . in case of failure, we ought ourselves to recognize the Southern States as an independent Stat."[34] Also, in this regard, the speech of William E. Gladstone, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, on October 7, 1862, delivered at Newcastle is instructive:

> . . . there is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either--they have made a nation . . . we may anticipate with certainty the success of the Southern States so far as regards their separation from the North.[35]

The statements of these high British officials tell much about British leanings in favor of the secessionists. London's proclamation of neutrality, at best, concealed the real official posture. The Federal Union viewed the

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[34]Spencer Walpole, The Life of Lord John Russell, Vol. II, (London, 1891), pp. 361-362.

[35]London Times (October 9, 1862), quoted by Thomas Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York, 1964), p. 337.

proclamation as British recognition of the Southern cause.[36] Albion's reasoning did not lead, however, to diplomatic recognition of Confederate independence. The British failure formally to recognize the Confederates could be attributed to Northern military success. Lord Robert Cecil, later Marquess of Salisbury, indicated this line of analysis when he said, ". . . well, there is one way to convert us all--win the battles, and we shall come round at once."[37]

In the Nigeria/Biafra war, the official British attitude took a different course. The British government did not want to assume a neutral stance. As George Thomson, the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, said, ". . . neutrality was not a possible option for Her Majesty's Government . . . our policy since the war began has been to continue authorizing the export of carefully controlled quantities of arms [to the Federal Government]."[38] This attitude indicates that Britain did not recognize the belligerent status of the Biafrans, but felt that the secession of eastern region was a rebellion of a people

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[36]Adams, Great Britain and the American Civil War, pp. 95-112.

[37]Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt, Europe and the American Civil War (New York, 1969), p. 17.

[38]Hansard, Vol. 296, No. 130.(August 27, 1968), Col. 1446. See also Lord Shepherd's statement, House of Lords Official Report, Vol. 296, No. 130, Cols. 688-689.

against their legitimate government. Beyond this, by intervening in the Nigerian crisis,[39] the British government demonstrated that it did not feel that Nigeria was capable of handling its domestic problem.

Character of the Rebellion

The character of the Biafran war was markedly different from the War Between the States. The Biafran secession was the existential resort of a people to preserve themselves from domination. Secession, to the Biafrans, was meaningful only to the extent that it achieved that goal--security of self-fulfillment. On this score, General Ojukwu, the Biafran leader said, ". . . Biafra is the end result of the fruitlessness of the Nigerian experiment which sought to turn our people into vegetables, into slaves that could be disposed of at will."[40]

In line with the above thinking, the Biafrans felt that they had been pushed out of the Nigerian federation and pointed to the irony that they had been the vanguard of Nigerian unity. In a country characterized by tribal and ethnic allegiance, the Easterners, who later proclaimed

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[39]The British government intervened by its continuous supply of arms to the Nigerian Federal government to crush Biafra.

[40]Biafra: Random Thoughts, Vol. II, p. 38.

themselves Biafra, broke tribal barriers, settled in almost every part of the country, and promoted the idea of national unity.[41]

Seen in this perspective, the proclamation of Biafran independence was not the culmination of a premeditated objective, but rather a measure which circumstances brought about. Despite the awareness that their lives were not safe, as demonstrated by the massacres, the Easterners still preferred an association with Nigeria, be it in the form of a "confederation" or "federation."[42] The Biafran independence proclamation was, thus, an expression of protest against the inability of the Federal Government to guarantee the safety of the Easterners within the federation. This protest was transformed into a war when the Federal Military Government took it for aggression.

If the Biafran war is interpreted in the above context, it is easy to eliminate some of the misrepresentations that cloud the real nature of the Nigeria/Biafra conflict. Because its nature has been largely misunderstood, it has been suggested that the Biafrans seceded

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[41]See for instance, Arthur Nwankwo and Samuel Ifejika, Biafra: The Making of a Nation (New York, 1970).

[42]Biafra, p. 128.

primarily to gain total control of their oil,[43] and that the F.M.G. fought the Biafrans in order to free the minorities in that region.[44] But the character of the war does not seem to justify these interpretations. If it was a war motivated by the desire to control the oil in their region, the Biafrans could have given up their struggle for independence after the federal government captured the oil areas. By May 19, 1968, Port Harcourt, the last oil area in Biafra, had been captured by the F.M.G. On the other hand, the F.M.G. could have consented to the Biafran independence after it had "liberated" the minority areas.[45]

The war has also been regarded as a struggle by General Ojukwu, Biafra's leader, to gain personal power. Hassan Katsina, emphatically stated, ". . . let me make it clear that this dispute is no longer between the East and the North . . . it is between one ambitious man and the rest of the country."[46] The moral support from the rank

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[43]"Enahoro Presents Federal Case to U.S.A.," in Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict, Vol. II, p. 351.

[44]Edun Akenzua, "Calling on the Eastern Minorities," in Toward One Nigeria, No. 2 (Lagos, n.d.), pp. 7-8.

[45]The capture of the oil areas and the "liberation" of minorities areas had been completed by May 1968. But the war did not end until January 1970. For the chronology of events of the war, see Kirk-Greene, "Nigeria 1966-70, An Outline Calendar of Events," Crisis and Conflict, Vol. II, pp. 476-481.

[46]New Nigeria (March 21, 1967).

and file of Biafrans as well as their readiness to fight against the greatest odds--starvation, inadequate medical care and lack of arms--invalidates any interpretation that regards the nature of the conflict as a conspiracy of power seekers. As one reads through Chi: Letters From Biafra, the words, "our cause" pervade the pages.[47] The nature of the Biafran war can more clearly be understood in terms of a dedicated struggle of a people for their survival.

The Confederate War

The character of the Confederate rebellion posseses a uniqueness of its own. What was at stake was not the survival of the Southerners as a people but their socio-cultural and economic institutions--slavery, an agrarian way-of-life and cultural nationalism.[48] The Confederates felt that they could secure the preservation of these cherished ideals by seceding from the federal union. Hence they did not wait to be pushed out of the Union. They believed that they could control their political destiny by force of arms; hence they initiated an attack on the federal government.

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[47]Betty Nickerson, ed., Chi: Letters from Biafra (Toronto, 1970).

[48]Rollin G. Osterweis, Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South (New Haven, Conn., 1949), pp. 132-154; James Ford Rhodes, Lectures on the American Civil War (New York, 1913).

The address of Jefferson Davis to the Confederate Congress on April 29, 1861, gives an immense clue to an understanding of the nature of the Confederate war. Many southern states, in their insistence on states' right, did not see themselves as part of a federal union in which their politico-economic destiny was inextricably bound. Rather, they considered that the union was a free association from which they could withdraw at will.[49] In this light, the Confederates regarded their fight as a measure that would transform their concept of the union and disunion into reality.

Lessons of the Two Events

The following lessons can be drawn from the Nigerian conflict. Domestically, the war demonstrated that unity could not be taken for granted. Far more concrete measures were needed to implement the "rhetoric" of unity. Thus, during and after the war, propaganda emphasing the need for unity has become commonplace. The introduction of the "youth corps," a measure which demands that students from all ethnic groups spend two years working together in a national project, and the federal take-over of the institutions of higher learning are among the projects aimed at

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[49]Frank Moore, ed., The Rebellion Record, Vol. I (New York, 1861), pp. 166-172.

promoting the concept of unity. During the Biafran war, "One Nigeria" almost became a household slogan, for the rest of Nigeria, united as never before, destroyed the forces of disintegration.

The war also revealed that Nigeria has, in the people of the secessionist region, an efficient, dedicated group, whose talents and skills could be profitably utilized in developing the nation. From an international standpoint the war evinced the triumph of neo-colonialism, which raised questions about the validity of Nigerian independence. It was the presence of the colonial master that maintained the unity of Nigeria. Barely six and a half years after the British departure, the unity disintegrated. Again, it was the intervention of Britain that forcefully brought the country together. Given this condition, it would appear that the presence of the ex-colonial master will always be necessary whenever Nigeria is onfronted with a major domestic problem. On this basis, Nigeria has not become truly Nigerian. The former colonial power still sees herself as the guiding hand of Nigerian affairs. British involvement in Nigerian internal affairs makes Nigerian domestic events assume an international focus. Other powers are encouraged to intervene, often in the form of advice or aid. The result is that Nigerian internal problems become solved in terms of major power directives.

A far more important lesson to be drawn from the Nigerian conflict is that "cold war" diplomacy is no longer a major determinant of big power involvement in Africa. Economic penetration and the need for political allies, largely determine the attitude of the big powers towards Africa. Communist and non-communist powers now unite to achieve these ends in a given country. "Communist" Russia and "democratic" England and to a lesser extent, "democratic" America, sank their ideological differences and pursued similar goals in Nigeria.

In the American Civil War, the significance that emerges remains distinct from that of the Nigerian conflict. The war tested the ability of the U.S. to solve its internal problem. America proved equal to that task. Because the destiny of the American union was not decided by foreign powers, (as was the case in Nigeria), its political integrity was inviolate.

The U.S. Civil War wrought a profound social revolution. By the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to its constitution, slavery was abolished: every American, irrespective of color, was equal before the law and the franchise was extended to the blacks who, prior to the war, were not considered U.S. citizens.[50]

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[50]See Chief Justice Taney's ruling on the Fred Scott's case: "Since Negroes had been viewed as inferior at the time the constitution was adopted, its framers

More important, the war set an example by which struggle is seen as a viable means of achieving national unity. Congo and Nigeria followed this example. But beyond this, the war demonstrated that even a "civilized" and politically mature nation can be victimized by a civil war. After seventy-eight years of independence (1783-1861) one might feel that the U.S. could have avoided the experiment in civil war. From this perspective, the American Civil War would often remind newer and less politically experienced nations that a civil conflict is a potential threat to their existence.

Conclusion

There is always a uniqueness in each historical event. An analysis and evaluation of the American Civil War and the Nigerian conflict reveal the futility of drawing parallels between the two events.

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did not intend to include them within the meaning of the term 'citizen.'" See The American Republic, Vol. I, p. 577.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The main thrust of this research has been the evaluation of the United States' role in the Nigeria-Biafra war. The popularly held notion is that the United States government played a neutral role in the crisis largely because it felt that the conflict was an internal Nigerian problem and hence its solution should be left to Nigerians. The truth of this notion has been examined, and based on the findings the following conclusions have been reached:

1. The overt participation of Britain and Russia in, and France's declared concern with, the crisis internationalized the Nigerian war. It no longer could be considered an internal Nigerian problem. Senator Edward Kennedy pointed to this when he said ". . . that it [Nigeria-Biafra war] really is a great power struggle. Those who have suggested that the United States should not enter into a discussion of the

problem or be concerned about it actually fail to recognize . . . that this is a power struggle among the great powers and that we are deeply a part of it."[1] Given this circumstance, the interest of the powers in the conflict made a solution based primarily on Nigerian ability difficult to achieve. This development belied the United States official view of the Nigerian war.

2. Despite its declared posture of neutrality, the United States government played a crucial role. It was not neutral. Its primary concern was the survival of Nigerian unity, and thus, during the war, its policy was directed towards that goal.[2] However, the degree to which United States diplomatic and economic support helped Nigeria to crush Biafra is difficult to say.

3. Much as the U.S. government was concerned with the human agony of the Nigerian war, its

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[1]See Senator Kennedy's speech, U.S. Congressional Record, U.S. Congress, Senate, January 22, 1969, S730.

[2]For a detailed analysis of United States posture see Chapter IV.

humanitarian involvement was guided by what it felt reflected its political stance. It was reluctant to comply with relief measures for Biafra when such would be interpreted as a support for the Biafran regime.

4. Though many Americans demanded a more active U.S. role that would guarantee an end to the human suffering, especially in the Biafran enclave, there was a general reluctance among the public to encourage overt U.S. intervention, especially militarily. The public feared that its government had already over-extended itself in Southeast Asia.

5. It is easy to misrepresent the humanitarian involvement of the U.S. public. Such misrepresentation would lead one to conclude that the public supported Biafran claim to independence. On the contrary, the public organizations that worked hard and conscientiously for Biafran relief pointed out that their primary concern was to get food to those in need of it and that they had nothing to do with who was right or wrong in the conflict. Essentially, the activities of the U.S. public in the Nigeria-Biafra crisis was without political intent.

6. The publicity given to starvation in Biafra seemed to have over-shadowed the main import of the Nigerian crisis. Political independence for the Biafrans became meaningful to the American public only in so far as it would end starvation and misery in that enclave. As a result of the public's preoccupation with the humanitarian aspect of the crisis, the U.S. government was able to execute its pro-Nigerian political policies without much criticism from the public whose interest was not in that aspect of the war.

7. Similarities have been drawn between the Nigerian crisis and the American Civil War. That both events had elements of secession is not a sufficient ground for drawing such an analogy. The historical differences between Nigeria and the United States, especially in their cultural and societal structure, underline a major problem which makes an analogy between the civil wars of the two nations a fruitless effort.

Essentially the policy of the United States government in the Nigerian conflict, especially in the political aspect, followed the Russian and the British patterns. They were committed to maintain the integrity of Nigeria as a

united nation. But the United States executed her policy differently from the others. It shunned overt military assistance, but preferred to achieve its objective by diplomacy. As indicated in Chapter IV the Department of State embarked on a diplomatic campaign through its agent Joseph Palmer, II, dissuading African countries from recognizing the Biafran regime.

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