

NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR: LESSON LEARNT, IMPLICATIONS FOR ITS EXTERNAL RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

When the military took over the reign of governance on 15 January 1966, they claimed that they had to step in to save the country from drifting and stop her from ruination. Regrettably however, their intervention could not prevent the nation from the waiting danger but rather, accentuated the already over-stretched political situation. When the war started, no one had the inkling that the political tension would last for 30 months because as the federal military intelligence report suggest, it is a police action that will ensure quick victory for the federal government. Their report was hinged on the ground that Nigeria had more hardware and military personnel, more stable and working economic system and more population than Biafra. At the end of the war on January 15, 1970, Nigeria's relation with proximate neighbours, OAU and other global powers like USA, Britain and USSR had been altered. It is in this light that the study seeks to find the consequences of the civil war on the country's foreign relations. In carrying out this study, it relied on desk research and find that the civil had multiple impacts on Nigeria's foreign policy.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Civil War, Biafra, National Security, Good Neighbourliness

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria came into existence in 1914 and achieved independent and sovereign status on October 1, 1960, thus by 2014 the country was 100 years old as an independent political entity. Nevertheless, as a global, diplomatic and sovereign legal subject, Nigeria commenced its activities in the global scene in 1960 and is over six decades old today dancing in the global stage (Asobie, 2010). Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa and about the strongest in the aspect of imposing influences on neighbouring states in Africa and sometimes, on situations outside the region. Within the sub-region of West Africa, Nigeria is unrivaled in terms of population, military and size of the economy, thus leading to the asserting of being the hegemonic power house of the sub-region (Wright and Okolo, 1999).

NFP since its formal independence from Britain October 1960 has witnessed high and low points with increasing level of expectations. During the first republic in Nigeria (1960-1966), the country's foreign policy thrust was conservative and modest with the formal implementation of the policy of positive neutralism and non-alignment, though remained closely knitted economically to Britain, its erstwhile colonial master and a reflection of the dominant Muslim leadership under Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, who was Prime Minister. A vicious civil war involving the federal troops and Biafra (1967-1970) was externalized by the warring parties with Paris showing openly its sympathy to the Biafran struggle even though it could not successfully formally recognized her. Undoubtedly, the role of France during the war created a severe strain in Nigeria-France relationship when the war came to an end. The USSR took advantage of Britain's temporal emotional conscience by becoming the main supplier of arms to the federal government however, by the time the war came to an end, Britain was once again restored as the major supplier of military to Nigeria (Nafziger, 1983).

During the 1970s the country experienced a rapid economic growth that dependent on the export of petroleum which eventually gave Nigeria the opportunity to push itself into preeminent status globally. Successive administration pushed for regional and West African policies built around the concept of Manifest Destiny and Moralism. The expectations of these policies is that the United States and European countries should pay serious attention to a nation that was greatly described not just by Nigerians only, as 'Africa's Champion', with the ability to enhance and secure the interests of the less fortunate Africans within the continent and in the diaspora. In fact, two global scholars put it thus, 'there is no other noble responsibility for Nigeria to achieve than to prudently deploy the leverage of Nigeria to speedily achieve freedom and justice for blacks the world over (Akinyemi and Ogwu, 1981: 142).

From the 1980s to the present time, the political economy of Nigeria has reduced these policy influence, weakens some aspirations of the country, leading to a grudging acceptability of an increased examination of its capacity. This situation was critically summed up by Julius Ihonvbere this way;

The country's ambitions have been checkmated by a series of domestic contradictions; marginal role and location in the global division of labour, dependence, political instability, foreign domination, technological backwardness, poor leadership, corruption and inconsistency in the formulation and implementation of policy (1994: 35).

Beginning from the 1990s, lopsided implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), the transformation of the global order, poverty, economic disarticulation and strangulation, tribalism, nepotism as well as the inability to properly democratize are some other major factors that has contributed to the troubled future of the country. Essentially, the foreign policy of Nigeria is the tool through which the country influences the international environment and through which Nigeria achieves objectives that are in tandem with her perceived national interests (Akinboye, 1999, in Anifowose and Enemuo, 1999: 364-383).

Policy can be described as a course of action or a reasoned choice that developed out of consideration of competing options. Hence, before a policy action is realized, there are competing actions that are considered by the makers of policy who in decision making, are guided by the principle of consensus, referred to as choice. Policy cannot just be a range of action but can as well represent principles that influences those actions or the goals they are proposed to serve. The discourse to effect these policies can be among and between states and most often, individuals. Hence, foreign policy can be described as a form of policy that transcends frontiers of a given state. It refers to that form of action that a nation takes upon itself while interacting with other nations in the global ferment in the process of attempting to achieve its goals and objectives. It can also be described as a set of principles that defines the goal a particular country pursue in the global system in the process of relating with other global actors. Foreign policy as a concept implies authoritative action which government takes either to sustain the desirable parts of the global environment or to alter the aspects that are undesirable. It can also be viewed as a plethora of actions taken by several sections of a state government in its interaction with other nations, acting on the global arena so as to promote the particular state's national interest (Reynolds, 1971).

THE OBJECTIVES OF NIGERIA FOREIGN POLICY

The objectives of NFP have since the nation's attainment of statehood in 1960 been clearly listed by successive administration. The Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa in his address to the Parliament on August 20, 1960 highlighted certain basic important foreign policy objectives of Nigeria. The most significant on which others revolves is the, 'promotion of the national interest of the federation and of its citizens. However, the 1999 constitution of Nigeria spelt out the foreign policy objectives of the country thus;

- (i) Promotion and Protection of the national interest
- (ii) Promotion of African integration and the support for African unity.
- (iii) Promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its ramifications
- (iv) Respect for international laws and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication
- (v) Promotion of a just world order.

THE PRINCIPLES OF NIGERIA FOREIGN POLICY

Since the attainment of independence, Nigerians have witnessed the emergence of 16 different regimes and despite the fact they have different leadership styles and orientations, the conduct of the country's policy has been proclaimed by them publicly to be guided by similar principles which are in tandem with the well-established principles of traditional law as well as the charter of the OAU/AU. The principles include:

- (i) Sovereignty equality of all states
- (ii) Respect for territorial integrity and independence of other states
- (iii) Non-interference in the internal affairs of other states
- (iv) Commitment to self-determination and independence of other states
- (v) Non-alignment to any geo-political bloc

While pursuing foreign policy objectives, countries exhibits certain similar characteristics whose plans are;

- i. Promotion of the welfare and prosperity of the population
- ii. Protect the security, sanctity and territorial integrity of the country.

THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR (NCW): CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL STATEMENT

The NCW also referred to as the Biafran war lasted from July 6 1967 till January 15, 1970 and was fought between Nigeria under the military leadership of General Yakubu Gowon and a breakaway group of Igbo extraction led by Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu. It was intended to establish a republic known as Biafra which was thought to represent the nationalistic desires of the Igbo ethnic group because the ethnic leaders felt that it was no longer possible to cohabit in a federation that is dominated by Muslim Hausa/Fulani from the northern extraction. It has been alleged that the armed violence was a result of religious, cultural, economic, political and ethnic tension that preceded the official decolonization by Britain. The remote causes of the conflict include military coup and counter coup and the anti-Igbo massacre that swept throughout the north (Plotnicov, 1971; Daly, 2020). On the latter, Gen. Yakubu Gowon made a broadcast in September 1966 wherein he stated that;

On a daily basis and till now, I have continually got information that the people of Eastern extraction living in the north are being harassed, maimed, killed and their property looted and destroyed. It seems that this is heading above reasoning and now at a point of thoughtlessness and rashness (Miner, 1971:131).

In reality, hostilities commenced along the Biafran frontier which was after both parties have presented their case before the global community and they have also accepted the fact that the issues can only be resolved in the battlefield. The three years bloodbath led to the loss of more than 1 million Nigerians from both sides of the disputing parties. Global condemnation, outrage and intervention were prompted due to well-crafted publicity of human misery and deaths occasioned by the armed conflict. Frederick Forsyth gave his account thus;

Starting at dawn, a mobile brigade of 3000 men that has been carefully prepared swept across the bridge of Onitsha into the Midwest. In 10 hours of daylight, the region fell and the cities of Agbor, Warri, Uromi, Ughelli, Sapele, Benin and Ubiaja were occupied. Nothing was heard of the small army of the Midwest; of the 11 senior military officers, nine were Ika, Ibos who were first cousins of Ibos of Biafra, so instead of fighting, they welcomed the Biafran forces (1969:116)

As the war was raging, some African states like Tanzania, Zambia, Ivory Coast and Gabon as well as some developed nations recognized Biafra republic while OAU and some powerful nations supported Federal government quest to unite the country. In an attempt to win the war in record time, the federal government in January 1968 changed the nation's currency and imposed some severe economic sanctions which include the stoppage and blockade of food, medicine and other essentials to Biafra land. This latest action of government increased the hardship of the people which made life unbearable thus leading to increase in number of deaths. By the time the war ended, things have gone awry; there were sicknesses and diseases leading to epidemic, abandoned property everywhere, infrastructural decay and millions of displaced persons (Otohagua, 2004).

THE CIVIL WAR AND ITS FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There is no gainsaying the fact that the NCW had considerable influence on foreign and domestic policy as well as external relations of the country. The quest to secede under the Biafra nomenclature through a proclamation by Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu was an effort to dismember the most populous black nation on earth. A declaration that was rejected by the federal government leading to a murderous 30 months civil war in what the government referred to as a police action that was intended to make the Easterner realize the unrealisticability of the proclamation. Some of these impacts include;

RESTRUCTURING OF NIGERIA'S INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

From the onset, the country was faced with a difficult situation that it was not effectively prepared to handle. This has to do with the efficient propaganda and information of Biafra. For instance, while Biafran propagandists were busy describing Nigeria in an unacceptable and very disgusting manner, the federal government was gloating with the belief that its reasons are genuine and clear enough for the entire world to see and cherish. According to the Biafrans, the federal government was carrying out a genocidal attack against the minorities in the East and the Ibos. They argued that what the Nigerian government referred to as war of a united Nigeria was in real fact, a subtle smokescreen for the extermination of the whole people of eastern Nigeria from the country. They referred to the killing of officers of Ibo descent in the counter-coup of July 1966 including the anti-Ibo massacre that swept across northern Nigeria from July to September 1966. The point being made by the propagandists was that all these killings was a grand plan to cleanse the Ibos from Nigeria and to buttress their point, they showed images and pictures of impoverished people to the entire globe so as to convince the world that the country is fighting a war of genocide and ethnic cleansing (Fawole, 2003).

Without doubt, the enormity of this destructive disinformation and intelligent manipulation of the sentiment of the world, at the early period of war, caused the country some allies and friends and because the national authority lacked the ability to oppose the Biafran propaganda, it was compelled to allow the team of global military observers to enter

the battleground (though a breach of national sovereignty) in order to monitor its execution of the war. Thus, experienced military officers from OAU, Britain, UN, Poland and Canada came to investigate Biafran genocidal claims through the inspection of the conduct of federal troops (De St. Jorre, 1972). For about 16 months, this team visited all the several battlefronts and the outcome of their investigation absolved the federal government of any charge of genocide. The potency of this global disinformation became a significant lesson that the country learnt from the war and this compelled the federal authority to restructure the dissemination of information soon after the war.

DEPLOYMENT OF SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE

During the war, the country was burdened on how to handle the issue of participation of foreigners in its domestic affairs. The enlistment of white hirelings ushered in a weird external aspect that was never expected. The federal government was taken aback when it realized that Biafra had unjustifiably globalized what ordinarily was a war between brothers. Nevertheless, the government sooner than expected, hired the services of pilots from Egypt to help in flying the Soviet made aircraft which the Nigerian pilots that are trained in Britain's machineries, could not fly. Again, this action ushered in external dimension to the war because Nigerian enemies such as France improved upon the assistance it was rendering to Biafra, even to the extent that the secessionist at the crucial period of the war, accepted help from South Africa and Rhodesia (De St. Jorre, 1972). Due to internationalization of the war, global opinion on the issues were divided for instance, the propaganda of Biafra helped in no small measure in the diversion of public opinion in Israel in Biafran favour. Also, most Arab countries in Africa supported Nigeria with the exception of Tunisia that showed lukewarmness towards Nigeria because of France's influence.

IDENTIFICATION OF REAL AND POTENTIAL ENEMIES

This war enables Nigeria to have knowledge and realize who it's real enemies within and outside Africa were. The first real enemies to reveal themselves were two countries under White Supremacist governance, Rhodesia and South Africa. These two nations were angry with Nigeria because of its unwavering anti-racist stance and the NCW presented a special moment for them to get their revenge and hence pitched their tents with the secessionists so as to weaken it or if possible divide it and thus rendering it an impotent opposition in Africa. Similarly, Portugal gave assistance in the form of materials and money to Biafra while Lisbon its capital served as European headquarter for purchase of arms as well as for the gathering of arms and other equipment purchased in Europe for the onward movement to Biafra land. France also provided the secessionists with materials and military and its diplomatic recognition of Biafra. Hence, these four nations were united in their quest to disunite the most populous country in Africa. For the purpose of emphasis, it is pertinent to mention the reason for this grouse against Nigeria.

South Africa: It was the intense Pressure and fervent opposition from Nigeria that ensured South Africa was barred in 1961 from the Commonwealth. The continuous opposition by Nigeria against apartheid ensured that it became the major adversary of South Africa in Africa. Let's not forget that Ironsi regime had prevented aircrafts and ships belonging to Portugal that entered and leave South Africa, from using the airspace and port facilities of Nigeria. Essentially, the basic responsibility of South Africa was more of clandestine assistance rather than direct involvement militarily; even though it did not grant official recognition to Biafra, it supplied some of its fighters including military

hard wares such as aircraft while Lisbon acted as the go-between in facilitating these supplies. The implications of these support is that Biafra's capacity and resilience in sustaining the war, prolonged the war thus leading to several deaths, economic strangulation as well as destruction of properties and infrastructures.

Rhodesia: The problem between Nigeria and Rhodesia started shortly after the White Supremacists led by Ian Smith in 1965, unilaterally declared independence from Britain. Among the African Commonwealth countries, Nigeria was the only nation that issued a diplomatic threat that by December 1965 should the illegal independence declaration was been reversed. Suffice to say that in January 1966, the first ever Commonwealth Summit to be organized outside London was hosted by the regime of Tafawa Balewa where the issue of Rhodesia formed the key point of discussion. By the time the government of Tafawa Balewa was removed in a bloody coup just few days after he hosted the summit, his successor, Aguiyi Ironsi did not alter the country's detestation of Rhodesia.

Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, despite not recognizing Biafra officially, supported the secessionist with military assistance as part of a larger calibration among Southern Africa states that were governed by White minority. As Soviet Union's influence was looming large in Nigeria, Rhodesia considered that a threat and thus viewed the civil war from the prisms of its own domestic inclination

Portugal: the stance of Nigeria was against the Portuguese colonial armed conflict in Angola as well as settler-colonialism in Africa. This stance falls in tandem with the country's belief that so long as other citizens in the continent remain in servitude, Nigeria's independence is not complete. Nigeria's vehement condemnation of Portugal's relentless colonization of the continent makes it an adversary of Portugal. Thus, the NCW was a notable opportunity for the Portuguese to deal with its major foe in the continent. For Nigeria under Aguiyi Ironsi to make a major decision to bar the ships and aircrafts of Portugal from Nigeria's ports and airspace was an insult to the influence of Portugal in Africa.

Lisbon's role was significant in that its assistance for the secessionist was clandestine and also contentious. Portugal's involvement was as a result of its Africa colonial interests and the aspiration to sabotage Nigeria. Through some of its colonies such as Sao Tome and Guinea-Bissau, it facilitated the supplies of arms to the secessionist including the provision of military supplies and military freelance. This assistance was a masked way of diverting global focus from its mindless and spurned programmes in its African colonies

France: France position as the greatest enemy of Nigeria was too pronounced more than it was originally assumed. Strategically, France was in a position to wreck unimaginable havoc in Nigeria if it has decided to do so, which was not same as that of Rhodesia, South Africa and Portugal. Outside the fact that it is a recognized military power and the only country that has always send large contingent of troops in the continent, while the war was already turning against the Biafrans, France send a large troop that was fully fortified with high-tech weapons into Chad with the intention to instill psychological pressure on Nigeria government. The problem started when in January 1961, Nigeria decided to sever diplomatic ties with France because of Paris consistent atomic test in the Sahara, a decision that Paris considered a heavy blow to its prestige in the continent. As a result, France didn't forgive Nigeria and ensured

it did everything possible at every point, to frustrate Nigeria, thus, the golden opportunity for France to get its pound of flesh against Nigeria was the CW (Fawole, 2003).

Fighters, arms and other forms of supports were rendered to the secessionists by France in a global manner (Achebe, 2012) while also describing the war as genocidal, in fact, French president Charles de Gaulle perceived the war as a noble and just cause for the secessionists (Olawoyin, 1971). Though it did not diplomatically recognize Biafra (Griffin, 2015), the French sent Alouette helicopters, Sans serial numbers, weapons captured during the Second World War from Italy and Germany two B-26s and pilots to Ivory Coast (Levey, 2014; Griffin, 2015). This may appear to be a part of France defense policy in the West Africa nation, but given the fact that Ivory Coast supported Biafra, the weapons were for onward shipment to the secessionists. Globally, France was at the forefront of assistance for Biafra (Olawoyin, 1971), in May 1968, Biafra was recognized by Ivory Coast and Gabon while in the same month, a personal donation of 30,000 CFA from President Charles de Gaulle to red cross mission from France in the supposed Biafra land for the purchase of medicals.

Despite its declaration of arms ban, France under the nomenclature of humanitarian assistance was providing weapons to Biafra and in July, it expanded its attempt to include the French population, television programmes and newspapers in France displayed pictures of famished and malnourished children as well as genocidal claims. As a result of this claims, President Charles de Gaulle officially announced his country's support for Biafra on July 31, 1968. This was followed by the declaration of Biafra Week from March 11 to 17, 1969 and on April 27, President Charles de Gaulle resigned after the stoppage of weapons shipment but Alain Poher, the interim president re-established assistance for Biafra and collaborated with the Secret Service of South Africa to ship more arms (Griffin, 2015). While this France intrusion was strategic for its influence in Africa particularly within the sub-region, it assisted in sustaining the secessionist and lengthened the war.

Nigeria too was also careful because it is strategically bordered on all sides by erstwhile colonies of France including Benin Republic, Cameroun, and Niger Republic as well as other French colonized nations in Central and West Africa. It was thus an opportunity for France to quickly recognize Biafra in addition to providing material and military aids to the secessionists. However, Nigeria was lucky to have the support of other African nations who still hold unto the belief that the boundary inherited from the colonial master should be accepted rather than to be redrawn forcefully, except Zambia, Gabon, Ivory Coast and Tanzania. Their decision to support Nigeria was also based on the fact that most of them realized that the fragility of their multi-religious and ethnic makeup could face threat in no distant time if they allowed the Biafra agitation to materialize.

China: Due to the fact that USSR was a key leader and supporter of the Nigerian government and was also generously providing arms in a large scale, Beijing which at that time was Soviet rival because of the Sino-Soviet crisis, decided to lend his support for the Biafran struggle (Diamond, 2007). Its Xinhua press agency declared in September 1968 that China is wholeheartedly supporting the just and reasonable struggle of Biafra against the Nigerian authority that is being backed by Soviet revisionism and Anglo-American imperialism thus, between 1968 and 1969, China supplied \$2m worth of small arms and ammunitions through Tanzania (Stremlau, 2015). Shortly after the close of the war,

diplomatic relations between both countries was reestablished as China now shifted its direction towards issues of development and economic relationships.

DIVERSIFICATION OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS

It appears that the major lesson of the CW on the country's FP was the hopelessness of solely depending on its traditional Western allies and friends, particularly the United States and Britain. Before and after independence, the country has always described Great Britain as everlasting friend that that cannot be involved in any wrongdoing. In fact, this was clearly captured in the independence speech by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa when he opined that, "Britain whom we first known as masters, later as leaders, and then as friends but habitually as partners" (1964: 61). This was not unconnected with the ruling class beliefs and training which happens to be mostly capitalist and Western inclined, thus the country FP inclination was fanatically pro-Britain to the extent that on almost all matters, it voted along Britain's decision on the floor of the UN. This very close proximity with Britain led to the accusation that the country is unfaithful to its doctrine of non-alignment (Anglin, 1964).

With this confidence that Britain is always friends, the Nigerian government requested military aids from Britain to execute the war, this was necessary because of the fact that the country's military has acquired the British model and was also trained with their ammunition during the Second World War. However, the efficacy of the propaganda by Biafra had turned public opinion in Britain against Nigeria government to the effect that the request for heavy arms such as tanks, bombs, bombers, sophisticated field guns and fighter jets was rejected on the excuse that the British will not want to be part of the plan to commit genocide and ethnic cleansing against the Ibos. This was a big surprise to Nigeria government that had always considered Britain as forever companion. At least, the country learnt the first important lesson that in global politics, what exists is permanent interest and not permanent enemies or friends.

Following the betrayal by its Western friends in the most crucial period of need and the continuous battle at home, the national government had no other choice than to swallow its pride and approach USSR for military aids. This was a tactical decision that was necessitated by the situation at that time and was so because never had any time did Nigeria show any form of concern towards communism. In fact, the governing elites in Nigeria was so repulsive of communism that it had to ban in 1960s, all kind of communist literature from being imported, circulated or sold within the borders of Nigeria while Nigerian citizens were discouraged from accepting the annual soviet scholarship or to travel to communist Eastern European nations. This communist hatred was so obvious that only five license plates and later 10 after much pressure, was approved for Soviet diplomatic mission in Lagos. This is in sharp contrast to how the Britons and Americans were being treated as both nations had unfettered access to several number plates while there was also report of Nigeria granting 40,000 pounds interest free loan for the construction of British diplomatic mission in Lagos. Also while the movement of Soviet diplomats and other staffs were being monitored, British diplomats and staffs had unhindered freedom of movements.

This was the circumstance before Nigeria reached out to the Soviet Union for arms assistance for it to execute the war. Prior to this time, USSR progress in Sub-Saharan Africa were not too fruitful (Fawole, 1993), hence were so happy and adore the chance of making the required diplomatic and political advancement into the most popular country in Africa.

As at that time, USSR was the largest manufacturer of arms globally and need markets for supply of arms and since Nigeria was in need of weapons, an harmonious relationship quickly developed between both nations. The supply of arms was followed immediately by the movement of technical personnel and Soviet military to train the Nigerian military in the deployment of these arms, thus there was inflow of Soviet citizens into Nigeria. When the war ended in 1970, Nigerian borders were opened to goods from Soviet including industrial manufactures and consumer goods while travel restriction to the Soviet Union was lifted and Nigerians began to accept scholarship for higher studies in Soviet universities and institutions. Immediately the war ended, Gowon paid a state visit to USSR to appreciate them for their assistance in executing the war. In fact it was rumoured that the contract award for the building of Ajaokuta steel complex was to thank the Soviet for their help. The major lesson Nigeria learnt was to expand and diversify its foreign relations to involve its erstwhile ideological and mutually exclusive countries (Fawole, 2003).

GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS

The war afforded Nigerian leaders the opportunity to change their orientation and by the time the war came to an end, Nigeria had learnt not to handle with levity, those issues it used to see as insignificant. Nigeria's relationship with the sub-region of West Africa greatly benefitted from this change in perception and viewpoints. Unlike it was in the 1960s when the country was treating its proximate neighbours in Central and West Africa without any form of seriousness. These immediate neighbours played major role in the unity and survival of Nigeria and the recognition of this fact by the Nigerian ruling class quickly transformed to greater and closer relation. The lackadaisical handling of the country's proximate neighbours in the first 10 years of Nigeria's independence was not a deliberate state policy but was occasioned by existing conditions. Just like most of the states in the continent, when Nigeria became independent in 1960, it was poor and rural without any valuable productive base except an economy that only depended on agriculture.

Since the economy was only involved in the production of raw materials and agricultural products, there was nothing it could trade with its neighbours and this probably explains the lack of intra-state cooperation and trade. Also, the divisions, biases, desires and pre-conceptions which were inherited from colonial masters seriously inhibited any form of bilateral or multilateral cooperation. As stated earlier, Nigeria is surrounded by a plethora of Francophonic nations in Central and West Africa and so, no much interaction was expected since both France and Britain deliberately dispirited any of such relationship. The only exception was the closer affinity between Nigeria and other Anglophonic countries like Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone due to the similarities in their colonial origin and tutorship as well as the survival of some inter-state establishments that remained till independence was achieved. In the colonial period, the four colonies of Britain in West Africa were united by some establishments including West African Airways Corporation (WAAC) which developed after independence to national airlines; Royal West African Frontier Force (RW AFF), which led to national armies of individual member state; West African Examination Council (WAEC) which is still existing and the West African Currency Board (WACB).

Despite all these, there were too many rivalry and animosity in the relationship between Nigeria and Ghana owing to the fact that the entire English speaking nation considered themselves as natural leaders of the black race and thus reluctant to surrender supremacy and as long as Nigeria considered itself large enough, it jettisoned the African Union

idea that was suggested by Kwame Nkrumah (Aluko, 1976). Again, there exist no inter-linguistic or inter-cultural cooperation among the French and English speaking countries neither was there any infrastructural linkage such as roads, bridge or telephone between them. The mixture of these situations was responsible for the important place that the continent occupied and still occupying in NFP.

NATIONAL SECURITY

The NCW revealed the country's security weakness through its proximate neighbours. This first happened when the French planned to rally Francophonic nations to endorse Biafra, a quest that would have dented the war efforts by Nigeria if these countries had adhered to the instruction by France. The effort by France to use the Republic of Benin for gun running and other assistance to Biafra in the name of humanitarian aids was quickly prevented as soon as Nigerian government heard about it. The country was very fortunate because Gabon and Ivory Coast, the two Francophonic nations that endorsed Biafra were not closed neighbours and the war could have lasted longer if closed neighbours like Chad, Republic of Niger, Benin Republic and Cameroun had supported and rendered assistance as well as refuge to the secessionists. However at the most critical period when the war has turned against the secessionists in the battlefield, the French quickly send a large contingent of its military to Fort Lamy (Presently Ndjamen) the Chadian Capital. This military contingent was probably for the protection of its administration in Chad but the size of the military including the sophistication of their arms contradicts this description.

It was this incident that compelled the country to reconsider and redefine its national security to involve its neighbours and this is so because for a large state like Nigeria, the borders of its national security must be defined in relation to its national borders (Olusanya and Akindele, 1986). Nigeria did not only take the presence of French contingent in its border seriously, it also summoned in 1970, President Ngarta Tombalbaye of Chad to a summit in Maiduguri for a discussion on the issue where Gowon convinced Tombalbaye to dismiss the troops and request, if there is any need, for Nigerian army (Aluko, 1977). After the war, Gowon paid state visit to all the countries in West Africa with the exception of Ivory Coast, to appreciate them for their assistance and support while the war lasted. The implication is that Nigeria realized that its first line of security is its proximate neighbours and thus the need to be attentive to all the issues and happenings around its borders particularly that of its immediate neighbours.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is well known that the civil war was a political, economic and social disruption of the country as it weakened the prevailing fragile social fabric that held the nation together. The armed conflict increased ethnic intolerance beyond expectations, a problem that is still very much visible today. On the side of the economy, there was severe destruction of lives and property and the quest to realize military advantage over others led to destruction of critical infrastructures. In the first few years after the end of the war, large part of the nation's resources was channeled towards rehabilitation of the homeless and jobless people in the Eastern part of the country (Tonwe, 2010). On the external front, there is no gainsaying the fact that the civil war was crucial in the reassessment of Nigerian foreign policy. It created several security challenges at the time which compelled the country to review its security architecture and redirect its foreign policy thrust. As earlier opined, NFP from the colonial period to independence and before the CW has been pro-west

but the event of armed conflict redirected Nigeria's foreign policy to include other regions like the East (USSR) and some states in Africa that the country had always overlooked.

To a greater extent, the civil war was caused due to the struggle between the three main ethnic groups who desires political supremacy. There was the genuine fear that an ethnic group could dominate the country's political terrain and since after the war, politics of ethnicity has become so disturbing and conspicuous to the effect that it no longer matters whether it is military nor civilian regime, as both are more interested in perpetuating and entrenching their various ethnic groups in the political landscape. Unfortunately, the circumstances that created the civil disturbances are still very much present (Tonwe, 2010). Though the civil war ended some 53 years ago, the effect it had on the nation's foreign policy is still visible. Nigeria now relate with other nations in Eastern Europe and Asia; a policy that was not possible in the pre-civil war era.

Consequently, in order to bridge these blurring gaps and unmask the triads of evil that has held the country down, it is necessary that Nigeria's religious, political and ethnic leadership set aside their differences and worked towards a united Nigeria. A Nigeria devoid of any form of bias, nepotism, exclusion, intimidation, repression, oppression and subjugation because it is only when a country is stable that it can articulate and exhibit a dynamic foreign policy. Also, within the international system and among the comity of nations, Nigeria should liberalize its external relations to revolve around a kind of 'no friend, no foe' policy, so that in the event of any severe armed conflict, she will have no foreign mercenaries to deal with while at the same time, expanding the country's foreign policy frontiers harmoniously.

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