



International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies

www.socialstudiesjournal.com

Online ISSN: 2664-8660; Print ISSN: 2664-8652; Impact Factor: RJIF 5.42

Received: 03-01-2020; Accepted: 17-01-2020; Published: 04-02-2020

Volume 2; Issue 1; 2020; Page No. 05-14

War-time diplomacy and the politics of biafran recognition, 1967-1970

Jacob¹, Uche Henry², Nwobi Isaac Obiora³

¹⁻³ Department of History and International Relations, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria

Abstract

The Nigerian Civil War (also known as the Nigeria-Biafra War) lasted for about thirty agonizing months from 6th July 1967 to 12th January 1970. Countless number of lives were lost on both sides of the conflict and there was mass destruction of property. The war attracted international attention due to the desire of both the Biafran regime and the Federal Military Government of Nigeria to secure diplomatic support as well as military assistance from the outside world, and also, due to the individual reasons various countries of the world had for their involvement in the war. For decades, scholars have written extensively on the Nigerian-Biafra war, but little has been written on the politics of the diplomatic recognition of Biafra. The focus of this study is to find out what propelled the four African States to declare support and accord de facto recognition to the Biafran regime against the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) position. The nature, dimension, significance and the implications of such recognition were also analyzed. The paper argues that the motivational basis of the diplomatic recognition of Biafra by the four African countries was not just on humanitarian considerations but political. Also, the findings of this work are in consonance with the assertion that "the activities of the supporters of Biafra in combination with other external influences (including the OAU) contributed to the prolongation of the war". Though most Pro-Biafran commentators believed that the motive behind the recognition was purely humanitarian, some others, mostly those pro-federal governments of Nigeria insisted that the motive had some underlying political and economic interest emanating from French influence geared towards the disintegration of Nigeria. The Realist, the Challenge and Response Theories are adopted for the work. Data for the research were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included: oral information from interviews, archival materials, government publications, press releases and newspaper reports while secondary sources included: books, journal articles, magazines, theses, the internet and other unpublished materials. A historical methodology of analysis that is thematic, chronological and descriptive was used.

Keywords: diplomacy, Politics, recognition, Organization

Introduction

Civil Wars with varying degrees of external involvement have become the principal form of violence in the international system. Most of these conflicts erupt in third world countries especially Africa. In Africa alone, there have been no fewer than thirty-five civil wars/revolutions between 1960 and 2017. Thus far, very little has been researched about how the local parties in these modern civil wars seek to attract and internationalize or discourage foreign intervention.

The role of OAU and the attitude of some of Nigeria's neighboring African countries towards the Nigeria-Biafra War was one of the major events in Nigerian history. The African continent as a region has been faced with the challenge of managing conflict situations. The establishment of the OAU in 1963 as a supra-national entity in Africa was born out of the strong desire to stem the tides of incessant conflicts which characterized the early stages of independence in Africa. It was the fear of subversion from outside that made African leaders to insert the clause of non-interference in the internal affairs of member-state into the OAU charter. This consequently forced most African states to be identified with the OAU's position regarding the Nigeria-Biafra civil war and further doomed Biafra in the eyes of the outside world. However, four African states accorded diplomatic recognition to Biafran regime which resulted in splitting OAU's solidarity, thus, easing the way for greater non-African involvement in the civil war that was said to

be absolutely "a Nigerian affair". What truly informed the recognition and the significance of those factors that informed such recognition need to be properly examined? Did the intervention/foreign involvement in the Nigeria civil war help in any way to end or prolong the war?

Volume of works previously carried out on the similar subject matter merely emphasized on the origin, cause, course and impact of the war as well as the role played by the African states and international community in general, thereby undermining the importance of the diplomatic recognition of Biafra during the war. Pursuant upon this, a yawning gap therefore exists among scholarly literature. This yawning gap of under-representation of issues regarding the diplomatic recognition of Biafra during the war is basically what the study seeks to fill. Thus, this thesis took a look at the Nigeria-Biafra war, the OAU and its attempt to tackle the political impasse in Nigeria, and will attempt to answer some objective questions relating to the recognition of Biafra during this civil war – which many scholars have described as genocide.

Diplomacy and the Politics of Biafran Recognition

During the Nigerian civil war, the primacy of national interests, personal diplomacy and the manifest continental leadership vacuum were to be the salient parameters of policy. The authority and credibility of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was

severely tarnished during the civil war ^[1]. Similarly, Nigerian military rulers were faced with a crisis of confidence and authority both internally (in their ability to maintain political stability and order) and in the external environment. While the civil war was in progress, Nigerian leaders were alarmed by the recognition accorded the Biafran secessionists by Tanzania, Gabon, Ivory Coast and Zambia, and perceived the internationalization of the issue as a manifestation of neocolonialist designs aimed at disrupting African unity ^[2]. Most of the African states believed that the disintegration of Nigeria would have repercussions all over Africa. These African nations believed that secession and balkanization had been the curse of Africa ^[3]. As a matter of political realism, after independence, African governments were virtually unanimous in agreeing that respect for existing European –delineated boundaries should be a guiding principle in inter-African relations. They believed that any attempt to redraw them could plunge these states into internecine conflicts. However, overtime, the principle of respect for the geographical *status quo* was expected to proscribe not only irredentist demands at the level of inter-state relations, but also secessionist attempts by purely domestic groups ^[4]. Not surprisingly, therefore, the majority of the African states backed the federal military government of Nigeria during the civil war.

The support for the federal military government of Nigeria (by most African states) was justified by the argument that the break-up of Nigeria would spiral the break-up of other African states. According to scholars like S. O. Agbi, since the boundaries of these states were all artificial, and contained different tribal groups that have often been in conflict in the past, it was argued by most African countries that secession of one tribal group in Nigeria would encourage the Somalis in Ethiopia and Kenya, the Ashanti in Ghana, the Baluba in Congo, the Ewes in Dahomey, Togo and Ghana and so on, to make similar attempts ^[5].

In Africa, there were strong feelings against secession. For loosely created states that are still economically and politically unstable to admit the validity of Biafra's cause would have given rise to trouble and reopened the disputes on the definition of boundaries and the regrouping of ethnic and tribal groups. This would have multiplied the difficulties of the continent and jeopardized its economic development.

However, apart from the above argument, several African States had individual reasons for the stance they took in the Nigeria - Biafra war. As Suzanne Cronje noted, there were links between Islam and the support given to Nigeria by some African States ^[6]. Arab support was invaluable to the Nigerians both materially and diplomatically. Egypt supplied pilots and technicians for the air force. Sudan and Libya that were traditional users of British weaponry, sold to Nigeria some of the equipment which Britain refused to provide ^[7]. Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia also supported Nigeria. Niger's support for the federal government was perhaps dictated largely by its economic dependence on Nigeria. This is because for land-locked Niger, the Nigerian railway was vital for getting access to the sea. Similarly for landlocked Chad, some of her external trade was carried out through Nigerian ports.

Ethiopia's stance on the Nigerian crisis appeared to be severely political. This was because, for her, according to some commentators like S. O. Agbi, there was a great need to see secession crushed. As at the time of the Nigerian crisis, Ethiopia

was also resisting the Eritrean secessionists ^[8]. Again, as indicated, internal political pressures contributed to the stance taken by some African states. For instance, in the case of Senegal, it was the pressure of the leaders of a powerful religious brotherhood, the Marabouts, on whom President Senghor had been largely dependent for his political survival that held him back from recognizing the Biafran regime in 1969 ^[9].

Finally, Ghana's role and that of Kenya towards the Nigeria - Biafra war could be classified as neutral. Both countries believed that awkward aid or ill-timed action might serve to facilitate intervention of United Nations or some other third party. Besides, Ghana has been noted for interfering in the internal affairs of other African States under Kwame Nkrumah. For instance, during the times of preparation for internal self-government in the Cameroons, the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) which was a radical anti-colonial party was banned in the Cameroons in 1955 but it continued to receive diplomatic and military assistance from Ghana and Guinea even after 1960, with the goal of overthrowing the pro-French Ahidjo regime ^[10].

It was the fear of "subversion from outside" that motivated African leaders to insert the clause of non-interference in the internal affairs of member-states into the O.A.U. Charter. Therefore, the new regime of General Ankrah was not trying to repeat the mistakes of its predecessors. The policy of support for the federal government of Nigeria by most African states was staunchly backed by the O.A.U. which frowned at secession in Africa. The O.A.U. made some frantic efforts at settling the Nigerian crisis. For instance, it set up a consultative mission to this effect during the O.A.U. summit meeting in Kinshasha in September, 1967. There were also peace negotiations at Niamey (July, 1968), Addis Ababa (August-September, 1968), Algiers (September, 1968) ^[11].

"All these efforts turned out to be exercises in sheer futility, as the O.A.U. could not take any concrete action apart from resorting to the diplomacy of persuasion which failed" ^[12]; and given the non-interference provision of its charter which has been seen as preventing any active mediatory role for the organization in internal conflicts. For instance, the OAU's charter specifically prevents it from interfering in the internal affairs of member countries and its principal article emphasizes the respect for the territorial boundaries (as defined by colonial powers) of member states (article iii, 2 and article iii, 3 respectively).

However, it is germane to point out that the O.A.U. situation was compounded by the irreconcilable position of Nigeria and Biafra during the war, while the recognition of Biafra by four African states basically did not help the situation either ^[13]. Four African nations-Tanzania, Gabon, Ivory Coast and Zambia –supported Biafra, and in addition, officially recognized the enclave as a sovereign state –Tanzania on April 13, 1968, Gabon on May 8, 1968, Ivory Coast on May 14, 1968 and Zambia on May 20, 1968 ^[14]. Many writers have argued that the motivational basis for the recognition of Biafra by the four African states was on humanitarian considerations -their sympathy for the enormous civilian suffering caused by the war (in Biafra). Though it is true that there were many reported cases of starvation and other forms of civilian suffering, this does not share the above contention. This position is anchored on the ground that humanitarianism was merely presented by those countries as a façade to cover up the ulterior motives –of preferring a divided Nigeria ^[15]. Accordingly,

the decisive factor in international relations is power –politics and not humanitarianism. This stance is backed by some reasons ^[16]. Firstly, there is no doubt that a united Nigeria constitutes a formidable political and economic unit. It was this fact that had at first aroused the misgivings, and even fears, of the smaller West African and Francophone States at the prospect of Nigerian independence. The Ivory Coast in particular and France were both anxious about the growing economic strength of Nigeria and were not averse to exploiting her internal tensions. President de Gaulle of France harboured the fear that Nigeria, in view of its potential, might upset the balance of power in the region to the detriment of French influence, by presenting a strong pole of attraction to the impoverished Francophone states around it.

After several meetings with Houphouet Boigny in Paris, Albert Bongo of Gabon also declared in May 1968 that “it was utopian to believe that Nigeria with its fifty million inhabitants could remain in its present form” ^[17]. It came as little surprise then that both Gabon and Ivory Coast provided the outlets through which French arms poured into Biafra, since they shared similar misgivings about Nigeria and wanted its disintegration. In July, 1968, Sekou Toure of Guinea openly criticized the action of the four African States that recognized Biafra, maintaining that, but for the discovery of oil in Eastern Nigeria, “there would not be so many ready to talk of humanitarian problems in Nigeria, when those same people could be apparently, and with a good conscience, remain silent over Vietnam” ^[18]. It is apposite to also indicate that even after the war, some of the Francophone states, notably Ivory-Coast and Senegal, still viewed Nigeria with suspicion as exemplified in the great reluctance with which the Communaute Economique De L’afrique De L’ouest [CEAO] states entered into Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 ^[19].

Ivory Coast and Tanzania contributed to relief efforts in Biafra, and recognized the enclave as an independent nation. Humanitarian considerations were not sufficient basis for their action. For instance, other countries that contributed immensely to the relief like U.S.A., Britain, West Germany and even Ethiopia and Liberia among others did not extend recognition to Biafra on the grounds of humanitarianism. Clearly Ivory Coast and Tanzania were acting in line with what they perceived as their national interest ^[20].

Apart from the fact that Ivory Coast and Gabon provided channels through which French arms poured into Biafra, Tanzania helped the Biafrans marginally in purchasing “Von Ronsens Minicon” fighter planes and that Zambia gave Colonel Ojukwu two DC 3 transport aircrafts. This action could not reduce the suffering of the Biafrans; it only escalated the crisis ^[21].

Finally, some writers such as De St.Jorre and S.Cronje had noted that Ivory Coast and Gabon dislike large federations. They wrote that just as Ivory Coast was very instrumental in the breaking-up of the old French West African Federation, so was Gabon in the destruction of the French Equatorial Federation at independence. Some statements made by these two countries supported this stance. For instance in 1968, while the Nigerian war was still raging, the Gabonese Council of Ministers remarked that “Federal groupings inherited from colonization or imposed by force have not shown from experience to be viable ^[22]” President Bongo stated at a Paris Conference that “... large political federations are not viable in Africa. They are only possible in

economic terms...” ^[23] Thus, in view of the fact that Nigeria is a large federation, these two countries would definitely see the rationale in backing Biafra, so that the federation would disintegrate. The question here was not so much the size of Nigeria but its bargaining power as a potential associate of the common market.

Thus, from the above points, it is clear that the four states that recognized Biafra only issued words that suggested altruism in order to cover up the fact that they had other vested interests in the disintegration of Nigeria. For instance, Houphouet Boigny of Ivory Coast declared that “what we want is peace. This should be our one guiding light. The Biafra problem is a human rather than a political one”. Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia declared that: “The heritage of bitterness stemming from this horrifying war will make it impossible to create any basis of political unity between Biafra and Nigeria”. And President Nyerere of Tanzania declared that: “unity achieved by conquest is worthless ^[24]”.

The recognition by the four had a momentous impact on the course of events as it contributed to the prolongation of the war in one way or the other ^[25]. In the first place and as already indicated above, Libreville and Abidjan (capitals of Gabon and Ivory Coast respectively) provided the outlets through which French weapons poured into Biafra, which kept the Biafrans going. Libreville was particularly significant in helping Biafra to survive after the fall of Uli (the last major town and airport), which ended any direct communication between Biafra and the outside world, except for the precarious air bridge to Uli at night ^[26].

Secondly, the recognition by the four provided Biafra with open diplomatic support and credentials. Again, it boosted Biafran morale as it suddenly injected new hope into Biafra just when everything seemed without hope in view of the military reverses they had suffered. Thus, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu was expecting more recognition and military assistance which never came.

Furthermore, the recognition paved the way for non-African involvement, which the previous lack of public support had not wholly excluded but certainly drastically inhibited ^[27]. The recognition was meant to persuade Lagos to a cease-fire and adopt a more flexible negotiating position, and to warn Britain and the Soviet Union that their military support for the federal side was not making a very favourable impression throughout Africa. However, the reverse was the case, as the war did not end rather British and other arms supplies to Lagos began to rise in May 1968 ^[28].

More importantly, the recognition strengthened Biafra’s claim to independent existence and its demand to be treated on an equal basis with the federal government at the peace talks ^[29]. This made Biafra intransigent, consequently leading to the failure of all attempts to resolve the conflict through compromise and thereby contributing to the prolongation of the war.

To corroborate the above argument that the recognition of Biafra by the four African States prolonged the war, a Biafran Diplomat, Ralph Uwechue wrote:

It is a lamentable irony that rather than bring the war to an end and so terminate the sufferings of the Biafran masses, recognition provoked an intensification of both. Like most acts born of reaction, it produced unexpected counter-reactions. Not only did it encourage the hawks on the Biafran side to unnecessary intransigence as far as peace negotiations are concerned, it also

provoked in the federal military government an increased determination to make nonsense by military means of whatever gains, Biafra may have scored diplomatically ^[30].

Contextualizing Politics and State Recognition

The role of the OAU and other African and non-African states during the Nigerian civil war and the attendant politics of recognition are historically vast. The above fact notwithstanding, we seek to provide some basic conceptual analysis in examining the extent to which OAU and the politics of recognition accorded to Biafra tremendously impacted the course of the Nigeria-Biafra war between 1967 and 1970. Accordingly, the OAU's pivotal role and the game of political recognition which followed the Nigeria civil war is conceptually tied to wider process of *Politics and State Recognition*.

Politics is the most important activity of organized life in society. There are different conceptual approaches on viewing politics. Politics has its origin in the Greek word 'Polis', which means the community or populace or society and '*Politika*' which means affairs of the cities. Greek thinkers, like Plato and Aristotle, saw politics as everything that is concerned with the 'general issues affecting the whole community'. According to the Greek view, the participation of each and every citizen in the life of the community is necessary for the self-realization of each human being ^[31]. This view has been particularly true of the Nigerian civil war owing to the fact that Nigeria as a country is a conglomeration of many ethnic nationalities with the major ones including Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. It is pertinent to note that the active participation of all strata of the state in the process of nation building is sacrosanct to the proper functioning/workings of the state system. This, however, could only be achieved if all the conglomerating nationalities are given equal grounds and opportunities to participate or contribute to nation building without sentiment or bias.

Conflicts however arise when, within the polity, many elements or force begins to think of themselves more important than others, either covertly, through institutional policies, and overtly, through declarations and body language. When a situation like the one pointed above continues over a long period of time, it becomes unhealthy and could lead to civil disturbances and if not properly checked could degenerate to a civil war. Following this line of reasoning, it could be deduced that the Nigerian civil war came as a result of the claims and counter – claims that some section of the country is dominating the polity or by the suspicion by other section that the other ethnic group is trying to dominate the polity. The former being the strong belief of those from the south, particularly the Igbo, who felt short changed in the Nigerian affairs not withstanding their invaluable contributions to the sustenance, growth and development of the country. In order to advance their argument, they pointed out that the structure of the federal system in the country was carefully designed to perpetuate the north in power while shutting out other sections of the country. The latter view however was the strong view of the north that saw the Igbo people of the south as being too ambitious to take over and remain in power. They equally cited what they described as an "unwanted" coup by Major Nzeogwu on 15th January 1966 to support their claim.

One fact which came out clearly from the above claims is that, for a state to function appropriately there must be fairness and equity which will breed trust and deep sense of belonging within

the polity. The Nigerian authorities in this period failed woefully in this regard, as they tended to emphasize sectionalism and ethnicism over nationalism. These claims and counter - claims equally elicited reactions from across the world. Those who supported the Biafrans during the war were states that believed that the Biafrans have been treated unfairly while those who took sides with the federal military government were those who shared in the view that the Igbo people were too ambitious.

Politics is the process of making decisions applying to all members of each group. More narrowly, it refers to achieving and exercising positions of governance – organized control over a human community, particularly a state. Furthermore, politics is a study or practice of the distribution of power and resources within a given community (this is usually a hierarchically organized population) as well as the inter-relationship(s) between communities. A variety of methods are deployed in politics, which include promoting or forcing one's own political views upon other people, which was the situation during the Nigerian civil war. One would appreciate the authenticity of the above assertion when one notes that Colonel Ojukwu before the civil war broke out never declared war against the Nigerian state. In fact, it was in a bid to impose Gowon/Nigerian military government's political views on the Biafrans that made Gen. Gowon administration declare what he called "Police Action" on Col.Ojukwu's Biafra after the declaration of the secession of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria from the Nigerian federation to form the Republic of Biafra. According to I. P. C. Okpalaeze, "the declaration of Biafran Republic was a direct response to the creation of 12 state structures by Gen.Yakubu Gowon who had turned down the Aburi Agreement" ^[32]. In other words, if the 12 state structures by Gowon were not created, the declaration of the state of Biafra would not have been effected at that point in time by Colonel Ojukwu.

State Recognition: The international system has been described to be in a constant state of flux ^[33], this is because new states are created and some old ones sometimes fall away. New states come into being within states in a manner that contrasted with the existing constitutional norm in the international system, whether or not such emergence of a state is accompanied by force. Insurgencies take place and belligerent administrations are established in areas of territory formerly administrated by a legitimate government. Each of these developments creates new facts and the question that recognition is concerned with revolves around the extent to which legal effects should flow from such occurrences. Each state as major actor in international system will have to decide whether or not to recognize the particular eventuality and the kind of legal entity it should be accepted as. Recognition involves consequences both on the international plane and within municipal law. If an entity is recognized as a state in the international system, it entails the consideration of rights and duties that would not otherwise be relevant. There are privileges permitted to a foreign state before the municipal courts that would not be allowed to other institutions or person. In more cases than not, the decision whether or not to recognize will depend upon political considerations than exclusively legal factors. Following this line of reasoning, recognition is not merely applying the relevant legal consequences to a factual situation, for sometimes a state will not want such consequences to follow, either internationally or domestically. For instance, the United States refused, for many years, to recognize either the

Peoples Republic of China or North Korea, not because it did not accept the obvious fact that these authorities exercise effective control over their respective territories, but rather because it did not wish the legal effects of recognition to come into operation^[34]. It is therefore obvious that the whole idea of recognition is purely a political judgment, although it has been clothed in legal terminology. In addition, there are a variety of options open as to what an entity may be recognized as. Such an entity may, for example, be recognized as a full sovereign state, or as the effective authority within a specific area or as a subordinate authority to another state^[35].

It is therefore pertinent to note that recognition is a statement by an international legal person as to the status in international law of another real or alleged international legal person or of the validity of a particular factual situation. Once recognition has occurred the new situation is deemed opposable to the recognizing state. That means, pertinent legal consequences will flow. As such, recognition entails participation in the international legal process generally, while also being important within the context of bilateral relations and, of course, domestically.

Therefore recognition can be considered to the formal acknowledgement of the status of an independent state by other existing states. Every state has to have some essential features, called attributes of statehood, in order for other states to recognize the state as independent. States are considered as the principal persons in international law. Biafra, although defunct, existed for three and half years (1967 -1970), being recognized by four African states, however, such recognitions could not sustain the existence of the new state because of the political interest and diplomatic considerations accorded Nigeria by the rest of the world. This implies that, recognition of a state is primarily determined by national interest and not necessarily international law or humanitarian considerations.

Biafra – The Pursuit and Failure of Diplomacy

To establish foreign missions, the Biafran government considered first those countries, with influence on internal affairs, particularly in Africa. The two colonial powers – Britain and France – were keys to this. The USA and the Soviet Union deserved attention too, as the two super powers of the age. Biafra was more familiar with the United States, which also had the advantage of hosting the United Nations, in New York. Biafra was anxious to be seen as a democratic regime, by Western standards; yet, had to maintain a balancing act, so as to appear truly neutral and not anti-Soviet Union. Frankly, the Biafra's attitude towards Moscow was ambivalent. The Soviet had considered Nigeria too pro-west, and Biafra did not believe they would jump to her rescue; at the same time, Biafra could not give them a warm embrace, for fear of losing the much-needed Western support.

In Africa, Biafra knew that they will face a tough battle. The charter of the OAU regarded as sacrosanct, the integrity of African states, as inherited from their colonial masters. The Congo question was still fresh, and no one wanted to encourage another potentially explosive situation. Biafra did not expect easy acceptance by other African states, as they were fearful of their own ethnic minorities taking a cue from that of the Biafran cause. The strategy was to court the progressive African states who despised Nigeria's docility to the west and at the same time win

over the same Western powers, in the expectation that they would teleguide their client-states to follow their lead.

There were countries needed purely for strategic purposes: Portugal, for transit bases in their colonies near the Biafran region; South Africa, for supply of military hardware. Ideology was completely out of the question. Survival was all that mattered. The state of Israel was different: it qualified, on the pragmatic side, as a source of material help and, on the ideological, for its historical affinity to the Christian states, of which Biafra was one. The Asian and Latin American states were not considered big players in the league, though the support of India and China would be helpful in dealing with the non-aligned states, as with similar leaning European states of Sweden, Norway and Denmark (Scandinavia).

The ploy was: catch Paris, and you got the Francophone state; secure London, and the Commonwealth will come with it; infiltrate the United States' public, and they would drag the government along. Finally, for the Christian world, Biafra had an advantage, by their religious profession, to persuade the Vatican, to bring its influence to bear on the faithful. The Biafran's missions were located to meet these criteria.

First, Biafra had its representative office in London, headed by a veteran administrator, Frank Ellah and Ignatius Kogbara (both are Rivers people). A Bright young career diplomat, Chidi Offiong, supported them. They had a team of other Biafrans, who had decamped from the Nigerian service; but the Biafran's main reliance was on Biafran Students' union, led by Fine Agi, former President of the Nigerian Students' union, Mr. Briggs and a very committed core of Biafran students' activists. They organized and attracted, to the Biafran cause, a large section of the British public, especially students, youths, women and the liberal establishment.

The British Government, under Prime Minister Harold Wilson, remained hostile, most of the time. Biafra did not give up but appeared to go along with them, in the hope that public opinion, and their own economic interest in the Biafran region, would force them to moderate their position.

Biafra used such notable Britons as Lord Goodman, a former Solicitor General, to penetrate the establishment. Fred Forsyth, ex-BBC correspondent, became a trusted adviser and helped in articulating strategy and communication targets.

Biafra also exploited the goodwill of some of the eminent Biafrans, like Sir Louis Mbanefo, who represented the country at the Commonwealth Peace Conferences and negotiations with Lord Shepherd, the Commonwealth Minister. Another Biafran leader and the only one who met the Prime Minister, was Chief C. C. Onoh, but nothing came out of it. Godwin Onyegbula had been a colleague to the Prime Minister's principal private secretary, Mr. Michael Paliser in Dakar but, inspite of his hospitality and conviviality during his London visits, the British position on Biafra remained unchanged.

As mentioned earlier, Biafra relied on the colonial powers to influence their client states in Africa, in favour of Biafra. French support was, therefore, considered imperative. The French President, General Charles de Gaulle had a grouse against Britain, and especially Nigeria, for leading African opposition to the French nuclear tests in the Sahara. He was well disposed towards the Biafrans, for both strategic and temperamental reasons; but his foreign office did not share the same enthusiasm.

Biafra's contact with the French government was mainly through the Presidency in the person of Monsieur Focart, Secretary-General or Special Assistant on African Affairs. Even so, the French attitude remained ambivalent, to the end: mild support, accompanied by doubts of Biafra's survival and possible unwelcome influence over the Francophone African states. Indeed, one senior official confessed, in exasperation, that they had more problems with Biafra than all their African state combined.

In dealing with, and penetrating, the French establishment, Biafra relied on the guidance of President Houphouët Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire. According to Godwin Onyegbula: "sometimes, not sure, whether it was the case of the French using him to reach the Biafra, or 'he' is bringing the French to Biafra, whatever it was, President Boigny's role was crucial to Biafra's diplomacy". The President was so involved in this field that he was fondly called "Wise One" or the "Godfather". Biafrans were also fortunate to have in Professor Kenneth Dike, an academic and venerable personality, with whom the President easily identified. The correspondence of President de Gaulle to the Biafran leader, Col. Ojukwu indicated some pride and admiration for this young leader whom he addressed correctly, even though France had not recognized Biafra.

France gave logistic and diplomatic support, but not enough to attain success. It seemed as if the French, having doubts about the Biafra's eventual victory, did not want to burn their boat completely. Rather, Biafra provided them ammunition to create some diplomatic unpleasantness for Britain, a traditional rival. They had in the past, been used, to a master-dependent relationship with their client states, and considered Biafra, with its potentially rich minerals and human endowments, as capable of undermining this relationship structure, or even dislodging them in some areas of influence.

In Gabon, for instance, the French were alarmed at the number and caliber of Biafran personnel who were gradually supplanting them in the higher echelon of government. A Biafran, Dick Onyeaso, had become President Omar Bongo's personal physician, and others were following suit. The French resented all this.

Biafra had a strong presence in Paris, with Ralph Uwechue, one of the Biafra's most competent young diplomats. He had been Special Assistant to the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Francis Nwokedi, in the Nigerian Ministry of External Affairs and had been regarded highly. He spoke French too. Above all, he was so dedicated to the cause that one appeared wanting, after an encounter with him. He later seemed to be quite as passionate in his disillusionment.

With Ralph Uwechue in Paris, however, under professor Dike's overall supervision, Biafra received good intelligence on what was going on in the French world, and often passed his personal note to the Head of State to ensure attention. Chidi Dike, another brilliant and articulate officer, took over the Paris office from Uwechue.

Portugal was a key European ally. Perhaps, they were also looking for a tool, like Biafra, for prosecuting their African policy. Biafra had contact with influential émigrés from their colonies, in Lisbon, including Dr. Ilunga. The Biafra's own Barrister Evan Enwerem was also a useful contact in the capital, where he was well connected. Still, the idea of Portugal then, as an ally, was not fully embraced.

Indeed, there was so much skepticism about Portugal and South Africa, that the Biafran authority directed the whiz-kids in the ministry to prepare a paper on the advantages and disadvantages of Portuguese/South African recognition. It was amazing that on paper, the arguments "for" were so overwhelming. Biafra could therefore, not ignore these factors in its diplomacy, notwithstanding the negative perception by the anti-colonialists and liberal elements, in and outside her ranks.

Ideology notwithstanding, Biafra needed Portugal for arms and logistic base in their country and in such colonial outposts as São Tomé and Guinea Bissau. These were vital for transit and military operations, and remained so until the end.

Ochea Ikpa was Biafra's Special Representative in Lisbon. An experienced administrator and African Affairs expert, who spoke fluent Spanish - the nearest language to Portuguese, he was obviously Biafra's choice for the position. Elbert Nwogu, later Permanent Secretary, another experienced diplomat, switched places with him, sometime. They were ably supported by a team of communication experts, led by Tony Anene and Okoye from the other end, ensuring that Lisbon functioned effectively, as one communications fulcrum. From Lisbon, all messages, to and from Biafra were routed.

Biafra had no official representative in Guinea Bissau except the military ones who serviced the air route. São Tomé, however, which was the rarest outpost to Biafra, and first or last port of call for Biafran air transportation, received special attention. Chief Eric Obi, the premier brewery and former director of U.A.C. alternated with Vin Muoneke, versatile Permanent Secretary as Special Representative.

Germany and other European states were important, but not a major factor in Biafra's European diplomacy as they lagged behind Britain and France in their contribution. Germany had not taken a leading position yet in Europe, and seemed to defer to France. Attempt to make the government to commit itself proved futile.

There was, however, a very strong public opinion, led by the Christian Council of Churches in favour of Biafran relief and survival. Dr. Akan Ibiam, President of the World Council of Churches, aroused tremendous support for the Biafran cause in Germany and Switzerland. Relief and money flowed into Biafra which was important for Biafran military activities. Dr. Ibiam, who was more or less a roving Ambassador, was assisted to a large extent by Dr. Aaron Ogbonna, a former Minister, based in Germany.

The Scandinavian countries were forth right in condemnation of Nigeria, and gave political support to Biafra. This appeared more symbolic and ideological and never translated to diplomatic recognition. Their people, however, have relief generously to Biafra. Chief Eyoma from Calabar, later Foreign Affairs Minister was the Biafra's representative in Stockholm.

The Vatican and other European Catholic Countries were also approached by the Biafran official representatives. The Vatican was vocal in support of Biafra, but mainly in condemnation of atrocities meted out to the Biafran people, urging the international community to intervene to come to Biafra's rescue. Biafra had a constant lobby, led by the ecclesiastics, and influential Catholic laity. Bishop Okoye was truly in a class of his own, and aptly earned the appellation "Priest and Patriot". Other laymen like Chief Udoji were useful too. The Pope used the immense prestige of his office to lobby for support amongst Catholic countries like

Italy, Ireland and the American Catholic community. The International Catholic Relief Organization (CARITAS), along with the World Council of Churches, indeed provided relief to save the Biafran population from annihilation by starvation. The Irish Catholic Priests were an important source of communication and offered homes to refugee Biafrans.

As was stated earlier in this chapter, Russia's position was equally ambivalent. Russia had no love for Nigeria which was regarded as too pro-west, with a feudal aristocracy in control. Biafra also had some of their eminent Biafrans who had studied in the Soviet Union, or were active in leftist trade unionism and international politics. Russia had also been excluded from taking part in the Nigerian economy. It was expected that they would be on the Biafra side and further embarrass the British government, closest ally of their arch enemy, (the U.S.). Biafra sent delegations led by such eminent radicals as P.K. Nwokedi (later Supreme Court Judge), Professor Nzimiro, M.C.K Ajuluchukwu and the others, who spoke their Leninist/ Marxist language. This was to no avail.

Biafra was willing to consider oil exploration deals. In spite of all these, the Soviet Union which was at first neutral, if not giving intrepid support, turned around to equip Nigeria, and become a bedfellow. Why and how all this turn around occurred could not be ascertained; but it appears that the Soviets were influenced by their own self-interest and careful calculation of the possible victor in the contest, in finally deciding which party to support. Biafra was advised that they had to do more to convince the Soviets that she was on the path of socialism. *The Ahiara Declaration* of 1969 was, in part, a response to this, though it was an authentic articulation of the Biafran goal of a free, just and egalitarian society. It marked the final breach with the ethos and ideological conception of the Nigerian state. All this time, the dispute was over security. Now the Biafran state and the people enunciated and postulated a way of life, completely at variance with the Nigeria view. This would have nothing to do with the prevailing Nigerian ethos of mediocrity and its squabbling ethnic states perennially juggling for advantage over the sharing of the 'national cake'. Biafra was positive with its new charter of liberty, invoking its citizens to heights of ambition and achievement, so rare in Africa and the world.

A lot of Biafrans looked for support from the U.S.A. Biafra was a Christian community, trying to defend the ideas of democracy and a free society. The U.S. politicians, Democrats and Republicans, especially during their presidential campaigns in 1967/ 68, all spoke in favour of Biafra; but once in power, the situation changed. They were not willing to take a strong independent position, against British advice and interests. They only played second fiddle to London.

The most they could do was to receive the Biafran officials at discreet meetings arranged by influential Biafran friends. Norman Cousins, Managing Editor of the Saturday Evening Post and a friend of many Presidents, arranged such a meeting for the Biafran diplomat in New York with an aide of Secretary Kissinger, soon after President Nixon assumed office in January 1969. The Biafran delegate met some officials in the state Department outside the country; the last occasion being the luncheon with Larry Eagle-Berger of the White House in Paris, later December 1969.

Even a friend of the Biafra, Alfred Friendly, Managing Editor of the Washington Post, who visited Biafra, could not persuade the

U.S.A. administration to change its course. His son, Alfred Friendly Jr., correspondent for the magazine *NEWSWEEK*, who visited Biafra a few times too, along with numerous other American journalists, failed to influence U.S. policy.

However, the Biafran lobby in the United States was one of the strongest. The Biafran representative office marshalled Biafran students and teeming American supporters to the streets, often embarrassing the Government. The Biafran Relief Association, under Dr. Anyanwu, in New York, and their counterpart all over the country, were very active raising political support and money, for the Biafran cause. Dr. Otue, a former Minister, exercised surveillance over Biafran offices in New York and in Canada (Toronto). He, being a Canadian-American trained, he was ably supported as a Representative in New York by Ralph Nwakobi (later a traditional ruler) and Dr. A. Onejeme. There was a steady influx of Biafran emissaries and private individuals to bolster the campaign.

Canada suffered the same fate, as the U.S.A. Biafra's problems were compounded by the negative British attitude, and the separatist agitations in the French-speaking province of Quebec. Biafra could not make much impact here, in spite of the lobby by supporters, running across the entire North American spectrum. Dr. Edward Johnson, President of the Canadian Presbyterian church, was at the center of activities and visited Biafra often. His church contributed considerable refugee assistance. Biafran Nationals like Dr. Ben Onyeabor and the Physicist, Dr. Ezemanari, later General Manager of Ajaokuta steel, helped to galvanize the work of the Biafran community.

Many in the country of Haiti traced their historic links to the Igbo of Africa. President Duvalier, his family and successor were partly influenced by this tradition. It required, however, the prestige and influence of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Zik) for them to cross the line to grant recognition to Biafra, against American and Big Power opposition. Chuma Azikiwe, representing his father (Zik), Dr. Okechukwu Ikejiani and other eminent Biafrans, led the delegations to convince Duvalier that Zik was in support. Haiti gave Biafra the fifth and final recognition.

As earlier stated, the independent African countries themselves - creations of the European colonizers were scared of agitation by their ethnic constituents, as most of them never practiced democracy and could not contend agitation without suppression. They were opposed therefore, to the Biafran experiment, as they all had potential Biafra in their midst. It required imagination and statesmanship to understand, much less grapple with the problem. Nwalimu Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia were about the only ones who understood and had the courage to demonstrate their convictions.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) under the Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia took initial steps to mediate immediately after Biafran independence in 1967. But they were hamstrung. The charter of the OAU proscribed secession. Emperor Haile Selassie himself whose country hosted OAU Secretariat was beset by separatists. It was an uphill task. They recognized the injustice and inhumanity inflicted on Biafrans by Nigeria, but could not accept the logical consequence of their reason. Biafra could not go back to a country which had rejected them, killed millions of their citizens and reneged on previous negotiated settlement, trusting on their future good will. Biafrans security lay in a separate existence.

Biafrans were asked to renounce their independence, come to the conference accepting Nigeria's territorial integrity and yet this was supposed to be *negotiations without preconditions*. All attempts by the OAU and the Ethiopian were doomed to fail. Biafran authorities on their part insisted on true negotiations without preconditions, to enable negotiations to determine the agreement itself. Biafra had several meetings in Ethiopia with the Emperor and the OAU, but found it all frustrating.

The most Biafra could do was to force a tacit acceptance of its sovereignty by insisting on travelling only on Biafran passports as their Nigerian passports had been lost or cancelled. This was as far as Ethiopia could go in recognizing Biafrans identity to their embarrassment. Pius Okigbo, Professor EyoNdem and Onyegbula Godwin were at the OAU meeting in December 1969, but the Nigerians did not even turn up, believing that military conquest had been achieved.

Biafra was served superbly by its representative in east Africa, Austin Okwu. Whilst at the Nigerian mission, he had cultivated excellent relationship with the East African political elite. He transferred to Biafra this unquantifiable asset. Fortunately, he dealt also with a leadership rich in intelligence and uncorrupted in serving its people.

The President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere was one such man. He had an unrivalled knowledge of Nigeria and an integrity which could not be compromised. One saw through this, during an audience with him, even when one disagrees. He had also great respect for the Biafran pan-Africanist, President Zik. An encounter with the Nwalimu Nyerere was an experience one could not forget according to Ambassador Onyegbula Godwin. It was a difficult task of conscience for Nyerere to recognize Biafra but he did so as the only way of ending that great human tragedy in Biafra and paving the way for a future free Africa, rid of the injustices he saw in the Nigeria system. Doctors Azikiwe and Kenneth Dike, Sir Louis Mbanefo, Chief Jerome Udoji etc. helped him to cross this line of recognition but the entire spade work was done by Okwu.

The Zambian President, Kaunda was slightly different. An articulate but emotional man, he did not always exhibit the cold intellectualism of Nyerere. He and his people looked like Igbo in Diaspora (according to Ambassador Onyegbula Godwin) because they shared most of the Igbo attributes. Many top Zambians wept openly any time the Biafran story was told. The dilemma was for Kaunda as it was for the Biafrans - the prospect of the break-up of Nigeria, an Africa state, which had the promise of the future but was Africa's present shame. With reluctance and influenced by the facts of the case and deep affection for the Igbo leadership, he succumbed at last. Okwu was assisted in his diplomacy here by Biafra's professionals working in the region, namely Professor U.U. Uche, a legal luminary and Doctors' Chuke, Ezeilo, Ukegbu and Igboeli amongst others.

The Prime Minister of Uganda, Milton Obote, understood the situation as clearly as his Tanzanian/ Zambian colleagues. The Biafran delegates team visited and lobbied him, and expected he would join but frankly it was difficult for the team to see in him the condor and integrity which marked the Tanzanian/ Zambian experience. He played for some time and sat on the fence.

Biafra had earlier, an initial reluctance to deal with White South African minority leadership. Biafrans had all been brought up to be rabid opponents of apartheid South Africa. It was one of the greatest ironies of history that the Igbo who were the original and

foremost champions of black rule would now be collaborating with the assumed enemy of Africa.

In retrospect, South Africa enabled the Biafrans to see the problem in its complexity and that the solution required higher statesmanship which recognized the rights of all- majority and minority alike. After all, the Biafran cause had been that of an injured and threatened minority, groping for survival. There was some similarity in the South African case, except that the minority wanted to impose its rule on the majority.

The Biafran interest in South Africa was solely dictated by Biafra's survival. Biafra obtained as much support for its military as it could. In the other states of Southern Africa, the Biafran diplomacy orchestrated by Ikpa who had been a roving Ambassador of Nigeria to the area was to mitigate any resentment of Biafra's collaboration with South Africa.

Abidjan was the center of the Biafran diplomacy in the area. President HouphouetBoigny dominated it all, as well; Biafra relied on him for entry to French West Africa and Paris itself. He was the Biafran guide and counselor as well as financier. Truly, he did not appear to be interested in any personal gains for himself or his country. It was just that of conviction by this very conservative ruler-patriarch, that great injustice was being done to fellow African brothers and it was being allowed to go on in the name of African unity. In a way, this conformed to his ideology which in essence resented the negative and harmful policies which were pursued by African leaders in the name of Africa. He had courage of his own and once allegedly quipped: "what have we in common in Africa except our poverty?"

Biafra was extremely fortunate to have such a man of vision as *godfather*; he treated the Biafrans as his children in love - not to be misunderstood as patronizing. The Biafran interest agreed with his and to that extent, worked together with the Biafrans. The Biafran Abidjan office, which was where Professor Kenneth Dike operated from, had among others, the urbane Peter Chigbo, and Permanent Secretary as the alternate Representative.

The late president of Gabon, L. Mba, could indeed be identified as Igbo (according to Ambassador G. Onyegbula) and appeared to have such antecedents. His successor, Omar Bongo did not take much time to be persuaded of the Biafran cause. Gabon soon became the home of many displaced Igbo and some of the Biafrans saw Gabon as a future "Israel" for the Igbo who escaped annihilation. Igbo officials and private citizens were welcome all over Gabon. "Home for the Destitute" was established and run by the Biafran nurses and other para- medical staff.

The problem as earlier stated was that the French who opened the way for Biafrans into Gabon both diplomatically and in other areas soon became resentful of the Biafran growing influence. The Biafra was ably represented in Gabon by Chris Okoye, a career diplomat; and later by HycinthUgwu, another career officer whose tenure spanned most of the Biafran existence.

Other Francophone West African countries like Senegal stood on the fence, most of time, in spite of French pressure. Senghor was too intellectually committed to a single Nigerian state in Africa, and did not wish to antagonize his predominantly Muslim communities even though normally a tolerant one. Appeals by writers and artists like Chinua Achebe and CypriEkwensi were of no avail.

Niger, on the Nigerian northern border was an interesting case. A Muslim himself, HamaniDiori, Niger's Head of state showed keen understanding of the Biafran tragedy. It is believed that if

he had not shared a boundary with Nigeria, he would have been the next African leader to recognize Biafra. He avoided the Biafran delegates in his capital, Niamey, so as not to offend Nigeria but received the Biafran delegates when away in Paris. The Biafran meeting with him in Paris, arranged by the Biafra's French agents was forthright and positive in nature but no recognition was promised.

The same applied to the neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad and the Equatorial Guinea. In spite of their quarrels with Nigeria, they were too scared to offend the "Big Brother, Nigeria." Sudan as a Muslim country close to Nigeria with problems akin to that of the Biafra was interesting. Col. Ojukwu maintained constant personal communication with Prime Minister El Mahdi on and off, who was an Oxford colleague. He showed such understanding and a willingness to assist, that the Biafran diplomats found it difficult to contemplate what he would have done if he felt secure in office.

Israel, the Jewish state, showed so much sympathy and a willingness to help; but in practice, not much came out of it. The Biafran leaders visited Israel and were well received, what was got mainly out of it was an introduction to Jewish lobbies outside the country, especially in the USA, who were also useful in their own way. Even Hanan Baron, an old friend of Ambassador Godwin Onyegbula during his Washington days, who later became foreign affairs spokesman in *Tel-a-Viv*, could not help much, beyond a courteous response.

Appraising the Biafran Diplomacy

The essence or purpose of diplomacy is to achieve the desired objectives of a case or cause peacefully, even when the other factors are absent or insufficient. The Biafran diplomacy would appear therefore not to have succeeded in spite of all efforts. In the end, only five recognitions were obtained: Tanzania, Zambia, Ivory Coast, Gabon and Haiti. This may not be an entirely fair assessment as recognition relates only to the decisions of governments as distinct from their people's position.

The Biafran case greatly assisted by its external publicity reached virtually all the corners of the earth; and turned men and women into activists for the cause. The disintegration of the republic itself due to internal forces especially of hunger, exhaustion and military inferiority, was the final cause for failure. The lesson is that one cannot conduct a successful and effective diplomacy from a weak domestic foundation.

Some critics also argue that Biafra did not offer much of its oil resources in bargaining for external support; and that where Biafra did, it was late and clumsy. The truth here again, is that Biafran security and survival were uppermost in the minds of its policy makers. Nothing was spared. Foreigners themselves, especially the business community are not naive or taken in for sentimental reasons, except profit. They judge whether one is in a firm control of, and can guarantee what one offer, before they are taken in, unless they are in a position to do this by themselves. Biafra failed because its time had not come. The international community was not yet ready to accept the emergence of ethnic state in spite of horrendous crimes against the citizens by their internationally recognized governments. The Biafrans were subjected to a pogrom; indeed, an ethnic cleansing, which would have decimated millions of its people. They fought back gallantly against overwhelming odds for 30 months.

The critics further taunt Biafra with the argument that her declaration of independence did not bring security to her people. But what else could the Biafran regime have done in the face of threatened extermination and international double-talk; merely trust on the goodwill of Nigeria - her rampaging opponent?

The fundamental right of self-determination and even self-defense for survival as a people were denied or not given cognizance. It required the emergence of a Bangladesh, supported by a powerful neighbor, India; the regrouping of ethnic states, following the disintegration of the Soviet bloc; the dissolution of the Balkans into ethnic nationalities; and the great human tragedies of ethnic minorities, fighting to avert their own extinction; for the international community to be aroused at last to respond to claims for separate identity through self-determination. Even Sudan, after over two decades of conflict, has been obliged to accept the concept of separateness and autonomy for its beleaguered south black minority. The sufferings of the Biafran people and the failure of their experiment, prepared the way for the success of subsequent similar enterprises elsewhere.

History is a movement; and the uninitiated often take a short-term view of it...true, the Biafrans are back in Nigeria relatively secure; but the grave issues that elicited its birth are still with the Biafrans in the Nigeria polity. Unless and until these have been seriously addressed, the jury remains hung ^[36].

Conclusion

It is very crucial to point out here that for Biafra to consolidate its sovereignty, the first step were to attain diplomatic recognition from African countries and the international community at large. Therefore, the Biafran leadership spent a great deal of time and energy in the pursuit of diplomacy but on the other hand, Col. Ojukwu's policy of prolonging the civil war in hope that the world opinion over the issue of genocide would intervene and force stalemate between Nigeria and Biafra and consequently insure Biafra's sovereignty never materialized. For the most part, Col. Ojukwu's war policy was to be a very costly one in terms of human life; the tragedy was the starvation that was the result of the war. The Biafran people bared the burden and paid the price, while the leaders talked of strategy and seek power.

The Biafra's war diplomacy was a calculated gamble that almost paid off, but towards the end, the hand-writing was on the wall. It had become clearer that the Nigeria Federal Government had completely counter-acted whatever success Biafra had made with their diplomatic manoeuvres. Col. Ojukwu failed to realize this, and was persistent in seeking foreign intervention. In other words, Col. Ojukwu failed, like his counterpart Gowon, to see the real significance of African recognition – that it was nothing more than a drop in the bucket. For example, the four African states that had recognized Biafra, did so partly to enable the Biafrans to have an equal chance to negotiate for a peaceful settlement at the Kampala Conference though their motives for extending such recognition could also be seen to have been induced by both economic and political interests considering French influence on the Ivory Coast's President Houphouet-Boigny.

It was believed that African recognition was a vote for Biafran survival and internal security, and not for their sovereignty, as Col. Ojukwu had interpreted it. This was one of the most crucial issues of the war that went unresolved until its final conclusion, and obviously this was Col. Ojukwu's and also Gen. Gowon's

misunderstanding of what African recognition really meant. Diplomatic recognition was not an approval of the political determination of Biafra to secede from the federation but as G.I. Okorie said, it was the “magnitude of the suffering that had caused a few African states to recognize Biafra”^[37]. They had recognized Biafra in an attempt to end the conflict as quickly as possible in order to prevent the outsiders from coming into Nigeria.

Both the federal government and Biafra had failed to see the significance of African recognition, as a result, over reacted by becoming more determined to achieve their objectives. For instance, after African recognition - the Biafran war hawks were no longer thinking about a possible peace settlement, and firmly believed that the tide was going to now turn in their favour if they could prolong the war and hold on^[38]. Whereas, the Nigerian federal government increased their determination to bring the war to a military conclusion in order to nullify the effects of what they felt were strong diplomatic achievements by the Biafrans. The fact remains that both Col. Ojukwu and Gen. Gowon underestimated what African support really meant and that both sides must share the responsibility for the tragic consequences of their decisions - death by hunger and starvation for more than a million people. Events during the Nigerian civil war are therefore a warning on all actors to avoid the expression of the blind optimism that a mere declaration by few countries automatically equips the new state with all it needs to survive as a nation.

References

- Osuji F. C.95, Rtd. Major-Nigerian Army, Azuogwugwu, 22/06/17.
- Foreign Meddlers in the Nigerian Crisis, Federal Ministry of Information, Lagos, 1970, pp. 3-8.
- Okpalaeze IPC, C.67, Rtd. Civil Servant, Awka, Etiti, 14/07/17.
- Kamanu O. Secession and the Right of Self-Determination: An O.A.U. Dilemma. *Journal of Modern African Studies*. 1974; 12(3):355-365.
- Cervenka Z. The OAU and the Nigerian Civil War, in Y. EL-Ayouty (Ed.), *the O.A.U after Ten Years: Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Praeger Publishers Inc, 1975, pp. 163-169.
- Cronje S. *The World and Nigeria: A Diplomatic History of the Biafran Civil War*, London, Oxford University Press, 1977, p.285
- De St. Jorre. *The Brothers War: Biafra and Nigeria*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1972, 193-2014.
- Agbi SO. *The O.A.U. and African Diplomacy*. Ibadan: Impact Publishers Ltd, 1986, pp. 60-65.
- Aluko O. *Determinants of Foreign Policy of the African States*. London: Hodden and Stoughton, 1977, p.77
- Gardiner DE. *Cameroon: United Nations Challenge to French Policy*. London: Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 90-91.
- Cervenka, pp 163-169.
- Akinbi. *The International Dimension of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970*. An Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1991, pp. 22-40
- Akinbi, pp. 22-40.
- Uwechue R. *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War*. New York: African Publishing Company, 1978, 110-128.
- Hartman FH. *The Relations of Nations*. London, Macmillan, 1968, 50-65.
- Keeton W, Swazenberger G. *Power Politics: A World Society*. London: Stevens and Sons Ltd, 1964.
- Hartman FH. *The Relations of Nations*. London, Macmillan, 1968, 50-65.
- Okorie GI. C.79, Nigerian Verbatim Reporter, Isuikwuato, 21/06/17
- Okorie C. 79
- Okorie, C. 79
- Smock A. *The Politics of Relief*. Africa Report, XV January, 1970, 24-26.
- Okorie GI. C.79
- Mark Press News Feature Service. 10 May, 1, (Biafra Overseas Division), 1968.
- Africa Research Bulletin 10 May, 1968, p.1073.
- Africa Research Bulletin 10 May, 1968, p.1073.
- Akinbi O. *The International Dimension of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970*. An Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1991, pp. 22-40
- Okorie GI. C.79
- De St. Jorre. *The Brothers War: Biafra and Nigeria*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1972, pp. 193-204
- Cronje S. *The World and Nigeria: A Diplomatic History of the Biafran Civil War*. London: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 285.
- Cervenka Z. *The OAU and the Nigerian Civil War*, in Y. EL-Ayouty (Ed.), *the O.A.U after Ten Years: Comparative Perspectives*. New York: Praeger Publishers Inc, 1975, pp. 163-169.
- Uwechue R. *Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War*. New York: African Publishing Company, 1978, 110-128.
- Williams C. *Appearance and Reality in Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p.364
- Okpalaeze IPC. C.67, Rtd. Civil Servant, Awka, Etiti, 14/07/17
- Jennings RY, Watts AD. *Oppenheim's International law*, 9th edition, London, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.7.
- Kaplan M, Katzenbach N. *The Political Foundations of International Law*, New York, 1961, p. 109.
- See *Carl Zeiss v Rayner and Keeler*. AC 853; 43 ILR, p.23, where the court took the view that the German democratic republic was a subordinate agency of the USSR, and the recognition of the Ciskei as a subordinate body of south Africa, *Gur Corporation V. Trust Bank of Africa ltd.*, (1986). 3 ALL ER 449; 75 ILR, 1967, p.675.
- Onyegbule G. *The Nigeria- BiafranBureaucrat: Memoirs of Ambassador Godwin. A. Onyegbule*. Ibadan: Spectrum books ltd. Publishers, 2015, 161-181.
- Okorie GI. C.79
- Oliver R, Atmore A. “Africa Since 1800” Cambridge Press, 1972, p.293