**THE MILITARY IN THE 21TH CENTURY NIGERIA**

**NIGERIANIZATION PROCESS**

Strickly speaking, the British unlike the French, favoured granting autonomy to each of the regiments in its West African dependencies. This means that the British Government would hand over to successor government the control of military forces in her various territories at independence. With this view in mind, therefore, the British War Department in London convened the West African Forces conference in 1953. The delegates of the conference recommended, among others, the establishment of an Army Advisory council for West Africa.

The council was to ensure the uniformity in military organization, training and equipment. In 1955 the council met in Kaduna, Northern Nigeria and decided to disband the West African command on the 1st of July, 1956. By this action, the military forces of the four British West African territories now became independent of one another but subject to the orders of the British council in London. Following this developments, the Army council decided to hand over the Nigerian Army to the Nigerian Government in Lagos. This was agreed during the constitutional conference held in London in 1957. Therefore, on the 1st of April, 1958, the British Government theoretically relinquished its control over the Nigerian Army. In effect, the Nigerian Government was to take full control of its armed forces. Not only that, the Nigerian tax-payers were now to provide the defense fund which was hitherto shouldered by the British Government. But, then, the British Government was to send some subsidy to augment whatever Nigeria was able to contribute for the upkeep of her military force.

Even before this decision was taken, the colonial government had already started localizing the officer corp in preparation for independence. Thus, by January, 1958 about twenty-one (21) Nigerian officers had been commissioned. Moreover, a few months later, fourteen (14) Nigerians were commissioned to the rank of subalterns. However, a lot more still remained to be done. In the first place, the British Government handed over control of the army to the British Governor General, assisted by a defence council, composed of representatives of the federal and regional Governments. Beside, a substantive number of N.C.O’S and officers were still British. There was, therefore, the need to localize certain things to save cost. Generally, central feeding was turned into ration cash allowance, paid along with salary at the end of the month. In addition, all the British personnels who were posted by the war office to serve in the Nigerian Military forces ceased to be posted in that manner. Moreover, all appointments for which qualified Nigerians could be found, were taken over from the British who held them. Indeed, ‘for skilled jobs for which there was no Nigerian, retired British officers who had the requirement were employed on contract until here was a qualified Nigerian. By the end of 1959, the number of British N.C.O’S left in the Nigerian military forces were about eighty (80). Before October 1959, the officer strength of the Nigerian military forces was 27,937 including Nigerians made up of three (3) Majors, six (6) captains, and 28 subalterns. Of these, 29 who were serving in the infantry, 3 in the engineering branch, 2 in signals and 4 in the supplies and transport. There were in addition, 36 potential officers under training, 30 of whom were to be commissioned in 1960. But even if this rate of progress was maintained, it would still be years before the army was completely Nigerianized.

**NIGERIANIZATION PROPER**

As already indicated, in 1958 the British theoretically relinquished its control over the Nigerian army as agreed during the constitutional conference of 1957. However, sustained efforts to pressurize the Nigerian Government to accelerate the process of Nigerianization of the army began to be made by members of the House of Representatives. To them, independence could hardly mean anything to a state that was incapable of, preserving its territorial integrity. Therefore, they agreed that the nation’s weapons of Defence must be invoked. In response to agitation by members of the House of Representatives to Nigerianize the army, the Government set-up a select committee, representing major political parties in March, 1958 to examine the issue. The members of the committee included: Chief T. T. Solaru – Chairman, Hon. L. J. Dosumu, Hon. L. S. Fonka, Hon. J. A. Wachukwu and Hon. Mallam Maitama Sule who served as Secretary. This committee issued an interim report in June, 1958 which advocated ‘swift and massive measures, including the immediate displacement of senior expatriates on the ground that their loyalties to Nigeria after independence would be decided. The committee also believed that if rapid expansion of the army was envisaged, it was advisable for government to think of other avenues for training other than Sandhurst in the United Kingdom.

This interim report was reject by the Government on the ground that it was unrealistic. This not withstanding, the Government took steps to Nigerianize the army and to improve conditions of service in the army. In the first place, the Government decided to send all officer cadets who had come into the army straight from secondary schools to Sandhurst for two and half years military training. Secondly, serving Nigerian officers were send for short service course at Mons and Eaton Hall military colleges. The need to widen the choice of place of training for advanced military courses became clear. Thus, in 1961 Major Zakari Maimalari became the first Nigerian officer to go to Pakistan Staff college. When the number of officers to be trained suddenly increased, cadets were sent to Canada, India, Pakistan, Ethiopia and the U.S.A. Also, apart from increasing the salary of serving officers, measures were taken to recruit university graduates. Some of the University graduates recruited into the military included Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna, Adewale Ademoyega, Chukwuemeka Odumegu Ojukwu and so on. Besides, in 1960, shortly before independence the General Officer Commanding (GOC) THE Nigerian army and the Defence Minister submitted a report to the Government on the number of years it would take to completely Nigerianize the army.

Before long, Government’s determination to Nigerianize the army became evident. Thus, in 1959, four (4) officers in the Nigerian army were commissioned through training at Mons and Eaton Military Colleges for short-service combatants. The group of Nigerians that started this programme were Igboba, Amadi, Satomi and Obasanjo. Few months later four more Nigerians were promoted to temporary majors and captains. Promotions rate in the army became, suddenly, faster and much easier as compared to the situation in the colonial period. At the same time, a large number of Nigerians were commissioned. By January 1st, 1960, about eighty one (81) Nigerians had received direct commission. As would be expected, the Nigerian Government was slow in the Nigerianization of the Nigerian army. This was not unconnected with the general belief among the Government officials and politicians that Nigeria was surrounded by peace-loving countries. Besides, there was no immediate threat from the major world powers such as the then USSR and the USA. As such, there was no need for an enlarged military establishment. To them, therefore, the possession of an army, like having a national flag was just another symbol of sovereignty. It was not surprising then to see Nigeria entered into Defence Agreement with Britain. The agreement known popularly as the ‘ANGLO-NIGERIA DEFENCE PACT’, came into effect on 1st October, 1961. Generally, by the terms of the agreement, Britain was to supply Nigeria with military equipment in return for the British Royal Airforce to use Nigeria’s Air Space for her Middle East operations. The Royal Air Force was also to establish a base at Kano. However, after severe attacks from various angles, particularly from the University students, the Defence pact was abrogated on 21st January, 1962.

The Nigerian Government was then forced to look inward for the training of its military personnels. Moreover, the Government started to look elsewhere for the possibility of esta -blishing military linkages. Apart from the Nigerian Defence Academy which was established in 1964, an ordinance factory, to facilitate the military industrialization of the country was set up that same year. Attempts were also made to set up a strong Naval and Air force units for the defence of Nigeria as a sovereign nation. Even before the establishments of the Nigerian Navy and Airforce, the Nigerian Parliamentarians had brought pressure to bear on the Nigerian Government. They openly told the Government to appoint a Nigerian to head the nation’s armed forces. Their argument was that “our sovereignty and foreign policy of positive neutrality” would be meaningless and susceptible to ridicule by the outside world, with a non-Nigerian as the head of our armed force. The first sign that our army would be commanded by a Nigerian was in June, 1964, when the Minister of state for army duties Alhaji Ibrahim Tanko Galadima disclosed in the USA THAT ‘ the command of the Nigerian army would go to the hands of a Nigerian in 1965.

Thus, on Monday, February 15,1965, Brigadier Thomas Aguiyi-Ironsi was promoted to the rank of Major-General and was also appointed as the GOC of the Nigerian Army. He took over from Major-General Christopher E. Wellby Everard (a Briton) who retired from the Nigerian army. The announcement of the promotion of Brigadier Ironsi to Major-General and commander of the Nigerian army marked a watershed in the history of the Nigerian military as he was the first Nigerian to attain this high position. With this appointment, Nigerians then headed the three arms of the Republic Armed Forces with Admiral Joseph Akinwale Wey (Navy), and Mr. Louis O. Edet (police). We need to note that with the appointment of Gen. Ironsi as the GOC of the Nigerian army, the process of Nigerianization in the Nigerian army was completed.

However, the Nigerianization process was to have adverse effects on discipline in the Nigerian army. During the rapid Nigerianization process, the officer corps’ age structure was ignored. Most of the newly commissioned officers were combatant officers whose ages ranged fron 20-35. Having joined the army immediately after graduation from secondary schools or universities, they despised the officers at the top of the military hierarchy for their limited educational background, they referred to them as “General Idiots” and were very unwilling to obey their commands. This problem was further aggravated by a further status discrepancy which arose because the officers at the very top of the hierarchy who clearly did not have some edge over their juniors, in age, experience and probably competences were for the most part ex-NCO’S, and therefore, had less formal education. By the end of 1964, vacancies in the command positions created by the departures of British officers had been filled. Government considered it necessary to slow down promotions and attendant movements of officers from one unit to another. This was greatly resisted by some officers, especially Majors and Captains, whose hopes of obtaining rapid promotions, like their superiors, were dashed to the ground. In their frustration, some began to seek for assistance from politicians of their regions. Others, especially officers from the East began to complain about the rapid promotion attained by their colleagues in the Northern region. Indeed, Brigadier Maimalari, a Sandhurst trained officer and one of the top Northern officers was cited as a typical example. But, it was also noted by some Northerners that it was however, not Maimalari alone that benefitted and enjoyed rapid promotion in the army. Aguiyi-Ironsi also did. He shot rapidly from the rank of Lt. Col. In 1961, to that of Major-General in 1964.

Added to this, was the friction between Nigerian officers, who suddenly found that junior Nigerian officers had become their seniors. These British officers, mostly technical officers, refused to acknowledge the new positions of the Nigerians, since they believed that they did deserve the command position. They accordingly were reluctant to give them both the due respect and to obey their commands. The Nigerian officers, on the other hand, interpreted the attitude of the British officers as gross disobedience and flagrant violation of military tradition. Moreover, the constant transfer of the newly appointed or promoted officers from one battalion to another affected the character and discipline of the Nigerian army. Essentially, between 1960 and 1964 these officers were constantly moving from one battalion to another, on promotion and for further military training. In June 1963 the fifth battalion complained that only ten officers remained of the twenty-seven (27) who had been in the unit a year earlier. Strictly speaking, this lack of continuity in the senior ranks meant that the mass of the newly appointed subalterns were not given adequate support and guidance in military traditions. There can be no doubt that the implementation of the Nigerianization policy created considerable discontent and uneasiness in the army. This situation was exploited by politicians, who were quick to see that control of the army could be an invaluable asset to parties. As from 1960, some politicians, mostly N.P.C. stalwarts, became conscious of the army’s critical role in the political process as the final instrument of coercion. In this connection, they took a quick look at the list of the Nigerian officers who had received direct commission by the 1st of January 1961, and noticed the numerical superiority of army officers from the Eastern region. Greatly worried by this phenomenon, they suggested that future recruitment in the armed forces should be based on quota system. Indeed, the southern politicians did not disagree with this view, however, pointed out that people of northern origin also dominated other ranks. They quickly maintained that any realistic and meaningful reform of the system of recruitment into the army should take into account educational qualification rather than courage.

The Minister of Defence, Alhaji Mohammadu Ribadu, a leading member of the N.P.C. cut the debate short, when he approved recruitment based on the quota system. As pointed out earlier, it was based on the agreed regional quotas (1957-1958) legislative arrangement of fifty percent from the north and twenty five percent each from east and west. The United Progressive Grand Alliance (U.P.G.A.) resented not only the introduction of the quota system into the recruitment of soldiers by the N.P.C. controlled government, but also the manner in which the Government had been handling the Nigerianization exercise. During the 1964 electioneering campaigns, the U.P.G.A. made recruitment and promotion in the army one of its main issues. The party even promised that if it won the election, “recruitment and promotion of members of the armed services will be divorced from tribalism and based strictly on merit and qualification. Undoubtedly, the introduction of the quota system into the recruitment of the men of the armed forces hastened the politicization of the army.

Gradually, therefore, the mutual trust and *esprit de corps* which prevailed in the army was corroded. Worse still, unflinching loyalty to the Federal Government gave way to a situation in which each soldier owed loyalty primarily to his region or his regional Government. The Federal Government did not seem to be unaware of the ominous nature of these developments and it did attempt to reverse the trend. In particular, the Government tried to solve the problem of ethnicity in the army, especially the tendency to shift allegiance from the Federal Government to regional Governments. Apparently, the Minister of Defence attempted to reduce political consciousness in the military, and ordered the Army Council to ensure that each unitin the army contained soldiers from different ethnic groups. In addition, it was decided that “each unit should not be allowed to stay too long in a place least it fraternized with the people.” Instead of putting an end to ethnic solidarity among soldiers, it led to the formation of tribal and regional associations in the army. Before those associations were banned by decree number 33 of 1966, considerable damage had already been done to the command structure of the officer corps. Therefore, rather than integrate the army, the system succeeded in dividing the army along tribal or regional lines.

**Civil War in Nigeria**

It is common, in the context of civil war, to think of insurgents as groups of guerrilla warriors fighting an unconventional war while holding little, if any, significant territory. In the case of the Nigerian civil war, however, it is much more accurate to think of the insurgents as regionally based military and political elites. Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, who led the Biafran secession, was a regional governor. As a result of his regional base of power, Ojukwu enjoyed significant control over media in the Eastern Region— access to resources and a level of popularity seldom enjoyed by insurgent leaders.

In this sense, General Ojukwu’s position could be more closely associated with that of General Robert E. Lee in the American Civil War rather than the “classic” African civil war that pitted government troops against guerrilla forces (as in Angola or South Africa, for example).

In addition to Ojukwu, several other key figures played roles in the Biafran secession. Many of these individuals were among Nigeria’s intellectual elite. One of the legacies of direct colonial rule in the east and west is that the Nigerian bureaucracy tended to be dominated by Ibos, who had access to European-style education during the colonial period. For example, Chinua Achebe, an Ibo novelist, was one of the chief architects of the effective Biafran propaganda machine.

The Ibo also attempted to win the support of other ethnic minority groups by appointing regional minorities to Biafran government and important military posts. N. U. Akpan, an Ibo, was appointed chief secretary of the Biafran government. Victor Banjo, a Yoruba, led the Biafran military in the midwest. Although the Biafran secession is often thought of as an Ibo secession, it is important to recognize that Biafra was as ethnically diverse as the remainder of Nigeria. For example, the strategic Niger Delta is inhabited primarily by the Kalabari and Ogoni ethnic groups. Although these groups were part of Biafra when it seceded from Nigeria, the perception, even within Biafra, that the Ibo had the most to gain from the civil war had an adverse impact on the secessionist movement. Ojukwu’s position as the leader of a regional military government and, later, of a declared independent state provided the Biafran movement with other advantages as well. Because the area controlled by the secessionists included the bulk of Nigerian oil reserves as well as Nigeria’s only oil refinery, Biafran control over millions of dollars in oil revenues was a distinct possibility.

Royal Dutch Shell, the petroleum concern with the greatest stake in Biafra, was much more interested in keeping the oil flowing than in taking sides in the conflict. The Nigerian government, however, was concerned both with the potential source of revenue to the breakaway region and the legitimacy that the receipt of oil royalty payments would confer on the Biafran secessionist movement. As a result, the government used its limited naval forces to blockade the Biafran coast and launch an attack on the oil city of Bonny. Despite the blockade, Ibo-dominated Biafra was able to take advantage of its border with Cameroon and the dearth of government naval capability to smuggle goods onto the international market and arms into Biafra. Although estimates of the amount of revenue generated by smuggling are unavailable, it does appear that black market activity generated enough revenue to sustain the secessionists during much of the war. In addition, it is important to recognize that the Nigerian civil war cut off the government-controlled areas of the country from their major supply of coal (which was in Biafran territory).

In addition, to the revenue generated from smuggling activities, Biafra received the armaments necessary to fight the war from France, South Africa, Israel, and Portugal. As the conflict intensified and the effects of the government blockade began to show, Biafra relied on aid from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other international relief organizations to secure necessary food, medicines, and resources for the general population. In addition, many of these resources were funneled to the military to sustain the secessionist movement.

**Causes of the War**

It would be easy enough to argue that the Nigerian civil war was little more than an ethnic conflict between Ibos and non-Ibos (especially the Hausa–Fulani). Although it is true that Nigeria’s ethnic diversity played a role in causing the conflict, it is also apparent that other factors were involved. One need only examine the relatively rapid reintegration of Ibo military personnel and civilians into Nigerian economic, social, and political life to understand that the Biafran secession was much more than an ethnic war. Although there were several key historical events that pushed Nigeria toward civil war, it is argued here that there were three key proximate causes of the conflict. The first of these was the politicization of ethnic identity, first by the British and then by independent Nigeria. The second proximate cause was the militarization of Nigerian politics. The third proximate cause of the war was the unequal distribution of resources, especially oil, within the country.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the British played a key role in the politicization of ethnic identity in Nigeria. The combination of the British protectorates into a single political entity in 1914 resulted in a mix of indirectly ruled and directly ruled territory. The results of direct colonial rule provided ethnic groups in the south, especially the Ibo, with superior education and health care. It is not surprising, in this context, that the Ibo came to dominate the

Nigerian civil service in the post-independence era. At the same time, the failure of the British to adjust administrative boundaries after the protectorate merger gave the Hausa–Fulani control over more territory than all the other ethnic groups combined.

Politicization of ethnic identity emerged in the developing Nigerian political party system before independence. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), formed in 1944, was designed to be a national party aimed at securing independence for Nigeria. However, the Yoruba and Ibo members of the party quickly began to suspect each other of attempting to dominate the NCNC. A civil war between the two rival ethnic groups was narrowly averted. The Yoruba responded by forming the Action Group (AG) to coordinate policy in the Western Region. The Hausa–Fulani- dominated Northern Region formed the Northern People’s Congress (NPC). The NCNC remained the key party in the Ibo-dominated Eastern Region. In 1959, elections were held under British observation to determine the political makeup of government in the post-independence era. The NPC won 134 seats, the AG seventy-three, and the NCNC eighty-nine. Although the NCNC could have formed a coalition with the AG based on the north–south divide, the NCNC instead became the junior partner in coalition with the NPC. The NCNC made this decision in part because Ibo party leaders viewed political payoffs in the south as a zero-sum game between the Yoruba-led AG and NCNC.

The fact that no strong national party ever emerged in prewar Nigeria, coupled with the ethnic character of the three dominant parties, is clear evidence of politicized ethnic identity. One of the first post-independence manifestations of ethnic politicization was the census crisis of 1962. Nigeria’s first Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, announced that there would be a new census, designed to update the British figures of 1953. The completed census suggested that the population in the Northern Region had grown by 30 percent, while the Western and Eastern Regions had grown by more than 70 percent. Had the census results stood, there would have been a major shift in power within Nigeria toward the south. However, the government, which was controlled by the NPC, recalculated the growth rate for the Northern Region at 80 percent, placing the Hausa–Fulani in a position of dominance once again. After the AG and NCNC threatened a parliamentary walkout, all census results were annulled. A subsequent census produced similar results. The census figures ensured both political dominance by the north and a revenue allocation formula that would benefit the north at the expense of the east, west and midwest.

Politicized identities, however, are but one of the causes of the Nigerian civil war. The militarization of Nigerian politics is another critical factor. Beckett and Young (1997) refer to a “permanent transition” to democracy in Nigeria. In the permanent transition, the military reluctantly intervened to rid Nigeria of the problems of corrupt civilian government. However, it is never clear exactly when the military intends to go back to the barracks. Whenever there is actual or perceived instability in the country, the threat of military intervention looms large.

In Nigeria, the politicization of the military began before independence. Because of direct colonial rule in much of the south, well-trained Ibo officers occupied a majority of officer positions. In the post-independence era, the Northern Region worried about Ibo domination of the armed forces. As a result, the government instituted a quota policy designed to redress the inequities in the armed forces. Before the quota, the Eastern Region accounted for approximately

45 percent of all officers, and the Northern Region accounted for roughly 32 percent. After the imposition of the quota, the proportions reversed. Although the quota created a national military that was more reflective of census figures, it also resulted in a less professional, more politicized armed forces. The perception in the Eastern Region was that the Northern Region was attempting to erode one of the few areas of Ibo breathing space in Nigerian politics.

One of the roots of the Nigerian civil war can be traced to the military intervention in Nigerian politics that occurred in 1966. An earlier crisis in the Western Region had resulted in a split within the AC and, ultimately, the formation of the Midwest Region. The Midwest Region struck a political bargain with the Northern Region and agreed to certify the disputed census figures in exchange for government aid. Irregularities in the 1964 general election and the 1965 regional election in the west created a constitutional crisis. All these factors weakened the Nigerian state and created conditions that were ripe for a military takeover. In January 1966, a military coup led by junior officers (code-named Operation Leopard) ultimately resulted in the assumption of power by General Ironsi. It was this military intervention that started a series of tragic events that led to the Nigerian civil war. Most military coups, of course, do not lead to civil wars. In the case of Nigeria, however, the politicization of ethnicity combined with the politicization of the military and the subsequent militarization of Nigerian politics to produce deadly results. In spite of evidence to the contrary, the Northern Region saw the January 1966 coup as an attempt to achieve Ibo domination of Nigeria. Ironsi’s decision to declare Nigeria a unitary republic, as well as his decision not to harshly punish the coup instigators, did little to allay this fear. In addition, the political and military officials who were killed in the coup were predominately non-Ibo.

In July 1966, Lieutenant Colonel Gowon launched a successful counter-coup. However, the

Ibo military, led by Ojukwu, was able to maintain control in the Eastern Region. At the same time, groups of loosely organized northern militia began hunting down and killing Ibo who happened to live in the north. It is estimated that more than 30,000 Ibo were killed during the reprisals, and another 2 million Ibo were permanently displaced. Most of those who were displaced fled to the Eastern Region. Political intervention by the Nigerian military, coupled with the politics of ethnic fear and hatred, had left Ojukwu in a position of power in the Eastern Region. Ojukwu could claim, with some accuracy, that he was the only person capable of protecting the east. He could also claim that the only way for the Eastern Region to avoid a repeat of the events of 1966 was to secede. In addition to the roles played by militarization and politicization of ethnic identity, the uneven distribution of resources in Nigeria was also a major factor in the Eastern Region’s decision to withdraw from Nigeria. As noted earlier, the results of the disputed Nigerian census enabled the Northern Region to justify the redistribution of wealth in ways that would tend to benefit the Hausa–Fulani. The Ibo and Yoruba, of course, were aware of this. Royalties from the Dutch and French oil companies operating in the Niger Delta pumped millions of dollars into the Nigerian economy. Ojukwu clearly believed that control of the oil resources in the southeast could make Biafra a viable independent state. Oil was not the only economic factor to contribute to the war, however. During the 1950s and 1960s, one of the most attractive career paths for university-educated students was the Nigerian civil service. Since the south tended to be more educated than the north, southerners, especially Ibo, tended to dominate the civil service.

After independence, however, the quota system used to achieve balance in the military was also applied to the Nigerian civil service. As a result, there was widespread discontent among young southern intellectuals, who felt as though they were being passed over in favor of less qualified northerners. This, in turn, forced those who were university educated to seek regional positions. It is no surprise, then, that many of the key figures in the Biafran secession where young, well-educated elites. Given the three major factors highlighted previously, it is evident that the Nigerian civil war was much more than a product of simple ethnic grievances.

In January 1967, Ojukwu and Gowon met in Aburi Ghana in a last attempt to resolve their differences. Ojukwu argued that the existing federal arrangement should be replaced with a loose confederation. Gowon proposed maintaining the existing federal structure. In addition, Gowon proposed the addition of eight new states. Two of these states, located in what was the Eastern Region, in effect would have diluted Ibo power and removed Ibo influence over the oil reserves. This was more than Ojukwu would stand for. On July 3, 1967, the Nigerian civil war began.

***Duration Tactics***

The Nigerian civil war lasted much longer than the one month originally anticipated by the government. Several factors combined to prolong the war. First, the rebel army, as mentioned above, was well prepared for the initial government advance. Although government forces were successful in their initial military objectives, the rebels simply fell back to established rendezvous points. Nigerian supply lines were also spread thin by the rebel incursion into the Midwest Region. This enabled rebel forces periodically to cut the government’s supply lines by vanishing in the face of direct attack and reappearing behind government lines.

The switch from conventional to guerrilla tactics also probably prolonged the war. The makeshift land mines and booby traps mentioned earlier almost certainly slowed the government advance. The government was prepared to fight a conventional war based on controlling key cities and pieces of territory. The government was not as prepared to fight an enemy that seemed to vanish in front of them after the initial phases of the war. Knowledge of terrain also benefited the rebels in their efforts to slow the government advance.

***External Military Intervention***

There was no blatant external intervention in the Nigerian civil war by other states. The Soviets chose to aid the Nigerian government indirectly, providing Egyptian pilots to fly Soviet MiGs. No country chose to dispatch troops directly to Biafra. Mercenaries from various states participated in the conflict but without sanction from a specific state. Material support from the Soviets, coupled with a general lack of international support for Biafra, tipped the scales even further in the government’s favor.

***Conflict Management Efforts***

Conflict management efforts were unsuccessful in limiting or shortening the Nigerian civil war.

The OAU eliminated its ability to be an effective mediator by endorsing a status quo policy. Although there were several attempts by potential mediators to bring the two parties to the negotiating table, only the talks held in Kampala, Uganda, in May 1968 had any chance of success. The talks were arranged by Arnold Smith, a Canadian diplomat and secretary- general of the commonwealth. Almost immediately, it became clear that the two belligerent parties were too far apart to reach a political settlement. The rebels enumerated three basic demands: (1) immediate cessation of all fighting, (2) immediate removal of the economic blockade by the government, and (3) withdrawal of all troops to their prewar positions. The rebels also proposed an international monitoring force to oversee compliance with their terms.

The government countered with its own twelve-point proposal. The following is a summary of each point, based on Government of the Republic of Biafra.

(1). A cease-fire day would be set. (2). A cease-fire hour would be set. (3). Before the cease-fire, the rebel army would renounce secession in exchange for the cessation of government hostilities.

(4). Troops would be frozen in their current positions as of the cease-fire hour. (5). The federal army would accompany observers and Ibo police officers to supervise rebel disarmament. (6). Within seven days after the cease-fire, the rebels would turn over the administration of the breakaway region to the federal government. (7). The federal government would appoint a commission to temporarily administer rebel-held territory. The rebels would have input regarding the membership of a minority of commission members. (8). The police would be responsible for law and order. (9). The federal government would recruit Ibos and integrate them into the federal army. (10). An easterner would be appointed to the Federal Executive Council.

(11). The federal government would grant amnesty to rebellion leaders in appropriate cases and general amnesty to other rebellion participants. (12). Both sides would exchange prisoners of war.

The inclusion in the rebel proposal of an immediate military withdrawal, as well as government insistence on renunciation of the secession, effectively eliminated the possibility of a compromise.

***Conflict Status***

Without the groundswell of international recognition and support that the rebels had hoped for, it was clear that the Nigerian government forces would ultimately prevail. In the period from December 1969 through January 1970, government forces began to converge on the last rebel strongholds around the cities of Oguta, Orlu, and Nnewi in the western portion of Biafra. The First Division of the government army converged with the Third Division on the Uli Airstrip. The key city of Owerri, which had been the fallback capital of Biafra, fell on January 8. Finally, General Ojukwu fled Biafra for Côte d’Ivoire via the Uli Airstrip just before it was seized by government forces. On January 12, 1970, Major General Philip Effiong, acting in place of General Ojukwu, called upon the Biafran rebels to end the fighting. The Nigerian civil war formally ended the following day, when Effiong surrendered to General Gowon. The final result of the war was a complete government victory. Although the war ended with the unconditional surrender of the rebels, the Nigerian government opted for a strategy of reconciliation rather than punishment.

There were no mass trials of rebel military leaders, and many members of the Biafran military were reintegrated into the Nigerian army. Refugee repatriation was a more difficult matter. The conflict created more than 500,000 refugees and internally displaced persons. As the government army advanced deeper into rebel held territory, people living in threatened cities usually withdrew deeper into Biafra with the secessionist army. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 30,000 children were displaced as a result of the conflict. By February 1971, those children who had been forced to flee Nigeria were effectively repatriated. Many Ibo who lived in Port Harcourt, where Ibo were a minority, left or were forced out during the war and never returned. However, most IDPs in Ibo-majority areas were able to return to their cities and villages after the war. Soldiers or people simply searching for food, however, had pillaged many of their homes.

**Conclusion**

The immediate political result of the Nigerian civil war was a clear victory for the government forces and the maintenance of Nigerian unity. Although it appears unlikely that another state will actually attempt to secede, it would be an overstatement to argue that the Nigerian civil war produced enduring stability in Nigeria.

Gowon’s decision to add eight states to the federal system set in motion a process that ultimately led to the creation of thirty-six states in Nigeria. The problem is that most of these states were created in an effort to satisfy the desires for increased autonomy of Nigerian ethnic minorities. This strategy has been successful in that no region has attempted to secede from Nigeria since the civil war. However, the strategy also produces state-level policies that once again are often based on the politicization of ethnic identity. Statehood also provides ethnic minority groups in Nigeria with new opportunities to make redistributive demands on the central government. The recent series of oil related kidnappings around Port Harcourt demonstrate, in part, the pressures that result from state and local redistributive demands. It is worth noting that the two smaller-scale civil wars that have occurred since the end of the Biafran secession have been based on the politicization of religion. Nigerian federalism is designed in part to defuse national-level religious conflict by allowing states to integrate aspects of religious law into their judicial processes. Many northern states have taken advantage of this by establishing Shari’a courts to preside over Muslims.

However, both of the smaller civil wars resulted from a combination of religious conflict between fundamentalist Muslims and more moderate Muslims, or between fundamentalist Muslims and non-Muslims. One of the keys to maintaining peace in Nigeria is finding a way to protect the rights of non-Muslims in the north. The majority of Muslims in Nigeria appear to favor the application of Islamic law for Muslims only. There are those, however, who would prefer to eliminate the secular legal system entirely. Nigeria’s size, relative military strength, and natural resource base create a great deal of potential for political and economic development. To this point in history, Nigeria has failed to fulfill its enormous promise. The key to avoiding future conflict will be balancing the power of federalism to dilute conflict with ethnic and religious- based federalism’s tendency to atomize Nigerian politics. One reason for guarded optimism is the fact that Nigeria made the transition from the kleptocracy of Sani Abacha to a fledgling democracy under Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999. Obasanjo had the military credentials that may be necessary to keep the military from attempting to dominate the political process. Because the militarization of Nigerian politics was one of the three key causes of the civil war, maintaining civilian leadership is almost certainly in the country’s best interest.

**MILITARY AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA**

The civil war created many serious problems for the country. The economy had been damaged as a result of all that was spent to prosecute the war.

For the military, which has been associated with assuming ever increasing control over the lives and behaviors of its citizens and for military goals( preparation for war, acquisition of weaponry, development of military industries) and military values (centralization of authority, hierarchization, discipline and conformity, combativeness and xenophobia) increasingly to dominate national culture, education, the media, religion, politics and the economy at the expense of civilian institutions.

In Nigerian 46 years of independence, the military has ruled the country, albeit intermittently, for about 27 years. During the period, the intervened three times to flush out democratic institutions and processes in the country and supplanted them with militarism. These periods are between 1966-1979, 1983-1993, 1993 (and perhaps 1999).

The various military regimes exhibited common features that exerted enormous influence and control over the lives and behaviors of Nigerians –viz.

**1. CONSTITUTION**

It has become a ritual for every military regime in Nigeria to suspend the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which paradoxically, they swore to defend. On each occasion, they attempt engineering a new constitution only to get it suspended by the next military junta. With the suspension of the constitution, it also the suspension of all protections and guarantees contained in the constitution, especially, human rights, rule of law and avenues for participation. E.g. on January 15, 1966, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu declared that the constitution is suspended. By December 31, 1983, the military once again overthrew a democratically elected government of Alh. Shehu Shagari, suspended the 1979 constitution, it exhibited no regards for human rights and due processes of law. Some of the decrees included “the state security (detention of persons) decree number 2”, which gave absolute powers of arrest to the Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, “The Recovery of Public Property Decree Number 3” convicted ex-governors and many other politicians to prison terms ranging from between 10-100 years. Like Babangida, the administration of General Sani Abacha did not pretend to be any different from his predecessors. According to him, the regime will be firm, humane and decisive. We will not condone nor tolerate any act of indiscipline.

The “so-called” untouchables in Nigeria attempted to “test the will” of Gen. Abacha. Chief M.K.O Abiola received the first salvo. He was arrested and detained on a five count charge of intention to remove, overawe, otherwise by unconstitutional means the Head of State. The other group of persons who attempted to test the will of Gen. Abacha are Gen. Obasanjo and Shehu Yar’adua.

The point is that the military depend on decrees to rule after suspending the constitution of the country. Usually, they are tolerant of any form of opposition as they are subdued, crushed or forced to go underground. They rely on tribunals to try “criminal” offences instead of allowing ordinary courts to do so. In the process, they subvert the country’s legal system and violate human rights.

**2. MILITARY SUPREMACY**

Nigeria since independence adapted the liberal democratic model of civil-military relations- the divergent or civilian supremacy model-from the departing British Colonial Administration.

By this, the military is to abstain from issues that are outside the sphere of national security. They are supposed to be subordinate to the civilian authority; they are therefore expected to adhere strictly to the civilian ethics by retaining a depoliticized and a politically neutral military organization.

The isolation of the military from politics is because it is beyond the scope of military competence and injurious to the profession.

Paradoxically, however, the reverse is the case in Nigeria. Over the years a military supremacy ‘model’ has been practiced in Nigeria. When the military intervenes in the political process, in the country, it usually sets up a military ruling council.

**3. CENTRALITY OF AUTHORITY**

Nigeria is an ethnically heterogeneous society, with a minimum of about 250 ethnic groups spread across an area of 923, 768sq km. it is also a culturally diverse country with differences in religion, language and history. Some of these features necessitated the official adoption of federalism for Nigeria in 1954.

When the military intervened in 1966, they found the decentralized center of authority too complex and cumbersome and not conducive to their hierarchical command structure. They then decided to tailor the administration of the country to fit into the military command structure.

The military took advantage of the civil war, the increasing revenue on oil, creation of states and rule by decrees, to strengthen the power of the central government. The tax system, primary, secondary and university education in the country were unified.

Federalism aims at striking equilibrium between centrifugal and centripetal forces in a society. In Nigeria, however, the military has not been able to strike at this equilibrium; instead it has brought about excessive centripetalism which has created a very strong and over burdened center.

**4. MILITARY EXPENDITURE**

Budgetary allocation to the defence sector has been experiencing significant boost since the military intervened in the political process in 1966. It rose steadily from N33.9 million in 1966/67 to N1.3 billion in 1979. It de-escalated during the civil rule in 1980 to N989 million and rose slightly to N1.17 billion in 1983.

Much of the budgetary allocation to the defence sector is hardly spent on procurement of new weapons and equipment that would raise functional capacity of the military. Instead, much money is spent on personnel. This pattern of expenditure was far from being cost effective in that what the nation gets in return was a bloated military structure with very little of fire power.

**5. DISCIPLINE**

This is the bedrock of the military profession. The military places a lot of emphasis on strict discipline and control with little room for personnel initiative and discretion. This involves indoctrination as well as punitive measures when any slight deviation, mistakenly or deliberately, occurs. Punishments or sentences, when they are awarded to offenders are not challengeable. Indiscipline, in all its ramifications is not condoned within the military at war or peace times.

Under military rule, the perception of discipline or indiscipline is seen view. They see the civil society as highly undisciplined hence the series of war against indiscipline, waged by successive military regimes. Indiscipline here includes corrupt practices.

Most military regimes warned that: “Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek tribes and demand ten percent, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIPs at least, the tribalist, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds”.

Gen. Murtala declared after he had overthrown Gen. Gowon that the affairs of the state had become “characterized by lack of consultation, indecision, indiscipline and even neglect”. He warned that this government will not tolerate indiscipline.

General Buhari’s regime held the view that central to Nigeria’s problem was the monster called indiscipline. Given this therefore, the administration launched the “War Against Indiscipline” (WAI). It is a war to replace indiscipline with responsibility and accountability. Emphasis was placed on queuing in public places, orderliness and environmental sanitation among others.

Gen. Abacha’s administration launched War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C). He had since promulgated the failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Decree No. 18 of 1994; Advanced Fee Fraud and other fraud related offences No. 13 of 1995 and the failed contract and parastalals Decree of 1997.

Finally, the military were the custodians of discipline and patriotism, therefore every Nigerian was seen as indiscipline and unpatriotic who must be taught a lesson on discipline and patriotism. No one was spared from this “war”, market women, university lecturers, students, middlemen, medical sector, religious leaders, drug traffickers and many others. The point is that there is nothing wrong with the military waging war on indiscipline and corruption on the society but they must do this within the confines of the rule of law and the due process of law. Many military regimes import into the civil society, from the military tradition, the use of brute force to enforce discipline in the society, thereby violating some of the fundamental human rights of Nigerians.

**IMPACT OF MILITARY RULE ON GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA**

We contend that the nature of governance in Nigeria owes much to the long period of military rule in the country to illustrate this point; we must take note of a number of issues such as:

1. **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

There is no doubt that this is one of the important requirements of governance, especially as people require constant access to decision making units and power centers in the country.

Military rule stifles participation by blocking access to decision making unit. Successive military regimes in the country have pursued variously, the extensive personalization of power after intervening through the use of force and violence.

The constitution becomes suspended, the executive and legislative arms of government dissolved, political parties and associations bamboozled and muzzled. In the process, the values of democracy become endangered.

Making demands upon the government and expressing support for the system and its agents through the electoral system, the party system and the interest/pressure group system becomes impossible. Moreover, representation of all the constituent units at the center, especially in the legislative house, is no longer tenable. Instead, more often, close associates, friends and in-laws of the military are handpicked or recruited, often without consultation and consideration to acceptability, suitability and representation of the diversities in the country and made governors/administrators, ministers, ambassadors, members of boards, committees and commissions, panels and even commissioners at states. In some cases, ex-convicts (i.e. people convicted previously by military tribunals of corrupt practices, economic sabotage and political criminalities) were appointed to serve in exalted positions to the utter disgust of the people.

When appointed, many of them do not feel the pulse of their communities and therefore hardly know the priority needs of their people. Government is seen by the people as alienating.

1. **PUBLIC SERVICE**

The traditional values of the public service –neutrality, impartiality, anonymity and security have all been lost during the 27 years of military rule in Nigeria. The capacity of the service to formulate and implement basic policies is greatly constrained and its image of an agent of development has been seriously compromised.

This has a lot of impact on governance in the country. The 1988 civil service reforms further compounded the problem. The reform designated the minister as the chief executive and accounting officer with broad powers to manage the resources allocated to their ministry. The office of the permanent secretary” was not only dispensed with, the office of the Director-General is occupied by a non-carrier officer, whose tenure was to be directly linked to the life of the regime.

Given this therefore, ministers or commissioners collaborate and collude with their Director-Generals with the tacit consent of key officials of government to cart away enormous resources of their ministries. In many cases, because they served under military regimes, they are never probed. The administration of Gen. Abacha has been able to expose quite a number of them.

The public service in Nigeria has virtually collapsed and can hardly formulate and implement policies successfully, especially as corruption and get rich-quick mentality has become the order of the day in the service.

1. **POLITICAL ELITES**

Military rule has no doubt destroyed the political elites in the country and has rendered some of them confused, unprincipled and apologetic of the military. It is common knowledge in the country, that because of their intolerance, lack of accommodation and compromise, often instigates and urge the military to intervene in the political process and orchestrate the extension of military rule.

A number of the political elites who masquerade as “democrats” more often than not, become unveiled as soon as they are given appointments to serve under the military. They become the most ardent defenders of military rule and legitimizers of violations of human rights and ‘bad’ governance to the fascination of even the military.

Virtually all known political activists in Nigeria have served at various times and at various capacities under the military. Many of them have become schooled and oriented in the ethnics of military rule to the extent that they exhibit militaristic attitudes even under democratic dispensations. It is very clear that values of tolerance, pragmatism, cooperation and compromise have been lost. Guarantee of basic human rights, free and fair elections, due process of the law, accountability and transparency have all been lost.

The net effect is persistent political instability in the country since independence. Each of all the military regimes in Nigeria except that of Murtala/Obasanjo regimes, embarked on “re-inventing the wheel of progress”. They dismantle the policies of their predecessors and embarked on new ones only to be discontinued by the next successors. Each regime wants to be identified by its own set of programmes. Many of the programmes were articulated on slogans to coincide with the aspirations of the people, but the policies elaborated for their realization are generally either inconsistent with or inadequate to realize them.

1. **THE ECONOMY**

The current economic crises in Nigeria is to say the least, very severe and embarrassing for a country that is well endowed with enormous agricultural and mineral resources.

Nigeria, since the seventies, has become a mono-cultural economy that is dependent on oil for nearly 95 percent of total foreign earnings.

Nigeria is the world sixth largest oil exporter but there is relatively nothing much to show for it, especially when compared to other oil producing countries. The fact of the matter is that many Nigerians have not benefited much from its, except those that have been in power and perhaps close to the military.

The cumulative effect of all thee is that Nigeria still remains an underdeveloped low-income economy with a narrow, disarticulated production base, a mono cultural production structure and the predominance of subsistence and commercial activities and a pervasive informal sector.

The Nigerian economy, no doubt is characterized by stagnation and decline. These have been accompanied by weak growth in productive sector, poor export performance, mounting debts, deteriorating social conditions, environmental degradation, institutional decline and political instability. The management of the economy as portrayed in the 27 years of military rule is beyond military competence.

1. **WELFARE**

This is one of the cardinal objectives of governance anywhere in the world. In Nigeria, the conditions of life of many of the populace have not adequately improved since independence. The current condition of life of the majority of Nigerians is characterized by limited access to health services, poor and inadequate housing, limited access to safe water, limited access to education, limited access to epileptic supply of electricity in urban and rural areas, bad roads and poor road networking, limited access to agricultural inputs and implements, limited access to income generating activities and many others.

Successive governments in Nigeria have attempted to grapple with these problems, but they seem to be escalating on a daily basis. Credit must be given to the administration of Gen. Abacha for establishing the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) which has tackled many of these problems.

According to the Union Bank for Africa’s Monthly Business and Economic Digest, over 45 percent of Nigeria’s population can be classified as existing below the poverty line. About 65 percent of this group is said to belong to the core poor group. The category of people living below poverty line in the country includes Director-Generals, professors, judges of the high courts and some others. This is the legacy of military rule in Nigeria.

1. **SOCIAL INEQUALITY**

The Nigerian society, over the years has become excessively polarized between the ‘haves’ and ‘have not’, between the rich and the very poor. In a society where the per capita income is $200 per annum, a tiny group of Nigerians still build very expensive houses, ride in multi-million naira cars and flaunt their ill gotten wealth to the utter disbelieve of many hungry Nigerians.

What is more disturbing is that this tiny minority of wealthy Nigerians are serving or retired military officers with the few fortunate civilians that have either served under them or are friends, in laws, or collaborators.

It is very common to find a military Governor/administrator or a minister (civilian or military) becoming a multi-millionaire within one year or less of his/her appointment into office.

This has given rise to increasing crime waves in the country. The “Area Boys”, the Advance Fee Fraud Scams (419), Drug trafficking, corruption, commercial sex hawkers, professional assassins, secret cults, and many others are products of the social inequality in the society. They pose serious internal security problem in the country.

1. **NATIONAL SECURITY**

Every nation seeks to make its society invulnerable. A society becomes vulnerable when it does not suffer excessive exposure from deprivations, inequities and violations of fundamental human rights. In other words, the society is built on a firm foundation of equity, respect for human rights and democracy. The development and use of physical and mental abilities are guaranteed and mobilized for participation in all spheres and other related desires for self-determination based on just and equitable symbiosis.

However, a population that experiences a feeling of alienation, injustice, social deprivation and suffocation of access to decision making, basic needs, income generating ventures and democracy, becomes frustrated and aggressive. Such aggressions are short-termed. Localized, ephemeral outbursts and movements of protests such as riots, urban terrorism, subversions and many others, aimed at objects of hostility responsible for grievances, hardships and suffering. This population poses a threat to national security.

Such a population cannot defend their country instead they become “fifth columnist” a domestic faction unifying with a foreign enemy and make the country an easy prey for predators.

Nigerians who perceived a feeling of political deprivation have since formed MADECO and have been mobilizing international opposition against their fatherland. They form part of the fifth-columnists and they are uniting with Nigerian’s external enemies to undermine the security of the country.

1. **FEDERALISM**

Essentially, federalism is premised on the constitutional division of power between levels of government with each having an area of action in which it is autonomous.

It is common to find federalism being (practiced) operated by constitutional democracies such as the USA, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, India and many others. This is so because democratic governments are structured to facilitate differences through the multiplication of points of access to power, thus providing an overall political balance between conflict and consensus. Democracy, therefore is the pillar on which federalism thrives.

Given this therefore, it might look strange to find federalism operated by the military, with its emphasis on hierarchy, especially in a heterogeneous and diverse country like Nigeria. The 27 years of military rule in Nigeria, many believed has destroyed federalism in Nigeria.

The point is that in the practice of federalism under the military in Nigeria, there is no constitutional division of powers between the center and the constituent units, as the constitution itself has always been suspended. The military government merely devolve powers to the states and local government.

Although the states and local governments do have spheres of influence, they are not defined. The absence of clear division of powers, among other reasons has resulted in excessive centralization of power, over the years and has now made the federal government very seductive. It has now become the center of competition because of its vast powers. This has contributed to the problems of political instability in the country as various competing groups now see the “capturing” of the center as a zero-sum game. The side-effects are ethnicity, nepotism, corruption, religious chauvinism, social inequities and many others.

**NIGERIAN ARMY AND PEACE- KEEPING**

**DEFINITION**: First of all, it is important to understand what peace-keeping is, in order to understand and appreciate its capabilities and limitations. Peace keeping is a conflict-control mechanism designed to diffuse tension and provide a peaceful environment conducive to the peaceful resolution of a dispute or conflict. The troops who constitute the peace-keeping mission provide the peaceful environment by monitoring a ceasefire and ensuring that there are no violations to the agreement by the parties to the conflict.

It is in such a stabilized situation that negotiations are conducted between the parties to the conflict through governmental, political and diplomatic machineries in the peace-making process and under AU/ECOWAS auspices in order to find a peaceful resolution to the dispute.

The army which the Nigerian government inherited from their departing colonial masters was small and ill-equipped even though they performed well in peace-keeping operations. As part of preparations for military engagement the Nigerian military was called upon to patrol Nigerian borders with Cameroon between 1959/1961. In 1959 a rebellious group led by Felix Mounu demonstrated against French rule in Cameroon. The Nigerian government feared that the situation might spread over into the bordering southern Cameroon which had been mandated to Nigeria.

On attainment of independence, Nigerian troops were pulled out and replaced by the British soldiers since that country was still a mandated territory. Indeed, the experience of self help, maintenance in the field, patrols and observations which was gained during the operation was to prepare the Nigerian soldiers for service in the Congo.

**CONGO CRISIS-** The crisis in Congo (Zaire) was touched off by the rebellion of the Congolese army against the new government of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba resulting in wide-spread killings of senior Belgian officials. The Prime Minister appealed to the UN for help.

The first Nigerian contingent left the country in January, 1960 and was made up of 26 officers and 640 soldiers including four British NCOs. The force operated under the UN between 1960 and 1964.

They maintain law and order.

Before the last group of troops left the Congo, Nigeria was again called upon to assist the Tanganyika Government. In January, 20, 1964, the Tanganyika army protested against the government of Julius Nyerere, for the continued presence of the British officers in the army. Accordingly, Nyerere appealed to the commonwealth, for help and countries including Nigeria responded. In April, 1964, 3 battalion under Lt. Col Yakubu Pam left for Tanganyika. With the help of Nigerian soldiers (troops), Nyerere disbanded the entire army and in its place, raised a new one for his country.

The Nigerian armed forces also played an important role in the maintenance of peace and order in the country. The armed forces were assigned the role of Internal Security Organization (I.S.O) when riots broke out in various parts of the country as a result of malpractices in the Federal elections of 1959 and 1964. There was the issue of refusal of people to be counted during the pre-independence census in 1953-54 because they thought it had to do with the issue of taxes.

When this problem was being tackled by the government of the federation. The country witnessed an unprecedented general strike. As if it was not enough, another one broke out in the middle belt. The Tiv riots. Undoubtedly, this situation warranted the army’s full intervention.

**ECOMOG AND NIGERIA**

The deployment of the Economic Community of West African states cease-fire Monitoring Group to Liberia was a response to the civil disorder which erupted in 1989 as an insurgent revolt of Charles Taylor against the regime of Samuel Doe which by the early 1990s had grown into a fearsome contest between remnants of Doe’s troops and the two wings of the rebel forces viz- Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPLF) and Johnson’s Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL).

The immediate effect of the civil war was break down of law and order and disintegration of the Liberian society and its control by mutually hostile forces. It was against this background that the mediation committee of ECOWAS took the momentous decision to establish ECOMOG with the express purpose of (i) sealing off the exploding military situation until the basis of a more durable settlement could be established and (ii) put in place a national conference of all Liberian political parties that would choose an interim administration to run the country for about a year, preparatory to a general and presidential elections.

Judging from the above, while it is true that the location of a country in a fundamental sense determines the character and dimension of her defence policy. The location of Nigerian in the midst of relatively weaker nations imposes some security responsibilities on her, thus, her security must therefore be perceived in terms of the security of the environment in which she is located.

**JUSTIFICATION FOR PEACE-KEEPING**

Post - colonial Africa continues to be encumbered with armed hostilities. Some independent African states are still being torn apart by intensive wars with seriously devastating effects on their social and economic development. Most of Nigerian’s peace-keeping efforts have been precipitated by the following:-

1. Some of the conflicts that develop have strong ethnic undertones, same as the case in Darfur (Sudan), start as being purely tribal while others erupt from non-tribal causes, escalating into violent ethnic hostilities.
2. Most of the conflicts which have erupted and continue to erupt have their causes deeply rooted in the human phenomenon, basically, between the govern and the governed.
3. The characteristic outcomes of all hostilities are pervasive hunger, poverty and suffering, with the indigenous, innocent populations being the major victims. Consequently the need to prevent, contain and resolve hostilities, poses a serious challenge.
4. Most of the problems facing Africa stem from the fact that, as a people they are not at peace with each other peace is not just the absence of war. It is the absence of strife, belligerence, rancor, general unrest and insecurity. It is only when the African can truly expect social justice, equity and fair play that he can be at peace with himself and consequently with his neighbors.
5. Restraint and repression, associated with authoritarian regimes breed resentment and resentment breeds violence because the individual is not at peace with himself. Peace for the average African implies his ability to meet his basic human demands-food, shelter and clothing.
6. Above all, Africans must have the freedom to choose who exercises governance over them and how they are governed. Situations in Somalia, Liberia, Cote divoire, Sudan and other African countries indicate that Africans want to exercise their God given right of freedom of choice.
7. The spirit propelling democratic changes in Eastern Europe has spilled over to Africa and Africans are also clamoring for a new political order. The need to review political ideologies and change one-party, philosophies into multi-party systems of governance. Pluralism is the natural human inclination and the African is no exception.
8. Peace within and among African nations is a non-negotiable pre-requisite for national progress and development. These continue to elude most African states because of prevailing violence, resulting from the absence of individual and communal peace. In turn without progress and development, poverty, discontentment and violence will persist and Africa will remain eternally a developing world.

Finally, it is obvious that disputes, conflicts and armed hostilities on the African continent will continue until such a time that most of these factors affecting security have been eliminated. This being the deserved end, there is a strong justification for conflict control mechanisms to manage these security crisis situations. Hence structures, concepts, techniques and procedures to manage conflicts have to be developed.

Agreed, Nigeria should have gained substantially from her active peace keeping activities in terms of developing her forces, but lack of a conscious policy on involvement has blurred some of the tangible benefits.

We hold that participation in peace-keeping provides the best opportunities in the absence of war for Nigeria to enhance the quality of her security outfits. Given her ranking, the country should have allowed this to impact on her handling of defence matters.