

The Nigeria War of Unity 1967-1970: Strategies and Diplomacy

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Abstract:

This study examines the aim and strategies of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970 and, emphasizes the diplomatic positions and war strategies adopted by the two sides (Federal Government and Biafra secessionist) involved. It agrees that series of researches have been carried out as regards the Nigerian Civil War but only a few viewed it on the ground of diplomatic maneuvering and strategy. The various literatures laid more emphasis on the causes, dimensions and effects of the war without a thorough analogy on the use of tact and strategy in the context of the war. The study also examines the use of propaganda, military tact, media, peace talks and summits in the context of the Nigerian civil war. This study is divided into two parts; the use of strategies by the Nigerian government and the Biafra people, as well as the peace talks and summits that took place during the war. Both primary and secondary sources of data are employed in this research.

Keywords:

diplomacy; propaganda; strategy; Nigeria; Biafra; Civil war; maneuvering, peace talks

I. Introduction

According to Clausewitz, War is the continuation of politics, in other means, a failure of diplomacy (Clausewitz, 1976). He further opines that war is nothing more than a larger-scale fight. War according to him is made up of countless duels, but an image of it as a whole may be constructed by seeing a couple of wrestlers. Each of these wrestlers tries to force the other to fulfil his will by using physical force; his immediate goal is to throw his opponent, rendering him incapable of further resistance. This however portrayed Clausewitz's understanding of war as an act of force, used in compelling an adversary to obey one's will. Force equips itself with art and scientific creations in order to counteract opposing force. Certain self-imposed, hardly detectable limits, known as international law and custom, are attached to force, but they rarely diminish it. Thus, force—physical force, because moral force does not exist except as represented in the state and the law—is the instrument of war, and the aim is to impose our will on the adversary. To achieve that goal, we must render the adversary impotent, which is the actual goal of combat in principle. That goal takes the place of the target, dismissing it as something unrelated to combat (Oyewale & Osadola, 2018).

Strategy is also a weapon of war; it is a tool used by the strategist to increase the efficiency of the whole operational side of the conflict in order to achieve its goals (Adeleye and Osadola, 2022). This implies the strategist will create the war strategy as well as the goal, which will define the course of action he intends to take (Clausewitz, 1976: 177). The two sides involved in the Nigerian war of unity adopted strategies with the intent of winning the war. These strategies vary from propaganda, weapon acquisition, war plans, and internationalising the war to positioning and formation of military personnel (Oluleye, 1985).

Hence, this study examines the strategy adopted by both the federal military government and the Biafra secessionists in order to either win the war or put a stop to it.

II. Research Methods

2.1 The Nigerian Government War Strategies

The then-eastern region's declaration of independence, led by Ojukwu; the military Governor of the Eastern region before and after the 1966 coup, rendered the Nigerian civil war not just unavoidable, but near (Emah and Osadola, 2021). This declaration was prompted by the failed Aburi Accord which Aremu and Osadola (2018) described as the last straw that broke the camel's back. The first gunshot was fired on July 6, 1967, signalling the start of the brutal thirty-month conflict (Cervenka, 1973). By May 1967, the Nigerian side had already begun making preparations for war. All soldiers from the North, West, and Mid-West had been removed and redeployed from the East. Four of the Army's regular infantry battalions were transferred to the 1st Brigade and renamed - Area Command. The Commander-in-Chief ordered the mobilisation of ex-servicemen. Four more battalions were established from the approximately 7,000 men who were called up. It was decided to increase recruiting from the Nigerian Police Force's employees. This was described by Aremu and Osadola (2018) as a means to an end – focusing on the value attached to the secession move of the Eastern region in the sight of Gowon's led federal government of Nigeria.

Walzer (1977) opines that the Federal Government had to portray the war as a just cause aimed at preventing the country's fragmentation in order to mobilise the Nigerian people. In doing so, the phrase "To keep Nigeria one is a work that must be done" was coined (Osadola, 2012:b). Gowon's letters was tagged "Go on with One Nigeria," which became a powerful propaganda tool (Korieh, 2013).

2.2 Army Offensive

The Nigerian government began its offensive operations in the northern part of the country. On the 2nd of July 1967, the 1st Area Command, backed by an Artillery Brigade, Armoured forces armed with British Scorpion tanks, Saladin armoured vehicles and ferrets, and Engineer units, issued operational instructions for operation UNICORD, the code name for the "police action" against the rebels. The command was split into two brigades, each of which had three battalions. The 1st Brigade moved along the Ogugu-Ogunga-Nsukka road, while the 2nd Brigade advanced along the Gakem-Obudu-Ogoja route. The onslaught was effectively repelled by the rebels. However, with the numerous friends the command had acquired while concentrating on the border waiting for the order to strike, they began to recruit guides and informants, and with this came knowledge about the Biafran forces' disposition, strength, and plans, as well as a breakthrough.

By the 10th of July 1967, the 1st Brigade had taken all of its initial targets, and if they had possessed the Biafran army's detailed intelligence on this day, they would have moved on to seize Enugu, the Biafran capital. In respect of this, Njoku (1987) posits that:

...many of the withdrawing troops were wounded by themselves. Malaria, headaches, and a variety of other ailments were reported by senior executives. If the Nigerian Army had known what was going on on the Biafran side on that fateful day, they would have seized Enugu that day without opposition.

Obasanjo affirmed that the 2nd Brigade had taken Obudu, Gakem, and Ogoja by July 12th. On the 26th of July, 1967, a division created from the Lagos Garrison Organization launched a naval landing on Bonny, launching a second front, the southern sector (LGO). After a hard sea and land fight, the division secured a beach head with the help of the Navy and exploited north. Biafra invaded the erstwhile Mid-Western Region on August 8, 1967, with the goal of relieving strain on the northern sector and threatening Lagos, the Federal Capital. While the LGO was preparing for future operations beyond Bonny, word of the rebel infiltration into the Mid-West reached the commander, who was ordered to leave a battalion in Bonny, suspend all operations there, and move to Escravos with two battalions in order to dislodge the rebels and clear the Mid-West riverine area. These manoeuvres were made with the help of the Nigerian Navy and a merchant from the National Shipping Line. Another division was established to assist the LGO in removing the rebels from the Mid-West. The formations were renamed at this stage. The 1st Area Command was redesignated as the 1st Infantry Division, the newly formed division as the 2nd Infantry Division, and the LGO as the 3rd Infantry Division. As a result, the "police action" became a full-fledged military operation (Obasanjo, 1980).

By the end of September 1969, the separatists had been driven out of a large portion of the Mid-West. Because of the division's unique riverine and creek activities, the commander of the 3rd Infantry Division was granted permission to alter the designation of his unit to 3rd Marine Commando. This was the first time in the Nigerian Army's history that something resembling a Marine organisation was tried. Amphibious operations were not taught to the division. In actuality, the forces were made up of soldiers from the Lagos Garrison Organization (LGO), the Federal capital's administrative structure. The division, however, became the most feared and successful during the conflict after some intensive training (Akpan, 1971).

In line with Obasanjo's (1980) position, Madiebo (1980) also affirmed that the Nigerian government perceived Enugu as a hotbed of secession and rebellion, and they hoped that capturing it would put an end to the insurgency. On September 12, 1967, the march from Nsukka to Enugu began in earnest. The rebels counterattacked, firing their "Red Devil" tanks for the first time. These are pre-World War II French armoured personnel carriers that have been modernised. They were hazardous, sluggish, blind, clumsy, and difficult to manoeuvre. Anti-tank recoilless weapons and a daring infantry charge made them easy prey. Enugu was taken on the 4th of October 1967, and the 1st Infantry Division took time to reorganise and repair. The division was under the mistaken impression that the fall of Enugu would mark the end of the revolt. The 1st Infantry Division decided to allow the secessionists some time to give up their cause, despite the fact that the flame of revolt was still burning brightly in the hearts of most Easterners (Madiebo, 1980).

Ojukwu was stoking the fire and riding high on the emotions of his apparently hurt and enraged people, who felt betrayed and sought vengeance for the events of 1966. It took another six months for the division to restart the offensive, allowing the rebels the time they needed to reorganise and collect additional ammo, weapons, and equipment to continue their fight.

On the south/southeast boundary, the 3rd Marine Commando created a new front. Calabar was taken on October 13, 1967, with the help of the Navy. The Federal Government established sovereignty in Nigerian seas and international waters surrounding the Nigerian coast with the conquest of Calabar, Warri, Escravos, and Bonny. Biafra was cut off from the rest of the world, leaving Port Harcourt Airport as the main method of international contact and transit. At this time, the Biafran leadership resolved to seek for alternate channels for the entrance of military hardware and medical supplies into the enclave. Awgu, Uga, and Ulli are three straight

road segments that have been turned into airstrips. Portharcourt was seized on May 19, 1968. The outside world was left in no question about the Federal superiority in the war with the conquest of Enugu, Bonny, Calabar, and Portharcourt. Mercenaries fighting for Biafra have begun to desert. Biafra began smuggling photos of hungry children overseas and accusing Nigeria of genocide. This resulted in Biafra receiving military, economic, and political aid from foreign groups, prolonging the conflict and the suffering of the people of Biafra (Stremlau, 1977).

After few unsuccessful efforts to cross the Niger River at Asaba, the 2nd Infantry Division crossed the river at Idah in early 1969 and pushed through the previously freed districts of Nsukka and Enugu to seize Onitsha. The division pushed further towards Owerri. The 1st Infantry Division advanced on Umuahia at the same time. The 3rd Marine Commando was now marching on three fronts: the Oguta-Owerinta-Ulli airstrip-Umuahia axis, the Portharcourt-Aba-Owerri-Umuahia axis, and the Calabar-Uyo-Umuahia axis. The aim was to meet up with the 1st Infantry Division in Umuahia and encircle the rebels, either forcing them to surrender or destroying their fighting spirit. Using guerilla tactics, Biafra attempted but failed to stave off the Nigerian Army's attack (Forsyth, 1977).

On the 10th of January 1970, Lt. Col. Ojukwu, the self-proclaimed Head of State of Biafra, realising the situation was completely chaotic and hopeless, he handed over the administration of Biafra to Commander Biafran Army Maj. Gen. Phillip Effiong and flew out of the enclave with his immediate family in search of peace. Maj. Gen. Effiong discussed the issue with the Biafra Strategic Committee, and they concluded that enough was enough and that surrender was the only honourable way out.

2.3 Diplomacy

The Federal Government of Nigeria waged a diplomatic effort to persuade other nations, notably superpowers such as the United States of America, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom, not to recognise the secessionists. A person portrayed the conflict as an adventure. The Lagos administration continued to represent the entire country in international institutions, where a vigorous propaganda campaign was undertaken to depict the conflict as a fight to bring the country back together. This allowed them to gain the backing of superpowers while continuing to denigrate Biafra. Nigeria was able to acquire additional guns and equipment from all over the world as a result of this assistance. Nigeria continued to participate in international peace negotiations in order to demonstrate that she was ready for a peaceful resolution to the war (Stremlau, 1977). Some of the peace talks were examined by Aremu & Osadola (2018), they include; Kinshasa Peace Talks, Kampala peace talks, Addis Ababa peace talks, Algiers summit, etc (Aremu and Osadola, 2018: 223-232)

III. Discussion

3.1 Biafra Strategy

a. Biafra Military

When the troops of non-Eastern origin departed from Enugu in August 1966, Biafran war preparations sprang into high gear. Thousands of individuals applied for the job. Officers and troops, the majority of whom were professors and university students, received training. The Eastern Region lacked adequate weaponry prior to the beginning of conflict since all troops who returned to the region did so without their guns, but soldiers who were removed from the East did so with their weapons. The Nigerian Army's remnants in Enugu barracks numbered around 240 troops, the bulk of whom were technicians and craftsmen who lacked firearms. The Eastern

Region, on the other hand, had succeeded in obtaining guns and ammunition from France, Spain, and Portugal prior to the beginning of the war. When more weaponry arrived in May 1967 according to Madiebo (1980), the decision was made to establish two new battalions, the 9th and 14th Battalions.

The Biafran Air Force was formed after several pilots and technicians from the Nigerian Air Force of Eastern descent returned to the region (BAF). With the purchase of new helicopters, two vintage planes, a B26 and a B25, were purchased. The two bombers were armed with machine guns and rockets and explosives produced in the United States. Minicon aircraft were also purchased by the Biafra Air Force (Emah and Osadola, 2021). Calabar developed a tiny navy with three patrol boats that were formerly used by the Nigerian Navy. More boats were eventually built in the area, which were armoured and equipped with light and machine guns (Uwechua, 1971). The Biafra Militia, a people's army, was established. Local leaders and ex-military personnel taught young men and women how to utilise any weapon they possessed. These weapons were mostly short firearms that were imported or produced locally. The militias were supposed to offer a fast source of personnel re-enforcement for the regular army, aid with military administration immediately behind the frontlines, garrison any regions won or reclaimed from the enemy, and help educate the populace about why Biafra was fighting (Jorre, 1972).

The Administration Support organisation was established. Prior to the declaration of hostilities, the tiny Biafran Army was virtually entirely funded by contributions from the general public. Since all the young and able-bodied men and women were to be involved in the war, this structure was to gather essential support, notably logistical necessities for the army, and to manage the government. A Food Directorate was established, which was in charge of purchasing and distributing all food, drink, and cigarettes to the military forces and the rest of the country. There is a Transportation Directorate that has been formed for the acquisition, management, and distribution of it. The board developed and constructed a large, efficient fuel refinery that produced gasoline, diesel, and motor oil at a rapid rate (Stremlau, 1977).

Clothing, Housing, Propaganda, Requisition and Supply, and Medical were among the other directorates formed. Clothing was especially important because uniforms were scarce in Biafra. The Eastern Region's textile mills have been revived to create uniform bails for the military troops and citizens. It was decided to form a Research and Production Board. Rockets, mines, tanks, grenades, launchers, bombs, flame throwers, vaccinations, biological and alcoholic drinks, and other items were all studied and created by this group (Okocha, 1994).

Women were taught how to acquire intelligence and infiltrate the Nigerian side. The Women Voluntary Service was established to aid in the education of Biafran women on the causes of the problem, to keep women informed of events, to assist in the rehabilitation of war casualties, to establish nurseries, orphanages, civil defence corps, and to provide chefs for the troops. An Advisory Committee was formed to organise and conduct the war, as well as to provide political and military advice to the Head of State (Momoh, 2000).

b. Political / Diplomatic

The Biafrans were well aware that the odds were stacked against them, and that their survival hinged on the amount of foreign assistance they could garner. The Biafrans conducted a robust campaign and propaganda for worldwide recognition of Biafra, as well as the procurement of guns and equipment, through many of its compatriots living overseas. This effective propaganda resulted in her being recognised by countries such as Tanzania, Zambia, Gabon, Ivory Coast, and Haiti, as well as covert French support and double dealing by countries

such as West Germany, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, Republic of Dahomey, Sierra Leone, and secret arms and ammunition importation into the region.

c. Biafra's use of Propaganda

Indeed, one thing remarkable about the Nigerian war of unity was the role of propaganda during the war of unity (NAE, 1967). Although it might be unvoiced as a cause of the war but it is pertinent to note that propaganda was the salient element behind its immediate causes, and it also played a prominent role in the course of the war.

In the course of the war, the sway of the war was too devastating on the Biafran side that the Nigerian government cut off the supply of relief materials from the international community. By this, the Biafrans resorted to the use of propaganda as an instrument of war by claiming that the Nigerian government who had earlier engaged on human right abuse had denied the Biafran right to international aids.

Most scholars argue that the message and organisation of the Biafran propaganda was better and more effective than that of Nigeria. For example, Uche, (1985) argued that during the Nigerian War of unity of 6th July 1967- 12th January 1970, Radio Biafra was literally seen as the Biafran Government, per se. He goes on to say that even when the Biafran leadership departed the enclave before the war ended, people believed in the notion of Biafra since the Biafran Radio Station identifications remained "This is Radio Biafra Enugu." When Radio Biafra finally went silent, the thirty-month war was officially over.

In the Biafran conflict, radio is by far the most potent weapon. Channel 6 in Enugu and Channel 4 in Aba were the only two television stations in Biafra by 1967 (Ukpabi, 1992). The Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation in Enugu, on the other hand, went out to the entire area and beyond. There were additional repeater stations in all of the Region's province headquarters. Apart from local newspapers in Aba, Calabar, and Onitsha that only had circulation in the provinces, the Biafran government owned and controlled the major newspaper, which had a regional readership (Mbaya, 1999).

There were also a lot of official propaganda flyers. Despite the fact that the inhabitants of Calabar, Ogoja, and Rivers Provinces were slaughtered with the Igbo in the north, they did not wish to be a part of Biafra. As a result, the Eastern Region as a whole did not speak with one voice. As a result, propaganda from Lagos was focused to the people in the three dissident areas in order to destroy Biafra. On the other hand, the Biafran media put out a lot of propaganda to keep people in the fold.

Because Biafra held military control of the area at the time, the Biafran media dominated. Listening to Radio Nigeria and reading Nigerian newspapers were declared illegal and considered as sabotage to further solidify the government's grip. It is unclear whether the Biafran government ever caught and punished anyone for violating this law, but there were reports that some of those who were apprehended were mobbed to death by angry crowds or summarily shot by soldiers, despite the fact that this was clearly not at the command or with the knowledge of Biafran government superior officers (Mbaya, 1999).

The Biafran administration took control of Radio Nigeria Enugu, an extension of Federal Radio Nigeria, at the start of the conflict. For better management, all of the broadcast systems were placed under one roof. The Ministry of Information was renamed "The Propaganda Directorate, which is led by university lecturer Dr. Ifegwu Eke, because to the Federal Nigerian

Government's air and sea embargo against Biafra, importing and exporting from the Biafran area became difficult, if not impossible. Biafra then founded the Voice of Biafra in order to reach out to the rest of the world and ask for help.

The tempo of the conflict was determined by propaganda. On the radio, territories were conquered and lost. Newspapers couldn't be printed because of a scarcity of paper and spare parts. The radio relied on a repair culture to survive. Biafra was sometimes only heard on the radio. Even when Nigerian military took control of Enugu, the station located underground in a bunker in Umuahia continued to announce Enugu's retention. People were urged to make more radio from junk, which helped the stations. Radios were urged to be purchased and carried. Bushes and woods served as transmitters, with palm and cotton wool trees serving as antennas (Mbaya, 1999).

The Biafran media was utilised to create solidarity, confidence, and spirit among the Biafran people before to the battle of unification. Images of easterners being slaughtered in Kano and other areas of the North were often shown on what was then known as Eastern Nigeria Television and published in the region's media. This infuriated the entire East, not just the Ibos. The massacres had an impact on most Eastern households, either directly or indirectly. Bicycles, trucks, aircraft, trains, and these guys who lay on top of trains were all used to transport people from the North to the East. Images of Igbo casualties flooded Eastern television channels such as Channel 6 and 4, as well as certain publications (Smock, 1991).

At this point, the images were shown on Western Nigerian television and newspapers. Interviews with the throngs of people coming into the East were broadcast on the radio. Easterners were outraged by the images of the evacuation. The resettlement of the refugees, often known as "returnees" in the East, had an impact on everyone's lives in the region.

Drama and skits in celebration of Biafra and edifying of Ojukwu were commissioned by the Biafran media. Nigeria, on the other hand, was shown in a negative light, and Gowon was mocked. At Ikot Ekpene, Aba-Azumini-Ekpat Akwa, notably at Ogbor Hill, and Port Harcourt, Abagana, and Umuahia-Uzuakoli, the war's heaviest engagements were fought. The media lauded the Biafran leaders on various battlefronts for their ability, intellect, and bravery. The battle was able to continue in this fashion. The media instilled in the Biafran people a sense of security. It gave them optimism that they would be adequately safeguarded and defended from annihilation. Colonel Archibong of the Ikot Ekpene front, Colonel Achuzia of the Port Harcourt front, and Colonel Ananaba of the Adazi front were lauded for magical powers that could not be pierced by opposing forces. Colonel Archibong was said to be immune to enemy gunfire, he was presumed to be invincible. These were part of the propaganda aimed at putting fear in the heart of the Nigerian Armies. This was similar to statements made throughout the Ukpum Ete/Okon wars, proving propaganda's consistency (Aremu and Osadola, 2018).

3.2 Markpress

For the course of the conflict, Markpress acted as Biafra's public diplomacy arm. The public relations agency took on the Biafran client in late 1967 and had an immediate impact on the war's outcome. Despite the fact that none of the content issued by Markpress was created by the company, it made full use of its understanding of the worldwide media system to provide Biafra with an efficient means of reaching out to the world's media. Markpress' achievement was recognised by Time Magazine, which stated:

Mark-press has actually conducted Biafra's war through press releases since January [of 1968] — more than 250 of them. They're jam-packed with information on upcoming arms

transfers meant to humiliate European politicians, as well as dire warnings about hunger. More than 70 journalists from every West European country were flown into Biafra by the company, and eyewitness reports were sent to their newspapers (NAE, 1968).

Despite the fact that Markpress issued hundreds of press releases until Biafra's capitulation in 1970, its owner, American H. W. Bernhardt, made few comments about why he accepted the position of Biafra's news department. Bernhardt stated in a letter to editors receiving Markpress releases that his company had never accepted an account like Biafra's before, and that they had only accepted Biafra's account after investigating the situation and concluding that:

Our company felt it had no choice but to put its communications network at Biafra's disposal, thus the Biafran people and their government. People from all around the globe are currently donating money to help the Biafrans buy food and medical supplies. As a gift to this great cause, our firm is providing services at a reduced rate (Jorre, 1972).

Markpress helped to the Biafran war effort by opening the nation to reporters, sponsoring their trip to Biafra, and acting as a centre for the publication of their articles, photos, and films, rather than by producing press releases. The firm was so successful in its efforts that they were commended and chastised in the same breath. "The [Nigerian] Federal Government concedes that it has come out second best in the war of words," Time Magazine wrote in the same edition (NAE, 1968). Indeed, the Nigerian government recruited the British advertising agency Galizine, Grant & Russell in reaction to Markpress' work with Biafra (Akinyemi, 1972).

The British House of Commons heard criticism of Markpress' efficacy, with conservative John Cordle telling the House that "sincere people in this country accept the misinformation and filth which Markpress has put out about Nigeria, "when I compare this misinformation to what Nigerians say for themselves, my blood boils" (NAE, 1968). "The photos that have emerged in the Press are all shot by entirely independent press photographers, not by Markpress or the Biafran Government," Bernhardt said in the sole other open letter confirming Markpress' connection with Biafra. Bernhardt then accused Cordle of hypocrisy, claiming that Markpress was performing the same work that the Nigerians had contracted out to other public relations firms, with the added benefit of having their own official government offices and British Commonwealth offices assisting their public diplomacy efforts (Doron, 2011).

Because of the Nigerian military's attempt to terminate the conflict in January 1970, most of Biafra's media blitz across the world began to fade in the second part of 1969. In October 1969, the British government issued a brochure titled Conflict in Nigeria:

The British View, which was extensively distributed among its European delegations. The Foreign Office sent a letter to many of its embassies around the world in advance of its release, with the British embassy in "Switzerland important because of Markpress would have liked something more detailed." Many European capitals, including those thought to be pro-Biafra, had lost interest in the civil war. The necessity for [special envoys sent to European meetings over Biafra] may be slightly reduced, according to John Wilson of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Even in Scandinavia, the Biafrans appear to be on the defensive [...]

Apart from that, pro-Biafran efforts are no longer uncontested, and we believe the pinnacle of criticism of our policies in Germany and Switzerland has passed, and Markpress is no longer widely seen as an authoritative source (Doron, 2011).

Interest in Biafra in general had waned across Europe by the latter half of 1969, and most British missions were in general agreement with the fact that Markpress was no longer as effective as it had been in the earlier stages of the war. Further, the general consensus among British diplomatic staff was that the public opinion campaign for Biafra had waned enough that there was no need to stir up attention with either the booklet or and special envoys. The Nigerian embassy in Rome stated simply that:

in Italy, the Biafran propaganda campaign is now fairly muted and receives scant publicity [...] but if the situation deteriorates again, we shall probably want to take up your offer.

Similarly, the Nigerian embassy in Copenhagen reported that: Danish interest in Biafra is not at the moment acute (Doron, 2011) and the embassy in Brussels concurred, saying

at present Biafran propaganda is neither very noticeable nor effective in Brussels” and that “we do not think [engaging the Belgian press] would be useful and it could even work against our purposes by drawing attention to a situation which does not at the moment get much attention from the local press.” Just as the war was turning against the Biafrans, it appeared that Markpress’ reach as a media source lost much of its luster (Umoh, 2011).

In January 1970, when Biafra finally surrendered, Markpress released a notice on the closure of the “Biafran Overseas Press Service”. Titled Signing Off, Markpress defended their support of Biafra by saying:

We have been repeatedly asked since the surrender whether we thought we had done the right thing in accepting this account. We are even accused of having prolonged the war. To answer this, one has only to ask some simple questions, such as “Does one believe in the freedom of the press?”, and “Does one believe that everyone has a right to be heard?” Negative answers can only mean press censorship and, in effect, a rejection of basic human rights. The Biafran people, no one can deny, fought bravely and from the highest motives. We are proud that we were afforded the opportunity of helping them (Umoh, 2011).

IV. Conclusion

The two sides (Federal Government and Biafra) involved in the war; Nigerian government and the secessionist, provided several diplomatic strategies in winning the war as well as sympathy of the international community. These strategies further prolonged the war and cause more damages. France’s support for the Biafran separatists during the Nigerian Civil War was a major source of contention for Anglo-French relations in the late 1960s, particularly in the final eighteen months of the Biafran war when French involvement directly opposed British policy in the region (Emina, 2020).

It was revealed that the two sides involved in the war adopted strategies with the intent of winning the war. These strategies are for the purpose of manoeuvring; varying from propaganda and weapon acquisition, to positioning and formation of military personnel (Oluleye, 1985). The study concluded that the intervention of foreign nations, bodies and organisation did both harm and good to the process of disintegration. It further concludes that there is need for government to invest more in reducing the mistrust that the war caused. They should further

ensure a peaceful settlement and reconciliation of the leading ethnic groups in Nigeria to curb the new dimensions (IPOB & Oduduwa) targeted at disintegrating the nation (Akanmu, 2020).

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