

Nigerian–Biafra War: Re-interrogating Indiscipline and Sabotage among the Biafran Soldiers

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Abstract: The Nigeria–Biafran war was an interstate military confrontation engaged in by the forces of Nigeria and Biafra between 1967–1970 as the former tried to maintain the cooperate existence of the country subsequent upon the latter expressing determination to break away from the national sovereignty of the federal republic of Nigeria. On the one hand, the Biafrans cited discrimination and political marginalization as the bane of the conflict. While on the other hand, it was the inability or rather the unwillingness of the Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon to rectify the resolution of 'Aburi Accord' that precipitated the outbreak of the conflict. Consequently, the war that was perceived to be a police-match by the Nigerian troops had ended up in three years of bloodshed and destructions. Although, commentators and historians alike have done a lot of classical studies on the causes and the aftermath of the civil war, which no doubt have provided a framework for understanding and analyzing conflict in Nigeria, however little have been done to unpack the factors necessary for the Biafran troops unprecedented resilience, credence and military capability that repelled attacks from the Nigerian troops who had more firepower, external support and an organized trained army. It is against this backdrop therefore, that this paper argues that Nigerian soldiers gained prominence immediately indiscipline and sabotage began to intrude among the Biafran soldiers. Our objectives are to critically examine how internal squabbles and perfunctory attitude among the Biafran soldiers have combined to weaken their military capability and enthusiasm to win the war. Data were collected from secondary sources such as textbooks, journal articles and archival materials, while content analysis was applied in analyzing data collected for this study. The paper concludes that the 'cancer indiscipline', betrayal and sabotage have caused the Biafrans' dreams of actualizing sovereignty and recognition within the international community to be abruptly terminated.

Keywords: Biafra, Indiscipline, Sabotage, Civil War, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Since independence in 1960, Nigerians have had difficulties in their efforts to fashion out a workable interaction between power and consent, freedom and obligation as well as between the nationalities themselves and the nation-state to which they belong. This posed serious doubts and questions to what would be regarded as the political arrangements suitable for the country, who would control political power at the center and how would political power be shared in such a way that the states, which are the federating units can act as moderating influence on the centre in a true federation? In view of the lop-sided nature of the former Regions making up the federation in spite of the

creation of states, it did appear that the position of the Head of State would never go round the former Regions instead it would be confined to the numerical superior part of the country. Thus, casting doubt on the serenity, national cohesion, identity and ethnic unity of Nigeria as an indivisible entity.

However, while Nigeria was still experimenting workable political system barely seven years of political independence, unfortunately, at 5.00 am, on 6 July 1967, the federal forces crossed the start line into Biafra, thus heralding the commencement of the civil war. According to S. C Ukpabi, four days earlier, the 1 Area Command had issued its operational orders code named OP UNICORD which committed two brigades of three battalions each to the

conflict [1]. However, scholar such as Ukpabi [1] further stresses that 1 Brigade was assigned the task of capturing Nsukka and advancing further south, while 2 Brigade was given the task of capturing Gakem, Obudu and Ogoja. Therefore, the Army Headquarters in Lagos had planned the war in four phases to capture Nsukka, then Ogoja, Abakaliki and finally Enugu. Presumably, the technical and strategic posture of the Nigerian military would leave one hoped that the Biafrans would give up once their capital, Enugu was captured rather, the war dragged on with total resilient and mentally-spirited by the Biafran soldiers to defend their territory. For Arthur Nwankwo, the Biafrans still believed in the invincibility of the fatherland, and refused to accept that Enugu, their capital city, would fall. Thus, nobody, except women and children, was allowed to leave Enugu until the Federal troops had actually entered the city on 4 October [2]. This is important of the fact that on the Biafran spirit, their resilience and enthusiasm to defend their fatherland demonstrated their readiness to die, hence they saw the war as “do or die”, fighting with machetes against the Nigerian forces that were armed with machine guns and automatic rifles. For Chinua Achebe, beyond the understandable trepidation associated with the looming war, one found a new spirit among the people, a spirit one did not know existed, a determination in fact [3]. The spirit was that of people ready to put in their best and fight for their freedom. In this spirit, the prevalent mantra of the moment was “*Ojukwunyeyiegbekaanyinuogha*”-“Ojukwu give us guns to fight a war” [3]. However, it could be understood from the Biafran spirits that while the Nigerian troops fought with more sophisticated weapons, the Biafran soldiers were ever ready to die fighting with inferior weapons in defense of their country home. Worst still, there was a band of soldiers clothed without gun and moved forward into the forest to face a superior armed Nigerian soldiers.

Again, there was limitation to the size and number of troops needed in the Biafran military. For example, as the secession of Biafra was greeted with applause all over the territory, young men rushed to military units to enlist. This could not expand the Biafran army as the armoury could only contain a few hundred rifles. And more importantly, an influential group in the Biafran Government believed that a large army was not necessary. Because, Biafra was not immediately interested in a large army, most young men who volunteered were rejected. They formed militia bands as outlets for their soaring spirits with scores of this band springing up all over Biafra. Against this odd, one found three characters in the Biafran spirit-determination, sacrifices and patriotism, though we will return to these later.

2. Sources and Methodology

The data for this study were sourced from the already existing literature such as textbooks, periodic journals, Newspapers and online materials. Information collated from these literature were analyzed using a historical methodology. The importance of this method shows that there is no

particular chronological order adopted to analyze the causes of Biafran war rather, events leading to the outbreak of the war are historically discussed.

2.1. Background of Nigeria-Biafran War

The 1962-63 population census figures with the January coup and counter coup of July, 1966 together with the 1966 pogrom against the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria constituted the background to the outbreak of Nigerian-Biafran war. However, these incidences were precipitated by the 1914 amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates without recourse to the ethno-religious divide of the people. The tribal and religio-cultural differences of these people were neglected by the British parochialism whose interest was only in uniting people for administrative conveniences. Thus, they created a platform for domination, marginalization and discrimination of people against their religious and ethnic background during and after the independent struggle of Nigerian state.

By extension, the 1922 Clifford declaration that the Northern Nigeria were to be governed through proclamation by limiting the competence of the Legislative Council to the South and the Richards entrenchment of the principle of Regionalism necessitated tribal sentiments among the regions of Nigeria. To suture the wound, Nigeria was granted independence on October 1, 1960, but with the principle of regionalism already in existence, the motion for independence moved by Anthony Enahoro to the Legislative Council in 1953 was foreclosed by lack of patriotism from the nationalists especially, as the Northern parliament staged a walkout as a consequence of the motion. The reason for the walkout was that, the North feared that they would be marginalized by educated south and had through the instruction of the British prayed that they were not ready. The consequence of this situation was that the battle line had been drawn and according to P. O. Okpaga; the political lines drawn up in 1914 by the British colonial rulers had little regard for the vast diversity that existed within the new boundaries of the colony. Different groups united under artificial constraints, had very little in common in terms of culture, ethnicity and religion [4]. To this extent, one would say that it was this conditions that set the stage for the war.

2.1.1. The 1962-63 Population Census

The 1962 population census provided the background to which Nigeria had to experiment her political maturity and independence. Marred with a lot of irregularities issuing from the population figure, the 1963 population census was quickly arranged to pacify the anger of the 1962 population results. From 13th to 27th May, 1962, a population census was conducted and the institution for it showed some marked improvement from other previous exercises. Though, the result was cancelled after a prolonged and heated dispute concerning inflation of figures. Each region tried to inflate its result based on the fact that the distributions and allocations of federal resource were based on the population figure or density of such region. To that extent, the North accused the

South of tempering with their results, thus leading to the 1963 population census.

In February 1964, the results of the federal census held in 1963 were announced. It showed that of all a total population of 55 million, over half of the result population was resident in the Northern region. The implication was that the North would continue to be politically dominated in the Federal House of Assembly thereby compelled the National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon of the east and Mid-West to reject the result in its entirety. In this context, Webster, Bohen and Tidy contend that since political power at the centre was determined by the voting power in the regions, the NCNC and Action Group-AG felt compelled to reject the census (which in any case was probably inaccurate) since they greatly feared the potential domination of the whole country by the North [5].

As a result of the census, a realignment of political forces took place. By this, the NCNC in the East and Mid-West allied themselves with the predominantly the Western (AG) and the opposition parties of North to form the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) for the purpose of fighting 1964-65 federal election.

2.1.2. The 1964 Federal Election

It is unfortunate that Nigeria headed into the election with the wound of 1963 population result yet, unhealed. The 1963 population census was not after all, the solution to 1962 population census irregularities but a national catharsis to the political tension and bugaboo created in the country. Therefore, the political realignment that manifested in the formation of UPGA was challenged by the Nigeria National Alliance composed of NPC, the traditional party of the North and NNDP, the new Western party splintered from the AG and the NCNC.

The election itself became notorious for its malpractice. The political stakes were so high that each political party indulged in questionable practice to ensure the election of its candidate. The result, though technically securing victory for the NNA was considered by many, particularly in the South to be so dubious that President Azikiwe declined to invite the NNA to form a government.

Within the fury of political ding-dong, Nigeria was thrown into disunity, a shibboleth called dichotomy such as:

- The North/ South dichotomy,
- The East/ West dichotomy,
- Majority/ minority dichotomy,
- Muslim/Christian dichotomy,
- Military/politician dichotomy,
- Socialist/capitalist dichotomy,
- Urban/rural dichotomy,
- The traditional/ modern dichotomy [6].

The situation was interminable with Nigeria gradually oozing to political instability. The picture it presented was that military intervention was inexorably inevitable.

2.2. The 1966 Military Coup

The military intervention in Nigeria's politics issued from

the instability within the country's political development. In late 1965 and early in 1966, there were rumors that the army was to be used to restore civil order, but before this could be done the army itself was determined to impose solution and was by 15th January 1966 through a group of middle ranked army officers attempted a *coup d'état*. As Nigeria approached independence, there was a scramble for elite positions among the Nigerian civilians. This scramble deteriorated and became a veritable political war after independence. E. O. Ojukwu agrees with the above assertion when he accentuated that it was this war that gave the opportunity for the military to attempt a *coup d'état* in January, 1966 [6]. The philosophy behind the coup was never reflected in its misrepresentation as the authors of the coup had in mind to save the country from collapsing but many tainted it as an Igbo coup just to give it ethnic colouration.

In this context, the mutineers of 1966 coup secured control in Kaduna and Ibadan, killing the Sardauna of Sokoto and Chief S. L. Akintola, premier of the west. In Lagos, the mutineers succeeded in assassinating Sir Abukabar Tafewa Balewa, the Federal Prime Minister and Chief Okotie-Eboh, Finance Minister but failed to take over the federal government machinery. Indeed, the survivors of the federal cabinet were premised to invite Major J. T. A. Aguiyi-Ironsi to take over government leadership, hence the mutineers admitted their failure and thus surrounded to Ironsi and the "loyal" section of the army. The coup was dubbed the lasting solution to the discredited political crisis that bedeviled the country; however, it had in some quarters been seen as the Igbo coup because neither the Igbo political leadership nor, the Igbo military leadership had been touched. Therefore while the coup was successful in the establishing the army's political authority, power did not fall into the hands of the officers, led by Major Nzeogwu in the North and Major Ifeajuna in Lagos.

A striking feature of the coup is that the rump of Balewa's government did not consider the authors of the 15th January effort as heroes; otherwise, it would have handed over power to Nzeogwu or Ifeajuna whenever he surfaced. Secondly, to say that the coup was an Igbo was to say the least for a still-born country otherwise, how could the coup become an Igbo coup when the most senior army General-T. A. Ironsi and E. O. Ojukwu, Igbo men stopped the coup in Lagos and in the North respectively? In fact it is imperative to say that, the pre-independent Nigeria's nationalists did not as a matter of sincerity consider the religious and tribal differences during their struggle for independence, they were only concerned about freedom from the colonialist who stoked the flame of pan ethnic nationalism among the various ethnicities of Nigeria.

2.3. The 1966 Counter-Coup

Following the declaration of May 1966 by General Ironsi to centralize the federal structure of the government, a mutiny within the army resulted in the death of General Ironsi as the military head and commander in-chief of the armed forces. In May 1966, General Ironsi decreed the

abolition of the federal structure of the government which was widely interpreted in the North as an attempt to bring that region under Southern control. As a result, there was a wave of killings of Southerners resident in the North and later in July a mutiny within the army resulted to the assassination of Thompson Aguiyi Ironsi. E. O. Ojukwuposits that, a close look at the events of 1966 will show that the counter-coup that toppled the Ironsi regime was anything but a spontaneous uprising in reaction to the now notorious Decree NO. 34 [6]. This decree could be understood to have merely centralized the administration of Nigeria in a manner that facilitated military command. Aside this, the ill-feeling which resulted to the July 1966 counter-coup issued from two interrelated claims, first, there was a feeling that neither the Igbo political leadership nor their military leadership was touched and second, Tafawaunlike the Sardauna and Akintola, had not resisted arrest and his assassination was interpreted as deliberate despite the mutineers claim that they had sought to avoid bloodshed.

3. The Igbo Pogrom

The 1966 Igbo pogrom was a series of massacres committed against the Igbo people and other people of southern Nigerian origin living in the north. The massacre occurred on May 29, 1966 and lasted till September 29 the same year. The genocide took place in the context of military coup d'état and in the prelude to Nigeria-Biafra war in which the perceived lack of Igbo humility was identified as one of the factors that sparked the pogrom and onslaught that resulted to the hostility towards the Igbo.

In fact, it is instructive to note that the immediate precursor to the massacre was the January 1966 coup d'état organized by young Igbo officers consequent upon the awareness that four out of the five Majors that executed the coup were Igbo. The coup was interpreted as an Igbo coup as no Igbo political leader or military officer was killed. Against this background an Igbo General was called to immediately take-over government and on July 29, a counter-coup that killed 240 southerners out of which three quarters were Igbo men including Ironsi, the then military head of state. However, C. Achebe puts their number at thirty thousand civilian men, women and children. According to him, six month after the January 1966 coup, the Northern officers carried out a revenge coup in which they killed Igbo officers and men in large numbers [3]. N. Charles contends that as a reappraisal to January 1966 Igbo coup, the July 1966 counter-coup was organized by the Northern officers against the Southerners [7]. This incident, heightened the ethnic rivalry that showcased Nigeria was on the edge of a precipice. The massacre of Igbo people living in the north impacted negatively on our national cohesion, integration and cooperation hence, Achebe further stresses that the Northerners unleashed waves of brutal massacre that Colin Legum of Observers (UK) was the first to describe as a pogrom. In fact, the massacre was surprisingly implemented by the government-the army, the police-the very people who

were there to protect life and property.

3.1. The Nigeria-Biafra War

The Nigeria-Biafra war was the outcome of the January 15, 1966 coup d'état and the counter-coup that was staged mainly by the Northern Nigerian officers who murdered over 185 Igbo officers, together with the massacre of thirty-three thousand Igbo and Easterners in pogroms that started in May 1966. In retaliation, scores of Northerners living in the East were set upon by irate refugees from the North. Subsequently, over a million refugees returned to the East from other parts of the Federation. And 'non Easterners' were expelled from the East thus, polarized the Nigerian crisis into Eastern Region-Federal Government conflict. In the context of this, all efforts towards settling these crises failed and the most prominent of these efforts was the meeting in January 1967, of the Nigerian Supreme Military Council at Aburi, Ghana. In this meeting, some agreements were reached particularly as they raised hopes of settling the crises. Surprisingly, these agreements were interpreted differently by the two parties which led to the hopes being shattered.

According to A. Nwankwo, events became so deteriorated that on 27 May 1967, Gowon promulgated a decree dividing Nigeria into twelve States [2]. By three days later, and on 30 May, Ojukwu declared the secession of the Eastern Region of Nigeria and the establishment of Independent Republic of Biafra. Consequent upon this, a war ensued between the forces of the Federal Government to prevent secession and the Biafra to assert its independence. The war which began on 6 July 1967, ended on 12 January, 1970 with the defeat of Biafra. Originally, the war that was initially declared a police action by the Federal Government of Nigeria lasted for thirty months with the Biafran troops showing a sense of resilient despite poor war apparatus. However, there were several factors that worked against the Biafrans among which are hunger and malnutrition, indiscipline and sabotage and poor military facilities.

3.1.1. Hunger and Malnutrition

The defeat of the Biafrans during the Nigeria-Biafra war steamed from the starvation policy adopted by the Nigerian government. The policy was suggested by Obafemi Awolowo who did not hesitate to announce that the South-West would break out of the Nigerian federation should the Igbo secede. Awolowo whose suggestions included changing the currency, refusal to devalue the Naira and the ordering of a stop to food corridors was considered an anti-Igbo struggle. The implementation of these policies prompted the quick defeat of the Biafrans towards the middle of 1970. In fact, it was cataclysmic that, Nigerian Government in her very stand had resolved to stop the supply of relief materials to the Biafrans. The policy was not only self-destroying but facilitated the prompt defeat of the Biafrans. A. A. Madiabo added that the greatest disaster attendant upon the loss of Abakaliki was the fact that it was by far the greatest food-producing area of Biafra [8]. The implication was that the Biafrans lost the war immediately Abakaliki as the food hub of the Biafra was captured.

In this context, it was learnt that the Biafran army at a time began to go through two-three days without food. In this regards, Madiebo further stated that one of the greatest challenges of the Biafrans was how to run the Food Directorate. He maintains that the first problem identified with was that the military operations had to be timed to fit in with meal timings as determined by various civilian cookhouses, over which the Army had no authority [8]. Its consequence was that the Army lost flexibility and surprise unless one was prepared to forgo some meals. This affected Biafran troops greatly that the warring soldiers became weak and less combatant. For example, it was learnt that each time the Army lost ground, the cookhouses dispersed and took several days to reassemble and re-establish in another location and in their absence, the troops went without food. To deal with this problem, a Biafran Army Service Corps (BASC) was formed to assist the Food Directorate with the distribution of food to Army rear units.

Civilian communities only supported units operating in their areas as the food problem heightened when the Red Cross decided to stop its "mercy" flights in July, 1969 after one of its planes was shot down by a Nigeria Air Force Russian Jet Fighter. By this, the Biafran population was hit by starvation as many children began to suffer from protracted kwashiorko arising from malnutrition and poor food supply. According to A. A. Nwankwo, only fortunate military units ate once a day. Most averaged one meal in three days [2]. He further maintains that troops often went for a whole week without a meal. When there was a meal, it wasn't a meal as such-just a cup of dry garri and the soldier was expected to find some water, soak the garri and 'smoke' it.

3.1.2. Indiscipline and Sabotage

One of the striking features to the Biafran defeat was the issue of indiscipline and sabotage. In spite of the prolonged starvation and resilience demonstrated among the Biafran soldiers in the battlefield, indiscipline and sabotage set in immediately the Army lost confidence on Food Directorate. The Food Directorate demonstrated a lot of incompetence in the distribution of food to soldiers. As the war progressed and the Biafran territories shrank, the number of people fed by the Food Directorate increased, and the amount of food getting to the Army decreased. By early 1969, almost all food producing areas had been lost to the forces of Nigeria. The Food Directorate had little or no money to buy as the little amount of food available was still sold at cut-throat price.

Thus, the food problem assumed different dimensions with everybody placing his survival and that of his dependants above every other consideration. By this, malpractices and cheating became part of the troop's survival. Meanwhile, not only had the Army become more committed to their survival, the Food Directorate officials became so dubious that when they bought their food they would make generous allowances for their dependents. In solving this problem, a unit of Biafran Army Service Corps (BASC) was created to assist the Food Directorate ensure that foods were distributed to army contingents and civilian population. With the infraction

and reduction on the ration of food supplied to the soldiers at the battlefield, it became extremely difficult to command the loyalties of field soldiers by the field commanders. This however resulted to disobedient as the soldiers devised an alternative means of survival. First, soldiers in the rear resorted to stealing from local farms in which occasion they would be apprehended and killed. This has brought the soldiers into direct attack from the civilian population. Secondly, a good number of the soldiers in front lines resorted to moving back in search of food or stay on and fraternize with the enemy in the hope of getting presents of food and cigarettes from them. This practice is quite unprofessional and the consequences could be grievous.

However, as the issue of food continues to rage, there were also what could be seen as cancer of trust, indiscipline and sabotage within the Army hierarchies. One of such sabotage is that Colonel Banjo and Major Alele had gone round to spread rumours that saboteurs exist in 53 Brigade and Army Headquarters. The accusation came as a consequence of advance attacks on 53 Brigade and Colonel Njoku is the man suspected. For a long time, each time 53 Brigade planned an operation against the enemy, they would be attacked exactly 30 minutes before the H-hour on that particular front, thereby neutralizing their proposed offensive. Therefore, it was not difficult to see that the two men were actually accusing the Army commander, Colonel Njoku of sabotage. In fact, Major Alele had gained access to the radio station at Enugu and made a broadcast in which he alerted the nation to the fact that there were top-ranking saboteurs in Biafra. Basically, that word "sabotage" completely tore the nation into tiny bits and contributed so much to the loss of the war. In this context, the Army lost absolute confidence and admiration which it had hitherto enjoyed from civilian population.

In a relative development, Banjo in whose character the nation was thrown into confusion had visited Major-General Madiebo to demand that 101 Division was to be formed with 51 and 53 Brigades under its command. This was considered a risk venture by Madiebo who tainted Banjo of being remarkable ignorance of basic military tactics. In his argument, the 101 Divisional Headquarters was comprised of Banjo-himself, Captain Christian Ogbu and Major Alele. It was therefore, considered that such team could not handle two Brigades in the battle without the assistance from Army Headquarters and Madiebo knew that embarking on such mission by moving the Brigade from its present location to attack and recapture ObelleAfor was impossible as the place had been abandoned and there were no troops to garrison it. In its sincerity, the mission could be suicidal hence Madiebo suggested to Banjo that he could only defend an offensive with a maximum of one battalion at a time. Such objection could no doubt be considered indiscipline in Army and its consequences giving the kind of situation on ground would amount to sabotage and Madiebo quickly yielded to the instruction and barely an hour the instruction was carried, the Federal troops shelled from there.

The successful operation of Nigerian troops within that axis agitated the Biafran supporters and they could not

believe a Yoruba man could be more sincere to the Igbo course than their own son, Njoku. To that extent, people saw Banjo not Njoku as the saboteur. In a similar incidence, there was an allegation that colonel Eze equally sabotaged the Biafrans particularly as he was denied invitation to Port Harcourt because of his role at Nsukka and Ontisha. Colonel Eze was accused aiding the enemy's penetration of Nsukka and its consequent defeat. This situation contributed to demoralizing the Biafran troops. Similarly, Colonel Ude who was left without battalion commanders to protect Udi had been accused of the same sabotage. In this development, Colonel Ude had seen that the army's morale were down to the extent that the thinly battalion stationed to ward-off the enemies penetration of Udi was no longer possible and with Captain Nweke being murdered barely after 24 hours, Colonel Ude, thus, took the command of two Divisions on two main axis-Olo-Umueze Mgbagbu Owo and Nkwo-Nsude- Ude. This was practically unprofessional for any standard military tactics and practice however, he tried to command each battalion in turn for the job but it didn't work out well with each of the battalion fighting serious battles at the same time. In order to safeguard the troops, Ude was quickly labeled a saboteur immediately he began to withdraw the soldiers from the frontline by the civilian population. Many called for his execution while few wanted his dismissal from the military.

In a relative development, increasing ammunition and other difficulties witnessed by the troops had forced them to withdraw from Umulokpa Bridge to Olo town on the 7th day of fighting. It is expected that the soldiers would get to the battle field as soon as ammunition was available and weapons found for unarmed civilian within the bridge. A. A. Madiebo writes that unfortunately, the usual distrust of soldiers for their "Nigerian officers" began to develop again [8]. According to him, the soldiers were convinced that the two battalion commanders, Olehi and Nweke, had hidden away all the ammunition for the battle in order that Nigerian troops would win. To that extent, Nweke was arrested by some of his troops, most of whom were not yet six weeks in the army. Led by the Company Sergeant Major whose nickname was "one man, one bullet", the soldiers accused Nweke of having gone across to the enemy to confer with them [2]. Thus, suspicion, distrust, indiscipline and envy created problem within the army organization and led to the defeat of the Biafra. Indeed, this was completely to the advantage of the federal troops as C. C. Osakwe and L. O. Udeagbala, maintain that despite the sabotage, within a short period, the navy was able to replace everything that was damaged by the fleeing Biafrans [9].

3.2. Lesson About the Nigeria-Biafra War

Beyond the Biafran military histrionics, there were a number of attempts made by the Biafran army to show that victory in war was a matter of determination and dedication. The Biafran armies did put up a spirited defense of their territory despite the short period of preparations, enlistment and the plethora of ammunition. They showcased for the first

time that, victory in war comes in two interconnected ways- the collective aspiration of the warring party to see themselves as one and the availability of resources for prosecuting the war. By this, the case of the Biafra was a reflection of those who were willing to die for their country. This was for the first time a patriotic spirit was demonstrated in Nigerian political history. The patriotism was that everybody was ready to be enlisted into the Biafran army despite the fact that:

1. There was no time for the new entrants to embark on military training
2. That the number of arms available was not commiserate with the number of troops ready for the war and as a result, some took arrows and machete as the instruments of war
3. The army and the civilian population maintained a good communication channel that led to surprise attacks on the enemy's territory.

This patriotism could not stop the cancer of sabotage and indiscipline that was allowed to set-in in the Biafran spirit and course of action. In this study, we learnt that suspicions and mistrust are two enemies of success. The Biafrans were highly spirited and ready for the war but were overwhelmed immediately they allowed sabotage to distort the spirit that propelled them to the war. However, while the Nigerian troops were well prepared, courageous and boastful that they would over run the Biafran territory within three days, the Biafrans were ill- prepared but were more determined that the war lasted for three years and six months with both sides recording heavy casualties. This shows that it is dangerous and lack of military professionalism to underrate one's enemy in war. Therefore, no matter the size or powers of a country, it is not certain that such country can easily be defeated hence, what is important is that each party must prepare for war anytime any day. In fact, it is important to know that the outcome of the war led to building unity in diversity. For instance, maintains that the war ought to reinforce the efforts of peacemaking and peacekeeping, as is currently been carried out by the Nigerian armed forces and security agents, as well as a preventive measure for future agitations [10].

4. Conclusion

The Nigeria-Biafra war was an interstate war fought by Nigerian troops who were committed to keep the sovereignty of Nigeria and by the Biafran troops that wanted a break-away from Nigerian federation as a result of how the Nigerian government was constituted and run. While the Biafrans cited marginalization, discrimination and maltreatment as the reason for the separation to declare the Biafran sovereignty on May 30, 1967, the Nigerian government with its head of state, General Yakubu Gowon swore to keep the unity and corporate existence of the country. By this, the former went into the war underestimating the Biafran capabilities while the Biafrans were resilient in their determination for break-away.

In this vein, the Nigerian government declared an attack on

the Biafrans as a “police march”, hoping that their superior weapons could be anything to count on. To that extent, the Biafran resistance to repel attack from the federal troops made the war lasted longer than being anticipated. Hence, the Federal Government depended on foreign assistance to prosecute the war. By this, they got ammunitions from Britain, Russia and France with senior military personnel sent to train Nigerian soldiers on the use of modern military equipments.

However, while the Biafrans got relief materials from the international society and from Red Cross Society, the Nigerian Government through diplomatic understanding moved and blocked it. Therefore, it was against this scenario that indiscipline and sabotage reared its head in Biafran military organization and affected the unity of the troops and also caused disunity with the civilian population. The resultant effect was that, the troops were unwilling to take order from neither their commandants nor the civilians willing to cooperate with the soldiers.

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