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Prospects for Postwar Nigeria

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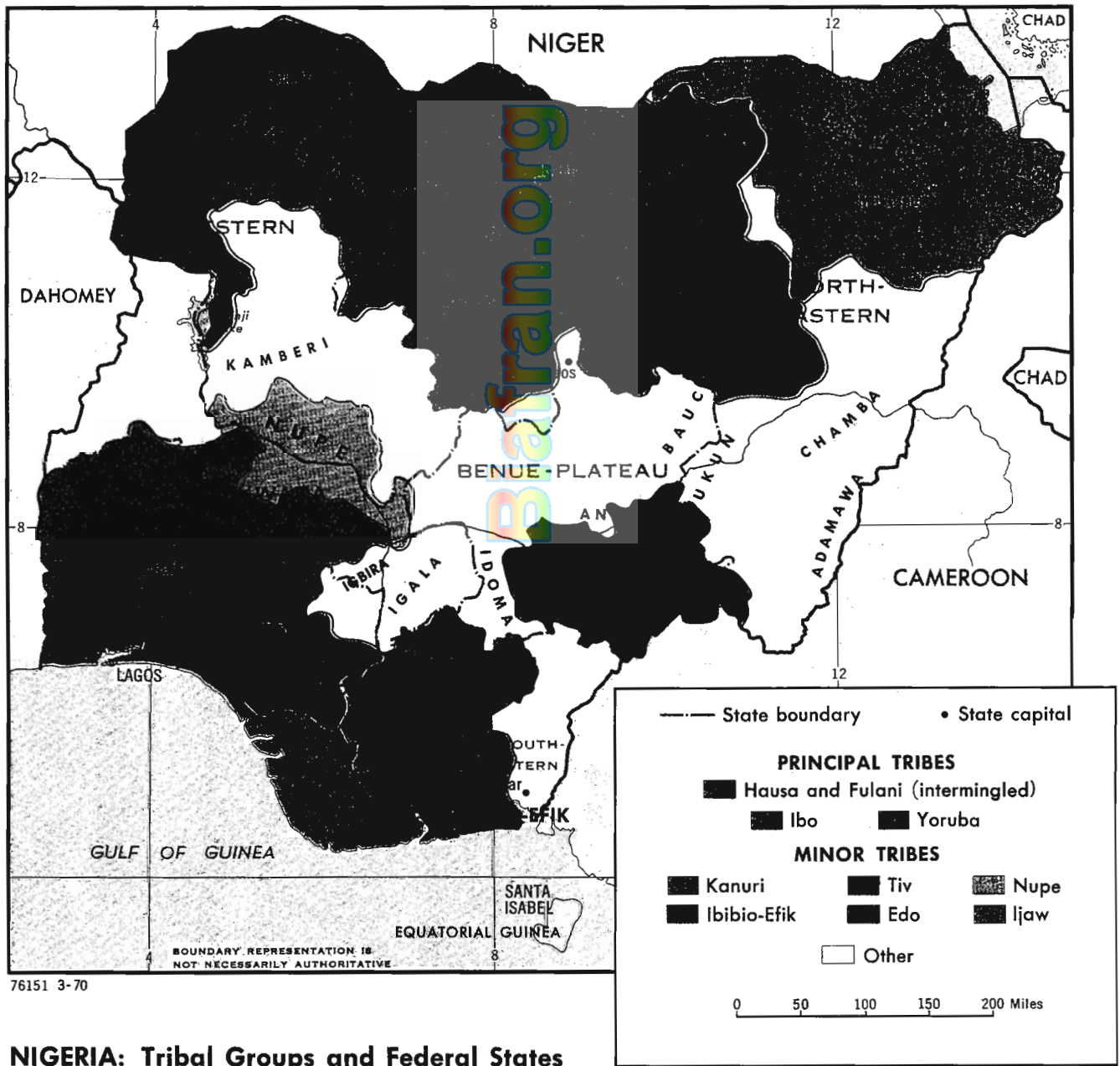
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NIGERIA: Tribal Groups and Federal States

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PROSPECTS FOR POSTWAR NIGERIA

CONCLUSIONS

A. The Nigerian Civil War ended with surprisingly little rancor. The defeated Ibos are accepted as fellow citizens in many parts of Nigeria, but not in some areas of former Biafra where they were once dominant. Iboland is an overpopulated, economically depressed area, where massive unemployment is likely to prevail for some years.

B. Nigeria is still very much a tribal society, in which clan, tribal and regional jealousies, hostilities and interests count for more than national attachment. General Gowon, Head of the Federal Military Government (FMG), is the accepted national leader and his popularity has grown since the end of the war. The FMG is neither very efficient nor dynamic, but the recent announcement that it intends to retain power for six more years has generated little opposition so far. The Nigerian Army, vastly expanded during the war, is both the main support of the FMG, and the chief threat to it. The troops are poorly trained and disciplined and some of the officers are turning to conspiracies and plotting. We think Gowon will have great difficulty in staying in office through the period which he has said is necessary before the turnover of power to civilians. His sudden removal would dim the prospects for Nigerian stability.

C. Nigeria's economy came through the war in better shape than expected. But there is considerable inflation, a heavy internal debt, and a huge military budget. Popular demands for schools, clinics, and other services are growing, and will place new burdens on the budget. The petroleum industry is expanding faster than expected, and oil revenues will help defray military and social service expenditures. Economic development as envisaged in the 1970-1974 plan will depend heavily on external loans and grants.

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D. Nigeria emerged from the war with a heightened sense of national pride mixed with antforeign sentiment, and an intention to play a larger role in African and world affairs. British influence is still strong in cultural and economic matters, but in the political sphere it is declining and likely to do so further. The Soviet Union benefits from Nigerian appreciation of its wartime military support, but is not making a major effort to exert influence. Nigerian relations with the US, although cool at the end of the war, are improving. Many in the FMG appear to see France as the key to future Nigerian efforts to develop closer economic ties with francophone neighbors, and thus important to the expansion of Nigerian influence.

DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Nigeria's fundamental problem has been its inability to devise a political arrangement which would provide both national unity and safeguards for the separate interests of its more than 250 tribal groups. In colonial days the British lumped these peoples together for administrative convenience and called the area Nigeria. At independence, tribal allegiances were still far stronger than national feelings. Under the original federal system each of the major tribes (Ibo, Yoruba, and Hausa-Fulani) dominated a region which embraced its own homeland as well as those of lesser tribes. The central government featured a parliament in which the conservative Northern Moslems held the deciding vote. This arrangement was devised by the British as a means of inducing the reluctant northerners to accept the federation. Southern Nigerians, more modern and generally Christian or animist, found themselves either junior partners in the federation or in opposition. The system soon ran into serious trouble when the major tribes were unable to agree even on census results or to conduct fair parliamentary elections.

2. The military coups of 1966 put an end to the first Nigerian federation but in the process exacerbated tribal and regional antagonisms. Massacres of Ibos from the Eastern Region who were living in the North and mounting Ibo fears of domination by Northerners led to the secession of the East to form the Republic of Biafra. The Federal Military Government (FMG), based in Lagos and headed by Major-General Gowon, took up arms against Biafra in the cause of "one Nigeria". The war dragged on for two and a half years until the superiority of Federal weapons and manpower wore down the stubborn Biafran defense effort.

3. The immediate effect of the Federal victory in the Civil War has been to discredit the concept of secession. It has provided an opportunity for those who are seeking a more durable framework of Nigerian institutions. It will be a long time before Nigeria becomes a homogeneous nation. The question now is

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whether or not the diverse peoples of Nigeria can take advantage of this respite to move toward mutual accommodations. Tribal animosities have not been eradicated by the war, but in the aftermath there have been few issues contentious enough to test the cohesion of the Nigerian polity. Nigeria, if it holds together, has probably the best prospects for development of any black African state. In terms of population it is by far the largest. It has the potential to become the spokesman for black African interests in world assemblages. But it must be kept in mind that many Nigerian institutions are weak or untested, and divisive currents are strong. We cannot make precise calculations of Nigeria's chances of success or failure in meeting the many problems before it. This Estimate is, therefore, more concerned with laying out those problems than it is with predictions.

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR

4. The sudden end to the fighting in January 1970 presented the FMG with an array of new problems in addition to those left unresolved by the war. Relief for the defeated Ibos and their allies in the East was required immediately. Beyond that was the question of how to reintegrate the rebels into Nigerian society. There was also the question of what to do with the Federal Army, swollen during the war to perhaps 250,000 men. And always in the background, was the sticky issue of devising institutions which would ensure some measure of national unity and provide protection to the various mutually-suspicious tribes.

A. The Ibo Problem

5. Though the Civil War was fought with considerable bitterness and prolonged by Ibo fears of genocide, it ended with surprisingly little rancor. General Gowon's policy of reconciliation has set the tone for relations between victor and vanquished. The mass of the Ibos and others who supported the Biafran cause are officially considered as "misled". The top ranks of Biafran leaders, the "misleaders" as they are now called, are mostly in exile and a few are in detention. Gowon has no intention of staging war crimes trials. Others in the FMG and in the army would prefer a harsher policy than he has followed so far. To some extent Gowon's options are limited by these hard-liners. Were he to show special favor to ex-Biafrans, he would encounter stiff opposition from many of his colleagues. Yet, the FMG has assumed the obligation of feeding the Biafran populace and coordinating the medical relief effort. The early shortcomings of the program seem to have been attributable more to inefficiency than to vindictiveness. Gradual improvements in the relief effort have dramatically lessened malnutrition and associated diseases in former Biafran territory.

6. The sudden military collapse of Biafra left an economic and political vacuum, with the inhabitants of the area in a state of shock and exhaustion and bereft of trusted leadership. Since then, an Ibo political administration, formed during the war by the FMG for the purpose of governing reconquered portions of Iboland, has expanded to become the government of the East-Central State. It furnishes

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employment to some 30,000 Ibo civil servants, but this is only a part of the hordes of Ibos who had formerly served in the Federal and Eastern Regional Governments. The lack of employment of these Ibos as well as millions of others who before the war had filled a variety of skilled and unskilled jobs both in Iboland and throughout Nigeria constitutes a massive problem. Even before the war, Iboland was one of the most densely populated areas of black Africa. It has few resources and its poor soil was overworked during the war. In prewar days, remittances from Ibos in other parts of Nigeria helped sustain the community at home. This source of income is now virtually gone, and, even if the prewar industries and commercial enterprises of Iboland are rapidly restored, unemployment will be the major problem in that overcrowded rural ghetto for many years.

7. The only hope for many Ibos is to migrate, although this is what brought the trouble before. Small numbers of Ibos have already begun to move out of their tribal homeland, and, where they have found jobs in the North or West, they are accepted as fellow citizens. Almost all former Ibo policemen have been absorbed into the Nigerian Police, and some former soldiers are being accepted in the Federal Army. The integration of Ibo officers poses a more touchy problem. The main obstacle to the Ibos is the fact that there simply are not many job opportunities for them elsewhere in Nigeria. The jobs left by the Ibo exodus on the eve of the war have been filled by Yorubas or other Nigerians. Moreover, few Ibo businessmen have the capital to open new enterprises or resume old ones. In some areas, especially Port Harcourt and other minority tribal lands of the East and Mid-West, where Ibos had once dominated economic life, they are not welcome nor are they likely to be for some years.

8. While the plight of the Ibos is unlikely to be eased for a long time, there is little chance of another attempt at secession. Few Ibos want to go through that again. They will certainly be frustrated, and perhaps resentful at the FMG, but there is little that they can do about it. There will probably be some increase in lawlessness and disorder in Iboland, and large numbers will head for the cities in the West even if no jobs are available there. By so doing they will merely add to the problem of urban unemployment in southern Nigeria, which was a troublesome enough issue before the war.

B. The Federal Army

9. The Nigerian Federal Army, which on the eve of the war numbered about 8,000, has grown to a force of perhaps 250,000 and may still be increasing. Its very size poses major problems for the FMG. Gowon and his advisors have decided against an early demobilization, fearing that the release of thousands without employable skills and accustomed to violence might have an unsettling effect upon a none too stable society. There is already a fairly high incidence of crime and violence—often committed by men in uniform—in all parts of Nigeria. The FMG is concerned about this and is trying to retrieve firearms now in the hands of soldiers and ex-soldiers. Nigerian police (about 30,000 men) are fairly efficient but are too widely dispersed to stamp out the current crime

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wave and are reluctant to arrest men in army uniform. Under these conditions, it is unlikely that there will be more than token reductions in the strength of the Nigerian Army over the next couple of years.

10. The army is far larger than necessary to provide defense against external aggression, maintain the unity of the federal system, and assist in the preservation of internal security. Keeping this huge force usefully employed and out of the way of civilians and police is a problem. Some training programs have been established, emphasizing retraining of NCO's and junior grade officers, and basic military drills. A crash program of barracks construction is also underway in various parts of Nigeria, where the military will be permanently stationed. Eventually a sizeable portion of the army will probably be enrolled in educational or training projects and some may be assigned to civic action programs. Their plans are still under consideration, however, and for a large part of the army there is still much idleness and time for mischief.

11. There are clear advantages as well as obvious dangers to the FMG in maintaining such a large army. Merely by its size and presence, the army is now, and may continue to be, a force for national cohesion. Discontented tribal groups, labor unions, or others are less likely to defy authority, so long as the government has a considerable armed force at its disposal. This is true only to the extent that the army maintains cohesion and discipline, and there are some circumstances that favor such stability. Most officers and men receive higher pay than they could hope to earn in civilian jobs. Most have at least a rudimentary national consciousness, having fought for "One Nigeria", and many officers are personally loyal to Gowon. Moreover, army units are tribally mixed and few officers would be able quickly to assemble and utilize for coup purposes a large contingent of fellow tribesmen.

12. On the other hand, it can be argued that the army constitutes a major potential threat to security in Nigeria. It remains an ill-trained and ill-disciplined outfit, composed of large units led by junior officers who are also poorly trained. Within the officer corps there is some ill-feeling between the "dirties" (those who have enriched themselves during military rule) and the "cleans" (those who have not). Some officers, as well as some in the ranks, are bored by barracks life, and are seeking diversion, either by stirring up trouble in areas near the barracks or by discussing among themselves the political and military problems of Nigeria. Under the circumstances, we would expect a considerable amount of low-level turbulence involving soldiers and civilians, some intermittent factional feuding among officers, and a growing political awareness in the army. None of this would pose much of a threat to the FMG, or to the cohesion of Nigeria. The dangers are that local squabbles can easily become riots, which might be difficult to put down, and that political discussions tend to be dominated by tribal interests, suspicions of corruption, and ties between officers and civilian politicians. There are already reports of plotting by junior officers against the regime. Heretofore these have come to naught, but the atmosphere is increasingly conducive to plots and conspiracies.

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13. Gowon and his advisors are well aware of the potential threat to themselves from an idle or discontented army. Indeed, Gowon has been more concerned with army affairs than with internal political problems, economic development, or foreign relations. His plans for the army, though still only very general, appear to be centered around the provision of vast amounts of new equipment and training. Before this ambitious program can get underway, however, Gowon will face serious challenges. Given the situation he confronts—centrifugal forces at work in the Nigerian Army, the divisive effect of corruption in the military, uncertain loyalties and allegiances, conflicting ambitions of key individuals, and the gradually rising pressures from civilian tribal and regional factions—we think Gowon will have great difficulty in staying in office over the six year period which he has said is necessary for the turnover of power to civilians. Much will depend on Gowon's success in bringing Nigeria together.

III. PROSPECTS FOR INTERNAL COHESION

14. By and large the basic decisions on the future of Nigeria have not yet been faced by the FMG. The 12-state scheme, conceived by Gowon shortly before the war as a substitute for the old semiautonomous regions, seems likely to last for some time, though perhaps with modifications. It has reduced the potential political power of the large tribes, advanced the interests of the minority tribes in the North and East, and provided a balance between North and South.

15. Individual states differ enormously in size, tribal unity, and efficiency. The Western and Mid-Western states are more or less the successors of the old regional arrangement, while some of the northern states are barely off the ground in terms of providing services and establishing bureaucracies. In some states bitter tribal and clan rivalries raise doubts about the permanence of the arrangement. Few of the states are reasonable administrative units; many lack competent civil servants of local origin and are handicapped by inept military or police governors. But, despite these deficiencies, for many of the lesser tribes, there is considerable satisfaction in sharing in a state government. Politically, the states are much weaker vis-à-vis the central government than were the old regions. One of the major issues between state and federal governments will revolve around the allocation of revenues to the states. A temporary formula for the allocation of the oil revenues was accepted early this year. When the matter comes up again, the non-oil producing states, particularly those in the North, will demand a larger share. If they do not get what they feel they are entitled to, there is likely to be trouble of some sort.

16. The particular problems of the backward northern states are likely to loom larger in the next few years. The political apparatus of the conservative northern aristocracy, which had ruled Nigeria before the military coups, is in disarray but is not beyond repair. If this aristocracy is able to regain its former cohesion and revive its political vehicle, it could disrupt the new and fragile state system in the North. This would be difficult because minority tribes in the

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North enjoy running their own affairs and would resist any shift in favor of the large tribes. Hence, the chances are against an early resurrection of conservative northern political power. But, in any event, Northern pressures on Lagos for funds for education and development will be very strong and will present the FMG with some thorny problems of allocation.

17. The central government is probably the most fragile part of the Nigerian system, because it depends largely on one man, General Gowon. Gowon possesses many of the qualities needed to lead Nigeria's multiracial society. He is from a small tribe in the North. He has survived four years in office without taint of personal corruption, and with a reputation for patience, fairness and moderation. Gowon is widely esteemed as the architect of victory, and as he becomes better known to Nigerians he is acquiring a personal popularity. He is, however, not very dynamic and often tends to look for a consensus among his colleagues rather than make hard decisions himself. Since the war's end, Gowon and the FMG have provided Nigeria with very little sense of movement. Gowon's recent anniversary speech identified national goals, but many of his listeners were discouraged by the prospect of six more years of military rule.

18. Gowon's position is not threatened at the moment, though there are discontented factions within the army, and impatient politicians are hankering for a return to civilian rule. Eventually he will have to make some unpopular decisions, e.g., on the disposition of ex-Biafran "misleaders", on specific constitutional plans, and on allocation of federal funds. Opposition to Gowon is likely to take shape on one or another of these issues, and there is likely to be more plotting and eventually a challenge to his position. Gowon's sudden removal would dim prospects for Nigerian stability. While there is a remote possibility that an unknown might appear who could take control, none of the present high ranking military figures in Nigeria appear likely to be able to command the respect and allegiance of the important elements in the country. The federal civil service could keep the machinery of government running in some fashion even without effective leadership, but a dispute among contestants for control of the FMG could quickly arouse tribal hostilities and again endanger the cohesion of the Nigerian state.

19. As time goes on, would-be political leaders among the civilians are certain to press harder for an early return to civilian control. Despite the current ban on overt political activity, shadow organizations based on the old parties are stirring, and new cliques are forming. For the most part these groups are still too amorphous to permit an estimate of their chances of coming to power. Their chances will remain poor so long as the army remains cohesive and in agreement on support for the FMG.

IV. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

20. Nigeria is basically a poor country. In terms of per capita income and living standards it is not much better off than its neighbors. Like many other African states, it suffers from a debilitating climate, tropical diseases, a cultural

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tolerance of corruption, a severe shortage of skills and managerial expertise and a low level of technological development. Though Nigeria has a relatively large educated elite, their training has not always been in fields most useful to national development. A sizeable proportion of this elite are Ibos, who are not likely to find suitable employment in the national economy any time soon.

21. Nigeria does, however, possess some assets which give it considerable economic potential. Its substantial petroleum reserves are nearer to the major West European market than Persian Gulf oil and are of low sulphur content, a highly desired quality in a time of concern over pollution. Moreover, Nigeria is capable of supplying its own basic food requirements and exports in large quantities a variety of agricultural products: mainly peanuts, peanut oil, cocoa, rubber, cotton, and palm products. The very size of the population, perhaps 55 million, could eventually lead to the development of a market that would encourage investment.

22. The Nigerian economy came through the war better than might have been expected. Nonetheless, the strains of financing the war increased the internal debt enormously, depleted foreign exchange reserves, and created an inflation of consumer prices (over 10 percent per year in urban areas). There was extensive damage to roads, bridges, power plants, and industries in the war zone, as well as general deterioration of infrastructure elsewhere. Also at the war's end the military budget, which had amounted to about \$35 million in FY 1967, had burgeoned to over \$500 million in FY 1970.

23. The legacy of the war is likely to weigh heavily on the economy for some time to come. A good fall harvest and relaxation of the import quotas would reduce the rate of inflation, but the war damage will not be repaired for another year or two at least. Moreover shortage of foreign exchange is likely to persist for several years, and this is likely to have a depressing effect, particularly in the private sector.

24. More important are the demands which the military establishment and the state governments will almost certainly make of the central treasury. The military plans, as nearly as they can be determined, call for more personnel, construction of new installations, and purchases of a good deal of expensive new equipment. Hence, there is little likelihood that the military budget will drop much in the next few years. As for the states, many are just beginning to build bureaucracies and respond to popular demands for amenities. The demand for more education, in particular, is universal and strong, even in the North, which is generally poorer and behind the South in all forms of modernization and development. All states will depend upon allocations of federal funds to meet their budgets, and many will have sizeable deficits.

25. Fortunately for the FMG, the petroleum industry is expanding at a faster rate than expected. Oil's chief contribution to the Nigerian economy lies in the rents, royalties, and profits taxes paid to the government. They will total about \$280 million this year (about a third of current revenue) and are expected to

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double by 1973. But Nigeria is not another Libya; it has over 50 million people, and oil revenues, while very important, will not provide a financial panacea.

26. The current annual budget will be in deficit, even if projected new capital expenditures get off to a very slow start. And for the next few years, at least, we expect recurrent government expenditures, particularly on the military establishment, on reconstruction, and on social services, to absorb all or practically all the additional revenues from oil. Economic development, as envisaged in the 1970-1974 plan would require extensive external financing, and more internal borrowing which would add to inflationary pressures. Full implementation of this plan will cost about \$4.5 billion. We doubt that Nigeria has the capacity to absorb this amount of investment. There is already some movement on the part of foreign lenders: the World Bank plans to furnish some \$31 million in 1970 and additional funds in future years; the UK, the US, Canada, West Germany, Japan, and the USSR are likely to provide some grants or loans. Nigeria can also draw on the IMF. Over the longer run, oil revenues could contribute to development projects, especially if more revenue becomes available through an increase in the rate of royalties. Government priorities, however, would determine how much actually went into development.

27. Oil revenues will be so important in terms of satisfying military and social service demands, that relations between the FMG and the foreign oil companies will be a key consideration over the next few years. The British control well over two-thirds of the productive capacity, and US companies are second with investments of some \$500 million and larger commitments planned. Government relations with the companies generally follow the pattern established by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), although Nigeria does not belong to OPEC. Any terms that oil companies agree to in other countries, particularly Libya and Algeria, are likely to be applied by Nigeria. Thus, Nigeria may earn far more from oil than is currently projected, and be able to finance more of the development plan from internal sources. The FMG would like to set up a national oil producing company, but lacks qualified personnel, and will probably settle for a joint enterprise while still granting production rights on other sites to foreign firms. There is no evidence thus far of Nigerian intentions to nationalize foreign oil production interests, nor would they be likely to do so in the next few years unless a wave of nationalizations were to sweep over other oil producing countries.

28. Foreign investment in the oil industry is thus likely to rise over the next few years. Other investors, however, are often put off by the complexities of Nigerian Government regulations and the rudeness and corruption of many officials. Most foreign dealings with the FMG involve costly delays and many are colored by Nigerian distrust of foreigners. Over the next few years, at least, many would-be private foreign investors are likely to be inhibited by the high levels of taxation, restrictions on imports and capital repatriation, and by the rising pressure for greater Nigerianization of company personnel. Moreover, most of the attractive openings for import substitution were filled in the 1960s. Nigeria

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already produces enough of a few classes of goods to meet local demand, but future investors will find some opportunities to manufacture consumer goods. Such sophisticated products as petrochemicals and fertilizer are likely to require a larger market than Nigeria can offer for some time.

V. NIGERIA AND THE WORLD

29. During and after the Civil War, Nigerians have been developing a sense of national and racial pride, a heightened sensitivity to slights by foreigners, and an awareness of their own status as Africa's most populous nation. Heretofore Nigeria has played a modest role in African affairs, even less on the world scene. There is still no indication that Nigeria is about to take bold new initiatives in foreign policy, but there is a more sharply nationalistic and xenophobic tone to Nigerian pronouncements, less pro-Western and more pro-African. As a consequence, Nigeria can be expected to try to minimize foreign influences in Nigeria itself.

A. The United Kingdom

30. Nigerians have developed a kind of love-hate relationship with the UK. It is an ambivalence common to many former colonies in their dealings with the ex-metropole, but reinforced in the case of Nigeria by the experiences of the war. Official British policy was to furnish the Federal armed forces with ample supplies of small arms, but no aircraft or sophisticated weapons. But, throughout the war, British public opinion leaned strongly toward the Biafrans. Consequently, many Nigerians viewed the UK as a half-hearted supporter of their effort to preserve national unity. By and large, British influence in cultural, economic, and even political matters is still greater than that of any other power. Britain is the single most important Nigerian trading partner, and the British stake in Nigerian petroleum, commercial, transport and other enterprises is sizeable.

31. Difficulties are likely to arise between the UK and Nigeria on a number of issues. To the extent that the FMG presses ahead with Nigerianization of jobs, contracts, licenses, and shareholding, British commercial interests, which are the most conspicuous of foreign holdings, will suffer most. Lagos' reaction to the recent UK suggestion of a more liberal arms policy toward South Africa was pretty mild. Other African responses were much sharper, and many in Nigeria demanded that Gowon take a harder line. Should the British go ahead with the arms deal, or reopen talks with Rhodesia, Nigeria will probably be much more vociferous and will seek some means of manifesting its displeasure, i.e., by demonstrations against the UK presence in Nigeria, or by joining other Africans in withdrawing from the Commonwealth.

B. France and Francophone Africa

32. The FMG has far more reason to be irritated with the French than with the British. French funds and equipment helped Biafra prolong its resistance for

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many months, and two French client states, Gabon and the Ivory Coast, actually extended recognition to Biafra. Yet the FMG finds it convenient to overlook these activities, and would like to improve relations with Paris. Pragmatism is the dominant note in these relations. All of Nigeria's near neighbors as well as most of those beyond these are ex-French colonies, in which French influences predominate. Most of these states depend upon French aid and their foreign policies are formulated with close attention to the aims of the French Government or even in conjunction with resident French advisors. Moreover, France still has troops in some of these states, and has defense agreements with most of them. Nigerians, like most black Africans, have both respect for French power and uneasiness over French intentions.

33. Meanwhile Gowon has been attempting to improve bilateral relations with his francophone neighbors. He is learning the French language and has met recently with the Presidents of all neighboring states. In the past official relations between Nigeria and the francophone states have not been close, but in many cases Nigerian tribal lands spread over political boundaries. Yorubas live in Dahomey as well as in western Nigeria; and Hausa-Fulani peoples in northern Nigeria and in Niger share linguistic and cultural interests. To the extent that Nigeria is not diverted by internal disruptions, it is likely to be in closer contact with its neighbors and by its size and power, will exert some influence over them. Some issues such as smuggling along the Nigeria-Dahomey frontier, and the confusion over boundary lines between Cameroon and Nigeria will probably be handled without reference to France. Any plans Nigeria might formulate for wider regional economic cooperation with its neighbors—a concept which Nigerians find attractive—would depend largely on the approval of the French.

C. The USSR

34. The unwillingness of the Western Powers to furnish aircraft and other major military items to the FMG at the beginning of the Civil War left this field open to the Soviets. With considerable publicity, the USSR proclaimed itself the true friend of Nigeria, and sold to the FMG a variety of hardware including Mig-17 planes. Although Soviet assistance was limited to sales of equipment and provision of technical assistance, all paid for in hard currency, the Soviets have been able to trade on Nigerian gratitude to enlarge their diplomatic and commercial missions in Lagos, and to expand contacts with Nigerian leftists. With the war over, the FMG is much less dependent upon Soviet arms, but the Soviets are still well-regarded in Nigeria. Gowon and other top military figures do not trust the Soviets, but are appreciative of Soviet assistance during the war.

35. The Soviets seem interested in maintaining their prestigious role in Nigeria so long as it does not cost much. There are about 280 Soviets in Nigeria now. A small Soviet military mission assists in the maintenance of aircraft, and about a dozen Nigerians are receiving military training in the USSR. The Soviets have given the FMG the impression that they are eager to aid in Nigerian recon-

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struction but have stalled on economic commitments. They clearly are hesitant to plunge into such dubious ventures as an iron and steel plant, but are pushing hard for Nigerian acceptance of more Soviet arms and training in the USSR. They would like to become sole suppliers of military aid to Nigeria, and have persuaded some officials in the Nigerian Defense Ministry and some army officers of the wisdom of such a scheme. Gowon and the top leadership in the armed forces are cool to the idea. They have had some problems with Soviet equipment, do not relish the prospect of more Soviet military advisors, and do not wish to become too dependent on the USSR. Gowon seems determined, however, to provide the military with large amounts of materiel and training, and, if these needs cannot be met through traditional Western sources, he might reluctantly turn to communist sources.

36. Obviously, the Soviets enjoy their acceptance as a friend of black Africa's largest state, but they have not launched a major effort to exploit their position in Nigeria. The Soviets continue to fund leftist politicians, labor officials, and university leaders, as well as a number of front organizations. These clients are generally inept opportunists with little or no following or influence. The Soviet-Nigerian cultural societies seem unpromising as vehicles for expanding Soviet influence under present conditions. So long as Gowon, or someone with similar views, is in power there is little likelihood of a major increase in Soviet influence.

37. If conditions in Nigeria were to change radically, i.e., if Gowon were replaced by a military or civilian figure willing to accept a larger Soviet presence, the USSR would probably be in a better position to expand its influence. But even in these circumstances, the Soviets would realize that Nigeria's petroleum wealth and close economic ties with the West limit the political leverage they could expect from a major aid effort. Furthermore, we think that the Soviets would be leery of overly close identification with a particular Nigerian leader or regime. The Soviets have responded cautiously to black African overtures, at least since the downfall of Russian-backed rulers in Ghana and Mali. So far as we can determine, West Africa does not rank very high in the Soviet scale of priorities.

D. The United States

38. The US decision early in the Civil War to sell arms to neither side was regarded by Lagos as an indication of US lack of sympathy with the Federal effort to preserve the integrity of Nigeria. Subsequent US actions to alleviate starvation in Biafra seemed to the FMG a further confirmation of their suspicions that the US was not on their side. Relations became very cool during and immediately after the war, but have since shown signs of improvement. Even Gowon, who was more inclined to see the US in a favorable light than most in the FMG, seemed to believe that the US was not really much interested in Nigeria, except for the petroleum. He and others in the top military ranks would prefer to get arms and training from the US and the UK rather than to rely upon the USSR. They have taken the recent US affirmative response to their military training requests as an indication of US support for and interest in Nigeria.

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39. The major US material interest in Nigeria is the large and growing private investment in the oil fields. The FBIS maintains a monitoring station in Kaduna, and there are some 4,000 US private citizens, many of them missionaries and businessmen, living in Nigeria. In a broader sense, the state of US relations with Nigeria is important simply because Nigeria is so much more populous than any other black African state and because its prospects are somewhat better than most of the others, if it holds together. Nigerian officials are proud, hypersensitive, and prickly. Diplomatic and other dealings with them will present challenges, and Nigerians will be slow to accept the US as a friend, even if Washington is fairly forthcoming in matters of economic and military assistance.

E. Africa and the Poor Countries Elsewhere

40. Nigeria's size, geographic position, and relative development should favor an important leadership role for it among black African nations. There has been a surge of self-confidence and heightened nationalism in postwar Nigeria, and there is some evidence of more ambitious aims with respect to relations with other African states. Nigeria is likely to take a more active role in backing liberation movements in southern Africa. It is moving to increase funding, and eventual training of liberation troops cannot be ruled out. Lagos is also moving into closer regional economic relationships with its francophone neighbors. However, the present situation in Africa affords few opportunities for Nigeria to exert leadership. Older, more prestigious heads of state than Gowon now dominate the Organization of African Unity and other African councils. Addis Ababa rather than Lagos is the spiritual and bureaucratic "capital of Africa". Also, the traditional differences between francophone and anglophone states and rising nationalism and antiforeign sentiment are barriers to possible Nigerian aspirations to continental leadership.

41. If domestic conditions are sufficiently tranquil for Nigeria to devote more attention to international questions, it will probably become more active, and certainly more vocal, in efforts to alleviate the growing plight of the poorer countries. As a producer of primary goods, agricultural and mineral, for consumers in the rich countries, Nigeria will become more conscious of the widening economic gap between the two worlds. Given its low economic base, its fast growing population, and the looming problems of vast urban unemployment, Nigeria over the next decade will probably manifest considerable frustration and resentment of the rich world, and will join with other major countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa in efforts to bring pressure upon the rich.

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