

THE 1967 ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY KINSHASA PEACE RESOLUTION ON THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR AND BRITISH REACTION

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Abstract

This paper discussed the British reaction to 1967 Kinshasa resolution of the Organization of African Unity during the Nigerian Civil War. The study adopted a historical narrative approach for data analysis, while it used primary sources such as archival materials from the British National Archives Kew London and secondary sources such as books and journal articles. In September 1967, at its meeting in Kinshasa the Organization of African Unity Thirty-four Member-states issued a resolution known as the Kinshasa Resolution which appealed to Nigeria and Biafra to negotiate peace and reconciliation of the civil war. This paper argues that, while Kinshasa resolution appeared as an African method of finding peaceful solution to the civil war, its condemnation of secession was a reflection of domestic political realities of the African countries that endorsed the resolution. The resolution strengthened anti-secessionist stance and one Nigerian policy of the British Government.

Keywords: British, Reaction, Organization of African Unity, Kinshasa, Resolution, Nigerian Civil War

Introduction

The Nigerian Civil War was a great challenge to post-independent African States, given that they were preoccupied with the task of nation-building after few years of colonization.¹ Seeing Nigeria internally divided and engulfed in conflict was not good for the rest of Africa.² This was the main reason peaceful approach was adopted by African leaders to reconcile Nigeria and Biafra during the civil war. However, it seemed that when the civil war broke out, the use of force was highly evident at the detriment of peace. The Federal side was never willing to accept secession as a precondition for peaceful settlement, while Biafra was never ready to settle for anything less than her outright recognition as an independent nation.³

In war, the prerequisite for peace settlement is that parties to a dispute must abandon military solutions, and embraced a negotiated solution. Even third parties wishing to see the conference successful must do all in their power to bring both parties to that persuasion.⁴ Though, Biafra had on several occasions expressed readiness for negotiations under suitable international organisations,⁵ but was not prepared to abandon the main principle anchored on military operations.⁶ The Federal Military Government of Nigeria resolved to defeat Biafra⁷

nonetheless was disposed to peace negotiations as revealed by the Federal Cabinet officials in Lagos.⁸

The stringent approach adopted by both sides of the conflict to peace settlement prompted African States under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity to work tirelessly in order to resolve the conflict amicably. The first peace moves engineered by African States appeared in East Africa soon after secession was announced by Colonel Ojukwu. Leading these efforts were President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Both leaders felt that as Pan-Africanists with long-standing personal contacts among Nigerian leaders, many of whom later turned to Biafra, they were well-suited to provide good offices. Zambia had begun in June 1967 to assert publicly that Nigeria's internal difficulties were a legitimate concern to the rest of Africa, and should be immediately reviewed by the Heads of States of the East African Community with a view to arranging a just and peaceful solution.⁹

The essence of this paper is to discuss the Kinshasa resolution of the Organization of African Unity during the Nigerian Civil War. It specifically focuses on the British reaction to the Kinshasa resolution. Earlier studies that have examined different perspectives of the Nigerian Civil War include the Kunle Amuwo exploration of remote and immediate causes of the Civil War.¹⁰ Chibuike Uche examination of the role oil played in the decision of the British government to insist on One Nigeria solution in the Nigeria-Biafra Conflict.¹¹ Godfrey B. Warren investigation of the degree to which Nigeria's considerable oil reserves contributed to shaping the outbreak of the civil war politically, diplomatically and economically.¹² Toyin Falola and Mathew M. Heaton examination of the history of Nigeria and the civil war and discovered how it left a significant legacy to Nigerian unity¹³ A. A. Nwankwo and S. U. Ifejika, examine the causes of civil war and Biafran secession and the British role in embedding and intensifying internal crisis in the Federation.¹⁴ G. Onuaguluchi's work on the Biafran tragedy caused by the most intense inter-communal distrust, as well as jealousies,¹⁵ M.S. Audu Osuala and S. Uzoma and B.I. Ibrahim interrogation of the international dimensions of the Nigerian Civil War¹⁶ and Okwudiba Nnoli discussion on how the strictly internal character of inter-African conflicts are been controlled by the external interventions to protect what he called the linkage groups in the conflict area,¹⁷ and J.J. Stremalu's work on the international politics of the Nigerian Civil War¹⁸ plus Fredrick Forsyth discussion on the British role during the Civil War.¹⁹

While these works have interrogated the causes and consequences of the civil war including its international dimensions, efforts have not been made to critically examine the British reaction to 1967 Kinshasa resolution of the Organization of African Unity which paved the way for a series of peace settlement that occurred during the civil war to achieve this objective the study adopted a historical narrative approach for data analysis. It used primary sources such as archival materials from the British National Archives Kew London and secondary sources such as books and journal articles obtained from the University of Nigeria Nsukka and Kenneth Dike University of Ibadan libraries for data analysis.

This paper argued that the Kinshasa resolution caused the war to be seen as an African affair to be settled by Africans but in a manner that was suitable to the objective of achieving

the Nigerian unity at the detriment of Biafran secession. The resolution strengthened the British anti-secessionist stance in Nigeria. By wholeheartedly endorsing the OAU peace initiatives, Britain acknowledged the Nigerian Civil War as an African affair. The OAU was described as the most suitable body to handle peace negotiations in the war. This position was not surprising because since the OAU began its intervention in the war, it had taken positions that suited the British interests and that was maximum support for the territorial integrity and unity of Nigeria. By succeeding to garner African support to the Nigerian cause, Britain was convinced that the OAU had the capacity to drive African diplomacy of the war and to serve as a vocal point for international voices of the civil war.

The first session of the paper looks at the OAU peace efforts and declaration of Kinshasa resolutions, session two examines the British assessment of OAU's Kinshasa resolutions during the war. In view of the untold human sufferings brought about by the civil war, many stakeholders had desired to see a firm peace initiative by the OAU. They developed a strong perception that the OAU's ability to initiate a genuine peace process depended on the changing military condition of the war, for during this time, the two sides had continued to engage one another in a serious fight aimed at securing more territories and fortification of their respective positions.

OAU Peace Mediation and Kinshasa Resolution during the Civil War

A month after the outbreak of the civil war, there were concerns about the escalating nature of the conflict involving civilian deaths. Expressions were made in favour of some kind of negotiated peace settlement as well as doubt over the capacity of the OAU to provide the forum for effective mediation efforts. Chinua Achebe maintained that, "the continental organization lacked credibility in this effort as it professed a one Nigeria policy from the beginning of the war."²⁰ According to the United States Assistant State Secretary for African Affairs Joseph Palmer:

The trouble was that most of the other Africans were too preoccupied with their own problems to have any time to spare for Nigeria. However, some of Nigeria's immediate neighbours such as Dahomey (Benin Republic), Niger, Chad, and Cameroon who were affected by the disruption of communications and general economic dislocation in Nigeria, might be persuaded to put some pressure on the two sides to talk.²¹

The above postulations were upheld because achieving peace in the conflict was viewed as difficult either through the OAU or any other multilateral organization. Doubt existed whether the Federal government was willing to negotiate at the early stage the war broke out and it did not even look as if Ojukwu wished to talk peacefully, except on terms which amounted to a Federal capitulation. Even the OAU meeting once held was unlikely to provide the forum for any effective mediation effort.²²

But, the unwavering unity and solidarity existing among African nations, occasioned by the conditions of decolonization propelled them to support the OAU to design peaceful resolutions in the civil war. Many African States believed in the capacity of the OAU to find solution to the Nigerian Civil War. For the role of the continental body in conflict resolution is found in Article XIX of the organization's charter. The article contains a pledge contracting parties to settle all disputes among themselves by peaceful means and to conclude a separate treaty establishing a Permanent Conciliation Commission which was to become an integral part of the Charter.²³

Early in June 1967 just a month before the war began, the Congolese Foreign Minister, Bomboko in a private conversation confined on the British Ambassador in Kinshasa, Cotton that they had been urging for an OAU mediation team for Nigeria that would include the Emperor of Ethiopia, President Tubman, Abdel Nasser and himself. But Gowon had unfortunately rejected the offer of the Congolese. Nevertheless, Bomboko was at all ready to mediate if asked to do so. Despite Gowon's rejection, the fact that the Congolese authorities muted the idea of peace mediation under the jurisdiction of the OAU showed the level of confidence and trust accorded to the continental body in resorting to peace in Nigeria. Also, Sierra Leonean Commissioner of Police Leigh told former Nigerian High Commissioner to Freetown, Obanye, in a private discussion that Sierra Leone thought that any consideration of the Nigerian problem was a matter for the OAU.²⁵

Ghanaian leader General Ankrah was listed as the potential conciliator, having retained the respect of both parties of the conflict. Although, it seemed unlikely that peace talks were to be initiated until it was clear that neither Nigeria or Biafra had gained a position of strength militarily.²⁶ The OAU's ability to initiate a genuine peace process depended on the changing military condition of the war for during this time the two sides had continued to engage one another in a serious fight aimed at securing more territories and fortification of their respective positions. Nobody was interested in peace.²⁷

While the war rages the international community waited to see how the OAU would react to the conflict. But, the main challenge being that the Head of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria, Major-General Yakubu Gowon, had already and strongly lobbied other Heads of States in numerous African countries objected the need for the Nigerian situation to be on top of the agenda of the OAU meetings at all.²⁸ Similarly, Biafrans were also indisposed to OAU peace engineering in civil war. This was because of the engagement of both sides in peace negotiation and preliminary discussions on the conflict by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London led by its secretary-general Arnold Smith. Britain regarded willingness of both sides to accept continued involvement of Commonwealth Secretariat in peace negotiations as a valuable gain. Attempt by OAU Secretariat to get into the act have potential and unfortunate effect on the London talks which was at a delicate stage then. So OAU peace initiatives at this time were viewed as not forthcoming.²⁹ Speaking to the Press at Entebbe airport on 13 May 1968 before leaving for the Dar es Salam summit meeting, the President of Uganda Milton Obote urged all African countries to help the two sides in Nigeria end the war.

Obote said that “although it could be a disservice to Africa and the conference if the participants did not express sympathy for peace moves on the Nigeria crisis, he does not consider it a time for African resolutions on the subject...”³⁰

Biafra’s secession did not only threaten the territorial integrity of Nigeria but the entire African continent at the time. That was the reason the OAU set out to end the bloody conflict through peace negotiations.³¹ The OAU Heads of State had convened and arrived in the Kinshasa with the intention to produce useful outcome or peace formula acceptable to Nigerians and Biafrans. The meeting began in September 1967 to deliberate among other issues the Nigerian Civil War. The emperor was among the African leaders present at the meeting. Ahead of the meeting, Nigerian ambassadors in Africa elicited reassurances from the emperor and other leaders that the crisis would not be allowed to intrude on the OAU summit without the full consent of the federal government.³²

Eighteen out of the thirty-nine Member-States were represented by their respective Heads of State. The 1967 summit was controlled by the host President Mobutu, and elder statesmen as Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, President Tubman from Liberia, and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. The combination seemed fully capable of raising an OAU peace initiative, quite possibly with the United States or other outside backing. Gowon’s attendance to the meeting was not seriously considered for domestic military and political reasons. The issue was whether to allow his Commissioner for External Affairs Okoi Arikpo to represent Nigeria at the summit or to send a more senior delegation. At the last minute Gowon delegated the highest-ranking civilian in his government Chief Obafemi Awolowo to represent him in Kinshasa. The instruction given to Awolowo was to prevent the civil war from being placed on the official agenda or in any other way from becoming an issue of formal consideration at the summit.³³

As the chairman of the meeting the Ethiopian Emperor opened the summit and made reference to the Nigerian crisis and expressed the hope that, “there will soon emerge a lasting solution which will serve the interests of the Nigerian people as a whole, and the entire Continent of Africa. Aside the Emperor’s reference there was never any formal discussion of the Nigerian crisis. But outside the conference chamber Awolowo Nigeria’s representative at the conference agreed to participate in an ad hoc gathering of seven for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Thus, on the morning of 12 September 1967 President Mobutu, Tubman, Kaunda, Ahidjo, Hamani Diori, the Emperor of Ethiopia and General Ankrah met for the of several intense discussions known as the “Caucus of Heavyweight. No formal record of these discussions was kept.”³⁴

The Federal government was concerned about the participation of President Hamani Diori of Niger and Ahidjo of Cameroon in the peace summit. The continued support from both leaders who States adjoined Nigeria was of vital strategic importance to the federal government. Awolowo said at the meeting “the technical point that the OAU had no jurisdiction to interfere in our affairs and if it did so it would open a flood gate of future interference which

few of the others present could afford themselves. At one point I even implied that if such a precedent was set, Nigeria would feel free to support dissidents in other countries.”³⁵

Inside the caucus, Awolowo found President Kaunda of Zambia to be the most difficult to deal with, and the first few hours of discussion were acrimonious. Kaunda finally left the room to be replaced by President Obote of Uganda. Before Kaunda’s departure, it was made plain to the Nigerians that if they refused OAU involvement, they faced the threat of Zambian and Tanzanian recognition of Biafra, a development that also raised fears among many other members of the organization who did not want to African ranks divided on the Nigerian question. In Kaunda’s absence, tensions subsided. Emperor Haile Selassie and President Tubman emerged in control of the proceedings and worked to develop a consensus that would accommodate the federal government while carving out a role for the OAU to establish the organization as the foremost judge of the international implications of the Nigerian civil war.³⁶ During the Kinshasa Assembly, a debate was held on the civil war. However, the heads of state did not go very far in their deliberations and were not eager to impose their will on a fellow member. The heads of state and government were faced with repeated warnings by the federal government of Nigeria that the war was merely a matter for Nigeria.³⁷

The African Heads of State and Government who met at Kinshasa from the 11-14 September showed commendable initiative by trying to resolve the Nigerian Civil War.³⁸ A resolution was passed by 3:00 a.m. on 14 September 1967 being the last day of the summit.³⁹ It stated that:

Solemnly re-affirmed their adherence to the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member-states; reiterating their condemnation of secession in any member-states; concerned at the tragic and serious situation in Nigeria; recognizing that situation as an internal affair, the solution of which is primarily the responsibility of Nigerian themselves; Reposing their trust and confidence in the Federal Government of Nigeria; resolved to send a consultative mission of six heads of State to the Head of the Federal Government of Nigeria to assure him of the Assembly’s desire for the territorial integrity, unity and peace of Nigeria.⁴⁰

The resolution was the product of the initiative of great African leaders, namely General Ankrah of Ghana and the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie. According the Nigerian Head of State, Majot-General Yakubu Gowon, “the Kinshasa resolution of the OAU Summit on the Nigerian situation proves that all African States are true friends of Nigeria... It was in the interest of all Africans that Nigeria remains one political and economic entity. The OAU has rightly seen our problem as a purely domestic affair and in accordance with the OAU

resolution...”⁴¹ Gowon was very happy that the resolution did not promote the interest of the secessionist led by Ojukwu, rather it reinstated the Federal position on national unity that was the main bone of contention during the civil war.

Under Kinshasa resolution, an agreement within the OAU caucus was reached for the establishment of an ad hoc committee of African Heads of State to deal with the Nigerian crisis. The committee was not constituted as a mediatory body but was only called only a ‘Consultative Committee’ in line with the Federal government's wishes.⁴² The members of the committee were the Emperor of Ethiopia, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, Chairman; President Tubman of the Republic of Liberia, Vice Chairman; President Ahmadu Ahidjo, President of the Republic of Cameroon; Monsieur Hamani Diori, President of the Republic of Niger; Lieutenant-General Ankrah, the Chairman of the National Liberation Council of Ghana; and General Mobutu of Congo Kinshasa, a choice that embraced the senior statesmen, the originators of the OAU proposals, the host of the OAU conferences on peace negotiations and the interests of the adjacent States.⁴³

Meanwhile, the draft resolution that created the Consultative Committee on the Nigerian Civil War was handed over to the US Ambassador in Kinshasa by General Mobutu and Bomboko and send to the US Ambassador to Nigeria Albert Mathew who transmitted the resolution to Gowon for his approval before passage by the OAU in morning session of the meeting on 14 September 1967.⁴⁴ This showed the extent of great power’s collaborations and diplomatic linkages with African Heads of State during the OAU summit in Kinshasa. The Kinshasa meeting was not independent of external interference as it still opened some diplomatic window for non-African watch of its activities.

At the insistence of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the resolution was carefully phrased to avoid the suggestion that the Consultative Committee was to deal with two equal participants or in any sense to mediate in the dispute. This prompted Ojukwu to state that: “The OAU resolution taken in Kinshasa a few weeks after the start of the war was partial in favour of Nigeria. Subsequent resolutions have followed that original and unrealistic resolution of 1967. Nigeria knows that Biafra cannot negotiate with her under such a resolution and because she does not want negotiations she insisted on the terms of that resolution so as to make a meeting impossible.”⁴⁵

Quao, the Principal Secretary National Liberation Council and Ghanaian Representative at OAU Ministerial Meeting in Kinshasa told the British High Commissioner in Ghana, Smedley, on 16 September 1967, that “Gowon should be well pleased with the resolution in its present form. To make it easier for Gowon to receive delegation, the operative paragraph had been deliberately phrased to indicate that what Heads of State were going to discuss was not mediation but possibility of mediation. In the event, the resolution which was first agreed privately in a restricted session, was somewhat amended to meet Nigerian wishes, I understand the reference to secession was general and not just linked to Nigeria.”⁴⁶

General Ankrah had got Gowon’s agreement to the original draft resolution before he went to Kinshasa but subsequent proceedings on it had to be held up until the Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry of External Affairs, Adegoroye flew to Kinshasa on 14

September 1967 to propose some amendments.⁴⁷ The Sierra Leonean Commissioner of Police and senior member in the External Affairs Ministry, Leigh said:

This suggested that Gowon had some difficulty in persuading some of his colleagues to accept the resolution and that there might be some serious reservations in Lagos about their attitude to the mission when it arrived. Awolowo's view was that the mission should go only to Lagos and that its main purpose would be to demonstrate that the OAU had not allowed their Kinshasa meeting to pass without addressing themselves to one of the major African problems. But once Africans of the calibre of Haile Selassie, Tubman and other got into the act, it would not be easy to prevent them trying to produce results if they were so minded.⁴⁸

Gowon never wanted the civil war issue to leave the shores of Nigeria. Such a scenario has the tendency of internationalizing the conflict. He wanted the matter to remain internally disposed and be resolved internally. A spokesman for Ministry of External Affairs once said at a Press Conference in Lagos on 12 September 1967 about OAU's intervention in the war that "Nigeria's situation is purely internal affair. FMG does not wish to internalize it. The FMG was in position to contain it and therefore need no external intervention. Any move for intervention would be regarded as encroachment in Nigerian domestic affairs." ⁴⁹

The policy of support for the Federal Government of Nigeria by most African States was staunchly backed by the O.A.U., which frowned at secession in Africa. This stand-point could be better understood against the background of the argument that the break-up of Nigeria would spell the break-up of every other African state, since the boundaries of these states are all artificial and as they contain different tribal groups that have often been in conflict in the past.⁵⁰ The position of the African leaders and the decision of the OAU in this regard on the Nigerian Civil War were short-sighted and auto-centric. Thus, incessant conflicts and civil wars bordered on the same problems gnawed across the continent in subsequent years.⁵¹

While the Nigerian-Biafran war had purely internal origins; it ceased to be an exclusively internal affair when Britain, the Soviet Union, and France became involved in the conflict. A civil war ceases to be an internal affair, when third parties intervene to such an extent as to upset the balance between the protagonists and determine the outcome. By following a policy of non-interference in such cases, the OAU was in effect allowing the outcome of the Nigerian conflict to be determined by the actions and preferences of non-African powers.⁵²

British Assessment of OAU's Kinshasa Resolution

British attitude towards peace settlement of the civil war was echoed on 18 August 1967 following the public call for cessation of hostilities and a negotiated peace settlement. The distance from achieving a clear-cut military victory prompted the British decision to align with the argument of the two sides for peace talks. Britain was however guarded against premature

action which might undermine peace moves when the chances of success might otherwise be greater.⁵³ It was hoped that the two sides would reach a compromise and developed the desire to resolve the conflict on the conference table.

Support for peaceful settlement of the conflict was boosted when the British Deputy High Commissioner in Enugu, John Parker, informed the Foreign Office in his war situation report on 14 July 1967 that the best solution for British interest was an end of the fighting while leaving Biafra uncrushed and open the way for negotiation rather than meet any request for military aid by the Nigerian Government.⁵⁴

At a meeting with the Nigerian Commissioner for Information and Labour Anthony, Enahoro, on 17 July 1967, the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson said that Her Majesty's Government hoped for a settlement on the basis of a united Nigeria in a continuing friendly relationship with Britain. Enahoro was glad to hear the statement.⁵⁵ Throughout the war, the British Government had consistently pressed for a ceasefire and a solution by peaceful negotiation acceptable to both sides. It is believed that the future welfare and prosperity of the Nigeria populace depended to a substantial degree on the country's ability to maintain its unity and therefore hope that the final settlement would be based on the maintenance of this unity in some form.⁵⁶

On 18 August 1967 the Commonwealth Office released a paper titled "British Policy towards Nigeria" which detailed the designs of the British policy on the civil war and its political consequences. Part of the document stated that, "it was difficult to envisage an acceptable political settlement which would associate the various races of Nigeria... however, at the appropriate time in the civil war, the two sides would realize the impossibility of reaching a military solution and be prepared for peace negotiations." ⁵⁷

Thus, the need to preserve long-term safety of British interests in Nigeria and sustenance of inter-regional cooperation and federalism in the country prompted Britain to opt for any international or multilateral support that included the OAU for the development of peace initiatives in the civil war with caution not to lose substantial influence with the Nigerian Government ⁵⁸

While it strived to maintain neutrality in peace negotiations in order to avoid criticisms of over interference in the civil war, Britain still wished that peace be attained to end the conflict as soon as possible. Part of its peace agenda was to work with any international and regional bodies willing to help bring peace between the sides. Moreover, London was highly disposed to peace mediations with an African approach, which only the OAU could be able to deliver.

Britain was strengthened by its conviction that its Defence policy in Nigeria was right, given the overwhelming support for a united Nigeria within the OAU.⁵⁹ As a result, it was the first country to assess the outcome of the OAU Kinshasa summit on 16 December 1967. The assessment was very important because it enabled Britain to study how the OAU Consultative Committee on Nigeria had dealt with the conflict and what further action needed to be taken as the civil war progressed. Everybody in London was pleased about the OAU resolution. It showed a sign of something being done by the African States to end the conflict. According to the High Commissioner:

The language of the resolution also gives us an excellent cue for when we are pressed for a statement of our attitude. It goes much further than anything I have thought it safe to say, particularly in the condemnation of secession, it talks about the organization's desire for the territorial integrity and unity of Nigeria as opposed to my rather optimistic faith; but I suggest we adopt its languages and say this is what we have maintained all along...⁶⁰

Her Majesty's Government applauded the OAU peace initiative and wished it the very best. However, Britain was cautious to avoid being hesitant and enthusiastically behind the OAU initiative. Being careful did not inhibit the British officials from expressing support for the OAU resolutions as the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Michael Stewart did in his reactions to the resolution.

In the resolution, the OAU was concerned about the international character of the war. The influx of external forces in the conflict, such as the Soviet Union, Britain, France, Portugal and Czechoslovakia created serious concerns for the continental body to find a way to mediate in the civil war. The British Government, Russia and France continued to supply arms and ammunition to Nigeria and Biafra. As a fellow member of the Commonwealth of Nations, Britain was obliged to render military assistance to Nigeria simply because the latter was trying to maintain unity against a secessionist movement.⁶¹ To cut off all supplies to Nigeria would be seen by Nigerians as an un-neutral and one-sided act against them and against our declared policy of support for a single Nigeria."⁶² While the big powers proclaimed the conflict an African affair, they have spared no effort in supplying arms and in dictating the pace of the war.⁶³ This caused a serious distress for the OAU Consultative Committee and encouraged her towards convening further peace negotiation meetings that took place in Addis Ababa and Algeria under the leadership of the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie.

Conclusion

The Kinshasa resolution on the Nigerian Civil War was a manifestation of an anti-secessionist stance of the majority of African Heads of State. The resolution was designed to make the OAU initiative on the civil war acceptable to the Nigerian government. Its condemnation of secession was a reflection of feelings of the parties to the resolution. African leaders were allergic to secession, thus, the resolution showed that it was a threat to the stability of Africa. The moment the OAU articulated the desire to find solution to the Nigerian-Biafra conflict; Britain was highly expectant of the positive outcome of her activities in the war and especially at a time when it adopted the principle of mediation as part of its foreign policy in the civil war with the assertion that even though it did not play a direct role in the peace process it could still support African peace efforts at any time in the war. The Kinshasa resolution was a significant proclamation as different great powers mostly Britain aligned their views to it as part of their standpoints in the fighting. Britain saw the Kinshasa resolution as in tandem with its position in the war that of facilitation of peaceful settlement based on the restoration of Nigerian unity.

It bodes well for both the British officialdom and the African States that Nigeria should remain an indivisible country devoid of secessionist tendencies, thereby placing Britain on a high footing with the African States. The British officialdom took the advantage of the OAU resolution to establish good relationship with the Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie the leader of the OAU Consultative Committee in resolving the war, and with the view that the conflict was an African affair to be solved by Africans as a confirmation of the common objective of the OAU and British government. Admittedly, the OAU was a young organization with limited resources but it was right that it should to about seeking for a solution to the Nigerian conflict, as it had been trying to do since the Heads of States drafted the Kinshasa resolution and equally set up a Consultative and Conciliation Committee.

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