

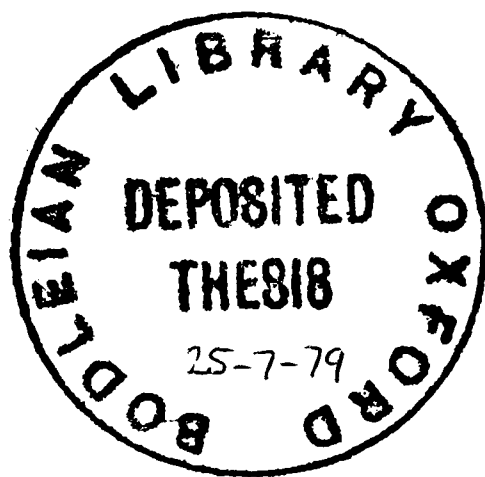
Relations between Nigeria, France and Selected
Francophone States in West Africa

1960 - 1975

A Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy at the University of Oxford

by

Daniel C. Bach



Trinity Term
1978

St. Antony's College
Oxford

ABSTRACT

Relations between Nigeria, France and Selected Francophone States in West Africa, 1960 - 1975

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The thesis is concerned with the emergence of Nigeria as a regional power since 1966, through a study of political relations between Nigeria, France and selected francophone West African states between 1960 and 1975 - Ivory Coast, Niger and Dahomey. Until 1966, Nigeria's policy substantially contributed to the preservation of francophone influence in West Africa. The first change in Nigeria's relationship with its neighbours was prompted by its disagreements with Ivory Coast during the Nigerian civil war. Subsequently, Nigerian influence spread into francophone West Africa at the expense of that of Ivory Coast, a change stimulated by shifts in France's policy towards Africa. The study concludes with the climax of this evolution, Nigeria's successful creation of the Economic Community of West African States in May 1975. This is seen as the embodiment of Nigeria's emergence as an active West African power, along with its corollary, the weakening of the historic francophone-anglophone division.

The study of Nigeria's changing relations with Ivory Coast is brought into sharper perspective by the inclusion of Dahomey and Niger into the analysis. Indeed, these two countries were closely bound to Nigeria in a subordinate

relationship through unequal economic and social ties. Furthermore, they belonged to the core of the francophone group in Africa, for here were two of those states which, under the leadership of Ivory Coast, retained the closest links with France at the time of their independence in 1960.

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AG	Action Group
AOF	Afrique Occidentale Française
AEF	Afrique Equatoriale Française
BCEAO	Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
CAB	Comité d'Action pour le Biafra
CAR	Central African Republic
CCN	Consultative Committee of the OAU on Nigeria
CEAO	Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
CFAF	Franc Colonies Françaises d'Afrique
	Franc Communauté Financière Africaine (since 1960)
CFAO	Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Occidentale
CFCF	Comité Français pour la Campagne Contre la Faim
CFP	Compagnie Française des Pétroles
CRF	Croix Rouge Française
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EAMA	Etats Africains et Malgache Associés
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDF	European Development Fund
EEC	European Economic Community
FEA	French Equatorial Africa
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale
FMG	Federal Military Government
FWA	French West Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPRA	Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne
IAMSO	Inter-African and Malgasy States Organisation
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
JCA	Joint Church Aid

JCC	Joint Commission for Co-operation between Nigeria and Niger
LDC	Least Developed Country
MP	Member of Parliament
NA	Native Authority/Administration
NCNC	National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons National Council of Nigerian Citizens (after 1962)
NEPU	Northern Elements Progressive Union
NLP	Nigerian Labour Party
NPC	Northern Peoples' Congress
OAMCE	Organisation Africaine et Malgache de Coopération Economique
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OCAM	Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache
OCDN	Organisation Commune Dahomey-Niger
PCF	Parti Communiste Français
PDCI	Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire
PFA	Parti de la Fédération Africaine
PPD	Parti Populaire Dahoméen
PPN	Parti Populaire Nigérien
PRD	Parti Républicain du Dahomey
RDA	Rassemblement Démocratique Africain
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute
SOCAD	Société de Commercialisation Agricole du Dahomey
SONARA	Société Nationale de Commercialisation des Arachides
UAM	Union Africaine et Malgache
UAMCE	Union Africaine et Malgache de Coopération Economique
UAMD	Union Africaine et Malgache de Défense
UAR	United Arab Republic
UDEAO	Union Douanière des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
UDR	Union des Démocrates pour la République
UMOA	Union Monétaire de l'Ouest Africain
UN	United Nations

INTRODUCTION

The multiplicity of regional organisations is a striking feature of the West African political scene.¹ Reflected therein is the establishment of spheres of influence erected around the more powerful states of the region, together with a complementary polarisation of West African politics into rival groupings. The thesis is concerned with the emergence of Nigeria as a regional power since 1966, through a study of the political relations between Nigeria, France and selected francophone West African states between 1960 and 1975 - Ivory Coast, Niger and Benin, known as Dahomey during this period.

Until 1966, Nigeria's policy actively contributed to the preservation of francophone influence in West Africa. The first change in Nigeria's relationship with its neighbours was prompted by its disagreements with Ivory Coast during the Nigerian civil war. Subsequently, Nigerian influence spread into francophone West Africa at the expense of that of Ivory Coast, a change stimulated by shifts in France's policy towards Africa. The study concludes with the climax of this evolution, Nigeria's successful creation of the Economic Community of West African States in May 1975. This is seen as the embodiment of Nigeria's emergence as an active West African power, along with its corollary, the weakening of the historic francophone-anglophone division.

A central focus is the evolution of Nigeria's relations with Ivory Coast, a theme which is brought into sharper perspective by the inclusion of Dahomey and Niger into the analysis. These two countries were closely bound to Nigeria in a subordinate relationship

1. West Africa is defined as the area lying West of the Nigeria-Cameroun border; R.J. Harrison-Church, West Africa, A Study of the Environment and Man's Use of it (London, 1961), p. XXIII.

through unequal economic and social ties. Furthermore, they belonged to the core of the francophone group in Africa, for here were two of those states which, under the leadership of Ivory Coast, retained the closest links with France at the time of their independence in 1960. By looking at these states' relations with Nigeria, with France, and with Ivory Coast, a clearer understanding of the West African policies of Nigeria and Ivory Coast is enabled.

To date, research on international relationships in West Africa has developed along three major lines. The first theme of research has been that of regional organisations in West Africa. Here, there are some excellent studies on such early federalist attempts in West Africa as the French West Africa Federation (FWA), the Mali Federation, the Union Africaine et Malgache (UAM), the Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache (OCAM) and the Conseil de l'Entente.¹ Yet such works have concentrated on the study of formal groupings without paying sufficient attention to the dynamics of inter-state relations as defined below. Secondly, there has been the literature on the Nigerian civil war. Some of this began, for the first time, to pay attention to the issue of Nigeria's relations with its francophone West African neighbours. However, these works still confirmed themselves to the study of diplomatic moves, and their authors' sometimes inadequate knowledge of francophone politics

1. Major contributions include books and articles by E. Berg; 'The Economic Base of Political Choice in French West Africa', American Political Science Review, LIV, 2(June 1960), 391-405; W. Foltz, From French West Africa to the Mali Federation (London, 1965); T. Hodgkin and R. Schachter, 'French-Speaking West Africa in Transition', International Conciliation, 528 (May 1960), 375-436; A. Jalloh, Political Integration in French-Speaking Africa (Berkeley, 1973); C. Welch, Dream of Unity: Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa (Ithaca, 1966); T. Yannopoulos and D. Martin, 'Domination et Composition en Afrique: le Conseil de l'Entente et la Communauté Est-Africaine face à eux-mêmes et face aux "grands"', Revue Algérienne de Sciences Juridiques, Politiques et Economiques, IX, 1(March 1972), 129-51.

has set a limit on their analyses.¹ The final approach is the conventional one of the study of the foreign policies of individual African countries. Several books and numerous theses exist on this subject, often providing useful background information.² Nevertheless, they generally tend to concentrate on bilateral relations with the former metropolitan powers or on African politics at the macro level of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and insufficiently on intra-territorial relationships in West Africa.

The originality of this thesis lies in its attempt to study inter-African relations in terms of 'external linkages' as well as 'foreign policy' moves. The classical study of foreign policy cannot in itself be sufficient for a comprehensive understanding of West African politics. Thus, the study takes into account socio-economic patterns of exchange between the Hausa and Yoruba communities living on each side of Nigeria's frontier with Niger and Dahomey; the religious bonds of Islam; political party links such as those between the NEPU of Nigeria and the Sawaba of Niger; the importance of transport and communication, of trading patterns and of the 'unrecorded' side of trade across the Dahomey-Nigeria and Niger-Nigeria frontiers, better known as smuggling. In this study, relations with the ex-metropolitan powers are considered as an integral component of the politics of inter-state relations in West Africa and no longer as an

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1. Eg. S.Cronjé, The World and Nigeria; A Diplomatic History of the Biafran War 1967-1970 (London, 1972); J.de St Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War (London, 1971); J.Stremlau, The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-70 (Princeton, 1977). Stremlau's analyses of France and francophone Africa contrast sharply with the high quality of his information on the other aspects of his study.
 2. For example O.Aluko, Ghana and Nigeria, 1957-1970, A Study of of Inter-African Discord (London, 1976); O. Aluko, ed, The Foreign Policies of African States (London, 1977); A.Akinyemi, Nigerian Federalism and Foreign Policy: the Nigerian Experience (Ibadan, 1974); G.Idang, Nigeria: Internal Politics and Foreign Policy, 1960-1966 (Ibadan, 1973); C.Phillips, The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy (Evanston, 1964), W. Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966 (Princeton, 1968). See also the list of theses in the bibliography.

independent variable. Emphasis is laid on a case study of France's relations with Nigeria, and with Niger, Ivory Coast and Dahomey. By contrast, relations between the United Kingdom and Nigeria are analysed in more general terms, since British policy towards Nigeria and francophone West Africa was far less significant than was France's policy during the period studied.¹ None of these aspects of West African politics has been a traditional component of foreign policy studies nor have they been conspicuous in the existing works on the politics of West Africa.

The perspective adopted by this study reflects the diversity of its sources. In the first instance, over a hundred interviews were conducted in Africa and in Europe, with academics, journalists, policy advisers, civil servants, businessmen and other personally involved individuals. In several cases total confidentiality was required, because of the recent character of the events recalled. Access to some of the written material incorporated in this thesis was also given on similar conditions. To preserve the confidentiality of sources and to respect the strict conditions on which the material was made available, the device has been used of indicating these separately by the occasional use of superscript arabic letters in the text (a/b/c). A key has been provided for the use of the examiners.

The rationale of the interviews was twofold. Not only did they frequently give considerable help in supplementing information readily available in written sources, even when they did not provide much new information, they were useful in enabling a better understanding of the motivation of the key individuals involved, a further step

1. British policy towards Nigeria has been thoroughly covered until 1966 by O.Ojedokun, 'Nigeria's Relations with the Commonwealth with Special Reference to Her Relations with the United Kingdom, 1960-1966' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1968, mimeo). For the period after 1966 see p.8, n.1.

towards an interpretation of the events. The importance of collecting oral information cannot be overemphasized in an age where personal communication has so often replaced written messages. For example, in Nigeria a senior civil servant who worked in close touch with Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa considers that 'even if the files of that period have survived they will not be very illuminating as the Prime Minister's minute [sic] was "We spoke - A[bubakar] T[afawa] B[alewa]".'¹

Written material includes the press of France, Britain, Nigeria and of francophone West Africa, as well as the daily releases of the BBC Monitoring Service and the Agence France-Presse. Many socio-economic reports and studies published in mimeographed form, and therefore not readily available, have been used. A large number of unpublished theses was also consulted, some of which were extremely helpful. In particular, the author wishes to acknowledge his debt to the theses of Oladipo Ojedokun and Jacques Batmanian.² Their approaches and findings are most stimulating, even when the present writer does not fully agree with their interpretations. For the period of the Nigerian civil war, film footage from the French television and the BBC, the extensive and valuable archives of the Comité International de Lutte Contre le Génocide au Biafra and the Mouvement pour la Paix au Nigéria-Biafra provided a lot of fresh information.

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1. P.Stallard, 'Africa in the Colonial Period, The Transfer of Power: The Administrator in the Age of Decolonisation' (Oxford, 1978, mimeo), p.2. Sir Peter Stallard was the Prime Minister's Secretary between September 1957 and June 1961.
 2. J.Batmanian, 'La Politique de la Côte d'Ivoire de son Accession à l'Indépendance à la Fin de la Guerre Civile du Nigéria' (Paris I Univ. thèse de Doctorat de 3ème cycle, 1973, mimeo). I am grateful to Dr. Batmanian for allowing me to read and quote his dissertation. For Ojedokun's work, see p.9, n.1.

The thesis is divided into two parts. Part One shows how the francophone-anglophone division inherited from the colonial period remained a basic feature of Nigeria's relations with its neighbours until 1966. Accordingly, Chapter I studies France's relations with Nigeria in connection with their respective policies in West Africa. Chapter II describes the scope and limits of the entente cordiale between Ivory Coast and Nigeria up to the overthrow of the Balewa regime in January 1966. It argues that the roots of the entente cordiale are to be found in the two countries' common hostility to Ghana and in Nigeria's contribution to the enforcement of respect for the status quo in Africa. Chapter III is a case-study of this aspect of the Nigerian policy and the way in which it contributed to the preservation and reinforcement of francophone influence in Niger and Dahomey.

Part Two analyses the emergence of Nigeria as a regional power in West Africa during and after the Nigerian civil war. Chapter IV studies the competition for influence in West Africa between Nigeria and Ivory Coast. Chapters V and VI show the impact of Nigeria's new West African policy on its neighbours, Dahomey and Niger. The last chapter of the thesis considers Nigeria's changing relations with France since 1966. It presents them as a crucial element in the emergence of a Nigerian sphere of influence in francophone Africa. The conclusion is reached that, although by 1975 the creation of the ECOWAS had marked a weakening of the francophone-anglophone division, that division has not yet totally disappeared: within ECOWAS, the francophone Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEAO), ensures the preservation of a privileged network of ties between francophone states. ECOWAS was largely the result of Nigeria's dynamic West African policy. In many ways the future

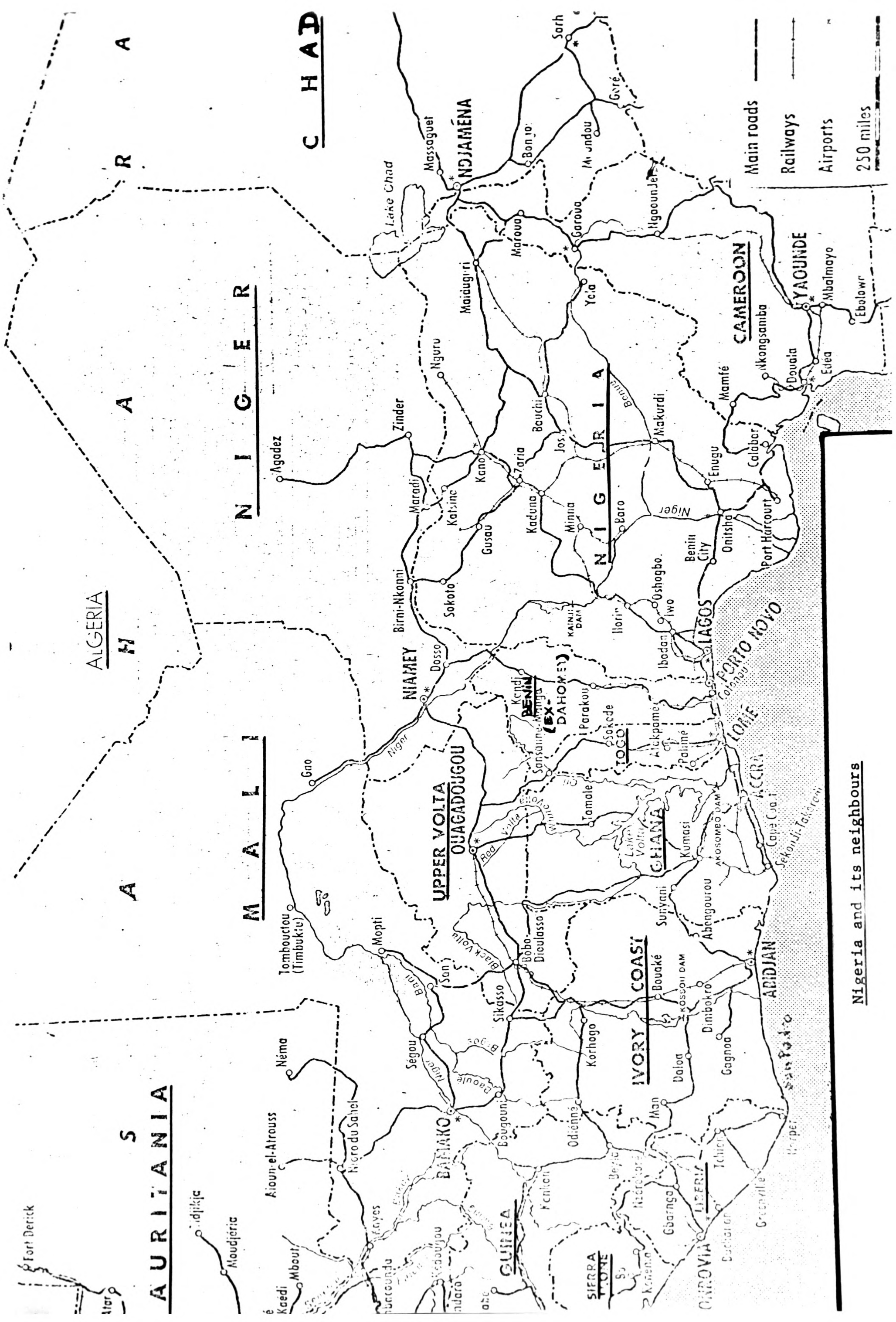
of the organisation would seem to be dependent on both the oil boom and the preservation of political stability in Nigeria.

This work was made possible by a generous scholarship granted by the Council of Europe, administered by the British Council. Generous grants from the Cyril Foster Fund also helped finance a six months visit to Africa and facilitated the completion of the thesis.

PART ONE

The continuity of the Francophone-Anglophone division

1960 - 1966



Nigeria and its neighbours

CHAPTER I

The background to the Gaullist policy in the Nigerian crisis

When Nigeria became independent on 1 October 1960, the development of relations with France was considered of little importance by the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. He had no plans for the opening of a Nigerian embassy in Paris.¹ The advantage of being represented in the French capital as a means of establishing contact with francophone African leaders was overlooked. Economically, French links with Nigeria were insignificant. In 1960, trade links with France represented less than 3% of Nigeria's overall trade.² Far more important was the transit trade conducted through the federation by French companies acting on behalf of Dahomey, Cameroun, Chad and Niger. Only a few French companies had invested in Nigeria during the colonial period. The Société Commerciale de l'Ouest Africain (SCOA) and the Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Occidentale (CFAO) were the oldest.³ They had opened offices in Nigeria in 1900 and 1910, respectively, to buy and export agricultural commodities. After the creation of the Nigerian Marketing Boards in 1947, they explored new spheres of activity. Thus by 1960, CFAO was involved in the sale of vehicles, trade in building materials and retail trade in food and luxury items through a network of supermarkets in the major Nigerian cities. As for SCOA, it had built a car assembly plant at Lagos-Apapa in 1956, and by the time of Nigeria's independence was producing

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1. Oral answer of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister to question O.28; Nigeria: House of Representative Debates, 7 April 1960, col. 806. (Hereafter HRD).
 2. See tables 16 and 17 in appendix.
 3. For fuller information see D. Bach, 'Les Relations Franco-Nigériennes de 1960 à 1970' (Grenoble II Univ. Mémoire de Second Cycle, 1971, mimeo), p. 24ff.

commercial and private vehicles-both Peugeot and the British Austin.

With the exception of CFAO and SCOA, most French companies in Nigeria started operations in the 1950s. There were two French owned banks in the country, one of them, The United Bank for Africa, had been in business there since 1949; the Banque de l'Afrique Occidentale opened its first branch in Kano in 1959, By 1956, Total, a subsidiary of the Compagnie Française des Pétroles (CFP) had established a chain of petrol stations throughout Nigeria. Dumez, a public works contractor, and the Etablissements Brossolette, who specialised in the import of building materials, had opened offices in Lagos in 1958 and 1959 respectively. Lastly, Gas Producers Ltd, a company jointly owned by the French Air Liquide and the Dutch Vanleer company, started producing industrial gas in Port Harcourt in 1960.

French investment in Nigeria represented little in comparison with its other interests in francophone Africa. At government level French attitudes to Nigeria were influenced primarily by geo-political considerations. The possible impact of the Nigerian federation on its francophone neighbours had aroused concern in the colonial administration at the time of the adoption of the Loi-cadre which broke up the federations of French West Africa (FWA) and French Equatorial Africa (FEA). When the act was debated in the French parliament pro-federalists claimed that its consequences would be countries like Niger and Dahomey moving into the Ghanaian or Nigerian orbit. The Senegales MP Leopold Senghor argued:

Quand vous aurez disloqué la Fédération d'Afrique Noire, craignez que les territoires ne se tournent l'un vers Lagos, l'autre vers Accra.¹

A study of this issue by the colonial administration showed quite clearly

1. République Française, Journal Officiel de l'Assemblée Nationale, 29 January 1957, p.373. (Hereafter JOAN).

that such concern was groundless as far as Ivory Coast and Dahomey were concerned.^a Nigerian influence, the report concluded, could only be feared in Niger.

To the Gaullists, in power since 1958, Ghana and Nigeria seemed dangerous poles of attraction to their smaller neighbours from the ex-FWA federation. Yves Guéna, France's High Commissioner in Ivory Coast in 1960, analysed the political geography of West Africa in the following words:

Dans une grande partie de l'Afrique la Grande Bretagne joue la réunification...elle s'est attachée à maintenir l'unité de l'énorme bloc du Nigéria malgré les forces centrifuges qui le travaillent; elle a favorisé l'absorption du Togo Britannique par le Ghana indépendant. Même sans parler en termes militaires, que pèserait demain une poussière d'Etats francophones devant ces deux puissances...?¹

1. The expulsion of the French Ambassador

De Gaulle's concern, after 1960, at the preservation of a united group of francophone states was partly reflected by his attitude to Nigeria. Raymond Offroy, the Gaullist diplomat who was France's first ambassador to Nigeria, recalls that in October 1960 de Gaulle was unhappy about the disproportionate size of Nigeria to its francophone neighbours.² Owing to its far greater population and natural resources, Nigeria dominated them de facto. Virulent Nigerian reaction to the French atomic programme since 1959 had reinforced de Gaulle's impression that an independent Nigeria could seriously disrupt relations between France and francophone West Africa.

News of France's planning to conduct nuclear experiments in the Sahara had aroused Nigerian fears that the northern parts of the

1. Y. Guéna, Historique de la Communauté (Paris, 1962), p.34.

2. Raymond Offroy, Interview, Paris, 17 April 1975.

country would become contaminated. In February 1959 the Nigerian House of Representatives had passed a motion calling on the British Secretary of State for the Colonies to convey Nigeria's concern about these experiments to France.¹ This was of no avail; in July, it was announced that the first atomic test was scheduled to take place in the following months. This decision provoked a storm of protest in Guinea, Mali (then French Soudan), in Anglophone Africa and among member-states of the Afro-Asian group, culminating in the condemnation of French policy at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in November that year.²

Nigerian reactions to the projected French experiments had little international impact because Nigeria was not independent. In reply to British representations on Nigeria's behalf, France merely gave the assurance that surrounding countries would not be endangered by the tests. This was greeted with dismay in Nigeria. Scientists from Ibadan University argued that 'the ground over Northern Nigeria could be contaminated by radioactive debris carried downwind' from the Sahara.³ Reggane was nearer to France than Nigeria, but nuclear fallout might be carried by the harmattan, a strong wind which blew southwards from the Sahara in December and January. All the party leaders in Nigeria wrote letters of protest to Sir James Robertson, the Governor of Nigeria, urging that their views should once more be made known to de Gaulle.⁴ A protest march against the French consulate-general took place in Lagos on 23 July. The radical Dynamic Party and Northern Elements Progressive

1. HRD, 24 February 1959, col. 1047.

2. United Nations General Assembly, 20 November 1959, Resolution 1379.

3. Nigerian Citizen, 1 August 1959.

4. Guardian, 15 July 1959.

Union (NEPU) also advocated a boycott of French goods, in addition to retaliatory measures against French nationals and interests if the experiment was carried out.¹

The tests became an issue of increasing importance as the 1959 Nigerian general election approached. In London, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier of the Eastern Region and President of the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), made a dramatic appeal to France:

We will regard this Sahara test not only as an unfriendly act but as a crime against humanity in view of the dangers of radioactive fall-out and in view of the effects of [the] Sahara desert on the climate of Northern Nigeria.²

A few days later, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Premier of the Northern Region and President of the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), went to Paris for informal discussions on the tests with French foreign ministry officials.³ The ineffectiveness of these protests contributed to the growth of anti-French sentiment in Nigeria. Demonstrations in Kano and Lagos demanded the expulsion of the French consul and called for a boycott of French goods.⁴ Members of the Nigerian parliament expressed their anger at the government's inability to influence French policy. Jaja Wachuku, MP for Aba and subsequently Nigeria's Foreign Minister, proposed a motion that would 'warn France to desist from the atom bomb test in the Sahara'.⁵

Balewa, however, pointed out that Nigeria had no independent status and could only 'protest in the strongest possible terms to the government of the United Kingdom'.⁶ As the expected date of

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1. Daily Comet, 24 and 25 July 1959.
 2. N.Azikiwe, Zik, A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe (London, 1961), p.74.
 3. Nigerian Citizen, 5 August 1959.
 4. Guardian, 26 August 1959; Daily Comet, 8 and 10 September 1959.
 5. HRD, 11 August 1959, col. 1713.
 6. Ibid., col. 1736.

the nuclear tests drew closer, Balewa himself led an all-party delegation to London early in September. After discussions with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, the mission secured nothing more than a promise that his government would inform France once again of Nigeria's fears. Britain, it was explained, had no influence on Gaullist policy. British scientists, however, reassured the delegates that the explosion would not have harmful effects. The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority discounted risks of nuclear contamination:

It is...virtually impossible that any measurable let alone any harmful degree of radioactive contamination could be blown by the harmattan to Nigeria, 900 miles away from the radio-active debris deposited at the site of an explosion at Reggan[e]...

An atomic explosion at Reggan[e] is unlikely, even in the most unfavourable circumstances...to add more to the normal background radiation of a man at the nearest point in Nigeria, than 24 mr. over 50 years, during which period he would have received from ordinary natural sources anything between 5,000 and 7,500 mr. in any case.¹

The comforting conclusions of this report did not allay publicly expressed fears about potential effects of an atomic explosion. In parliament, Balewa came under criticism for accepting too readily the opinion of British scientists.² In Lagos the French consulate-general and various French commercial buildings received police protection.³ The press continued to emphasize the tests' dangers and reproduced statements from scientists about the risks involved.⁴ One newspaper devoted a full page article in its regular column 'Family Doctor' to a description of the hazards of atomic tests.⁵ Another reported that 'higher circles in Lagos and the

1. Quoted in Daily Times, 29 December 1960.

2. The Times, 14 January 1960.

3. West African Pilot, 11 and 12 February 1960

4. Nigerian Citizen, 16 January 1960; Daily Times, 20 January 1960.

5. 'Atomic Tests: how dangerous will it be to your health?', Daily Times, 2 January 1960.

U[niversity] C[ollege of] I[badan] described the projected atom-test as the greatest threat to human life in Nigeria... since the epidemic that followed the first world war'.¹

France's first atomic explosion, delayed by technical difficulties, was eventually carried out on 13 February 1960. No increase of radio-activity was then recorded by any of Northern Nigeria's six monitoring stations.² Yet Nigerian opposition to the nuclear tests remained and took on a more political overtone. French experiments were branded as an imperialist venture tantamount to a denial of Africa's independence. Following France's second atomic explosion on 1 April, the Federal House of Representatives voted for a resolution that trade links with France be suspended and its assets frozen if further tests were conducted.³ Nigeria was still under British rule and could not vote the immediate implementation of these measures as Ghana did.⁴ In Nigeria, the Eastern Region government adopted a resolute stand; it ordered its ministries to halt the purchase of French goods and the use of services.⁵

On 27 December 1960, France carried out a third atomic experiment in the Sahara. Nigeria, now independent reacted strongly. At the end of a four-hour long cabinet meeting on 5 January 1961, it ordered the departure of the French ambassador Raymond Offroy under particularly difficult and humiliating circumstances. Telephone services in the embassy were cut off without notice, the ambassador and his staff were told to leave Nigeria within 48 hours. They could not do so by air for the Federal government had cancelled, with immediate effect, French transit rights through Nigeria.

1. West African Pilot, 12 February 1960

2. West Africa, 20 February 1960, 199.

3. HRD, 5 April 1960, cols. 654-5.

4. Ghana froze trade relations with France and recalled its ambassador to Paris for consultations.

5. This directive did not apply to existing contracts; Daily Times, 12 April 1960.

Nigerian sanctions drastically hampered the external trade of Niger, Dahomey and Chad which were dependent on French ships for their import-export trade through Nigeria. By mid-January, 90,000 tons of groundnuts from Niger were held up in Lagos.¹ Nor could Dahomey any longer import the equipment necessary for the construction of its deep water harbour in Cotonou.² Economic sanctions against France meant a serious setback in Balewa's attempts to develop good relations with Nigeria's neighbours. After visits of delegations from Niger and Dahomey, the Federal government agreed to revise its policy. By the end of January, French ships carrying goods for Nigeria's neighbours were again allowed into Lagos harbour provided they did not fly the French flag.³

After France's fourth atomic explosion on 25 April, Balewa resisted pressure in parliament for further retaliation against French nationals and interests. He postponed taking any action until he could discuss this issue with francophone leaders whom he was to meet in early May at Monrovia.⁴ Balewa announced after his return from the conference that all economic sanctions against France had been withdrawn. In any event, the decision was taken at a time when the ban was only loosely enforced,⁵ and it did not follow any improvement in relations between France and Nigeria. Balewa emphasized that this move was for the benefit of Nigeria's neighbours, whose development plans were being hampered by the denial of Nigerian port facilities to French shipping.⁶

1. Daily Times, 16 January 1961.

2. L'Aube Nouvelle, 26 January 1961.

3. Daily Times, 20 January 1961; Afrique Nouvelle, 25 January 1961.

4. Daily Express, 26 April 1961.

5. In April two French boats registered in Concarneau, a French port in Brittany, were reported to be fishing in the Nigerian territorial waters. They were simply operating under the name of Nigerian coastal fisheries; West African Pilot, 26 April and 13 May 1961.

6. Daily Express, 18 May 1961.

From Nigeria's point of view, severing diplomatic relations with France had been a mistake. No other African country had adopted the attitude of the Federal government, which was now 'caught out as the only soldier in step'.¹ African reaction to French atomic tests had reached a climax during France's first two experiments in February and April 1960. Countries like Ghana and Guinea had then campaigned against the tests, but after the explosion of December 1960, they had only protested verbally. In Nigeria, the Federal Government's policy had been widely acclaimed by political parties and regional governments as the first assertion of the country's leadership in African affairs. Nigeria had expected that Nkrumah would announce Ghana's break of diplomatic relations with France at the forthcoming meeting of radical African states in Casablanca.² This did not happen. At the meeting, Nigeria acquired little international credit for a militant gesture which contrasted with the country's otherwise conservative foreign policy.

Only a few months after the break of diplomatic relations with France, the Federal Government expressed its readiness to consider their resumption. Early contacts between the Nigerian high commission in London and the French foreign ministry were established in May by the CFAO. In Lagos, the Federal government and the Dutch embassy (responsible for French interests) prepared the text of a statement announcing the resumption of diplomatic relations.³ It was then transmitted to the Quai d'Orsay for approval. Nigeria's suggestion that this text be simultaneously released in both capitals was not taken up by France. De Gaulle considered that France had

1. W.Schwarz, Nigeria (London, 1968), p.121.

2. W.S. Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957-1966 (Princeton, 1969), pp. 99 and 237, n.148.

3. Daily Express, 10 May 1962; see Balewa's confirmation in le Monde, 27 May 1965.

not been responsible for breaking relations and asked for an apology from the Nigerian government before their resumption.¹ He believed that the 1960 atomic test was no more than a pretext for anti-French behaviour on the part of Nigeria. To him, past explosions had clearly confirmed that there was no danger of atomic fall-out there. De Gaulle was also convinced that Nigeria's protest over the tests was British inspired, on account of the harmonious relations that existed between Nigeria and the United Kingdom.² Many British nationals, moreover, held senior positions in the Nigerian civil service and acted as advisors to the Federal government. Not surprisingly, Nigeria considered de Gaulle's conditions for a resumption of diplomatic relations unacceptable. Balewa refused to commit his government beyond the despatch of a Nigerian ambassador to Paris once France reopened an embassy in Lagos.³

2. The negotiation of the 1966 Nigeria-EEC agreement.

In all respects, Nigeria's negotiations of an association agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC) can be considered as a microcosm for the study of relations between France and Nigeria until their resumption in 1966. It provided a forum for the continuation of the bad relations that the expulsion of Offroy in 1961 had triggered off.

Nigeria's decision to seek an agreement with the EEC in late 1961 followed its concern at the repercussions that Britain's entrance into the Common Market would have on Nigerian export trade.⁴ Early in 1963, Nigeria continued to show interest in the EEC although

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1. D. Anglin, 'Nigeria, Political Non Alignment and Economic Alignment', Journal of Modern African Studies, II,2 (1964), 262.
 2. See Ch. de Gaulle, Discours et Messages, (Paris, 1971), iii, p.298, and his Mémoires d'Espoir: Le Renouveau 1958-1962 (Paris, 1970), pp.227-8.
 3. See Nigeria's Foreign Minister Jaja Wachuku in HRD, 23 November 1961, cols. 3320-1.
 4. For a detailed account of EEC-Nigeria relations see P. Okigbo, Africa and the Common Market (London, 1967), p.90. ff.

de Gaulle put an abrupt end to negotiations on Britain's entrance. Pius Okigbo, an economic adviser to the Federal Government, was sent to Brussels during February 1963 in order to study the possibilities of an agreement which would improve Nigeria's export trade with the EEC. Nigeria did not wish to apply for an associated status similar to that of the Etats Africains et Malgache Associés (EAMA). It emphasized that the EAMA had been associated with the EEC in 1958, while they were still colonies. The possibility of such an association for Nigeria provoked considerable criticism in the country.¹ In fact, Nigeria's application for association with the EEC followed its failure to have those parts of the Rome treaty dealing with association declared invalid by the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs Conference.²

Nigeria's interest in the EEC originally created, in Okigbo's own words, 'a psychological block... among the francophone African states who were associated under the [EAMA] convention'.³ They strongly resented the fact that, after severely criticizing their relationship with the EEC and accusing them of betraying African unity, the Nigerians were now laying claim to special and more advantageous EEC treatment. The opening of Nigerian negotiations with the EEC also met with French opposition. In April 1963, however, France reluctantly had to agree to the possibility of Nigeria negotiating an ad hoc association agreement. This was an indirect effect of de Gaulle's veto on the entry of Great Britain into the Common Market in January, which had especially upset the Dutch and Italian governments. In retaliation, the latter postponed their signature

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1. The Action Group (AG) opposition Party described the Association as 'an insult to Nigeria's dignity and self-respect' for it was 'laid down by European powers...in...negotiation[s] of which African countries took no part'; Daily Times, 7 July 1961; See also HRD, 21 August 1962, col. 2473 ff; and 2 April 1963, col. 334.
 2. J. Mayall, 'Oil and Nigerian Foreign Policy', African Affairs, LXXV, 300 (July 1976), 320.

of the Yaoundé convention of association of the EAMA. They eventually agreed that they would reconsider their stand provided France would sign a 'Declaration of Intent' on the opening of negotiations between the EEC and non EAMA members. France agreed and the statement was issued in July 1963 by the EEC Council of Ministers.¹ It was of crucial importance to Nigeria as it provided the legal basis for its preliminary discussions with the EEC.

Okigbo, now Nigeria's ambassador to the EEC, officially requested consultations, which began in November. France took no active part in the negotiations until they were virtually completed in April 1964. The French delegation then requested that the terms of the Commission's mandate should clearly stipulate that any future agreement with Nigeria would not harm EAMA interests.² They also insisted that the mandate should consider problems arising from Nigeria's dual participation in the EEC and Commonwealth trade preference systems. Finally, they demanded that the tariff concessions Nigeria would offer in return for its association with the EEC be clearly defined. After a two month delay these objections were included as amendments to the mandate. Full talks with Nigeria were then able to begin. The negotiations suffered further delay during the following months. In December they were affected indirectly by de Gaulle's ultimatum to the five other EEC members that a common cereal policy should be agreed upon by the 15th of the month. More important, negotiations were brought to a standstill in April 1965 by France's request for new Nigerian tariff concessions at a time when they were on the point of completion. The French request caused Okigbo to declare that:

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1. Bridget Bloom, 'The Agreement Between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Nigeria' (Lyon, Association pour le Développement de la Science Politique Européenne, 1966, mimeo), p.5.
 2. I. Zartman, The Politics of Trade Negotiations between Africa and the European Economic Community (Princeton, 1971), pp.81-2.

All the technical problems of Nigeria's association have now been exhaustively discussed. Nigeria cannot improve the offer she has made.¹

At this stage good relations between the EAMA and Nigeria played a decisive role in lifting the French veto.² Ever since the summer of 1964, Okigbo had been touring EAMA capitals to combat their reluctance towards a Nigeria-EEC agreement. He argued that Nigeria should be allowed to retain its simultaneous participation in the Commonwealth and EEC preference systems. This would guarantee to the EAMA that 'we [Nigeria] would not flood the EEC markets because we would have diversified outlets'.³ A first significant change in EAMA attitudes to the Nigerian application occurred at the end of 1964 during Okigbo's visit to Dakar. He assured Senghor that Nigeria would not seek to benefit from the resources of the European Development Fund (EDF).⁴ Early in 1965 Nigeria had also agreed to the imposition of a quota on its duty-free exports of cocoa, palm oil, groundnut and plywood to the EEC.⁵ These were the commodities from which the EAMA particularly feared Nigerian competition on the European markets.

On 14 May 1965, the French delegation announced that it was prepared to accept the agreement as it stood. Nigeria was no longer asked to offer new concessions. France demanded, however, from its partners in the EEC, assurances that similar negotiations would later be permitted with Tunisia and Morocco.⁶ This request was granted and

1. In The Times, 6 May 1965.

2. Dr. Pius Okigbo, Interview, Enugu, 27 November 1974

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Zartman, The Politics of Trade Negotiations..., pp.85-6.

6. L.Metzemaekers, 'De Onderhandeligen van de EEG met Nigeria en de Maghreblanden', Africa Den Haag, XIX, 6 (1965), 174; I am indebted to Lodwyck Breemer for a translation of this article.

negotiations were formally concluded on 8 July. A final draft had still to be drawn up and was expected to be ready for signature by September.¹ It was during that month that Nigeria decided to re-establish diplomatic relations with France.

3. The resumption of diplomatic relations

The decision did not result from any improvement in relations between France and Nigeria. It followed a Nigerian compromise under the pressure of practical considerations. France was firmly opposed to the Nigerian-EEC agreement being signed by the Commission on behalf of its members. It demanded that each EEC member-state should sign the agreement with Nigeria.² For Nigeria, resuming diplomatic relations with France was thus a sine qua non to the signature of the agreement.

Pressure for resumption of diplomatic relations with Nigeria also existed in France. There, private interests were attracted by the size of the Nigerian market and the country's newly found oil resources. Despite the successive French atomic explosions, French investment had not suffered from any Nigerian retaliation. At a press conference in March 1961, Balewa had intimated that France's nationals might be expelled from Nigeria if another test took place, but this never happened.³ Characteristically, a few days after Balewa's Conference, the French company Dumez was awarded a £4 million contract for the construction of a bridge across the Niger at Onitsha.⁴

1. Dr. Pius Okigbo, Interview, Enugu, 27 November 1974. This was not to be the case, for a crisis wracked the EEC during July-December 1965 following de Gaulle's decision to break off discussions on the common agricultural policy and France's subsequent boycott of the Council of Ministers' meeting. See J. Newhouse, Collision in Brussels, The Common Market Crisis of 30 June (London, 1967), p.92 ff.

2. The point was made very clear by the French delegation in Brussels; Financial Times, 16 March and 5 April 1966.

3. Daily Express, 4 March 1961.

4. The Times, 9 March 1961.

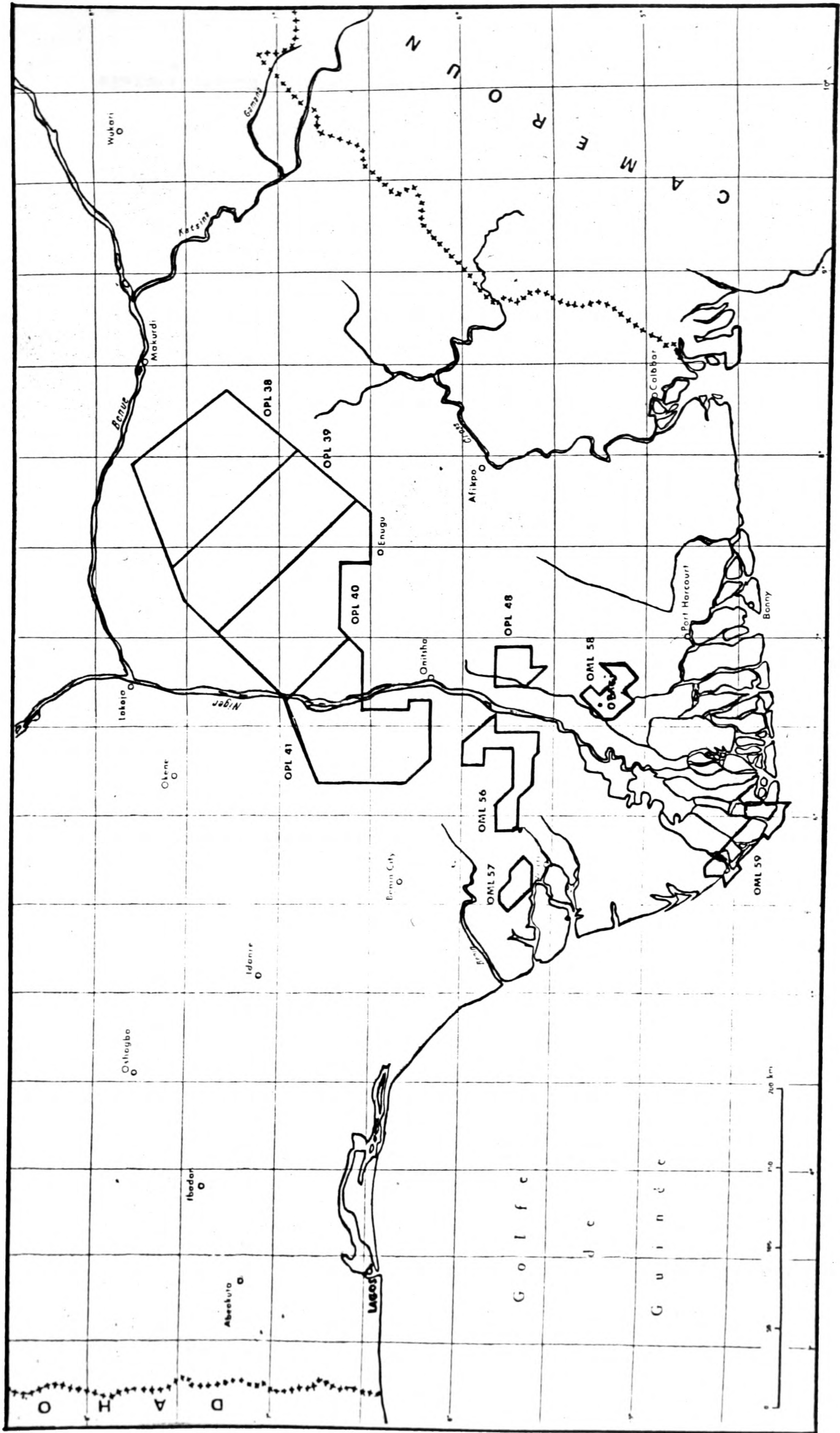
The absence of diplomatic relations between France and Nigeria, however, constituted a serious handicap for French companies which were often unfamiliar with Anglo-Saxon commercial practices and found it difficult to secure information or advice that could have been provided by the commercial services of a French embassy. By the end of 1965 over half of the French investment in Nigeria related to the oil sector. In 1962, the Federal Government had granted its first prospecting concessions to the French oil company SAFRAP. The latter discovered oil and gas in 1964 near Obagi in the Eastern Region. (See map p. 30). A dozen French companies of various sizes were working in the Nigerian oil industry. In Port Harcourt a subsidiary of the Société Commerciale du Midi (Achille Fould group), the Nigerian Marine and Trading Co., imported navigation material and chartered tugs for the oil companies in the Niger delta.¹ Other companies supplied public works contracting or various kinds of expertise for exploration and drilling.

In February 1963, the first French industrial and trade mission, comprising twenty six members led by Roland Pré, President of the Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières, toured Nigeria at the invitation of the Federal Government.² As a goodwill gesture, the mission awarded twenty five scholarships to Nigerians for study in France. It could only express the hope that diplomatic relations between France and Nigeria would be resumed in the near future.³ In fact, French investors had tried convincing de Gaulle to revise his attitude towards Nigeria but had failed. In 1961, they had made representations to him when it was feared that a fourth atomic test in the Sahara would lead the Nigerian government to take economic sanctions

1. Bach, 'Les Relations Franco-Nigérianes...', p. 27 ff.

2. Roland Pré, Interview, Paris, 18 April 1975.

3. Daily Times, 15 February 1963.



Source = ELF

The Oil Mining Leases (OML) and Oil Prospecting
Licences (OPL) of Safrap in Nigeria
(August 1969)

against French assets. The French President is said to have asked them 'where Nigeria was on the map of the world'.¹ He then advised them to invest in francophone countries rather than in Nigeria. Faced with the deadlock over the resumption of diplomatic relations, French industrialists interested in Nigeria approached the President of Ivory Coast, Houphouët Boigny, in 1965.^a

With Balewa's agreement, Houphouët Boigny undertook a mediation which was successfully concluded. During the summer, he met de Gaulle in Paris and asked him to abandon his demand for a public apology by the Federal Government for the expulsion of the French ambassador.^b De Gaulle agreed that Balewa should merely send him a letter expressing Nigeria's desire to resume relations. The foreign ministers of France and Nigeria could then meet in Paris and make an announcement to that effect. For Nigeria diplomatic relations with France were necessary for the signature of the EEC association agreement. Balewa, therefore, wrote the required letter to de Gaulle. In return the French President expressed his satisfaction at the normalization of relations. He reaffirmed, however, that he considered Nigeria was responsible for breaking them.^c On 25 October Nuhu Bamalli, acting as Foreign Minister, and Alhaji Abdul Maliki, Nigeria's High Commissioner in London and future ambassador to France, went to Paris. After their meeting with the French Foreign Minister, Maurice Couve de Murville, a communiqué announced the resumption of diplomatic relations.²

The exchange of Chargés d'Affaires did not occur until May. This was possibly linked to the postponement of the signature of the

1. Chief Hezekiah Davies, Interview, Lagos, 9 November 1974.

2. Le Monde, 28 October 1965.

EEC-Nigeria agreement because of the crisis between France and the other member-states of the EEC.¹ Instability in Nigeria was certainly an important factor. During the night of 15 January, army mutinies in Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna and Enugu put an end to the Balewa regime. Fifteen Nigerian politicians were killed, including the Prime Minister and the Premiers of the Northern and Western regions. After curbing the mutiny, the General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army, Aguiyi Ironsi, became the head of a Nigerian Federal Military Government (FMG). It was during his regime, overthrown on 29 July the same year, that Raphael Uwechue arrived in Paris to open the Nigerian embassy. He spoke some French as a result of his previous appointment as Nigeria's first Chargé d'Affaires in Mali. Early in October, Abudul Maliki came to Paris almost at the same time as his French counterpart Marc Barbey arrived in Lagos. Both men were career diplomats. Abdul Maliki had been Nigeria's ambassador in London while Barbey had been French ambassador in Rwanda and Burundi between 1962 and 1964. The first consequence of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations was the signature of the Nigeria - EEC association agreement in Lagos on 16 July 1966.

When Nigeria became independent it had few ties with France. The Federal Government's uneasy relations with the Gaullist regime were only partly attributable to Nigeria's active criticism of French atomic experiments. De Gaulle considered that Nigeria represented a challenge to francophone Africa. It was surrounded by francophone states with which it had close ties. In view of Nigeria's size and resources, these links might promote a relationship of political patronage exclusive of French influence. In 1965, de Gaulle agreed to the completion of negotiations between Nigeria and the EEC. He also defined new terms for a resumption of Franco-

1. See Supra., p. 27, n.1.

Nigerian relations. De Gaulle's policy line did not follow any significant change in his views on Nigeria. The revision of his attitude was the result of the friendly relations which Nigeria had established with francophone statesmen. Thus, pressure from the EAMA, and in particular from Senegal, led to de Gaulle's acceptance of the Nigeria-EEC agreement. Similarly, Houphouët Boigny persuaded him to revise his stand on the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between France and Nigeria. Nigeria was an active proponent of both the preservation of the territorial status quo and of political stability in Africa. This was a policy which, as the next chapter shows, was the platform for its entente cordiale with Ivory Coast.

CHAPTER II

The 'entente cordiale' between
Ivory Coast and Nigeria

Relations between Nigeria and Ivory Coast were bound to be of particular importance because of the two countries' substantial influence in the West African Region. In the case of Nigeria, this external influence was almost inherent in the size and population of the country. With respect to Ivory Coast external influence was the outcome of an active policy of Houphouët Boigny. Ivory Coast was the wealthiest of the Francophone countries in West Africa and one of the most active politically. Ivory Coast's entente cordiale with Nigeria until 1966 was based on the Nigerian government's lack of interference with Ivorian West African interests. Nigeria's diplomacy did not adversely affect but actually reinforced Ivory Coast's leadership over the Conseil de l'Entente, which formed the hard core of the Francophone group in subSaharan Africa.

What Nigeria's external relations with West Africa would be after its independence remained impossible to assess until the speech which Balewa delivered in late August 1960. This was partly due to the Nigerian Prime Minister's refusal to issue any statement on the foreign policy of his government. At the same time, previous statements by Nigeria's various political parties could not help giving a definite image of Nigeria's policy towards its neighbouring francophone countries.

During the Federal election campaign of 1959, Nigeria's three major parties presented closely similar foreign policy platforms, which only made short and general references to Africa. Azikiwe committed an independent Nigeria to good neighbourly relations aimed at the development of closer political and economic co-operation with other African countries.¹ The NCNC-NEPU electoral platform

1. Daily Times, 22 August 1960.

had later added that 'the Nigerian colossus' would neither try to interfere in the domestic affairs of its neighbours nor seek to draw them into its political orbit.¹ Awolowo, the AG leader, had considered that 'to labour for the emergence of United States of Africa [as Nkrumah did] or even of economic co-operation such as exists in Western Europe' was both 'visionary' and 'unrealistic'.² The NPC, for its part, regarded any projects of West African union or federation as equally 'premature' for the present.³ It argued that after independence, 'it will be better for us to direct our energies to developing the potentialities latent in each country.'

These general proclamations, however, could not be accepted at face value as there were discrepancies between them and the specific attitudes of their authors in their relations with Nigeria's West African Francophone neighbours, Dahomey and Niger. Houphouët Boigny and President Diori Hamani of Niger, feared the possible effects of NEPU's alignment with the NCNC in the federal parliament owing to NEPU's known links with the banned Sawaba party of Niger. NPC attitudes were of even greater concern because of Bello's claims to authority over Northern Nigeria as well as parts of Niger. His strong feelings on this issue had been brought into the open by the 1959 referendum campaign in Northern British Cameroons.⁴ As a result of this, the close political links existing between Prime Minister Balewa, who was also vice-president of the NPC, and Bello induced fears that Nigerian policy moves might nurture secessionist tendencies in Niger Hausaland.

In mid-March 1960, an AG proposal that Dahomey should join Nigeria

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1. Daily Times, 9 October 1959.
 2. Daily Service, 12 September 1959.
 3. Daily Times, 18 September 1959.
 4. See the account of the Cameroons issue in A.B. Akinyemi, Nigerian Federalism and Foreign Policy (Ibadan, 1974), pp. 123-48.

was looked upon as another sign of potential Nigerian expansionist threats to the unity and sovereignty of its smaller neighbours.¹

Dahomey's Prime Minister Maga, politically close to Houphouët Boigny and Diori Hamani, subsequently declared that his country was in a position similar to that which Togo faced, with Ghanaian pressure for the eradication of their frontier. Speaking a month later at the Dahomean National Assembly, Maga emphasised that:

... La solidarité [est] indispensable avec les trois autres Etats [du Conseil] de l'Entente de manière à présenter un bloc important et cohérent au moment où des visées néo-impérialistes semblent² se faire jour chez nos voisins de langue anglaise.

The Conseil de l'Entente had been established in May 1959 by Ivory Coast and included Upper Volta, Niger and Dahomey. Houphouët Boigny's foundation of the Conseil was widely recognized as the outcome of his diplomatic offensive against the Mali federation and the Ghana-Guinea union. At the same time, the creation of the Conseil de l'Entente had been also expected to provide a counterweight to Nigerian influence in West Africa. Inherent in its foundation was the establishment of a tightened Dahomey-Niger axis through the construction of Cotonou harbour and the creation of the Organisation Commune Dahomey Niger des Transports (OCDN) - two initiatives aimed towards the reduction of import-export trade through Nigeria.

During late February 1960, a conference of the states of former French Equatorial Africa (FEA) met to discuss common issues in Bangui. Commenting on this Houphouët Boigny thought not surprisingly, that 'en face de grands pays comme le Congo [Zaire] et le Nigéria', states which were soon, to become independent, a need for union was felt.³ There was indeed no doubt in the mind of Houphouët Boigny that

1. Daily Times, 14 March 1960.

2. Le Monde, 19 April 1960.

3. Afrique Nouvelle, 2 March 1960.

Nigeria's future relations with Africa would be of great importance to Ivory Coast's influence in the West African region. As independence came closer in Nigeria statements in parliament and in the press stressed this, often with somewhat messianic overtones.

The Federal Commissioner for Finance, Okotie-Eboh, believed that:

Nigeria has a responsibility to spearhead the impact of the African personality in world affairs... Nigeria cannot afford to stay in the background. On the contrary, Nigeria must ... show that by her size, her population, her economic potentialities and all the resources at her command, she is prepared to lead Africa.¹

It remained unclear whether the 'visible strength' of Nigeria would be employed in order to achieve the 'stabilizing effect' in Africa that Balewa wished.² Different political tendencies within the Nigerian Government coalition and the country's weak unity could reduce this 'earnest hope' of the Prime Minister to mere wishful thinking. The issue of the atomic tests in the Sahara seemed a good example of Balewa's limited margin of manoeuvre on burning issues.

On 5 April 1960, under strong pressure in parliament, the Federal Government agreed to the adoption of a strongly-worded condemnation of France's second atomic explosion in the Sahara. In spite of Balewa's restraint on this issue, it was also moved that an independent Nigeria would strongly retaliate against France in the case of further tests. Since 1959, Nigerian attitudes to the tests appeared to follow very closely Ghana's radical pledges and were often accompanied by virulent criticism of the commitment of

1. HRD, 15 January 1960, cols 123-4; see also O.Ojo, 'Nigeria's Foreign Policy, 1960-1966: Politics, Economics and the Struggle for African Leadership' (Connecticut Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1974, mimeo), pp. 187-95.

2. HRD, 14 January 1960, col 33.

the French states to their continuation.¹ Houphouët Boigny had been prominent as an active proponent of the tests at the UN. As a member of the French delegation, he had insisted at the General Assembly meeting in November 1959 that the tests would be harmless for the population of Africa. He had also emphasised that all French colonies, belonging along with France to the Communauté created by the 1958 constitution, supported the French atomic program because they believed that it would contribute to the establishment of more balanced relations between world powers.²

Houphouët Boigny's meeting with Balewa on 24 August 1960 allayed fears of Nigeria's possible adoption of radical and challenging policies in Africa. The meeting took place four days after Balewa's reading of his first foreign policy statement to the House of Representatives in Lagos. This had defined general principles for the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy, much appreciated by the president of the newly independent Ivory Coast. Balewa's statement had considered that it was 'premature... to think in terms of a Common Market in Africa'. It had also emphasized that colonial frontiers should 'remain the recognized boundaries'. Most importantly, it added:

We shall discourage any attempt to influence such communities [separated by colonial frontiers] by force or through undue pressure to change, since such interference could only result in unrest and in harm...³

Balewa had then emphasized that the African continent should be preserved from 'the ideological war between the great powers', a view most strongly held by Houphouët Boigny.⁴ The success of the encounter between Balewa and the Ivorian president was mainly owing to their 'bond of shared hostility to Ghana'⁵ which constituted

1. See HRD, 11 August 1959, cols 1733, 1752 and 1757.

2. West Africa, 21 November 1959, 987.

3. Full statement quoted in Phillips, The Development..., pp. 40-1.

4. See Houphouët Boigny in Le Monde, 12 March 1960.

5. A. Mazrui, Towards a Pax Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition (London, 1967), p. 66.

a basic feature of the entente cordiale between Ivory Coast and Nigeria until 1966.

1. The bond of shared hostility to Ghana.

Joint opposition to Dr. Nkrumah's regime in Ghana constituted the cement to good relations between Nigeria and Ivory Coast. At Abidjan in August 1960 and a few weeks later in Lagos, Balewa and Houphouët Boigny established a close relationship of mutual trust which was the backbone of the entente cordiale between Ivory Coast and Nigeria. Their first encounter in Abidjan occurred four days after the break-up of the Mali federation, of whose constitution both Balewa and Houphouët Boigny disapproved. After the meeting, Balewa emphasized that they had been in total agreement on all the problems concerning West Africa.¹ Houphouët Boigny, for his part, subsequently decided to attend in person Nigeria's independence celebrations and asked the other statesmen of the Conseil de l'Entente to join him there so that possibilities of a concerted opposition to Ghana-Guinea pan-African initiatives could be discussed with Nigeria.² Balewa and Houphouët Boigny were indeed equally hostile to Nkrumah's commitment to the creation of United States of Africa of which the Ghana-Guinea union was expected to be the nucleus.

Since the late 1950's Nigerians had become very resentful of Ghana's emergence as the leading African spokesman at international meetings.³ Within a year of Nigeria's independence, relations between its NCNC-NPC government coalition and Ghana underwent a serious deterioration. This followed the establishment of close contacts between Nkrumah and the AG opposition after Awolowo's visit to Ghana

1. Afrique Nouvelle, 28 September 1960.

2. Le Monde, 27 September 1960.

3. This is studied in Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy..., pp.77-81 and 237 ff.

in June 1961. The Federal Government particularly resented the fact that the AG subsequently emerged as the proponent in the federal parliament of Ghanaian criticism of Nigeria's conservative policies. Ghana-Nigeria relations reached their lowest ebb since independence in May-June 1962 at a time when a leadership crisis led the Federal Government to proclaim a state of emergency in the Western Region. Subsequently commissioners in the Western Government supporting Awolowo were deposed and replaced by AG members belonging to S. Akintola's rival faction of the party which also received NCNC support.¹ Ghanaian attacks on the Federal Government policy led Nigeria's Foreign Minister, Jaja Wachuku, to accuse Nkrumah of organised interference in Nigerian politics. He also made the famous statement that the Federal Government could, if willing to do so, overthrow Nkrumah's regime within two months.² Relations with Ghana underwent further strain that same year when Awolowo and Enahoro were sentenced to ten and seven years imprisonment, together with eighteen other AG members. They were convicted of indulging in subversive activities against the Federal Government and receiving Ghanaian support for that purpose.³ Samuel Ikoku, the AG secretary general, and other members of the party also wanted by the Nigerian government in connection with these charges, successfully sought refuge in Ghana, where they remained until Nkrumah's overthrow in February 1966. Their presence in Accra, where they actively participated in controversies with the Nigerian press, constituted a permanent source of Nigerian resentment against Ghana.

Equally uneasy relations existed between Ivory Coast and Ghana.

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1. For a description of this episode of the Federal Government's attempt to eliminate AG opposition see M. Crowder, The Story of Nigeria (London, 1978), pp. 262-3.
 2. Daily Times, 18 June 1962.
 3. Crowder, The Story of Nigeria..., p. 264.

During the 1959-62 period Nkrumah became one of the most outspoken critics of Houphouët Boigny's support of French policy over the Algerian war and the Sahara atomic tests. Nkrumah also came out in support of the independence of Sanwi, a small area located in the South Eastern part of Ivory Coast, along its frontier with Ghana. In 1959, following the failure of a short rebellion against the colonial authority, leaders of the Sanwi movement had sought refuge in Accra and formed a government in exile.¹ Relations between Ivory Coast and Ghana continued to deteriorate after independence. Following the arrest in late 1962 of several Ivorian ministers accused of plotting against him, Houphouët Boigny requested the recall of the Ghanaian ambassador to Ivory Coast on the grounds of his involvement in the conspiracy uncovered. Bad relations between Ivory Coast and Ghana were to reach a climax in 1964-65. Two unsuccessful attempts to overthrow the Ivorian regime were made by exiles who had received shelter and, in one case at least, active support in Ghana. These events caused Ivory Coast and the other member-states of the Conseil de l'Entente to launch a diplomatic offensive aimed at boycotting the OAU Accra conference of October 1965.

While opposition to Ghana constituted the cement of the entente cordiale between Nigeria and Ivory Coast, their leaders' converging views on how Africa should develop accounted for their joint strategies in Africa, despite different tactical approaches. Ghana's bad relations with Ivory Coast and Nigeria ultimately hinged on their irreconcilable outlooks on development.

2. Converging views on Africa's development

In April 1957 Nkrumah, newly Prime Minister of independent Ghana,

1. V.Meite, 'Les Relations Ivoir-Ghanéennes de 1957 à 1970' (Paris, 1971, mimeo), pp. 27-30.

had visited Ivory Coast, where Houphouët Boigny, then a minister in the French government, received him. The encounter highlighted the distance between the two leaders' views of their countries' futures. It also induced Houphouët Boigny to launch his public challenge to Nkrumah, the famous wager that though continuing relations with France the Ivory Coast would achieve better results than independent Ghana during the coming ten years.¹ Houphouët Boigny considered in particular that Nkrumah's demand for immediate independence would have adverse effects on Ghana's economic development. As Houphouët Boigny explained with reference to Ivory Coast's development:

The Ivory Coast could not by itself find the means of providing the investment means to cope with the heavy and continuing expansion. For many more years - ten, twenty, fifty, - it will require enough capital aid to allow its inhabitants to make-up for the heavy handicaps which nature imposes on tropical countries.

We wish to remain in the French Union because it furnishes us this assistance and ... seems to us ... best adapted to further the social and technical progress of our people.²

When Ivory Coast eventually became independent on 7 August 1960, the alternative between the preservation of 'organic links' with France and the demand for independence was outdated. The pari between Houphouët Boigny and Nkrumah, however, remained valid. It now became a milestone pointing to a set of polarised attitudes to development, one pole of which was equally represented by Ivory Coast and Nigeria. Both countries had adopted Western-oriented models of economic development relying heavily on the maintenance of close relations with the former metropolitan powers and on the preservation of peace and security in Africa.

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1. J. Woronoff, West African Wager: Houphouët Versus Nkrumah (Metuchen, 1972), passim.
 2. F. Houphouët Boigny, 'Black Africa and the French Union', Foreign Affairs, XXXV,4 (July 1957), 594.

Western-oriented economic models.

The economic policies of Nigeria and Ivory Coast, as reflected in their respective development plans, emphasized their commitment to liberal models of economic growth, based on a substantial appeal to Western aid and capital. However, state intervention in the economy was more important in Ivory Coast than in Nigeria. While the former sought to develop a mixed economy, Nigerian policy remained closer to the spirit of free enterprise.

Nigeria's first National Development Plan, released in 1962, assumed that at least 50% of all capital expenditure until 1968 would be met from external sources. The plan sought to sustain a 4% annual growth rate. Expected trade deficit was to be balanced through an inflow of foreign investment amounting to half of the overall private capital formation for the 1962-68 period.¹ In Ivory Coast, the Perspectives Décennales de Développement Economique for 1960-69 postulated an even greater reliance on Western aid, investment, and skilled labour to achieve an ambitious target growth rate of 7.3% a year.²

On the eve of their independence, Ivory Coast and Nigeria had therefore adopted regulations which guaranteed the security of foreign investments and created financial incentives to accelerate their inflow. Private investors were allowed to repatriate the bulk of their profits and could benefit from tax and import-duty relief for investments in those fields which Ivory Coast and Nigeria considered of particular importance to their development.³ The attractive provisions of Ivory

1. Federation of Nigeria, National Development Plan, 1962-1968 (Apapa, 1962), p. 38.

2. Woronoff, West African Wagger..., p. 208 ff.

3. Federation of Nigeria, Investment opportunities in Nigeria (Apapa, 1966), p.10 ff; République de Côte d'Ivoire, Chefs d'Entreprise Découvrez la Côte d'Ivoire Industrielle (Abidjan, 1972), pp. 48-50.

Coast's investment code represented one of the factors responsible for the country's spectacular growth rate after independence. By 1966 its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had grown by an average of 8% a year at constant prices, while the per capita increase of national income represented 4% annually in real terms.¹ The miracle ivoirien, as it came to be referred to, was based on an annual production increase of 7.5% in the primary sector which occupied over 80% of the population of working age and accounted for some 85% of Ivory Coast's total export earnings. Progress was equally fast in the industrial sector which in 1966 represented 19% of the GDP as against 14% at independence.² The inflow of foreign capital and skilled labour was the driving force in the spectacular development in manufacturing as well as in forestry and in the fishing industry. European labour had considerably increased since 1960: by 1965, 30,000 Europeans lived in Ivory Coast as against 10,000 in 1960. They virtually ran the private sector of the economy where they held over 85% of the managerial and engineering positions.³ Ivory Coast's liberal attitude to the repatriation of investment income and private earnings underlay the success of its extensive appeal to foreign capital and labour.⁴ Ivorian officials insisted, however, that the suppression of political and social agitation in their country constituted another factor of crucial importance for its economic boom:

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1. International Monetary Fund, Surveys of African Economies (Washington, 1970), iii, p. 222 ff. (Hereafter IMF Surveys.)
 2. Ibid, pp 246-7; total production in manufacturing increased by an average 25% annually.
 3. République de Côte d'Ivoire, 'Pour une Politique d'Ivoirisation, Deuxième Esquisse' (Abidjan, n.d., mimeo), pp. 1-2.
 4. Following a revision of the investment code in 1962, incentives to re-investment in Ivory Coast were created but they excluded a stringent control of capital flows; see G. Tixier and B. Labiche, Etude comparée des Politiques Economiques du Cameroun et de la Côte d'Ivoire (Paris, 1973), pp.136-9.

Nous avons commencé par le vote à l'Assemblée Nationale d'un code des investissements qui a tenu compte des données économiques du pays, ... de la psychologie des investisseurs. Et en même temps que cette construction scientifique de l'économie, il y a eu la stabilité politique construite à partir de ... notre parti, le [PDCI-RDA...]

Il suffit d'un petit mouvement politique pour que l'on ressente tout de suite des remous économiques ... c'est en écartant tous ces soubresauts politiques que l'on bâtit une économie solide.¹

Political stability largely accounted for Ivory Coast's reputation as a reliable economic partner in French and American business circles. The preservation of such a climate was of crucial importance for Ivory Coast, which unlike Guinea or Nigeria did not have attractive mineral resources or a sizeable internal market to attract foreign private capital. Political and social stability in Ivory Coast contributed not only to the continuing inflow of capital and labour from Europe, but also to the preservation of vital labour immigration from Upper Volta and Mali. Indeed, unlike Nigeria, where internal migrations provided the unskilled labour required for the country's agricultural development, Ivory Coast had to rely on labour from neighbouring countries.² Such migrations were of major importance to the high growth rate of Ivorian agriculture. By 1965 Malians and Voltaics represented over 80% of the low paid unskilled labour working on the plantations.³ They were also largely employed in similar positions in the industrial sector and at Abidjan harbour.

Far more than that of Nigeria, the economic prosperity of Ivory Coast was therefore based on socio-political factors. These were,

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1. Arsène Usher Assouan, Foreign Minister of Ivory Coast in Réalités Ivoiriennes, 29 April 1966, 1-2; see also F. Houphouët Boigny, 'Message à la Nation, 7 Août 1966' (Abidjan, 1966, mimeo), p.6.
 2. On this point see S.Amin, 'Introduction', in S.Amin, ed, Modern Migrations in West Africa (Oxford, 1974), p.80 ff.
 3. O. Diarra, 'La Main d'Oeuvre Etrangère' (Abidjan, 1968, mimeo), passim; see also République de Côte d'Ivoire, 'Politique d'Ivorisation, Première Esquisse' (Abidjan, 1970, mimeo), pp. 3-4; Voltaic and Malian nationals represented 25% of the total population of Ivory Coast in 1965.

in Ivory Coast, the country's political stability and its liberal policy towards foreign capital and investment. Beyond this, the small size of the Ivorian market, the country's limited natural resources and heavy reliance on Voltaic and Malian labour, and the fact of being surrounded by radical political regimes in Guinea, Mali and Ghana, accounted for its great sensitivity to the evolution of its West African environment. The outcome of this was the active West African policy which, unlike Nigeria, Ivory Coast found to be sine qua non of the preservation and successful implementation of its development choices.

Nigeria shared similar economic choices to those of Ivory Coast but, owing to the country's increasing political instability after the 1962 AG crisis, it was the discovery of very promising oil resources which boosted the inflow of foreign capital from 1965 onwards. Federal government pledges on the security of foreign capital had until then possibly been undermined by regular demands for nationalisation or greater government control of the economy expressed not only by AG and NCNC radicals but also by Ministers speaking in parliament.¹ Criticism of the Federal government's liberal economic policy had little effect on its substance as a widely circulated pamphlet informed potential investors:

Owing to lack of capital in the indigenous private sector, the government may appear to have taken greater interest in the establishment of industries by direct participation than might otherwise have been thought necessary. This should not be misinterpreted as a movement away from a free-enterprise economy.²

It was estimated that, by 1966, foreign investment accounted for approximately two thirds of total investment in Nigeria. Foreign

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1. See Ministerial statements in parliament on 10 April 1964 in Republic of Nigeria, Mr. Prime Minister (Apapa, n.d.), p.150.
 2. Republic of Nigeria, Investment Opportunities..., p.10.

managers and technicians, according to the same source, accounted for 30% of the total labour cost.¹

The lack of interest of Balewa and Houphouët Boigny in a West African common market was a concomitant to their western oriented models of economic development. These the Nigerian Prime Minister thus justified:

We have not the necessary capital, the necessary equipment or the necessary know-how for the development of our continent. Therefore, we find it absolutely necessary to rely on outsiders for the development of the African territories.²

In 1962, Nigeria's Finance Minister, Festus Okotie-Eboh had discarded for the immediate future, suggestions that Nigeria should set up an African common market. He thought that 'before a common market can become a reality [in West Africa]... there must be far greater industrialization.'³ Ivorian condemnation was expressed more bluntly by Finance Minister, Raphaël Saller, who straightforwardly dismissed such projects as 'fantaisistes' on account of the few trade links existing between African countries. Ivory Coast, like Nigeria, looked for association with the EEC rather than to economic unity in Africa, which was considered 'unimportant since it was not immediately "useful" in economic terms.'⁴

The Federal Government's economic relations with its neighbours were limited to functional co-operation in the fields of trade, customs, telecommunications and transport.⁵ In a similar fashion, Ivory Coast

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1. P.Kilby, Industrialization in an Open Economy: Nigeria 1945-1966 (Cambridge, 1969), p.29.; in Ivory Coast, foreign nationals occupied in 1968 6.3% of the jobs in the modern sector and received 41.1% of total wages paid to that sector; see République de Côte d'Ivoire, 'Pour une Politique d'Ivoirisation, Deuxième Esquisse', pp. 1-3.
 2. A.Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria Speaks (Lagos, 1964), p.101.
 3. HRD, 29 March 1962, col 527.
 4. M.Tukur, Nigeria's External Relations: The United Nations as a Forum and Policy Medium in the Conduct of Foreign Policy October 1960 - December 1965 (Zaria, n.d.), p.4.
 5. O.Aluko, Ghana and Nigeria 1957-1970, A Study in Inter-African Discord (London, 1976), pp.112 and 134.

showed no real interest in a coordination of development projects with its neighbours, although it actively sought to establish political co-operation with them. During the colonial period, Houphouët Boigny had fought for the dissolution of the FWA federation. His attitude, widely supported in Ivory Coast, was related to the fact that the bulk of the country's contributions to the budget of the federation were redistributed to poorer territories without any political or economic return for Ivory Coast.¹

Houphouët Boigny's creation of the Conseil de l'Entente in May 1959 did not reflect any change of policy towards Ivory Coast's neighbours. On the occasion of the first anniversary of the Conseil de l'Entente, President Diori Hamani expressed his conviction that 'la création d'un marché commun au niveau du Conseil de l'Entente' was to be the first step towards an African economic union.² Diori Hamani's statement remained wishful thinking, as no steps were taken to this effect in the following years. Despite pressure from the other states of the Conseil de l'Entente, Ivory Coast resisted the adoption of common economic policies. Lack of harmonization of economic projects within the Conseil de l'Entente naturally benefited Ivory Coast, owing to its greater investment opportunities which attracted foreign capital at the expense of poorer Dahomey, Niger and Upper Volta.³ Houphouët Boigny had established the Conseil de l'Entente in 1959 with the intention of avoiding Ivory Coast's

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1. The bulk of Ivory Coast's contributions to the inter-territorial budget was redistributed to the poorer territories of FWA. From 1949 to 1955, Ivory Coast received back an average 18% of its contributions. After the implementation of the Loi-Cadre Ivorian contributions fell from 10.2 billion CFAF in 1954 to 2.6 billion CFAF in 1958; see A.Zolberg, One Party Government in the Ivory Coast (Princeton, 1969), p.161 and W.F. Foltz, From French West Africa to the Mali Federation(London, 1965), p.75.
 2. Afrique Nouvelle, 8 June 1960.
 3. J.Delpy, 'Le Développement Economique de la République du Niger' (Paris Univ. Doctorat d'Etat de Sciences Economiques, 1961, mimeo), 11, p.262.

isolation in French West Africa and preserving its links with the labour market of Upper Volta which, like Dahomey, had considered joining Senegal and the French Sudan(now Mali) in the Mali Federation.¹ The Conseil de l'Entente survived after 1960 despite the collapse of the Mali Federation which had prompted its creation. The support given by all the Conseil de l'Entente states to the preservation of a climate of political confidence likely to attract aid and capital from the West, remained a 'calculated and distinct feature' of the organization.²

The Conseil de l'Entente also performed an important function of mediating both French and Ivorian influence in West Africa. The subsequent creation of the Fond de Solidarité between the four members of the Conseil de l'Entente did not constitute progress towards their economic pooling of resources. It was introduced to increase the political cohesion of the Conseil to which Dahomey and Upper Volta had only reluctantly agreed to belong. The Fond brought about a limited redistribution of the coastal states' customs and excise revenues taking into account their respective wealth and amounted in effect to an Ivorian subsidy to the budgets of Dahomey, Niger, and Upper Volta.³ The Fond de Solidarité was one of the factors which accounted for the

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1. A special contribution was voted by the Chambre de Commerce of Abidjan to back Houphouët Boigny's campaign to induce members of the Voltaic parliament to revise their stance. See Foltz, From French West Africa..., pp.107 and 109. Upper Volta's reliance on Ivory Coast for access to the sea increased its sensitiveness to Ivorian pressure; see R.Schachter-Morgenthau, Political Parties in French Speaking West Africa(Oxford, 1964), p.313.
 2. W.Rodney, 'The Entente States of West Africa', International Journal, (Winter 1965-1966), 85.
 3. The Fond de Solidarité was set up in 1959 to collect and redistribute customs duties levied in the harbours of the member states of the Conseil de l'Entente. The redistribution was done according to the pro rata of 1/16 for Ivory Coast and 5/16 for each other state.

'rapport de clientèle'¹ characteristic of Ivory Coast's relations with the other states of the Conseil de l'Entente until the Nigerian civil war.

Close ties with the former metropolitan power

The outward-looking conceptions of economic development of Nigeria and Ivory Coast were based on the preservation of close relations with Britain and France respectively, as chief sources of private capital, aid and labour. In both countries, independence caused no brutal interruption of social, political and economic relations with the former metropolitan power. As Balewa put it emphatically on Nigeria's independence day:

... We claim the achievement of our independence to be unparalleled in the annals of history. Each step of our constitutional advance has been purposefully and peacefully planned with full and open consultation... in harmonious co-operation with the administering power which has today relinquished its authority... I have every confidence that ... our future relations with the United Kingdom will be more cordial than ever...

We are grateful to the British officers whom we have known first as masters, and then as leaders, and finally as partners, but always as friends.²

In the case of Ivory Coast, close links with the former metropolitan power were far more striking than those of Nigeria. Until December 1959, Houphouët Boigny had fought for a transformation of the Communauté of 1958 into an 'Etat multinational [Franco-Africain] avec un groupement fédéral et des assemblées fédérales centrales.'³ Houphouët Boigny's creation of the Conseil de l'Entente in May 1959 had thus been designed to counterbalance the creation of the Mali Federation, as he feared its adverse effects on the projected

1. T.Yannopoulos and D.Martin, 'Domination et Composition en Afrique, Le Conseil de l'Entente et la Communauté Est Africaine Face à Eux-Mêmes et Face aux "Grands"', Revue Algérienne de Sciences Juridiques, Politiques et Economiques, IX, 1(March 1972), 149.
2. Mr. Prime Minister, pp.47-9; see also The Times, 3 October 1960.
3. Houphouët Boigny in Agence France Presse, Bulletin Outre-Mer, 24-25 May 1959. (Hereafter AFP/BOM.)

Franco-African Federation. Attempts to promote unity among African states were considered as an indirect attempt to weaken links with France and pave the way to independence claims.¹ The Conseil de l'Entente, actively supported by the Chamber of Commerce in Abidjan, was, on the contrary, meant to promote the establishment of closer links with France. These should ensure a climate suitable for the continuation of private investments, but also secure a guarantee that the French government would continue to buy Ivory Coast's export crops at prices higher than on the world market.² In December 1959, following a request from the Mali Federation, de Gaulle had agreed to the possibility of evolution towards independence within the Communauté, an alternative that he had denied to President Sékou Touré of Guinea in 1958. The Entente states, led by Houphouët Boigny, strongly reacted to this announcement; they refused to remain members of a Communauté 'qui ne serait plus qu'un Commonwealth,' and in turn demanded independence.³ As a result of de Gaulle's attitude to the Communauté, Ivory Coast's relations with France were to be in disarray for nearly a year and a half. Houphouët Boigny opposed in particular any signature of the co-operation agreements with France before Ivory Coast's independence. The signature of these, in the spring of 1961, formally recognised Ivory Coast's widespread reliance on French technical aid and advice in all fields.⁴ In January 1962, using words very similar to those employed by Balewa in his independence

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1. M. Merle, 'Les Relations Extérieures de la Côte d'Ivoire', Revue Française de Science Politique, LX, 3 (September 1959), 696 and 699-700.
 2. The attitude intégrationniste of Houphouët Boigny should be understood in view of his recalling of the 'cartierist' viewpoint that France should curtail overseas aid and concentrate on the development of poorer metropolitan areas.
 3. His feelings deeply hurt, Houphouët Boigny explained 'J'ai attendu sur le parvis de la fédération [Franco-Africaine] avec mes fleurs fanées'; Fraternité, 3 June 1960 and Le Monde, 7 July 1959.
 4. See M. Ligot, Les Accords de Coopération entre la France et les Etats Africains et Malgache d'Expression Française (Paris, 1964), pp. 35-7.

day speech, Houphouët Boigny looked back on the relations between France and Ivory Coast since independence:

The first country towards which we have turned for co-operation is ... France which we consider our best friend ...

We have come to independence in friendship with France... We have left the Community but relations ... have not become less close.¹

Differences of intensity existing in the relations which Ivory Coast and Nigeria retained with the former metropolitan powers were however striking. These were partly due to dissimilarities between French and British methods of colonial administration in the two countries. When Ivory Coast became independent, Houphouët Boigny, like several other Francophone statesmen, had been closely associated, as an MP and then as a Minister, with French politics for over sixteen years.² After August 1960, Houphouët Boigny continued to travel frequently to Paris where he had direct and personal contact with de Gaulle who greatly respected the opinions of his former Minister. Perhaps because of his past career in Parisian ministries, Houphouët Boigny freely employed French nationals as advisers in the presidential office, or even as full ministers in his cabinet.³ More generally, the cooperation agreements provided the institutional framework for the supply of French nationals to Ivory Coast's fonction publique which employed them as teaching staff in schools or in administrative and technical positions in the civil service and state-owned companies.

Attempts to maintain relations with Britain at an institutional

1. Radio Abidjan on 18 January 1962, BBC Monitoring Service Part IV Middle East and Africa, 847/B/10. (Hereafter BBC MEA.)
2. Houphouët Boigny was a deputy in the French National Assembly from 1944 until 1956. Thereafter he held various ministerial appointments until 1959. He also participated actively in the establishment of the Loi-Cadre (1956-7) and was a member of the five-man committee in charge of drafting the constitution of the fifth Republic (1958) which contained provisions for the creation of the Communauté; see Zolberg, One Party Government..., pp.173-4 and 226.
3. Raphaël Saller was Ivory Coast's Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs until 1964.

level had similarly been made by the Balewa government at the time of independence.¹ After 1962, domestic events in Nigeria, however, led the Federal Government to reconsider this policy of establishing special and formal diplomatic links. Until then, Nigeria was a constitutional monarchy, its highest judicial authority was in England and appeals had to be made to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of London. The revision of these links during 1963 did not affect the substance of relations with Britain which remained particularly close until 1966.² The abrogation of the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Agreement in January 1962 thus did not put an end to Nigeria's defence ties with Britain. Provisions allowing British military to fly over Nigerian territory and also involving British training of Nigerian troops and assistance with weapons were retained by 'executive agreements' and through 'individual contracts or exchanges of personnel'.³ Just as Ivory Coast recruited French nationals, Nigeria employed numerous British nationals. In the Northern Region and in Lagos the latter provided administrative or technical assistance at different levels. Balewa's wish to take into consideration British views on international affairs also led him to ask the British High Commissioner in Lagos to brief him over issues on which he could not make up his mind.⁴

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1. See an excellent detailed analysis of this point in O.Ojedokun, 'Nigeria's Relations with the Commonwealth with Special Reference to her Relations with the United Kingdom, 1960-1966' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1968, mimeo), p.102 ff.
 2. Ibid.
 3. J.Mackintosh, Nigerian Government and Politics (London, 1966), p.278; see also G.I.Idang, 'The politics of Nigerian Foreign Policy, the Ratification and Renunciation of the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Agreement', African Studies Review, XIII, 2 (September 1970), 230-1.
 4. O.Ojedokun, 'The Anglo-Nigerian Entente and its Demise', Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, IX, 3 (November 1971), 216.

Houphouët Boigny and Balewa considered relations with the former metropolitan power, and the West in general, as necessary for the success of the development programs of Ivory Coast and Nigeria. Their appeals for substantial influxes of foreign private capital accounted for their concern about stability within their respective countries and also in Africa as a whole.

Emphasis on peace and security in Africa

The concern of Ivory Coast and Nigeria for the preservation of peace and security in Africa was the basis of their closely similar policy objectives in Africa. The two countries emphasized such principles as the respect for boundaries inherited from the colonial period, the exclusion of any devolution of sovereignty, the condemnation of subversion and interference in the internal affairs of other independent African countries. The extensive reliance of Ivory Coast on foreign private capital as well as foreign (both European and African) labour, accounted for Houphouët Boigny's special sensitivity on this latter principle.

Faced with Ghana's territorial claims on the south eastern part of Ivory Coast, to which was added Nkrumah's aid to Ivorian opponents, links with France constituted Ivory Coast's best guarantee for political and social stability. As in other Francophone African countries, defence cooperation agreements signed with France after independence contained provisions for an intervention of French troops in Ivory Coast if the country was the object of internal threats or external aggression. Yet, more than subversion from Ghana or Guinea, Houphouët Boigny feared that the emergence of African support for their policies would undermine Ivory Coast's appeal for a massive inflow of capital and labour from the West. Because of Ivory Coast's small market and dearth of mineral resources, their continuing

inflow primarily relied on political considerations - the stability of Ivory Coast and of its environment - to which were added the incentives contained in the Ivorian code of investment.

Economic considerations provided no incentive for the Nigerian government to develop an active policy in the West African region. This was an indirect effect of the substantial size of the country to which were added increasingly attractive natural resources. The conservative African policy of the Federal Government,

unlike Ivory Coast's, related sharply to the need to preserve and enforce the unity of the Federation. Because Nigeria had greater natural resources and commercial outlets than Ivory Coast, the political stability of its environment appeared less likely to affect the continuing inflow of private aid and private capital from the West. Domestic political considerations accounted for the fact that Nigeria soon after its independence became 'one of the leading defenders of the territorial status quo in Africa'.¹ The preservation and enforcement of Nigeria's ailing national unity constituted the determining factor of the African policy of the Federal Government.

Colonial rule had shaped not only the international frontiers of Nigeria, but also its regional boundaries, the revision of which had been the object of conflicting demands since the 1940's. In the Northern Region, Tiv agitation for the creation of a Middle Belt State had resulted in tension and clashes with the NPC, as well as with the army and police forces, which continued after independence.² In the Western Region, the creation of a separate Mid-Western Region had been demanded by non-Yoruba speaking people, and in the Eastern Region the creation of a Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State also constituted

1. J.S. Coleman, 'The Foreign Policy of Nigeria', in J.E. Block and K.W. Thompson, eds, Foreign Policy in a World of Change (New York, 1963), 402.

2. See T.N. Tamuno, 'Separatist Agitations in Nigeria since 1914', The Journal of Modern African Studies, VIII,4(1970), 576.

a longstanding demand. Federal Government's response to these delicate problems was limited to the creation of a Mid-West Region in 1963. Balewa's conservative approach to African unity was only logical given such a situation. It would have been hazardous for his government to support on a continental scale what was denied at home.¹ Balewa condemned Nkrumaist AG pledges to eradicate Nigeria's frontier with Dahomey in the same way as he opposed other AG demands for the redrawing of the boundary between the Western and Northern Regions.²

The preservation of peace and stability in Africa constituted a major field of agreement between Nigeria and Ivory Coast until 1966. It largely dictated the response to Ghana's radical pledges to African continental unity. Like Ivory Coast Nigeria's stance, in Balewa's words was:

... for the practical approach to the unity of the African continent. We feel that if this unity is to last ... we must first agree to certain essential things ...
African states must respect one another. There must be acceptance of equality by all states ...
Nigeria recognizes all the existing boundaries in Africa and recognizes the existence of all the countries in Africa.³

The African policies of Nigeria and Ivory Coast stemmed from similar guiding principles, but they often adopted different tactical approaches. These did not affect the entente cordiale since the goals to be achieved, the preservation of the status quo in Africa, remained agreed upon.

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1. R.O. Mowoe, 'The Relative Impact of Economic and Non-Economic Factors on Nigeria's Foreign Policy, 1960-1966' (Surrey Univ. Ph. D. Thesis, 1970, mimeo), p. 79.
 2. Enahoro in HRD, 15 November 1961, col 2809 and Crowder, The Story of Nigeria, p.244.
 3. Mr. Prime Minister, p. 95.

3. The common concern for the respect of the status quo in independent Africa.

Different domestic pressures in Ivory Coast and in Nigeria, and Ivory Coast's greater sensitivity to the stability of its external environment, accounted for noticeable differences in the approach of the two governments to similar African issues. In harmony with Ivorian objectives, the Balewa government committed itself to its pre-independence pledge that Nigeria would act 'as a stabilising force... [so as to] induce conditions favourable to orderly progress and development' in Africa.¹ In Ivory Coast, questioning of the authority and leadership of the President was limited by the single party system. In Nigeria, the outlook on the African diplomacy of the Federal Government was strongly affected by domestic pressure. There, the constitutional and electoral system agreed upon at independence, resulted inescapably in an alliance between two of the three major region-based political parties. Nigeria's weak national unity and the heterogeneous nature of the Government coalition whose parties were also allied to critical groups of NCNC and NEPU backbenchers in the Federal Parliament, induced the Federal Government to avoid any conspicuous commitment to the Western bloc in its African policy. Under Balewa's leadership, emphasis was put on a strong need for conciliation first between the Monrovia and Casablanca blocks and later within the OAU itself. Yet Nigeria's African policy remained in substance clearly aligned with that of the conservative-moderate African states.

On the whole, Ivory Coast's diplomacy was more assertive and resolute than that of the Balewa government. The Ivory Coast Government was fully committed to an open alignment with the West as well as to a

1. HRD, 14 January 1960, col. 33.

close relationship with the ex-metropolitan power. The insulation of Ivory Coast proper, as well as its West African environment, from radical-revolutionary ideas and policies, were the chief guidelines of Houphouët Boigny's African diplomacy. Accordingly, a series of Ivorian diplomatic initiatives sought to ensure the continuity of close association with France and the West, and also mediated Ivorian external influence. This led to the creation of groups like the Conseil de l'Entente, the Union Africaine et Malgache (UAM) and, in 1965, the Organization Commune Africaine et Malgache (OCAM). For Ivory Coast, ensuring its influence in West Africa constituted an important parameter in its African diplomacy. Such influence preserved the continuity of the 'voie ivoirienne de développement'.

Before 1960, Ivory Coast had undertaken a series of diplomatic moves whose first outcome had been the creation of the Conseil de l'Entente. After independence, the Conseil had retained its original political and economic purpose of favouring close links with France, despite the collapse of Houphouët Boigny's project of a Franco-African Federation and the break-up of the Mali Federation in August 1960. Community of policies and objectives within the Conseil de l'Entente chiefly originated from the member-states' sometimes unwillingly accepted bond of allegiance to Houphouët Boigny, once emphatically called by President Yaméogo of Upper Volta, 'notre Général à nous'.¹ In October 1960, the members of the Conseil de l'Entente thus actively contributed to the success of Ivory Coast's sponsoring of a first regrouping of the moderate to conservative states

1. Quoted in T. Hodgkin and R. Schachter-Morgenthau, 'French Speaking West Africa in Transition', International Conciliation, 528 (May 1960), 427.

of Francophone Africa: the Brazzaville group, later renamed UAM.

The Brazzaville Group

The Brazzaville group emerged out of discussions between Houphouët Boigny and the other statesmen of the Conseil de l'Entente at the time of the independence celebrations in Nigeria.¹ Subsequently, Houphouët Boigny invited all independent Francophone states of subSaharan Africa, with the notable exceptions of Guinea and Congo Leopoldville, to meet in Abidjan during the last week of October 1960. The decision to convene a conference within such a short period of time had been prompted by Houphouët Boigny's concern that Francophone African countries, now all independent, should adopt common attitudes at the November session of the UN General Assembly.²

After meeting on 25-26 October, the delegates decided that they would oppose Afro-Asian demands for the organization of a UN-supervised referendum in Algeria. The conference also decided to send delegations to de Gaulle, to convey its concern over the French stance, and to North Africa to explain to the Maghreb states the group's attitude to the Algerian war.

Congo, Mauritania and the French atomic tests in the Sahara were also at the centre of discussions during the Abidjan meeting which provided the basis for the creation of a 'Conseil de l'Entente élargi'.³ Indeed it was agreed that further meetings would be held, the first of which took place at Brazzaville two months later, with

1. Afrique Nouvelle, 12 October 1960.

2. Mali only sent an observer to the conference; A.Jalloh, Political Integration in French Speaking Africa (Berkeley, 1973), p.36 ff. The conference was held as negotiations between France and the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) were interrupted, arousing widespread concern in the UN Afro-Asian group. Houphouët Boigny's organisation of the conference undermined the intent of President Olympio of Togo to convene a conference on Algeria which would include countries like Guinea, Tunisia and Morocco, highly critical of the French policy in Algeria, see Ibid., p.45.

3. Afrique Nouvelle, 2 October 1960.

almost the same attendance as at Abidjan.¹ The new group again discussed topical African problems in order to adopt concerted policies at international meetings. It also adopted a set of 'principles for African co-operation' which paid tribute to Houphouët Boigny's views. They reflected an active concern that the radical diplomacy of Ghana, Guinea and the UAR, and to a lesser extent Mali, should not be left unchallenged. The Brazzaville group thus proclaimed its respect for 'frontiers as they existed on the day ...[of] independence' as well as their commitment to 'non-interference in the internal affairs of the states' and 'economic and cultural co-operation on the basis of equality.'² The 'co-ordination of diplomacy with a view of carrying out a joint foreign policy' was the last but not the least important item mentioned. The Brazzaville principles, conspicuous for their lack of reference to African 'unity', bore the imprint of Houphouët Boigny, who chaired the conference. Co-operation was to be modelled on the unwritten rules of functioning of the Conseil de l'Entente whose claims to reflect a more realistic assessment of inter-state relations seemed more justified since the recent collapse of its rival experiment, the Mali Federation.³

Throughout 1961, several meetings of experts drew a vast program of co-operation in all fields. At a first conference in Dakar during January, a treaty for the creation of a joint airline company, later named Air Afrique, was prepared, together with the charter of the Organisation Africaine et Malgache de Cooperation Economique (OAMCE). Specific resolutions were also adopted on subjects

1. Twelve states which had attended the Abidjan meeting were present: Cameroun, Congo-Brazzaville, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Gabon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Mali was no longer represented; Congo (Léopoldville) sent observers.
2. Statement read by Houphouët Boigny; Radio Brazzaville on 19 December 1960, BBC MEA, 520/B/4.
3. Jalloh, Political Integration..., p.50.

including customs and fiscal policies, territorial water limits, judiciary cooperation, price stabilization and commercialisation of groundnuts and coffee.¹ Later meetings studied financial incentives and security guarantees offered to private foreign capital, and discussed joint attitudes on specific foreign policy matters including, at the insistence of Ivory Coast, the negotiation of an Union Africaine et Malgache de Défense (UAMD).

After the adoption of a charter at Tananarive, this extensive network of functional links between Francophone countries which retained close ties with France became known as the UAM system. One of its chief characteristics was its continuation, at a multi-lateral level, of the functional links existing with France, at bilateral level, within the Accords de coopération. The UAM, where Ivory Coast's influence was predominant, was to be the 'cheville ouvrière'² of the Monrovia group the formation of which marked the effective beginning of co-operation between Nigeria and the UAM. It was within this group, set-up in May 1961, that Nigerian initiatives contributed to an evolution of the pan-African movement which led to the constitution of the OAU in May 1963.

The Monrovia Group

Co-operation between Nigeria and the UAM was prompted by the visit of President Senghor of Senegal to Lagos during February 1961. The Federal Government did not belong to the Brazzaville group, but Balewa's foreign policy statements of 20 August 1960 had expressed a similar conception of inter-African relations. In January 1961, Nigeria had also refused to participate in the Casablanca conference.³

1. Ibid., pp.51-2.

2. S.Sako, 'Les Relations Extérieures de la Côte d'Ivoire' (Paris I Univ. Thèse de Doctorat d'Etat, 1973, mimeo), p.262.

3. HRD, 13 April 1961, col 1432. Members of the Casablanca group included Morocco, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, the UAR and the Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne (GPRA).

The Federal Government fully supported Senghor's wish for the organisation of a conference which would avert the incipient division of the African continent along cold war lines. While subsequent consultations failed to secure the attendance of the newly constituted Casablanca bloc, they led to the birth of another group including the twelve UAM states and the other moderate-conservative African states.¹ The Monrovia conference, held during May 1961, discussed such current issues as Algeria, the Congo, Angola, South Africa and the French atomic tests. The final resolution also included guiding principles for relations between African states. These were closely similar to both the Brazzaville principles and the Nigerian statement of 20 August 1960 which was now expanded in a detailed fashion. Interestingly in view of Nigeria's attendance at the conference, special emphasis was put on the 'absolute equality' of states, 'whatever may be the size of their territories, the density of their populations or the value of their possessions'.² In contrast with the Brazzaville principles was the new and exhaustive description of African unity meaning 'unity of aspiration and action', but not 'political integration'.

The conference was, in effect, of great significance for Balewa's subsequent relations with the UAM. Many Francophone leaders who met him for the first time were impressed by his spirit of compromise and moderation during the debates. Nigeria's non-assertive attitude, despite the country's size and population, was also greatly appreciated. As a gesture of goodwill towards Nigeria's neighbours, Balewa agreed during the conference to the formal lifting of economic

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1. The Monrovia group gathered the 12 Brazzaville states and Liberia, Nigeria, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Ethiopia and Libya.
 2. See C. Legum, Pan-Africanism, A Short Political Guide (London, 1965), p. 216.

sanctions against France which had primarily affected Chad, Dahomey and Niger. By the time the conference ended, Balewa's pledges enjoyed wide support and confidence among the UAM whose members were prepared to support this emergence of Nigeria as a leading force against radical policies in Africa. After his return to Nigeria, Balewa could argue in this respect that 'It is towards this country that the others are looking for help and leadership'.¹

Indeed the Federal Government was under strong domestic pressure for greater Nigerian involvement in African affairs. The years 1960-61 saw the emergence of groups of 'radical young men'. They were students, university lecturers, journalists and trade unionists, who were supported in Parliament by NCNC radicals demanding Nigeria's adoption of a 'dynamic and positive foreign policy' to 'give leadership to this country and to the whole of the African continent'.² Support in Parliament also came from the AG opposition, whose spokesman on Foreign Affairs, complained in April 1961:

... there is a lot of trouble going on in Angola. The Prime Minister will not say anything. There will be no statement from the government until everyone else takes it up, until Dr Nkrumah says something and Sékou Touré says something and then we follow. Is it not high time that we try to lead?³

Yet, despite the increasing virulence of AG attacks against the foreign policy of the Balewa Government after the summer of 1961, it was criticism from NCNC, NPC and NEPU backbenchers in Parliament which chiefly affected its African policy. For different reasons many MPs felt that, because of its size, Nigeria could not leave unchallenged Ghana's much publicised diplomatic initiatives in Africa.

1. Mr. Prime Minister, p. 91

2. Kalu Ezera quoted in Tukur, Nigeria's External Relations..., p. 65

3. Enahoro in HRD, 17 April 1961, col 1764.

Following the Nigerian Prime Minister's return from Monrovia in May 1961, his appointment of a personal adviser on African affairs constituted a first step towards a greater participation in African politics. During the following summer, Kenneth Mbadiwe convened a conference which would express 'all shades of opinion...on Nigeria's role in African affairs'.¹ The conference held in Ibadan during 19-21 August 1961 recommended that the Federal Government should 'accept in principle the idea of a Political Union of African States on [a] continental basis'.² The implementation of such suggestions, which were incompatible with the basic guidelines of Nigeria's foreign policy, was postponed sine die. Another recommendation that Nigeria should attempt to bring the Casablanca and Monrovia powers together was accepted by Federal Government as an alternative response to pressure for active diplomacy at the continental level.

Domestic pressure on Balewa's foreign policy accounted for the difference of its outlook and tactical approach to African unity from that of Ivory Coast. While the latter clearly asserted that it belonged to one of Africa's blocs, Nigeria emphasized the need for compromise and co-ordination which was reflected in its policy towards a merger between the Monrovia and Casablanca groups. The second conference of the Monrovia group, held in Lagos during January 1962, was the confirmation of Nigeria's emergence as both an active proponent of the group's conservative vision of African unity and a prominent challenge to Ghanaian claims to leadership of the pan-African movement. Balewa's personal diplomacy was chiefly responsible for the preparation of the Lagos conference, which he hoped would overcome the Casablanca-Monrovia division. Accordingly, Nigerian

1. Mbadiwe, quoted in Phillips, The Development..., p.47

2. Ibid., p. 60.

representatives started lobbying during the UN general Assembly in the Autumn of 1961. Balewa also exchanged letters with Nkrumah and eventually paid an official visit to Sékou Touré in Guinea in December 1961. In a last-minute attempt to prompt the Casablanca states to attend the conference, the Nigerian Prime Minister even went so far as to announce the formal abrogation of the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact, a decision which domestic opposition had failed to obtain until then.

In spite of this goodwill gesture by Balewa, the Casablanca group decided after a long meeting in Accra that it would not come to Lagos owing to the cancellation of Balewa's earlier invitation to the GPRA.¹ It was not Balewa's feelings towards Algeria, but rather domestic pressure for a Nigerian leadership in African affairs which had been responsible for his invitation to the GPRA.² Balewa's hope had been that this would constitute a further inducement to the Casablanca states to attend. The later withdrawal of the invitation was the result of demands from the UAM. The main decision of the Lagos conference was its agreement to the constitution of an Inter African and Malgasy States Organization (IAMSO) whose charter was drafted on the basis of a document prepared by Liberia. The charter was, once released, widely considered as a document which bore 'the imprint of the Balewa government'.³ The principles for African co-operation contained in the charter were indeed very similar to those contained in Balewa's speech at the conference. However, this did not have much meaning in itself, since Balewa's proposals were exactly

1. Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy..., pp.213-3.

2. Balewa had originally excluded the GPRA from his invitation list but none of the Casablanca states had protested; see C.Legum, Pan-Africanism..., pp. 131-2.

3. Phillips, The Development..., p. 94.

the same as the Monrovia principles.¹

The Lagos charter, therefore, reflected the continuity of the IAMS0 with both the views of the Brazzaville group and Nigerian foreign policy principles as defined in Balewa's statement of August 1960.

The Togo crisis and the adoption of the OAU Charter

In May 1963, the adoption of the OAU Charter at Addis Ababa was tantamount to a recognition and legitimization of the IAMS0 principles of inter-African co-operation by all independent Africa. The agreement of the great majority of states to the mutual guarantee of internal security had been brought to the forefront of political discussions by the assassination of President Olympio of Togo on 13 January 1963. Like Ivory Coast, Nigeria held very strong views on this issue. Nevertheless, the commitment of the Nigerian government to the success of its policy of rapprochement of the Monrovia and Casablanca groups induced the Nigerian Prime Minister to adopt an attitude of compromise towards the issue of recognizing the new Togolese regime.

During the days immediately after the assassination of Olympio, Dahomean mediation had largely contributed to avoiding an escalation of the crisis into a direct confrontation between Ghana and Nigeria. Dahomean pressure had in particular induced the former Togolese Prime Minister, Nicholas Grunitzky, to return to Lomé and become President of a Togolese provisional government. Grunitzky had had no part whatsoever in the assassination of his brother-in-law Olympio and it was only reluctantly that he left his business in Cotonou.²

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1. See Federation of Nigeria, Conference of Heads of African and Malgasy States 25th-30th January 1962, Proposed charter of the Inter-African and Malgasy States Organization(Lagos, n.d.) p.3. on Balewa's proposal see A.B. Akinyemi, Nigerian Federalism..., p.166.
 2. Full account in A.Tevoedjire, Pan-Africanism in Action, An Account of the UAM(Harvard, 1965), p. 47.

The appointment of this well-known francophile to the presidency was the result of a compromise within the Togolese junta and counterbalanced the pro-Ghanaian influence expected from the vice-president of the government, Antoine Meatchi, a leading opponent of Olympio.

The spilling of blood which had accompanied the coup in Togo aroused considerable emotion among African statemen because it was the first of its kind on the continent. In Nigeria, Balewa immediately suggested an extraordinary meeting of the IAMSOC Council of Ministers, explaining:

...if we allow such a method to continue, I don't know who will remain [alive]. For a Head of State to be murdered and nobody to say anything will be too grievous.¹

At a much-publicized press conference held on 21 January, Nigeria's External Affairs Minister Wachuku showed far less restraint. He accused Nkrumah, without formally naming him, of having 'financed, engineered and organised' Olympio's 'cold-blooded murder'.² Wachuku also declared that Nigeria would treat as an 'unfriendly act' any diplomatic recognition of the new Togolese regime adding that 'for purposes of security, Nigeria considers her boundary extends to the Ghana-Togo border'.³ Nigeria had not intervened in Togo so far but, Wachuku hinted, it would not hesitate to do this if 'a dictatorship' - that, is in his mind, a pro-Ghanaian regime - were to be installed in Lomé. Like Nigeria, albeit less aggressively, Ivory Coast and Upper Volta expressed strong condemnation of Olympio's assassination, making clear that 'despite their friendly feelings for the person of President Grunitzky', they refused to recognize 'the government [of Togo] under the known conditions'.⁴

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1. Federal Nigeria, VI, 2(1963), 2.
 2. Radio Ibadan on 21 January 1963, BBC MEA, 1157/B/7-8.
 3. Daily Times, 22 January 1963.
 4. Communiqué read on radio Fort Lamy, 23 January 1963, BBC MEA, 1158/B/9.

Divisions were to prevent the IAMS0 meeting of 24-26 January from reaching any agreement on the Togo issue. Senegal and Dahomey, which for various reasons had already granted recognition to the Grunitzky government, were joined by several other states in favour of de jure or de facto recognition. Their suggestions were, however, ruled out by Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Upper Volta and Sierra Leone.¹ During the conference, Wachuku's own behaviour appeared to differ widely from the attitude of his Prime Minister, 'modérée et légaliste', as Dahomey's Foreign Minister Emile Zinsou recalls vividly.² Wachuku favoured an intervention in Togo by IAMS0 forces or the UN for peace-keeping purposes. He also sought to mobilize support against Grunitzky's delegation on behalf of an alternative group of Togolese including Theophilus Mally, Olympio's former Minister of the Interior. Mally's contention that not only Ghana but also the French Government shared responsibility for the overthrow of Olympio irritated francophone representatives at the conference. As it opened, Ivory Coast's representative Auguste Denise warned his colleagues against 'accusations not specifically founded'.³ Ivory Coast believed that the assassination of Olympio was probably the outcome of a plot whose strings were being pulled by intellectuals from Ghana, Ivory Coast, Togo and possibly Niger.⁴ It was recalled that the Togolese insurgents had first called on Meatchi, known to have been in close contact with Ivorian nationals including Ivory Coast's Health Minister, Amadou Koné, now arrested and sentenced for plotting against his President.

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1. For an account of the conference see Tevoedjire, Pan-Africanism..., p.48.
 2. Dr Emile Zinsou, Interview, Paris, 8 September 1975.
 3. Tevoedjire, Pan-Africanism..., p. 45.
 4. Ibid., p. 48.

As the IAMS0 delegates left, no agreement had been reached on the stand to adopt vis à vis the Grunitzky regime. As a compromise, it was decided that no recognition should take place until the heads of state met at Addis Ababa and reconsidered the issue.¹ Their work would be assisted by a report from the Commission of Inquiry formed at the insistence of Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Nigeria to probe the circumstances of Olympio's death and observe the evolution of the Grunitzky regime. The task of the Commission which included Nigeria and the four states of the Conseil de l'Entente, was to prove impossible to accomplish because of the opposition of the Togolese Army to any inquiry.² Prior knowledge of this may have accounted for the decisions of Ivory Coast and Upper Volta to abstain from the first meeting of the Commission whose subsequent meetings were adjourned sine die. It is also possible that the non-attendance of Ivory Coast and Upper Volta reflected Houphouët Boigny's attitude to Nigeria. He was indeed willing to see Nigeria act against Ghana but not to the extent of upsetting the delicate position of Grunitzky to the possible benefit of Mally, Wachuku's candidate to succeed Olympio.³ Ivory Coast, however, remained adamantly opposed to any recognition of the Grunitzky regime on the grounds that the authors of Olympio's assassination remained still unpunished.⁴ Addressing the heads of state at Addis Ababa in May Houphouët Boigny considered

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1. Dr Emile Zinsou, Interview, Paris, 8 September 1975.
 2. During the only visit of the delegates to Lomé, the Army refused to give them any help and told them that their security could not be guaranteed.
 3. Wachuku remained adamantly opposed to the Grunitzky Government which, because of the presence of Mally in Lagos, became increasingly concerned at his possible preparation of a coup from Lagos. Morning Post, 11 April 1963.
 4. Morning Post, 14 March 1963.

that:

The moment has come to condemn collectively and publicly political assassination as a means of coming to power. The conference must take a clear stand on this matter or else Africa will fall into so-called revolutions.¹

In contrast with this, Balewa's commitment to the success of the conference led him to adopt an attitude of moderation and compromise. Unlike his Foreign Minister Wachuku, the Prime Minister advocated 'a realistic approach to the recognition of Togo' which eventually prevailed.²

The successful gathering of the thirty-two independent African states at Addis Ababa in May 1963 was the outcome of joint diplomatic efforts by Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Balewa and Sékou Touré. Behind the fact that the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union only survived on paper, Algeria's independence had facilitated this rapprochement of the Monrovia and Casablanca groups. Balewa and Sékou Touré had also been in close agreement on the Togo crisis. The charter of the OAU signed during the night of 25-26 May was largely based on an Ethiopian document drawn from the Lagos charter.³ The Addis Ababa charter's relationship with the Lagos charter of the IANSO was described as follows by Nigeria's Minister of Justice and one of the lawyers involved in its preparation:

The only changes in the original Lagos charter worth mentioning were a slight reformulation of some paragraphs of the preamble and of the purpose and principles, as well as the inclusion of the Defence Commission among the specialised Commissions of the Organisation. The last was a concession, albeit in a greatly attenuated form, to the Casablanca bloc and their idea of an African High Command.⁴

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1. Quoted in I. Wallerstein, Africa, The Politics of Unity (New York, 1969), p. 66.
 2. Daily Times, 21 May 1963; Nigeria and Guinea recognized the new Togolese government on 13 June and were followed two days later by Ivory Coast and Upper Volta.
 3. In effect, the Ethiopian initiative gave to the Casablanca states 'an opportunity to sign without seeming to lose face' The Economist, 1 June 1963, 893.
 4. T.O. Elias, 'The Charter of the Organisation of African Unity', American Journal of International Law, LIX, 2 (April 1965), 24

Balewa's diplomacy of mediation had contributed largely to the acceptance by all independent Africa of the conservative conception of African unity which he shared with Houphouët Boigny and the Monrovia group in general. Nigeria acted as an enlightened spokesman and a successful exponent of the Monrovia conception of inter-African relations. Houphouët Boigny's positive attitude to Balewa's diplomacy resulted from its contribution to the legitimization of a conception conservatoire of African unity, enshrined in the 1963 OAU Charter. After 1964, domestic considerations increasingly weighed on the practical conduct and overall outlook of Nigeria's African policy. This accounted for its increasing emphasis on compromise and mediation and its more neutral outlook in such conflicts as the 1965 OAU crisis. The Conseil de l'Entente had become then openly and uncompromisingly committed to its policy of insulating Africa from revolutionary ideas and policies through an active campaign for the isolation of Ghana. This policy directly affected the future of the OAU and threatened to cause its break-up.

The 1965 crisis of the OAU

The origins of the 1965 crisis of the OAU were to be found at the Cairo conference of the heads of state held during July 1964. The opposition of a majority of leaders to the attendance of Congo's new Prime Minister, Moïse Tshombé, especially irritated Houphouët Boigny. As did other conservative statesmen, he considered that the OAU attitude constituted interference with the internal affairs of a member-state in violation of the OAU Charter. Ivory Coast and Ghana's other neighbours - including Nigeria - also greeted with dismay the decision that the 1965 heads of state meeting would be held in Ghana, as opponents to their regimes received aid and support there. Within a few months, the evolution of attitudes

to the Congo crisis in the OAU and a series of events in Niger prompted the inner core of the francophones to undertake a big scale offensive in support of Tshombé, seeking to isolate in the OAU Ghana and the other states supporting the pro-Lumumbist insurrection in Stanleyville.

In October 1964, the Niger government had resisted a sudden attempted **insurrection** led by exiles from the banned Sawaba party of Djibo Bakary. After the operation was over, captured ammunition, equipment, and oral testimony from prisoners, showed that the insurgents had been based in Ghana and had received military training with the help of China.^I On the basis of this evidence, the Conseil de l'Entente made it known to Nkrumah in November 1964 that they would refuse to attend an OAU conference in Ghana unless political opponents to their regimes were first expelled.

Nkrumah willingly agreed to this request then; but in January 1965, he wrote a letter to Houphouet Boigny to explain that the implementation of his demand was now impossible because no other African country had been willing to offer asylum to the militants concerned.² The letter to Houphouet Boigny arrived within a few days of incidents at the Togo-Ghana border, and at a time when conservative African states were becoming particularly concerned at the role of the OAU in the Congo crisis. The transport of Belgian paratroops to Stanleyville by the United States, in late November 1964, had brought help to Tshombe, enabling him to curb revolutionary opposition to his Western-oriented regime. Whether this intervention in favour of a member of the OAU had been appropriate was a matter of controversy and serious division for the African states at the UN.

I. G.Chaffard, Les Carnets Secrets de la Décolonisation(Paris, 1967), ii,p. 310 ff.

2. Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy...,p. 366.

OAU principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member-states and respect of their sovereignty were again becoming matters of disagreement between radical-revolutionary and moderate-conservative African states. Concern among the latter at a possible renewal of threats to their internal security favoured Houphouët Boigny's reconstitution of a tight francophone bloc, the OCAM.

The OCAM had almost the same membership as its spiritual predecessor the UAM, which had been transformed into an economic body, against Houphouët Boigny's will, in March 1964 to comply with OAU pressure for the dissolution of blocs.¹ The chief objectives of the new organisation were to be its support to Tchombé and, at the risk of destroying the OAU, an isolation of the Ghanaian regime which, if successful, would indirectly affect all radical states.² The Conseil de l'Entente, was the hard core of the OCAM as it had been that of the UAM. In mid-April 1965 the Conseil launched a major offensive against Ghana, taking as a target the OAU Accra Conference. The move was prompted by an attempt to assassinate Diori Hamani made on 13 April in Niamey by a political exile recently back from Ghana.³ Missions from the Conseil de l'Entente subsequently flew to all major African capitals to accuse Ghana of indulging in subversive activities against independent African states in contradiction to OAU principles. A meeting of the OCAM was subsequently held in Abidjan on 25 May and decided both to admit Tchombé's Congo as one of its members and to boycott the OAU Accra Conference.

Balewa held closely similar views on Ghana's involvement in Africa and the violation of the OAU character over the Congo issue.⁴

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1. West Africa, 17 August 1963, 909.
 2. Wallerstein, Africa..., pp. 91-2
 3. Chaffard, Les Carnets Secrets..., ii, pp 327-8.
 4. At the UN Nigeria's Foreign Minister Wachuku fully supported the US-Belgium intervention in Stanleyville. This stance was strongly criticised in parliament. See Tukur, Nigeria's External Relations..., pp. 28-9.

Balewa's tactical approach to the crisis was nevertheless very different from that of the Conseil de l'Entente. Nigeria's policy line was more than ever before shaped by domestic considerations owing to the deep crisis which the unity of the country had recently faced after the Federal elections of December 1964. Azikiwe had then refused to summon Balewa to appoint a new government on the basis of the results of the elections, boycotted by the NCNC, because he did not consider them to be fair.¹ The conflict between the Prime Minister and the President of the Federation divided the whole country as well and it was only Azikiwe's late acceptance of a compromise which had saved Nigeria from both a coup and widespread civilian disturbances.² The settlement of the dispute on 4 January 1965 had involved the formation of a broadly based cabinet and the holding of new elections for those constituencies where the boycott had been successful. Accordingly, the new NPC-NCNC-dominated cabinet included a plethora of new ministers. Adding to the underlying competition between the leading parties, this brought governmental responsibility and cohesion to their nadir.

At the time of the 1965 OAU crisis, the chief characteristic of the foreign policy of the last Balewa government was 'compromise rather than initiative'.³ When on 21 April, Yameogo and Diori Hamani arrived in Lagos to press for a boycott of the OAU meeting, Balewa expressed his opinion on this issue in parliament declaring that, at the Cairo meeting, he had said to fellow statesmen:

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1. Mackintosh, Nigerian Government..., p. 589 ff.
 2. Balewa later recalled 'I sat in that chair over there (in the cabinet room) and heard day after day people urging me to call the police, the army, the navy to arrest the President and so on'; Interview in Schwarz, Nigeria, p. 175. Azikiwe was under similar pressure; Mackintosh, Nigerian Government..., p.589 ff.
 3. J.L.Entwistle, 'Nigeria's African Policy' (New York Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1970, mimeo), p.35.

... that I could not see how I could go to Accra to dine and laugh with Nigerians who had run away from their country because they were wanted by the police...

It is a very difficult situation... I would like to consult with many Heads of State as soon as possible.¹

Much of the difficulty of the situation came from the actual impossibility for Balewa to consider a boycott of the Conference, despite Nigeria's sharing of the experience of Ghana's francophone neighbours.² When Balewa met Yameogo and Diori Hamani he expressed full sympathy with their feelings but explained that he could not agree to the Conseil de l'Entente's boycott because of domestic pressure.³ Besides the vocal presence of Nigerian exiles in Accra, the Federal Government was particularly resentful of the publication in the Ghanaian press of allegations that Nigeria supported the Tchombé regime by sending mercenaries. In March, these accusations had led Ghanaian students to demonstrate in front of the Nigerian High Commission in Accra.⁴ But the issue of Nigeria's participation at the Accra Conference also represented a potential source of conflict among leading political parties in the government. It was chiefly for this reason that Balewa was concerned to avoid a controversial policy-line.

Ahmadu Bello, Premier of the Northern Region and the President of the NPC, had established good relations with the Niger republic, giving limited but appreciable support to its fight against Sawaba activities.⁵ Bello was therefore well aware of the reality of Diori Hamani's charges against Ghana. However, the NPC remained silent on

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1. HRD, 21 April 1965, cols 1139-40. Balewa was referring to Ikoku and Adebajo.
 2. Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy..., p.387
 3. Daily Times, 23 April 1965 and Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy..., p.382.
 4. West Africa, 20 March 1965, 322.
 5. See Chapter 3, pp.141-3.

the issue possibly so as to avoid embarrassing Balewa. It was only the NPC's Youth Branch, the Arewa Youth Congress, which openly advocated a boycott of the Accra meeting.¹ In contrast, the NCNC clearly and strongly campaigned against a boycott of the Conference. It was argued that taking such a decision would affect the future of the OAU and should therefore be ruled out. When queried about this, Azikiwe replied that 'only compelling reasons' could justify the non-attendance of Nigeria which like other African states, was morally bound to come to the meeting.² The fact that Nigeria's participation in an OAU Conference in Accra was an object of semi-open dissent among the leading parties of the fragile government coalition was a prime factor accounting for Balewa's basic attitude of conciliation and compromise.

Another related consideration shaped the Prime Minister's subsequent suggestion that an extraordinary meeting of the OAU Council of Ministers should be convened. Pressures for a Nigerian diplomatic initiative were at the time strong in Nigeria. The Federal Government had claimed a leading part in the birth of the OAU and it was widely felt among politically aware Nigerians that their government could not remain indifferent to an issue involving the organization's survival. It was also felt that the destruction of the OAU following a successful boycott of the Accra meeting by all OCAM states could have dramatic effects on the stability of the African continent as well as in Nigeria.

On 27 April, the Nigerian Prime Minister addressed a telegram to OAU Secretary-General Diallo Telli, suggesting the organization of an extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers to discuss Ghana's attitude, 'which some African statesmen consider

1. Radio Kaduna on 18 March 1965, BBC MEA, 1814/B/10.

2. Daily Times, 27 April 1965 and The Nigerian Citizen, 28 April 1965.

inconsistent with the character of the Organization'.¹ At the Conference held in Lagos during 10-13 June Balewa's opening speech went straight to the central issue of the meeting, the survival of the OAU. He emphasized that the decision adopted by the delegates would have 'far-reaching effects on the future of the OAU' its very existence being at stake.² Nigeria's commitment to the holding of the OAU Accra Conference was reflected in the remarkable moderation of its representative at the conference who, unlike Ghana's other neighbours, neither mentioned the presence of Nigerian exiles in Accra nor referred to Ghana's recent meddling in Nigeria's internal affairs during the recent 1964 election crisis. When the Conference ended, it had been agreed that the OCAM states might reconsider their decision not to go to Accra if Ghana fulfilled its pledge to 'send away from its territory... all those persons whose presence is considered undesirable.'³

Various initiatives from Balewa during the following months failed to change the attitude of the Conseil de l'Entente towards a boycott of the Conference. These moves included a formal ban of Sawaba party activities in Nigeria and, in September, an offer by Balewa to join Telli for a meeting between Nkrumah and the heads of state of the Conseil de l'Entente in Abidjan.⁴ This meeting failed to materialize. At the Accra Conference held during October, Balewa and Ahidjo were the only representatives of what Michael Wolfers has called 'Ghana's complaining neighbours', in attendance.⁵ In the case of Cameroun, the attendance followed Nkrumah's handing over of the

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1. Telegram quoted in West African Pilot, 28 April 1965.
 2. Balewa on radio Lagos, 10 June 1965, BBC MEA, 1882/B/1.
 3. Resolution quoted in Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy..., p.381.
 4. Morning Post, 15 September 1965.
 5. M.Wolfers, Politics in the Organization of African Unity(London, 1976) p. 155.

most conspicuous opponents to the Ahidjo regime who were in Ghana.¹ Balewa had failed to secure the attendance of the hard core of the OCAM states at Accra but his earlier initiative of convening an extraordinary meeting of the OAU Council of Ministers had been a success insofar as it had avoided the boycott of the Conference by all OCAM states and the consequent possible break-up of the Organization.

Ivory Coast's policy in the crisis, like that of Nigeria, originated from a concern to preserve stable patterns of relations between African states respecting each other's sovereignty. Peace and security remained the key-words of the Balewa-Houphouët Boigny approach to African unity. Unlike Nigeria, however, Ivory Coast had been prepared for a break-up of the OAU and initiated the reconstitution of a strong francophone bloc, the OCAM. The underlying assumption of the campaign of the Conseil de l'Entente for a boycott of the Accra Conference was that, beyond the issue of relations with Ghana what was at stake was that the OAU should not be allowed to achieve aims other than the protection and enforcement of a conservative conception of relations between independent African states. Houphouët Boigny's attitude to the OAU might have been described with the famous phrase used by the XIXth century French politician Adolphe Thiers to describe his vision of the republican system 'La République [Française] sera conservatrice ou ne sera pas'. Balewa, on the contrary, had been bound to consider a policy of reconciliation within the OAU. A collapse of the Organization would have affected the overall political stability of the African continent and also created new sources of conflict within his government coalition.

1. Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy...., p.384.

Houphouët Boigny had been very aware of the difficult position of Balewa since the Federal Election of 1964.¹ The President of Ivory Coast admired the Nigerian Prime Minister's political skill in the increasingly difficult internal situation which he faced in Nigeria. The mediation undertaken by the Ivorian President during the summer of 1965, to convince de Gaulle to resume diplomatic relations with Nigeria, was his personal tribute to Balewa's diplomacy. Nigeria's African policy was indeed appreciated because of its stabilizing effects on the African continent. Another important cause for the appreciation of the African policy of Nigeria came from its lack of interference with Ivory Coast's leadership of the Conseil de l'Entente.

4. Nigeria's non-interference in Ivory Coast's sphere of influence.

Until 1966, Nigeria's foreign policy was primarily directed against Ghana and seldom interfered with francophone ties in West Africa. On the contrary, Nigerian policy towards Ghana often led to their reinforcement, and therefore favoured the continuation of the francophone/anglophone division. The Federal Government remained reluctant to develop bilateral co-operation with neighbouring Francophone states. Nigeria's commitment to African affairs grew largely due to pressure by the domestic critics of the Federal Government. A restricted outlook on foreign policy goals underlined Balewa's attitude to West Africa. Faced with Nigeria's own problems of national unity, the Prime Minister seemed to agree that the Federation 'barely needed' a regional policy because its neighbours were 'all weak and.. [with] no desire or capacity to threaten Nigeria in any serious way'.²

1. Details in J. Batmanian, 'La Politique Africaine de la Côte d'Ivoire de son accession à l'Indépendance à la Fin de la Guerre Civile du Nigéria' (Paris I Univ. thèse de Doctorat d'Etat, 1973 mimeo), ii, p. 312.

2. J. Mackintosh, 'Nigeria's External Relations', Journal of Commonwealth Studies II, 3 (November 1964), 207.

Balewa's reluctant development of an African policy

Throughout his period of office, Balewa remained particularly concerned that his government should appear as a reliable partner in the West as well as in Africa. He insisted that because of its very size, Nigeria should be an example of 'good sense and reasonableness' in the conduct of its external relations.¹ Such concern was partly reinforced by the attitude of Ghana to the frontiers of its Ivorian and Togolese neighbours. Balewa seemed to seek to redeem the attitude of West Africa's other anglophone power through unexpectedly low-profile policies towards Nigeria's neighbours. As Balewa explained in London during a visit in 1961:

Our policy in Africa is that no matter how small a country is...we shall recognize that country as our equal.
...We are most anxious that peace should be maintained on the African continent. We, in Nigeria, believe that on no account should any African country be so ambitious as to use force to eat up another smaller African country.²

After 1963, the Federal Government policy of association with the EEC openly excluded earlier suggestions that an African common market might constitute an alternative. The Federal Government's relations with neighbouring Francophone states were chiefly determined by political considerations relating to Nigeria's weak unity. Balewa thus favoured functional co-operation instead of the organic unity advocated by Ghana, Guinea, Mali and the UAR. Functional co-operation implied consulting with other African states to improve communications, fight customs evasion or mark frontiers clearly as they had been drawn during the colonial period. The ultimate aim to be achieved was a reinforcement of state sovereignty

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1. A.Tafawa Balewa, 'Nigeria Looks Ahead', Foreign Affairs, XLI, 1(October 1962), 131.
 2. The Times, 23 March 1961.

and independence, as opposed to the progressive devolution of state sovereignty and the eradication of colonial boundaries expected from continental union projects. Nigeria's bad relations with Ghana, the Federation's weak unity, and the internal division in the government coalition constituted three major political factors in the lack of development of any Nigerian regional policy until 1966. Preserving the status quo was primarily looked for. Compromise or conciliation were preferred to clearcut policy lines likely to lead to divisions. Balewa's regional policy remained inward-looking, aimed as it was towards the preservation of Nigeria's own unity from potential centrifugal forces. Balewa resisted projects involving any tightening of relations with neighbouring Dahomey and Niger, despite pressure to do so in the Western and Northern regions. This attitude was possibly related to a fear that the central authority of the Federal Government, and the inter-regional balance, could be upset by the development of links with these states. Yorubas in the Western region or Hausa-Fulani groups in Northern Nigeria might have felt more inclined to pursue contacts with Dahomey and Niger than with other regions in Nigeria. Accordingly the Federal Government adopted a strikingly non-committal attitude to Togolese and Dahomean requests for Nigerian support of a Benin union. Nigeria's failure or unwillingness to develop a West African policy was of crucial importance to its good relations with Ivory Coast, whose leadership over the Conseil de l'Entente could have been dramatically affected by the implementation of the Benin union project.

The Benin Union Project.

On 2 February 1962, at a party held by Azikiwe after the completion of the Lagos Conference of the IAMSOC, Olympio unexpectedly suggested

the creation of a regional union between Togo, Dahomey and Nigeria.¹ The reduction of customs barriers, the simplification of travel formalities, the development of roads and telecommunications, and mutual guarantee of the frontiers were the practical steps which the Togolese President suggested for the implementation of his proposal. Although the suggestion took Dahomey's President Maga by surprise, he gave it immediate support and subsequently held a joint press conference with Olympio to present the proposal formally in Cotonou. The two leaders expressed their willingness to favour 'a regional union...starting by... [the abolition of] customs restrictions' between the states involved.² The only substantial point of disagreement between the two leaders related to Ghana's participation in the project, which Maga strongly desired. He had established friendly contacts with Nkrumah during a visit to Accra in June 1961 and the two leaders had decided to sign a Ghana-Dahomey trade agreement. Dahomey was a transit point for cattle travelling from Northern Nigeria and Niger to Ghana. Dahomey could also hope to export fish to Ghana against imports of cheaper manufactured products from the Commonwealth.

Olympio was most reluctant to accept a Ghanaian participation in a union of the states of the Benin, which he had originally proposed largely as a result of deteriorating Togo-Ghana relations. Olympio strongly distrusted Nkrumah's pressure for a reunification of Togo with former British Togoland, now part of Ghana. In December 1961, tension between the two countries had been suddenly increased by Ghana's involvement in a foiled attempt to overthrow the Olympio regime. Ghana's subsequent closure of the frontier on 23 December

1. West African Pilot, 3 February 1962 and Afrique Nouvelle, 7 February 1962.

2. Radio Cotonou on 2 February 1962, BBC MEA, 863/B/3.

seriously affected the economy of Togo. Considering this, Olympio's proposal at Lagos reflected an attempt to reorientate the Togolese economy towards Nigeria so as to ensure alternative supplies of manufactured goods from the sterling area, which the market women of Lome needed for their trade. Nigerian guarantees against possible Ghanaian subversion attempts would have also been an important inbuilt feature of such a relationship.¹

The closure of the Togo-Ghana frontier had affected the Dahomean economy as much as that of Togo. The move had jeopardized Maga's hope for the conclusion of a trade agreement with Ghana. The Dahomean President had therefore undertaken a series of initiatives to promote reconciliation between Olympio and Nkrumah in late December and during January 1962. As Maga took up Olympio's suggestion of a Benin union, early in February, the outcome of these moves became subsequently relevant to both Togo-Ghana relations and Ghana's participation in a union of the states of the Benin. On 6-7 February, delegations led by the Foreign Ministers of Dahomey, Togo and Ghana met in Cotonou. Much to the surprise of observers, the atmosphere of the talks was described as 'excellent' and when the meeting ended, reconciliation seemed within reach provided Nkrumah and Olympio could agree to a venue to seal their reconciliation.² As a result of this, Ghana's participation in a loose confederation of states including Togo and Dahomey seemed no longer impossible.³ The idea of a Benin Union now appeared to be acquiring wider regional implications. Journalists were told of a possible inclusion of Niger in the project and Dahomey's Vice President Apithy foresaw an extensive revision of Dahomey's relations with the Conseil de l'Entente and the UAM.

1. Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy..., p. 236.

2. Tevoedjire, Pan-Africanism..., pp. 42-4.

3. W.Schwarz, 'Towards a Benin Union?', Daily Times, 27 February 1962.

Apithy's enthusiasm for the Benin Union was related to his longstanding support for association with Nigeria. Early in 1959, he had taken up the idea of a Union du Bénin. However, the politics of the creation of the Conseil de l'Entente had led to his rapid abandonment of all alternative projects of regional co-operation in the following months. Since then, suggestions of closer relations with Nigeria had remained a most popular theme among Apithy's regional electorate, the Yorubas living along the frontier with Nigeria. They were actively involved in trade - mostly unrecorded - with Nigeria and warmly welcomed any prospects of reduction or disappearance of hazards brought to their trade by customs control along the frontier. This gave Apithy's attitude to the new Benin Union the smack of a shrewed political move, supported by his traditional Yoruba electorate but also by those Dahomeans whose trade with Ghana had been curtailed by the closure of the Togo-Ghana customs post at Aflao.

Apithy explained that the Benin Union, including Ghana and Nigeria, would represent a more suitable association for Dahomey than the Conseil de l'Entente or the UAM which were 'becoming out of date'.¹ The Conseil de l'Entente, he said in another interview, 'a été ou est une étape de notre [Dahomey] marché vers l'Unité Africaine'.² The Benin project, was to be an example of those 'unions économiques homogènes... [qui engagent] la réalisation concrète de l'unité Africaine'.

These statements actually prompted a mini leadership crisis in Dahomey and early in March rumours circulated in Cotonou that Maga might seek to remove Apithy from office. This did not occur but several mises au point were made by Maga and Ministers acting on his behalf.

1. Ibid.

2. Afrique Nouvelle, 21 February 1962.

One of them, Dahomey's Interior Minister, Arouna Mama, expressed:

...un ultime avertissement à ceux qui s'obstineraient encore à jouer leur petit rôle de détracteurs stériles, [et] à ceux qui pourraient penser à bâtir une nouvelle fortune politique en exploitant les difficultés de la nation dont ils sont précisément responsables. Le ¹ bras de la répression s'abattra lourdement... sur eux.

Maga also emphasized in the following months that the project of union of the Benin states was not to imply any reconsideration of Dahomey's existing external commitments.² Maga did not formally dismiss the Benin Union idea but it had lost most of its original substance. Maga's attitude was perhaps a concession to Apithy, but it certainly also related to the difficult economic and financial situation of Dahomey. As Dahomey-Nigeria customs negotiations were undertaken in the spring of 1962, Maga could possibly hope that the Federal Government might agree to make the 'geste...[financier] dans le cadre de la solidarité Africaine' which he had vainly requested from Nkrumah in early March.³

After the failure of Dahomean initiatives towards a Togo-Ghana reconciliation in March 1962, it was largely as a result of continuing Togolese initiatives that the Foreign Ministers of Togo, Dahomey and Nigeria met on 25-27 August 1962 in Cotonou. The opening speech of Dahomey's Foreign Minister, Emile Zinsou, did contain an indirect but clear reference to the attitude of Apithy once 'prêt à torpiller le Conseil de l'Entente pour faire quelque chose avec le Nigéria.'⁴ Zinsou warned that:

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1. Afrique Nouvelle, 21 March 1962.
 2. Afrique Nouvelle, 31 August 1962.
 3. Letter of Maga to Nkrumah (5 March 1962) in Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy..., p.247.
 4. Dr. Emile Zinsou, Interview, Paris, 8 September 1975.

La recherche que nous entreprenons aujourd'hui s'inscrit fidèlement dans cette ligne [de l'Unité Africaine]. L'infrastructure est déjà en place et a nom: UAM, groupe de Monrovia... C'est dans ce cadre et dans ce cadre seulement, que nous entendons nous tenir, de telle sorte que ce que nous voulons réaliser dans notre région du Bénin respecte l'esprit et la lettre de nos accords antérieurs.¹

The creation of a formal institutional framework for the Benin Union was therefore ruled out. The delegates merely adopted proposals for functional co-operation in the fields of airlines, education, justice, trade, taxation, and telecommunications.² No decision was taken to set up an administrative structure which would have constituted a link and a basis for the organisation of future meetings. The implementation of most of the proposals for functional co-operation made by the conference was expected to take place through bilateral discussions.

Balewa's attitude towards this first project of the Benin Union had been extremely cautious and unassertive. Wachuku qualified it later as one of 'self-effacement' due to Balewa's desire to see whether the proposal was made on the spur of the moment or whether it was serious.³ On 3 February, Wachuku had pointed out that Nigeria had already taken steps towards the realization of Olympio's suggested Togo-Dahomey-Nigeria Union, and therefore supported it.⁴ After Dahomean suggestions of Ghana's participation in the Union, official attitudes to the project appeared even more non-committal. When Balewa's opinion was requested on the subject during a public meeting in Ibadan on 20 February 1962, he made a revealing

1. L'Aube Nouvelle, 1 September 1962

2. West African Pilot, 27 August 1962 and radio Cotonou on 26 August 1962, BBC MEA, 1033/B/1-2.

3. Jaja Wachuku, Interview, Nbawsi, 29 November 1974.

4. Radio Lagos on 5 February 1962, BBC MEA, 864/B/6.

preliminary comment that he only knew of the proposal through press reports, before adding that it sounded like 'a good idea' provided no attempt would be made to imitate the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union which, to him, existed 'on paper in Accra and just... [did] not make sense in Bamako.'¹ The participation of both Nigeria and Ghana in the Benin Union appeared impossible to achieve. Balewa fully shared Olympio's view that Nkrumah wanted to absorb smaller Togo.² Besides, at the beginning of 1962 Balewa already had precise information on Ghana's involvement in AG subversion plans, which he had actually discussed with colleagues during the Lagos IAMSOC Conference.³ Last but not least, Nigeria greatly resented Nkrumah's active contribution to the last-minute decision of the Casablanca group to stay aloof from that Conference. Other factors, however, shaped Nigeria's low-profile policy, which was continued after Ghana had been unremittingly excluded from the Benin Union project by Olympio. These included the Federal Government's reluctance to undertake any regional commitment, because Nigeria's economic development and national unity should be built first. Disagreement on what the Benin Union should be existed between Togo and Dahomey as well as within Dahomey itself, providing a further incentive to caution. To Olympio, the Benin Union was to provide Nigerian protection against Ghanaian territorial ambitions. To Maga, it was rather Ghana's inclusion in the Benin Union which was expected to act as a counterweight to Nigeria, irrespective of financial implications.⁴

1. Radio Brazzaville on 22 February 1962, BBC MEA, 879/B/5.

2. Jaja Wachuku, Interview, Nbawsi, 29 November 1974.

3. Thompson, Ghana's Foreign Policy....., p. 242.

4. Dr Emile Zinsou, Interview, Paris 8 September 1975.

The eradication of frontiers between Dahomey and Nigeria had been an old proposal of the AG whose leader Awolowo, now in the opposition, was also a close friend to Apithy. In March 1960, the AG suggestion that Dahomey should join with Nigeria had been responsible for Maga's claims that, like Ghana, Nigeria represented a neo-colonialist threat to its neighbours. Balewa, who was then already Nigeria's Prime Minister, was aware of these criticisms, and partly to avoid them adopted the policy line of self-effacement described by Wachuku.

From May 1962 onwards, the attitude of the Federal Government towards the Benin project also owed its caution to the AG crisis in the Western region, where a state of emergency was proclaimed. The region's only external boundary was with Dahomey. With the development of the crisis, Balewa's continued concern for the respect of sovereignty and territorial status quo affected even more deeply his relations with Nigeria's neighbours.

Domestic considerations again played a prominent part in Nigeria's similarly cautious reaction to the revived idea of a Benin Union during the spring of 1964, at a time when Apithy had become Dahomey's President. Apithy's initiative characteristically occurred at a time when relations between Dahomey and the Conseil de l'Entente were at their lowest ebb since 1960. In October-November 1963, Houphouët Boigny and Diori Hamani had strongly disapproved of the overthrow and imprisonment of Maga, like them strongly committed to the preservation of francophone links. The crisis had openly burst in the Conseil de l'Entente in December, following Niger's expulsion of all Dahomean nationals working in the country and Dahomey's subsequent closure of the frontier to all transit trade. This seriously affected Niger whose import-export trade via Cotonou had to be channelled through alternative routes, via Ivory Coast and

Nigeria. It also represented a substantial financial loss for Dahomey, since traffic on the Parakou-Cotonou railway and in Cotonou harbour were drastically reduced.

Apithy's proposal for a revived Benin Union was made in March 1964 after the Dakar Conference of the UAM where, together with Senghor, he had successfully secured its transformation into a mere economic body, the Union Africaine et Malgache de Coopération Economique (UAMCE). Returning to Cotonou on 16 March, Apithy explained that:

The OAU must be the only political organisation in Africa... I earnestly hope to see the formation of truly regional groups...

In this respect we shall work... for the creation of a regional or sub-regional group comprising, as an example Nigeria, Dahomey, Togo, Ghana, Upper Volta and Niger...

In Dakar we were happy to note that... President Senghor is now taking the initiative as regards Guinea, Mauritania and Mali.¹

That the Conseil de l'Entente was not a 'truly regional group' could be inferred from this statement which amounted to a veiled attack on Houphouët Boigny's influence in Francophone West Africa. On 6 May 1964, a much publicized meeting of senior Dahomean civil servants was convened in Cotonou to 'lay down the line of Dahomey's policy with respect to the creation of a Benin Union.'² The recommendations made by the Cotonou Conference of August 1962 were to serve as a basis for the work of the participants.

In Nigeria, Balewa was then particularly preoccupied with the preservation of law and order in Nigeria where the Federal elections were being held. The Nigerian Government avoided becoming involved in the issue. As Apithy went through Lagos airport on 15

1. Radio Cotonou on 16 March 1964, BBC MEA, 1508/B/3.

2. Dahomey's Foreign Minister Gabriel Lozes; Radio Cotonou on 6 May 1964, BBC MEA, 1548/B/3.

July, he could only ask journalists about public attitudes to his project and tell his audience 'Il faut que vous travailliez pour la réalisation de cette Union [du Bénin]'.¹ Not surprisingly, Balewa's first direct comment on the Benin Union project, made on 19 August, was that the idea was very good but had to be examined with care and without precipitation.²

The Dahomean revival of the Benin project was primarily related to the country's rift with Niger and Ivory Coast. The suggested establishment of closer links with Nigeria constituted in many ways a tactical imitation of Upper Volta's rapprochement with Ghana during its 1961-62 crisis with Ivory Coast. In effect, the chief aim of Yameogo's diplomacy was to strengthen his 'bargaining position vis à vis both Ivory Coast and France'.³ In a very similar fashion, the Benin Union project looked like an attempt to put indirect pressure on the current renegotiation of Daho-Niger financial arrangements for the transport of Niger goods through Dahomey.

For both Dahomey and Upper Volta there were, however, clear limits to a désengagement from the Francophone links owing to their budgetary reliance on subsidies from France and Ivory Coast - through the Fond de Solidarité of the Conseil de l'Entente in the latter case. On 25 June 1964, Ahomadegbe, who sought an increase of French aid in Paris, insisted that Dahomey's non-attendance of the Conseil de l'Entente meetings since January 1964 did not mean that his country had left the organization.⁴ Since the reopening of the Dahomey-Niger frontier to the import-export traffic of Niger on 2 June, relations had begun to improve between Dahomey and the other member-states of the Entente.

1. AFP/BOM, 16 July 1964

2. AFP/BOM, 19 August 1964

3. E.O. Saffu, 'The Bases of Ghana-Upper Volta Relations during the Nkrumah Regime', Canadian Journal of African Studies, IV, 2(Spring 1970), 199.

4. AFP/BOM, 26 June 1964.

The Benin Union project, especially its first 1962 version, represented the greatest threat to Ivory Coast's regional influence since the Mali Federation in 1959. Nigeria's policy, however, did not threaten the hegemony of Ivory Coast over the Conseil de l'Entente, although it could have easily done so. Because of Nigeria's unsettled internal situation, the stability of the Federation's immediate environment was of primary concern to Balewa. This remained the constant and increasingly predominant feature of his regional policy until 1966. Nigeria's diplomacy not only avoided any forceful policy line but actually contributed directly to a reinforcement of francophone links within the Conseil de l'Entente and the Francophone states of West Africa in general. Early in January 1964, Dahomey, which had refused UAM mediation proposals, agreed to send representatives to Lagos and, like Niger, present its case to Nigeria, which undertook to avoid the outbreak of a confrontation between the armies of the two countries.¹ The fact that Nigeria never seriously interfered with Ivory Coast's leadership of the Conseil de l'Entente constituted the basis for the entente cordiale between the two countries. Between 1960 and 1966, Nigeria and Ivory Coast developed very few relations with each other, even though - or because - they pursued very similar goals in the international arena. The two countries looked for development in close association with the former colonial power and the West in general. The Commonwealth and the states of the former Communauté also remained their partenaires privilégiés for co-operation.

In the case of Nigeria, close relations with other Anglophone states in West Africa had been jeopardized by Ghana's

1. Daily Times, 1 and 4 January 1964.

withdrawal from interterritorial institutions that had existed in British West Africa during the colonial period.¹ African unity, as it was subsequently conceived by Nigeria and Ivory Coast, was meant to be instrumental to the preservation of their vertical and - in the case of Ivory Coast only - horizontal links based on a common colonial past. These relations provided the quasi-exclusive basis for inter-state co-operation until the Nigerian civil war. These ties were stronger than those, more recent and slowly developing, which existed as a result of geographical propinquity and common political and economic interests.

The persistence of the Francophone/Anglophone division

The reliance of Ivory Coast's voie de développement on close relations with France, as well as on the socio-political stability of the country's immediate neighbours had prompted the creation of the Conseil de l'Entente. On a broader level, these factors underlined Ivory Coast's active contribution to the preservation of a francophone bloc in sub-Saharan Africa. In March 1964, it was against the wish of Ivory Coast that the UAM-Brazzaville group was transformed into an economic body, the UAMCE. This new organisation, was founded under the impulse of Senghor, the longstanding rival to Ivorian policy in moderate francophone Africa.² Commenting on its creation, Saller explained in Paris:

Il fallait maintenir l'UAM et éventuellement supprimer l'Organisation Africaine et Malgache de Coopération Economique... car les attaches anciennes et plus nouvelles, depuis l'indépendance, correspondent à des affinités réelles et non à des idées plus ou moins étranges. L'idée d'un marché commun Africain est pour le moment fantaisiste.³

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1. Aluko, Ghana and Nigeria...., pp. 40-66.
 2. Jalloh, Political Integration..., p. 136 ff.
 3. Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens, 13 June 1964, 1505.
(Hereafter Marchés Tropicaux)

Accordingly, Ivory Coast boycotted the meetings of the UAMCE. A few months later, Houphouët Boigny was to take advantage of the Francophone states' revived concern about internal security to initiate the OCAM. This new organization superseded the UAMCE and restored the continuity of the political tradition established by the UAM.

The entente cordiale between Ivory Coast and Nigeria was based on Nigeria's respect of Ivory Coast's influence in West Africa. More generally, this meant that the Federal Government would not interfere with Francophone links. During the 1960-63 period, the UAM disagreed with Nigerian attempts to reconcile the Cassablanca and Monrovia groups only insofar as this threatened UAM political principles and commitments. Thus, at the 1962 Lagos Conference, the IAMSOC Charter was only adopted 'in principle', as the UAM states wanted to study it carefully so as to avoid any incompatibility with their own Charter.¹ Limits to co-operation with Nigeria were even more clearly set out on issues involving relations between the UAM states and France. At Monrovia, in May 1961, the Francophone states thus opposed condemnation of the French atomic tests in the Sahara, despite Nigeria's strong views on this matter. Accordingly, the paragraph of the final resolution on 'disarmament' only appealed for a cessation of 'all further nuclear explosions anywhere in the world'. Reference to France was made almost passingly, noting that France had given 'assurances ... that they will cease all further nuclear explosions in Africa'.² As Houphouët Boigny told the Conference to explain the UAM stance on Algeria, 'Nous voulons être vos amis et aussi ceux de La France'.³ For this reason, a few

1. Radio Lagos on 30 January 1962, BBC MEA, 860/E/1; Afrique Nouvelle, 7 June 1962.

2. Legum, Pan-Africanism..., Appendix 17, p.218; in fact France had simply completed the first set of its nuclear experiments.

3. Afrique Nouvelle, 24 May 1961.

months later the UAM opposed at Lagos Nigeria's invitation of the GPRA.¹

UAM attitudes to France were very similar to the policy line of the Nigerian Federal Government towards Britain and the Commonwealth. The preservation of friendly relations with the United Kingdom was the major foreign policy guideline of the Nigerian government until 1966. Domestic considerations led the Federal Government to abandon its early policy of establishing open and formal links with Britain after 1962, but this had little effect on the substance of relations between the two countries. Internal pressure accounted for frequent discrepancies between the Federal Government's policy statements and diplomatic moves.

On 3 December 1965, Nigeria's acting Foreign Minister Nuhu Bamalli voted at Addis Ababa for a resolution of the OAU Council of Ministers, calling for a severance of diplomatic relations with Britain if it were to allow Rhodesia to proclaim unilateral independence. In Nigeria, such a move was, however, disavowed by the Nigerian Prime Minister, who considered that it would not contribute to a solution of the Rhodesian crisis. In any event, Tanzania and Ghana were the only Commonwealth African states to implement the OAU resolution. Nigeria's friendly relations with Britain had contributed to this. Indeed, the Nigerian Government had undertaken diplomatic initiatives to convince other African states to follow its attitude and furthermore to avoid taking any measures of retaliation against British economic interests.³

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1. Houphouet Boigny's press conference in Daily Express, 2 February 1962; see also Nbadiwe in HRD, 3 April 1962, col 786 and Wachuku in Ibid., 14 April 1962, col 1718.
 2. For a comprehensive account of the Nigerian policy on Rhodesia see Ojedokun, 'Nigeria's Relations with the Commonwealth...', pp.385-415.
 3. J. Strenlan, The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-70 (Princeton, 1977), p.10.

In order to provide an alternative to Nigeria's dismissal of the OAU stance on Rhodesia, Balewa had helped to set up a meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers which was held in Lagos during January 1966. There, Balewa showed, by all accounts, 'characteristic restraint and statesmanship' which involved his determination 'that Britain should not be put in the dock'.¹

The guiding principles of the Nigerian Government over the Rhodesian crisis were in many ways comparable to those adopted by Ivory Coast over Algeria or the French atomic experiments in the Sahara. The Governments of Ivory Coast and Nigeria both agreed that issues which involved the preservation of close and friendly relations with the former metropolitan powers should be primarily discussed within the Commonwealth or the ex-Communauté. In all respects, these structures based on a common colonial past constituted a forum privilégié for discussion and co-operation in lieu of continental groupings which, like the OAU, cut across francophone-anglophone divisions in Africa.

Like the Federal Government's attitude to Britain, the persistence of a bloc of Francophone states and its conspicuous links with France aroused criticism in Nigeria. Criticism of these latter relations also came from Federal Ministers such as Wachuku. He was allowed 'considerable leeway' by Balewa, who nevertheless remained ultimately 'the leader in an indisputable position of control' of Nigeria's foreign policy.² Certainly, Wachuku's direction of the Ministry of External Affairs (1961-1964) did not affect Balewa's basic politico-economic commitments, on which Wachuku and the Prime Minister were in close agreement in spite of their formal membership of

1. The Economist, 15 January 1966, 185.

2. Tukur, Nigeria's External Relations..., p. 11. For a description of the 'foreign policy elite' see J. Idang, Nigeria: Internal Politics and Foreign Policy 1960-1966 (Ibadan, 1973), p.48.

different political parties. Wachuku's diplomacy was striking in its strongly worded and idiosyncratic assertion of a Nigerian leadership in African affairs. This had adverse effects on Nigeria's relations with Francophone West African states insofar as it revived their underlying concern over Nigerian influence on them.

Wachuku's tenure of office could be considered as the epitome of the Federal Government's quest for a prestigious-looking foreign policy which would placate domestic opposition without inducing a reconsideration of the Government's conservative foreign policies. Wachuku's conduct of Nigerian foreign policy was often criticized in parliament but it also enjoyed great popularity and support. This was especially the case after the founding meeting of the OAU in Addis Ababa, when Wachuku could proudly announce in parliament that 'ninety nine per cent of the Addis Ababa Charter is to be found in the Lagos Charter.'¹ Much of Wachuku's domestic following could also be ascribed to his conduct of a breathless verbal guerilla war with the Ghanaian press and officials, contrasting sharply with Nigeria's overall soft-worded diplomatic style.² Wachuku's unorthodox diplomacy frequently amounted to his assimilation of Nigerian interests with his desire for acknowledgement of his personal activity and influence. This was very clearly the case when in 1963-64 the Federal Government hoped to secure the appointment of a Nigerian national to the office of OAU Secretary General or, as an alternative, the location of the headquarters of the organization in Nigeria.³ Earlier, at the OAU founding meeting in Addis Ababa Wachuku's stubborn hostility to the Ethiopian draft

1. HRD, 1 August 1963, col.2455.

2. For further details see Akinyemi, Nigerian Federalism..., pp.77-99 (passim).

3. See Wolfers, Politics...., pp. 53-63 and Jeune Afrique, 9 March 1964, 9.

Charter had forced an adjournment of the Foreign Ministers' Sub-Committee in charge of drafting a Charter.¹ On such occasions, Wachuku's conduct of the Nigerian foreign policy became comparable to 'an exercise in pure politics - a struggle for influence for its own sake; at worst...[descending] to the level of whim, emotion and accident'.²

With respect to Nigeria's relations with Francophone states, and in particular with Ivory Coast, Wachuku's statements helped to feed their a priori suspicions of the actual motives behind Nigerian policy initiatives in Africa. In January 1963, Wachuku's statement that Nigeria considered that it had a common frontier with Ghana prompted President Maga of Dahomey and the Ivory Coast Ambassador to Nigeria, Etienne Djaument, to meet Balewa and his Minister at Ikeja to demand an explanation. Balewa's embarrassment on this issue subsequently led him to admit publicly that 'on delicate matters of this nature people should be a little guarded and not allow oneself to be carried away'.³ In his own customary vein, Wachuku launched a violent offensive against the UAM at the Dakar meeting of the OAU Council of Ministers in August 1963. Among other things, he described the UAM as 'an enterprise of sabotage' against the OAU.⁴ Such attacks, which went along with Wachuku's strong views on de Gaulle and the French policy in Africa, particularly irritated Ivory Coast and the core of the Francophone group. The effects of Wachuku's diplomacy were described in the Nigerian Parliament

1. Wolfers, Politics..., pp. 12-5 .

2. I.W. Zartman, 'Characteristics of Developing Foreign Policies', in W.H. Lewis, ed, French-Speaking Africa, the Search of Identity (New York, 1965), p. 183.

3. West African Pilot, 2 February 1963.

4. See the account of Entwistle, 'Nigeria's African Policy....', pp. 61-2

by the NCNC radical Kalu Ezera during the debate on the IAMSOC Council of Ministers which had discussed the Togo coup during January 1963:

Delegates thought that Nigeria was trying to dictate to them what line of action they should adopt at the conference... Other delegates said that they did not like the arrogant attitude with which Nigeria tried to deal with them.¹

Balewa's ultimately decisive role in Nigerian foreign policy was a crucial factor in the entente cordiale between Nigeria and Ivory Coast. Houphouët Boigny's personal friendship with the Nigerian Prime Minister was the nerf moteur of good relations between the two countries until 1966. This key reliance of Nigerian foreign policy on the views and diplomatic skills of one individual was a factor accounting for the rapid transformation of Ivory Coast-Nigeria relations after the coup d'état of January 1966. Until then Nigeria and Ivory Coast shared a similar concern at the insulation of Africa from radical ideas and policy lines. Nigeria thus actively contributed to the creation and survival of the OAU which proclaimed the irrevocability of colonial boundaries and condemned interference in the internal affairs of independent states.

Nigeria's contest of Ghanaian influence in Africa was an innate characteristic of their relationship. At the same time, it was also the backbone of its entente cordiale with Ivory Coast. Clear limits to this relationship existed, resulting from Ivory Coast's equal opposition to the development of Nigerian and Ghanaian influence in West Africa. Wachuku's statements and diplomatic initiatives crystallized this ambiguity in Ivory Coast's relations with Nigeria. Balewa's control over the Nigerian foreign policy prevented any clash with the regional policies of Ivory Coast. The lack of internal unity in Nigeria and its Western-oriented development policies provided the

1. HRD, 2 April 1963, cols. 396 and 398. Wachuku replied that 'when we do certain things people complain that we are not dynamic and when we are dynamic they criticise and ask us to be silent.' Ibid., 2 April, col. 403.

background to the non-assertive nature of the regional policy conducted by the Federal Government. Contrary to expectations at the time of independence Nigeria's size and population were not conducive to its development of regional leadership and influence over its neighbours. Nigeria never seriously challenged Ivorian influence in Francophone Africa. The Federal Government's overall concern with the preservation of Nigeria's unity constituted a positive force towards the internal security and unity of its Western neighbours, both members of the Conseil de l'Entente, Dahomey and Niger.

CHAPTER III

Nigeria's Relations with Dahomey and Niger

During the Balewa regime Nigeria's relations with its West African neighbours developed along lines similar to those with Ivory Coast during the same period. Nigeria's relations with Dahomey and Niger were a striking example of the Federal Government's non-assertive diplomacy. Both countries had strongly unequal socio-economic bonds with Nigeria, yet, until 1966, the Federal Government did not seek to translate these into a client relationship that would have clashed with their Francophone ties.

In the case of Niger, unequal ties with Nigeria were partly attributable to the recent political history of the country after 1958. There were also economic considerations, Niger's main access to the coast being through Nigeria. Lastly, Sokoto exercised a strong religious influence on the Hausa and Fulani living in Niger. In the case of Dahomey, however, ties with Nigeria constituted less of a threat to the unity of the country but, trade with Nigeria still represented a considerable source of economic activity in the Porto Novo area and along the coast and any shift in relations with Nigeria might therefore have powerful social implications and affect the fragile stability of the Dahomean regime.

1. The unequal nature of the socio-economic ties

The particularly weak situation in which the Government of Niger found itself vis à vis Nigeria in 1960 had its origins in the evolution of Niger politics after the referendum of September 1958. The referendum had been held in all the French colonies, which were asked to choose between immediate independence and internal autonomy within the Communauté created by the new French constitution. The Prime Minister of Niger, Djibo Bakary, and his

Sawaba party, which was a territorial section of the Parti de la Fédération Africaine, campaigned for immediate independence.

Unlike in Guinea, the policy of the cabinet was rejected by the electorate, which cast only 26% of 'noes' to the Communauté.

Support for the Communauté came from the Parti Populaire Nigérien (PPN), a territorial section of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA) of Houphouët Boigny. The PPN campaign received active support from the Ivorian section of the RDA, the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI). It supplied financial aid and motor vehicles which were of crucial importance for touring Niger's vast territory.¹

The PPN campaign was also backed by the colonial administration in Niger after the appointment of the new Governor, Don-Jean Colombani, in August 1958. The major reason for this involvement by the colonial administration was its concern about the possible emergence of a radical Niger state south of Algeria where France was at war. In January 1958 the Territorial Assembly of Niger, where the Sawaba held 41 out of the 60 seats, had voted against any control of the Niger parts of the Sahara Desert by the Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes (O CRS).² It felt that the O CRS activities might endanger Niger unity by promoting the creation of an autonomous, mineral-rich Saharan area carved out of Algeria, Mali and Niger.

In colonial circles, Djibo Bakary had acquired the reputation of an unpredictable radical owing to his active role in the Union Générale des Travailleurs d'Afrique Noire. This had been born in 1956 out of the Confédération Générale du Travail, a French trade union close to the PCF.³ Also, during the first week of September 1958 Bakary met Nkrumah in Ghana. After this visit the

1. Chaffard, Les Carnets Secrets..., ii, p. 278 ff.

2. Le Monde, 19 February 1959. The O CRS was officially set up in January 1957 to bring forward the mise en valeur of the Sahara zone.

3. Ernest Millicent, Interview, Paris, 9 September 1975.

Niger Prime Minister formally announced that the Sawaba was campaigning for immediate independence. Djibo maintained that if France withdrew all aid to Niger as a result of its decision, alternative technical assistance and financial support would be forthcoming from Nigeria and Ghana¹. Niger shared a long frontier with Algeria and, if friendly relations developed between Ghana and independent Niger there was a good chance that the FLN would gain friendly access to the outside world through Niger.

The third and perhaps most important reason for the success of the PPN campaign in favour of the Communauté was the withdrawal of the support that traditional authorities in Eastern and Central Niger had given to the Sawaba party during the territorial elections of 1957.² Before the referendum the suspension of twenty chiefs by the Sawaba cabinet of Niger reflected deteriorating relations with traditional authorities. They eventually refused to follow the campaign of Djibo Bakary and resigned from the Sawaba membership in the Territorial Assembly. Partly owing to their close association with the colonial administration, the chiefs feared that they might lose power if Niger became independent under Djibo Bakary's leadership.³ In Niger Hausaland, chiefs also came to fear that the Sawaba's proclaimed intention to develop close relations with Northern Nigeria would also threaten their power-base.⁴ Greater religious and political authority was indeed

1. La Semaine en AOF, 20 September 1958

2. F. Fuglestad, 'UNIS and BNA, the role of the Traditionalist Parties in Niger, 1948-1960', Journal of African History, XVI, 1(1975), 117 ff.

3. F. Fuglestad, 'Djibo Bakary, the French and the Referendum of 1958 in Niger', Journal of African History, XIV, 2(1973), 325-6.

4. T. Berthier, 'Le Régime Politique de la République du Niger' (Paris I Univ. thèse de Doctorat d'Etat, 1973, mimeo), I, p. 129; In July 1958 at the Cotonou Congress of the Parti du Regroupement Africain (PRA) a leading figure in the Sawaba party, Mamani Abdoulaye, had proclaimed that immediate independence meant for Niger 'le droit de se séparer de l'ensemble Français ...[et] la liberté de se confédérer avec le Nigéria ou avec d'autres territoires'. Djibo Bakary himself pointed out that Niger had historical ties with non French states that would become independent in 1960; G. Dugué, Vers les Etats Unis d'Afrique (Dakar, 1960), p. 95.

commanded by the traditional rulers of Northern Nigeria.

Following the 'yes' answer to the 1958 referendum, an offensive prompted by the Governor of Niger and the PPN eventually led to the elimination of all Sawaba representation in Niger within a year. The Djibo Bakary cabinet willingly agreed to resign because its policy line had been rejected by the electorate. Governor Colombani then initiated a dissolution of the Territorial Assembly so that new elections could be held in December. All but six seats were won by candidates on a joint list drawn up by the PPN and the chiefs. Diori Hamani, Secretary-General of the PPN, became Niger's new Prime Minister. Within the following months, the elections of all six Sawaba deputies were invalidated.¹ New elections were organised, leading to the elimination of all Sawaba representation in the Territorial Assembly.

Djibo Bakary and the former members of his cabinet who had remained faithful to the party were already living in exile in Dakar and Bamako when the Sawaba was formally banned in Niger on 12 October 1959. Diori Hamani explained that Djibo Bakary and other Sawaba personalities were taking advantage of the electoral campaign in Nigeria to establish contacts and seek support for subversive activities in Niger.² During the months preceding the referendum of 1958 Djibo Bakary and other leading Sawaba members had mentioned on several occasions the development of closer relations between an independent Niger, Nigeria and Ghana. These statements did not, however, have much effect on relations with Nigeria: Djibo Bakary had established significant contacts with Nkrumah in Ghana but he had not done so in Nigeria. There, the

1. On these events see Ibid., p. 153 ff. and Chaffard, Les Carnets Secrets..., ii, p. 294 ff.

2. Le Monde, 20 October 1959.

major political parties were hardly aware of the political evolution in surrounding French territories. Unlike Ghana, Nigeria would not be independent before 1960 and it was too soon to plan any future relations.

Sawaba's appeals for closer relations with Nigeria were primarily electoral pledges meant to secure support from the Hausa living along the frontier with Nigeria. Djibo Bakary was himself a Djerma but he had been brought up in Tahoua in Niger Hausaland and the Sawaba received most of its support from this area. On the other hand, the backing for the PPN came from the Zerma-Songhai living in Western Niger. In a fashion comparable to that of the Yoruba living along the Dahomean frontier with Nigeria, the Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri people of Eastern and Central Niger had important trading relations with Northern Nigeria.

After the ban of the Sawaba in Niger, the party's relations with Nigeria acquired special importance because of the long frontier with Niger Hausaland from where support for the now clandestine Sawaba activities could easily come. Indeed Djibo Bakary was known to have requested trade unionists from the Nigerian Labour Party (NLP) to help Sawaba militants establish contacts with Hausa living along the frontier.¹ Another link between Sawaba and Nigeria which had been seized on as a pretext for banning Sawaba activities in Niger, was provided by NEPU. Djibo Bakary had first met the President of NEPU, Aminu Kano, at a Conference held in Paris in 1952. Their two parties had, however, kept little contact with each other until the referendum of 1958. It would seem that it was in fact with the PPN, then in opposition, that NEPU had established some relations during this period.² NEPU-Sawaba links

1. Chaffard, Les Carnets Secrets...., ii, p. 305.

2. Fuglestad, 'Djibo Bakary...', op. cit., 222.

were to develop during 1959-60 largely as a result of the increasing difficulties facing the Sawaba in their attempts to operate in Niger. Aminu Kano and Djibo Bakary met again in October 1958 in an aircraft bound for Conakry where both of them were attending Guinea's independence celebrations.¹ They also attended the first All-African People's Conference held in Accra during December of that year and this was the starting point of new NEPU-Sawaba relations.

NEPU and Sawaba had a good deal in common. Like the Convention People's Party of Nkrumah or the Parti Africain de l'Indépendance in Senegal, they adopted the black star of Marcus Garvey as their party symbol. In addition, both parties favoured full independence for African states. Amimu Kano, who represented Nigeria at the independence celebrations of Guinea, had earlier in 1953 opposed the NPC's delaying of the independence of Nigeria, and had advocated self-government for all Nigerian regions by 1956.² Sawaba, which meant 'freedom' in Hausa was the name of Djibo Bakary's party; it was also a name and motto of NEPU.³ Further bonds of mutual support between NEPU and Sawaba were created by the fact that the two parties had to face hostility from powerful parties, the NPC and PPN both of which had the sympathy of the colonial administration and were bent on the enforcement of single-party rule in Northern Nigeria and Niger respectively. In Northern Nigeria, NEPU was not banned but its militants faced constant harassment by the NPC and the Native Administrations (NA) owing to their commitment to radical changes in the Northern society. NEPU considered itself the representative of the talakawa, the commoners in Hausa society. It did not advocate the removal of the Emirs but a restructuring of Northern society which would reduce inequalities and put an end

1. Alhaji Aminu Kano, Interview, Lagos, 12 November 1974

2. On this debate see J.S. Coleman, Nigeria, Background to Nationalism (Berkeley, 1963), p. 398 ff.

3. J. Paden, Religion and Political Culture in Kano (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 287-8.

to 'emiratism' of which the NPC ruling party was an epitome. Hostility to NEPU put its militants under constant threat of heavy fines and prison sentences by the NA and they were subjected to harassment and outbreaks of organised violence by NPC followers and henchmen.¹ Lastly, links of mutual help and protection between NEPU and Sawaba were facilitated by the fact that in both parties members were chiefly of Habe or Hausa origin.

The Government of Niger was aware of NEPU-Sawaba contacts but knew little of NEPU's difficulties in Northern Nigeria. After the Nigerian Federal election of December 1959 Niger realised that it had overestimated NEPU's following.² Nonetheless, NEPU's friendly links with Sawaba continued to be viewed as a threat to Niger's internal security. Sawaba contacts with Niger Hausaland were facilitated by the fact that it often received support from local traders as well as adherents to Muslim brotherhoods, especially the Tijaniyya and the Kabaru. The groups regularly crossed the frontier and provided an important medium of communication between Kano and Niger Hausaland. In 1960, it was thus thought in the area around Maradi that, like the Kabaru, the Sawaba party of Niger received protection from the Emir of Kano.³

Links between Niger Hausaland and Northern Nigeria were impossible to control owing to the penetrability of the frontier and also the socio-economic ties between the two area. Nigeria was

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1. See B.Dudley, Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria (London, 1968), pp. 186-7 and 189-90.
 2. Alhaji Aminu Kano, Interview, Lagos, 12 November 1974. NEPU had won 8 seats.
 3. In Niger, the change of name of Djibo Bakary's party into Sawaba in 1957 has been said to be a reference to the Emir of Kano who was rumoured to be supporting it; Professor Guy Nicolas, Interview, Paris, 2 September 1975. On the relations between the Kabaru (reformed Tijaniyya) and the Emir of Kano see G. Nicolas, 'Organisation Sociale et Appréhension du Monde au Sein d'une Société Africaine, Vallée du Niger' (Bordeaux Univ. thèse de Doctorat d'Etat, 1969, mimeo), i, p.217 and Paden, Religion and Culture..., pp. 109 and 117-8.

the natural export outlet for the central and eastern parts of Niger, where most of the country's population and export resources were concentrated. Sixty per cent of the Niger population lived within 180 miles of the town of Maradi, the heart of Niger Hausaland. This area also produced all the cotton and 92% of the groundnuts of Niger as well as 70% of the country's livestock.¹ Together these items represented over 95% of Niger's export earnings at the time of independence. Since 1954, over two-thirds of Niger exports had been transported through the Kano-Lagos/Port Harcourt railway, the cheapest and fastest route to the coast from Eastern and Central Niger.

Unrecorded trade between Niger and Nigeria was the most important feature of the unequal ties that linked Niger to Northern Nigeria. Since the opening of the Kano-Lagos railway link in 1911, Kano had emerged as a prosperous centre of redistribution of European products for Northern Nigeria as well as Niger. In 1958 the value of unrecorded trade between Northern Nigeria and Niger was estimated as equal to 40% to 50% of Niger's recorded external trade.² Livestock sales represented over 80% of Niger's unrecorded exports to Nigeria. Cattle herds crossed the frontier without any control, owing to their need to seek Southern grazing and water points during the dry season. The animals were sold in markets on the borderland, in Kano or further south in the Eastern Region. Traders used the sterling earned by these sales to purchase and then import into Niger cola nuts and manufactured goods that were cheaper in Nigeria.³ In Niger, unrecorded imports were a source of substantial profits for commercial companies, providing an estimated

1. Marchés Tropicaux, 17 September 1960, 2036.

2. See table 22 in Appendix.

3. M.Sriber, 'Le Trafic Frontalier Clandestin Entre le Niger et le Nigéria' (Paris, 1958, mimeo), pp. 3-4.

two-thirds of their overall turnover in 1958. For these companies, goods from Nigeria were cheaper, and were not subject to any customs duties or profit taxation. Not surprisingly, such unrecorded trade seriously curtailed Niger's potential revenue from indirect taxation and customs income. The sale of officially imported products was also hampered by the fact that they could not compete with the cheaper unofficial Nigerian imports sold in the markets of Niger.¹

The virtual dependence on Nigeria which characterised the economies of Eastern and Central Niger was reflected by the wide use of Nigerian currency, which was almost exclusively employed in the area of N'Guigmi near Lake Chad.² The unequal nature of Niger's economic ties with Nigeria was reinforced by the fact that unrecorded imports from Nigeria outweighed in value the unrecorded export trade, thus causing a depreciation of the CFA franc (CFAF) to the sterling in the borderland.³ These strong economic ties could obviously provide a favourable context for the continuation of Sawaba political activities in Niger Hausaland from Nigeria. The risk of Nigerian support for irredentist movements campaigning for a merging of Niger Hausaland with Northern Nigeria was of particular concern to Niger at the time of Nigerian independence.⁴

When it had been drawn up, the long frontier between Niger and Northern Nigeria had split the Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri groups, but it had also consecrated a political separation. To the North, Niger territory included Hausa states and Habe ruling groups which had

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1. 'Réunion des Présidents des Chambres de Commerce du Conseil de l'Entente à Niamey le 11 Février 1960' (Niamey, 1960, mimeo), p.4.
 2. République Française, Organisation Commune Dahomey-Niger des Chemins de Fer et des Transports, Projets d'Aménagement des Voies de Communication du Dahomey et du Niger(Paris. 1960), p.6.
 3. In 1958 £1 was worth 800 CFAF in the East of Niger and 740 CFAF in Kano; Sriber, 'Le Traffic Frontalier...', p. 12; the official rate of the pound was 625 CFAF; computed from le Monde, 31 August 1958.
 4. S. Kiba, 'Problèmes Nigériens', Afrique, January 1962, 10.

fought and successfully resisted the unification of Hausaland by Usman Dan Fodio at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹ Southwards, Northern Nigeria included areas under the authority of the Sokoto empire which the Fulani conqueror had founded. The colonial period had favoured migration and the resumption and development of trade contacts between formerly hostile communities in Niger Hausaland and Northern Nigeria. Paradoxically, these moves had favoured a progressive extension of the moral and religious influence of Sokoto, which became a place of pilgrimage for Hausa and Fulani people in Niger. They also sent their children to Koranic schools in Nigeria and they took the habit of travelling there for Moslem festivals.² Marabouts of the Maradi valley, under the influence of their Fulani teachers, thus came to consider the Sultan of Sokoto as the leader of the Muslims, the Sarkin Musulmi, despite his being a direct descendant of Usman dan Fodio whose conquest Maradi had so fiercely fought.³

In 1960, it seemed likely that such religious links would be translated into political ties owing to the personality of the Premier of Northern Nigeria, who was also the President of the NPC and a direct descendant of Usman dan Fodio. Bello was a cousin of the incumbent Sultan of Sokoto and claimed to be related to the Prophet from both sides.⁴ The attitude of Bello towards Niger could have dramatic effects on its unity and internal security - indeed

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1. D.J.Thom, The Niger-Nigeria Boundary 1890-1906: A Study of Ethnic Frontiers and a Colonial Boundary (Athens, 1975), p.6 ff.
 2. G.Mainet and C.Nicolas, La Vallée du Gulbi de Maradi, Enquêtes Socio-Economiques, Documents et Etudes Nigériennes (Niamey, 1964), p. 57. and G.Nicolas, 'Crise de l'Etat et Affirmation Ethnique', Revue Française de Science Politique, XXII, 5(October 1972), 1040.
 3. Nicolas, 'Organisation Sociale...', i, pp. 213 and 215.
 4. Ahmadu Bello, My Life (Cambridge, 1962), p. 239.

Bello claimed that most of the territory of Niger had been 'once ours'.¹ When Nigeria became independent, its future policy towards Niger remained unclear, despite Balewa's pledges to respect the unity and national sovereignty of neighbouring states. The Premier of Northern Nigeria was known to be close to Balewa who, he boasted, was his 'lieutenant' in the NPC and in Lagos.² Thus Bello's wish to reconstitute or extend the former Fulani empire represented the most serious of potential threats to the unity and national independence of Niger.

The relations between Dahomey and Nigeria did not involve such dramatic issues as the preservation of unity. Yet Dahomean trade links with Nigeria had important social effects in Dahomey, and thus Nigeria's policy towards its neighbour could have very important effects on Dahomey's political stability. Yorubaland had not undergone a unification process comparable to that achieved by Usman dan Fodio in Northern Nigeria. The Yorubas in Nigeria constituted a group of 11 million, while those living in Dahomey represented 300,000 out of a total population of 1.7 million. The lack of unity among the Nigerian Yoruba largely cancelled any threat of secession towards their Dahomean counterparts. Nigerian potential influence on the internal stability of Dahomey, however, was strong, owing to the important commercial links existing across the frontier.

Before the European conquest had separated the Western Yoruba, they had belonged to what has been described as a system involving the same language, traditions of origin, patterns of

1. West Africa, 22 October 1960, 1186.

2. Ibid.

government and economic activities.¹ Politically, however, they were divided, owing to the existence of different centres of power. When the frontier had been drawn, it had cut across areas 'sandwiched' between the rival influences of Dahomey and Abeokuta, whence they had to suffer numerous incursions. Pre-colonial divisions had to some extent disappeared during the colonial period. This was partly due to the cessation of hostilities in Western Yorubaland; it was also due to the different policies pursued by the French and British colonial administrations on each side of the frontier. From Dahomey, individual families and also whole villages had to migrate and settle in Nigeria in order to avoid forced labour or conscription, only abolished at the end of the Second World War.

By 1960, family or trade links across the frontier also accounted for frequent marriages between Nigerian and Dahomean Yoruba. To the Dahomean Yoruba, Nigeria appeared as a cultural and commercial pole of attraction owing to its greater wealth and larger Yoruba community and because of its preservation of Yoruba traditions. Clothing and hairdressing styles in vogue in Lagos were adopted in Dahomean Yorubaland, Nigerian highlife bands were hired for festivities,² and Moslem Yoruba who had come from Nigeria formed a small but active bourgeoisie d'affaires in Porto Novo. They traded with Nigeria, Togo and Ghana, taking advantage of the different tariff policies applied to manufactured products. Their trade, mostly unrecorded, had become a feature of relations across

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1. Account drawn from A.I.Asiwaju, Western Yorubaland Under European Rule, 1889-1945(London, 1976), p. 26ff.
 2. B. Lallement, 'Le Dahomey, Voisin de la Nigéria' (Ecole Nationale de la France d'Outre Mer, mémoire, 1960, mimeo), p. 20.

the frontier and also of the social and economic life of Southern Dahomey as a whole. In the borderland, entire villages had in some cases abandoned agriculture for trade, carrying goods, on foot or by bicycle, along the paths crossing the frontier or by boat in the Badagary Creek.¹ Fish was exported to Nigeria against cloth, bicycles, sewing machines and cola nuts. In 1959, the value of unrecorded trade between Dahomey and Nigeria was estimated as 30% of Dahomey's total official trade.²

These goods were openly sold on the markets held regularly in the borderland and at Cotonou. Such traffic represented a considerable loss for Dahomey's finances but it was tolerated owing to the political sensitivity of the issues involved. In the Territorial Assembly which met at Porto Novo, deputies from the borderland constitutencies were under pressure from their electorates to oppose seizures and controls which, they emphasized, might be conducive to social disorders and riots. Apithy's prominence in Dahomean politics during the 1949-59 period was thus attributed to his good relations with and defence of the interests of the Porto Novo trading community.³ The eradication of customs control and the development of closer links between the Yoruba on each side of the frontier formed popular pledges in the borderland.

At the 1945 Pan-African Congress in Manchester, Apithy had advocated for the first time the creation of a West African Federation. In October 1958, the idea of creating a United States of the Benin including Cameroun, Nigeria, Dahomey, Togo and Ghana

1. A.Mondjanani, 'Quelques Aspects Historiques, Economiques et Politiques de la Frontière Dahomey-Nigéria', Etudes Dahoméennes, 1(3 ème trimestre 1963), 48.

2. See table 15 in Appendix.

3. A.Mondjanani, 'Les Echanges à Travers la Frontière Dahomey-Nigéria'(Dakar Univ. Mémoire de DES, 1963, mimeo), p. 55.

was brought forward by the Youth Section of the Parti Populaire Dahoméen (PPD).¹ The idea of creating this smaller unit was taken up by Apithy himself during his campaign for the Dahomean elections of April 1959. The Parti Républicain du Dahomey (PRD) had been newly founded by Apithy and other former members of the PPD who supported his reappraisal of Dahomey's participation in the Mali Federation. The PRD had adopted as a symbol the palm tree, the party symbol of the AG in Nigeria.² Apithy and Awolowo had first met at Manchester in 1945 and had since remained on friendly terms. A loan of £25,000 was made by the AG as a contribution to the 1959-60 electoral campaigns of the PRD.³ Fifteen years later, Chief Awolowo held that if his party, the AG, had come into power after the Federal elections of December 1959, 'Dahomey would be part of Nigeria today'.⁴ The AG, he recalls, was prepared to help Dahomeans to fight for independence and come together with Nigeria.

In March 1960 an article in the AG newspaper Daily Service had indeed suggested that a referendum should take place in Dahomey to decide whether it should become:

a state within the Federation [of Nigeria] on the same footing as the ...[other] Region[s]...
... most of the matters for which France is now responsible on behalf of Dahomey - defence, foreign affairs, higher education - will be taken over by the Federal Parliament in which Dahomey will be more adequately represented, than it is at the moment in the French Community.⁵

This proposal was strongly opposed by Maga, Head of the Dahomean

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1. D.Ronen, 'Political Development in a West African Country: The case of Dahomey' (Indiana Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1969, mimeo), p. 195; the PPD was the Dahomean section of the PRA.
 2. The PRD metal badges worn by its militants were imported in bulk from Nigeria; Lallement, 'Le Dahomey...', p. 21.
 3. Akintola in Morning Post, 16 November 1962.
 4. Chief O.Awolowo, Interview, Ibadan, 16 November 1974.
 5. Daily Service, 14 March 1960.

Government, which also included PRD deputies. Maga considered that Dahomey had already opted for the Communauté during the referendum of September 1958 and he condemned what he called the 'appétits territoriaux du Ghana et de la Nigéria'.¹

The idea of a referendum was supported by the PRD's newspaper but no step by Apithy followed. Considering the relations between the PRD and the AG, one could query whether the adoption of similar party symbols had really reflected a genuine desire for closer relations with Nigeria. It looked more like a shrewd strategic decision to secure AG sympathy and support. Party symbols were reproduced on the ballot papers, so that AG members would find it easier to cross the frontier and vote for the PRD in an election which seriously challenged the continuing political prominence of Apithy in Dahomean politics since 1949.² Good relations between Dahomey and (Western) Nigeria were also of great importance because of the social pressure which any disruption of the commercial links across the frontier could bring on the Dahomean Government. This was to appear ten years later, during the crisis in relations between the two countries over the Nigerian civil war.

Apithy's resignation from the PPD/PRA in January 1969 had followed talks with the leaders of the Dahomean section of the RDA during which, he later recalled, he pointed out 'how necessary the goodwill of France was to us at this stage of our economic development'.³ Apithy subsequently pointed out the need for Dahomey to reinforce economic ties with the Benin region. This was primarily in order to justify his 'profound conviction that the proposed Federal constitution

1. AFP/BOM, 6 April 1960.

2. Blatant irregularities occurred during these elections; see Thompson, West Africa's Council of Entente, p. 23 f.

3. Quoted in Foltz, From French West Africa....., p. 112.

[of Mali] would harm the free development of the Republic of Dahomey's economy'.¹ To the AG, Apithy's statements and campaign against the Mali Federation appeared to reflect his own wish to develop closer relations with Nigeria. In actual fact, Apithy's strategy paved the way for Dahomey's participation in a different Francophone grouping, the Conseil de l'Entente, after the April elections.

2. The continuing Francophone relationship

The links between Niger and Nigeria induced Niger to seek a closer association with France through the co-operation agreements, which guaranteed support in the event of threat to Niger's internal security. Niger's participation in the Conseil de l'Entente represented a further attempt to counterbalance Nigerian influence by reinforcing links with Francophone Africa.

Dahomey's participation in the Conseil de l'Entente was not, however, the result of Nigerian threats to its unity, but was primarily the result of Dahomey's basic need to secure external sources of finance for its budgetary deficits and generally ailing economy. Economic considerations rather than political conviction had previously induced the decision of all Dahomean political parties to campaign for a 'yes' to the Communauté in September 1958. Dahomey's Prime Minister, Apithy, explained that the country 'still need[ed] external support - independence for Dahomey would be only the source of worse difficulties and divisions'.² After the implementation of the Loi-Cadre, which curtailed subsidies previously received from the richer territories of FWA, Dahomean leaders feared

1. La Semaine en AOF, 21 February 1959.

2. Quoted in Ronen, 'Political Development...', p. 194.

that immediate independence could have dramatic social and financial effects for the country. The bulk of Dahomean export revenue came from palm products and these had been steadily declining since the mid-thirties.¹ After the Second World War, the Dahomean trade balance had been in constant deficit. Except in 1948 and 1950, exports represented about 70% of imports.² To this trade imbalance was added a difficult social situation owing to the return of many Dahomeans formerly working in other territories of FWA. Their reintegration had swollen the number of Dahomeans in the fonction publique and their salaries absorbed as much as 62% of the Dahomean budget in 1958. The extent of the Dahomean dependence on France was very high, since French budgetary subsidies for that same year represented 2 billion CFAF out of an overall budget of 3.5 billion CFAF for current expenditure.³

Dahomean federalists expected economic and financial support to come from France and the richer territories of the former FWA Federation but not from Nigeria, inward-looking because of its domestic problems.⁴ Characteristically, when Alexandre Adandé, a member of the PRA, left to represent Dahomey at the Federal Constituent Assembly held in Dakar in January 1959, he was instructed by Apithy 'to accept the principle of the [Mali] Federation but not to join it without a guarantee of special privileges for Dahomey... [located] away from economically richer Senegal and Ivory Coast and in the shadow of Nigeria'.⁵ Such advantages were not secured.

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1. For 1950-54 the tonnage of palm exports had gone down to the level of the 1921-1925 period while palm oil exports had decreased by nearly one third; J. Suret-Canale, Afrique Noire, De la Colonisation aux Indépendances, 1945-1960 (Paris, 1972), p. 90.
 2. République de Dahomey, 'Annuaire Statistique du Dahomey' (Cotonou, 1969, mimeo), p. 227.
 3. V. Thompson, 'Dahomey', in G. Carter, ed., Five African States, Response to Diversity (London, 1965), 195.
 4. Faustin Gbaguidi, Interview, Molsheim, 20 August 1975.
 5. Ronen, 'Political Development...', p. 195.

Nevertheless, in Dakar the federalist spirit was such that the Dahomean delegation decided that Dahomey, like Upper Volta, would join the Mali Federation. This prospect had, however, already prompted hostile reactions in France, Ivory Coast and Niger, which made it impossible for Apithy to consider carrying out the commitment of the Dahomean delegation.

For Niger, Dahomey represented a major link to the coast and the prospect of its participation in the Mali Federation was a serious source of concern owing to the close relations between the Dakar federalists and Djibo Bakary.¹ For this reason, Niger threatened to divert through Ivory Coast external trade presently transiting via Dahomey.² Since Niger freight represented 85% of the goods traffic of the Cotonou-Parakou railway the implementation of such a threat would have involved its closure and the consequent redundancy of some 2,600 Dahomeans.³ The possibility of a diversion of Niger traffic had other serious implications. France's financing of the construction of a deep-water harbour in Cotonou had only recently been agreed to following extensive lobbying by Apithy in the French National Assembly. This harbour was seen as a decisive means of reviving economic activity in Dahomey in which, by 1958, some companies had in fact stopped investing, pending a decision on its construction.⁴ Some seemed ready to consider withdrawing from the country altogether

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1. Dugué, Vers les Etats Unis d'Afrique, pp. 151-2.
 2. Ibid., p. 158.
 3. République Française, Territoire du Niger, 'Rapport Economique Année 1957' (Niamey, n.d. mimeo), p.69 (Hereafter Niger 1957) and Afrique Nouvelle, 27 April 1960; Trade Unions represented no more than 3% of the wage earners in Dahomey but they constituted a powerful pressure group; V. Levine, 'The Coups in Upper Volta, Dahomey and the Central African Republic', in R. Rotberg and A. Mazrui, eds, Protest and Power in Black Africa (New York, 1970), 1053 ff.
 4. Dugué, Vers les Etats Unis d'Afrique, p. 81.

if the harbour were not built. Existing harbour facilities consisted of a wharf built at the turn of the century; this had a limited handling capacity and constituted a serious bottleneck for the Dahomean economy. Ships had to wait several weeks at sea before they were unloaded and bulky imports of hydrocarbons had to be imported through Lagos.

Regionalist preoccupation were also involved in the choice of a site for the harbour. With the support of the Chamber of Commerce, Apithy had pressed for the choice of Cotonou rather than Agoué or Grand Popo, although both villages were close to the frontier with Togo which would have used the harbour for its own import-export trade.¹ Whether or not this was implied to Apithy in Paris, possible delays or reconsideration of the financing of a harbour in Cotonou was a major reason for his decision not to attend the Dakar meeting:

Que deviendra le Dahomey si la Fédération de type Dakar se construit? Nous avons un voisin, le Niger. Le port de Cotonou [le] concerne aussi... On me dit que la Fédération est politique. Soit mais pas de politique sans économique ... au Dahomey il nous faut sauvegarder nos chances d'attirer les investissements privés.²

Apithy's condemnation of the Mali Federation provoked a crisis within the PRA, from which he resigned, as well as within the cabinet. New elections were thus necessary in late March. By then, however, the constitution of Dahomey had been adopted by the previous Parliament on 14 February. In accordance with Apithy's wish, it had excluded provisions for any delegation of the Dahomean sovereignty. Apithy's new policy line had been preceded by his realignment with leaders of the Dahomean section of the RDA and

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1. A.Mondjanani, 'Cotonou: Some Problems of Port Development in Dahomey', in B. Hoyle and D. Hilling, eds, Seaports and Development in Tropical Africa (London, 1970), 153-4.
 2. Apithy in Afrique Nouvelle, 16 January 1959.

Northern parties until then in opposition. It was therefore a cabinet of compromise which was constituted by Maga after the election of April. The new Prime Minister brought the Dahomean stance to its logical conclusion by taking the country into the Conseil de l'Entente founded in Abidjan on 29 May 1959.

The Conseil de l'Entente

Socio-economic considerations had prompted Dahomean participation in the Conseil de l'Entente and this received full support from French business and political circles to whose pressure Dahomey was so sensitive. Between 1960 and 1966, French subsidies represented on average 15% of the Dahomean budgetary expenditure.¹ Such subsidies involved little investment as the number of civil servants on the state payroll grew from 12,000 in 1960 to 18,000 in 1966 and absorbed between 65% and 75% of the Dahomean budget.² During this same period, foreign aid, again mostly French, financed 64% of the investment undertaken by the Dahomean administration which accounted for 62.5% of the country's gross fixed capital.³ For Dahomey, participation in the Conseil de l'Entente ensured the building of Cotonou harbour and the survival of the Dahomean railway. Ivory Coast also promised financial aid to Dahomey within the framework of the new organisation.⁴ Like Upper Volta, however, Dahomey remained a marginal member of the Conseil de l'Entente because of its

1. Investment aid being excluded; C.Agbo, 'Les Relations Diplomatiques et Aides Bilatérales de la République du Dahomey depuis son Accession à la Souveraineté Internationale, 1960-1969' (Paris, Institut d'Etudes des Relations Internationales et de Recherches Diplomatiques, thèse, 1970, mimeo), p. 163.
2. H. Leroux, 'Situation Economique et Capacité d'Endettement de la République du Dahomey, Etude Sommaire' (Bruxelles, 1966, mimeo), p. 15.
3. Ibid., p. 28.
4. Thompson, West Africa's Council of Entente, p. 21; the amount of subsequent income drawn by Dahomey from the Fond de Solidarité is unavailable.

reluctant agreement with the politics of Houphouët Boigny's Franco-African federation which logically excluded access to international sovereignty for its African members.

Dahomean membership of the Conseil provided Niger with what it considered to be politically reliable access to the coast. Diori Hamani's diplomatic skills, which had accounted for his appointment as Vice-President of the French National Assembly in the mid-1950s, were to play a considerable role not only in the Conseil de l'Entente but also in Africa in general in so far as they closely supported Ivorian diplomatic initiatives.¹ Diori Hamani was indeed to remain the 'lieutenant' of Houphouët Boigny², at least until their first serious disagreement over the Nigerian civil war. Houphouët Boigny's support had played an important role in the struggle of the PPN against the Sawaba party during and after the referendum campaign of September 1958. Moreover, the two leaders had agreed to the development of a network of close Francophone ties with France as well as between moderate Francophone African countries. To Ivory Coast, this was a requirement for the pursuit of the high rate of growth of its economy.

To Niger, French aid was equally necessary owing to the country's bleak economic and financial prospects at the time of independence.³ During the 1960-67 period, the total of French public aid to Niger was estimated to be two-thirds of all foreign public funds received.⁴ The Fond de Solidarité of the Conseil de

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1. V. Thompson, 'Niger', in G. Carter, ed, National Unity and Regionalism in Eight African States (Ithaca, 1966), 215 ff.
 2. Faustin Gbaguidi, Interview, Molsheim, 20 August 1975.
 3. 'Quatre ans après son accession à l'indépendance, la République du Niger existe. Cela même est un succès' wrote dryly the author of a report on Niger; République Française, 'Rapport sur la Coopération avec la République du Niger, Première Partie, Le Développement de la République du Niger' (Paris, 1965, mimeo), p. 3.
 4. République Française, 'Niger 68-69, Dossier d'Information Economique' (Paris, 1970, mimeo), p. 69.

l'Entente, which operated between 1960 and 1963, brought a net income of 993 million CFAF to Niger.¹ When Niger became independent in December 1960, Francophone ties were perhaps regarded chiefly as guarantee of internal stability and unity. The French military presence in Niamey and in Agadés was the counterpart of co-operation agreements containing provisions for army support to the Diori Hamani Government if necessary.²

The Niamey-Cotonou axis

Policies aimed at the preservation of strong Francophone ties within the Conseil de l'Entente, the UAM or through the co-operation agreements with France, were also reflected in bilateral relations between Dahomey and Niger through the building of a Cotonou-Niamey Axis. Until 1963 this development constituted the chief feature of the regional policies of the countries' leaders. France's agreement to finance the construction of Cotonou harbour, which began in 1960, provided an important backing to this policy. Another decisive factor was the decision of Niger and Dahomey to set up the OCDN to continue and develop Niger transit trade through Dahomey.

Niger's groundnut exports, the country's main source of revenue, had up to 1953 been transported by the Kano-Lagos railway in Nigeria. In that year, however, the Nigerian railways seemed no longer able to cope with this. By December 1953, 4,000 tons of groundnuts from the 1952-3 season were still in Kano and besides this, for the coming season, the Nigerian railways would only guarantee

1. BCEAO, Notes d'Information et de Statistiques, November 1966, 6. (Hereafter BCEAO Notes).

2. See le Monde, 26 April 1974.

the transport of 48,000 tons.¹ Since Niger's exports amounted to 68,000 tons, alternative access to the coast had to be found for the surplus. Lorries were hired to transport groundnuts from Western and Central Niger to Parakou from where they were carried by rail to Cotonou harbour (map p.123). When the lorries returned to Niger, they were loaded with freight for Niamey or Eastern and Central Niger. This tripolar move, named the Opération Hironnelle, was meant to reduce transport costs by avoiding the return of empty trucks from Parakou to the groundnut-producing areas.²

When it was set up, the Opération Hironnelle was on a limited scale and was in no way directed against transit trade through Nigeria, although it did have the effect of reducing import trade via Kano. In Niger, the Opération Hironnelle was greeted with reluctance by the companies involved in the groundnut trade, owing to the loss of time resulting from transit through Dahomey, the route from Zinder to Cotonou being far longer than to Lagos and of worse quality. Moreover, the road to Parakou was severely affected by the rains and at Gaya-Malanville the Niger had to be crossed by ferry before 1958. In Cotonou, shipment was further delayed by the slow handling of traffic by the single wharf. Thus the Opération Hironnelle was expensive to run and heavily subsidised.³ Interestingly, its inception had been regarded with positive interest by Northern Nigeria. In 1953, Governor Ramadier of Niger received a letter from Northern Nigeria inquiring about possibilities of channelling its own groundnut exports via Northern Dahomey.⁴ This

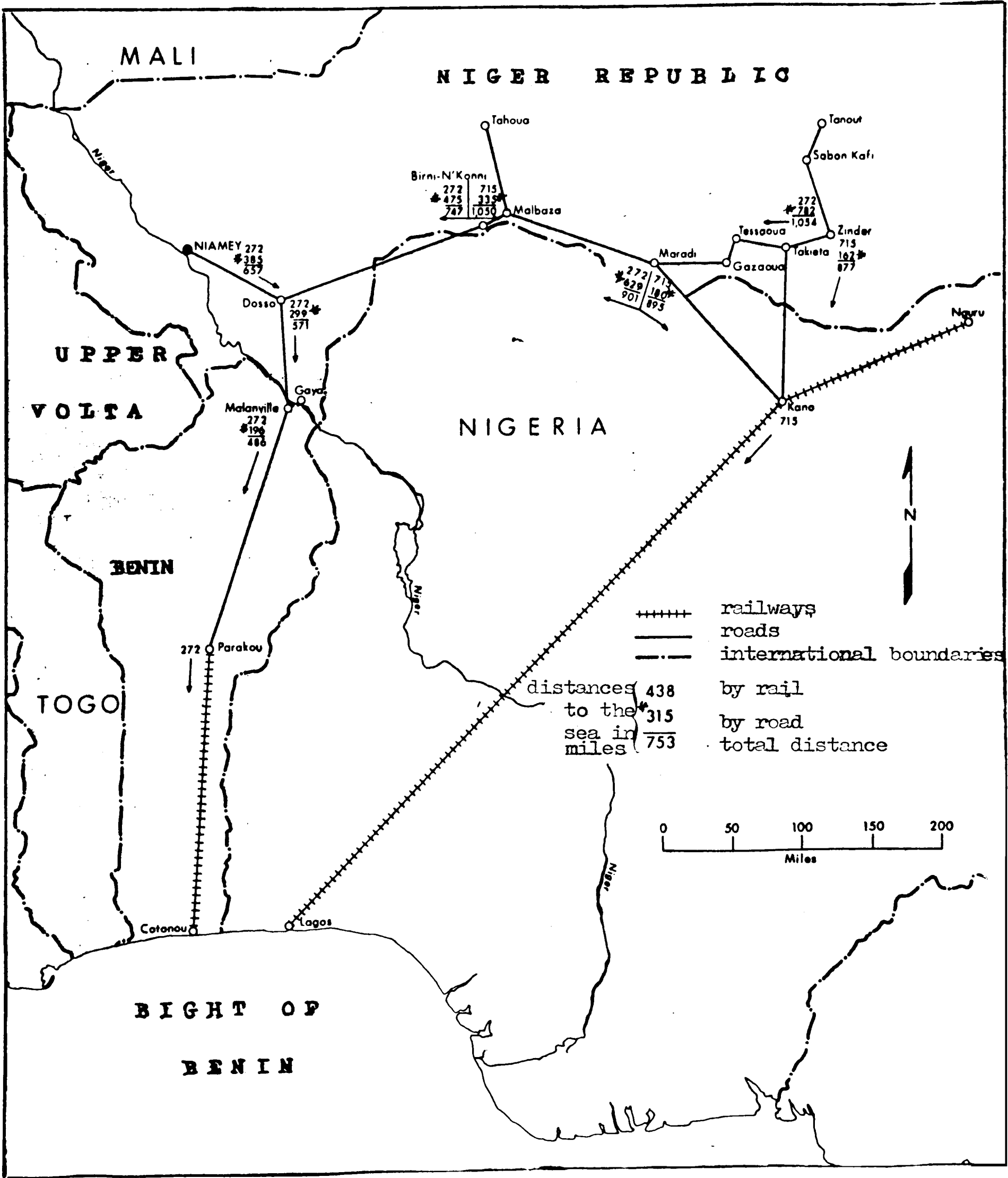
1. Y.Péhaut, 'L'Arachide au Niger', in D.G.Lavroff, ed, Etudes d'Economie Africaine(Paris, 1970), 58-9.

2. See table 3 in appendix.

3. For exports from the area of Zinder, transport through Cotonou increased costs by 40% per ton; République Française, Organisation Commune Dahomey Niger..., p. 7.

4. Lettre du Gouverneur Ramadier à Monsieur le Haut Commissaire de la République, Gouverneur Général de l'AOF in Péhaut, 'L'Arachide au Niger', op. cit., 58 and Professeur Yves Péhaut, Interview, Bordeaux, 14 April 1975.

Export outlets for the Groundnuts of the Niger Republic



Source: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

was at a time when political relations between the North and the other Regions of Nigeria had deteriorated. In April 1953, during a debate on self-government in the Federal House of Representatives, Northern MPs were strongly criticised and subsequently abused in Lagos for opposing a motion for the self-government of Nigeria by 1956. Riots against Southerners broke out in Kano during May, while in Kaduna an emergency meeting of both Houses subscribed to a resolution advocating the creation of virtually independent Regional Governments.¹ Thus the breaking up of the Nigerian Federation emerged as a possibility and outlets to the sea independent of Southern Nigeria were sought.

Up to 1960, the Opération Hironnelle channelled an average 30% of Niger groundnut exports, the bulk of which continued to travel through Kano and Lagos. Soon after its inception, the Opération had been seen as a means of reducing the dependence of the Niger economy on that of Nigeria. Ramadier had explained 'Je cherche à profiter de l'Opération Hironnelle pour organiser autour de celle-ci toute l'économie du Niger'.² The Opération had therefore been continued, although in 1957-58 the Nigerian railway could have transported once again all the groundnuts of Niger. After the referendum on the Communauté and the elimination of Sawaba representation during the following months, politico-economic considerations closely intermingled to support this trend. Reports emphasized the regional effects of an interruption of the Opération Hironnelle, arguing that:

...si l'Opération Hironnelle était supprimée ce serait fatalement la disparition du chemin de fer du Dahomey, la nécessité de liquider un parc routier de 1.500 tonnes de capacité et une forte diminution des chances du port de Cotonou.³

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1. Tamuno, 'Separatist Agitation in Nigeria....', op. cit., 568.
 2. Quoted in Péhaut, 'L'Arachide au Niger', op. cit., 59.
 3. Niger 1957, pp. 68-9.

To the Diori Hamani Government in power after the elections of December 1958, the potential influence which an independent Nigeria might seek to exert in Niger Hausaland was a major preoccupation. The continuation of the Opération Hironnelle therefore supported efforts by the Zerma-Songhrai elite in power to reorientate Niger's economic activity westwards, so as to achieve greater control over the resources of Hausaland, the wealthiest part of the country.

From the French viewpoint, the continuation of the Opération Hironnelle anchored Niger and Dahomey more firmly to Francophone, and away from Nigerian, influence.¹ At grass roots level, the Opération Hironnelle also had a positive effect: 'réserver à des entreprises et à un port Français le bénéfice de l'évacuation des arachides du Niger'.² Niger being landlocked, pressure brought by private road transporters for the continuation of the Opération was by no means a minor factor accounting for its survival. In effect, the Chamber of Commerce of Niamey was ready to support any initiative likely to prevent Niger's being drawn into the orbit of Nigeria.³

The survival of the Opération Hironnelle after 1960 was ensured by the creation of the OCDN in December 1959. This body, set up by Niger and Dahomey, shared the responsibility for the co-ordination of road transport during the period of the Opération.

1. Le Monde, 22 October 1959.

2. Niger 1957, p. 58.

3. In December 1960 the President of the Niamey Chamber of Commerce suggested the use of OCRS funds to this effect; Afrique Nouvelle, 27 January 1961. An OCRS study of the creation of a transsaharan road joining Niger to North Africa via the Hoggar had declared it politically and economically unfeasible; République Française, 'Perspectives Economiques et Aménagement des Voies de Communication du Sahara (Territoires relevant de l'OCRS)' (Paris, 1960, mimeo), p. B-37.

It was also in charge of the administration of both the Cotonou-Parakou railway and the wharf of Cotonou. Dahomey and Niger would equally share any deficits.¹ The creation of the OCDN and the related building of Cotonou harbour were expected to be a first step towards the development of better links between Dahomey and Niger, with the object of siphoning off an increasing part of the latter's external trade at the expense of that transiting through Nigeria. The refusal of the EDF to finance plans made to achieve this aim and the disruption of relations between Niger and Dahomey after 1963 were to induce a reappraisal of these objectives.

Francophone ties after 1962

The heavy deficit of the OCDN during its first year, amounting to almost half its budget, prompted Niger and Dahomey to seek financial support for an improvement of the Niamey-Cotonou Axis. An extension of the railway line from Parakou to Dosso (299 miles) and the tarring of the road between Niamey and Zinder (569 miles) were suggested chiefly to reduce OCDN transport costs.²

The conclusions of the study which presented this project acknowledged that, apart from the issue of cheaper access to Cotonou, what was at stake was 'une préoccupation politique de renforcer l'unité du Niger en soustrayant au moins partiellement le Niger Centre et le Niger Est à l'attraction économique de la Nigéria'.³ Such political considerations were not taken into account by the feasibility study requested by the EDF and completed in 1962. The financing suggested was rejected, on the grounds that, even in the

1. BCEAO, Notes, March 1965, 17.

2. The total cost of the project was 15.7 billion CFAF, over three times the Niger budget expenditures for 1960.

3. République Française, Organisation Commune Dahomey Niger...., p. III - 49.

best circumstances, the viability of the new rail-road link would necessitate the export of nearly all the groundnuts from Eastern and Central Niger through Cotonou.¹ If successfully implemented, such measures would drastically reduce transit trade through Nigeria. The small size of the remainder of Niger's transit trade through Lagos would then probably cause an upward revision of the tariffs of the Nigerian Railways. Therefore, the study advised that Niger should negotiate with Nigeria an agreement for the transit of all the groundnuts of Eastern and Central Niger. This would mean a saving of 1.3 billion CFAF a year for the OCDN and of 2.3 billion CFAF a year for Niger alone, without any investment being required. In comparison, the direct gains that could have been expected from the implementation of the project submitted by Dahomey and Niger were estimated as 700 - 1,000 million CFAF for the OCDN and over 500 million CFAF for Niger alone.

Despite the pessimistic conclusions of the study, Maga and Diori Hamani continued to lobby in favour of a development of the Niamey-Cotonou Axis.² Their view seemed to be that, as the PPN newspaper le Niger put it:

le port de Cotonou actuellement en voie d'aménagement... pourrait drainer toutes les importations et exportations du Niger... qui dès lors pourrait se passer des voies de communication de son puissant voisin le Nigéria.³

In January 1961 the transit of Niger's and Dahomey's trade through Nigeria was totally interrupted by the economic sanctions taken against France by the Federal Government. Following requests by the Francophone states affected, however, they were unofficially lifted within a fortnight. The incident caused irremediable injury

1. Communauté Economique Européenne, 'Etude Economique des Transports au Niger et au Dahomey, Note de Synthèse' (Bruxelles, 1962, mimeo), pp. 37-9.

2. Afrique Nouvelle, 25 January 1963.

3. Le Niger, 11 February 1963.

to relations between Nigeria and the Gaullist regime in France. In Niger and Dahomey it also contributed to the belief that reliance on Nigerian channels of communication should be reduced to the minimum. The serious crisis that developed between Dahomey and Niger after the forced resignation of Maga from the Presidency in October 1963 demonstrated that exclusive reliance on Francophone states would prove equally hazardous. This conflict, which lasted for over a year, substantially contributed to changes in the attitude of Dahomey and Niger to Francophone links.

Maga was induced to resign from the Dahomean Presidency on 28 October 1963 by trade union agitation against austerity measures affecting wage earners, most of whom lived in the urban centres of Southern Dahomey. During the preceding months widespread allegations that Maga favoured Northern Dahomey, his region of origin and electoral base, had poisoned Dahomean public life.¹ The 'révolution du 28 Octobre', as it was named in Dahomey, only acquired a radical outlook several weeks later when a plot against the Dahomean provisional government was foiled. Niger nationals and followers of Maga had been involved in its planning and Maga subsequently had to leave the Government, where he held several portfolios, and was put under house arrest early in December.² The provisional Government's relations with France and the Conseil de l'Entente were affected by these events. While France was reproached for the withdrawal of its representatives in Dahomey after the overthrow of Maga, the Entente was branded as a 'syndicat des Chefs d'Etat' seeking to restore Maga to power.³

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1. E.Terray, 'Les Révolutions Congolaise et Dahoméenne', Revue Française de Science Politique, XIV, 5(October 1964), 918 ff.
 2. Le Monde, 5 December 1963.
 3. Le Monde, 30 November and 5 December 1963.

After the resignation of Maga, the possibility of re-establishing friendly links between the new Dahomean Government and the Sawaba became a preoccupation of the Niger Government. Diori Hamani had been very close to Maga, who was also the most Francophone-oriented of the Dahomean leaders.¹ Against this background, tension between Niger and Dahomey was to build up after the arrest of Maga and accusations against the Entente aimed at Houphouët Boigny and Diori Hamani. In mid-November 1963 the Niger Government dismissed forty eight Dahomean nationals holding senior positions in the security forces of Niger because of its fear of their possible ideological contamination by the Dahomean revolution.² Relations between Dahomey and Niger deteriorated still further until, on 28 November, a Dahomean trade union leader gave an incautious warning that if other dismissals took place 'the people of Dahomey would not hesitate to call upon Djibo Bakary.'³ Tension was also increased by the revival of the issue of the ownership of the Lette island on the Niger. Then on 21 December the Government of Niger dismissed all the Dahomeans employed in its fonction publique. Employers in the private sector were invited to do the same, and all Dahomeans were given less than three weeks to leave the country.⁴

These expulsions affected several thousand educated Dahomeans, mostly from the Christian south of the country. Like the Ibos in Northern Nigeria, they had staffed civil service and teaching jobs because of the insufficient number of Niger-trained

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1. Friendly relations between Maga and Diori Hamani dated back to their schooldays at the lycée Victor Ballot.
 2. H.S. Challenor, 'French Speaking West Africa's Dahomeyan Strangers in Colonization and Decolonization' (Columbia Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1970, mimeo), pp. 230-1.
 3. Ibid., p. 233.
 4. Marchés Tropicaux, 28 December 1963, 3233.

personnel. The Dahomeans' employment in Niger was much resented and had caused several incidents of property looting in the past.¹ Their exodus was therefore a popular move in Niger. It also enabled the PPN to assert greater control over the administration of the country which became fully controlled by the Zerma-Songhai elite. In retaliation against the expulsion of its nationals, Dahomey blocked the import-export trade of Niger. Despite the formal reopening of the frontier in January, OCDN traffic with Niger remained interrupted for nearly six months as a result of bad relations between Dahomey and Niger.

The resumption of normal OCDN traffic early in June 1964 followed the opening of direct negotiations between Dahomey and Niger with a view to reviewing OCDN statutes.² The improvement of Dahomey-Niger relations during July-September had a sudden setback in October 1964. Some of the Sawaba commandos arrested after their unsuccessful insurrection attempt in Niger received aid and shelter in Dahomey, where they had stopped on their way from Ghana.³ The National Assembly of Niger adopted a motion from the Politburo of the PPN which stated that Niger ought to be prepared fully to reconsider its relations with Dahomey:

...en faveur d'un ensemble économique plus sûr...
[car] la coopération économique que nous voulons
instaurer ne saurait se baser sur le chantage,
l'insécurité possible des voies d'évacuation qui
doivent commander l'évolution de notre développement
économique.⁴

It is not unlikely that the Dahomean Government had been unaware of the friendly aid given to Sawaba commandos by some of its security

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1. Challenor, 'French Speaking West Africa...', pp. 224-7.
 2. AFP/BOM, 7-8 June 1964.
 3. Chaffard, Les Carnets Secrets..., ii, pp. 321-4.
 4. AFP/BOM, 27 October 1964.

officers, possibly those whom Niger had dismissed in November 1963. Dahomean indignation at Niger's accusations was tempered by concern for the economic and social effects of a boycott of the OCDN by Niger. Justin Ahomadegbe, who had become Dahomey's Vice-President after the elections of January 1964, stated that 'toute l'infrastructure... du Dahomey reste en permanence à la disposition du Niger pour son trafic économique'.¹

In December 1964, a Dahomean delegation travelled to Niamey for a meeting of the Board of Management of the OCDN, the first to be held since July 1963. Revised statutes were adopted. These replaced previously equal contributions of Niger and Dahomey to the OCDN deficits by contributions of 63% and 37% respectively.² The wharf of Cotonou was closed. The new OCDN did not take over the management of the deep-water harbour of Cotonou, which was opened that month.

Niger and Dahomey had different motives for wishing to revive the Cotonou-Niamey Axis. Its break-up would have adversely affected the Conseil de l'Entente as well as their relations with the Francophone bloc in general. Niger trade was a major part of the traffic on the Dahomean railway, representing 66% of the freight transported between 1960 and 1963.³ Enrockment and laterite carried down to Cotonou for the construction of the harbour had represented two-thirds of the overall freight transported by the Cotonou-Parakou railway since 1960,⁴ but the harbour being near completion, such traffic stopped in April 1964. This made a

1. AFP/BOM, 13 November 1964

2. BCEAO Notes, March 1965, 17.

3. See table 4 in appendix.

4. République Française, 'Examen des Conditions d'Exploitation de l'Organisation Commune Dahomey Niger des Chemins de Fer et des Transports' (Paris, 1967, mimeo), p. 2.

continuation of Niger's transit trade of utmost importance. For Niger, the interruption of transit trade through Cotonou had been financially costly for the import-export trade of Niamey and Western Niger, which had had to be channelled through Ivory Coast and Upper Volta.¹

For Niger, the crisis in relations with Dahomey had also highlighted the dangers of total reliance on a single channel for access to the coast. Niger had also found it necessary to rely more heavily than usual on Nigeria for its groundnut exports during the 1963-4 and 1964-5 seasons.² Exclusive reliance on Dahomey, which had been sought until 1963, could no longer be considered desirable. Thus the crisis in Dahomey-Niger relations constituted the starting point of Niger's multilateralisation of external dependence. This was to become the major feature of its foreign policy during and after the Nigerian civil war.

Dahomey and the Conseil de l'Entente were officially reconciled on 17-18 January 1965 at the country residence of Houphouët Boigny in Yamoussoukro. Dahomey's continuing membership of the Entente was dictated by financial and economic considerations. The return of Dahomeans from Niger had recalled similar events in Ivory Coast in October 1958 and showed the weakness of the bonds of solidarity supposedly created by the Conseil de l'Entente. In June 1964 Vice-President Ahomadegbe had explained in Paris that:

Si l'on veut que [le Conseil de] l'Entente subsiste il faut qu'il existe une solidarité réelle entre les quatre Etats membres. Nous ne voulons pas être les victimes d'une marché de dupes.³

1. Marchés Tropicaux, 18 January 1964, 130.

2. See table 3 in appendix.

3. AFP/BOM, 26 June 1964.

Although Dahomey boycotted the Entente meetings it had not formally withdrawn from the organisation. Its continuing membership could not be attributed to financial benefits previously drawn from the Fond de Solidarité of the Entente which had ceased functioning in 1963 as a result of the Dahomey-Niger crisis. It was rather a reflection of its need to remain integrated within the Francophone bloc so as to ensure the continuation of France's vital financial support. Therefore, Ahomadegbe reasserted Dahomey's continuing membership of the Entente when he went to seek support for his country's ailing finances in Paris. The public debt left by the Maga administration represented 6.3 billion CFAF while the budget of Dahomey for 1964 amounted to 7.1 billion CFAF.¹ The return of the Dahomean civil servants from Niger in December-January 1964 had further increased the share of salaries in the budget of Dahomey. Dahomey's lack of natural resources did not constitute an incentive for foreign investment and aid. This gave special importance to links with France and the Francophone bloc. The failure of the 1962 and 1964 Benin Union projects had also highlighted the practical impossibility of any alternative west African regional regrouping to the Conseil de l'Entente. Bad relations between Nigeria, Togo and Ghana had doomed to failure attempts to balance the weight of Nigeria with that of other neighbouring states. On the other hand, Dahomey was suspicious that an exclusive relationship with Togo and Nigeria might threaten existing commitments without bringing any substantial economic benefits.²

1. Marchés Tropicaux, 11 July 1964, 1725.

2. See Ahomadegbe's statement in AFP/BOM, 26 June 1964.

3. Nigeria as a stabilising force

Until 1966, the Federal Government showed little interest in the establishment of closer political relations with Niger and Dahomey. Contrary to the fears of the latter at the time of independence, Nigerian diplomacy under Balewa did not seek to take advantage of the socio-economic dependence of neighbouring states to enhance its international position through influence. Instead, Nigeria's foreign policy sought to buttress respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Dahomey and Niger. In the case of Niger, it actively contributed to the internal security of the country under the threat of Sawaba activities.

The foreign policy of the Federal Government

Nigeria's participation in the Monrovia group formed in May 1961, marked a turning-point in the attitude towards co-operation with Nigeria by Niger and Dahomey. At the Conference, Niger agreed to repeal its ban on French ships and aircraft, which primarily affected the Francophone states neighbouring the Federation. At another level, Nigerian participation in the new group was the first international commitment of Nigeria in accordance with its previous verbal pledges to uphold the territorial integrity and nationality of independent African states. A few months after the Conference, Diori Hamani paid his first visit to Nigeria and stated that:

In spite of its great area and wealth, Nigeria does not make any attempt to impose its views and for all the forty million inhabitants, Nigeria considers itself the equal of Gabon with a mere four hundred thousand population.¹

1. Morning Post, 20 November 1961; see a similar declaration of Diori Hamani in le Niger, 7 October 1963.

Federal Government relations with Dahomey and Niger were limited to a low-profile policy of functional co-operation. This contributed to the enforcement and greater respect of each state's authority and control over its territory. Frontiers dating back to the turn of the century were researched and reconfirmed. Indirect taxation systems were partly harmonised so as to cut down unrecorded trade and increase official traffic across the frontiers.¹ Other measures included the establishment of common lists of dutiable goods and the building of joint customs posts. One of these was to be on the frontier with Niger, another on the frontier with Dahomey. Direct telephone links from Lagos to Cotonou and Niamey were also established.

Co-operation remained limited not only because of the stronger Francophone ties of Niger and Dahomey. In 1962, the Government of Niger sought in vain to secure Nigerian support for some harmonisation of development projects between the two countries. It was already considering the purchase of electricity from the Kainji dam. It also hoped that the cement factory projected for Malbaza could supply cement to the Sokoto area as well as to Niger.² This proved impossible, as the Nigerian Government would not renounce the construction of its own factory in Sokoto. Similarly, in its relations with Dahomey and Togo over the Benin Union, the Balewa Government rejected proposals involving unilateral financial commitments on its part.

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1. Federal Nigeria, XV, 9(September 1962), 6; also radio Lagos on 25 August 1962, BBC MEA, 1033/B/2 and Marchés Tropicaux 16 May 1964, 1316.
 2. G.Destanne de Bernis, 'De la Nécessité d'une Coordination de Politiques d'Industrialisation, Rapport Préliminaire à la Conférence Inter-Africaine sur l'Harmonisation des Programmes de Développement Industriel' (Niamey, 1962, mimeo), p. 15.

The Nigerian Government, like that of Ivory Coast, considered that economic development primarily involved the establishment of closer ties with the West. It did not have much interest in projects of African common markets or the harmonisation of economic development within a West African context. In 1966, a study of 'the economic dependency of the Afro-Malgasy States on France' prepared by the Nigerian Ministry of External Affairs, stated that if Nigerian influence had developed as an alternative to existing Francophone ties the Federation would have incurred extremely heavy financial costs.¹

The major factor accounting for the Balewa Government's lack of concern for the development of closer relations with Dahomey and Niger was its unrelenting concern for the preservation of the unity of Nigeria. This concern was naturally extended to the maintenance of the status quo in neighbouring states. The Federal Government's policy thus contributed to the preservation of the unity of the Conseil de l'Entente. When tension between Niger and Dahomey reached its climax in late December 1963, the prime concern of the Federal Government was that the armies of these two neighbouring states should not fight each other. Instability along the Western frontier of Nigeria could have particularly disruptive effects in Nigeria, where a state of emergency remained in force. Reviewing the 'place of Africa in Nigeria's foreign policy' a confidential paper prepared for a Conference of Nigerian Ambassadors in June 1966 pointed out that:

... our African posture and attitude has been respectively shaped and guided by the traditional concept of protecting and promoting our vital national interests, the most important of which is to create conditions at home and around us conducive to political stability.²

1. Stremlau, The International Politics..., p. 11, n. 25.

2. Quoted in Ibid., p. 12.

Bad relations between the Balewa Government and France led to Nigeria's strong resentment of French influence in Africa. At the same time, however, the Balewa Government did not seek to jeopardise the Francophone ties of its West African neighbours insofar as they contributed to the stability of Nigeria's external environment.

A policy geared towards the development of closer links with Niger and Dahomey did not appear economically useful to the Federal Government. It might also endanger the unity of the Federation, since it would activate those centrifugal forces existing in its regional components. Unequal ties linking Niger and Dahomey to Northern and Western Nigeria respectively, threatened the unity of Nigeria as well as that of its two neighbours. Since the early 1950s, the Western and Northern Regions had considered seceding on several occasions. Unity with Eastern and Central Niger or Dahomey's Yorubaland could have been their next step after leaving the Federation. Not surprisingly, therefore, it was in these two regions that the greatest pressure for closer relations with Dahomey and Niger were found. In Northern Nigeria especially, a policy line independent from that of the Federal Government sought to promote the establishment of closer ties with Niger. Such regional policies constituted the core of Nigeria's relations with Niger and Dahomey until 1966.

Foreign policy initiatives of Regional leaders

Although the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy was constitutionally a Federal prerogative, the Northern and Western Regional Governments both adopted specific policy lines for a development of closer relations with their respective neighbours, Niger and Dahomey. These independent strategies reflected the

inherent weakness of Federal Government authority over Regional Governments, especially in the Northern Region. In 1959 the AG, which was the ruling party in the Western Region, had given some financial support to the electoral campaign of Apithy, whose election was expected to lead to closer links between (Western) Nigeria and Dahomey. Financial support to PRD had been again offered during the Dahomean general election of December 1960 that led to the formation of a Government under the Presidency of Maga, with Apithy as Vice-President.¹ These AG loans were a tribute to the closer relations with Nigeria which it believed Apithy would seek to develop once elected. However, this was not the case, and it was possibly for this reason that, in 1961, the Directeur de Cabinet of President Maga, Faustin Gbaguidi, was visited by three AG members. They requested repayment of the sums loaned to Apithy.² Early in 1962 Apithy appeared ready to use the proposal of a Benin Union as an occasion for an overall reconsideration of the external ties of Dahomey. It seems doubtful, however, whether the Dahomean Vice-President would have been prepared to carry out the plan that he advocated, owing to its probable effects on Dahomey's external ties and especially on French aid. Apithy's views found a radical echo on the other side of the frontier, where the AG had been advocating the eradication of the Dahomey-Nigeria frontier in a fashion comparable to Nkrumah's aggressive attitude to Togo. Both Maga and Balewa opposed any measure which would involve any reappraisal of existing commitments or external ties on the part of their countries. In 1962 a state of emergency was proclaimed in the Western Region. Within a few months AG opposition was eliminated from both the Federal House of Representatives and the Government of the Western Region. From now on pressure for closer relations with Dahomey disappeared in Nigeria.

1. Faustin Gbaguidi, Interview, Molsheim, 20 August 1975

2. Ibid.

On the other hand, the relations spéciales between Niger and Northern Nigeria remained firm until 1966. These relations were the result of an autonomous strategy on the part of the Northern Premier. They also tended to conflict with the overall concern of the Nigerian Federal Government for the preservation and enforcement of Nigeria's unity. Less than three months after Nigeria's independence, Bello paid his first private visit to Niamey. The aim was to re-establish exchanges and contacts which, to him, had been only temporarily interrupted by the colonial period. The cool official reception given by Niger to the Sardauna and his suite contrasted with the enthusiastic welcome that they received along the road and in the streets of Niamey. The recent statements made by the Sardauna on Niger, which he had claimed to be 'once ours', had been received with official concern in Niamey, where Diori Hamani 'counted on the wisdom of Northern Nigeria to dispel certain threats concerning the creation of Hausaland'.¹ The President of the National Assembly, Boubou Hama, a powerful political figure in Niger, told the Nigerian Premier bluntly that:

... notre peuple aime le calme et la paix et c'est par ce sens des choses qu'il convient le plus correctement d'interpréter l'enthousiasme de nos populations depuis votre arrivée sur le sol du Niger.²

Diori Hamani, for his part, insisted that relations with Nigeria could develop only if the latter would respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Niger in accordance with the Brazzaville principles.³

1. Quoted in West Africa, 12 November 1960, 1271

2. Le Temps du Niger, 24 December 1960; Boubou Hama was also President of the PPN. He was older than Diori whose tutor he had been when the latter was a schoolboy.

3. Le Temps du Niger, 26 December 1960.

Special relations between Niger and Northern Nigeria were indeed to develop on a new footing after Nigeria's participation in the Monrovia Conference. In November 1961, Diori Hamani went to Northern Nigeria where he spent nine out of the twelve days of his visit to Nigeria. He toured the Northern Region with Bello, who introduced him to all its important traditional rulers so as to convince him that they did not share aggressive intentions towards Niger. A notable exception to the friendly atmosphere of the visit occurred in Kano, where the Emir Muhammadu Sanusi kept his two visitors waiting for an hour before receiving them at his palace.¹ This was a calculated gesture of independence vis à vis the Northern Premier, which reflected the longstanding resistance of Kano to the rule of the Sokoto empire and the antagonism between Bello and Sanusi. The Emir's decision to defy Bello on this occasion had probably been prompted by the lack of consideration shown to him and the Emir of Katsina in Niger where they had accompanied Bello in December 1960.² That a traditional ruler could retain such independence vis à vis the political power was hard for Diori Hamani to understand, given the lack of equivalent respect for traditional authorities in Niger and in Francophone Africa generally. This conflict of authority between Bello and Sanusi, whose deposition Bello eventually secured under charges of corruption in 1963, contributed to the use by Sawaba of Kano as a starting point for their trips to Niger Hausaland.

Good relations between Diori Hamani and Bello were a major factor in maintaining the political stability of Niger, owing

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1. Alhaji Aminu Kano, Interview, Lagos, 12 November 1974.
 2. The Emirs of Katsina and Kano, both ministers without portfolio in the cabinet of the Sardauna, had in particular to find their own accommodation in Niamey; Alhaji Aminu Kano, Interview, Lagos, 12 November 1974.

to the prestige and moral authority which the latter commanded among the Hausa and Fulani as well as the Muslims of Niger in general.¹ The possibility that Niger Hausaland might be the theatre of an insurrection prompted by clandestine Sawaba activities was a constant fear of the Niger regime until 1966. Sawaba publications reached Niger Hausaland as well as Niamey, and funds were collected through sales of Sawaba party membership cards.² Sawaba also recruited in Niger Hausaland. The recruits were sent for military training to Algeria, Morocco, Ghana and even China.³ This situation maintained a state of tension on the part of the Niger leadership which sometimes amounted to paranoia. Innocent travellers crossing the frontier with Nigeria were suspected of being Sawaba agents.⁴ A state of emergency was proclaimed around Niamey following the assassination of Olympio in January 1963, because it was thought that the incident might be part of an overall conspiracy which would in turn affect Niger.⁵ In April 1964, a political meeting held at Jiratwa, near Maradi, ended dramatically when the villagers were thought to have responded in a hostile way to the long speech delivered by Boubou Hama in the presence of Diamballa Maiga, the Niger Minister of the Interior.⁶ The Chef de Canton and his son were severely beaten in public and forty family heads were arrested, twenty-one of whom subsequently died from asphyxia in the overcrowded jail of Maradi.

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1. The authority and prestige which accompanied the name of Bello were illustrated by an advertisement published in le Temps du Niger claiming that Sabena took to Mecca 'all the Muslims of the Sardauna of Sokoto'. See Morning Post, 1 March 1965 and le Temps du Niger, 12 February 1965.
 2. Le Monde, 29 June 1961 and 10-11 February 1963; Afrique Nouvelle, 27 June 1964.
 3. Chaffard, Les Carnets Secrets..., ii, p. 309 ff.
 4. See an incident reported in Afrique Nouvelle, 29 June 1961.
 5. Le Monde, 10-11 February 1963.
 6. Afrique Nouvelle, 26 June 1964.

Throughout this period, the support given by the Sardauna to the Government of Niger reflected his concern that Muslims should not remain divided and that there should be a peaceful reconciliation between the Sawaba and the PPN. In Zinder, where Diori Hamani and several members of his Government met Bello in July 1963, he pledged support to Diori Hamani, insisting that he was not only a personal friend but also one of his relatives.¹ Prior to this, the Secretary General of the Section of the PPN for Zinder had praised him in characteristic fashion:

Tant qu'il y aura à la tête du Nigéria du Nord un homme de votre valeur et de votre clairvoyance, le Niger est certain d'être à l'abri de la subversion de ce côté.²

Bello also attempted to mediate between Djibo Bakary and Diori Hamani and in 1964 he went to Lagos to discuss with the Nigerian representative at UNESCO, Ahmadu Seydou, the possibility of a return of Djibo Bakary to Niger.³ Diori Hamani, unlike other prominent members of the PPN politburo such as Boubou Hama and Diamballa Maiga, was not a priori hostile to a reconciliation with Djibo Bakary. Negotiations were thus delicate.^a They apparently involved the possibility of Djibo Bakary becoming Prime Minister or the President of the National Assembly of Niger, the latter office being held at the time by Boubou Hama. It was widely rumoured in Niamey that a reconciliation between Djibo Bakary and Diori Hamani would take place in the near future.⁴ For this reason, the reality of the sudden attack by Sawaba commandos in early October

1. Le Niger, 22 July 1963.

2. Ibid.

3. The grandfather of Ahmadu Seydou had been the Imam of Usman Dan Fodio, grandfather of the Sardauna; West Africa, 22 November 1964, 1335.

4. Professeur Destanne de Bernis, Interview, Grenoble, 2 April 1975.

was at first widely disbelieved.

This attack by the 250 Sawaba commandos demonstrated that reconciliation attempts had failed. The commandos had entered Niger from Mali, Dahomey and Nigeria. From their confessions broadcast over the radio, it appeared that Kano had been used as a starting point and a base for the preparation of their activities. A commando arrested in Zinder explained that he had travelled to Kano in June 1963 to join the former Sawaba deputy of Tessaoua, who was in charge of organising clandestine activities in Eastern Niger.¹ More recently, commandos on their way to Niger had reached Kano with the help of the NLP, with which Djibo Bakary had established contacts after his exile from Niger in 1958.² However, the Niger Government did not hold Nigeria responsible for such activities, and in Nigeria itself the tense atmosphere which prevailed because of the elections made it easy for such activities to go unnoticed. Nor was Diori Hamani unaware of the uneasy relations between Kaduna and Kano where the new Emir was known to be sympathetic to NEPU, with whom Sawaba had close links.³ Several Niger nationals belonged to NEPU, which had continued to provide shelter and friendly, though limited, help to Sawaba militants after 1960.⁴

Conflict in Nigeria over foreign policy

The fact that the relationship between Niger and Northern Nigeria was at the core of Niger's relations with Nigeria as a whole

1. Le Niger, 23 November 1964 and radio Niamey on 20 October 1964, BBC MEA, 1690/B/3 and 4.
2. Chaffard, Les Carnets Secrets..., ii, pp. 305 and 322.
3. Foreign Report, 7 October 1965, 7.
4. Alhaji Aminu Kano, Interview, Lagos, 12 November 1974.

created an ambiguous situation. Bello's policy of rapprochement with Niger appeared to be part of his wish to bring about a 'consolidation of the North' which, he openly acknowledged, remained 'uppermost' in his mind.¹ In Nigeria this policy threatened the fragile balance between the components of the Federation. In Niger, Bello's policy was also a source of concern, because of the potential threat to its unity posed by closer relations with Northern Nigeria. Bello liked to insist that Niger and Northern Nigeria had similar cultures, languages and religions, as well as a common history, and had indeed been one before the colonial period. This keen sense of history appeared to some in Niger as a potential instrument for achieving territorial ambitions. After the referendum held in Cameroun in 1961, Bello had justified his active campaign for a merging of Northern Cameroun with the Northern Region in Nigeria by saying:

... we have no territorial ambitions, What we want to do is to recover where necessary and preserve what has been for many generations past, a part of our heritage from our ancestors.²

Bello's earlier statements at the time of Nigeria's independence had made it clear that he might well apply such an analysis to Eastern and Central Niger too. During a pilgrimage to Agadès in 1963, Bello described the city as his home because his grandfather had lived and received part of his education there.³ Such references in Bello's speeches were regarded with some uneasiness by Niger officials, whose replies always insisted that, despite the close links between the people of Niger and Northern Nigeria, they belonged now to two different states.⁴

1. Sunday Post, 4 March 1962.

2. West Africa, 15 April 1961, 411.

3. Nigerian Citizen, 24 July 1963.

4. Nigerian Citizen, 18 November 1961; le Niger, 7 October 1963.

Another source of ambiguity in the relations between Niger and Nigeria came from Bello's readiness to use co-operation with Niger in order to reinforce the power and authority of his ruling party within the Northern Region. In September 1962, experts from Northern Nigeria and Niger drafted a convention which provided that the two parties involved could assist each other in their criminal investigations. Sentences passed by courts on either side of the frontier would be carried out and extraditions operated if necessary.¹ Since Northern Nigeria was used as a refuge by Sawaba, the future agreement could greatly affect its activities there. Niger's acting Foreign Minister, Abdou Sidikou, pointed out that it would represent 'l'armature la plus sûre de l'ordre et de la sécurité dans nos Etats respectifs'.² This agreement was never signed, presumably because it would have led to a reinforcement of the power of the NPC over opposition to its rule in the North. The convention could easily have been used against NEPU, given its close contacts with Sawaba, and would for this reason be unacceptable to the NCNC to which NEPU was allied.

A similar crisis took place two years later when, on 21 July 1965, police in Kano seized arms and ammunition belonging to Sawaba commandos who had sought refuge in Nigeria after the failure of their attack in Niger during October 1964.³ After extensive operations in the next three weeks, the Kaduna police announced that they had broken Sawaba activities on Nigerian soil.

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1. Le Niger, 1 October 1962
 2. Ibid.
 3. Nigerian Citizen, 24 July 1965.

Sawaba pamphlets and flags were exhibited to the press, as well as arms which included sub-machine guns, rifles, grenades and 2,000 rounds of ammunition.¹ Twenty-eight persons had been arrested in Kano, twenty-two of whom were Niger nationals. Among the Nigerians arrested were such prominent members of NEPU as Tanko Yakasai, the party's Publicity Secretary.² The Federal Government now found itself in the same difficult position as it had over the issue of the boycott of the OAU Accra Conference earlier in April-May. Police arrests of NEPU members appeared to support the Sardauna's wish to eliminate remaining NEPU opposition to NPC rule in Northern Nigeria, especially in Kano.³ The Federal Government refused to hand over to Niger those of its nationals who had been arrested, arguing that no extradition agreement existed between the two countries.⁴ In actual fact, this was because conflicting pressure existed within the shaky government coalition on this issue. Balewa had again adopted a policy of non-involvement and compromise. On 29 July Sawaba activities were formally proscribed in Nigeria, seemingly at the pressing request of Bello. In mid-August, however, charges brought by the courts of the Northern Region against NEPU members of alleged membership of the Sawaba were withdrawn and the accused were released. As the Chief Magistrate presiding at the trial of Tanko Yakasai explained, the court had no authority to try his case which 'must receive the approval of the Attorney General [a requirement] which is not carried out in this case'.⁵ Of those Niger nationals who had been arrested,

1. Radio Kaduna on 12 October 1965, BBC MEA, 1938/B/1.

2. Daily Times, 8 August 1965.

3. Foreign Report, 7 October 1965, 6-7.

4. Morning Post, 5 August, 1965.

5. Daily Comet, 14 August 1965.

at least half were deported from Nigeria for unlawful entry into the country,¹ a charge which reflected the embarrassment of the Federal Government on this issue. Throughout this period, relations between Diori Hamani and the Northern Premier remained most friendly. According to Aminu Kano, Bello supplied 150 cars to Diori Hamani so that the PPN could conduct an efficient mobilisation campaign on the issue of the re-election of Diori Hamani to the Presidency in September 1965.²

Throughout the period of the Balewa Government, relations between Nigeria and its West African neighbours remained limited. Despite unequal ties existing between Niger, Dahomey and the Northern and Western Regions of Nigeria, the Federal Government maintained a consciously non-assertive policy line towards its Francophone neighbours. Nigeria's first contacts with these were really established on the occasion of the discussion of international issues within the Monrovia group. There Balewa's diplomacy was greatly appreciated and favoured the establishment of more confident relations at state level. But relations between Nigeria and its West African neighbours remained somewhat ambiguous. This was due to the lack of unity in Nigeria where the Western and Northern Regions tended to adopt independent policy attitudes and in particular develop closer ties with Niger and Dahomey. This represented a threat equally to the unity of the Federation of Nigeria,

Niger and Dahomey. Between 1960 and 1966 Nigeria's relations with Dahomey and Niger were indirectly affected by the need for the two francophone states to review their exclusive commitment to the Niamey-Cotonou axis. This was due to the lack of financing for the improvements which had been planned at the time of the Independence

1. Daily Comet, 12 August 1965 and Nigerian Citizen, 21 August 1965.

2. Alhaji Aminu Kano, Interview, Lagos, 12 November 1974.

of Niger and Dahomey. It was also related to the political crisis between these two countries during 1963-64. For Niger, these events showed that total dependence on a single access to the coast was unreliable. For Dahomey the expulsion of its nationals from Niger emphasized the limits of solidarity within the Conseil de l'Entente. Yet, until 1966, the core of the Francophone group remained the unchallenged sphere of influence of Ivory Coast. Its cohesion was preserved by the lack of alternative arrangements available to its more impoverished members, Dahomey and Upper Volta. The Entente continued to appear to these states as a guarantee of the continuing inflow of public aid and private investment from France. Fears of subversion from Ghana featured prominently in the regained cohesion of the Entente during 1965. Such external pressure was to disappear in February 1966 with the fall of Nkrumah. Until then, the Nigerian Federal Government had sought to avoid any interference with the francophone ties of its neighbours. This was no longer the case after the Nigerian civil war broke out. The conflict acted as a catalyst on the weakening of the francophone-anglophone division and involved Nigeria's emergence as a West African power.

PART TWO

The Nigerian Civil War and the emergence of
Nigeria as a Regional Power
1966 - 1975

CHAPTER IV

Ivory Coast and Nigeria:

Competition for Influence in West Africa.

When Houphouët Boigny was informed of the first Nigerian coup d'état in January 1966, he interpreted it as a signe annonciateur of the break-up of the Nigerian Federation.¹ Houphouët Boigny later explained his reaction in an interview:

Certains se sont étonnés des événements du Nigéria. Les Anglo-Saxons qui voient rouge lorsqu'il est question de parti unique ne cessaient de s'émerveiller devant ce pays. J'ai toujours su que c'était un colosse aux pieds d'argiles. Il subissait la loi commune du tribalisme et de l'absence d'unité nationale. Il était fatal que le pluralisme des partis nourrisse cette faiblesse.²

When Biafra's independence was proclaimed in May 1967, Usher Assouan argued that Ivory Coast 'abstain[s] from any involvement in the internal affairs of the other states', but at the same time he indirectly criticised the Nigerian Government when he added that 'we always oppose...subversion and take over by means of violence and assassination'.³ When fighting started in July, Houphouët Boigny maintained his commitment to the OAU principles on territorial integrity and national sovereignty. This was in spite of his real concern at the wider implications of the conflict for the neighbouring francophone states.⁴ For Houphouët Boigny, OAU mediation would only be possible in international conflicts and at the express request of the parties involved. In late July, Houphouët Boigny reiterated this point in Geneva when he met Kenneth Dike, formerly Vice Chancellor of Ibadan University and now a

1. Batmanian, 'La Politique Africaine de la Côte d'Ivoire...', ii, pp. 315-6.

2. Le Figaro, 10 May 1966.

3. Quoted in Africa Research Bulletin, 9 June 1967.

4. AFP/BA., 9-10 July 1967.

senior Biafran envoy. Dike was warmly received, as he himself later recalled.¹ Yet, Houphouët Boigny refused to become involved on either side because he considered that the Nigerians should 'solve their problems between themselves'.² Houphouët Boigny strongly believed that the break-up of Nigeria was inevitable because of the bitter ethnic divisions which its two coups d'état had exacerbated. He stressed that Nigeria was undergoing 'une véritable guerre civile' involving conflict between tribes rather than between ideologies.³ During the following months, Houphouët Boigny adopted a policy of non-intervention. This was in contrast to that of other African leaders like Kaunda, Nyerere, Obote and Kenyatta, who actively pressed for an OAU initiative to end the war.⁴

1. Ivory Coast and the Nigerian Civil War.

By June 1967, Ivory Coast had become involved in an international dispute which caused it to adopt a low profile in the Nigerian Civil War for the rest of the year. A clash between Ivory Coast and Guinea had arisen, following the coup d'état in Ghana which had overthrown Nkrumah on 24 February 1966. The former Ghanaian leader sought refuge in Conakry and Sékou Touré had announced that Guinean troops would be used to restore him to power.⁵ The possibility of Guinean troops crossing Ivory Coast territory led to the mobilization of Ivory Coast troops along the Guinean frontier, while French troops in the country were put on the alert.

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1. Dike, in Stremlau, The International Politics..., p. 135.
 2. Raph Uwechue, Interview, London, 6 April 1975.
 3. Houphouët Boigny in AFP/BA., 9-10 July 1967.
 4. Stremlau, The International Politics..., pp. 82-5.
 5. The Times, 17 March 1966.

Tension remained high in the following months and in February 1967 Guinea seized an Ivorian trawler and jailed its crew for allegedly planning to kidnap Nkrumah. In June, Ivory Coast retaliated by arresting ten Guinean diplomats, among them the Foreign Minister and the representative at the UN, who were in transit at Abidjan airport returning from a special session of the UN General Assembly.¹ Ivory Coast made their release conditional on that of the Ivorians detained in Guinea.² Guinea refused to treat the issue as a bilateral matter, and with the support of Algeria, Mali and Mauritania brought to the attention of the UN Secretary General, U Thant, Ivory Coast's violation of the conventions on the diplomatic immunity of UN officers. In mid August, after failing to secure Ivory Coast's release of the Guinean diplomats, U Thant put the issue on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of the UN General Assembly to be held in October 1967.

When the OAU heads of states met at Kinshasa early in September, Ivory Coast came under pressure to discuss its dispute with Guinea. It adamantly opposed this, on the grounds that the conflict could be solved bilaterally.³ Ivory Coast had clearly violated rules concerning the immunity of the UN diplomats, and would have encountered severe criticism and pressure to reconsider its attitude had it allowed the issue to be put on the agenda. As in the past, it only agreed to informal mediation by President Tubman of Liberia. He was on good terms with Guinea and eventually secured the release of the two groups of prisoners in late September.⁴

One can easily understand that at Kinshasa, Ivory Coast would have found it impossible to press unilaterally for a discussion of

1. Le Monde, 2-3 July 1967.

2. Le Monde, 6 July 1967

3. Afrique Nouvelle, 14 September 1967

4. Afrique Nouvelle, 4 October 1967.

the Nigerian crisis while at the same time refusing to allow its own conflict with Guinea to be raised. This was, after all, an international and not an internal issue. At the beginning of the meeting of the heads of state Awolowo, who headed the FMG delegation, had privately warned each head of delegation that if there were any attempt to discuss the situation in Nigeria, 'every one of the members had its own skeleton in the closet and we would not hesitate to raise it'.¹ Despite these threats, the Nigerian crisis was eventually discussed, after Tanzania and Zambia had made it clear that they were prepared to grant Biafra diplomatic recognition if the FMG were to maintain its veto on any OAU involvement. The OAU Consultative Committee on Nigeria (CCN) which was subsequently created included the heads of state of Cameroun, Congo Kinshasa, Ethiopia, Liberia and Niger. These were given the task of restoring peace and unity in Nigeria. Houphouët Boigny later recalled that Diori Hamani, current chairman of both the Conseil de l'Entente and the OCAM, was 'legitimately representing' Ivory Coast and the francophone states in general on the CCN.²

Houphouët Boigny's restrained attitude to the Nigerian civil war was maintained during Nyerere's visit to Ivory Coast at the end of February 1968. The war was a major issue in the discussions held by Nyerere during his successive visits to Ivory Coast, Liberia and Senegal. In Liberia, the final communiqué deplored 'the unfortunate situation' prevailing in certain parts of Africa.³ In Senegal, the communiqué remarked more bluntly that 'genocide and the oppression of minorities' held back progress towards African unity.⁴ In Ivory Coast, however, no public reference was made to the conflict although it was discussed.⁵ There the final communiqué

1. Awolowo in Stremlau, The International Politics..., p. 91-2.

2. Radio Abidjan on 18 April 1969, BBC MEA, 3053/B/4.

3. Dakar Matin, 2 March 1968.

4. The Nationalist, 5 March 1968.

stated that the two leaders had proceeded to a 'useful exchange of views on African issues',¹ a phrase which carried undertones of disagreement.

Relations between Houphouët Boigny and Nyerere had been uneasy since the latter's arrival at Abidjan airport. Nyerere had been greeted by a guard of honour in uniform resembling that of the Garde Nationale in Paris. For this reason, at the banquet given in his honour he decided to reply in Swahili to Houphouët Boigny's speech, thereby underlining the non-African aspects of his welcome. Nyerere then visited Bouaké in the north of Ivory Coast and declared that he was now in Africa, after having spent a few days in France.^a A few weeks before Nyerere's visit, Tanzania had clashed with Ivory Coast in the UN, where it supported the Guinean stance concerning the immunity of its diplomats. In view of this, it is doubtful whether Nyerere and Houphouët Boigny could have agreed on any common policy over Biafra. However, they probably did agree that the CCN should be allowed by the FMG to mediate in the conflict. At this point Nyerere's commitment to the OAU principles of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of an independent African state was of prime concern to Houphouët Boigny. The final communiqué issued by Nyerere and Houphouët Boigny contained an indirect but clear reference to Sekou Touré's threats to the Ghanaian and Ivorian sovereignties:

African unity can only be reached in a spirit of tolerance on the basis of equality between the states to the exclusion of all forms of personal political or economic hegemony with respect for the sovereignty of each state with acceptance of the coexistence between the different economic systems on the continent.²

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1. The Nationalist, 28 February 1968.
 2. The Nationalist, 28 February 1968

This statement, which was meant to contribute to Guinea's isolation in Africa, excluded any simultaneous reference to the need for a FMG agreement to accept external advice or mediation to put an end to the civil war.

Yet, the visit of Nyerere to Ivory Coast may still be considered as taking place at a turning-point in the development of Ivorian policy to Biafra's secession. Pressure which the conflict between Guinea and Ivory Coast had brought on the latter's African policy had ended. Nyerere's visit, during which the OAU principles of non-intervention were reasserted, indirectly confirmed the isolation of Guinea and the ineffectiveness of its pledges to restore Nkrumah to power in Ghana. By 1968, Ghana and Guinea, both of whom shared frontiers with Ivory Coast, were no longer a threat to its prosperity and influence in West Africa. This transformation of the milieu surrounding Ivory Coast provided the background to its decision to recognize and support Biafra.

The recognition of Biafra.

Usher Assouan made the following declaration on his return from Addis Ababa where the OAU Council of Ministers had just met:

...il y a trop de sang versé [au Nigéria] et nous estimons que c'est un drame pour l'Afrique de ne pouvoir intervenir pour régler ce problème...
L'OAU n'a même pas soufflé un mot, n'a même pas exprimé un espoir, un désir ou un appel, c'est un échec.¹

This criticism of the failure of the CCN to mediate was prompted by the adoption at the Addis Ababa meeting of a resolution on the Middle East crisis. This had been done in contravention of OAU rules of

1. Fraternité, 1 March 1968.

procedure. According to Usher Assouan, the issue was not on the agenda. It had been discussed following a statement by the UAR representative. A resolution had then been adopted by acclamation, without a proper vote.¹ Usher Assouan argued that 'Les méthodes utilisées pour l'adoption des résolutions ne sont pas celles préconisées par le règlement intérieur de l'Organisation'. In Usher Assouan's view, if normal procedure had been respected the resolution might not have been passed.²

The OAU's double standards in strictly adhering to its charter on the issue of the war in Nigeria without applying its rules of procedure when the Middle East crisis was discussed irritated Houphouët Boigny. Since 1960 Ivory Coast had maintained close relations with Israel, of which Houphouët Boigny was a great admirer. During his visit there in 1962 he explained that:

Pour nous inspirer...nous avons pensé que nous ne pouvions mieux trouver que votre pays... en raison de notre commune qualité d'anciens opprimés - et il n'est pas besoin ici de préciser combien les peuples juif et noir ont été les plus opprimés de la terre - en raison de notre commune satisfaction de la dignité retrouvée.³

Ivory Coast's friendly relations with Israel were built largely on their shared hostility to the Muslim states. Houphouët Boigny distrusted their diplomacy in sub-Saharan Africa. He believed them to be motivated by expansionist views and, in the case of Northern Nigeria, he feared a movement to revive the Fulani advance towards the coast which the colonial period had interrupted.^a

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1. Usher Assouan in Le Figaro, 26 February 1968. See also J. Woronoff, Organizing African Unity (Metuchen, 1970), p. 618.
 2. Le Monde, 28 February 1968.
 3. Fraternité, 27 July 1962.

The massacre of the Ibos in Northern Nigeria in May, July and again in September 1966 appeared to confirm this view.

After the OAU Conference of February 1968, the Ivorian leader became convinced that the OAU was being used by Muslim or Arab states like the UAR, Algeria, Somalia, Guinea, the Sudan and Nigeria, to achieve their own ambitions. This coalition of forces threatened Israel and Biafra in particular and non-Muslim Black Africa in general. Not surprisingly, the Biafran view that it faced a modern version of the 'Jihad' conducted by Muslim expansionist states found in Ivory Coast its strongest support in Africa.¹

Houphouët Boigny felt that since 1966 'pro-Islamic' and 'Fulani' movements had become increasingly influential in the FMG.^a The Federal troops' action against Biafra was interpreted as an attempt to pursue Usman dan Fodio's advance to the sea, and a revival of what Houphouët Boigny considered to be 'le rêve Peuhl de rétablir un empire'.^b Houphouët Boigny was particularly concerned at this development, as he considered himself the representative of non-Muslim Black Africans. He also alleged that President Nasser of Egypt had plotted his assassination because he represented a bulwark against the spread of Nasserism - in his opinion a powerful politico-religious force, combining Islamic religion and Marxism - in sub-Saharan Africa. The Chief Secretary of the Biafran Government, N.U. Akpan, has recalled vividly how Houphouët Boigny felt about Biafra:

... He had the highest admiration for the Biafran people whom he considered the heroes of Africa. His support of Biafra had a kind of religious zeal and ring about it. A very wealthy and conservative man, he hated communism and pan-Arabism as the twin forces really fighting against Biafra.²

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1. On this Biafran theme, see D. Anglin, 'Zambia and the Recognition of Biafra', The African Review, I, 2(September 1971), 119, n. 42.
 2. N.U. Akpan, The Struggle for Secession 1966-1970, A Personal Account of the Nigerian Civil War(London, 1971), p. 179.

Houphouët Boigny's view of the Nigerian civil war was clarified during his talks with senior Biafran envoys in mid-March. The Biafrans visited Ivory Coast as part of a tour of African states considered to be sympathetic to the Biafran cause.¹ The mission was led by Azikiwe and included Dike, whom Houphouët Boigny had already met on several occasions and personally liked; Nwafor Orizu, formerly President of the Nigerian Senate, and Raphael Uwechue, who had been Nigeria's Chargé d'Affaires in France and was now Biafra's permanent representative there. Azikiwe, Orizu and Dike had all been prominent personalities under the civilian régime. For this reason, their appeal for support secured from Houphouët Boigny the attention and respect which neither Gowon nor Ojukwu could have won. The two leaders had stepped into the political arena as a result of the overthrow of the civilian government by the military authorities.

Houphouët Boigny readily agreed to support Biafra's demand that a cease-fire without preconditions should be declared before the opening of peace talks.^a The delegation was promised that Ivory Coast's relations with the FMG would be reconsidered 'should Nigeria remain implacable' on the issue of a peace settlement. Houphouët Boigny adopted a cautious approach to this last issue though he made it clear that he would only recognize Biafra after an anglophone African state had first done so.^b He then stated that on his forthcoming visits to Tunisia and France at the end of March, he would 'co-operate' with Bourguiba, and de Gaulle as well as with Senghor and Tubman 'to ensure their good offices in persuading Nigeria to be more conciliatory and compromising'.

1. The delegates flew to Ivory Coast from Senegal and were on their way to Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Ivorian intervention in the conflict was prompted by the seriousness of the threat posed by FMG policy to the influence and prosperity of Ivory Coast in West Africa. Houphouët Boigny feared that Nigeria might be increasingly influenced by the 'courant Arabe de tendance Marxiste', of which he considered Nasser to be the chief representative in Africa. Since the overthrow of Balewa, Nigeria appeared to have undergone a process of radicalization reactivating fears which Balewa's quiet diplomacy had partly allayed. Members of the AG who, with the support of Nkrumah, had planned to overthrow the Balewa Government, were now prominent figures in the FMG. Thus Awolowo, released from jail in August 1966, was Vice-Chairman of the Executive Council and Finance Commissioner in the FMG. Enahoro had become Federal Commissioner for Information and Labour and was one of the FMG's most committed spokesmen. Another former AG member, Ikoku, had been released from jail in January 1968. Characteristically, the magazine Jeune Afrique, widely read in francophone Africa, commented that the event highlighted 'l'importance croissante du lobby Soviétique à Lagos'.¹

From mid-August 1967 on, the FMG received support from the Soviet Union and East Germany as well as from the UAR and Algeria, all countries with which Ivory Coast's relations were bad. This support involved the supply of training aircraft and Mig 17 fighters, which arrived in Kano together with some two hundred Soviet technicians.² The Migs were piloted by East Germans and Egyptians, the latter being responsible for the wanton bombing of the civilian population in Biafra.³ Ivory Coast's fear was that either Nigeria

1. Jeune Afrique, 14 January 1968, 15.

2. Stremlau, The International Politics..., pp. 79-80.

3. Nyerere attempted to convince Nasser to reconsider his aid to the FMG when he visited the UAR in March 1968.^a

would emerge as a powerful radical state after defeating Biafra, or that the conflict would lead to a major international confrontation. This led to its favouring a rapid end to the war in order to prevent any transformation of (West) Africa into 'un champ clos où s'affrontent les forces antagonistes qui se disputent la direction du monde'.¹ Because of the radical element in the FMG and because of Nigeria's external alliance with radical-revolutionary states, Ivory Coast saw a continuation of the war as a threat to the stability of West Africa, without which economic growth deriving from foreign investment in Ivory Coast could not be achieved.² In Ivory Coast's view, after failing to penetrate Africa via Guinea and Ghana the Soviet Union was now trying to do so through Nigeria.

Meanwhile, Ivorian prosperity remained extremely fragile. Inflows of foreign aid and capital had increased regularly since the early 1950's but they remained lower than outflows.³ Radical political and social changes in the states surrounding Ivory Coast could have dramatic effects on its prosperity. Capital investment would decrease and outflows increase, thereby aggravating the deficit of the balance of payments. Another adverse effect could be the departure of Europeans, who held over 80% of the managerial positions in the private sector of the economy. Lastly, any recession in the economic growth of Ivory Coast would probably arouse popular feelings against the Voltaic and Malian labour working on the plantations.

Politico-economic considerations were inextricably intertwined

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1. F. Houphouët Boigny, in France-Eurafrique, 221 (1970), 36; on this recurrent theme in his thinking see Le Monde, 12 March 1960 and 26 January 1965.
 2. For a critical appraisal of the Ivorian miracle see B. Campbell, 'Ivory Coast' in J. Dunn, ed, West African States; Failure and Promise (Cambridge, 1978), 74 ff.
 3. For 1965 inflows of foreign capital into Ivory Coast amounted to 15.4 billion CFAF while outflows represented 25.2 billion CFAF; S.Amin, L'Afrique de l'Ouest Bloquée(Paris, 1971), p. 79.

in the Ivorian Government's approach to maintaining the economic stability and prosperity of the country. In 1968, Ivory Coast was particularly sensitive to any threat to the continuing stability of the West African sub-region. In the previous year it had adopted an ambitious Loi-Plan de Développement Economique, Social et Culturel. The building of the Kossou dam near Bouaké and the creation of a deep water harbour at San Pedro near Sassandra were the key points of this plan, which aimed at correcting regional disparities between Abidjan and the hinterland. A rate of investment twice that of the 1960-1967 period was required to reach these targets.¹ Even more important, almost half the financial backing had to come from private investment. In the short run, by supporting Biafra, Ivory Coast hoped to put pressure on the FMG for a cessation of military operations the continuation of which implied risks of further instability in West Africa. Thus, Ivory Coast's determination to retain foreign confidence was a crucial consideration in its intervention in the Nigerian civil war.

Strategic factors also constituted an incentive for Ivory Coast's support to the Biafran views on a peace settlement. From 1966, it was apparent that Nigeria's oil resources would increase the potential impact of its diplomacy in West Africa. If Nigeria remained united, it was bound to exert an increasing influence on its francophone neighbours and jeopardize Ivory Coast's leadership of the Conseil de l'Entente. In fact, Ivory Coast's relationships with the other Entente states had already suffered a serious setback in 1966 with the collapse of Houphouët Boigny's plan to promote closer links between them. During a visit to Upper Volta in December 1964 Houphouët Boigny had suggested the creation of a common nationality or

1. International Monetary Fund, Surveys of African Economy (Washington, 1970), iii, pp. 251-2.

'double nationalité' for the citizens of the two countries.¹ The proposal involved reciprocal rights and duties, equal opportunities in land ownership and employment, even in the civil service. The advantage to be derived by Ivory Coast's formalization of its ties with Upper Volta was the assurance of a supply of cheap Mossi labour. A common nationality would also lessen the risk of xenophobic pressures within Ivory Coast leading to a mass exodus of foreign labour.

The subsequent requests of Dahomey and Niger to participate in the project opened new perspectives. As Batmanian has shown, the convention on common nationality signed on 30 December 1965 by all the states of the Entente implied that tariff barriers between them would be ultimately removed. This would open up new markets for Ivory Coast's more developed industrial sector.² But when the question of common nationality was discussed in January 1966 by the Conseil National of the PDCI, it aroused considerable hostility.³ Many at the meeting feared that the Dahomeans and Togolese employed in Ivory Coast's civil service and police until their expulsion in October 1958 would now return and take jobs from Ivoirians.⁴ Feeling on the issue was so strong that Houphouët Boigny dropped the question in February 1966.⁵

When Houphouët Boigny visited Tunisia in late March 1968 his feelings about the Nigerian civil war were publicly revealed

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1. Afrique Nouvelle, 24 December 1964.
 2. Batmanian, 'La Politique Africaine de la Côte d'Ivoire...', 11, pp. 492-4.
 3. The Conseil National was created after the fourth Congress of the PDCI in September 1965. It included the 80 Secretaries General of the party's local sections and the 85 members of the Comité Directeur, its national executive.
 4. Fraternité Martin, 22 January 1966.
 5. In Upper Volta, where Yameogo had been overthrown by a coup d'état early in January, strong trade union opposition existed to the project of common nationality; see W. Skurnik, 'The Military and Politics: Dahomey, and Upper Volta', in C. Welch, ed, Soldier and State in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Military Intervention and Political Change (Evanston, 1970), 66.

for the first time in a reference to 'les luttes meurtrières et fratricides qui se prolongent au Nigéria'.¹ Houphouët Boigny then flew to Europe. For the next two and a half months he stayed in France and in Switzerland. During this period, the Ivorian leader had several meetings in Paris with French officials and with de Gaulle. He also met African francophone statesmen who visited Paris. Close contact was maintained with the Biafran emissaries, who were kept informed of Houphouët Boigny's diplomatic moves. Thus on 31 March, the Biafran mission which had visited Ivory Coast earlier that month and was now in Paris, was received by Houphouët Boigny. He briefed its members on the outcome of his talks with Bourguiba, de Gaulle and Jacques Foccart, Secrétaire-Général à la Présidence pour les Affaires Africaines et Malgache.^a

The existence of this office, held since 1961 by one of de Gaulle's most trusted assistants, reflected the special interest attached to African affairs by the French President. In theory, the Secrétariat was only in charge of France's relations with African countries which had signed co-operation agreements with France on independence. In practice, its role was much wider, as it was used by de Gaulle as an instrument through which he exerted his influence on the whole African policy of the Government.² Solely responsible to the President, the Secrétariat Général was independent of any parliamentary or government control. This helps to explain its well-established reputation for clandestine intervention both in the politics of France and Africa.

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1. L'Action, 19 March 1968; the same phrase was later embodied in the joint communiqué issued after the talks; Fraternité, 25 March 1968.
 2. For an assessment of the Secrétariat Général see F. Ridley and J. Blondel, Public Administration in France (London, 1964), pp. 8-9; République Française, Journal Officiel de l'Assemblée Nationale, 2 October 1968, p. 2961. (Hereafter JOAN.) and Le Canard Enchaîné, 6 August, 20 August, 27 August, 3 September, 10 September and 17 September 1969.

When Houphouët Boigny received the Biafran diplomats on 31 March, he had already met de Gaulle twice since his arrival in Paris, and in their second meeting, on 30 March, he had exclusively discussed international issues. De Gaulle had not committed France to any particular course of action but after his meeting Houphouët Boigny was convinced that 'le Général de Gaulle est réellement un grand ami de l'Afrique. Il nous comprend. Il soutiendra à fond le Biafra'.¹ In public, Houphouët Boigny did not hide the fact that he considered the situation in Nigeria 'un drame affreux dont la sagesse exige une prompte solution'.² He refused, however, to disclose whether mediation between Biafra and the FMG was being considered.

On 31 March, with the FMG having failed to fulfil its self-imposed deadline to finish the war, Azikiwe held a timely press conference in Paris to convey Biafra's wish that a cease-fire on the battlefield should be the prelude to the opening of peace talks without preconditions.³ Gowon's broadcast to the nation the next day left no room for compromise on the opening of peace talks:

There are only two ways of ending the rebellion - through peace or military suppression. The Federal Government's position on peace talks is very clear. The rebel leaders must give up secession or accept the twelve states structure...⁴

Almost all the Biafran-held areas had slowly shrunk between September 1967 and the time of Gowon's statement but there was no immediate prospect of victory for the Federal troops. After the fall of Enugu

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1. Quoted in Batmanian, 'La Politique Africaine de la Côte d'Ivoire...', ii, p. 337.
 2. AFP/BA., 31 March 1968
 3. Text in Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict...., ii, pp. 205-6.
 4. Gowon quoted Ibid., ii, p. 204.

and Calabar in October 1967, the advance of the Federal troops had slowed down considerably. They had had some success on the Eastern front in January but elsewhere fighting was often reduced to hit and run skirmishes in which neither army gained any permanent territorial control.¹ Conventional techniques of warfare had been used in the offensives against Port Harcourt and Onitsha on the southern and western fronts, but there again the progress of the Federal troops was slow and costly. Onitsha had been occupied on 21 March after a three month offensive, in which the Federal side had suffered heavy losses in two unsuccessful attempts to cross the Niger. At the time of Gowon's announcement, the battle for the control of Port Harcourt, whose airport was Biafra's major communication link with the outside world, continued without any significant progress being achieved by the Federal troops.²

The stalemate on the battlefield appeared particularly tragic because of the poor prospects for a diplomatic settlement. The CCN had been unable to act as mediator. More recently, the FMG had rejected the idea of the formation of a Commonwealth Peace-Keeping Force. The Federal demand that Biafra should renounce secession as a precondition to any peace talks was unacceptable to Biafran leaders. The FMG's position, as defined on 1 April, appeared hopelessly intransigent. Biafra was not only asked to surrender but also to accept the twelve state Federal structure. It was this deadlock which induced Nyerere and Kaunda to give public recognition to Biafra, a move upon which they agreed in principle when they met in Mbala on 4 April.³

1. Z. Cervenka, The Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970 (Frankfurt, 1971), p. 61.

2. J. de St Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War (London, 1972), pp. 186-7.

3. D. Anglin, 'Zambia and the Recognition of Biafra', op. cit., 116; when Azikiwe's mission had visited Dar es Salaam in March Nyerere answered its pleas for support with the guarantee that his country would recognize Biafra if the war continued after 31 March and if the FMG still refused to open peace talks without preconditions with Biafra.^a

In Paris, an abortive attempt to open peace talks was made by Senghor in conjunction with Houphouët Boigny. It was only after this that Houphouët Boigny committed himself to diplomatic recognition of Biafra. In mid-March 1968, when Azikiwe's mission was in Dakar, Senghor had offered to act as mediator. With the agreement of the Biafran delegation, Senghor had subsequently suggested to Nigeria's Commissioner for External Affairs, Dr. Okoi Arikpo, the opening of peace negotiations in Dakar when he visited Senegal early in April.¹ This first initiative had failed. A second attempt was made by Senghor, possibly as a result of his meeting with Houphouët Boigny in Paris on 7 April. In a letter to Gowon and Ojukwu, Senghor suggested a formula for compromise. The FMG would order a cease-fire and the Biafrans would agree to participate in a 'confederation of nations' which would preserve Nigerian sovereignty.² These proposals did not prove acceptable either.

Nyerere's recognition of Biafra on 13 April, 1968, prompted a decisive change in Houphouët Boigny's approach to the conflict. Two days later, Houphouët Boigny flew to Switzerland, where he summoned Yacé, Usher Assouan, and the President of the Conseil Economique et Social, Mamadou Coulibaly, to discuss the Nigerian crisis.³ Ivory Coast's Ambassador to Nigeria, Christophe Mian Korecki, was recalled from Lagos to participate in these consultations.⁴ Before his departure for Geneva, Houphouët Boigny's statement at Paris airport led observers to conclude that Ivory Coast's recognition of Biafra was now a foregone conclusion.⁵ Yet such a move was to be

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1. See Arikpo's own account in Kirk-Green, Crisis and Conflict..., ii, p. 219.
 2. The Times, 10 April 1968 and Financial Times, 20 April 1968.
 3. Le Monde, 17 April 1968.
 4. Daily Times, 18 April 1968.
 5. See Financial Times, 17 April 1968; le Figaro, 16 April 1968 and le Monde, 17 April 1968.

delayed for almost a month, until Houphouët Boigny's return to Ivory Coast.

On 21 April Yacé announced that on the following day Fraternité Matin would publish a statement from Houphouët Boigny on the recognition of Biafra by Tanzania. This statement showed unexpected caution in view of Houphouët Boigny's previous announcement only a week earlier 'dans deux jours je ferai une déclaration concernant le Biafra'.¹ The statement of 22 April contained an analysis of the evolution of Nigeria's political situation since 1966. Houphouët Boigny, expressing his admiration and respect for Nyerere's recognition of Biafra, insisted that he was not speaking as a statesman but as a 'citoyen libre' of Ivory Coast.² As in his statement of 15 April, Houphouët Boigny now repeated that no decision concerning Biafra would be announced outside Ivory Coast and that its people and representatives would be consulted at all levels.

Houphouët Boigny's return to Ivory Coast, originally planned for the week beginning 21 April, was postponed.³ The President went to rest in the Swiss Alps, so that an official decision concerning Biafra was excluded for the time being. This was perhaps because Houphouët Boigny wanted to avoid possible accusations that Ivory Coast's recognition of Biafra reflected his personal views. His caution certainly reflected the fact that party and Government officials in Ivory Coast found it difficult to understand why their country should take such a step.

Ivorian opposition to the recognition of Biafra appeared in the Journal des Amis du Progrès de l'Afrique Noire, better known

1. Le Monde, 17 April 1968.

2. Fraternité Matin, 22 April 1968.

3. AFP/BA., 4 May 1968; le Monde, 17 April 1968.

as the Journal des Fonctionnaires. This bimonthly shared Houphouët Boigny's concern at Soviet support to the FMG. Gowon, it argued, was forced to accept advisers along with the Soviet weapons necessary to fight the secession.¹ It considered that:

... le Nigéria constituait depuis plusieurs années déjà une poire convoitée par Moscou...
[Les Soviétiques] trouvent dans les événements actuels l'occasion de manoeuvrer avec une plus grande liberté en même temps que de s'introduire au rang de 'bienfaiteurs' dans le camp fédéral.²

Although this analysis approximated to Houphouët Boigny's, it did not lead the Journal des Fonctionnaires to the same conclusion.

The editors, on the contrary, insisted that 'nous sommes contre le Biafra comme nous avons été contre la sécession Katangaise; comme nous sommes contre tous les séparatismes basés sur le tribalisme et le racisme'.³ These views were shared by some of Houphouët Boigny's close political advisers. They were reluctant that Ivory Coast should bypass a principle which had underpinned its own internal security since 1960.⁴ Houphouët Boigny's statement after his Geneva consultations had referred to this issue in an interrogative manner:

Comment concilier nos devoirs de Chef de l'Etat qui nous font obligation de respecter l'intégrité territoriale des Etats membres de l'OUA et de l'ONU avec nos devoirs d'Hommes Africains, devant la mort de dizaines de milliers de Noirs...devant ce fossé de sang qui s'agrandit de jour en jour rendant sinon impossible du moins très difficile la vie en commun de ces frères ennemis au sein de la Fédération du Nigéria, devant la détermination d'un peuple de vivre une vie indépendante?⁵

1. Journal des Amis du Progrès de l'Afrique Noire, 15 April 1968.

2. Ibid.

3. Journal des Amis du Progrès de l'Afrique Noire, 1 April, 1968; also 15 April and 15 May 1968; the journal was banned on 17 June, possibly due to its attitude to Biafra; Fraternité Matin, 18 June 1968.

4. Kaye Whiteman, Interview, Oxford, 2 February 1978.

5. Fraternité Matin, 22 April 1968.

In Ivory Coast, recognition of Biafra could also revive regionalist claims for autonomy, especially in the south-eastern part of the country.¹ Answering such objections was one of the main points of the article written by Usher Assouan in the PDCI newspaper Fraternité Matin and published on 2 May under the telling headline, 'Nous ne Pouvons nous Contenter de Jouer les Ponce Pilate Sous le Seul Prétexte de Défendre un Principe'.²

Following his return from Switzerland to Paris on 30 April, the Ivorian President campaigned for French and African support to Biafra. Until his departure for Abidjan on 9 May, Houphouët Boigny's position was unaffected by the opening of peace talks under the aegis of the Commonwealth Secretariat in London on 6 May. He continued to believe that prior to discussion a cease-fire should take place on the battlefield.³ During this period, Houphouët Boigny again met de Gaulle, whom he urged to intervene in the conflict. He also appealed to the French people for sympathy:

Les Français qui ... ont connu les horreurs de la guerre, les Français qui ont un culte pour la liberté de l'Homme et qui sont foncièrement attachés à la paix, peuvent-ils demeurer longtemps insensibles au malheur qui s'abat sur un peuple admirable de courage et qui lutte dans les conditions les plus difficiles, les plus inhumaines, pour son indépendance?⁴

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1. This was indeed to be the case in 1969 when the Mouvement de Libération du Sanwi sent a request to de Gaulle asking for military aid and accusing the Ivorian Government of 'genocide' between 1959 and 1966 and of repressive measures since then; West Africa, 8 March 1969, 271; later in November-December, a short lived movement of agitation around Aboisso led to an intervention of the army followed by numerous arrests. Ivory Coast's Minister of the Interior Nanlo Bamba then castigated those who believed that because Ivory Coast recognized Biafra's right to self-determination it would do the same in the case of the Sanwi; le Monde, 30 December 1969; Afrique Nouvelle, 1 January 1970.
 2. Fraternité Matin, 2 May 1968.
 3. AFP/BA, 4 May 1968.
 4. Fraternité Matin, 10 May 1968.

While at this stage Houphouët Boigny failed to change de Gaulle's non-committal attitude to Biafra, his diplomacy was responsible for Gabon's decision to recognize Biafra on 8 May 1968.

On 18 April in Libreville President Bongo of Gabon had condemned Nyerere's recognition of the breakaway state. A week later in Paris when asked whether Gabon intended to recognize Biafra, as Houphouët Boigny appeared ready to do, Bongo replied that each state had to make its own decision.¹ He believed, however, that Houphouët Boigny's statement of 22 April would represent a landmark for many African statesmen. Ironically enough, the statement referred to was an appreciative commentary on Nyerere's recognition of Biafra which Bongo himself had criticized the previous week. The fact that Bongo greatly admired Houphouët Boigny undoubtedly accounted for the latter part of his statement. On 4 May, following several meetings with the Ivorian President, one of which lasted two hours, Bongo announced his country's imminent recognition of Biafra.² This move was unexpected and surprised even the Biafran envoy in Paris.³

On 9 May, after Gabon's recognition of Biafra had become official, Houphouët Boigny gave a press conference at the Ivorian embassy in Paris. It attracted over a hundred journalists, including foreign envoys who were in Paris to cover the opening of the Vietnam talks on the following day. Houphouët Boigny did not formally announce Ivory Coast's recognition of Biafra. Instead, he appealed to both African and world opinion to react to the 'drame humain' taking place in Biafra.⁴ Houphouët Boigny drew a striking parallel between the situation in Vietnam and Nigeria. He contended that

1. Combat, 26 April 1968.

2. Le Monde, 7 May 1968.

3. Raph Uwechue, Interview, London, 6 April 1975.

4. Fraternité Matin, 10 May 1968.

fewer people had died in Vietnam during the last three years than in Biafra in the previous ten months. The impact of this comparison was demonstrated by its repeated use in articles on the Nigerian civil war. The main aim of the press conference had been to draw international attention to the situation in Nigeria. In this it was largely successful.

After his conference, Houphouet Boigny left Paris for Abidjan where he presided over a series of meetings of the various échelons of the PDCI. The recognition of Biafra was eventually announced on 14 May, after a meeting of the Conseil National 'élargi'. Besides the senior party officials who constituted its regular membership, the meeting included all the members of the Conseil Economique et Social and the Assemblée Législative, Ivorian diplomats, senior civil servants and army officers, representatives from the trade unions and the students and women's associations.^I Over 1,000 participants attended. Houphouet Boigny first explained his reasons for advocating diplomatic recognition of Biafra. Participants then intervened, but the major issue of the Conference became increasingly a vote of confidence in the Ivorian President, who had been away from the country over two months.

No real debate on Biafra's recognition actually took place during the meeting. This was largely because most of the members of the audience were unfamiliar with the issue. The situation in Biafra had aroused little attention in Ivory Coast until, after Houphouet Boigny's statement of 15 April, radio and television programmes began to express support for Biafra. An observer recalls that while Houphouet Boigny was in Geneva, a television broadcast

I. Fraternité Matin, 15 May 1968.

showed a priest sitting at a desk talking about Biafra. In a corner of the screen one could see a picture of a child dying of malnutrition. 'Du jour au lendemain, tout a changé et on s'est mis à parler du Biafra partout'.^a After the meeting of the Conseil National, participants admitted privately that they did not really understand why Ivory Coast had found it necessary to recognize Biafra.¹ The use of a mass meeting to announce the decision to recognize Biafra gave a broader base of popular support to Houphouët Boigny's decision. It also bypassed the reluctance of those Ivorian officials who feared that it might adversely affect the country's security and position in African affairs. Opposition to recognition of Biafra still existed two days before the meeting of the Conseil National when Usher Assouan convened a meeting of his Ministry's senior officials and of ambassadors recalled to Abidjan for consultations on this issue. According to one of the participants, 'la plupart ont gardé un silence prudent, quelques uns ont fait part de leur opposition à la reconnaissance du Biafra mais aucun ne s'y est montré favorable'.² Usher Assouan had then told the assembly that they would have the opportunity to express their views freely and publicly at the coming meeting of the Conseil National. There, the young Directeur de la Coopération Internationale, Birama Touré, was the only participant to attempt to oppose recognition of Biafra.³ As an Ivorian writer perceptively remarked 'le mot sacrilège est vite lancé lorsqu'il s'agit d'une initiative du chef de l'Etat'.⁴

The lack of understanding of the Ivorian stand was due

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1. Sako, 'Les Relations Extérieures de la Côte d'Ivoire', p. 24.
 2. Quoted in Batmanian, 'La Politique Africaine de la Côte d'Ivoire...', ii, p. 345.
 3. Tamar Golan, Interview, Paris, 5 August 1977.
 4. Sako, 'Les Relations Extérieures de la Côte d'Ivoire', p. 24.

to the atmosphere of mystery which shrouded Houphouët Boigny's real motives for recognizing Biafra. The Ivorian leader argued that the civil war in Nigeria was not a political issue but a 'problème essentiellement humain'.¹ This, he explained, was how he and Nyerere could take similar decisions despite their different political philosophies. Politically informed Ivorians, however, pointed out the contrast between Houphouët Boigny's virulent indignation and his past attitude to the conflicts in Vietnam and Algeria.² As the war in Nigeria went on, official Ivorian claims that the country's policy in the conflict was purely humanitarian were greeted with dismay in Abidjan itself, where it was widely known that air traffic with Biafra was not confined to relief aid.

In the light of French support for Biafra after September 1968, many Ivorians believed that Gabon and Ivory Coast had acted under French pressure when deciding to recognize Biafra. A similar view was also brought forward by Nigerians. Ola Balogun who arrived in Paris as Cultural Attaché to the Nigerian Embassy early in 1969, charged that 'Gabon and Ivory Coast were the willing instruments of the French' and particularly of Foccart.³ Gowon similarly believed that French businessmen with substantial interests in Gabon and Ivory Coast had put pressure on the two African Governments to take such a step' (as to recognize Biafra).⁴ Houphouët Boigny, like Bongo, had announced his decision to recognize Biafra after private visits

1. Fraternité Matin, 22 April and 10 May 1968.

2. In July 1966 an editor of the PDCI owned newspaper Fraternité Matin was dismissed for writing an editorial critical of the American policy in Vietnam; Fraternité Matin, 13 July 1966 and Réalités Ivoiriennes, 22 July 1966, 3; on Ivory Coast's attitude towards Algeria see supra., pp.52 and 93.

3. O. Balogun, The Tragic Years, Nigeria in Crisis 1966-1970 (Benin, 1973), p.100.

4. Gowon on 21 May 1968 in Africa Research Bulletin, 1-31 May 1968, 1071.

to Paris, where he discussed the conflict with senior French officials and de Gaulle on several occasions. In Abidjan, Houphouët Boigny was surrounded by several French advisers. His Directeur de Cabinet was a Frenchman from the West Indies. Since 1964, Houphouët Boigny had also developed a close working relationship with Foccart. One of the adviser's of Houphouët Boigny in Abidjan also had an office in the Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires Africaines et Malgache, being Foccart's representative in Ivory Coast.¹

After Ghana's support to the Sawaba attempt to overthrow Diori Hamani in Niger in October 1964, Houphouët Boigny and Foccart had joined efforts to combat Ghanaian influence in Africa and reconstitute a strong francophone political grouping. The importance de Gaulle attached to this policy was confirmed by France's public approval of Houphouët Boigny's foundation of the OCAM in February 1965.² The communiqué issued by the Council of Ministers on this occasion was one of the rare public comments on relations within francophone Africa made during the Gaullist Presidency. Opposition to Sekou Touré in Guinea and support to the Congo (Léopoldville) were other points on which Foccart and Houphouët Boigny agreed.³ Their understanding reached its peak during the Nigerian civil war. By then, Ivory Coast was the major relai of the Gaullist diplomacy in West Africa. Houphouët Boigny also had close contacts with French business circles, which in some cases went back to the early 1940's. Through a complex network of ties with France, Ivory Coast was a channel for French influence. In turn it influenced French policy and used its relations spéciales with the former metropolitan power to

1. L'Express, 17 December 1971.

2. Le Monde, 18 February 1965.

3. Account drawn from Batmanian, 'La Politique Africaine de la Côte d'Ivoire....', i, p. 36 ff.

ensure its leadership of the Conseil de l'Entente and to a lesser extent of the OCAM.

Houphouët Boigny had a decisive influence on de Gaulle's attitude to the Nigerian civil war after June 1968. Closely associated with French politics before 1960, Houphouët Boigny knew de Gaulle well. Also, the latter trusted his advice on African affairs. In 1958, Houphouët Boigny had influenced de Gaulle against the appointment of Senghor to the Debré cabinet, despite the contrary advice of Pompidou.¹ Houphouët Boigny's views had been of fundamental importance on those sections of the constitution of the Fifth Republic which dealt with the Communauté. With respect to Nigeria, his intervention in 1965 had led de Gaulle to reconsider his views on resuming diplomatic relations with the Balewa Government. Houphouët Boigny's reasons for supporting Biafra's independence were, however, different from those which led de Gaulle to take sides in the conflict. While Houphouët Boigny was chiefly concerned with the preservation of the 'voie Ivoirienne de développement', de Gaulle sought to ensure the unity of the francophone bloc with its inherent close relations with France. The years of the Nigerian civil war were to represent an important period of transition in the relations between France and Ivory Coast. The main factor in their evolution was the ending of the relations spéciales with France, which had existed throughout de Gaulle's Presidency. This transformation was chiefly brought about by de Gaulle's resignation in April 1969 and the election of President Pompidou.

The commitment to Biafra's independence.

From the time of the recognition of Biafra until the end

1. Ernest Milicent, Interview, Paris, 9 September 1975.

of the civil war in Nigeria, Ivory Coast backed Biafra strongly. Various diplomatic initiatives were accordingly undertaken to induce the FMG to agree to a cease-fire, to be followed by peace talks without preconditions. The lack of support obtained by Houphouët Boigny from the Conseil de l'Entente states and the OCAM led him to pursue a strategy of convincing non-African states to step into the conflict.

It was faute de mieux that, in June 1968, Houphouët Boigny took part in reactivating the OAU mediation attempt which led to the Niamey meeting of the CCN in July. The CCN meeting was supported by member states of the Conseil de l'Entente, whose President, Diori Hamani, undertook to press Gowon to agree to an OAU mediation.¹ Houphouët Boigny then took up the matter with a Biafran delegation which flew from London to meet him in Abidjan on 8 June.² The Biafran leadership was very critical of any OAU initiative because of the way the CCN had conducted its mission since its constitution. The Biafran also distrusted Diallo Telli since his full endorsement of the FMG policy.³ Guarantees provided by Houphouët Boigny were undoubtedly instrumental in Biafra's announcement on 9 July that the CCN might become an acceptable mediator.⁴ On 19 July Ojukwu flew to Niamey in Houphouët Boigny's private aircraft. Two Ministers, from Ivory Coast and Gabon, also travelled on board as a guarantee of the security of the Biafran delegation.⁵

Houphouët Boigny, however, did not really believe that such talks could be successful. Akpan writes that the Ivorian leader:

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1. See infra., p. 214 .
 2. AFP/BA., 8 June 1968.
 3. See S. Cronje, The World and Nigeria (London, 1972), pp. 293-4.
 4. Financial Times, 10 July 1968; on the part played by other members of the CCN see the detailed account in Stremlau, The International Politics...., p. 184 ff.
 5. Afrique Nouvelle, 25 July 1968.

... had great contempt for the Organization of African Unity as an Arab-Muslim dominated organization, particularly insofar as the Biafran case was concerned. He did not in the slightest trust the OAU Committee's objectivity and therefore believed that the real solution would not come from Africa but from Europe and America and he was strenuously working for this.¹

The day after Ivory Coast's recognition of Biafra, Houphouët Boigny had summoned the British and Soviet Ambassadors and requested their Governments to order an embargo on their arms deliveries to the FMG and to call for a cease-fire.² Once the events of May 1968 were over Houphouët Boigny also urged France to intervene, and in July he conveyed a letter from Ojukwu asking de Gaulle for France's support.³ The letter drew a parallel between the predicament of the Biafran leader and de Gaulle's situation in 1940. It also referred to the dramatic occupation of France by the Nazis, French desire for liberty, and the sufferings of the French people.⁴ Ojukwu urged France to raise the Nigerian issue in the UN and other international organizations. He asked de Gaulle to try to gain the support of other African states for a cease-fire to be followed by the opening of peace talks.⁵

On 31 July, a statement issued from Paris expressed preoccupation with the situation in Biafra. It considered that the Nigerian conflict ought to be solved on the basis of the right of the peoples to self determination.⁶ This statement, which raised hopes in Biafra for de jure French recognition to be followed by military support, represented a major step in the evolution of the Nigerian civil war. At the end of September, de Gaulle agreed to give a limited but

1. Akpan, The Struggle for Secession..., p. 180.

2. De St Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War, p. 197.

3. François Debré, Interview, Paris, 24 March 1975.

4. F. Dabré, Biafra An II (Paris, 1968), pp. 126-7.

5. François Debré, Interview, Paris, 24 March, 1975.

6. Detailed analysis of the French stand infra Chapter VII.

crucial military support to Biafra. Like Gabon, Ivory Coast took an active part in the subsequent airlift of small arms to Biafra. During the early stages of the airlift the weapons were supplied from Ivory Coast's own arms stocks, which were later replenished. Ivorian support also involved loans to Biafra guaranteed by France.

After September 1968, Ivorian policy increasingly diverged from that of France, in that the latter did not give full military and diplomatic support to Biafra, as had earlier been expected. French policy reflected de Gaulle's conviction that the Nigerian civil war could only be settled by the African states themselves. French intervention was meant to enable Biafra to survive so that a settlement could be achieved. At the OCAM Conference of January 1969, the francophone group confirmed its hostility to Biafra's independence. De Gaulle now realized that the continuation of the war and France's aid to Biafra were likely to lead to the rupture of these very French links with francophone African countries which his intervention in the conflict had been meant to preserve.

Up to April, 1969 the Ivorian President urged de Gaulle in vain to increase French diplomatic and military support to Biafra. On 19 February 1969, after a French parliamentary delegation returned from Nigeria, Houphouët Boigny flew to Paris for discussions with de Gaulle on French policy in the conflict. The Ivorian leader feared that it was undergoing a change.¹ After meeting de Gaulle, Houphouët Boigny disclosed that:

J'ai attiré à nouveau son attention sur les aspects humains de ce drame...sur les aspects politiques et aussi sur les menaces qui pèsent sur l'ensemble de l'Afrique si par malheur la situation qui prévaut aujourd'hui s'éternise.²

1. Batmanian, 'La Politique Africaine de la Côte d'Ivoire...', ii, p. 388.

2. AFP/BA., 21 February 1969.

Houphouët Boigny added that de Gaulle was not considering recognition of Biafra. The Ivorian President then declared that he fully supported the French leader's attitude, but this statement did not sound very convincing. A few days later, after again discussing the situation in Nigeria with the French Prime Minister, Maurice Couve de Murville, Houphouët Boigny explained 'nous avons manifesté nos craintes quant au devenir de cet ensemble Africain étant donné la prolongation de la guerre du Biafra'.¹ Once again Houphouët Boigny's comment conveyed the impression that he had been pressing France to intervene more directly in the conflict, by recognizing Biafra, or perhaps by supporting the presentation of its case in the UN.

French policy was indeed changing at this time. After the OAU Conference at Algiers in September 1968, the OCAM meeting held at Kinshasa in late January 1969 confirmed the lack of African support for Biafra's independence. De Gaulle was concerned at the mounting criticism of French policy in francophone Africa, added to which was the increasing division of public opinion in France. As a result of the intransigent attitude of the Biafran leadership towards a settlement of the conflict, France's limited support to Biafra was reconsidered during March, so as to put pressure on the Biafran Government to make peace. Early in March, French aid to Biafra was totally halted. Three weeks later, after the intervention of Houphouët Boigny and Foccart, aid was restored but only at a reduced rate.² Biafra, as both men had probably argued, was on the brink of military collapse as a result of a Federal offensive

1. AFP/BA., 25 February 1969.

2. Daily Telegraph, 7 April 1969; The Times, 3 May 1969; K. Whiteman, 'France's Year in Africa', in Africa Contemporary Record, 1969-1970, A-36.

launched against Umuahia, Biafra's last stronghold, on the eve of the CCN talks in Monrovia.

The decisive factor accounting for the end of the relations spéciales between France and Ivory Coast was the departure of de Gaulle and his replacement by Pompidou. The latter's pragmatic attitude to the conflict in Nigeria excluded taking any initiative which might further a policy already unpopular with the OCAM states. In July 1969, Ivory Coast undertook its last important diplomatic initiative in the war by attempting to raise the Nigerian issue at the UN. After meeting President Pompidou, Houphouët Boigny expressed his satisfaction at meeting the newly elected French President. He indirectly revealed his disappointment at the more cautious policy which France had adopted towards the Nigerian crisis:

... nous avons bien sûr parlé de ce douloureux problème du Biafra où des milliers d'êtres humains, des milliers d'innocents, jeunes et vieux, meurent chaque jour... et le plus cruel et le plus écoeurant c'est l'apathie générale du monde des 'grands' devant ce génocide dont l'horreur est sans égal.¹

After meeting the new French Prime Minister, Jacques Chaban Delmas, two days later, Houphouët Boigny stated that Ivory Coast, in conjunction with other countries, was planning the inclusion of the Nigerian crisis on the agenda of the coming UN General Assembly.² France did not figure among these countries. In New York the Ivorian delegation was trying to raise support for this at the UN.³ A semi-official statement released in late August 1969 asserted that France's attitude towards Biafra remained unchanged.⁴ Indirectly it underlined the differences between the French and Ivorian policies. It stated that

1. Fraternité Matin, 17 July 1969.

2. AFP/BA., 19 July 1969.

3. Le Monde, 18 July 1969.

4. AFP/BA., 30 August 1969.

the transit of French arms through francophone countries friendly to Biafra should not be considered part of French policy in the conflict. The statement also expressed non-committal readiness to study any 'initiative susceptible de contribuer à un retour de la paix'.

On 16 September, Houphouët Boigny met Pompidou again to discuss the possibility of raising the Nigerian crisis at the UN.¹ A week later in New York, Usher Assouan consulted France's Foreign Minister, Maurice Schuman, over this issue as well as Israël's Foreign Minister, the Canadian State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and U Thant.² The Ivorian initiative was to no avail. No formal debate took place on the situation in Nigeria. It got no further than a mere mention in the delegations' speeches.

Biafra collapsed following the fall of Owerri on 10 January 1970. After a last cabinet meeting on the following day Ojukwu and a few others flew into exile in Ivory Coast.³ Major General Effiong then announced Biafra's surrender on the radio. In Abidjan, Houphouët Boigny precluded any support to Biafra by announcing on the same day:

La Côte d'Ivoire ne sera jamais une base de subversion à l'encontre de tout territoire Africain ou extra Africain. Nous sommes pour la paix et la neutralité réelle qui seule permettra à l'Afrique de rattraper son long retard sur le chemin du progrès.⁴

Ojukwu was officially granted political asylum in Ivory Coast but he was required to abstain from political activities.

1. Fraternité, 19 September 1969.

2. Fraternité Matin, 30 September 1969.

3. Akpan, The Struggle for Secession...., p. 176 ff.

4. Fraternité Matin, 16 January 1970.

Ivory Coast's strategy in the war had not elicited any support from those francophone statesmen traditionally sympathetic to Houphouët Boigny's views. Indeed, his support to Biafra had brought on him criticism which led him to comment in August 1969 that: 'mes meilleurs amis politiques ne saisissent pas la portée de mon geste et...je passe pour un traître à la cause Africaine'.¹

The isolation of Ivory Coast in Africa

Ivory Coast's attitude to Biafra contributed to its increasing isolation in Africa. Houphouët Boigny's policy undermined his leadership and authority among the francophone states of West Africa. Tanzania's recognition and subsequent support of Biafra were chiefly intended to bring about a settlement which would provide the Ibos with guarantees for their security. It did not necessarily exclude the preservation of Nigeria's territorial integrity. Throughout the war, Ivory Coast's policy was committed to the emergence of Biafra as an independent state. In Tanzania, Nyerere believed in the necessity of solving the conflict through African initiatives and distrusted attempts of non African powers or institutions to impose a solution. Thus the policies of the two countries towards the conflict were often in strong contrast.

Ivory Coast's uncompromising support of the Biafran leadership prompted its attempts to elicit support in the wider arena of international diplomacy in Western Europe, the US and the UN. The aim was to create conditions which would induce the FMG to agree to a cease-fire without preconditions. Indeed, it was clear to all sides that if this could be brought about, military pressure on Biafra would be relieved, thereby strengthening its

1. In Jeune Afrique, 29 January 1970, 25.

negotiating position. This would also have been a decisive step on the path to Biafra's international recognition. The meeting of the Conseil de l'Entente in Lome at the end of May 1968, barely a fortnight after Ivory Coast's recognition of Biafra, could be seen as a turning-point in Ivory Coast's relations with its francophone neighbours. What the attitude of the core of the francophone group towards the civil war would be remained unclear until a few days before its meeting. In Paris, Houphouët Boigny had had consultations on the issue with Diori Hamani. The latter shared his concern at the continuation of the war but excluded the possibility of recognizing Biafra.¹ Also in Paris, President Eyadema of Togo - a member of the Conseil de l'Entente since December 1965 - had declared himself in favour of an extraordinary meeting of OCAM on the war. This followed Biafra's reference to the francophone grouping as an acceptable convenor for peace talks.² The announcement that delegates from Biafra and the FMG had agreed, during their talks in London, on Kampala as a venue for peace discussions, made Eyadema's suggestion redundant.³

A meeting of the Conseil de l'Entente was to take place at a time when the talks in Kampala were clearly failing to achieve any result. Its coming discussion of the civil war in Nigeria therefore became a matter of serious concern to the FMG. Accordingly Gowon flew to Lome to meet Eyadema on 27 May. The importance of this move is best illustrated by the fact that it was Gowon's first trip outside Nigeria since the Aburi talks in Ghana in January 1967. Gowon briefed Eyadema on the stalemate at Kampala and warned him that

1. See infra., chapter V.

2. Dakar Matin, 11 May 1968.

3. Le Monde, 11-12 May 1968.

the FMG would oppose any peace move that did not respect the terms of the 1967 Kinshasa resolution.¹ Gowon's insistence that no initiative could be acceptable which did not respect previous OAU charter decisions obviously influenced the proceedings of the Conseil de l'Entente meeting. This saw the birth of an attempt to revive the CCN, and led to the Niamey and Addis Ababa talks in July and August - September 1968. Divisions within the Conseil de l'Entente were to develop as Houphouët Boigny played an active role in de Gaulle's decision to supply small arms to Biafra.

On 10-11 September, two days before the beginning of the Algiers OAU summit, Houphouët Boigny met the heads of state of the Entente in Ouagadougou. The meeting saw another attempt at making the member states revise their policy towards the conflict. On 9 September de Gaulle had suggested at a press conference that Nigeria might become a confederation. This proposal failed to secure support at Ouagadougou and at Algiers. The idea of a confederation appeared unrealistic, given Ojukwu's intransigent contention that 'our survival cannot be separated from the sovereign independence of our state'.²

The Biafran leadership's uncompromising stand can only be understood in the light of Ojukwu's high expectations of full diplomatic and material support from France. Gowon had announced a final military push against Biafra on 24 August and this time his prediction that the war would be over 'within the next four weeks'³ was on the verge of being confirmed. On 4 September, Aba and the railway junction at Owerri had surrendered to the Federal troops and

1. Stremlau, The International Politics..., p. 183.

2. Address at Addis Ababa on 5 August 1968 in Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict..., ii, p. 271.

3. Gowon, Ibid., ii, p. 317.

when the OAU meeting began, Owerri was under siege. Biafra was now merely a rectangle, 60 miles long and 30 miles wide, with refugees clogging the roads and a death toll at a soaring rate because of starvation and air raids.¹

Between July and September 1968, African states such as Tunisia, Senegal, Dahomey, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia had expressed readiness to mediate in the conflict, publicly or when their leaders had met Biafran envoys.^a But they had all insisted that Biafra should make some concessions prior to the Algiers Conference. These should take the form of a loose arrangement with Nigeria so as to enable the mediators to press the FMG to revise its stance on a settlement. At the OAU heads of state meeting in Algiers during 13-16 September, the four states which had recognized Biafra, found themselves particularly isolated. Strong pressure from Algeria, Morocco, Guinea, Mali and the Sudan failed to prevent a debate on the Nigerian crisis but succeeded in blocking an invitation to Biafran representatives to attend the assembly meeting.² Ojukwu's adamant opposition to any peaceful settlement of the conflict short of Biafra's independence caused statesmen who might otherwise have supported a confederal arrangement to acquiesce in pressure for the adoption of a resolution supporting the FMG. On the eve of the Conference, the FMG announced the establishment of an International Observer Team.³ The Team was to report on the conduct of the Federal troops in the offensive and thereby refute allegations that the Ibos were being subjected to genocide. Military victory over Biafra was

1. Cervenka, The Nigerian Civil War..., pp. 64-5.

2. See the account of the Conference in G.Akuchu, 'The Organisation of African Unity Peace Making Machinery and the Nigerian-Biafran Conflict' (Denver Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1974, mimeo), pp. 179-80.

3. Financial Times, 30 August 1968.

expected to be achieved in a matter of days and now came to be seen as the only possible solution to the conflict.

Usher Assouan, who represented Houphouët Boigny at the summit, tabled a resolution which urged both sides to cease fire and negotiate a settlement.¹ It also called on all concerned to co-operate in delivering relief supplies. The resolution eventually adopted by all states, except the four which had recognized Biafra, included instead an Algerian amendment which reinforced the already strong endorsement of the FMG viewpoint. The Biafrans were asked to co-operate with the FMG in restoring peace and unity in Nigeria.² The FMG was advised to proclaim a general amnesty once the fighting was over. OAU and UN members were also asked to refrain from 'any action detrimental to the peace, unity and integrity of Nigeria', a point clearly directed to the four countries which had recognized Biafra.

Houphouët Boigny's last attempt to mobilize the francophone bloc over the Nigerian issue was made during the OCAM summit meeting held at Kinshasa at the end of January 1969. The rift between members of the francophone group from Central and Equatorial Africa was the main item on the agenda. In order to improve relations between the two Congos, Rwanda, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad, it was decided that a series of missions of conciliation would travel to these countries. After Houphouët Boigny raised the Nigerian issue it was similarly agreed that a mission would travel to Nigeria to attempt to promote reconciliation.³ It was decided that Diori Hamani and Mobutu would go to Nigeria and try to meet both sides.⁴

1. West Africa, 21 September 1968, 1117.

2. Resolution in Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict...., ii, p. 328.

3. Financial Times, 30 January 1969.

4. President Tombalbaye of Chad in Sunday Post, 2 February 1969; Dakar Matin, 3 February 1969.

The fact that both were members of the CCN reflected the determination of the majority of OCAM states to remain within the framework of the OAU resolutions. Their attitude again underlined Houphouët Boigny's isolation in francophone Africa. The Kinshasa mediation proposal never materialized as, not surprisingly, the FMG felt 'that the OAU is capable of handling the Nigerian crisis'.¹

Houphouët Boigny's failure to convince the Conseil de l'Entente and the OCAM to bypass OAU resolutions on the Nigerian civil war confirmed Ivory Coast's political isolation. Then, when the Monrovia Conference of the CCN opened in April 1969, Houphouët Boigny refused to take up Tubman's offer to attend the Conference as an observer. Bitterly critical of the lack of neutrality of the CCN, he requested the status of a full participant arguing that it had 'only people who support the Nigerian side and nobody for the Biafran side'.²

Ivorian diplomatic initiatives near the end of the war turned almost exclusively towards non-African powers, especially through the UN. They now attempted to secure a resumption of ICRC relief flights to Biafra, interrupted in June 1969, as well as the imposition of a cease-fire. In this respect, Ivory Coast's policy was very different from that of Tanzania, which was clearly hoping for an African settlement of the conflict when the OAU heads of state met at Addis Ababa in September 1969.

Unlike the two previous OAU meetings, this Conference discussed the Nigerian conflict at length. The newly elected president of the Organization, Ahidjo, considered that the Nigerian issue affected Africa's destiny and thought it urgent to find a

1. Rear Admiral Wey in Daily Times, 4 February 1969.

2. Radio Abidjan in French on 18 April 196, BBC MEA, 3053/B/4.

solution in accordance with the OAU charter. As the Addis Ababa meeting began, the violence of the confrontation over the Nigerian crisis was illustrated by Nyerere's release of a pamphlet highly critical of the OAU. This he argued, had been established 'to serve the people of Africa', and not to act as 'a trade union of African heads of state'.¹ Nyerere therefore urged them to:

... ask Nigeria to stop more killing now and to deal with the problem by argument not death. Justice is indivisible. Africa and the OAU must act accordingly.

In return Enahoro, who accompanied Gowon to the Conference, castigated Nyerere's views in a statement later released under the telling title 'That's false, Nyerere!'.² In contrast to the early polarization of the Conference, Gowon's speech to the Assembly on 6 September showed moderation and opened the door to attempts at mediation outside the Conference hall:

Any organisation interested in offering its good services must, first of all, adopt an attitude to the vexed question of secession. This is the only question that divides the secessionist leaders from the rest of Nigeria...I have had occasion to declare publicly before that the constitutional settlement which will follow the war is a matter for Nigerian leaders from all parts of the country to decide in a constituent assembly. We are, therefore, fighting a war against armed rebellion and secession. It is thus not possible for us to compromise on the principle of the territorial integrity of Nigeria.³

The private discussion which took place the next day between Gowon and Nyerere - the only statesman representing a country which had recognized Biafra - subsequently appeared as a turning-point in the Conference. Nyerere withdrew his polemic pamphlet. He also addressed the CCN, which was told that Tanzania's position was being misunderstood, for it believed that a cessation of hostilities in

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1. In Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria...., ii, p. 438-9.
 2. Ibid., ii, p. 439 ff.
 3. Ibid., ii, p. 428 .

Nigeria ought to be followed by talks with Biafra to determine their future relations 'within the framework of a united Nigeria'.¹ This attitude, supported by the Zambian delegates, was clearly different from that of Ivory Coast, which simply refused to meet the CCN.² This was because Ivory Coast, in addition to its distrust of the capacity of the CCN to mediate, did not share Nyerere's views on the preservation of Nigeria's unity. Like Gabon's representative, Usher Assouan remained committed to the arrangement of a peace Conference between both sides after a temporary cease-fire.^a

At the CCN meeting, progress was made when Gowon pledged the FMG to a cease-fire, provided that Biafra would agree to negotiations intended to preserve the territorial integrity of Nigeria.³ This would allow negotiations between Biafra and the FMG to start on a new footing. Indeed, the reference to Nigeria's territorial integrity seemed to allow for some kind of confederal arrangement adapted to the Nigerian context. Nyerere subsequently sent a message to Ojukwu, inviting him to come to Addis Ababa while the CCN met.⁴ On 9 September, Nyerere announced that he had received a reply from the Biafran leader, who was ready to go anywhere for talks with the FMG provided a cease-fire was arranged beforehand.⁵ No mention was made of Biafra's having agreed to negotiate on the basis of Nigeria's territorial integrity, but Nyerere believed that Biafra would be prepared to renounce secession once guarantees for its safety were given. U Thant, who attended the Conference, was

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1. Guardian, and Financial Times, 9 September 1969.
 2. Stremlau, The International Politics....., p. 351.
 3. The Observer, 14 September 1969.
 4. Daily Telegraph, 9 September 1969.
 5. Guardian, 10 September 1969.

also very optimistic and predicted the adoption of 'some substantive recommendation by the OAU which will be an advance on resolutions of previous years'.¹

Ojukwu's silence on the issue of Nigeria's territorial integrity probably helped determine the Nigerian delegation's radical change of attitude a few hours later. All hopes for a cease-fire and peace settlement were dashed when Enahoro explained that 'you cannot separate the question of a cessation of hostilities from the general question of the unity and territorial integrity of Nigeria'.² Mistrust was also expressed about Nyerere's good faith and attempts to bring about a solution. On his way back to Nigeria, Gowon made it clear that a cease-fire merely followed by peace talks could not be acceptable for the FMG.³ Before Ojukwu's lack of commitment on the issue, Gowon had possibly not seen the implications of his earlier reference to the 'territorial integrity' of Nigeria. If this were indeed so, the FMG's change of attitude was comparable to what had happened after the Aburi talks. There, none of the participants except Ojukwu had fully realized the dramatic implications for the unity of Nigeria in the agreement which they had signed. It was only in Lagos that civil servants had pointed out the dangers involved in the proposal agreed upon.⁴

Ivory Coast's angry relations with the OAU flared up a few weeks after the Addis Ababa meeting, when Usher Assouan's consultations with various African states for the discussion of the Nigerian crisis in the UN failed to achieve any result. In retaliation, the Ivorian Foreign Minister announced that Ivory Coast

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Guardian, 11 September 1969.

4. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict...., ii, pp. 340-5.

refused to support UN resolutions on Portugal's colonial wars or on apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia.¹ He argued that Africans could not ask non-African powers to put an end to colonialism and racism in Africa when they were unable to put an end to the killing of Africans by other Africans.

2. The weakening of francophone links in West Africa.

Nigeria's increasing oil wealth and international power, along with the weakening of francophone links, were the two major determinants of West African relations after the end of the civil war. Changing patterns of relations between francophone countries reflected a shift in their ties with France which led to the renegotiation of the co-operation agreements during 1972-1975. Francophone institutions like the Conseil de l'Entente and the OCAM were also affected. The Conseil de l'Entente became increasingly a non-political organisation meant to promote technical co-operation. This was not the case within the OCAM where political conflicts led to the departure of several member-states during 1972-1973.

The Conseil de l'Entente

Ivory Coast's policy in the Nigerian civil war transformed relations within the Conseil de l'Entente. Houphouët Boigny's leadership was irrevocably shattered by his total commitment to the independence of Biafra. During the war, Upper Volta, Togo and Niger had not only refused to follow the Ivorian policy line, they had also given open and active support to the FMG. In the year after the end of the war in Nigeria, political dissent within the Conseil de l'Entente increased when Ivory Coast proposed 'dialogue' with South

1. Le Monde, 17 October 1969.

Africa. None of the member-states of the Conseil agreed to support the suggestion when it was discussed at the 1971 OAU Addis Ababa summit. After 1972 policy changes such as closer diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, China and East European countries, and the break-off of relations with Israel plus increased support for Arab countries, caused further rifts between Ivory Coast and its partners. Significant political transformations also took place in relations between West African states. To the conservative regimes of francophone Africa, Mali, Ghana and Guinea no longer appeared threatening. Thus, much of the political rationale behind groupings such as the Conseil de l'Entente and the OCAM was no longer valid. Increasingly, they took on the appearance of obsolete structures primarily geared towards the preservation of close links with France.¹ The Entente remained intact because it evolved into a loose functionally-based association. Entente summit meetings were held at longer intervals. Relations between member-states became increasingly confined to technical co-operation. The activities of the Fond d'Entraide et de Garantie des Emprunts du Conseil de l'Entente captured most of the attention of the Administrative Secretariat in Abidjan.² The Fond was designed to promote economic harmonization within the Conseil de l'Entente by stimulating the inflow of foreign private and public capital towards poorer members. Accordingly, financial guarantees as well as loans for special investment projects were provided. As in the past, Ivory Coast supplied most of the resources

1. On the crisis of the OCAM see S. Diallo, 'L'OCAM', Jeune Afrique, 4 March 1972, 26-28; le Monde, 26 April, 28 April, 3 July, 6 July 1973.
2. In June 1966 the Fond d'Entraide succeeded the Fond de Solidarité which had ceased to function since the Dahomey-Niger crisis in 1963.

of the Fond d'Entraide (74% between 1967 and 1970).¹

The Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest

By 1970 the economic imbalance between Ivory Coast on the one hand, and Dahomey, Niger and Upper Volta on the other hand led to increasing dissatisfaction on the part of the latter countries. An introductory report prepared for the March 1970 meeting of the Conseil de l'Entente in Ouagadougou remarked about relations within the group:

...beaucoup de choses restent à faire... sous peine de voir les Etats au fil des ans, partir vers des horizons et des solutions différentes...
Il n'existe que peu de possibilités de coopération industrielle entre les Etats. Il ne s'agit pas de les gaspiller. Cela implique de la part de la Côte d'Ivoire... une étude attentive de chaque projet qu'elle réalise pour connaître les répercussions possibles sur le marché de l'Entente et pour éviter de réaliser quelques projets qui pourraient être réalisés dans un autre Etat de l'Entente.²

In 1966 the Ivorian opposition to Houphouët Boigny's proposal for a joint nationality within the Conseil de l'Entente had set a clear limit to earlier hopes for closer co-operation. Inequalities in the economic benefits derived by the different member-states were compounded by the functioning of the Union Douanière des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (UDEAO) to which all Entente states but Togo belonged.³ In 1969, a study of trade relations within the Conseil de l'Entente revealed that lower tariff concessions applying to products from the six member-states of the UDEAO only benefited Ivory Coast's manufactured exports. Thus, Ivorian exports to

1. See table 5 in appendix.

2. Conseil de l'Entente, 'Réunion de Ouagadougou, 18-25 Mars 1970, Présentation du Dossier' (1970, mimeo), p. 1.

3. The UDEAO was a free trade area set up in 1959 and revised in 1966. It remained largely inoperative due to its members' adoption of independent customs policies.

Upper Volta, Niger and Dahomey in 1967 involved loss of customs revenue of 6%, 3.7% and 3.1% respectively of their total customs revenue.¹ Understandably, when the UDEAO states met at Bamako in May 1970 to discuss the issue, the continuation of past arrangements was excluded. The protocol of agreement for the creation of a CEA0 which they signed brought the UDEAO to an end. In its place it was hoped to create a free trade zone and also to promote common industrialization and infrastructure projects which would benefit Ivory Coast and Senegal's poorer partners. Proposals to establish the CEA0 remained in abeyance until the reconciliation between Houphouët Boigny and Senghor in December 1971. At a time when Houphouët Boigny's policy of 'dialogue' with South Africa was causing Ivory Coast to be increasingly isolated in West Africa, it was Senghor's influence that ensured the attendance of all the states of the former UDEAO at the second CEA0 Conference held in Bamako in July 1972.

Ivory Coast's attempt to create the CEA0 has to be seen in the context of the failure of the 1965-66 proposals to develop trade within the Conseil de l'Entente and the UDEAO. The creation of the CEA0 was therefore expected to provide better investment opportunities and market outlets to foreign investors in Ivory Coast.² Prominent also in Ivory Coast's policy towards the CEA0 was the desire to create a francophone economic grouping which would protect Ivory Coast from Nigeria's economic competition and political influence. It was feared that this would follow the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), of which Nigeria was an active proponent since the end of the civil war.

1. Losses amounted to 210 million CFAF (Upper Volta), 140 million CFAF (Niger) and 100 million (Dahomey); République Française, Secrétariat d'Etat aux Affaires Etrangères, Les Echanges à l'Intérieur de l'Entente (Paris, 1969), pp. 42-3.

2. Ivory Coast's Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Konan Bedié in Afrique-Industrie Information, 1 March 1972, 571.

Plans for the creation of ECOWAS derived from specialized meetings of the West African states held under the aegis of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in the mid 1960's. These had led to the organization of the Monrovia summit of April 1968. It was boycotted by Ivory Coast, Niger and Dahomey as well as Togo, all anxious to study more carefully the implications for the francophone states of the proposed ECOWAS treaty.¹ Since 1960 francophone states had developed a marked distrust of the ECA where their close ties with France and their association with the EEC through the Yaounde Convention had become the object of frequent criticism. In his thesis, Kallon has described the unhappy relations between francophones and anglophones within the ECA in the mid-1960's:

The whole dispute over the association agreement [to the EEC] has often been only a surrogate for the opposition of the Anglophone Africans to the connection with France... The Secretariat itself is dominated by English-speaking Africans who tend to be hostile to French influence in African affairs...

The Francophones consider the ECA as an exclusive club controlled by Anglophones... The Secretariat believes that it needs the successful implementation of the kind of multinational schemes the Francophones oppose if it is to regain respect and an important role in Africa.²

At the Monrovia Summit Conference convened by the ECA in April 1968, four francophone countries did not attend. Furthermore most of the other francophone delegations were not led by their heads of state. Explaining why he did not attend, Houphouët Boigny expressed his belief that the meeting would be dominated by the 'Anglo-Saxons'.³

The Monrovia Conference achieved little beyond the adoption of a protocol for the creation of a West African economic

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1. Le Figaro, 26 April 1968.
 2. W. Kallon, 'Patterns of Interstate Relations and the Prospects for Regional Unity in West Africa' (George Washington Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1973, mimeo), pp.91-2.
 3. Quoted in West Africa, 27 August 1971, 979.

grouping.¹ None of the meetings planned within the next year was to be held and the whole project was dormant when the FMG took it up again in 1970. Various contacts were made during the summer of 1970, and again on the occasion of the Nigerian independence celebrations of 1 October, which Tubman and Senghor attended. As he flew back to Monrovia, Tubman stopped briefly in Abidjan but failed to secure Houphouët Boigny's support for the project. Once more, this fell into oblivion, this time until April 1972. Gowon's visit to Togo was then the occasion of the announcement of a diplomatic offensive to promote ECOWAS through the creation of a Togo-Nigeria union, from which it would develop.²

The Nigeria-Togo diplomatic offensive failed to prevent the adoption of the CEA0 charter at Bamako in July 1972. The issue, however, remained in the background of the Conference and nearly caused its collapse. During discussions, Niger, Mauritania and Dahomey insisted that the charter should not hamper their important bilateral relations with non-member states of the former UDEAO: Algeria and Nigeria for Niger, the Maghreb states for Mauritania, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria in the case of Dahomey.³ Another point of dissent which caused heated debates concerned tariff concessions, compensation arrangements and the establishment of a regional development fund. Mali, Upper Volta, Niger and Mauritania requested greater tariff concessions, partly to favour their own development and partly to balance the unequal relationship between coastal and landlocked states.

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1. Francophone-Anglophone divisions during the Conference are briefly discussed in J. Nti, 'Problems and Prospects of Regional Co-operation in West Africa' (Monrovia, 1969, mimeo), p.7.
 2. West Africa, 21 July 1972, 961.
 3. West Africa, 7 July 1972, 866-7.

Disagreement almost led to a breakup of the Conference, an outcome avoided by the signature of what was little more than an empty framework of agreement. It was agreed that the administrative structure of the CEA0 and its customs and tax regulations should be left open to amendments to be proposed by the seven member states. After several delays due to prolonged discussions of these points, the amended charter of the CEA0 was adopted in Abidjan on 19 April 1973.

Common membership from the same monetary zone had constituted the strongest incentive to the survival of the CEA0. Another factor had been the concern of landlocked states like Mali, Niger and Upper Volta, that Nigeria's ECOWAS project might lead to the adoption of free trade policies to the detriment of preference systems. To counter this, the new CEA0 charter offered not only development of trade links but also took into account the establishment of common projects in the fields of agriculture, industry, fishing and transport. These would be financed from a central development fund, whose resources were to be drawn from common external tariffs.¹

After its establishment under the Presidency of Diori Hamani, the CEA0 expressed readiness to consider wider membership to include non-francophone states of West Africa. Francophone states agreed to attend the first ministerial meeting designed to set up ECOWAS. This was held in Lome, from 10 to 15 December 1973. There, they insisted that ECOWAS should be an outward-looking community, within which sub-regional groupings such as the CEA0 should be allowed to pursue their activities.² The Lome meeting concluded with the

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1. For a description of CEA0 institutions see Bulletin de l'Afrique Noire, 2 May 1973, 14379-80.
 2. R.Onwuka, 'Development and Integration in West Africa: The Case of the Economic Community of West African States' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1976, mimeo), i, p. 119.

agreement of all the fourteen West African states that a second Conference should be convened in Niamey early in March 1974 to discuss revised proposals of a charter which experts were to draw up at Accra in January. But there were difficulties throughout because of the insistence of CEA0 states that the ECOWAS treaty should be compatible with the existence of their community. For this reason, the CEA0 had sought to secure postponement of the Accra meeting in order to study the compatibility of the CEA0 with the ECOWAS draft treaty adopted at Lome. The Accra Conference was eventually convened early in February but with no representatives from Ivory Coast, Niger, Upper Volta or Mauritania. The March meeting of ECOWAS had to be postponed since Niger did not appear willing to receive it under these circumstances. Instead, on 8 March the CEA0 which had started operating on 1 January met in Ouagadougou to reassert the readiness of its members to belong to ECOWAS, provided that the integrity of their new grouping would be preserved.¹

By 1974, Nigeria's low profile diplomacy in West Africa and its oil wealth constituted incentives to Ivory Coast's development of economic relations with its powerful neighbour. Ivory Coast could not expect to challenge successfully Nigeria's influence over its Togolese and Dahomean neighbours. Differences in size and wealth made this impossible. More importantly Nigeria had not turned out to be the radical states which Houphouët Boigny had thought would challenge Ivory Coast's socio-political commitments and favour the development of Soviet influence in West Africa. Since the resumption of diplomatic relations in 1971, Nigeria had supplied an increasing quantity of crude oil to Ivory Coast. Total Nigerian

1. Le Moniteur Africain, 14 March 1974.

exports to Ivory Coast accounted for less than 3% of Ivory Coast's overall imports.¹ Nigerian supplies of crude oil, however, accounted for 44.8% of Ivorian crude oil imports for 1971 and 48.8% in 1972.² The high quality of the Nigerian crude, as well as cheap transport costs made it economically attractive for Ivory Coast. Nigeria came to be seen as a sound trading partner. In accordance with earlier pledges, Nigeria was to agree to sell crude oil to Ivory Coast at concessionary prices in June 1975.³

In January 1975, the second ministerial meeting of the fourteen West African states had agreed upon a revised ECOWAS treaty. It proclaimed respect for pre-existing treaties and therefore guaranteed the autonomy of the CEA0 group within the ECOWAS.⁴ The signing of the ECOWAS treaty by all CEA0 member states in May 1975 reflected a partial success for the Nigerian policy of bridging the gap between francophone and anglophone states. The existence of the CEA0 delimited this rapprochement. The CEA0 provided Ivory Coast with a structure of privileged economic co-operation, likely to attract foreign investors concerned at the small size of its market but interested by the country's attractive incentives to foreign investment and its continuing political stability since the early 1950's.

1. See table 19 in appendix.

2. République de Côte d'Ivoire, Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, 'Situation Economique de la Côte d'Ivoire 1972' (Abidjan, n.d., mimeo), p.C-51; République de Côte d'Ivoire, Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, 'Supplément Trimestriel au Bulletin Mensuel de Statistiques' (Abidjan, 1972, mimeo), p. 46.

3. O.Aluko, 'Oil at Concessionary Prices for Africa; A Case Study in Nigerian Decision Making', African Affairs, LXXV, 301 (October 1976), 443.

4. Le Monde Diplomatique, October 1975.

3. Nigerian Diplomacy and ECOWAS.

The civil war had a profound effect on Nigeria's external relations. It necessitated an increased interest in African affairs, This derived partly from the fact that friendly relations with Britain went sour because of its fence-sitting at the beginning of the conflict. As Nigerian diplomats pointed out, Whitehall only changed policy when the Federal troops took over control of the Bonny oil terminal.¹ Western countries gave the FMG increasing support as the war went on. They did so for various reasons but all of them were influenced by the support which African countries like Algeria, the UAR, Niger, Ethiopia and Cameroun gave to the FMG. In the case of France, de Gaulle's support of Biafra, which was crucial though limited, became increasingly reluctant when it was clear that Ivory Coast and Gabon's policies in the conflict were not being followed by other African countries.

The FMG's post-war policy in West Africa originated from the need felt during the civil war to establish closer relations with francophone Africa. The military and diplomatic support given to Biafra by Ivory Coast and Gabon had constituted much greater threats than Tanzanian and Zambian assistance. Indeed, the formers' aid to Biafra was organised from the nearby airports of Abidjan and Libreville. It was backed by France which retained much influence in the francophone states surrounding Nigeria. Early in 1969, Dahomey was used as a staging post for relief activities set up by the ICRC against the policy of the FMG. The event highlighted the dangers which being surrounded by a group of united francophone states could involve for Nigeria's security. Discussing this issue in June

1. In Stremlau, The International Politics..., p. 76.

1969 Nigerian ambassadors recommended that:

Lagos [should] seek to undermine OCAM's solidarity by strengthening bilateral ties with Nigeria's Francophone neighbours and by promoting the creation of a new bilingual economic grouping in West Africa that would supplant OCAM and open new markets for Nigeria's industrial products.¹

Accordingly Nigeria's foreign policy was committed between 1970 and 1975 to the creation of the ECOWAS. This was meant to overcome francophone - anglophone divisions and thereby widen Nigeria's influence in West Africa.

The strengthening of bilateral ties.

The FMG's policy of promoting closer links with its immediate neighbours was in sharp contrast to the policy of Balewa's Government. Nigeria's policy of functional co-operation with its neighbours had then been almost exclusively concerned with enforcing mutual respect of state sovereignty and territorial control. Concern at the preservation of the status quo in and around Nigeria had been conducive to preserving and reinforcing the unity of the francophone states. The FMG's increasing power over the former Nigerian regions since their division into twelve states in 1967 gave Nigerian foreign policy a powerful stimulus, especially with respect to relations with neighbouring states. The twelve new states could not challenge the unity of the Federation through independent diplomatic initiatives, as the former Northern Premier had done between 1960 and 1966. One result of the FMG's dynamic policy of establishing closer links with francophone West African states was the development of new relations with countries like Dahomey and Niger. This threatened neither the unity of Nigeria nor that of its neighbours. It greatly

1. Ibid., p. 380

contributed to the establishment of more confident relations which were reflected in the numerous state visits which Gowon paid to, and received from, West African leaders after 1970.¹ In August 1974, the balance sheet of the Nigerian policy of increased bilateral co-operation with neighbouring states was far more positive than under Balewa. Nigeria's External Affairs Commissioner Okoi Arikpo explained that:

Within the past few years, Nigeria has concluded trade agreements with seven neighbouring countries in the West African sub-region, Air services agreements with five, and economic co-operation agreements with another five. We have also established telecommunication links with five OAU member-countries in the sub-region, and joint customs posts with three others... Despite the calamitous effects of the drought on the Nigerian population... cash grants of over four million Naira have been made available to eight member-countries of the OAU, in addition to over a million worth of grain and other foodstuffs donated to the Republic of Niger. Nigeria continues to make the facilities at her ports and airfields available to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation free of charge for the purpose of transporting relief material to the neighbouring countries.²

Nigeria's readiness to contribute financially to joint projects in accordance with its larger resources, constituted a very important feature of its policy of favouring the developing closer ties with West African states. Accordingly, the FMG contributed to the reactivation of regional co-operation through the Lake Chad Commission by actively contributing to the creation of a Development Fund.³

Nigeria's establishment of closer relations with Dahomey, Niger, Chad, Cameroun and Togo, provided the basis for its successful launching of ECOWAS in 1973. The development of Nigerian policy initiatives originally relied on the continuation of personal

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1. Between January 1970 and August 1971 Gowon visited twelve African countries.
 2. O.Arikpo, 'Nigeria and the Organisation of African Unity', Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, I, 1(July 1975), 8-9.
 3. West Africa, 28 June 1976, 930.

links established by Gowon during the war, with Diori Hamani, Eyadema, and Ahidjo. The FMG improved its relations with Dahomey, whose President, Emile Zinsou, had been overthrown by a coup d'état in December 1969. This policy accounted for the Dahomean withdrawal from the CEA0 in April 1973. The continuation of the relations spéciales which Nigeria and Togo had established during the civil war were of the utmost importance in helping to bridge the francophone-anglophone division in West Africa. Thus Gowon's visit to Lome in April 1972 took place on the occasion of the Togolese independence celebrations. More important, these coincided with the holding of an OCAM summit in the Togolese capital. Gowon thus found the opportunity to hold discussions on ECOWAS with francophone statesmen and met Houphouët Boigny for the first time. The views of the latter on West African integration could not be overlooked. The subsequent decision of Eyadema and Gowon to announce a joint Togo-Nigeria union failed to prevent the creation of the CEA0, but their initiatives affected its evolution. Pressure to open it to anglophone states was brought by Diori Hamani during the Bamako Conference. This partly accounted for the need to consider amendments to the charter before its final adoption at Abidjan in April 1973. Within the following months, improving relations between Nigeria and Ivory Coast led to Houphouët Boigny's support of these developments. The subsequent decision of the CEA0 to participate in ECOWAS was, however, prompted by changes in relations between francophone West Africa and Nigeria, following the latter's emergence as the chief negotiator of the Lome convention with the EEC on behalf of both anglophone and francophone African states.

The Lome Convention

As noted above, the association of the EAMA with the EEC under the Yaounde conventions of 1963 and 1969 was a long-standing source of dissent between francophones and anglophones in West Africa. The Yaounde conventions were criticized in Nigeria, as well as in the ECA, on the grounds that they were the legacies of arrangements built into the Treaty of Rome during the colonial period. The EAMA's access to European markets at special tariff preference for agricultural commodities commonly exported by other African states, and the exclusive financing of EAMA development projects by the EDF, were major sources of resentment and division during the ECA Conferences for the creation of a common grouping of West African states. In 1967, at a meeting in Dakar, ECA consultants presented a preliminary draft for the creation of an economic community of West Africa. It suggested the adoption of common policies for selected West African imports and exports. However, the implementation of the project involved the creation of a common monetary and external tariff zone, which would have meant the abolition of the UDEAO/EAMA preference system.¹ This was considered unacceptable by the francophone states. The issue was closely related to that of their close ties with France through the franc zone and the co-operation agreements which would have had to be reconsidered.

Nigeria's hostility to association with the EEC was partly the result of its own unhappy experience. After encountering much opposition from France, francophone Africa and Great Britain,² an

1. Onwuka, 'Development and Integration in West Africa...', i, p.103.

2. On the attitude of Great Britain see Ojedokun, 'Nigeria's Relations with the Commonwealth...', pp.490-3; on the attitudes of France and francophone Africa see supra., p.25 ff

association agreement was signed in July 1966. Three years later, it expired without having been implemented, due to its non-ratification by Luxembourg and France, both of which were on bad terms with Nigeria. After the end of the civil war, Nigeria no longer saw the need for association. Tariff preferences enjoyed by the EAMA had not adversely affected Nigerian exports towards the EEC.¹ Besides, Nigeria considered suggestions of Euro-African association irrelevant, since oil had become its major export to Europe (80% in 1973). Early in 1973, when the issue of association between the EAMA and Commonwealth members with the enlarged EEC came up at a meeting Nigeria's Finance Commissioner, Shehu Shagari, discounted the possibility of association.

Within a few months, however, the Nigerian attitude to the EEC was reconsidered. Following the OAU Addis Ababa summit meeting in May 1973, Nigeria brought together in Lagos the Trade Ministers from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. After another meeting in July, Nigeria emerged as the leader of the new ACP group. It was Nigeria that began to negotiate on the ACP's behalf with the EEC in October 1973.² This policy of the FMG reflected a tactical shift, rather than a dramatic change of attitude. The negotiation of an agreement served Nigeria's wider interest of promoting unity between francophone and anglophone West Africa.³ When Arikpo had paid his first visit to Ivory Coast in March 1973 he had contended that ECOWAS should be the first step

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1. This was even true of France which remained during the civil war Nigeria's main export outlet for groundnuts. In 1967, 1968 and 1969 France purchased respectively 29.6%, 22.4% and 43.8% of Nigerian groundnut exports; computed from World Bank, Country Economic Report, Nigeria: Options for Long Term Development (Baltimore, 1974), pp.213-4; Marchés Tropicaux, 31 May 1969, 1508; Moniteur Officiel du Commerce International, 10 December 1970, 5128.
 2. For a description of ACP negotiations see C.Stent, 'Eurafrique, An Analysis of the Relations between the European Economic Community and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1958-1975' (Oxford Univ. B.Phil.thesis, 1977, mimeo), p. 71 ff.
 3. J.Mayall, 'Oil and Nigerian Foreign Policy', African Affairs, LXXV, 300(July 1976), 320-21.

towards the opening of negotiations with the EEC.¹ This viewpoint received no support from Ivory Coast officials. They were particularly distrustful of the Nigerian stance owing to the FMG's proclaimed opposition to association with the EEC.

Nigeria's emergence as a spokesman for the ACP group was a logical choice. Nigeria held the Presidency of the OAU during 1973-1974. It also appeared as a natural leader because of its growing oil revenues at a time when most West African states were struck by the drought. Pressure for the EAMA's agreement to common negotiations with the associables was due to the forthcoming expiry of the Yaounde convention in January 1975. The EAMA could not expect its renewal independently from any other agreement concerning the associables. Indeed, at the Paris summit meeting held in 1972, the EEC had decided that similar privileges would be granted to the EAMA and the associables. The fourfold increase in oil prices in October 1973 made Nigeria even more pre-eminent among the ACP when negotiations opened with the EEC that same month.² As before, under the Balewa Government in 1964, Nigeria's foregoing of benefits from the new EDF was welcomed by francophone states like Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta and Niger.

The oil crisis considerably reinforced the bargaining power of Nigeria vis à vis the EEC. Nigeria did not have to seek any development of its trade with EEC members who, on the contrary - France included - were concerned at retaining access to the Nigerian oil market.

1. AFP/BA., 21 March 1973.

2. O.Aluko, 'Nigeria and the European Economic Community', International Studies, XXXIII, 3(July 1974), 467.

The signature of the Lome convention in February 1975 constituted the decisive step towards the formation of the ECOWAS. Nigeria's oil wealth had played an important role in changing West African attitudes towards the proposed community. Besides financial aid to its drought-stricken neighbours, the FMG had promised to supply crude oil at concessionary prices to those West African countries which had refineries. The new wealth of the country could also be held responsible for Nigeria's commitment to provide ten million dollars a year to the ECOWAS Development Fund during the next three years.¹ The creation of the fund had not originally been foreseen by Nigeria, which favoured a free trade zone. It resulted from a later awareness that the success of ECOWAS would be largely dependent on the establishment of an institution promoting solidarity and development projects favourable to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The signing of the ECOWAS treaty in May 1975 marked an important evolution in Nigeria's relations with its francophone neighbours. Yet it by no means implied the total disappearance of the francophone-anglophone division. This was the result of changing patterns of international ties in West Africa. Under the pressure created by the civil war, Nigeria had become an active power and, following the oil crisis, a country of international importance. Meanwhile, the francophone bloc lost much of its political cohesion as a result of increasing political dissent between member-states. This was reflected most clearly in the changing relationships which developed between Nigeria and its two neighbours, Niger and Dahomey during and after the civil war.

1. West Africa, 19 May 1975, 559.

CHAPTER V

Nigeria's new relationship with Niger

Events surrounding the coup of 29 July 1966 in Nigeria made it clear that its break-up would affect relations between the Northern Region and Niger Hausaland. Late in May, the outburst of violence against Easterners living in Kano, Zaria and Kaduna was accompanied by the outcry of araba, a Hausa expression meaning 'let us part'.¹ During the following week, the issue of secession was central in discussions which the military governor of the North, Hassan Katsina, held with emirs and chiefs in Kaduna. They debated and made recommendations on the FMG's recent decrees for the unification of the Nigerian civil service. These were measures which had prompted demonstrations and riots against Easterners accused of trying to assert their control over the entire Federation. On 29 July, revenge for the assassination of Balewa and Bello was one of the predominant goals of the Northern mutineers, who killed Ironsi; the other was secession. The mutineers remained divided over this last issue when they handed over power to Gowon a few hours after the coup. The attitude of the new Nigerian head of state towards Nigeria's unity was also unclear. It has been argued that Gowon's first speech of 1 August intended to announce a break-up of the Federation, but was hastily revised at the last minute.² In any event, there is clear evidence of combined pressure from Federal civil servants and the British and American Ambassadors in Nigeria to that effect.³

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1. M.Dent, 'The Military and the Politicians', in S.K. Panter-Brick, ed, Nigerian Politics and Military Rule: Prelude to the Civil War(London, 1970), 84-5.
 2. The unbalanced construction of the central part of Gowon's speech is striking; see document reprinted in Kik-Greene, Crisis and Conflict...., i, p. 197
 3. Gowon's account in Stremlau, The International Politics...., pp. 35-6.

Secession was distinctly mentioned in the Northern delegation's first proposals at the Conference on the future of the Nigerian Federation that Gowon convened in Lagos in September 1966. The Northern delegation originally held views similar to those of its Eastern counterpart. It suggested in particular a transformation of Nigeria into a loose Federation of autonomous states with a right to individual secession.¹ Strong pressure for revision from the minority groups of the Middle Belt area, later forced the Northern delegation to make new recommendations for the division of Nigeria's four regions into smaller states.

Northern Nigeria's potential secession was of direct concern to Niger because reunion with the Hausa areas of Niger would be the logical consequence. This idea lurked in the minds of those who heard the speech made by Hassan Katsina sometime in November 1966 at a party in the emir of Katsina's palace.^a This was on the occasion of a polo tournament, traditionally held at this time of the year, and in the presence of a Niger delegation from Maradi. The speaker emphasized that on both sides of the frontier people wore the same dress and worshipped the same God. They also spoke the same language and had intermarried for centuries. To loud applause, Hassan Katsina referred to the artificial frontier drawn by the colonial powers between Niger and Northern Nigeria. The speech was improvised and did not contain a single reference to Nigeria's unity.

1. Niger and the Nigerian civil war

Niger's support for the FMG's preservation of Nigeria's territorial integrity was expressed on radio Niamey within a few

1. See Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict....., i, pp. 60-1.

hours of the proclamation of Biafra's independence. Niger's Secretary of state for Foreign Affairs, Abdou Sidikou, stated that the conflict was 'purely a Nigerian affair' to which 'the Nigerians themselves must find a solution'.¹ Niger could not possibly remain indifferent to the situation in Nigeria. The division of the Northern region into six states had been decided by the FMG but had not yet been implemented.

There was no doubt that if Biafra were allowed to secede, the breaking up of the remaining parts of the Federation would follow. It was recalled that Awolowo had declared early in May:

If the Eastern region is allowed by acts of omission or commission to secede from or opt out of Nigeria, then the Western region and Lagos must also stay out of the Federation.²

Niger's commitment to the preservation of Nigeria's territorial integrity was also understandable in view of the political situation in the départements of the East and Centre of the country. Since independence, the Hausa people of Niger had been excluded from ruling the country by the Zerma-Songhrai group, and all the Sawaba MPs had lost their seats in the national assembly. In 1962, the Société Nationale de Commercialisation de l'Arachide (SONARA) had been given the monopoly in the commercialisation and export of groundnuts. This enabled increased tax on farmers by the state and caused deep resentment in Hausaland, where most of Niger's groundnuts were grown. In 1963, the expulsion of the Dahomeans working in the police and civil service had reinforced Zerma-Songhrai control of the administration. Suspicion of the Hausa population's loyalty to the Diori Hamani

1. Radio Niamey on 30 May 1967, BBC MEA, 2479/B/13.
2. Daily Times, 2 May 1967.

regime led to incidents like Jiratawa, which was bitterly remembered. The Hausa-Fulani's cultivation of groundnuts, and cattle raising activities, accounted for most of Niger's export resources. Together with the Tuareg and the Kanuri people in Niger, they represented over two thirds of the total population. None of these groups was, however, represented in the highest échelon of the PPN, the Politburo. Eight of the twelve members in Niger's most influential decision-making body were in fact Zerma-Songhai.¹

When the war broke out in Nigeria, the Hausa people of Niger strongly supported the FMG cause. They identified themselves with the aspirations of their Nigerian Hausa-Fulani 'brothers', whose influence they had fought and successfully resisted during the pre-colonial period.² Gowon became their hero. This situation caused serious concern in Niamey because it undermined the authority of the central government. As Sidikou once put it, 'nous sommes solidaires des gens du Nord [du Nigéria dans le conflit] mais nous leur demandons de ne pas [nous] imposer la loi du nombre'.³ Continuation of the war had the effect of reinforcing the attraction exerted by Nigeria on the population of the borderland. This political consideration accounted for the fact that from the early months of the war on Diori Hamani actively looked for a settlement to the conflict. This he hoped to achieve by an agreement that would preserve Nigeria's territorial integrity while giving some measure of autonomy to the former Eastern region.

Financial and economic considerations were other factors that prompted Niger's support for initiatives likely to restore peace rapidly

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1. R.Higgot and F.Fuglestad, 'The 1974 coup d'Etat in Niger: towards an explanation', Journal of Modern African Studies, XIII, 3(1975), 386.
 2. G.Nicolas, 'Crisis de l'Etat et Affirmation Ethnique en Afrique Noire Contemporaine', Revue Française de Science Politique, XXII, 5(1972), 1041.
 3. In le Niger, 5 January 1969.

in Nigeria. In 1966, the return of Ibo train drivers to Eastern Nigeria and the closure of the Kano-Port Harcourt line had curtailed railway traffic in Nigeria. Transport of troops and material after the war broke out caused an additional disruption of import/export trade via Nigeria. A vast proportion had to be re-routed through the harbours of Abidjan and Cotonou. Whereas 80% of Niger's groundnut exports were channelled through Lagos in the 1965-66 season, this figure fell, respectively, to 57% and 63% during the 1966-67 and 1967-68 seasons.¹ Export through Dahomey was far more costly. To meet requirements in the 1966-67 season, thirteen trailers of 25 tonnes each were purchased for the transport of groundnuts from Niger to the Parakou railway terminal.² From there, carriage to the coast was also more expensive than under the Opération Hirondelle. Indeed, transport costs of groundnuts to Cotonou were not balanced by equivalent returns of freight. As a result, traffic through Cotonou involved an average supplementary expenditure of 5,000 CFAF per tonne. As the war continued, falling groundnut prices and the first effects of the drought put increased pressure on Niger's finances.³

Diori Hamani's attempts to mediate

When, early in July 1967, an OAU intervention in the civil war was publicly advocated by some African statesmen, Diori Hamani remained cautious. He thought that the FMG was the 'legal Government [of Nigeria] recognized by all African countries' and believed that it would therefore be difficult 'to intervene [in the conflict] without

1. See table 3 in appendix.
2. SONARA, 'Rapport du Conseil d'Administration à l'Assemblée Générale des Actionnaires, Campagne 1966-1967' (Niamey, 1967, mimeo), p.6.
3. The volume of Niger's groundnut exports did more than double between the 1961-62 and 1968-69 seasons. The value of groundnut exports however increased by less than 50% in the same period. In 1969, it was estimated that the drought caused the loss of 50% and 75% of the livestock in central and eastern Niger respectively. Cattle prices had also fallen by 50% to 80% within a year; le Monde, 16 March and 10 July 1969.

being accused of interfering in Nigeria's internal affairs'.¹ Diori Hamani respected the FMG's viewpoint, but believed at the same time that it should agree to a discussion of the civil war at the forthcoming meeting of the OAU in Kinshasa. Early in September, Diori Hamani was among the group of seven statesmen who successfully prevailed upon the FMG to have the conflict discussed at Kinshasa.² Informal talks were held outside the Conference meeting and, on 13 September, a resolution on the war was formally adopted in the assembly. With the reluctant approval of the FMG, the CCN, which included six of the seven statesmen belonging to the previous group, was constituted. This institutionalized the attempt of the group of seven to find a peace solution.

Hopes which the creation of the CCN had raised in Africa were soon dashed. The CCN intended visiting Lagos immediately after the Conference but could only do so two months later, on 23 November. The FMG's reluctance to receive it was then patent in Gowon's opening remarks warning that 'your mission is not here to mediate'.³ At Kinshasa Awolowo had successfully opposed the use of words like 'mediation' or 'conciliation' to define the functions of the CCN. In accordance with this, the OAU resolution merely specified the CCN's mission as one to 'assure' Gowon 'of the assembly's desire for the territorial integrity, unity and peace of Nigeria'.⁴ This nebulous character of the CCN's role was an issue at the core of discussions in Lagos. Members of the CCN argued that they should be

1. Daily Times, 3 July 1967.

2. For a comprehensive account of these events see Stremlau, The International Politics...., p. 91 ff.

3. Z.Cervenka, The Organisation of African Unity and its Charter (London, 1969), p. 197.

4. Reprinted in Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict..., ii, p. 173.

allowed to establish contacts with the other side. Diori Hamani felt strongly about this and suggested that negotiations with Biafra should start 'from the main item which is the safeguarding of the national integrity of Nigeria and the rest would follow'.¹ He also considered that at this early stage relations between the components of the Federation should be left open for discussions between the FMG and Biafra. Gowon firmly rejected all suggestions of contact with Biafra in which CCN's role might be that of a mediator. The communiqué released by the CCN after the meeting could only endorse this position.

When Diori Hamani returned to Niamey, he did not try to hide his disappointment at the results of the meeting.² He, however, could not but remain committed to a settlement reached in full agreement with the FMG. Thus, following Nyerere's recognition of Biafra in April, he appealed for a CCN mediation. He suggested publicly that the CCN's role be transformed so that it could become 'une commission de conciliation'.³ After the failure of the London and Kampala talks, Diori Hamani's diplomacy actively contributed to this evolution.

On 7 June, Diori Hamani met Gowon in Sokoto, where they discussed possibilities of talks between Nigeria and Biafra under the aegis of the CCN.⁴ Almost simultaneously the issue was raised in Abidjan by Houphouët Boigny, who received a Biafran delegation from London. After further contacts between the two sides, through the CCN and the countries which had recognized Biafra, a meeting of the CCN was

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1. Minutes of the meeting of the CCN on 23 November 1967; quoted in G. Akuchu, 'The Organisation of African Unity Peace Making Machinery and the Nigerian-Biafran Conflict' (Denver Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1974, mimeo), p. 158.
 2. Le Monde, 27 November 1967.
 3. AFP/BA., 18 April 1968.
 4. See Stremlau, The International Politics...., p. 185.

convened in Niamey. The terms of the Committee's mission were not revised. Diori Hamani's personal diplomacy, however, was largely responsible for a significant change in the atmosphere of the meeting. Gowon and Ojuwku were invited to present separately their views on a settlement of the conflict. Preliminary talks then opened between the two sides with Diori Hamani as a chairman. They only lasted for six days until they reached a deadlock over the issue of creating relief routes for aid to Biafra. Little importance, however, was attached to this as it was widely believed that forthcoming talks at Addis Ababa would secure a peace settlement. Such optimism, known as the 'spirit of Niamey', was largely attributable to Diori Hamani's initiatives for favouring a rapprochement between the two delegations.

After the failure of the Addis Ababa talks in August-September 1968, Diori Hamani made a last attempt for a peace settlement during the CCN meeting at Monrovia in April 1969. Until the eve of the meeting, Diori Hamani hoped to link its opening to a cease-fire or at least an embargo on arms deliveries to both sides.¹ He had therefore canvassed for this in London and in Paris during March-April but found no positive response. Britain refused to interrupt its arms deliveries to the FMG despite strong pressure in parliament. In France, early in March, de Gaulle ordered an interruption of arms deliveries to Biafra. Early in April the decision was reconsidered in order to help Biafra to resist a Federal offensive against Umuahia. In view of this, chances for success at the Conference appeared slim when it opened. Gowon and Ojuwku, who had been expected to attend, found it impossible to fly to Monrovia. Ojukwu refused to leave Biafra at a time when Umuahia faced serious threat; Gowon could not

1. AFP/BA., 5 April 1969.

attend because of his wedding.

When he stopped briefly in Abidjan on his way to Monrovia, Diori Hamani nevertheless remained confident that the Conference could put an end to the fighting on the basis of what he called:

...une solution raisonnable au cours de laquelle les Nigériens définiront les perspectives d'évolution de leur pays dans un cadre pouvant être fédéral, unitaire ou confédéral.¹

Diori Hamani believed in the possibility of reaching an agreement along the lines of the Aburi talks. During his visit to London, this had been a point of dissent between him and the British Government. As Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart recalls, Diori Hamani, 'did not stick to the view that the unity of Nigeria was to be maintained'.² He thought that a loose arrangement could be made which would leave 'somewhat in the shadow' the question of the unity of Nigeria.

At Monrovia, the inaugural statement made on 17 April by the head of the Biafran delegation, Sir Louis Mbanefo, gave the impression that a compromise was now possible. It mentioned that 'immediate political unity [was an] impossibility'.³ The phrase suggested that Biafra was no longer strictly committed to independence and sovereignty and might consider retaining links with Nigeria. To explore possibilities of a negotiation, Tubman and Diori Hamani subsequently met Mbanefo, while Haile Selassie and Mobutu consulted with their Nigerian counterparts. They were to prepare a statement which could serve as a basis for further discussions. It was at this stage that Diori Hamani brought forward his idea of a settlement. With Tubman, he suggested that the Aburi agreement, which ought to have turned Nigeria into a confederation, should serve as a platform for the establishment of a statement acceptable to both sides in future negotiations.⁴

1. Le Niger, 21 April 1969.

2. Michael Stewart, Interview, London, 6 April 1975.

3. Markpress Release, GEN-575, 17 April 1969.

4. Account for Akuchu, 'The Organisation of African Unity...', p. 267.

After the discussions the Biafrans agreed in writing to 'initiate negotiations on the basis of the return to a normal situation in the country'.¹ These suggestions were not followed up because they were unacceptable to other members of the CCN as well as to the Nigerian delegation. On 22 April, the CCN released an amended declaration as a basis for future negotiations. Both sides were asked to accept a 'united Nigeria', a phrase earlier unacceptable to the Biafrans.² The Monrovia Conference was the last attempt Diori Hamani made to favour a peace settlement.

Niger's client relationship with Ivory Coast.

The most significant effect of Niger's policy in the civil war was its ending of Diori Hamani's client relationship with Houphouët Boigny. The Nigerian civil war was also important in what it produced, the first instance of Niger's open and active opposition to the policies of France and Ivory Coast in Africa. Diori Hamani later recalled:

Nous avons adopté en dépit de nos amitiés une attitude intransigeante contre la tentative de sécession dont était menacé notre grand voisin du sud, le Nigéria. L'histoire portera témoignage, j'en suis certain, des pressions que nous avons subies, de la résistance qu'il nous fallut opposer...pour appliquer notre politique de principe.³

Ivory Coast's recognition of Biafra was a drastic blow to the Abidjan-Niamey axis but this was not clear until a few months later. Houphouët Boigny's decision was a surprise for Diori Hamani to whom he had made no mention of such a move when they had met in Paris a few days before.⁴ In view of their longstanding friendship, Houphouët

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1. Quoted in Stremlau, The International Politics...., p. 317.
 2. The Times, 21 April 1969; Africa Confidential, 25 April 1969.
 3. Le Niger, 21 January 1974.
 4. Batmanian, 'La Politique Africaine de la Côte d'Ivoire...', ii, p. 350.

Boigny's policy move caused serious embarrassment to Diori Hamani in Niger. In fact it so incensed the Politburo of the PPN that it forbade Diori Hamani to fly to Yamoussoukro to ask for an explanation from Houphouët Boigny.¹ In spite of this Diori Hamani considered then that his friendship with the Ivorian leader should not be affected by their different attitudes. This was the case during the following weeks when their diplomatic activity proved instrumental in getting the Niamey peace talks off the ground. Neither leader veered from his policy commitment but their concerted effort helped both sides to overcome their reluctance for discussions under the aegis of the CCN.

The deterioration in relations between Niger and Ivory Coast followed de Gaulle's intervention in the conflict in which Houphouët Boigny played an active role. After September, Houphouët Boigny also gave Biafra diplomatic, financial and military support in close association with France and Gabon. Similarly, Diori Hamani established a close relationship with the FMG. As an experienced statesman, Diori Hamani could offer Gowon valuable advice on matters concerning the francophone group and France. Niger also acted as an intermediary for the purchase of small armament and ammunition in the European countries where there was an embargo on arms sales to Nigeria.^a Niger's President emerged progressively as a spokesman for the francophone countries which shared his views on the conflict. Throughout the war, during meetings of the Conseil de l'Entente or at the OCAM Conference held in Kinshasa during January 1969, Diori Hamani opposed suggestions for any solution to the conflict that did not accord with OAU principles. Diori Hamani thus became a major opponent to Ivorian attempts at securing francophone support

1. Ibid., ii, p.353.

for Biafra. The irreconcilable nature of the policies of Niger and Ivory Coast in the conflict was best illustrated in April 1969. During his visit to Paris, Diori Hamani pressed Couve de Murville for an interruption of French military aid to Biafra; only a few days earlier, Houphouët Boigny and Foccart had successfully won de Gaulle's agreement to a resumption of arms supplies.

The challenge of de Gaulle's policy

In August-September 1968, Diori Hamani condemned without hesitation de Gaulle's intervention. He argued that 'si bien intentionnée qu'elle puisse être [elle] risque d'élargir le conflit à des dimensions imprévisibles'.¹ During his stay in Paris in mid-August Diori Hamani stated more bluntly that he held France's policy responsible for the failure of the Addis Ababa talks.² Diori Hamani's claims contained no direct accusation of de Gaulle or France, but they constituted a significant challenge to the Gaullist policy. In fact, Diori Hamani's stand was an influential factor in de Gaulle's decision to give only a qualified support to Biafra in September 1968.

By the time de Gaulle resigned in April 1969, relations between Niger and France were nevertheless deteriorating rapidly. In March, Diori Hamani who was President of the Conseil de l'Entente had suggested to its members that they should jointly request a revision of the co-operation agreements with France.³ On 2 April, a short article in The Times had included harsh comments by Diori Hamani on de Gaulle's foreign policy:

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1. Le Niger, 3 August 1968.
 2. AFP/BA., 13 August 1968.
 3. Le Monde, 5 October 1972.

It is wrong for General de Gaulle to keep Britain out [of the EEC], to back Biafran secession or to seek to draw Quebec away from Canada. Only France, not la Francophonie, wants any such thing.¹

This incensed de Gaulle who subsequently refused to receive Diori Hamani when he visited Paris later in April.²

The election of Pompidou in June 1969 did not lead to any improvement in Niger's relations with France. This was not on account of Diori Hamani's feelings about Britain's admission to the EEC or his views on the Nigerian crisis. Bad relations stemmed from Niger's policy of diversification of its external ties, which involved the establishment of friendly relations with the Federal Government of Canada. Thus Diori Hamani had sided fully with its views on the representation of Quebec at the Niamey Conference on francophonie in February 1969. During 1968, Canadian missions had toured francophone African states to counteract France's diplomatic stance towards Quebec. Aid was offered in return for diplomatic support.³ In the case of Niger this policy was to result in Ottawa's costly financing of the construction of the road between N'Guigmi and Goure. When in September 1969 Diori Hamani paid an official visit to Canada, French reactions led Boubou Hama to comment that:

Il y a des moments où ce qui est bon pour la France ne l'est pas pour nous car nous n'acceptons pas n'importe quoi. Mais c'est dans la mesure où nous ne pourrions pas coopérer avec la France que nous irons chercher des partenaires ailleurs... Qu'on ne nous empêche pas d'aller vers d'autres nations pour demander ce que nous n'avons pas.⁴

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1. The Times, 2 April 1969.
 2. Jacques Baulin, Interview, Paris, 2 August 1977.
 3. See Details on the 'carrot and stick' policy of the Canadian Federal Government in J. Schlegel, 'The Influence of Federalism and Bicameralism on the Emergence of a Canadian Presence in Black Africa, 1957-1971' (Oxford, Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1976, mimeo), pp. 253-73.
 4. Jeune Afrique, 29 October 1969, 26.

Relations between France and Niger had been greatly influenced by de Gaulle's policy in the Nigerian civil war. His attitude to the conflict after July 1968 was totally incompatible with Niger's vital interest in the preservation of Nigeria's territorial integrity. Diori Hamani's subsequent challenge of the Gaullist policy represented a starting point in Niger's policy of diversification of its external links. This policy was first directed towards the development of closer links with non francophone states like Canada, and indeed Nigeria.

2. Closer political relations with Nigeria

Closer political ties between Niger and Nigeria were a natural effect of Diori Hamani's policy of support during the civil war. Friendly relations had developed as a result of the polarisation of francophone African attitudes to the war. After 1970, political contacts were actively pursued by the FMG, by now committed to a policy of overcoming the francophone-anglophone division.

As the war ended in Nigeria, Diori Hamani was especially hopeful for the development of economic and technical co-operation with the FMG. Visiting Nigeria in November 1970, he suggested an impressive number of areas where joint policies and projects could be discussed.¹ These included the improvement of roads across the frontier; the extension of the Nigerian railway from Kano to Zinder and from Kaura Namoda to Maradi; the construction of a dam on the Kumadugu river near lake Chad; joint hydro-agricultural projects around Maradi, Maggia and Gaya; the use of the Niger river for Niger's transit trade; the sale of cement from the Malbaza factory to Northern Nigeria and Niger's

1. Perspectives Nigériennes, October-November 1970.

purchase of electricity from Kainji. Of particular importance to Niger were projects for tighter control on smuggling across the frontier, the revision of customs duties between the two countries, and the export of Niger's livestock to Nigeria. The founding of the Joint Commission for Co-operation (JCC) in March 1971 reflected these hopes for an extensive development of bilateral relations.

In 1971, an agreement was signed for the sale of 30,000 kilowatts of electricity from Kainji to Niger during the next twenty years. It was, however, the Niger river navigation project set up at that time which best illustrated the spirit of Niger-Nigeria co-operation. In 1969, Niger and Nigeria had jointly asked Canada for the services of an expert who would study possibilities of navigation on the Niger.¹ The logic of the project, undertaken in 1970, implied a marked change in Niger's attitude to the Cotonou-Niamey axis in the early 1960s. Indeed, the preliminary study emphasised that:

l'exportation et l'importation de l'Est du pays[Niger] devraient selon un critère de minimisation des coûts de transport être acheminés sur le chemin de fer Nigérien. A l'Ouest [du Niger]...le problème de concurrence se pose entre le chemin de fer Dahoméen et la voie fluviale... Si le système rail-route Dahoméen était amélioré, l'établissement d'un système fluvial perdrait son intérêt.²

Niger's interest in this project involved a reassessment of its external links. Since 1960, it had tried repeatedly, without success, to reduce transport costs to the coast via Cotonou. When the Fond d'Entraide et de Garantie des Emprunts du Conseil de l'Entente was created in 1966, Niger's hopes for financial aid from this quarter were in vain.

1. Le Temps du Niger, 17 January 1973.

2. Gouvernement Fédéral du Canada, Agence Canadienne de Développement International, 'Etude des Accès à la Mer de la République du Niger' (Montreal, 1971, mimeo), p.C6-1.

The implementation of the navigation scheme on the Niger would have increased Niger's transit trade through Nigeria at the expense of that channelled through Cotonou. Full implementation of the project in its proposed form would also have drastically reduced traffic on the Dahomean railway - leading almost certainly to its closure. Niger's readiness to reconsider its links with Dahomey provoked opposition from transport companies in Niger. The issue was equally of concern to French political circles because the project was financed by Canada and meant the development of closer links between Niger and Nigeria. For France, the Niger river project would also have incurred increased budgetary subsidies to Dahomey to avoid or compensate for the closure of the Cotonou-Parakou railway.

The Niger river project at first showed promise but never went beyond the experimental stage. In January 1973, three barges loaded with 1,200 tons of oil successfully reached Gaya, two months after leaving Port Harcourt.¹ But, the effects of the drought soon made navigation on the Niger impossible and the project had to be abandoned.

The control of economic flows across the Niger-Nigeria frontier was an issue that Diori Hamani had brought up during his visit to Nigeria in 1970. It was in fact of crucial importance to Niger. According to estimates, the value of Niger's unrecorded trade with Nigeria was almost four times higher than the official figure.² Livestock, one of Niger's major resources and its main export to Nigeria, suffered particularly unfavourable terms of exchange which applied to recorded as well as unrecorded trade. Nigeria's high taxation on meat imports (50% ad valorem in 1970) precluded the establishment

1. Le Temps du Niger, 17 January 1973.

2. See tables 20, 21 and 23 in appendix.

of meat markets in Niger.¹ From the Niger Government's point of view, such a measure would have reduced unrecorded livestock sales to Nigeria on which no export tax could be levied. For Niger's cattle producers it would have meant better prices. These were generally cut because of the poor condition of the animals who sometimes travelled for up to 30 days before reaching Nigerian markets where prices were further reduced by the great number of middlemen. For Niger's finances, livestock sales to Nigeria involved other losses. Traders returning from the Nigerian markets brought back to Niger cola nuts and various other goods which they purchased with the Naira received in payment for their cattle. These imports were not subject to customs duty. They also competed in Niger's markets with regularly imported manufactured products like sugar, or even commodities produced in the country such as groundnut oil.

The significant failure of Niger-Nigeria co-operation to reduce the imbalance of economic flows across the frontier was a source of disappointment to Niger. In January 1970, a commercial agreement previously signed by Niger and Nigeria was implemented.² Under it, the FMG guaranteed a special rate of exchange for the Naira as an incentive to the development of Niger's sales. This agreement certainly contributed to a resumption of foodstuffs and livestock trade with the war stricken areas of Eastern Nigeria but did not level the unequal trade links between Niger and Nigeria. In December 1972, a new agreement was signed on the tariff, taxation and volume of goods exchanged between Niger and Nigeria. This had also little effect on the patterns of trade between the two countries. They remained

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1. For a comprehensive account see R.Valaskakis and P.Turcan, 'Les Problèmes de l'intégration Economique du Niger et du Nigéria' (Montréal, 1971, mimeo), ii, p.366 ff.
 2. Description of the Agreement in R.Tremblay, 'Le Niger et le Fonctionnement de l'Union Monétaire de l'Ouest Africain' (Montréal, 1971, mimeo), pp. 151-2.

heavily influenced by Nigeria's overall economic evolution: the devaluation of the Naira in February 1973, the growth of inflation in Nigeria, and the increase of groundnut producer prices by the Marketing Boards.

The FMG's earlier suggestion of creating a free trade zone between Niger and Nigeria could not be acceptable to Niger. Such a measure would have reinforced the dependency of its economy on that of Nigeria.¹ It was in order to reduce it that Niger's project of building the 'route de l'unité' between N'Guigmi and Gouré was set up. The road was not justifiable economically but, the authors of its preliminary study insisted, it had a very strong political rationale.² They emphasised that it would establish a physical link with the Eastern part of Niger which was virtually isolated from the remainder of the country and closely associated with Nigeria. In another field, Niger attempts to promote the teaching of French reflected similarly upon relations with Nigeria. Diori Hamani's pet project of franconisation was indeed primarily expected to favour the emergence of a national consciousness.³ Ultimately, the Hausa-Fulani of Niger should feel closer to the Zerma-Songhai living in the West of Niger than to the Hausa-Fulani of Nigeria.

3. The evolution of francophone links

As the civil war ended in Nigeria, Niger - in spite of uneasy relations with France - nevertheless retained close ties with it.

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1. Valaskakis and Turcan, 'Les Problèmes de l'Intégration Economique...', ii, p. 399.
 2. Gouvernement Fédéral du Canada, Agence Canadienne de Développement International, 'Route de l'Unité, République du Niger'(n.d., mimeo), p. 45.
 3. Details on this project in 'Rapport de la Mission Canadienne au Niger du 23 Juin au 3 Juillet Concernant l'Etude d'un Projet d'Enseignement du Français Oral pour l'Ensemble de la population de ce Pays' (1970, mimeo), p. 37.

France still provided the bulk of Niger's foreign aid and remained its main trading partner. As noted above, Niger, in an attempt to counterbalance links with France, had begun a policy of diversification of its external dependency through an appeal to Canadian and, to a certain extent, Nigerian aid. With the war over, this policy was continued. Niger now sought German and American aid, whilst pressing France for a revision of the co-operation agreements. However, Niger's demands on this issue had clear limits. In particular, it intended to continue to rely on French troops for its security. Defence agreements with France were still considered the best guarantee for political stability especially if the Hausa-Fulani population living in East and Central Niger were to revolt.

De Gaulle's resignation in April 1969 had led Diori Hamani to postpone his demand for a renegotiation of the co-operation agreements. It was during Pompidou's visit to Niger in January 1972 that Diori Hamani formally requested a reform of the franc zone system which had created difficulties for Niger's trade with Nigeria. France's lack of response to a subsequent written request for renegotiation triggered a severe crisis in relations with Niger when Diori Hamani demanded the replacement of the French Ambassador to Niamey.¹ The request was caused by his behaviour, which Niger insisted did not pay due respect to its independence. Another factor was the Ambassador's close links with Foccart. Tension grew as Pompidou, after originally agreeing to the withdrawal, reconsidered his stand and urged Niger to change its attitude. The signing of aid agreements and the payment for uranium purchased by France were held up. Relations between France and Niger only began to improve in August when a revision of French policy followed the constitution of the Messmer Government. A new French Ambassador to Niger was appointed and discussions on the renegotiation of co-operation agreements began in October.

1. Le Monde, 22 July 1972; Diori in Financial Times, 6 March 1973.

Another serious crisis between France and Niger developed a year later over another issue. Following the increase in oil prices, Niger and Gabon requested a renegotiation of uranium prices with France.¹ Pompidou and his advisers opposed this. Only after the death of the French President was Niger's request agreed to. The coup which overthrew its Government a few days later, did not interrupt the renegotiation of either the co-operation agreements or the uranium prices.

The civil war in Nigeria had marked the end of Diori Hamani's client relationship with Houphouët Boigny. Further differences in the policies of Niger and Ivory Coast after 1970 contributed to a deterioration of relations between the two francophone states. Diori Hamani paid tribute to his longstanding friendship with Houphouët Boigny by refraining from open disagreement with his policy moves. This was particularly significant when the Ivorian proposal for dialogue with South Africa was made in 1971. Nevertheless relations between Diori Hamani and Houphouët Boigny deteriorated as more and more issues of dissent arose. In 1971 Niger started a policy of rapprochement with Libya, Algeria and Islamic countries in general. In January 1973, it severed diplomatic relations with Israel and in May voted for the resolution condemning Israel at the OAU Addis Ababa meeting. These moves brought relations between Diori Hamani and Houphouët Boigny to their lowest ebb.² When Diori Hamani was overthrown in 1974, Houphouët Boigny made no public comment on the event.³ Nor did he attempt to secure a revision of the French decision

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1. For a full account see G. Comte, 'Les Pâques Nigériennes', Le Monde, 25 April 1974. Gilbert Comte was a political adviser to Diori Hamani at the time of the coup.
 2. See Africa Contemporary Record, 1973-74, B-718.
 3. Le Monde, 26 April 1974.

not to interfere with the events in Niamey.

The birth of the CEA0 and its relations with the ECOWAS provide a good example of Niger's policy towards both francophone states and Nigeria during 1972-1975. Diori Hamani was highly critical of Houphouët Boigny's original CEA0 project. Since 1968, drought had plagued Niger and emphasised dramatically the inequalities of development with coastal states. Diori Hamani was also bitter that, during the 1960s, regional trade and monetary unions like the UDEAO and the Union Monétaire de l'Ouest Africain (UMOA) mostly favoured richer and more industrialized member-states. On the eve of the Bamako Conference of June 1972, Diori Hamani disagreed so strongly with the pro-coastal outlook of the proposed CEA0 charter that he considered not attending.¹ He eventually came, but made it clear that he would not sign the charter unless it underwent substantial transformations. He rebelled against what appeared to be an anachronistic attempt by Ivory Coast and Senegal to reconstitute to their own advantage the ex-FWA structure without Guinea. No account was taken of regional inequalities between coastal and landlocked states, nor were links with non-francophone African states considered. It was of the utmost importance to Niger to preserve good relations with Nigeria. Niger therefore felt awkwardly placed vis à vis the CEA0 charter, which all too clearly seemed the would-be rival to the ECOWAS project. To avoid giving this impression, Diori Hamani suggested-in vain - that observers from Nigeria should be invited.²

The provisions of the charter dealing with trade between CEA0

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1. West Africa, 16 June 1972, 747.
 2. After the conference, Gowon flew to Niamey to discuss it with Diori Hamani; West Africa, 7 July 1972, 867.

states were at the core of the debate at Bamako. Niger, Mauritania and Mali considered that, being landlocked, they should be partly relieved from the payment of customs duties for the transit of their imports through the harbours of Senegal, Ivory Coast and Dahomey.¹ Full payments should be made to a CEA0 development fund. This issue would have caused the Conference to break-up without an agreement if a last minute compromise had not preserved a façade of unity. Participants signed an 'accord de principe' which involved no acceptance of the CEA0 draft charter.² Amendments to it would be proposed in the following months and representatives of the seven countries who were at Bamako would then meet.

Diori Hamani was pessimistic about the future of the Community. It seemed that Ivory Coast was not prepared to budge from its laissez faire conception of economic flows within the CEA0. To an Ivorian friend, he conveyed his disillusion:

Do not be surprised if we are swallowed up by Nigeria. Our natural routes are directed through Nigeria, our cattle are exported to Nigeria and many of our people came from there. If we are swallowed up, it will be as much your fault for leaving us alone as it is ours.³

Not surprisingly, the second CEA0 Conference was convened at Abidjan in April 1973 with several months delay. From the viewpoint of Ivory Coast and Senegal, the amendments proposed by Dahomey, Mauritania and Niger presented such difficulties that they considered returning to their original CEA0 charter proposal.⁴ CEA0 would have had only four members: Ivory Coast, Senegal, Mali and Upper Volta. The CEA0 charter was, however, successfully revised. Niger, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Upper Volta and Mali agreed to sign it,

1. Ibid., 866.

2. West Africa, 14 May 1973, 629.

3. Quoted in West Africa, 7 July 1972, 867.

4. Le Monde, 10 April 1973.

but not Dahomey and Togo. Houphouët Boigny firmly promised the landlocked states that tax revenues from goods manufactured in CEA0 states would be credited to industrial development projects of benefit to them.¹

The CEA0 also proclaimed itself open to association with non-francophone states. Immediately after the Abidjan meeting, Diori Hamani toured Ghana, Togo, Dahomey and Nigeria insisting that any economic union excluding Nigeria and the other anglophone countries 'ne serait pas réaliste'.² He also claimed that:

la création de la CEA0 doit être considérée comme un premier pas vers la création d'une large et solide union économique qui unira les quatorze pays anglophones de l'Ouest Africain et leurs homologues francophones.

Elsewhere Diori Hamani said that the CEA0 was neither a 'machination' nor a 'machine de guerre' against anglophone West Africa.³ The conflict between the CEA0 and the Togo-Nigeria initiative for ECOWAS nevertheless existed. It resulted from dissent over which organisation should join the other, and on what terms. In December 1973, CEA0 states agreed to be present with all other West African states at the first ministerial Conference for ECOWAS. There CEA0 states emphasised however, that ECOWAS should accept the preservation of their corporate identity.

Niger shared the view of other CEA0 members on this issue, which led to confrontation with the FMG until the overthrow of Diori Hamani's regime. Niger's attitude to ECOWAS was partly the result of disappointment with its co-operation with Nigeria. While Niger was

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1. West Africa, 14 May 1973, 630.
 2. Fraternité Matin, 18 May 1973
 3. Diori Hamani in AFP/BA., 22 May 1973.

drought-stricken, Nigeria had given its neighbour some measure of relief aid. Yet, little had been achieved in alleviating the dependence of Niger's economy on that of Nigeria. Niger officials also particularly resented the fact that in their relations with the FMG they were frequently left with the feeling of being 'little more than the poor relation from the North come to beg from his rich brother'.¹ Niger's relations with Nigeria returned to normal when the ECOWAS treaty was agreed upon and signed by all CEA0 states in May 1975.

For Niger and Dahomey, Nigeria's foreign policy until 1966 had contributed to the preservation and reinforcement of their ties with France and with each other. After 1967, this was no longer the case. Issues at stake in the Nigerian civil war led Niger to active involvement on the side of the FMG. For the first time since independence, the socio-economic and cultural ties between Nigeria and Eastern and Central Niger had a profound effect on the conduct of Niger's foreign policy. As a result of diverging policies, relations with France and Ivory Coast underwent a series of crises. After the end of the conflict in Nigeria, Niger pressed for a renegotiation of better terms in its co-operation agreements with France. Pressure from Nigeria accounted for Diori Hamani's active diplomacy towards establishing formal links between CEA0 and ECOWAS. The preservation of francophone links within the CEA0 it was hoped would prevent further integration of Niger into Nigeria's sphere of influence. This concern of the Niamey Government was absent in Dahomey. There the Nigerian civil war acted as a catalyst on relations with the FMG. In Niger, close relations with Nigeria threatened to undermine the power of the Niamey-based ruling elite. Such was not the case in Dahomey whose African policy now became increasingly aligned with that of Nigeria.

1. Africa Contemporary Record, 1973-74, B-718.

CHAPTER VI

The integration of Dahomey into the Nigerian sphere of influence

The successive crises which preceeded the beginning of the civil war in Nigeria were closely followed in Dahomey, where the East's cause had widespread sympathy. Dahomeans considered that Biafra's secession was only logical in view of the plight of the easterners living in Northern Nigeria. In their exodus after May 1966, many Dahomeans saw parallels with their own fate in Africa. Indeed, since 1958, some 30,000 Dahomean nationals had been expelled - often ruthlessly - from Ivory Coast, Gabon, Niger and Mali. Like the Ibos, the Dahomeans had described their plight as that of the 'juif errant de l'Afrique'.¹

Dahomey was directly affected by the developing instability in Nigeria. In the early months of 1965, several thousand Yorubas crossed the frontier, fleeing violence in the Western region. A year later, within few days of Balewa's overthrow, temporary exiles again suddenly poured into Dahomey, where emergency relief aid had to be provided for them.² Some 2,300 Nigerians were repatriated by the Nigerian Red Cross after order had been restored in the Western region. These inflows were a grave concern to the Dahomean Government headed by General Soglo, Dahomey's head of state since the bloodless coup of December 1965.³ They involved not only supplementary expenditure for Government finances but also the risk of the Nigerian political crisis spreading into Dahomey.

1. Soglo in l'Aube Nouvelle, 30 December 1963.

2. Le Monde, 20 January 1966

3. For a brief account of political events in Dahomey until 1975, see S. Decalo, Coups and Army Rule in Africa. Studies in Military Style (London, 1976), p. 57 ff.

1. Dahomey and the Nigerian civil war

After the outbreak of war in Nigeria, Ibos previously living in Lagos and the Western region crossed the frontier when it became impossible to return to the east. Some settled in urban centres like Porto Novo and Cotonou. Others, who had worked before then on cocoa plantations in the West, formed rural communities in Dahomean villages close to the frontier, where they were allocated land for cultivation.¹

At the beginning of the conflict, the Soglo Government felt sympathetic, but also powerless, vis à vis Biafra.² Many Dahomeans thought that as their country was a sovereign state with less than 2 million inhabitants, Biafra with far greater human and natural resources could well become independent. Yet, Dahomey's Government could not consider any support for secession. This would have been a flagrant violation of the OAU rule of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member-states, and could have had undesirable repercussions on Dahomey's relations with Nigeria. A possible break-up of the Nigerian Federation did not represent a real threat to Dahomey's unity. At the time of the 1966-67 constitutional debate in Nigeria, some intellectuals from the Western state had suggested its secession, with the Dahomean Yorubas participating in the creation of a 'greater Yoruba empire'.³ This reflected an unrealistic link between the Yorubas of Nigeria and Dahomey. The latter, unlike the Hausa-Fulani in Niger, played an influential role in the conduct of

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1. L. Mills, 'The Geographical Impact of the Nigeria-Dahomey Boundary' (Durham Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1970, mimeo), pp. 110-1.
 2. See P. Decraene, 'Les Répercussions au Dahomey de la Crise du Nigéria', Comptes Rendus Mensuels des Séances de l'Académie d'Outre-Mer, XXVII, 8(October-November 1967), 471 ff.
 3. B. Dudley, 'Western Nigeria and the Nigerian Crisis', in S.K. Panter-Brick, ed, Nigerian Politics and Military Rule : Prelude to the Civil War(London, 1970), 101.

public affairs in Dahomey. They were fully integrated in the country's public life. They favoured closer relations with Nigeria for trade purposes but never considered seceding from Dahomey.

Soglo's cautious attitude towards the Nigerian civil war resulted partly from the extensive Ibo migration to Dahomey. It involved the risks that Dahomey might be used as a base for instigating political agitation in Nigeria. The Dahomean Government also felt particularly concerned about the security of its several thousand nationals in Lagos since they had no diplomatic representation to protect their interests.

Reluctant pledges to Nigeria's unity

Soglo reluctantly agreed to the FMG's insistence that the civil war was a domestic affair. Early in June 1967, Dahomey feared that the conflict would lead to a rapid military escalation by the Federal troops, followed by renewed violence against the Easterners.¹ This prompted a stillborn offer to send a delegation led by Foreign Minister Zinsou to Nigeria.² The mission intended suggesting mediation in the conflict but could not do so because the FMG requested its postponement. FMG views on this issue were expressed to Soglo in late July when Nigeria's Federal Works and Housing Commissioner Femi Okunnu brought a message from Gowon re-stating that the Nigerian crisis was a domestic issue in which foreign countries should not interfere.³ Dahomey's unwilling agreement to this was apparent when, on 23 August, Zinsou travelled to Cotonou at the head of a mission which offered its services.⁴ He was ready to go to Enugu to establish a

1. Decraene, 'Les Répercussions au Dahomey....', op. cit., 471 ff.

2. L'Aube Nouvelle, 4 June 1967.

3. AFP/BA., 29 July 1967.

4. Dr Emile Zinsou, Interview, Paris, 24 September 1976.

link for discussions between the FMG and Biafra, but this proposal was rejected.

On 17 December 1967 a group of junior officers toppled Soglo in a bloodless coup and then remained in power until July 1968. The regime led by Colonel Alphonse Alley, to whom the officers handed over the executive power, treated the situation in Nigeria as a purely internal affair. A few weeks after the Dahomean junta came to power, good relations with the FMG were sealed by its agreement to convert obsolete Nigerian banknotes held by the Dahomean banks into new Federal currency.¹ The Alley regime intended to be transitory and withheld its pledges to this despite its failing to accomplish a return to civilian rule according to its own plans. By July 1968, the Dahomean junta remained strongly divided over what course of action it should take. At the same time, it faced strong pressure from France either to adopt an economic policy of austerity or relinquish power. Since December 1967 de Gaulle had frozen budgetary assistance to Dahomey. This had forced the deferralment of some Government expenditure and the administration of state finances on a monthly basis. This became increasingly difficult until early in July when the treasury could only provide 20 million CFAF out of the 350 million CFAF needed to cover army and civil service salaries at the end of the month.² Foreign investors, also lacked confidence in the new regime. By June 1968 there was a drastic fall in investment offers from 2,000 million CFAF (in December 1967) to 38 million CFAF.³

Faute de mieux, the junta decided to appoint Zinsou as Dahomey's

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1. This reflected the active trade existing with Nigeria. Nigerian currency was estimated to represent over 20% of the holdings of the Dahomean banks; AFP/BA., 11 January 1968.
 2. African Contemporary Record, 1968-69, 474.
 3. Ibid.

President and head of Government. Zinsou had neither a marked ethnic affiliation nor any strong regional power base. He also enjoyed good relations with French officials and business circles. In many ways his appointment was a last ditch attempt to avert the outbreak of serious social disorder in Dahomey.

Zinsou's policy in the Nigerian civil war relied on the same basis as that of the former Soglo Government, where he had been Foreign Minister. Changes in the international politics of the conflict emphasised the basic ambiguity of the Dahomean policy. Zinsou's stand appeared obscure because of the attempt to reconcile his own feelings on the conflict with Dahomey's interest in the preservation of good relations with both France and the FMG. On 20 September, after meeting de Gaulle, whose support to Biafra was assuming new dimensions, Zinsou characteristically told the French press that statesmen in Africa, 'et au Dahomey plus qu'ailleurs', felt awkwardly placed vis à vis the Nigerian crisis.¹ In private, he did not hide his sympathy for Biafra. Yet, at Algiers he voted for the OAU resolution which fully endorsed the FMG's viewpoint on the conflict. In Paris, Zinsou explained this afterwards:

Je suis contre la sécession et contre la guerre. Nous nous sommes toujours battus pour la constitution de grands ensembles et je ne cherche pas à favoriser la naissance de micro-Etats. A Algiers nous avons combattu la sécession conformément à la charte mais on ne peut nier, en considérant la cohésion du peuple Ibo et sa résistance que le Biafra constitue un véritable Etat. Cependant j'estime qu'il doit rester lié à l'ensemble du Nigéria par des liens confédéraux.²

This meandering policy statement on the civil war reflected the conflicting pressures to which Dahomey was subject. De Gaulle

1. AFP/BA., 21 September 1968.

2. Marchés Tropicaux, 5 October 1968, 2394.

had expressed support for Biafra's self-determination, a stand that Zinsou could not have reasonably dismissed at a time when his country desperately needed the resumption of French financial support. With respect to Nigeria, indirect pressure was brought on Dahomey by the impending important boundary negotiations between the two countries.¹ They involved issues of vital importance for Dahomey as they followed positive oil prospecting results which raised hopes that Nigeria and Dahomey might share common oil shales. Beyond all other considerations it was this issue that made it impossible for Dahomey to think of transgressing OAU principles on the intangibility of colonial frontiers.

In spite of the ambiguity of Dahomean comments on the civil war, relations between Zinsou and the FMG remained good until January 1969. Dahomean views on the conflict did not result in any policy move conflicting with the FMG policy line. In January 1969, Zinsou's agreement to the use of Cotonou airport and harbour as a base for transport of ICRC relief supplies to Biafra prompted a drastic deterioration in relations with the FMG.

The conflict with Nigeria over relief aid

On 6 January 1969, restrictive conditions imposed by the Government of Equatorial Guinea on ICRC activities in Fernando Poo led to their interruption.² As no alternative transit base was immediately available all the flights from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to Biafra were halted. The ICRC

1. AFP/BA., 16 October 1968

2. See the detailed analysis of the crisis in T. Hentsch, Face au Blocus. La Croix Rouge Internationale dans le Nigéria en guerre (Geneva, 1973), p. 157 ff.

had already unsuccessfully approached various neighbouring African states when Dahomey agreed to the use of Cotonou airport and harbour for relief operations.

The Dahomey-ICRC agreement was publicised by the ICRC on 28 February, a day before the first flights to Biafra began. At Dahomey's request it provided for the constitution of a permanent mission headed by Zinsou's military attaché, Colonel de Souza, to ascertain the humanitarian content of ICRC cargoes leaving Cotonou for Biafra. The agreement also defined the financial conditions under which the airlift would take place in Dahomey, but these remained unpublished.¹

The beginning of the airlift during the night of 29 January provoked strong reactions in Nigeria where Enahoro expressed the FMG's surprise:

We have not authorised routes from Dahomey to rebel held areas and...there is no prospect of giving them [a] free route. The Federal Government had no previous knowledge of the agreement from the Dahomean Government which we always regarded as a friend. The Red Cross informed us of the agreement after it was signed.²

The Dahomean policy move was a serious setback to the FMG's attempt to reassert its control over conditions under which the ICRC organized relief flights. Returning a few days later from Kinshasa, Zinsou expressed surprise at the strong Nigerian protests to the airlift. His attitude was partly justified for, during negotiations on the airlift, the ICRC Commissioner for West Africa, August Lindt, had claimed that Nigerian officials were well aware that he was coming

1. On this point see Stremlau, The International Politics...., pp. 286-7.

2. West Africa, 8 February 1969, 165.

to Cotonou. He had added that they would, in fact, prefer ICRC flights to operate from Dahomey rather than from a hostile country.¹

Indeed, a few days before meeting Zinsou, Lindt had informed the FMG in Lagos that the ICRC would approach various African countries, seeking a new operational base. During his talks in the Nigerian ministry of external affairs a civil servant also suggested to Lindt that the airport and harbour of Cotonou could handle ICRC relief aid to Biafra.² However, this remark was hardly likely to reflect FMG policy. The need for a resumption of the airlift led the ICRC delegate to overplay the value of this comment during his subsequent talks in Dahomey. For the ICRC, Cotonou was the only alternative to the adjournment sine die of ICRC aid to Biafra. National societies of the Red Cross pressed for relief flights to be resumed and in some cases threatened to withdraw from the ICRC operations and take part to JCA's independent airlift from Sao Tomé.³

Dahomey was strongly in favour of resuming relief aid to Biafra. FMG views on this were widely publicised and Dahomey could not have been ignorant of them. But, the Dahomean Government did not seek any official confirmation of Lindt's claims that the FMG would greet the agreement with the ICRC favourably. Dahomey also agreed to the organisation of night relief flights despite the FMG's well-known opposition of these. Finally, although the agreement was

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1. Dahomey's Foreign Minister Daouda Badarou in Daily Times, 10 February 1969; Minister of Information Urbain Nicoué in l'Aube Nouvelle, 2 February 1969; this important point was also confirmed by Dr Emile Zinsou, Interview, Paris 26 September 1976.
 2. See the internal message sent by Lindt to the ICRC headquarters in Geneva on 18 January 1969; quoted in Hentsch, Face au Blocus...., p. 163, n. 109.
 3. J. Freymond, 'L'Aide aux Victimes de la Guerre', Preuves, 1, (1970), 77; Professor Jacques Freymond was Vice-President of the ICRC during these events.

signed before Zinsou's departure for Abidjan and Kinshasa on 23 January, it was only publicised five days later. The Dahomean haste to see relief aid flowing to Biafra again seems to have been inextricably combined with a deliberate attempt to present the FMG with a fait accompli. Control of the humanitarian nature of the cargoes was expected to disarm Nigerian criticism. In fact, Dahomey's agreement to the ICRC activities in Cotonou was a logical outcome of the Zinsou Government's attitude to the Nigerian civil war since coming into power in August 1968.

Early in February 1968, the FMG rejected a Dahomean proposal to participate in the control of the ICRC airlift which, it insisted, was 'unauthorized'.¹ This did not prevent the flights to Biafra from increasing. Restrictions on ICRC activities from Fernando Poo were lifted on 12 February, but a fortnight later political agitation disrupted all flights until 17 March. By then Cotonou was the ICRC's main transit base for relief supplies. The four transport aircraft that were based there flew an average of 1,600 tonnes of relief aid into Biafra each month.

Nigeria could not expect to apply direct pressure on the Dahomean Government for a revision of its policy. ICRC activities were openly and fully supported by the US and West German Governments whose influence had played a significant role in Zinsou's agreement to the airlift.² In retaliation against the Dahomean policy, however, the FMG closed the frontier - officially in order to curb unrecorded trade flourishing across it. The effects of this measure were pervasive and eventually caused Zinsou to reconsider his policy towards the ICRC. In the event, this emphasised the unequal ties between Dahomey

1. New Nigerian, 7 February 1969.

2. France's interest in this issue was minor since it had its own relief airlift from Gabon, West Africa, 25 October 1969, 1271 .

and its eastern neighbour.

As the airlift got underway, Nigerian soldiers began patrolling the tracks crossing the frontier. At Idiroko customs post, completed in July 1968, the entrance of Dahomean registered vehicles was severely restricted. The visa abolition agreement for Dahomeans on a short visit to Nigeria was also suspended.¹ Controls became tighter when the Dahomean Government refused to reconsider its policy and, by mid-March 1969, Idiroko was to all intents and purposes closed to Dahomean traffic.² Elsewhere along the frontier, lorries smuggling cocoa into Dahomey were now intercepted by Nigerian army patrols. Encounters between Nigerian troops and villagers were responsible for some border incidents.

The Dahomean trading community on both sides of the frontier greatly resented the closure. It generated social agitation which had increasing political overtones. From Lagos, petitions by Dahomey's trading community were sent to Zinsou. In Porto Novo, unrest developed and on 1 March a demonstration of traders marched through the town.³ They carried banners protesting against ICRC activities, whose humanitarian character they questioned. Zinsou was also branded as a 'mercenaire du Biafra'. Agitation against the ICRC airlift served partly as an outlet for resentment against Zinsou's policy of financial austerity, which clamped down on tax evasion and was particularly unpopular in Porto Novo.⁴

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1. H.A. Asobie, 'Domestic Political Structure and Foreign Policy in the Nigerian Experience, 1960-1974' (London Univ.Ph.D. thesis, 1977, mimeo), p. 432.
 2. Afrique Nouvelle, 20 March 1969.
 3. Le Monde, 4 March 1969.
 4. Zinsou's policy was largely successful; in 1969, 80% of the taxes due were collected as against less than 40% under the previous Alley regime; Africa Confidential, 16 January 1970.

During March 1969 social unrest in Porto Novo reached such proportions that persistent rumours of a collapse of the Zinsou regime began circulating. Thus, after his return from visits to Western Germany and the US, Zinsou felt it necessary to hold a rally in Porto Novo and to explain in detail the reasons for his agreement to an ICRC airlift from Cotonou.¹ Mentioning relations with Nigeria, Zinsou condemned the pressure to which Dahomey was now being subjected. He also hinted that the activities of the Nigerian Chargé d'Affaires in Cotonou were responsible for the development of agitation during his absence. Zinsou nevertheless remained firm and announced no reconsideration of Dahomean policy. Certainly, benefits drawn from the airlift did not constitute an incentive to do so. Relief shipments by the ICRC to Cotonou had substantially increased its traffic. Taxes on the transit of these goods added to various airport fees and duties and brought some 30 million CFAF a month to the Dahomean treasury.² The ICRC also made some investment in Cotonou to improve airport facilities: the apron was enlarged by 15,000 sq. meters, parking facilities were increased and a new airport lounge was built. During 1969 a total of 75,790 million CFAF was spent.³ The ICRC airlift was also a source of advantage to the private sector in Dahomey. Some 450 Dahomeans were directly employed by the ICRC. Expatriate pilots, technicians and administrative staff brought in by the airlift brought business for hotels, bars and restaurants in the city. Traders, especially in the early stage of the conflict, also sold food supplies to the ICRC.

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1. Full speech reprinted in l'Aube Nouvelle, 13 April 1969.
 2. Le Monde, 23-24 February 1969; Der Spiegel, 16 June 1969, 110.
 3. See table 6 in appendix.

In April and July 1969 two unsuccessful attempts against the Zinsou Government led it to seek ways of improving relations with the FMG. This meant the reappraisal of Dahomey's policy towards the ICRC. Social agitation prompted by the closure of the frontier in February provided the background to the coups. On the first occasion, twenty five supporters of Ahomadegbe, then in Lomé, were arrested in Dahomey as they prepared to overthrow Zinsou. Togo's support to the plotters could not be established but its neutrality vis à vis the activities of Zinsou's opponents spoke for itself. Relations between Eyadema and Zinsou had not recovered from the latter's condemnation of Olympio's assassination and his insistence that its perpetrators be punished. Besides this, Togolese traders were affected adversely by Zinsou's policy, which hampered their commercial relations with Nigeria.

Nigerians appeared directly involved in the second abortive coup three months later. On 11 July, a group of officers including Alley attempted to kidnap the Chief of Staff of the Dahomean Army and military prefect of the Cotonou area. This amounted to staging a coup insofar as Kouandete's support to Zinsou had proved vital to the stability of his Government since social agitation had begun to develop in Dahomey. The conspirators were found in possession of light armament clandestinely brought in from Nigeria.¹ The Dahomean Government had been aware of the smuggling for some time, and had ordered the army to put an end to this traffic. It was this order which had created a source of armament supply for Alley and his group.

Armament smuggling constituted a pervasive threat to Dahomey's security. This was especially true in view of the strong anti-government feelings in Porto Novo and the borderland. Concern over this was

1. Dr Emile Zinsou, Interview, Paris, 10 September 1975.

reinforced by the frequent visits Apithy had made to Lagos since January 1969. After the beginning of the airlift he had emphatically stated that it was 'a tragedy and a great disservice to the very existence of Africa'.¹ Apithy's regional base of support was the Porto Novo area. Besides this, his relations with Awolowo - now Vice-Chairman of the FMG - were patently friendly. Therefore, on 30 July, Zinsou travelled to Lagos to meet Gowon, who in turn visited Cotonou a fortnight later. Gowon then announced that Dahomey would no longer permit ICRC relief flights to Biafra without the FMG's prior agreement.² The Dahomean decision had no direct meaning for Nigeria, because ICRC flights had ceased since 5 June.³ On the eve of that day, a DC-7 carrying relief aid from Santa Isabel to Biafra had been shot down by the Nigerian air force. Yet it was possibly as a result of Zinsou's agreement with the FMG that ICRC aid to Biafra stopped until the end of the war.

The reconsideration of Dahomey's policy towards the ICRC airlift did not lead to a fundamental improvement of relations between the Zinsou Government and the FMG. Gowon nevertheless requested from the Nigerian press to withhold its criticism of the Zinsou regime.⁴ At Idiroko the taxis of Dahomean traders were again allowed into Nigeria. The Nigerian soldiers in charge of curbing illicit trade were also withdrawn from the borderland. During his visit to Cotonou, Gowon was shown evidence of arms smuggling across the frontier. He was unaware that this traffic was taking place and emphasised that his Government should not be held responsible.⁵ Dahomey no longer referred

1. In Daily Times, 17 April 1969.

2. AFP/BA., 13 August 1969.

3. By then 9,500 tons of aid had been flown from Cotonou to Biafra. This represented over 70% of all ICRC supplies to Biafra since January 1969; Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co., 'International Committee of the Red Cross, Relief Operations in Nigeria' (London, 1970, mimeo), Schedules V and IX.

4. New Nigerian, 14 August 1969.

5. Dr. Emile Zinsou, Interview, 10 September 1975; It was suggested that the arms were in fact sold by Yoruba deserters from the Nigerian army; West Africa, 29 November 1969, 14447.

to the Nigerian crisis. The reopening of the frontier failed to halt agitation in Cotonou and Porto Novo. Thus, during October-November, serious political unrest arose over the verdict on the authors of the July plot against Kouandete. The latter's dissatisfaction with Alley's sentence led to him to stage a coup which successfully overthrew Zinsou on 10 December 1969.

2. Nigerian influence in Dahomey

Zinsou's overthrow caused satisfaction in Nigeria whose relations with Dahomey improved within weeks.¹ Two days after the coup, Arikpo stopped briefly in Cotonou on his way back from Ghana to meet the new Dahomean leaders. Improvement in relations with Nigeria was desired by Dahomey's three civilian leaders, Apithy, Maga and Ahomadegbe, who had returned from voluntary exile to become actively involved in politics. During the week following the coup, they invited a group of Nigerian journalists whom they told that Dahomey hoped Nigeria would provide assistance in solving its problems.² The crisis in relations between Nigeria and Dahomey had prompted an awareness of the necessity of good relations with the FMG. This was one of the important factors that led to closer links between Dahomey and Nigeria after 1970.

Dahomey's economic ties with Nigeria represented strong incentives to the establishment of good relations with the FMG. During the period of the Nigerian crisis, trade across the frontier had undergone a spectacular increase.³ The FMG's adoption of a policy of import restrictions had favoured the growth of Dahomey's clandestine exports

1. O.Aluko, 'The Civil War and Nigerian Foreign Policy', Political Quarterly, XLII, 2(April-June 1971), 179.

2. Daily Times, 18 December 1969.

3. For an overall analysis of the problems which the study of inter-African trade relations involve see M.Delmas, 'L'Evolution des Exportations Françaises de Produits Agricoles et Alimentaires vers les Etats Africains et Malgache Associés'(Toulouse Univ.thèse de Doctorat de 3 ème Cycle, 1974), mimeo , pp. 126-31.

to Nigeria.¹ These economic flows transformed the Dahomean economy at the micro and macro level. Re-exporting to Nigeria products regularly imported through Cotonou was an activity of considerable importance to most of the commercial companies of Dahomey. A study by the BCEAO estimated in 1971 that re-exports to Nigeria represented from 50% to 80% of the overall turnover of commercial enterprises in Dahomey.² Thus, regular Dahomean imports of spirits, tobacco, wine, beer, soft drinks and textiles went up by some 90% between 1966 and 1970.

Cocoa was another illustration of the nature of Dahomey's trade relations with Nigeria. From 1970 to 1974, cocoa exports represented an average 19% of Dahomey's overall export revenues.

Table 1 - Dahomean cocoa exports³

FOB in tonnes and million CFAF				
Year	Quantities	Value	Total Dahomean export earnings	Cocoa exports as % of overall export earnings
1968	445	unknown	5,507	-
1969	5,167	1,013	7,067	14%
1970	10,561	1,508	9,062	16%
1971	19,259	2,807	11,648	24%
1972	12,320	1,780	9,189	19%
1973	15,291	2,443	9,794	25%
1974	3,694	1,147	8,185	14%

All Dahomean cocoa sold on the international market originated

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1. See the detailed estimates published in J. Igué, 'L'Evolution du Commerce Clandestin entre le Dahomey et le Nigéria', Canadian Journal of African Studies, X, 2(1976), 248-9.
 2. Quoted in Ibid., 250.
 3. BCEAO Notes, October 1976, 8; I am also indebted to the Direction des Etudes of the BCEAO.

in fact from Nigeria. Cocoa smuggling started during the 1967-68 season at a time when Nigerian farmers were becoming increasingly resentful of the low prices paid for their crop by the Marketing Boards.¹ Clandestine imports were actively fostered by the Dahomean Government itself. A comprehensive state corporation, the Société de Commercialisation Agricole du Dahomey (SOCAD) had the monopoly over cocoa exports and fixed for each season the 'producer' price paid to Dahomean traders.² Cocoa was brought by Nigerian farmers to markets near the frontier where middlemen from Dahomey purchased it. SOCAD agents then took on record the quantities traded and operated a first grading of the crop. At a later stage cocoa beans were purchased by the SOCAD, which then exported them.

Cocoa trade substantially affected the economy of the départements along the frontier. Profits drawn by all the intermediaries which its commercialisation involved can be only improperly inferred from the selling prices of the crop at the various stages in the process. For the 1968-69 season, producer prices (main crop, grade I) were 100 Naira per ton in Nigeria (Marketing Board prices) and 120 Naira per ton along the frontier.³ Given the rate of exchange of the Naira on the black market, this latter price amounted to 54,000 CFAF per ton. Dahomean traders sold their cocoa for 120,000 CFAF to the SOCAD, which exported it to le Havre harbour where the selling price was 188,000 CFAF per ton. Cocoa revenues were of benefit to Dahomean finances indirectly owing to the SOCAD's monopoly, but also

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1. In the autumn of 1968, discontent flared into widespread and often violent refusal to pay taxes, better known as the Agbekoya, which lasted for over a year; C. Beer and G. William, 'The Politics of the Ibadan Peasantry', The African Review, V, 3(1975), 276 ff.
 2. See J. Igué, 'Un aspect des Echanges entre le Dahomey et le Nigéria; le Commerce du Cacao' (Cotonou, 1975, mimeo), p. 3 ff.
 3. Ibid., pp. 22 and 61.

directly by a 24% tax levied on its exports value. For 1969, 1970 and 1971 the tax on cocoa accounted for respectively 1.7%, 2.3% and 3.7% of Dahomey's budgetary income.¹

Nigeria's increasing influence on Dahomey's African policy after 1970 was the reflection of new economic ties between the two countries. Closer relations between Dahomey and Nigeria were also built on their common distrust of Ivory Coast's policy moves in Africa. To Nigeria, Ivory Coast represented an obstacle to the breaking down of the francophone-anglophone division. Dahomey's relations with Ivory Coast were emotionally loaded since the anti-Dahomean riots of 1958 in Abidjan. They had undergone several serious crises since then, in 1963-4 and also in 1966. The withdrawal of Houphouët Boigny's proposal of common nationality was bitterly resented by Dahomeans. Houphouët Boigny had announced as follows the cancellation of his proposal:

La peur qui vous étreint à l'idée que les Dahoméens et les Togolais puissent venir vous enlever le pain de la bouche n'a plus de raison d'être.²

These events were another blow for relations within the Conseil de l'Entente. Dahomey subsequently became the main beneficiary of the Fond d'Entraide which started operating in 1967. By 1970, Dahomean projects had received 49% of its loans although the country's share in total contributions only amounted to 6%.³ This incentive to its continuing participation in the Conseil de l'Entente did not prevent serious criticism in Dahomey. This was especially the case during March 1970 when the soldiers who had overthrown Zinsou organised elections for the appointment of a civilian President. The benefits gained by Dahomey from its membership of the Conseil de

1. Information supplied by the Direction des Etudes of the BCEAO.

2. AFP/BA., 21 January 1966.

3. See table 5 in appendix.

l'Entente were the object of a heated controversy between Apithy on the one hand and Diori Hamani and Houphouët Boigny on the other. In particular, Apithy claimed that the Entente did not benefit Dahomey and suggested Dahomey's participation in an alternative union with Togo and Nigeria.¹ This did not occur, for Maga, close to Diori Hamani, was eventually appointed chairman of the Presidential Council formed after the army's decision to invalidate the elections. Under Maga, Dahomey remained committed to its francophone links but there were changes in its relations with Nigeria.

In August 1970, in Cotonou, Gowon and Maga signed a treaty of friendship, co-operation and mutual assistance. This paved the way to an economic agreement signed in Lagos the following February. A small Dahomean Embassy was also reopened in Lagos in 1971 - it had been closed since 1965 for reasons for economy. The following year, the FMG undertook the financing of the reconstruction of the Porto Novo-Idiroko road. Again that year, an interest-free loan of 3 million US dollars reimbursable within 25 years was granted by the FMG to finance various social projects in Dahomey. During this period, friendly relations between the FMG and Dahomey were already a predominant feature of Dahomean foreign policy. This was illustrated by the numerous contacts between Apithy and Awolowo who actively favoured the development of co-operation projects with Dahomey. Dahomey's commitment to the francophone groupings in West Africa remained, however, unchallenged by these links. Thus, in June 1972, it signed the agreement creating the CEA0 at Bamako.

The overthrow of Maga by a coup on 26 October 1972 was followed by a sharp evolution in Dahomey's relations with Nigeria. As it stepped into power, the regime of Major Kerekou was ostracised by francophone Africa and France, whose President Pompidou cancelled a visit which he should have paid to Dahomey. Nigerian reactions to the change of regime were equally marked by displeasure. It was

1. AFP/BA., 4 March 1970.

largely in order to break this isolation that the new Dahomean leaders initially committed themselves to a policy of rapprochement with Nigeria on the basis of common support for the ECOWAS. A few hours after the coup, Kerekou proclaimed his support for the constitution of a Benin union between Dahomey, Togo and Nigeria. Dahomey's new Foreign Minister, Major Michel Alladaye then went to Lagos where he explained the motives of the take-over and again pledged the new Government to the constitution of a Benin union.¹

From 1972 onwards, Dahomey emerged increasingly as a proponent of Nigerian views and policies in West Africa. In March 1973, Dahomey agreed to the abolition of the transit taxation for its trade with Togo and Nigeria.² This measure was indispensable to the implementation of the Togo-Nigeria association announced at Lomé in April 1972. It led to a remarkable boost of recorded traffic across the frontiers of the three states. At the Abidjan Conference on the CEA0 held in April 1973, Dahomey demanded a mere observer's status in the grouping. Alladaye explained in Cotonou that:

le Ghana et le Nigéria n'appartenant pas à la CEA0,
l'appartenance du Dahomey à cette organisation ne
signifiait plus grand chose. Le Dahomey...ne pouvait
entrer dans une communauté d'où le Nigéria serait absent.³

Closer economic co-operation with Nigeria went along with Dahomey's new political commitments. In January 1975, Gowon visited Dahomey and agreed to the construction of a sugar refinery and a cement plant which would supply the markets of both countries. The FMG also provided some budgetary subsidies to the depleted finances of Dahomey.⁴ In 1973-74 a drastic reduction of Niger's groundnut exports

1. West Africa, 13 November 1972, 1514.

2. AFPBA., 18-19 March 1973

3. Daho-Express, 19 April 1973.

4. G.Arnold, Modern Nigeria(London, 1976), p. 140.

following the drought had caused a slump in the traffic of Cotonou harbour. During 1975, however, port congestion in Lagos led to a considerable increase of Cotonou harbour's traffic on behalf of Nigeria. Transit trade for Nigeria became of greater importance to Cotonou than that for Niger.

When the ECOWAS treaty was signed in Lagos in May 1975, Dahomey was the only neighbour of Nigeria whose relations with the FMG had undergone dramatic changes since 1966. They followed the replacement of Dahomey's links with Ivory Coast by an alternative and much stronger politico-economic relationship with Nigeria. Ivory Coast's leadership had been queried by Dahomeans since the late 1950s. Under de Gaulle's Presidency his policy towards Nigeria and close links with Houphouët Boigny made Dahomean links with Ivory Coast a political necessity. During this period Ivory Coast remained a crucial intermediary in Franco-African relations. This was no longer the case after 1969. By 1975 Dahomey continued to rely heavily on French aid but this no longer represented an obstacle to its relations with Nigeria. France had reduced its aid but it was

Table 2 - Total net overseas development aid to Dahomey¹

Year	bilateral aid		%	multilateral aid	Total aid
	France	Total			
1969	6.1	8.0	76%	5.3	13.3
1970	6.3	8.1	77%	6.2	14.3
1971	8.4	20.8	40%	8.5	29.3
1972	6.9	12.0	57%	8.1	20.1
1973	7.9	13.6	58%	13.0	26.6
1974	8.7	18.5	47%	16.0	34.5
1975	13.9	29.3	47%	24.0	53.3

1. OECD, Geographical distribution of Financial Flows to Developing countries(Paris, 1977), p. 26.

still Dahomey's primary aid contributor and its main trading partner.¹ Indeed, under Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing, France's policy of diversification of commercial relations with non francophone African states (and in particular Nigeria) removed political obstacles to Dahomey's establishment of closer ties with Nigeria. These changes in France's policy towards Nigeria during and after the Nigerian civil war are the subject of the following chapter.

1. see tables 13 and 14 in appendix.

CHAPTER VII

Changing Relations between Nigeria and France

Resumption of diplomatic relations between France and Nigeria in May 1966 did not follow any fundamental change in de Gaulle's attitude to Nigeria. Political relations between France and Nigeria were still chilly when the initiative for re-establishment was taken by the last Balewa Government in September 1965. In effect, de Gaulle's agreement to re-establish diplomatic relations had been prompted chiefly by Nigeria's policy towards its West African neighbours, which had helped maintain the unity and stability of Francophone states.

Diplomatic relations between France and Nigeria were barely resumed when the developing crisis in Nigeria appeared to bring increasing evidence of a forthcoming break-up of the federation. Because of this, France, when the war began in July 1967, maintained a low profile attitude in the conflict with an eye to establishing good relations with both sides if they were to part. This policy was strongly influenced by political events in Nigeria but also by Uwechue's active and skillful lobbying in Paris. Uwechue was Nigeria's Chargé d'Affaires in Paris until the arrival of Maliki as Ambassador in October 1966. When war broke out in Nigeria, Uwechue - then First Secretary in the embassy - resigned his post and began openly to serve Biafra's cause as its representative in Paris.¹ This was of crucial importance, because Uwechue had been in closer contact with the French press and diplomatic circles than the other

1. The Observer, 5 June 1969.

staff in the embassy - including Maliki, who did not speak a word of French. In May 1966, Uwechue had been in charge of establishing the first contacts with the French Foreign Ministry, the Quai d'Orsay, whom he had found happy that diplomatic relations with Nigeria were at last being resumed.¹ Soon after this, however, the overthrow of Ironsi and the ugly and repeated violence against Easterners in Northern Nigeria had aroused conflicting sentiments among Nigerian diplomats abroad, which equally affected Nigeria's new representation in Paris. Accordingly, in August 1966, Francis Nwokedi - formerly Permanent Secretary in the Nigerian Ministry of External Affairs, now a senior political advisor to Ojukwu since the overthrow of Ironsi, - flew via Paris on his way to Israel in order to present the case of the East as well as to seek armament.² Thanks to help which he received in the Nigerian Embassy Nwokedi met in Paris officials from the Quai d'Orsay whom he pressed to give support to the East.^a The French foreign officials refused, but found the incident pertinently illuminative of the situation in Nigeria.

At the beginning of October 1966 when Maliki took up his post in Paris, Nigeria was in turmoil and seemed to be on the verge of collapse. Massacres of Easterners in Northern Nigeria had been resumed in late September, causing the breakdown of the Lagos constitutional talks on the future of the federation as well as the exodus of thousands of Ibos to the Eastern Region.

Divided loyalties within the Nigerian embassy in Paris reinforced the impression that the Federation could not survive. After the failure of the Aburi talks in January 1967, French officials reached the conclusion that Biafra's independence would be the prelude to a

1. Raphael Uwechue, Interview, London, 5 May 1975

2. D. Hunt, On the Spot (London, 1975), p. 172; de St Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War, p. 113.

total break-up of Nigeria.^a

1. De Gaulle and the Nigerian civil war.

When Biafra's independence was proclaimed there was no official French reaction, primarily because, unlike Britain, France had no substantial economic stakes to protect in Nigeria. In 1966, the value of French assets had been estimated at £35 million representing 10% of total foreign investment in Nigeria.¹ The same year, Franco-Nigerian trade accounted for only 2.8% of France's total trade with Africa.² The crisis in the Middle East, with the Suez canal closure early in June triggering off Israel's victorious Six Day war against the UAR, was French diplomacy's paramount concern. During the following months and until May 1968, France's reaction to the civil war in Nigeria was the adoption of a policy of non-involvement or, as this was officially termed, ignorance of the conflict in order to remain 'neutral' vis à vis both sides.³ It was felt that a political solution to the Nigerian crisis should follow an African - and especially Nigerian - initiative.

In June 1967, France refused Nigerian requests for a supply of armament, including jet aircraft.⁴ At the same time, existing contracts with the FMG were implemented. In fact, it happened that the shipment of the first batch of AMX Panhard armoured cars which France had agreed to sell to Nigeria in February 1967 coincided with the beginning of the war. France recognised only the FMG.

1. Marchés Tropicaux, 10 August 1968, 1991.

2. See tables 16 and 17 in appendix.

3. John de St Jorre, Interview, London, 10 July 1974.

4. Uwechue, Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War....., p. 96.

Thus, when on 14 December Dr Gabriel Okpara, formerly Premier of the Eastern Region and now political adviser to Ojukwu, landed at Orly airport without a visa, he was not allowed into France.¹ Yet, France's overall attitude of laissez faire in the conflict was of greater benefit to Biafran envoys whose activities in Paris were tolerated within the limits of the law. In Paris, as in London, New York, Lisbon or Geneva, Biafrans were consequently able to open offices for which Uwechue chose the cover name of Biafra Historical Research Centre.² From a suite of two rooms located at 18 Rue de Galilée, near the Etoile in Paris, Biafran envoys undertook public relations activities but also co-ordinated contacts with businessmen, arms dealers and even mercenaries. Dr S. Mezu, then Biafra's assistant Representative in Paris, later gave a vivid account of activities conducted semi-clandestinely by Biafran envoys in France in the early months of the war.³

During the few weeks between Biafra's proclamation of independence and the beginning of the war operations early in July 1967, Biafran envoys in France tried approaching various businessmen in order to discuss contracts which could provide Biafra with the cash necessary for its purchase of armaments. In August 1967, the FMG released in Lagos copies of two documents allegedly relating to such agreements (see copy, pp.257-8). The first one was a 'Power of Attorney' which Ojukwu gave to Nwokedi to 'negotiate and conclude an agreement with Baron de Roure and J-P Mallet, Paris, for the grant of foreign exchange to the Government of the Republic of Biafra up to the equivalent of £6 million'. The document was unsigned and incompletely dated '...July 1967'. It also referred to a description of the terms

1. Le Monde, 31 January 1968.

2. Raph Uwechue, Interview, London, 5 May 1975.

3. S. Mezu, Behind the Rising Sun (London, 1972), pp. 1-141. It should be noted that Mezu's work is one of fiction, even if based on his personal experience.

The two documents distributed to the Press by the FMC
on 8 August 1967

1. Power of Attorney of Lt.Col. C. Ojukwu to Francis Nwokedi



**From THE MILITARY GOVERNOR
REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA
ENUGU**

POWER OF ATTORNEY

KNOW ALL MEN by these presents, that
I, LT.-COL. C. ODUMEGWU OJUKWU, Military Governor,
The Republic of Biafra, DO this day of
July, 1967, APPOINT FRANCIS CHUKWUKA NWOKEDI,
ESQ., of 4, Nwokedi Street, Onitsha, to be
attorney for the Government of the Republic
of Biafra for the purpose hereinafter mentioned,
that is to say:

To negotiate and conclude an
agreement with BARON DU ROURE & J.P. MALLET,
Paris, for the grant of foreign exchange
to the Government of the Republic of
Biafra up to the equivalent of £6,000,000
(six million pounds) sterling in a
currency acceptable to, and to an account
designated by, the Government of the
Republic of Biafra, the first payment
of £1,000,000 (one million pounds) sterling
being made available immediately for the
use of the Government of the Republic of
Biafra on the conclusion of this agreement
in accordance with the terms of the
attached Schedule.

Source: reprinted in J. Wolf and C. Brovelli, La guerre des rapaces, la vérité sur la guerre du Biafra (Paris, 1969), pp. 140-2.



FROM THE MILITARY GOVERNOR
REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA
ENUGU

GRANT OF EXPLOITATION

KNOW ALL MEN by these presents, that I,
LT. - COL. C. ODUMEGWU OJUKWU, Military Governor,
The Republic of Biafra, DO this day of 1967
GRANT AND CEDE TO THE FOTCHILD Bros BANK, FRANCE,
the exclusive rights of exploitation and extraction
of all deposits of the hereinafter enumerated minerals
within the territorial jurisdiction of the Republic of
Biafra :

- 1) COLUMBITE ORE
- 2) URANIUM
- 3) COAL
- 4) TIN CONCENTRATES
- 5) NATURAL OIL.
- and 6) GOLD ore

These presents have effect immediately, and
henceforth FOR A DURATION OF 10 (TEN) YEARS; ONLY.

BE IT ALSO KNOWN THAT I, LT. - COL. C. ODUMEGWU
OJUKWU, Military Governor, The Republic of Biafra,
./.

SECOND PAGE

HEREBY EMPower FRANCIS CHUKWULA NWOKEI Esq., of 4,
Nwokedi Street, Onisha, TO NEGOTIATE AND CONCLUDE
subsequent renewals and extensions of the above - granted
rights of extraction and of exploitation.



of the transaction which were said to be contained in an 'attached schedule'. But this could not have been the second document presented to the press. As we argue in appendix I, this project of sale of the mineral rights of Biafra to the Rothschild Bank in Paris cannot be considered genuine. According to this interpretation, the contents of the 'attached schedule' are still unknown. There is some evidence, though, that it may well have referred to a financial deal. During June 1967, Biafra was reportedly considering converting its Nigerian currency into international currency before issuing its own banknotes.¹ This, however, did not materialize. According to a well informed source quoted by St Jorre, the French banker Mallet entered negotiations with Biafran envoys in Paris and did reach an agreement with them, but refused later to implement it.² Biafra's credibility had perhaps been undermined in his eyes by the outbreak of the military operations in July, or by one of the negotiators leaking the document to the FMG.

Another concern of Biafra's representatives in France was the arrangement of arms supplies. Indeed, owing to a loophole in the French law, arms embargoes imposed in June 1967 on the conclusion of arms contracts with Nigeria did not apply to black market purchases. Arms dealers acting on behalf of the Biafrans bought small quantities of French light armament.³ These transactions often proved deceptive however. When deliveries actually took place and reached Biafra, it was not unusual that the crates turned out to be filled with iron rods.⁴

More importantly for Biafra, it was in France that two B-26s and a

1. The Times, 9 June 1967.

2. De St Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War, p. 214.

3. Until September 1968, French arms represented 10% of Biafra's supplies, 50% of which consisted of black market purchases actually made in France; S.Diamond, 'Who killed Biafra?', The New York Book Review, 26 February, 1970, 18.

4. Ibid.

Superconstellation were bought (also through intermediaries) during June-July 1967.¹ The aircraft, paid for in cash, proved expensive and of little military value. Biafra was reported to have paid twice the normal price for its Superconstellation.² The two B-26s had been used for photogrametric prospecting, and had had their bombing equipment removed. For this reason, within a few months, two similar B-26s were bought in Portugal to replace those purchased earlier in France.³ These mistakes resulted from the Biafran envoys' lack of experience in dealing with entrepreneurs who sought to exploit Biafra's acute armament needs. From another point of view, the nature of these dealings could provide evidence of France's non involvement on the side of Biafra at this stage in the conflict.

The variety of activities undertaken by Biafra's Historical Research Centre was highlighted by the short episode of Biafra's recruiting of mercenaries in October-November 1967. When the British mercenary Mike Hoare refused to organise a mercenary force for Biafra after his visit there in October 1967, Frenchmen were successfully approached. A force of some 50 mercenaries was then recruited in Paris and flew to Biafra in November. Their stay, however, was brief. After five of them died in the battle for Calabar early in December, all but a handful left in January. They had been in Biafra barely six weeks.⁴

1. Details in The Times, 27 July 1967; l'Express, 12 February 1968 and JOAN, 22 May 1968, 2082.

2. West Africa, 2 March 1968, 243; see also table 9 in appendix.

3. XXX, 'Le Biafra, Histoire d'une sécession, Naissance d'une Nation?', Revue de Défense Nationale, March 1969, 437.

4. See a detailed account of the mercenaries' activities in Gemini News Service, D. Paskov, 'White Men in a Black War' (London, 1970, mimeo), ii, p.3.ff.

Mercenary recruitment and arms purchases, as well as what is generally termed the "Rothschild oil deal" with Biafra, all emphasised the inherent ambiguity of France's politique attentiste in the conflict. This policy line undoubtedly permitted Biafra's semi-clandestine activities of which French officials - and, more precisely, Foccart's Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires Africaines et Malgache - were clearly aware.¹ FMG suspicions about the French attitude led Okoi Arikpo to fly to Paris and meet with Couve de Murville to discuss France's attitude to the civil war on 12 December 1967. After the meeting, Arikpo could but tell the press that France's stance was unchanged, with no consideration of recognizing Biafra.² The FMG representative confirmed previous impressions that France did not support the FMG's conduct of the war, but nevertheless remained committed to diplomatic usage and international law rulings which worked in favour of Nigeria.

Early in 1968, however, the FMG's chief concern was the attitude of French interests to the conflict. In particular, the state-owned CFP was strongly believed to have signed an agreement granting it future access to Biafra's mineral resources in return for financial support. During the months following their proclamation of independence, the Biafrans tried to collect revenue from oil companies operating in Nigeria. The oil companies did not support the Biafran leadership but adopted a cautious stance towards its claims, being concerned for the safety of their oil installations. Most of these were located East of the Niger, where, by 1966, nearly two thirds of the Nigerian crude oil was extracted. All Nigeria's onshore

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1. See P. Chairhoff, B...comme Barbouze (Paris, 1976), pp. 74-82; also R. Steiner, Carré Rouge, du Biafra au Soudan, le dernier Condotière (Paris, 1976), pp. 74-82 and 267. Steiner did not write himself this account of his life which often bears little relation to reality.
 2. Le Monde, 15 December 1967.

oil production had also to be pumped to the sea terminal in Bonny island through pipelines crossing the Eastern Region.

When oil negotiations with Biafran officials started SAFRAP, the subsidiary of the CFP operating in Nigeria played no active part. With only one field in production at Obagi in the Eastern Region, it followed the lead of Shell-BP which by 1966 was producing 84% of the Nigerian crude. Shell investment in Nigeria amounted to £250 million against £18 million for SAFRAP.¹ Also, SAFRAP payments to the FMG were not due before the end of August 1967, while those of the two other companies involved in Nigerian production, Shell-BP and Gulf Oil, were expected by mid-July.²

In June 1967, Biafran envoys invited the oil companies' representatives to two meetings where they argued that the royalties, rents and profit taxes previously redistributed by the FMG to the Eastern Region should now be diverted to Biafra. They failed to secure any commitment.³ Subsequently on 21 June, Ojukwu delivered an ultimatum to Shell-BP demanding that oil revenue be paid to the Bank of Biafra within ten days.⁴ Simultaneously troops were sent to guard the oil companies' installations at Port Harcourt and Bonny. Both the FMG and the Biafrans rejected a Whitehall compromise proposal that payments be lodged in a suspended account.⁵ By the beginning of July, Shell-BP had paid neither Nigeria nor Biafra. Gulf Oil, whose production was entirely off shore and consequently unaffected by the conflict, had made payments to the FMG. At this point the Biafran

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1. De St Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War, p. 139 and Marchés Tropicaux, 21 September 1968, 2306.
 2. West Africa, 1 July 1967, 860; AFP/BA., 30 July 1967.
 3. M. Davis, 'Negotiating about Biafran Oil', Issue, III, 2(Summer 1973), 23-32.
 4. Petroleum Press Service, July 1967, 265.
 5. Le Monde Diplomatique, August, 1968, 20.

leadership revised its stand and made a new request to Shell-BP for a token payment. Stanley Gray, the Company's Manager in Nigeria, wrote a letter to Ojukwu, dated 1 July, agreeing 'under duress' and with 'strong protest' to a payment of £250,000.¹ SAFRAP subsequently adopted a similar approach and informed the FMG of its intention to pay £100,000 to the Bank of Biafra.^a The FMG responded to Shell-BP's decision by extending its naval blockade of Biafra to oil tankers. On 6 July, the crisis took another turn, when initial fighting north of Nsukka received publicity.

Discussion and diplomatic contact between Shell-BP executives, British and FMG officials led to the cancellation of Shell-BP payments to Biafra later in July.² When SAFRAP's head office in Paris learnt this, they followed suit, rescinding their agreement to pay £100,000.^b In fact, they were badly worried that their relations with the FMG would be seriously damaged if they made a payment while Shell-BP did not. On 25 July, Federal troops landed on Bonny island and took control of the oil terminal which channelled Nigeria's onshore production. Two days later, all oil companies curtailed their activities in Biafra and withdrew their expatriate personnel. On the day Bonny was captured, Ojukwu placed Gray under house arrest in a last attempt to induce Shell to pay royalties. The move did achieve some result; Gray's release eleven days later followed the payment of what Shell later described as ransom money.³

By September 1967, SAFRAP and Shell-BP had not paid any royalties to either the FMG or the Biafran Government.⁴ This situation was probably accepted by the FMG on the basis that delayed payments might

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1. De St Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War, p. 141; West Africa, 8 July 1967, 904.
 2. Officially the Bank of England was instructed by the Treasury to refuse permission for the transfer of the payment; West Africa, 15 July 1967, 929 and 937.
 3. The Observer, 14 January 1968.
 4. West Africa, 2 September 1967, 1147.

avert Biafran retaliation - such as destruction of oil installation, which would hamper the resumption of production when the war was over. It was another issue, SAFRAP's known dissatisfaction with the oil arrangements under negotiation with the FMG before the outbreak of the war, which caused the latter's concern at relations between the CFP and Biafra. In January 1967, the FMG had announced changes in the taxation system which would substantially increase its oil revenue.¹ The new tax arrangements represented a re-alignment of prices, conforming with the more favourable tariff concessions granted by oil companies to Libya since the end of 1965. Agreements between Shell and the FMG stipulated that any decision of the Anglo-Dutch company, or one of its subsidiaries, to provide better financial terms to an African Government should subsequently apply to Nigeria. Shell-BP had accordingly begun to negotiate with the FMG a revision of its pricing system, and announced enforcement of it in November 1967.² The FMG's earlier announcement in January 1967 that tax law changes would apply to all companies had, however, met with considerable resistance from other oil companies in Nigeria - in particular, SAFRAP. They protested that their presence in the Federation, more recent than Shell-BP's, had not yet enabled them to recover their exploration costs.³

On 27 July, when SAFRAP stopped all activities in Nigeria, this issue was still being discussed. In December, it was believed that SAFRAP was wondering whether its commitment to new investments and exploration was worthwhile under the new tax system. Indeed Parisian oil circles considered that the company might receive better treatment

1. West Africa, 21 January 1967, 83.

2. S. Pearson, Petroleum in the Nigerian Economy (Stanford, 1970), p. 27.

3. West Africa, 4 February 1967, 182.

at the hands of an independent Biafra than from the FMG.¹ Against this background, during January-February 1968, it was alleged in France and Nigeria that the CFP had signed an agreement in December 1967, granting them mining rights in exchange for immediate financial aid to Biafra.² These rumours reflected SAFRAP's ambiguous stance, expressed in reluctance to resume prospecting activity in Nigeria before the conflict was resolved. The study of the origin of these allegations helps provide an answer to queries on their veracity. In late January 1968, the Nigerian embassy in Paris had sponsored the organisation of a press conference to announce the formation of an Association France-Nigéria. At the Conference, on 24 January at the Paris Hilton, the speaker was François Duprat, a right-wing activist notorious for his apologies for antisemitic practices in Nazi Germany and strongly hostile to de Gaulle's policy in Algeria.³ These facts were patently ignored by officials from the Nigerian embassy, who attended the Conference together with some 50 journalists. In his address, Duprat argued that France had a double policy in the Nigerian crisis. The Quai d'Orsay supported the FMG while Foccart's Secrétariat Général conducted a secret policy of support to Biafra, which had led to the recruitment, equipment and financing of a hundred mercenaries now in Biafra.⁴ France's secret support of Biafra, Duprat continued, related to the payment by a French oil company of royalties to the Biafrans to pay the mercenaries' salaries and purchase arms.⁵ Information supplied as evidence for this allegation included names of mercenaries and arms dealers as well as telephone numbers and addresses - in particular

1. Africa Confidential, 22 December 1967, 2.

2. Daily Times, 16 February 1968.

3. See Duprat's obituary in Le Monde, 19-20 March 1978.

4. Rivarol, 25 January 1968; New Nigerian, 26 January 1968; West Africa, 2 March 1968, 243-4.

5. Ibid., and P. Decraene, 'Le Biafra marque des points', Revue Française d'Etudes Politiques Africaines, 27 (March 1968), 10.

those of the Biafra Historical Research Centre, described as a recruiting centre for mercenaries.

Under careful scrutiny, Duprat's allegations appear to comprise little more than a collage of previously published newspaper articles on arms purchases, the recruitment of mercenaries or the 'Rothschild deal' - details of which were applied to CFP. The information which he had collected was cast in a strong anti-government mould, augmented with detailed addresses and telephone numbers probably drawn from the comprehensive system of reference cards which he had compiled on right-wing militants and milieux in France and abroad.¹ There is no doubt that Duprat was primarily concerned with serving the purpose of his own anti-Gaullist and anti-Israeli convictions. At his Conference, he argued that Israel was actively supporting Biafra and explained that he was founding the Association France-Nigéria because he wanted to fight Israël 'qui en Afrique comme au Moyen Orient est l'ennemi commun.'²

Not only were his claims completely unsubstantiated but the strong antisemitic overtone of his address so irritated journalists in attendance that some of them called him an agent provocateur, walked out of the Conference and precipitated its collapse.

The Conference of the stillborn Association France Nigéria - of which Duprat had seemed to be the only member - was hardly reported in the French press. The unfortunate association of the Nigerian embassy with it, however, did cast a long shadow behind the FMG's policy in the war as seen by journalists in Paris. The communiqué released by the Nigerian embassy, justifying official support for

1. Le Monde, 19-20 March 1978.

2. Decraene, 'Le Biafra marque des points', op. cit., 10.

François Duprat's Association on the assumption that it was a cultural and not a political movement, had little effect.

Strained relations between the French press and the Nigerian embassy were apparent when, almost a week later, Maliki invited some 15 journalists to a press conference at the Nigerian embassy. The journalists were addressed in English and criticised for their reports on the civil war.¹ This initiative failed to achieve any result insofar as Nigeria's deteriorating image among journalists was concerned. France's most influential newspaper le Monde published a brief account of the encounter and added:

On peut s'interroger sur l'opportunité de cette convocation essentiellement destinée à faire connaître des plaintes à l'adresse de la presse Française...M.Alhaji Abdul Maliki n'a convaincu aucun de ses interlocuteurs...²

Duprat's Conference, besides its adverse effects on relations between the Nigerian Embassy and the French press, had diplomatic repercussions not only in Paris, but in Nigeria. On 16 February, three Nigerian newspapers reproduced Duprat's allegations without his name being mentioned.³ Arikpo immediately emphasised that these reports did not reflect the viewpoint of the FMG which, he said, disavowed them.⁴ Raymond Césaire, the French Chargé d'Affaires in Lagos, nevertheless made representations to the Ministry of External Affairs to raise the matter. In Paris, the publication on the very same day of similar stories by three newspapers was considered as the result of an FMG inspired move.⁵

Changes in France's attitude towards Biafra were to follow a

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1. Full text of the address in Morning Post, 12 February 1968.
 2. Le Monde, 4 February 1968.
 3. Morning Post, Daily Sketch, Daily Times, 16 February 1968.
 4. AFP/BA, 17 February 1968.
 5. See the Satirical comments in Le Canard Enchaîné, 21 February 1968.

period of intense contacts between de Gaulle and African leaders in March-May 1968. No clearcut French policy towards Biafra was however adopted until July 1968. This was partly because early in May and for nearly a month and a half internal issues monopolized both public opinion and Government attention. The continuation of military operations in Nigeria beyond the FMG's self-imposed deadline of 31 March 1968 represented a crucial step in the evolution of the war. Indeed several African statesmen thereupon took the initiative of entreating the FMG to accept a diplomatic settlement of the conflict. Following Houphouët Boigny's arrival in Paris on 29 March, France became a focal point for diplomatic activities in favour of Biafra. As in London, numerous informal meetings and contacts took place on possible initiatives to end the war but without any result. Francophone statesmen like Senghor, Diori Hamani, Bongo and Eyadema who all visited France during this period did not share Houphouët Boigny's views on the war. Officials from the Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires Africaines et Malgache were closely associated with these discussions although no public statement on France's attitude to the conflict was made at any stage during this period. De Gaulle's own attitude was one of caution, despite various attempts by Houphouët Boigny and de Gaulle's closest advisers on African affairs to persuade him to make France's voice heard. Possibly the reason for de Gaulle's attitude was the division of Francophone Africa over how civil peace should be restored in Nigeria. Tanzania's recognition of Biafra on 13 April was condemned by Diori Hamani and also by President Tsiranana of Madagascar, President Modiebo Keita of Mali, Bourguiba, Lamizana and even Bongo.¹ Houphouët Boigny excepted, only Senghor appeared then to be contemplating recognition of Biafra.²

1. West Africa, 27 April 1968, 480.

2. Le Figaro, 19 April 1968.

On 2 May, de Gaulle received Raymond Offroy, France's first Ambassador to Nigeria, and now a supporter of Biafra, on whose behalf he pressed de Gaulle to take a positive stand in the conflict. The French President did not disclose his views to Offroy but the latter left the meeting convinced that de Gaulle would soon clarify his position.¹ This was not the case as the unexpected événements de mai interrupted activity throughout France during the following weeks, leaving foreign policy in the background. After the evacuation of the Sorbonne by police forces on 3 May, savage police brutality in the quartier Latin against demonstrating students incensed by the violation of university liberties sparked off indignation throughout France. A general strike called in protest spread rapidly to all sectors of the political, economic and cultural life of the country for nearly a month. During June 1968, an agreement was reached on new salary scales, involving a re-evaluation of minimum wages by 35% and the acceptance of social reforms at a meeting which was held between tradesunion and employer representatives, chaired by Prime Minister Georges Pompidou. Following a dramatic speech by de Gaulle on the radio, economic activity progressively returned to normal. It was in this context that, on 12 June, the first Council of Ministers to deal with foreign policy issues since the beginning of May discussed 'la situation au Biafra'.² A total embargo on arms deliveries to the area of the conflict was announced as well as purely humanitarian support of the French Government in sending medical personnel and relief supplies to Biafra by the Croix Rouge Française (CRF). In accordance with this, a subsidy of 50,000 FF enabled 4.5 tons of relief aid to be

1. R. Offroy, Quand le Coeur a Raison (Paris, 1973), p. 48.

2. République Française, La Politique Etrangère de la France, 1^{er} semestre 1968 (Paris, 1968), p. 194. (Hereafter Politique Etrangère).

flown to Biafra from Libreville during the second week of July.¹

This first French public statement on the Nigerian crisis was not noted either in France or abroad. In effect, it brought France's policy into line with that of other European Governments. After the failure of the Kampala peace talks in late May 1968, Czechoslovakia had halted arms deliveries to Nigeria. The Netherlands and Italy followed suit on 4 and 7 June respectively.² Nigeria was not really affected by the French and Italian embargoes for these two countries had already ceased all arms deliveries.³ France's public announcement of arms bans was really aimed at adding further pressure for the enforcement of an embargo on all European arms deliveries to the conflict. The Dutch Government had on 6 June committed itself in Parliament to approaching countries delivering arms to Nigeria, suggesting an interruption of supplies.⁴ In Britain, which was primarily concerned, this issue led to a debate in the House of Commons on the very day of the French Council of Minister's announcement.

It should be emphasised that France's policy statement of 12 June did not originate from any popular concern for Biafra in France. The country was on the eve of legislative elections and internal issues still dominated public life. On 10 and 11 June, for the first time since the beginning of the événements de mai, three deaths had been reported in different incidents. The Council of Ministers which discussed the situation in Nigeria on 12 June also met after a night of clashes between students and police in Paris.

1. See table 8 in appendix.

2. Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute, The Arms Trade with the Third World (Stockholm, 1971), p. 629.

3. Deliveries of French armoured cars had been interrupted in December 1967; by then 21 out of the 40 ordered were supplied; XXX, 'Biafra, Histoire d'une Sécession...', op. cit., 440.

4. Financial Times, 5 June 1968.

In fact its most publicised decisions were a ban on all demonstrations and the dissolution of various radical right-wing and left-wing groups. The short reference to the Nigerian crisis contained in the communiqué released after the Council meeting was not reported by most newspapers in France and went unnoticed.

Contrary to common assertions, French public opinion was not aroused by the suffering in Biafra before this reaction had manifested itself in Britain or other European countries. Until the end of June 1968, French newspapers - with the exception of le Monde and le Figaro - confined themselves to limited coverage of the Nigerian situation.¹ Throughout 1967, foreign news concentrated on the Middle East problem and during March-April 1968, on the opening of the Vietnam peace talks in Paris. In April 1968, Markpress, the Geneva based public relations agency employed by Biafra since February, sent four British journalists to Biafra. Their articles 'hit the headlines of British newspapers' in the week of 21 April, marking an important date for British popular concern at the war.² These press reports generated campaigns for an embargo on arms deliveries to Nigeria which had no echo in France, where the Markpress initiative made no impact. A moving 'Panorama' television programme broadcast in France on 3 May might have aroused public opinion but could not do so as domestic events began to monopolise attention.

On 30 June, the 'plaidoyer pour le Biafra', published in le Monde by the left-wing catholic intellectual Jacques Madaule, was a pioneering appeal for concern about Biafra. Strong feelings about the Biafran situation then spread rapidly in France as a result of newspaper commentaries and reports.³ The plight of Biafra's population was a shock to newsmen who, like their readers, now discovered the evolution of

1. See the analysis of M. Mandagou Baillet, 'Les Informations sur le Conflit Nigéria-Biafra dans la presse Quotidienne Française', Journalisme, 32(1^{er} trimestre 1970), 52-3.

2. I am indebted to the BBC for permission to view its film 'Propaganda in the War', BBC Midweek Programme, 8 May 1969.

3. The French television played no role at this stage, as it was on strike until 12 July 1968.

the conflict since the fall of Port Harcourt in May. Newspapers also received Markpress releases which, after the end of June, promoted the image of a Biafra, encircled by the Federal troops, becoming a kind of concentration camp created by the FMG to enforce, 'a new final solution: death by starvation'.¹ The impact of this image in France was particularly strong, recalling Nazi atrocities towards the Jews during the second world war. Biafra's dramatic overpopulation owing to the exodus of refugees after the fall of Port Harcourt and its encirclement by Federal troops was seen as the result of an FMG ploy to win the war. The words 'mass-extirmination' and 'genocide' soon crept in. Special envoys sent dramatic descriptions of the Biafran population's suffering and expressed their profound admiration for 'un peuple qui préfère se suicider [en mourrant de faim] plutôt que de se soumettre'.²

During July growing pressure built up for a French Government intervention in the war. MPs asked in parliament what initiatives were intended.³ The Association France-Biafra, founded by a group of French Catholics, petitioned African statesmen attending the CCN meeting in Niamey to urge the FMG to end the 'massacre systématique des Biafrais' and accept the organisation of a massive relief airlift.⁴ On 30 July, a group of intellectuals from Amiens pleaded in a public letter to de Gaulle for French intervention in favour of a ceasefire and an interruption of arms supplies to Nigeria.⁵ On the same day, the conservative Catholic Daily le Figaro characteristically

1. Markpress Release, GEN-199, 21 June 1968.

2. Le Figaro, 24 July 1968.

3. République Française, Journal Officiel du Sénat, 23 July 1968, pp. 531-2.

4. Le Figaro, 17 July 1968.

5. Le Monde, 31 July 1968.

concluded a series of dramatic reports from a special correspondent in Biafra with two horrifying pictures of starving children next to a front page article by the Académicien Thierry Maulnier.¹ Under the headline, 'les regarderons nous mourrir?' he advocated a co-ordinated intervention in 'des Etats qui se sentent une responsabilité dans le destin du monde' and hoped that France would take 'des initiatives concretes'.

De Gaulle's intervention in the civil war followed the creation of a new Gaullist Government after the legislative elections of 23 and 30 June, which provided the Gaullist regime with its largest majority in Parliament since 1958. This reflected in the composition of the Government formed on 12 July, with Couve de Murville replacing Pompidou as Prime Minister, while Michel Debré became France's new Foreign Minister. Four days later, while Gowon addressed the CCN in Niamey, a 'Commentaire de Milieux Autorisés' in Paris expressed grave concern over the prolongation of the conflict and hoped for urgent re-establishment of peace and tranquility in this part of Africa.² After announcing also that France would increase its humanitarian aid to Biafra through a development of CRF activities, the statement concluded:

Le gouvernement Français suit de près l'évolution de la situation locale et reste prêt à participer à toute initiative qui permettrait de soulager les souffrances des populations et, aussitôt que possible, de rétablir la paix.

For the first time, official French sympathy for Biafra had been intimated. The importance of this statement went, however, unnoticed - like that of 12 June. This was partly because the declaration of 16 July was not a formal statement but a 'commentaire' made by the French 'milieux

1. Le Figaro, 31 July 1968.

2. AFP/BA., 17 July 1968.

autorisés'. The low profile of the French pronouncement appeared aimed at preventing too obvious an interference with the Niamey talks. Characteristically, the statement emphasised that the French Government considered the Nigerian crisis 'essentiellement un problème Africain'.¹

As was the case at the London talks early in May, the Niamey Conference only agreed on a venue and date for future discussions. No agreement was reached on such crucial issues as the creation of a relief corridor or the implementation of a ceasefire. In view of this, a statement read after the meeting of the Council of Ministers of 31 July represented a logical follow up to the commentaire of 16 July. The declaration of 31 July considered that:

...le sang versé et les souffrances qu'endurent depuis plus d'un an les populations du Biafra démontrent leur volonté de s'affirmer en tant que peuple...
Le conflit actuel doit être résolu sur la base du droit des peuples à disposer d'eux mêmes et comporter la mise en oeuvre de procédures internationales appropriées.²

Contrary to widespread rumours at the time, this proclamation of French sympathy with Biafra's cause did not prompt any massive military support from France. French military support to Biafra only developed - and then on a limited scale - after the end of September 1968.

The statement read after the Council of Ministers meeting of 31 July marked the beginning of a campaign to provide relief funds to the CRF and the Comité Français pour la Campagne Mondiale Contre la Faim (CFCF). Their appeal presented on the French television and widely supported in the press brought over 10 million FF within two weeks and at a time

1. Ibid.

2. République Française, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, La France et la Biafra (Paris, 1969), p. 20.

when most French people were on holiday.¹

Immediately after the statement of 31 July, a highly placed French official commented that de Gaulle's stance reflected a decision in principle to recognise Biafra.² Accordingly, the business weekly Marchés Tropicaux described France's position as a 'reconnaissance implicite du Biafra'.³ The well informed newspaper le Figaro explained that the French statement 'ne constitue pas une reconnaissance officielle du Biafra mais...il semble que l'attitude soit identique'.⁴ A few days later, le Figaro, quoting official sources in Biafra, hinted that French diplomatic recognition of Biafra might take place on 12 August.⁵ The French Embassy in Lagos and the Quai d'Orsay in Paris, however, denied that such steps were being considered.⁶ According to Effiong it was nevertheless at this stage that Foccart's Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires Africaines et Malgache informed the Biafran military high command that efforts would be made to ensure that military supplies - increasingly sparse in delivery to Biafra since the fall of Port Harcourt - would continue to reach the enclave.⁷ If true, this pledge constituted a clear incentive to the stiffening of the Biafran stand at the Addis Ababa talks which opened a few days later.

On 13 August, while the Addis Ababa talks were at a stalemate, a commentary from de Gaulle reasserted the French stand without, however, referring to the diplomatic recognition eagerly awaited by Biafra:

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1. See table 8 in appendix.
 2. The Times, 1 August 1968; West Africa, 3 August 1968, 909.
 3. Marchés Tropicaux, 3 August 1968, 937.
 4. Le Figaro, 1 August 1968.
 5. Le Figaro, 3-4 August 1968.
 6. AFP/BA, 3 August 1968; Daily Times, 5 August 1968.
 7. Quoted in Stremlau, The International Politics....., pp. 229-30.

Quoiqu'il puisse arriver sur le terrain, seule une solution politique peut résoudre cette question qui ne peut être réglée que compte tenu de la personnalité du peuple Biafrais.¹

France's stance on Biafra was a total surprise outside France itself where the evolution of the French viewpoint on the war before 31 July had been ignored. De Gaulle's attitude was particularly puzzling to foreign observers in view of the situation on the battlefield. Indeed all reports insisted that Biafra, surrounded by Federal troops and desperately lacking military equipment, was in a hopeless position, not only excluding any possibility of military recovery but also pointing to a victory of the Federal troops within a few months. As the British MP, Nigel Fisher, who visited Nigeria pointed out, de Gaulle appeared to be backing the wrong side at the wrong time, when the war was almost over.²

Biafra as a nation

De Gaulle's intervention was prompted by his personal genuine sympathy for Biafra whose struggle for independence he greatly admired. His famous though possibly apocryphal remark 'Brave petit peuple, Foccart, il faudrait faire quelque chose pour eux' neatly summarises an important aspect of this attitude.³ De Gaulle, unaware that not all Biafrans were Ibos, considered that their struggle was one of an integral nation 'les Ibos...en général sont Chrétiens...vivent dans le Sud d'une certaine façon.. ont une langue à eux'.⁴ Community of culture, territory, language and experience are indeed the well known criteria used to define national identity.

1. AFP/BA., 14 August 1968.
2. New Nigerian, 5 August 1968.
3. Le Nouvel Observateur, 3 November 1969, 50.
4. Full text of the Conference in Le Monde, 10 September 1968.

De Gaulle's feelings were reinforced by his political analysis of the external forces involved in the conflict. The Biafrans emphasised the unequal and unjust character of a war which they were desperately fighting to ensure their physical survival. In July 1968, Ojukwu's written request asking de Gaulle for support had astutely recalled the French struggle for freedom during the second world war.

Since March 1968, visitors like Houphouët Boigny or Offroy, who were urging de Gaulle to make France's voice heard in the conflict, had insisted that Biafra was fighting with courage and resolution more powerful forces bent on its extermination. The FMG benefited from an overwhelming arms superiority thanks to support from the Soviet Union and Great Britain, with the tacit approval of the US. This struck de Gaulle as another attempt to enforce international order—as at Yalta, or as in Czechoslovakia and Vietnam —without consideration for the inhabitants' feelings. France's statements were made at a time when the British Government had refused to interrupt its arms deliveries to the FMG, but while all other Western Governments had officially banned such supplies to Nigeria; Biafra had access only to the black market.¹ This aroused indignation both in Britain and abroad. In London pressure for a revision of the Wilson Government's stand forced an emergency debate on the war in both Houses of Parliament during August. In Switzerland, organisers cancelled the British Trade Week at Basel in protest against the British attitude. In France, letters of protest were sent by France-Biafra to the British Embassy. Tourists landing on the continent were also handed leaflets depicting Wilson as an accomplice in genocide.² Posters produced by the Biafran delegation

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1. In Germany and Switzerland, trade regulations banned arms sales to countries at war. After the Netherlands, Italy and France, Belgium ordered an embargo on exports of 60,000 tons of arms to Nigeria; SIPRI, The Arms Trade...., p. 629; On Biafra's arms supplies during this period see infra., pp. 282-3.
 2. Philippe Valode, Interview, Paris, 19 April 1975; M. Lambert, Interview, Brunoy, 25 March 1975; Valode and Lambert were respectively Treasurer and Secretary of the Association France Biafra.

in Paris advocated a boycott of British products. De Gaulle's stand revived the Franco-British feud, exacerbated by the atavisms of rivalries in Africa during the colonial era. In fact, de Gaulle's intervention in the civil war came to be attributed to his vigilant Anglophobia. This was only partly true. His policy on the civil war in Nigeria was fundamentally a specific move which can be understood only in the context of France's African policy since 1958.

The Nigerian challenge to the Communauté Francophone

The determining political factor in de Gaulle's stand in the Nigerian civil war was geopolitical. As the anonymous author of a well-informed article put it in the Revue de Défense Nationale:

La crise du Nigéria que l'histoire a situé au coeur de l'ensemble colonial Français ne pouvait laisser la France indifférente: quatre Etats Francophones entourent la Fédération et l'on trouve d'importantes minorités Yorubas au Dahomey, Haoussas au Niger, Ibos au Cameroun oriental.¹

Politico-strategic considerations had always been closely intertwined with the history of Franco-Nigerian relations since 1960. When de Gaulle received Offroy before his departure for Nigeria in 1960, he expressed his disquiet at a Federation which he considered too vast in size for its Francophone neighbours. Until the overthrow of the Balewa regime in January 1966, the moderate and pro-West bias of Nigerian diplomacy found a sole exception in its relations with France. Houphouët Boigny's lobbying in favour of Biafra during March-April 1968 revived de Gaulle's outlook on Nigeria. The influence of Houphouët Boigny's views on the French President was important — if not decisive. It was Houphouët Boigny who previously had overcome de Gaulle's opposition to a resumption of diplomatic relations with Nigeria.

1. XXX, 'Le Biafra, Histoire d'une Sécession...', op. cit., 449.

When Offroy met de Gaulle in May 1968, he pointed out the danger of Nigeria becoming a pole of attraction and possibly absorbing its weaker neighbours once their chefs historiques - those leaders in power since independence - had been replaced by a new generation of statesmen.¹ The dramatic effects of Nigeria's 1961 ban on French ships and aircraft for Niger, Chad, and Northern Cameroun and the serious disruption since 1966 of their export trade by the war, emphasised their extensive dependency on Nigeria's internal stability and its attitude to them. Relations between France and Francophone Africa could also suffer indirectly as a result of Nigeria's newly found oil wealth which might further enhance its appeal to its neighbours.

The French statement of 31 July 1968 was above all an appeal to African countries to press for a solution to the civil war in Nigeria. Informed of the military situation in Biafra,^a de Gaulle excluded any extensive French military commitment as this could only incur the risk of widening the conflict into a serious international crisis.² De Gaulle was under the impression that more African statesmen would grant Biafra diplomatic recognition. France would then follow suit and present Biafra's case in the UN. This did not happen, because his appeal gained no support in francophone Africa. As Diori Hamani arrived in Paris in mid-August he bluntly declared that the French statement was responsible for the stalemate at the Addis Ababa talks, adding that such extra-African intervention was most regrettable.³ Diori Hamani believed that 'le problème du Nigéria peut et doit être réglé par des Africains', a point which he made forcefully during his talks in Paris. Many African statesmen

1. Raymond Offroy, Interview, Paris, 17 April 1975.

2. François Debré, Interview, Paris, 24 March 1975.

3. AFPBA, 13 August 1968.

felt that the statement made after the Council of Ministers meeting of 31 July had encouraged further intransigence by the Biafran delegation at Addis Ababa. Senghor, with whom de Gaulle had discussed the Nigerian crisis on the eve of the statement, was isolated when he advocated the intervention of great powers in the conflict to impose a ceasefire and institute negotiations, but he committed himself no further.¹

2. France and Biafra until March 1969

By the beginning of September, the lack of any positive response to the French policy statements in francophone Africa and their open condemnation by such prominent statesmen as Tsiranana and Diori Hamani, caused de Gaulle to adopt a more cautious policy line designed to avoid a split within the francophone bloc and isolation of France on this issue. This period marked a turning point in the evolution of the French stand. De Gaulle refused to grant diplomatic recognition to Biafra for the present; at the same time, however, French diplomacy continued its pressure on African countries to take initiatives for a solution of the conflict that would ensure Biafra's self-determination.

These points were made directly to the Biafrans when Foccart received a mission of senior diplomats on 7 September 1968. The delegation had pointed out that an intensification of military operations followed France's tacit recognition of Biafra and asked for military and diplomatic assistance.^a Diplomatic support, they suggested, should initially include recognition of Biafra by France, followed by lobbying in the UN to persuade its members to recognise Biafra and urge curtailment of Britain's arms deliveries to the FMG. The French reply did not meet Biafran expectations. As one of the

1. Le Figaro, 20 August 1968; Dakar Matin, 31 July 1968.

participants recalled, it was sympathetic but without any commitment to a course involving diplomatic recognition.⁸ Foccart promised that the CRF would increase humanitarian aid to Biafra. Armament requests put forward by the Biafrans would also be considered separately at another meeting.

As Uwechue recalls, it was clear after this meeting that there was no hope of instigating more French action without Biafra receiving further support from African countries.¹ In view of this, after seeing Foccart, the Biafran diplomats who had also visited several African statesmen during the previous two months, sent a series of recommendations to Ojukwu. They advised changes in Biafra's stand on a solution to the conflict before the opening of the OAU Heads of State Conference in Algiers on 13 September. Azikiwe, Okpara, Dike and Uwechue all told Ojukwu that 'as Africa was sympathetic to the Ibo cause but, at the same time, opposed to secession he should use the opportunity of the Algiers meeting to seek OAU guarantees for a confederal arrangement, such as was agreed at Aburi'.² Several African leaders told members of the delegation that they were hostile to the idea of an independent Biafra, but declared themselves favourable to a confederal solution. It appeared particularly important to the delegation to secure their support, because officials in Paris had made it clear that France would only give further support to Biafra once other African countries expressed themselves in favour of Biafra's self-determination.

On 9 September de Gaulle declared France's position publicly, at a press conference. He did not exclude the possibility of granting Biafra diplomatic recognition but subjected it to further moves in the

1. Raph Uwechue, Interview, London, 5 May 1975.

2. Uwechue, Reflection on the Nigerian Civil War...., p. 139; also Uwechue quoted l'Express, 19 January 1970, 37.

direction of African states:

La gestation de l'Afrique est avant tout l'affaire des Africains... Il y a des Etats d'Afrique de l'Est et de l'Ouest qui ont reconnu le Biafra. D'autres paraissent s'orienter dans ce sens. C'est dire que la décision qui n'est pas prise n'est pas exclue de l'avenir.¹

De Gaulle thought that a transformation of the Nigerian Federation was inevitable, but did not mention independence for Biafra. He certainly knew that support for such an alternative was unacceptable to most of African states as they felt bound by the OAU charter. De Gaulle therefore suggested a transformation of Nigeria 'en quelque union ou confédération', a proposal which evoked the ghost of Aburi and was strangely similar to the proposals of Senghor, Bourguiba and Tubman to the Biafran delegates who visited them.

In spite of the strong commitment which the Algiers OAU Heads of State meeting expressed on 16 September for the position of the FMG, France began a few days later to provide limited but crucial military aid to Biafra. Such aid was not meant to secure a military victory for Biafra on the battlefield; the intention was to prevent the fall of Biafra and create a stalemate, thereby ensuring Biafra's physical survival. Indeed De Gaulle was convinced that a political settlement of the conflict would eventually have to be accepted by the FMG.

France's Military Support

After the fall of Aba on 4 September 1968, Biafra's military situation was desperate. Arms supplies had become increasingly scarce since the loss of Port Harcourt airport. In July, Hank Wharton, an American arms dealer acting for Biafra since the autumn of 1966, had

1. Le Monde, 10 September 1968.

been sending only 30 tons of arms per week.¹ In September, in the fortnight following the fall of Aba, only one plane-load of arms reached Biafra.² Since the beginning of September, however, light armament had begun to arrive in Uli from Libreville, where a DC-3 and a DC-4 piloted by mercenaries flew 60 to 72 tons of arms per week.³ These deliveries did not represent anything likely to prevent Biafra's eventual collapse but they were partly responsible for the success of the counter-attack against Oguta on 14 September. The Federal troops' control of this town since 12 September posed a significant threat to the Uli-Ihiala airstrip only some ten miles away to the North. Ojukwu personally supervised the crucial operation for which the mortar-bomb quota of the troops was increased by some 500%, in view of the important issues at stake.⁴ The reoccupation of Oguta only gave Biafra a breathing space because the encirclement of Biafra's capital, Umuahia, continued rapidly, while thousands of refugees from Aba and Owerri streamed along the roads to escape the fighting. The famine was then at its worst stage at any time since the beginning of the conflict. Eye-witnesses have argued that when Owerri fell on 17 September, morale was so low in Biafra that a federal platoon could have moved into Umuahia without meeting any resistance.⁵ The fall of Owerri was followed on 21 September by that of Uturu airstrip (also known as Obilagu). Except for the north, the battlefield was then within 25 miles of Umuahia. There seemed no hope of Biafran troops reversing the tide.⁶ Final military defeat was

1. Sunday Express, 10 November 1968.

2. Gemini News Service, Paskov, 'White men...', iii, p. 3.

3. François Debré, Interview, Paris, 24 March 1975

4. F. Oyewole, Reluctant Rebel (London, 1975), p. 133.

5. Ibid., p.131 and Akpan, The Struggle for Secession...., p. 110.

6. West Africa, 28 September 1968, 1137.

expected within a few weeks and relief organisations in Fernando Poo were already establishing plans for a relief aid air-drop as soon as airstrips were closed by advancing federal troops.¹

Persistent rumours on the formation of a Biafran Government in exile in Libreville developed in spite of Gabon's official denials that such an alternative was being considered. Rolf Steiner, a leading figure among the dozen mercenaries fighting with Biafra, predicted that all the towns in Biafra, including Umuahia, would fall and claimed that regular war operations were over and would give way to guerilla activities by 15,000 men being trained in Biafra.² Such prospects were indeed raised by Ojukwu during a meeting of selected members of the Biafran Executive Council, where he announced that the war was lost. Afterwards, he suggested that the intelligentsia of the country should be evacuated while he would go into the bush and organise resistance.³

Around the 14 September, envoys were sent abroad to discuss these plans with the four countries which had recognised Biafra.⁴ Returning a few days later, they brought news of radical changes in Biafra's military prospects. As Akpan recalls, they came back:

...with assurances of an immediate supply of arms and ammunition which would be dropped from the air if necessary. Two planes arrived that night bringing the returning envoys and large quantities of arms and ammunition.⁵

France was clearly involved in this decisive move. In Paris, emissaries from Gabon and Ivory Coast had held several meetings between

1. Guardian, 24 September 1968.

2. Le Monde, 26 September 1968.

3. Akpan, The Struggle for Secession...., p. 110.

4. Sunday Telegraph, 15 September 1968; Sunday Times, 22 September 1968 and Guardian, 28 September 1968.

5. Akpan, The Struggle for Secession...., p. 111.

18-20 September with French officials whom they pressed for aid to Biafra.¹ Zambia's President Kaunda, visiting Paris during the period, urged de Gaulle to provide arms and supplies to Biafra.² On 20 September, de Gaulle received Raphaël Leygues, France's Ambassador to Ivory Coast, to discuss 'les problèmes Africains d'actualité qui intéressent particulièrement la Côte d'Ivoire'.³ This was most probably to finalise details of France's support to Biafra.

It was between 18 and 22 September that journalists in Biafra reported a sudden increase in arms supplies, at the precise moment when diplomats and members of the inner cabinet of Ojukwu were returning to Biafra for important consultations.⁴ DC-3s and DC-4 began to ferry 30 odd tons of armaments each night from Libreville and Abidjan.⁵ Relief workers at Libreville airport recall that they were easily distinguishable from other aircraft because they bore no markings (see photograph p.286).

The sudden arrival of arms in late September 1968 prevented the fall of Umuahia which would have meant an end of the war. Anti-tank weapons delivered at a crucial period halted the advance of federal Saladins and Ferret armoured cars. On 23 September, Biafran sources reported a breach in the encirclement of Umuahia some 25 miles to the south of the city and an advance of 16 miles within 24 hours. In fact, the fall of Okigwi on 1 October represented the federal troops' last significant advance. The situation then gradually changed as their offensive came to a halt. By November, the Biafran army had even made several successful counter-attacks, recapturing

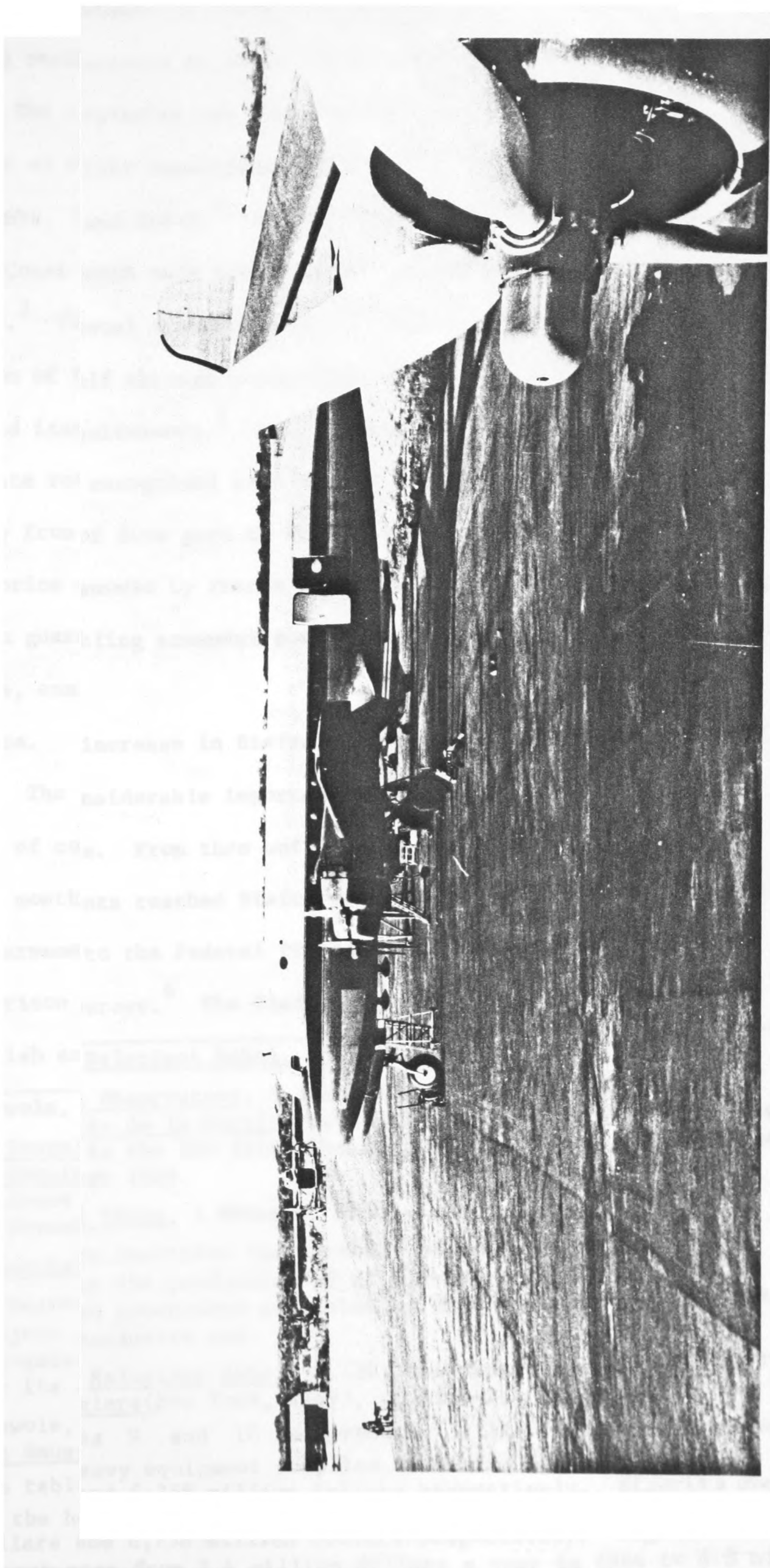
1. Debré, Biafra An II, pp. 130-1.

2. Anglin, 'Zambia and the Recognition of Biafra...' op.cit., 127.

3. AFP/BA, 21 September 1968.

4. Sunday Times, 22 September 1968 and Guardian, 2 October 1968.

5. Financial Times, 23 and 24 September 1968.



Unpublished photograph.

Libreville Airport: One of the unmarked DC-4's operating the Arms Airlift with Biafra.

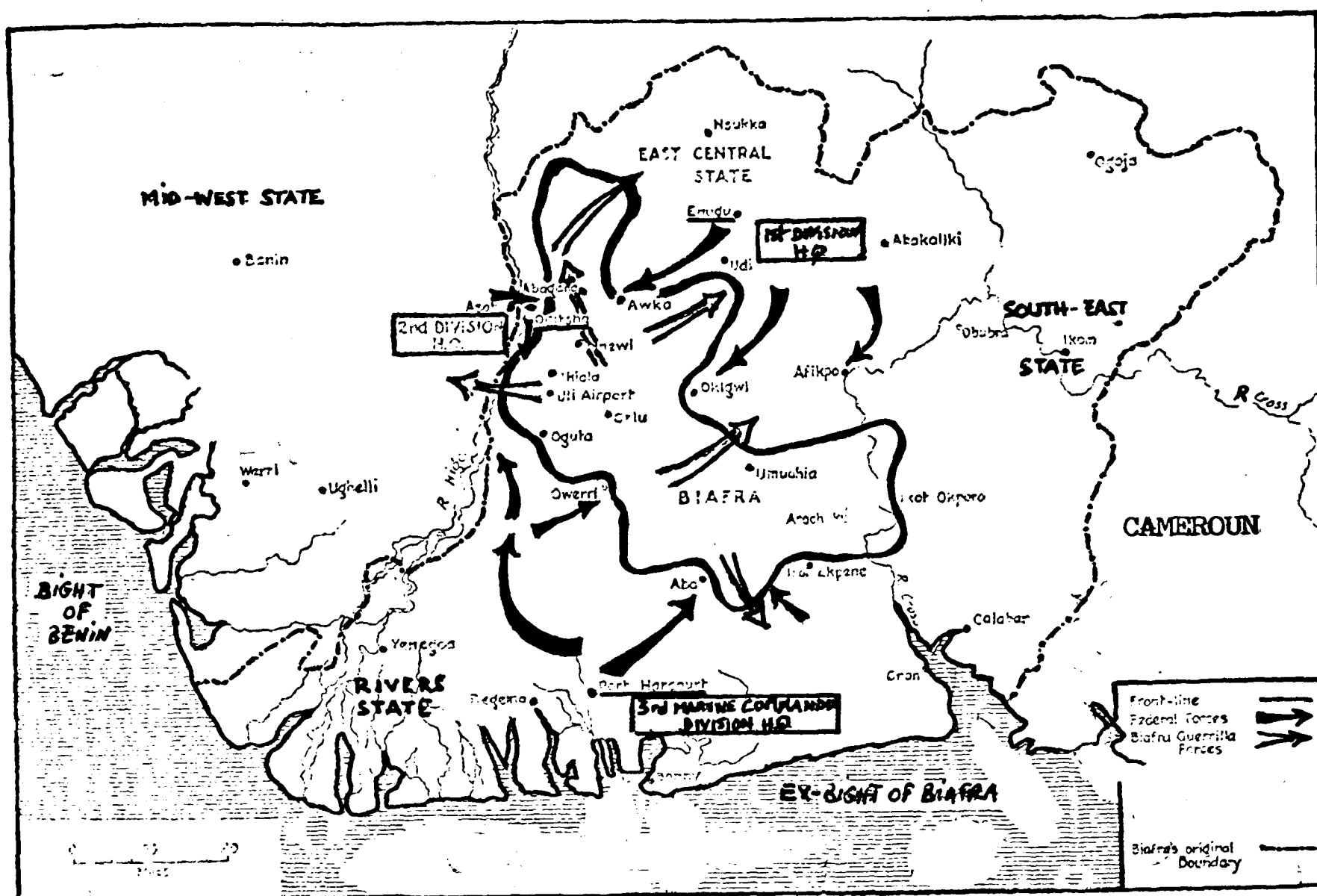
areas where vital petrol supplies were produced by using ingenious improvised techniques of crude oil refining.¹

The increase at short notice of arms deliveries to Biafra at the end of September was effected by using stocks of French mortar bombs, light ammunition and armament held in the arsenals of Ivory Coast and Gabon.² France subsequently restocked their armouries.³ French made arms, however, represented only a small proportion of total armament flown to Biafra. French aid to Biafra manifested itself through a considerable easing of end-user certificate requirements.⁴ From September onwards, the Biafrans could buy from recognised arms manufacturers and 'no longer had to pay the price of five guns to obtain one'.⁵ Loans from Ivory Coast and Gabon guaranteed by France strengthened Biafra's financial resources, enabling armament purchases from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and France.

The increase in Biafra's arms supplies after 18 September 1968 was of considerable importance given their scarcity during previous months. From then until early March 1969, as much as 350 tons of armaments reached Biafra every night. This was still minute in comparison to the Federal troops' abundant supplies from Soviet and British sources.⁶ The Biafran army was not able to launch any

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1. Oyewole, Reluctant Rebel, pp. 134 and 138-40.
 2. Le Nouvel Observateur, 5 January 1969, 11; M. Honorin, Les Mercenaires de la Mort(Paris, 1969), p. 134; further documentary evidence in the BBC film 'The Battle for Onitsha', BBC programme, 27 November 1968.
 3. Financial Times, 1 November 1968.
 4. In Western countries the purchase of arms and ammunition is subject to the production of an end-user certificate from a recognised government guaranteeing that the arms are intended for its exclusive use.
 5. Oyewole, Reluctant Rebel, p.138; this point is also made in T.Green, The Smugglers(New York, 1969), pp.139-40.
 6. See tables 9 and 10 in appendix. SIPRI estimated the total value of the heavy equipment supplied to Biafra and the FMG to 384 million dollars and 6,758 million dollars respectively. Nigeria's overall arms imports rose from 2.4 million dollars a year in 1966 to 8.8 million dollars a year by the end of the war. The size of the Nigerian army increased by a factor of 14 and British arms exports to Nigeria rose by a factor of 110; SIPRI, The Arms Trade..., pp.627 & 631; Peace News, 22 January 1970, 5-6.

The situation on the battlefield in October 1968



Source: from J. de St Jorre, The Nigerian Civil War (London, 1971), p. 221.

decisive offensive. In fact, arms supplies merely kept Biafra's head above water.^a Full and direct military support was refused by de Gaulle, who was aiming only for a stalemate on the battlefield to ensure Biafra's survival until a political settlement could be reached.

France's Relief Contributions

It was during July-September 1968 that concern about the situation in Biafra reached its peak in France. The average Frenchman generally saw Biafra as a Catholic community fighting against conservative Muslim forces responsible for the massacre of thousands of defenceless Easterners in 1966 and now engaged in a holy war against their last shelter. To many intellectuals, Biafra was a paradigm of the fight of modernity versus tradition, an epitome of the conflict between tribal and national consciousness in Africa and the symbol of resistance to imperialist interests attracted by Nigeria's oil resources, eager to preserve the colonial status quo in Africa.

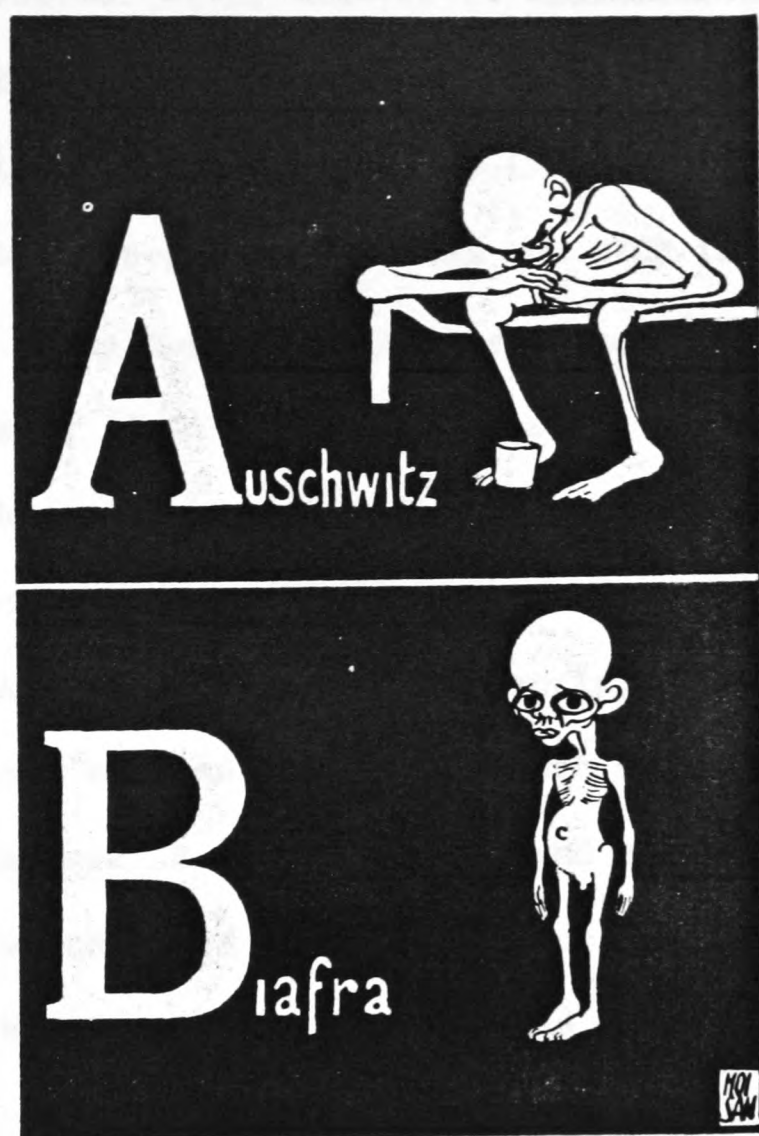
Humanitarian concern for Biafra reached its zenith as famine assumed horrifying proportions in Iboland in September 1968. ICRC relief workers estimated that the death rate had soared from 1,000 per day in June to 5,000-10,000. Biafra, whose military situation was desperate, also appeared to be fighting its last battle. Strong feelings in the French population showed in a multiplicity of initiatives, often unco-ordinated, which suddenly developed. France-Biafra launched an appeal supported by le Figaro and under its own auspices flew 12 tons of powdered milk to Biafra.¹ The Association des Journalistes pour l'Information sur les Pays en Voie de Développement sent 50,000 protein rations to Biafra, saying that it intended to supplement this.² Religious organisations like the Secours Catholique

1. M. Lambert, Interview, Brunoy, 25 March 1967.

2. Le Monde, 17 September 1968.

Reactions to Biafra in France

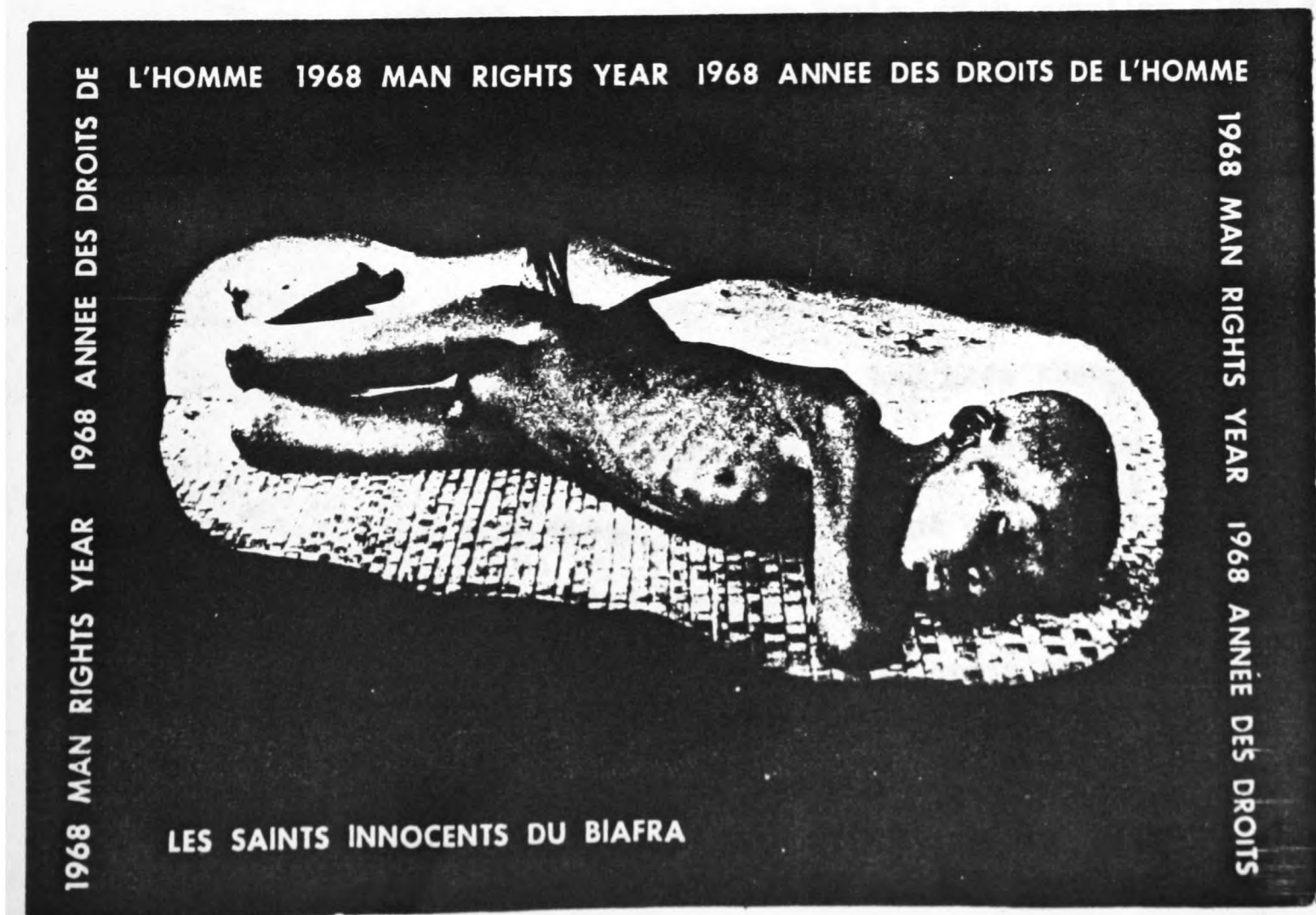
ALPHABET



L'alphabet (à suivre ?) de l'horreur

1. A concentration camp

(cartoon originally published in le Canard Enchaîné and later reprinted as a handout by the Comité International de Lutte Contre le Génocide au Biafra).



2. A Christian martyrdom

(postcard from the Association France-Biafra).

Français and the Cimade (French Protestant and Orthodox churches) were also involved. They however co-ordinated their shipments with those of Caritas Internationalis and the World Ecumenical Church Council within the Joint Church Aid (JCA) airlift.

Progressively the CRF and the CFCF integrated all relief aid from non religious organisations. They took charge of recruiting medical teams of 12-14 doctors and nurses. These were sent to Biafra for three months and worked there under the aegis of the ICRC. The first recruits arrived on 3 September via Santa Isabel, to run a hospital at Awo Omamma, near Uli airstrip. Other members of this forerunner team arrived later that month and were posted to nutritional centres at Santana, East of Umuahia, and Ezenhiette to the South East of Umuahia, which cared respectively for 350 and 400 children affected by protein deficiency (Kwashiorkor) and looked after 2,500 and 500 other children.¹

After the CRF's first relief shipments to Gabon in July, Libreville airport became the expedition base for all Biafran relief aid until Biafra fell. Between 3 September and 4 October a relief airlift was organised on an emergency basis, with supplies flown from Paris to Libreville by regular air services and then brought into Biafra by Air France pilots. The best known aspect of CRF activities was its evacuation of Biafran children in the aircraft returning empty from Uli. The evacuation, reception and treatment of these children, which started on 12 September, had been thoughtlessly organised by representatives from the Swiss Organisation Terre des Hommes.² The CRF, favourable to the treatment of a greater number of children in Biafra's various Kwashiorkor malnutrition centres only agreed reluctantly to transport them in its empty planes returning

1. In Vie et Bonté, Revue Officielle de la CRF, 190 (March 1969), 26.

2. See Fédération Internationale Terre des Hommes, 'Rapport du Dr Raoul Mainette, Rapport sur l'action "Evacuation" des enfants malades Biafrais sur le Gabon' (Lausanne, 1968, mimeo), p.1. ff.

from Uli.¹ Failure by Terre des Hommes and the Croix Rouge Gabonaise to cope with the intensive medical care needed by the children immediately after their arrival led to subsequent involvement of both the French army and the CRF. A CRF team arrived in Libreville on 21 September and was followed three weeks later by a military field hospital composed of 200 beds and 66 doctors and nurses under the direction of a pediatrician. Subsequently, it ensured the initial treatment - lasting about six weeks - of children evacuated from Biafra. When restored to health, the children were sent to centres administered by charitable organisations in Gabon and Ivory Coast.

When the CRF initiated its activities early in September 1968, it did not expect that they would last more than two months given Biafra's military position.² The unexpected necessity of sharing the cost of the children's treatment and maintenance after their evacuation to Libreville, added to the expenses of the continuing airlift, led to a reduction by almost a half of relief flights to Biafra after 4 October 1968.³

French relief supplies represented only a fraction of the overall tonnage of relief aid flown into Biafra, CRF aid thus never exceeded 10.7% of JCA supplies and 15% of those by the ICRC.⁴ Nevertheless the CRF activities were had special significance due to their separate organisation, (see map p.293) with active support of, and under close supervision by the French Government. It was, indeed, a Military Attaché to the French Embassy in Libreville who

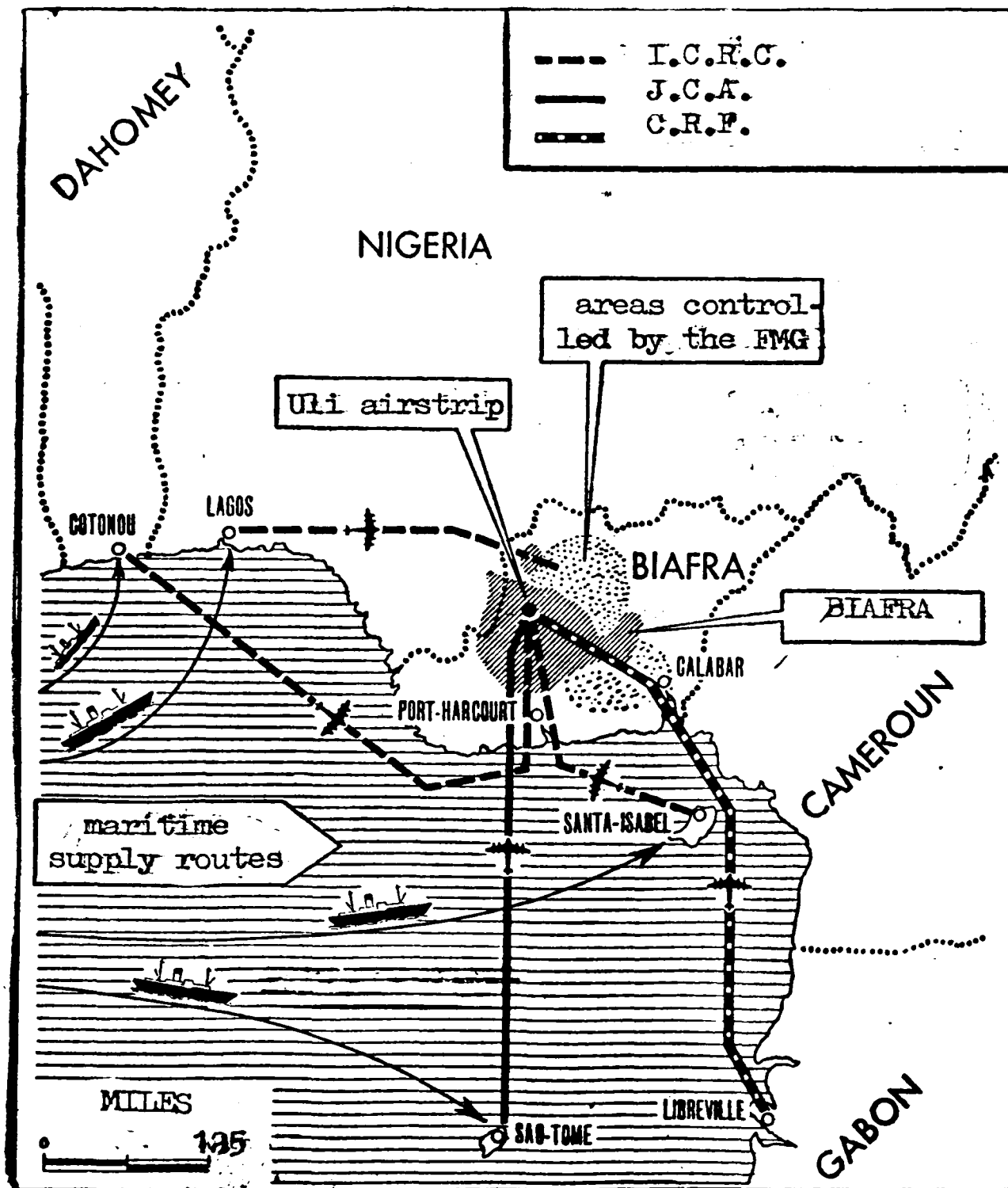
1. Vie et Bonté, 195 (October-November 1969), 64.

2. Vie et Bonté, 190 (March 1969), 27.

3. See table 8 in appendix.

4. See table 7 in appendix.

Relief routes during the Nigerian Civil War



Source: Nigeria-Demain, October 1969, 9.

was responsible for the logistic organization of the airlift as well as co-ordination of other transports to Biafra.¹

France's Economic Interests.

There was no connection between de Gaulle's position and the geographical distribution of French investments in Nigeria. Most of them were located in areas which were under FMG control by the end of July 1968.² French assets in the former Eastern Region were concentrated in the Port Harcourt area, which had been recaptured by the Federal troops in May. Regarding the oil sector, the only functioning SAFRAP field in 1967 was at Obagi which, like most other concessions of the French oil company, was in one of those areas under Federal control.

A cause for great speculation was the attitude of French companies to the secession after France's declared support for Biafra. On 5 August 1968, the Nigerian High Commissioner in London announced at a press conference that the FMG now had 'irrefutable documentary evidence' that France was supporting Biafra financially in exchange for an exclusive concession of mineral rights.³

Disappointing photocopied documents were published later in the Embassy journal United Nigeria.⁴ They had in fact appeared in the Lagos press during August 1967, and were now produced again, but as evidence of French involvement found in Biafran archives after the fall of Enugu in October 1967. The commercial firms operating in Nigeria before the civil war gave no support to de Gaulle's

move in favour of Biafran self-determination. Within a few months

1. Le Monde, 9 May 1969; CRF activities represented between 10% and 15% of Libreville airport's total traffic with Biafra.^a
2. Marchés Tropicaux, 10 August 1968, 1991.
3. In Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict...., ii, p. 246.
4. United Nigeria, 20 August 1968.

they formed a lobby hostile to French intervention and, early in 1969, increased pressure for a policy reversal. Indeed, their interest was related to the preservation of the larger markets of a united Nigeria.

SAFRAP was the only French company prospecting and exploiting oil in Nigeria. During the first months of the conflict, it had followed Shell-BP's policy on the payments of royalties. Early in 1968, Shell-BP had decided to resume investment in Nigeria and by March it started the construction of a pipeline that would channel crude oil directly to the sea. This was necessary for the resumption of production which until 1967 had been routed for export via the Eastern region and to the Bonny terminal. In contrast with Shell-BP's policy, SAFRAP had remained however uncommitted. Partly in order to quash rumours that it had committed itself to support Biafra in December 1967, the CFP informed the FMG in late January 1968 that its Nigerian subsidiary would resume exploration activities on one of its concessions in the MidWest, the Oil Mining Lease Number 57.^a Early in April, however, SAFRAP told the FMG that it had cancelled these earlier plans. SAFRAP contended that it wanted its new investment to be financed with benefits drawn from its Obagi oil field.^b Given its location close to the Biafran heartland, this amounted to suspending activities in Nigeria until peace returned. With SAFRAP's known dissatisfaction with the FMG's new oil regulations, this attitude aroused considerable suspicions after de Gaulle's commitment to support Biafra in July 1968. Samuel Ikoku, who visited France in December 1968, claimed that:

In his Biafran exercise, M. Foccart is acting in accord with Rothschild and a consortium of French financial interests which put out the money for the SAFRAP oil company.¹

1. S. Ikoku, 'Nigerian Rebels and their French backers', Daily Times, 27 January 1969.

This statement stemmed from the false assumption that France's intervention in Biafra after July 1968 was not the result of government policy. French aid to Biafra was de Gaulle's policy and not a financial exercise by SAFRAP or other private interests. According to available information, it is the French intervention which prompted SAFRAP's siding with Biafra. An agreement granting SAFRAP privileged access to its oil resources was offered by the Biafrans as the repayment for loans guaranteed by France.^a This did not constitute an agreement to the overall sale of Biafra's oil resources.

However, if Biafra's French supporters included people who were genuinely sympathetic to its cause, there were also individuals whose backing was motivated by less ethical consideration. Some of de Gaulle's trusted advisers on African affairs took into account the predictable oil benefits that a successful French intervention in favour of Biafran self-determination would provide.¹ At the request of a French businessman, who was involved in oil activities and acted as an intermediary, the Institut Français du Pétrole studied and developed an oil manufacturing process that used no dissolvent.^b The results of this research were then made available to Biafran technicians responsible for the supply of petrol and its by-products.

But, oil was not a decisive factor in de Gaulle's decision to intervene in the Nigerian civil war. If it had been, his support for Biafra would have been expressed much earlier than June-July 1968. Since the Six Day war, de Gaulle's approach to those Middle East and Arab countries supplying France with oil was one of

1. See the interesting but very unreliable account in Steiner, Carré Rouge..., pp. 268-9.

rapprochement. Having condemned Israel in June 1967, he placed an embargo, early in 1969, on French arms deliveries to the state. At the same time, the sale of French Mirage aircraft to Libya was authorised. This course of action was far from unanimously endorsed in France. It even divided the Gaullists both in Parliament and in the Government. De Gaulle's policy towards the Arab world accounted for his increasing reluctance to commit France any further to support for Biafra after the UN General Assembly meeting in October-November 1968. France's, substantial relations with Algeria, which was heavily committed to the FMG cause, were one of the factors which prompted the alteration of de Gaulle's stance towards Biafra, in March 1969.

3. The abortive reappraisal of de Gaulle's policy, March-April 1969.

France's support to Biafra after September 1968 had an increasingly ambiguous effect. As a Biafran diplomat later recalled Ojukwu regarded the French statements and aid to Biafra as an opportunity to stiffen resistance.^a On 10 September, he bluntly dismissed the proposal made three days earlier by the group of Biafran diplomats after their meeting with Foccart. They were told that they must accept Ojukwu's policy or resign.¹ A message advocating the search for a compromise was again sent from Paris by Azikiwe on 24 September but it was of no avail either.²

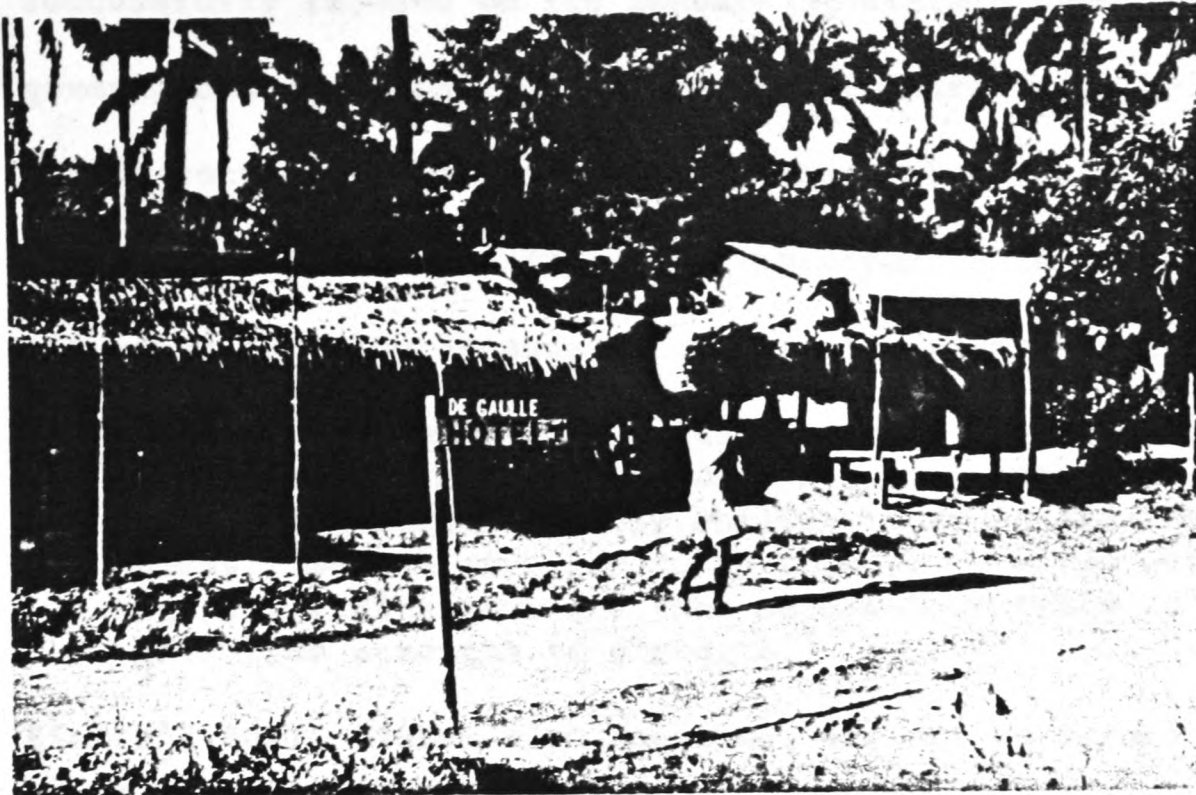
On 25 September, two days after the first successful break through, Umuahia's encirclement by the Biafran troops, Ojukwu declared in an address to the Consultative Assembly of Biafra that he had full confidence in the future of Biafra as an independent state.³

1. Raph Uwechue, Interview, London, 6 May 1975.

2. N. Azikiwe, 'La France et la Guerre Civile du Nigéria', Nigéria Demain, 2 (November-December 1969), 26.

3. Statement on Radio Europe I on 9 January 1969 in Politique Etrangère, 1^{er} Semestre 1969, p. 43.

Biafran reactions to De Gaulle's statements



Hotels and bars were renamed, songs were composed, rallies
lauding de Gaulle and France were organized...



Source: Unpublished photographs

Like Houphouët Boigny, he mistrusted the OAU. He believed that recognition of Biafra's independence by the OAU would be successfully imposed on its members by Western democratic governments now experiencing growing pressure from their own public sectors. The war, Ojukwu claimed, had reached a turning point not only because of recent improvements in the battlefield situation but also because of concern for Biafra's plight:

The international acceptance of our rights to self-determination and our improved supply position gives me more confidence in our ability to frustrate the enemy. We are stronger today than we were two weeks ago and indications are that we shall continue to grow from strength to strength.¹

Biafra's goal, Ojukwu also declared, was not to secure a military victory over the Federal groups but 'to delay the enemy until the world's conscience can be effectively aroused'.² To him, however, no settlement short of Biafran independence could be acceptable. At this meeting of the Consultative Assembly, the continuation of the war was hotly debated. Senior diplomats and civil servants who favoured a timely compromise failed, however, to secure any change of policy. Their position was weakened by the diplomatic situation at the time. On the eve of the opening of the meeting, Lord Shepherd, Britain's Secretary of State for the Commonwealth, had travelled to Lagos to discuss guarantees which the FMG might be willing to offer to Biafra if it surrendered voluntarily. This visit followed earlier contacts between the Commonwealth Secretariat and Biafran diplomats in London who, like their counterparts in Paris, believed that changes in the Biafran prerequisites for a peace settlement were necessary.³ This viewpoint was, however, to be

1. C. Ojukwu, Biafra, Selected Speeches with Journal of Events (New York, 1969), i, pp. 353-4.

2. Ibid., i, p. 353.

3. Guardian, 1 October 1968.

seriously undermined by the total failure of Shepherd's visit to Lagos, owing to the FMG's refusal to commit itself to any compromise.¹

Despite clear warning from Biafran diplomats abroad, Ojukwu expected France to play a key role in the mobilisation of Western and African governments and in the increase of pressure on the British armament policy. In November 1968, he told a delegation of MPs and journalists from Canada, Holland and Denmark that:

Si la France reconnaissait le Biafra, l'aspect de la guerre en serait profondément modifié.
La France serait le premier Européen à reconnaître le Biafra et les autres pays devraient reconsidérer la situation.²

De Gaulle, however, would take no further steps in the Nigerian crisis without the support of the francophone countries. Well aware of this, Biafra's representative in Paris, Uwechue, resigned his post on 12 December 1968.³ The decision followed a radio broadcast by Biafra's Commissioner for Information who rejected any association whatever with Nigeria and claimed that there could be no further peace negotiations without prior recognition of Biafra as a sovereign and independent state.⁴ Two months later, in February 1969, Azikiwe used the occasion of a lecture which he gave at the Commonwealth Society in Oxford to dissociate himself publicly from Ojukwu's views on a peace settlement.⁵

On the African continent as a whole, de Gaulle's limited but crucial support for Biafra was held responsible for Ojukwu's refusal to accept any proposal for peace short of full independence

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1. The Times, 30 September and 3 October 1968; Guardian, 2 October 1968. Gowon sent a message to all African Heads of State declaring 'My government has absolutely nothing to do with a British initiative and is completely opposed to the rebel attempt to switch once more from the OAU to the Commonwealth Secretariat.' Text in Daily Telegraph, 30 September 1968.
 2. AFP/BA., 15 November 1968.
 3. Raph Uwechue, Interview, 6 May 1975.
 4. The Times, 13 December 1968.
 5. In Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict...., 11, pp. 346-9.

for Biafra. Passing through Paris after the Algiers Conference of the OAU, Tsiranana insisted that the Malagasy Republic's stand differed from that of the French Government and denounced as propaganda allegations of an FMG policy of genocide against Biafra.¹ Similarly, within a week, Ould Daddah publicly condemned Biafra's secession in the French capital, expressing irritation with European attitudes to atrocities committed in the conflict.² At the UN, Debré, however, reiterated de Gaulle's appeal for African initiatives in the conflict:

Les temps sont venus où il nous faut demander à nos amis Africains ce qu'ils comptent faire eux-mêmes de ce principe [du droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes] et leur rappeler ce qu'une longue expérience a enseigné aux Européens: c'est entre frères que peut aussi régner l'intolérance! Garder le silence trop longtemps, demeurer dans l'inaction, alors que coule le sang et se répand la famine, affaiblissent le prestige neuf de l'Afrique. C'est un constant et fidèle ami des Africains qui de cette tribune le dit avec préoccupation mais aussi confiance dans leur prochaine réaction.³

None of the reactions anticipated by Debré was to materialise. Early in November, Modibo Keita, Lamizana and Diori Hamani met in Upper Volta and collectively condemned 'les prises de position partisans en faveur de la province sécessionniste et les justifications contredites par le comportement de certains pays qui arment à outrance le Biafra'.⁴

When President Zinsou of Dahomey went to Paris in January 1969 to discuss his country's difficult financial situation with de Gaulle, the latter no longer considered the Nigerian crisis a major issue and only referred to it briefly. As Zinsou recalls,

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1. Le Monde, 21 September 1968.
 2. Combat, 26 September 1968.
 3. Le Monde, 8 October 1968.
 4. Afrique Nouvelle, 21 November 1968.

de Gaulle appeared to have accepted that Biafra could not become independent.¹ Debré acknowledged this isolation of the French policy when he answered questions on the civil war during a radio interview that same month:

Il n'y a pas présentement, ni en Afrique ni en dehors de l'Afrique, de majorité susceptible de comprendre la valeur de la politique du Général de Gaulle.²
...Nous ne pouvons seuls imposer notre volonté.

Since August 1968, the position of countries like Senegal, Tunisia, Liberia or Sierra Leone, which held moderate views on the war and would have supported initiatives in favour of a ceasefire, had been undermined by Ojukwu's refusal of any settlement that did not guarantee Biafra's full sovereignty and independence. In late January 1969, the isolation of the policies of Gabon and Ivory Coast within francophone Africa became obvious at the Kinshasa Conference. There, OCAM Heads of States declined to consider initiatives other than those conforming with OAU principles and resolutions.

It was becoming clear that further French support to Biafra would have grave repercussions on the stability of Nigeria's neighbours. The French Socialist MP Maurice Brugnon emphasized that such a policy could jeopardise the benefits which de Gaulle expected from the break-up of Nigeria:

Il n'est pas impossible de penser qu'un Etat trop vaste, plus grand que la France et peuplé de 55 millions d'habitants à côté des Etats Francophones, est un danger pour l'influence Française, mais on peut être assuré que la reconnaissance de l'indépendance [du Biafra] par la France aurait des conséquences graves pour l'unité des pays voisins dont les frontières ne sont qu'artificielles puisqu'elles sont celles de la colonisation.³

The continuation of the war threatened the unity of the francophone group

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1. Dr Emile Zinsou, Interview, Paris, 10 September 1975.
 2. Quoted in Politique Etrangère, 1^{er} Semestre 1969, p. 43.
 3. M. Brugnon, 'Guerre au Nigéria, Impressions d'une brève visite de quelques jours' (Paris, 1969, mimeo), p. 7.

as well as French influence in francophone Africa. Thus, the Biafran leadership's intransigent attitude towards any peace settlement falling short of full recognition of Biafra's independence prompted the change in de Gaulle's policy early in March 1969.

De Gaulle decided to place an embargo on French and French-paid arms deliveries to Biafra via Libreville and Abidjan. Interestingly the decision followed an attempt by the newly elected US President Nixon to favour a peaceful settlement by the imposition of an arms embargo on both Nigeria and Biafra. As presidential candidate, Nixon had expressed grave concern about the situation in Biafra. Once elected, the human suffering in the Nigerian civil war became one of the prior concerns of his new administration. With preparation for policy changes in mind, missions were sent to Biafra and Nigeria.¹ In Washington, the Government of Equatorial Guinea was induced to agree to a resumption of ICRC relief flights to Biafra from Fernando Poo. On 22 February, before leaving the US for a European tour, Nixon reiterated his concern about relief aid for the conflict area and appointed a special co-ordinator in charge of US relief aid. Nixon also earnestly hoped, for 'an early negotiated end to the conflict and a settlement that will assure the protection and peaceful development of all the people involved'.²

These views were to meet de Gaulle's wish for an end to the war. Following discussions with Nixon on 1-2 March, de Gaulle ordered a revision of the French policy towards Biafra. The only public hint of this was given by France's Defence Minister, Pierre Messmer, who told journalists in Paris that:

1. For a full account see Cronje, The World and Nigeria....., p.225 ff.

2. Ibid., pp. 231-2.

'Il y a des pays comme la Côte d'Ivoire et le Gabon qui ont un armement Français et qui ont reconnu le Biafra.

Ces pays ont le droit d'aider le Biafra'.¹

On March 5 a French envoy flew to Biafra via Libreville to inform Ojukwu that France's military support to Biafra would cease within a few days. Subsequently, on 10 March, arms stopped reaching Biafra.² Deliveries from Libreville previously amounting to 25-30 tons a day dropped to 20 tons in the following three weeks. In Libreville harbour, a cargo of the Chargeurs Réunis which brought ammunition remained unloaded.

During this interruption of arms deliveries to Biafra persistent rumours began circulating on Soviet policy in the conflict. Officials had reportedly approached Biafran diplomats, expressing their readiness to apply pressure on the FMG for a solution of the conflict which would allow Biafra a certain autonomy. This would give Biafra a status within Nigeria similar to that of the Ukraine within the Soviet Union.³ In Britain, where Nixon discussed the Nigerian crisis, Wilson's Government withstood fierce parliamentary demands for an interruption of its arms deliveries to Nigeria. On 13 March, after a day-long debate in the House of Commons, a motion in favour of continued supplies was passed with a majority of 30 votes. Wilson's last minute announcement that he would visit Nigeria to discuss possible peace initiatives with the FMG had a major influence on the final vote.⁴

De Gaulle's arms embargo on Biafra thus remained an isolated

1. AFP/BA., 4 March 1969.

2. J. Batmanian, 'La Politique Africaine de la Côte d'Ivoire...', ii, p. 395; Le Figaro, 5 April 1969.

3. Financial Times, 17 March 1969.

4. Stremlau, The International Politics..., p. 304; this hastily set up initiative achieved no result.

initiative. On 2 April, before the CCN talks in Monrovia, a well manned Federal offensive on Umuahia threatened Biafra's last town. Responding to urgent appeals by Houphouët Boigny and Foccart, the French President agreed to the resumption of military aid to Biafra.¹ On 17 April, when the Monrovia meeting convened, Biafra's situation on the battlefield was as grave as it had been at the time of the OAU Algiers Conference. Arms deliveries via Libreville were resumed, but at a reduced pace: barely 120 tons a week reached Biafra, compared with some 350 before 10 March.²

On 23 April, at the last Council of Ministers meeting presided over by de Gaulle, Debré announced that French policy in the war was unchanged. France still maintained that 'le peuple Biafrais a le droit de disposer de lui-même'.³ Failure at the Monrovia Conference to reach agreement came as no surprise to the French Government. There was the notable absence not only of Ojukwu and Gowon but also of those countries that had recognized Biafra.

During the Council of Ministers meeting de Gaulle and a few of his ministers already knew that the outcome of the referendum on 27 April would be negative. The proclamation of France's continuing support for Biafra's self-determination therefore had a symbolic value. Aid to Biafra had been reduced, but it continued until the last day of de Gaulle's Presidency. On 27 April, the Swedish MFI-9 (or Minicoins), purchased by Tanzania on Biafra's behalf, were flown to France en route to Libreville and Uga in Biafra. In France, technicians worked on modification of electric circuits in these aircrafts and a method of installing rockets under the wings.⁴

1. See supra, p. 179 .

2. Le Monde, 20-21 April 1969.

3. Le Monde, 24 April 1969.

4. Details of this episode in the war in G. Von Rosen, Le Ghetto Biafrais Tel que je l'ai Vu (Grenoble, 1969), pp. 13-4.

By the time of de Gaulle's decision to resign, a number of pressure groups existed in France with the aim of changing policy on Nigeria. Ineffective while de Gaulle was in power, the pro-federal lobby in France began to play an increasingly important role when Pompidou became President. Since 1969, there had been growing demands for a revision of French policy, culminating at the time of the Biafra Week (10 - 17 March 1969) sponsored by the French Government to raise relief funds for the CRF. In late January 1969 a delegation of MPs from the Socialist, Centrist and Gaullist parties had toured Nigeria for a week. This was at the invitation of the Federal Ministry of Information to Aymard Achille Fould, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs commission in the National Assembly. Achille Fould was a centrist MP who had known Nigeria before the civil war, being Chairman of the Nigerian Marine and Trading Co., formerly based in Port Harcourt and now in Warri. During its visit to Nigeria, the mission travelled extensively, especially in the recently liberated areas and on the war front. Some of its members were at great pains to avoid any further deterioration in relations between France and the FMG. Achille Fould had met Debré on this issue before leaving Paris but could only point out to Nigerian officials that, as things presently stood, France recognised only the FMG.¹ Jean Louis Massoubre, a Gaullist MP, argued at a meeting with Gowon that de Gaulle's pleas for Biafra's autonomy did not necessarily imply support for independence.² The mission returned to France with a guarantee that French investors would not be excluded from Nigeria after the war provided that France did not recognize Biafra.³ These

1. AFP/BA., 4 February 1969.

2. AFP/BA., 2-3 February 1969.

3. Ibid., and The Times, 21 April 1969.

pledges of the FMG were important in that French investors in Nigeria henceforth had greater confidence in actively opposing the Gaullist policy in the civil war. The FMG's statement negated Colonel Adekunle's statement to a French journalist 'la SAFRAP, ici c'est fini!' that had been widely reported in France.¹ Back in Paris, members of the parliamentary delegation to Nigeria gave accounts of the conflict viewed from the Federal side of the battlefield that were in direct contrast to reports from the other side. They opposed contentions that an FMG policy of genocide towards the Ibos existed or that minorities in the former Eastern region all supported Biafra. Most important, they underlined the adverse effects which French recognition of Biafra could have on the restoration of peace in Nigeria and also on French interests in francophone Africa.

Besides French private interests, the FMG received support, early in 1969, from a nucleus of left-wing and radical militants whose mobilisation in favour of Nigeria's unity followed a visit of Ikoku to Paris in December 1968. Ikoku's visit was important in many respects. He was an Ibo and a well known radical which gave his support to the FMG a significant new dimension. In Paris Ikoku first met senior officials in the Quai d'Orsay whom, he recalls, did not seem to share de Gaulle's extensive commitment to Biafra but could do little about it as it was part of his domaine réservé.² France's policy in the civil war was conducted by Foccart's Secrétariat Général pour les Affaires Africaines et Malgache. During his discussion with Quai d'Orsay officials, Ikoku mentioned that French assets in Nigeria would be safe provided France did not

1. Marchés Tropicaux, 14 September 1968, 2253.

2. Dr Samuel Ikoku, Interview, Lagos, 21 October 1975.

recognise Biafra. At their request, Gowon himself confirmed this point in a cable sent on the same day via the Nigerian Embassy in Paris.¹ Asked whether de Gaulle intended to recognize Biafra, Foreign affairs officials emphasized that no prediction could be made but they hinted that if de Gaulle considered taking such a decisive step, it would be announced on the occasion of his New Year address. As Ikoku recalls, de Gaulle's new year message contained only a casual reference to Biafra.²

While in Paris Ikoku also met members of the Comité Central of the PCF with whom he had fruitful discussions,³ which were possibly responsible for the increasing support given by l'Humanité, the party newspaper, to the FMG in the following months.⁴ Ikoku's contacts in Paris led a small group of intellectuals like Pasteur Jacques Beaumont, Henri Hervé - whom Ikoku had met in Ghana - and Me Marcel Manville, a famous French West Indian lawyer, to join African students and black power supporters in bringing active support to the Federal cause in the public meetings on Biafra held in the ensuing months. Ikoku's visit was also followed by the publication by Hervé of a mimeographed monthly in French, Facts Nigéria, with its first issue in January. This was Nigeria's first experience of public relations since the disastrous press conference of Duprat's stillborn Association France-Nigéria the year before. At Ikoku's invitation a five man delegation from the new group made a long visit to Nigeria in February-March. They

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., De Gaulle's address only mentioned 'le droit de disposer de lui-même a reconnaître au vaillant Biafra'; Le Monde, 2 January 1969.

3. Dr. Samuel Ikoku, Interview, Lagos, 21 October 1975.

4. See in particular R. Lambotte, 'Pour qui meurent les Nigériens?', l'Humanité, 19 June, 20 June, 25 June 1969 in contrast with R. Lambotte, 'Nigéria: la Raison d'une Guerre Atroce', L'Humanité, 16 August 1968.

returned to Paris at the time of the Biafra Week, upon which their testimonials had a strong impact.

While the case of the FMG gathered some support in France, the pro-Biafra lobby appeared at the same time increasingly divided. The Achille Fould parliamentary delegation's departure for Nigeria had prompted, in January, two Gaullist MPs supporting Biafra to fly there in order to bring back to France counter-evidence of the situation in Nigeria. Once in Biafra, Alain Terrenoire and Jean Claude Fortuit made various declarations, hinting at forthcoming French recognition. In a statement to Ojukwu at Umuahia,

Fortuit claimed that:

la France désire augmenter vos possibilités de déterminer votre propre destinée: le Biafra est déjà une nation et un Etat, c'est une réalité qui devient de plus en plus évidente.¹

These confident statements did not result from French Government policy, as the Biafrans and observers were led to believe. After their return to Paris, the two MPs began urging the Government, in speeches at meetings and in written articles, to recognize Biafra.²

In late February 1969, after visiting Biafra, the Gaullist MP Offroy emerged as one of the most ardent supporters of French diplomatic recognition of Biafra. Offroy's visit took place during the revision of de Gaulle's attitude to Biafra - a move unpublished at the time. Elysée reactions to Offroy's visit were characteristically different before his departure and after his return. In February Foccart had told Offroy of de Gaulle's approval of his idea of a 'visite d'information' to Biafra which would provide French public opinion with first hand information during the Biafra Week.³

1. AFP/BA., 21 January 1969.

2. Notre République, 14 February 1969; AFP/BA., 2-3 February, 5 February and 6 February 1969.

3. Offroy in AFP/BA., 2-3 March 1969.

On 22 February, Offroy had announced before leaving for Biafra the creation of a Comité d'Action pour le Biafra (CAB) to encourage the emergence of a vast movement of opinion favourable to Biafra.¹ The founding members of the CAB were nearly all Gaullists who had previously signed a 'déclaration pour la reconnaissance du droit du Biafra à l'indépendance' which basically endorsed the French Government viewpoint on the conflict.² Offroy and Jacques Marette - a Gaullist MP deeply involved in the Biafran cause - flew to Libreville and then Biafra early in March. A television crew, which had been put at their disposal, accompanied them. With de Gaulle's approval it was planned that the French television would broadcast daily two minute long film sequences on Biafra, at the peak time of the 8 o'clock evening news, to support the appeal for funds during the Biafra Week.³

Once in Biafra, Offroy and Marette expressed full support for French recognition of Biafra. At a rally in Umuahia, Offroy announced that on his return to France he would launch a public opinion campaign to persuade the French Government to recognise Biafra. Marette concluded his own intervention with 'Vive Ojukwu - Vive l'amitié Franco-Biafraise!'.⁴ Not surprisingly, when the two MPs met Ojukwu, he urged 'France' to take an initiative in the conflict and looked forward to a revision of French policy during the coming Biafra Week.⁵

1. La Nation, 23 February 1969.

2. Text of the statement signed by over a hundred personalities in CAB, 'Aidez le Biafra en Lutte' (Paris, 1969, mimeo), pp.2-3.

3. Offroy, Quand le Coeur a Raison, pp. 60-1.

4. AFP/BA., 5 March 1969.

5. AFP/BA., 9-10 March 1969.

No French recognition of Biafra was forthcoming during the Biafra Week. In fact, on the eve of its commencement, French military support to Biafra was interrupted. Throughout the Biafra Week the French Government insisted that it had organised the campaign solely for the humanitarian purpose of raising funds for the CRF and CFCF.¹ The French television, on which the presentation of the week relied, did not broadcast any of its films on the visit of Offroy and Murette to Biafra. Their 'exceptionnelle valeur de propagande pour le Biafra',² clearly conflicted with de Gaulle's revised policy in the conflict. The films showed in particular a rally at Umuahia where, according to Offroy, 'la foule avait fait preuve d'un enthousiasme délirant pour la France et le Général de Gaulle', as well as an interview with Ojukwu featuring his above-quoted comment on a French initiative during the Biafra Week.³ Releasing these films would have created undesirable pressure for a French diplomatic recognition of Biafra. After their return to Paris on 10 March, Offroy and Murette also sent to de Gaulle an account of their visit which advocated a rapid recognition of Biafra by France.⁴ De Gaulle read it within the two following days but did not comment on its recommendations. Foccart merely informed the two Gaullist MPs that de Gaulle was busy with the preparation of the referendum and could not receive them within the next six weeks.

When the Biafra Week opened, French public opinion unanimously 'pro-Biafra' during the summer and autumn of 1968 was becoming

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1. Debré in La Nation, 15 March 1969; West Africa, 8 March 1969, 226.
 2. Offroy, Quand le Coeur a Raison, p. 62.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Raymond Offroy, Interview, Paris, 17 April 1975.

increasingly indifferent to or critical of France's policy in the conflict. The controversial methods used by the television to encourage donations reinforced this trend of evolution. The television presented the purchase of cards, sold on behalf of the CRF in post offices and tobacconist shops throughout France, as an attractive gamble in a lottery (with a winning stake of 500,000 FF) which would conclude the Biafra Week.¹ This use of incentives to engender public charity aroused indignation and bitter irony in the press. It was equally denounced by relief organisations like the CIMADE, the Comité Catholique Contre la Faim and even the CFCF which jointly with the CRF, had sponsored previous appeals for funds.² The character of the campaign was responsible for a drastic shortfall of the target of 20 million FF: 8.2 million FF were raised, but a quarter of that sum was relegated to cover the costs of the campaign.³ The Biafra Week had also highlighted the ambiguity of French policy in the civil war. Together with other personalities, Beaumont asked on 12 March:

Si cette opération est humanitaire...pourquoi choisit-on d'aider les seuls Biafrais? Si les pouvoirs publics ont fait en faveur des Biafrais un choix politique, quelle est leur politique?⁴

This ambiguity was felt only gradually by groups supporting Biafra. The Association France-Biafra collected signatures for an appeal pressing the French authorities to act 'de toute urgence sur le plan diplomatique pour faire cesser la guerre du Biafra'.⁵ Another

1. Le Monde, 11 March 1969.

2. Le Monde, 14 March 1969.

3. See table 8 in appendix.

4. Quoted in Terre Entière, March-April 1969, 127.

5. Le Monde, 9-10. March 1969.

organisation, the Comité International de Lutte Contre le Génocide au Biafra had been created in January 1969 by pilots, journalists and doctors returning from Biafra. It was much smaller than The Association France-Biafra, by far the largest pro-Biafra group with its 80 departmental committees.¹ The Comité International owed its weight to the fact that all its members had been to Biafra as journalists, CRF pilots, doctors or nurses. In view of the Biafra Week, the Comité International had gathered signatures from anthropologists, philosophers, writers, physicists and scientists who demanded that responsible governments impose a ceasefire without any precondition as a prelude to a political solution of the conflict.² The Biafra Week, however, involved a political exploitation of public charity which the two groups condemned. On 12 March, Robert Buron, a former French Minister close to both groups, condemned at a public meeting the 'tiercé des petits Biafrais' before emphasising the dichotomy of French policy which recommended peace but at the same time claimed 'je n'ai pas de solution'.³

By the time de Gaulle resigned on 27 April, attitudes in France towards the Nigerian civil war had changed considerably. On 17 March, the France-Nigéria association was founded by Me Manville and the two groups of Frenchmen who had visited Nigeria in January and February-March 1969. The Comité International and the Association France-Biafra became increasingly aware, if not openly critical, of France's ambiguous policy in the war. The CAB, however, remained fully committed to its support of de Gaulle's policy. Thus its earlier demand for French recognition of Biafra was no longer raised as an

1. Le Courrier du Biafra, 27 May 1969, 1-2.

2. Archives of the Comité International de Lutte Contre le Génocide au Biafra.

3. Transcript in Ibid.

issue at the public meeting of 12 March. By then all French political parties had become aware of the complexities of the Nigerian civil war through contacts in Paris or visits by MPs to Nigeria. France's official policy line in the conflict no longer commanded the unanimous support which it had enjoyed in the summer and autumn of 1968. This did not affect de Gaulle's policy line but it had repercussions on that of his successor, Georges Pompidou, who became President on 15 June 1969.

4. The Policy of Pompidou in Africa

Changes in France's policy towards Nigeria followed Pompidou's election to the Presidency on 15 June 1969. They were slow and went along with a broader evolution in France's policy towards Africa. Pompidou did not share fully de Gaulle's policy of ensuring French influence in Africa through the preservation of political, cultural and military ties with a strong francophone bloc. In this context, bad relations with Nigeria and, later, support to Biafra were a logical consequence of the prominence of geo-political factors in French African policy throughout de Gaulle's Presidency. Pompidou's outlook on Africa was more pragmatic and businesslike. He was determined to put an end to the costly and much criticised French military intervention in Africa: in Nigeria on the side of Biafra and in Chad in support of the Government. Pompidou did not aim to preserve, at all costs close relations between France and those African countries formerly a part of the French colonial empire. At the same time the new President was far more sensitive to the greater commercial possibilities for French exports to non-francophone countries. This certainly applied to Nigeria, with its vast market and oil wealth.

Relations with Nigeria

De Gaulle's policy of support for Biafra and bad relations with Nigeria were inherited, but not shared, by his successor. Nevertheless, until the end of the civil war in Nigeria, domestic considerations in France clearly limited any rapid or open evolution from the Gaullian policy in the conflict. African hostility to de Gaulle's policy caused the Chaban Delmas Government to eschew any initiative that might revive criticism of French intervention. From the economic angle, a reconsideration of the French intervention appeared sensible. While the civil war continued, French investors in Nigeria exerted a growing pressure on French policy development.

In July 1969, Pompidou told Houphouët Boigny, who inquired about his attitude to the civil war, that the level of support given by de Gaulle to Biafra would be sustained.¹ These pledges highlighted pressure on the Government by Gaullist MPs and government members who favoured Biafra. Their influence in Parliament, and over the Gaullist movement generally, were of crucial importance to Pompidou. Earlier in 1969, he had affirmed that he would stand as candidate for the Presidency if it became vacant. This statement had provoked strong reaction from de Gaulle still in power at the time. During the following months a campaign of rumours discrediting Pompidou's private life had been orchestrated by some of de Gaulle's followers. After his election, unremitting references to the continuity between the policies of Pompidou and of de Gaulle, underlined the need for the new French President to assert his authority over the Gaullists.

Changes in French policy towards the civil war were, nevertheless, clear. Under the de Gaulle administration, communiques on the Nigerian crisis nearly always included a mention of Biafra's right to self-determination. This (by now famous) phrase was totally

1. Effiong quoted in Stremlau, The International Politics....., p. 294.

absent from official speeches after Pompidou's election. At the UN General Assembly in September 1969, France's Foreign Minister, Maurice Schumann, merely expressed support for Biafra's 'personnalité héroïque' in the middle of his short reference to the conflict.¹ Schumann's moderate advocacy of a ceasefire and talks without preconditions contrasted with Debré's plea the year before for recognition of the 'droit du Biafra à l'auto-détermination'. The presence of Achille Fould as advisor to the French delegation in the UN illustrated changes in the French policy outlook. Houphouët Boigny had met Pompidou twice during the previous months to discuss bringing up the Nigerian crisis for discussion in the UN. But no such move took place.

France now opposed taking any isolated step in the civil war. Early in November, this attitude received public criticism in the National Assembly during the discussion of the budget for foreign affairs. Gaullist MPs strongly urged the Government to take initiatives in the war. In his reply, Schumann first paid tribute to de Gaulle's proposals for some confederal arrangement to solve the conflict. He then advocated a ceasefire and the opening of talks without preconditions. Any French attempt to mediate was, however, clearly excluded:

Dans l'état actuel cette médiation ne peut parvenir que d'autres pays Africains...c'est à un stade ultérieur... qu'un pays comme le nôtre pourrait intervenir sans courir le risque d'interférer avec d'autres initiatives et de rendre la situation plus confuse encore.²

French humanitarian aid to Biafra remained unaffected by the evolution of French policy. It was in fact under Pompidou that the largest Government subsidy (3 million FF) was granted to the CRF, whose resources were dwindling by the end of 1969.

1. Le Monde, 8 September 1969.

2. JOAN, 4 November 1969, 3299.

Between the Biafra Week of 11-17 March and the announcement of the fall of Owerri on 10 January 1970, the Nigerian crisis was hardly mentioned in French newspapers. Only brief attention was given to events like Biafra's capture of eighteen oil technicians working in the Midwest, or the announcement early in June 1969 that the ICRC would henceforth interrupt its relief flights to Biafra.¹ This period was also marked by an evolution of concerned public opinion which partly arose from better information on the conflict.

In June 1969, Uwechue's disagreement with Ojukwu over the latter's intransigence in the conflict became widely known in France with the publication of his book L'avenir du Biafra, une Solution Nigériane, with prefaces by both Senghor and Azikiwe. Uwechue denounced both sides for intransigence in the war and proposed a form of confederal settlement to restore peace.² These ideas received wide and continuing publicity in the following months as the magazine Jeune Afrique, which had published Uwechue's book, launched a campaign seeking petitions under the slogan 'Nigéria: la guerre doit cesser, la paix est possible'.³

Important changes in the attitude of concerned public opinion also stemmed from changes in the public relations activities of Biafran emissaries and the Nigerian Embassy in Paris. Biafra's representation in Paris was weakened by the resignation of Uwechue in December 1968. Their six man strong delegation in Paris, led by C.I. Dike, lacked the impact on press and political circles it had enjoyed under Uwechue's authority. During this period, after Maliki's return to Nigeria on account of illness, a former Permanent Secretary in the

1. See Supra, p. 244 .

2. See R. Uwechue, L'Avenir du Biafra, Une Solution Nigériane (Paris, 1969), pp.79-94.

3. Jeune Afrique, 23 June 1969, 23 and following issues.

Ministry of External Affairs in Lagos, Tayo Ogunsulire, was appointed Nigeria's Chargé d'Affaires in Paris. In Spring 1969, Ola Balogun joined the staff of the Embassy as Press Attaché. Unlike his predecessor, he was fluent in French. Under the instigation of Ogunsulire and in close co-operation with France-Nigéria, Embassy activities developed considerably. The news bulletin Nouvelles du Nigéria had until then been published in English, despite its French title. This was no longer the case. The activities of the Franco-Nigerian Chamber of Commerce in Paris were revived in order to promote interest in Nigeria amongst French business circles. Ogunsulire reassured potential investors in Nigeria that the FMG had no intention of nationalizing industries in the immediate future.¹ He emphasized that French business was not presently affected by the attitude of the French Government and quoted, as examples, a big road contract awarded to Dumez, and current negotiations for the establishment of a Peugeot car plant. The Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries of Economic and Industrial Development, Alison Ayida and Peter Asiodu, approached French industrialists likely to be interested by the Nigerian Development Plan.² Nigerian Embassy representatives added weight to this co-ordinated effort by attending debates and panels on the civil war which featured on French radio and television. Letters were also systematically sent to newspaper editors and press agencies to correct what were considered misleading reports on the war.³ As Bernard Couret, the Secretary of France-Nigéria recalls, all

1. Le Monde, 24 April 1969.

2. AFP/BA., 23 July 1969.

3. Maliki was famous in press circles for addressing the press and sending letters to le Monde in English; Kaye Whiteman, Interview, Oxford, 2 February 1978.

possible occasions to describe and explain the FMG viewpoint were utilised.¹ In October 1969, France-Nigéria and the Nigerian Embassy began publishing a monthly magazine on glossy paper, Nigéria Demain. Well presented, it contained articles of substance, had a wide distribution, and replaced the mimeographed Fact Nigeria, whose readership had been limited to student circles in Paris.²

In October 1969, the evolution of informed public opinion on the conflict was perhaps best illustrated by the decision of the Comité International de Lutte Contre le Génocide au Biafra and the Association France-Biafra to merge, as the Mouvement pour la Paix au Nigéria-Biafra. The aims of the new organization were described as follows by Buron, its President:

... multiplier les pressions pour que la paix revienne sans préoccupation de victoire pour l'un ou l'autre camp, sans souci de décider à partir de Paris de la politique et de la géographie du Centre Ouest de l'Afrique.³

When on 27 December the Gaullists of the CAB sent a telegram urging Pompidou to recognize Biafra, their appeal was now out of line with the silent evolution of French Government policy.⁴ France's contribution to Biafra's military resistance was not stopped but in November Pompidou had ordered it to be reduced.⁵ On 17 December, the Council of Ministers had also agreed to the nomination of Leslie Hariman as Nigeria's new Ambassador to France.⁶

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1. Bernard Couret, Interview, Paris, 10 April 1974.
 2. Facts Nigéria, published six issues. They were mimeographed brochures of poor technical quality. The articles often had strongly polemical and provocative overtones which further undermined their impact; copies of Facts Nigéria in the author's possession.
 3. Letter to Maurice Schumam, 24 October 1969 in the Archives of the Mouvement pour la Paix au Nigéria-Biafra.
 4. An editorial of the CAB later explained that 'depuis plusieurs mois l'attitude du gouvernement [Français] ne nous satisfaisait pas. Elle nous paraissait en retrait des positions antérieures... prises par le Général de Gaulle. Notre Comité n'a pas ménagé ses interventions...Ni l'opinion, ni la presse n'ont voulu l'entendre'; Biafra, Bulletin du CAB, 12 February 1970, 2.
 5. SIPRI, The Arms Trade...., p. 263.
 6. In Politique Etrangère, 2 ème Semestre 1969, p. 193.

The end of the war in Nigeria had a catalytic effect on the evolution of Franco-Nigerian relations since Pompidou's election.

The news of Biafra's military collapse aroused considerable feeling. Dramatic press editorial and comment stirred public opinion. In the absence of any reports from the former Biafran enclave, wild rumours of genocide and mass extermination were revived in Europe. Gaullists, recalling de Gaulle's support to Biafra, claimed that the Chaban Delmas Government was indirectly responsible not only for Biafra's fall, but also for the massacre of its elite which could subsequently be expected.¹ Members of the CAB met Schumann and organized a demonstration, calling on the French Government for relief supplies by parachute to Biafra and a demand for them to call for intervention of the UN Security Council. This emotionally charged atmosphere triggered off various French diplomatic consultations, as well as a telegram from Pompidou to Thant, whom he asked:

au nom des principes de solidarité humaine valable
pour tous les peuples...d'entreprendre l'action
nécessaire pour que soient préservés l'existence et
l'avenir des populations Ibos.²

Pompidou's message concluded with an expression of France's readiness to participate in any possible humanitarian initiative. The sudden outburst of concern for Biafra was to die as rapidly as it was born. This was partly because, by the beginning of February, other issues claimed public attention. It was also because news of the Federal troops' conduct made no mention of the feared mass killings. French doctors who had refused to leave

1. Le Monde, 13 January 1970; on press reactions in general see 'La Chute du Biafra à travers la Presse', Nigéria Demain 3 (January-February 1970), 21-8 and le Monde, 18-19 January 1970.

2. Combat, 13 January 1970.

Biafra before the arrival of Federal troops now returned to France, where they denounced the sensational character of press reports and commentary.¹

SAFRAP excepted, no retaliation was taken by the FMG against French interests in Nigeria. Nevertheless, when the war ended, there was pronounced antipathy to France in Lagos, where offers of French aid were rejected.² In February 1970, Achille Fould paid a short visit to Gowon in Nigeria. On his return to France, the Vice President of France-Nigéria related Gowon's expressed desire for a process of 'normalisation' of relations with France.³ These, Gowon was well aware, had never really improved since the expulsion of the French Ambassador to Nigeria. Hariman's arrival in Paris in May 1970 was the first acknowledgement of the timid evolution in Franco-Nigerian relations since Pompidou's election.

In 1971, SAFRAP was allowed to resume its activities in Nigeria. The company's relations with Biafra during the war had provoked the FMG's demand for a Nigerian shareholding of 35% in its capital.⁴ This demand later emerged as the first step towards a new FMG oil policy. Thus, within the next two years Agip and Shell were required to accept similar terms.⁵ In 1972, France approved a loan of 110 million FF to the FMG - with the provision that part of the latter was committed to purchasing French industrial products. In the same year, a contract for the construction of a Peugeot car assembly plant at Kaduna was signed.⁶ After a tremendous

1. Le Monde, 24 January 1970; On the radio in France, Dr Récamier, a highly respected French surgeon who headed the Awo Omamma hospital, even compared Biafran attitudes to the end of the war with the feelings of the French population during the liberation of France in 1944; AFP/BA., 30 January 1970.
2. A donation of £7,000 from SAFRAP was also returned; AFP/BA., 23 January 1970.
3. AFP/BA., 28 February 1970.
4. Le Monde, 25 April 1971.
5. West Africa, 18 June 1973, 818.
6. West Africa, 25 August 1972, 1127.

boom in its exports of crude oil to France, Nigeria became from 1972 onwards France's primary supplier in Sub Saharan Africa.¹

Pompidou's more open attitude towards Nigeria was in line with his overall policy advocating diversification of France's trade links. This contrasted sharply with de Gaulle's francophone-centred policy in Africa. In 1960, French overseas development aid was confined to the Franc area and the Maghreb states. Under Pompidou, these flows were reduced, accounting for only 83% of total aid in 1971.² Relations with non-francophone states had a distinctly commercial flavour. French aid to these was almost exclusively constituted by loans from the French Treasury which were associated with private export credits.³ For the recipients they had the advantage of softening the average terms of the operations financed. For France they amounted to export subventions. It was in accordance with this policy of broadening France's commercial outlets that Pompidou favoured admittance of Great Britain to the Common Market and also association of the non-francophone states with the EEC. To this effect in April 1972, Claude Cheysson, known and respected in the anglophone world, replaced Jean-François Deniau to negotiate the association of the Commonwealth states to the EEC.⁴

France and Francophone Africa

In contrast with these dynamic policy moves towards non Francophone states in Africa, France's relations with its ex-colonies

1. See tables 12 and 17.
2. See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Flow of Resources to Developing Countries (Paris, 1973), pp. 12-3.
3. Ibid.
4. Kaye Whiteman, Interview, Oxford, 2 February 1974.

in Africa were characterized by a process of banalisation. Especially after 1972, political and military disengagement progressively emerged as a predominant policy feature in francophone Africa. This caused press comments which claimed, wrongly, that France no longer had an African policy.¹ More often than in the past were French policy moves prompted by commercial or financial considerations. In particular, Pompidou sought to curtail the financial commitments incurred by de Gaulle's interventions to support 'Gaullist' regimes in Africa. Pompidou's policy outlook prompted the outburst of a serious crisis in relations between France and francophone Africa during 1972-75. The latter manifested itself in demands for a renegotiation of the co-operation agreements. Several francophone states also decided to leave the OCAM.

Pressure for the renegotiation of the co-operation agreements often originated among young African technocrats now working for their governments. With their university training, they were more aware than their elders of what the co-operation agreements involved for their countries. Especially in the poorer francophone states, politicians were also bitter about the limited achievements of French aid since independence. During de Gaulle's Presidency, total French public aid had in fact decreased from 1.41% of the GNP in 1961 to an average 0.69% since 1966.² The

1. G. Comte, 'La Co-opération Franco-Africaine menacée de sclérose', Le Monde, 22 January 1971.

2. In effect French aid to independent third world countries only represented 0.45% of the GNP(1969) because two thirds of France's overall aid was constituted by flows to French overseas territories and départements; République Française, Comité d'Etude de la Politique de Coopération de la France avec les Pays en Voie de Développement, 'La Coopération de la France avec les Pays en Voie de Développement' (Paris, 1971, mimeo), i, p. 25. (Hereafter Rapport Gorse).

terms of French aid had deteriorated. France's overall flow towards developing countries included an increasing volume of credits tied to the purchase of French manufactured goods. This constituted indirect subventions to France's export trade but certainly not development aid. The confidential Rapport Gorse which reviewed France's policy of co-operation under de Gaulle pointed out that the dependency of francophone African states on France had been perpetuated by a tendency to continue aid to activities of assistance and support as opposed to development projects. Such aid included budgetary subsidies or gifts of personnel whose salaries were paid by France. The number of French nationals in the civil service of francophone African countries remained considerable by 1969. Little evolution had in fact been recorded since 1960, for, as the Rapport Gorse put it 'la coopération Française supplée à l'absence de personnel autochtone sans que la relève de cette aide directe ait été encore commencée'.¹

The co-operation agreements with France often ensured the persistence of relations closely similar to those in the colonial period. On crucial issues like finance and education, policy moves in francophone Sub-Saharan Africa followed decisions and policies elaborated, often without any consultation, by Parisian administrations. Thus, membership of the Franc zone involved control by the French Treasury over the finances of member-states. This could have positive effects insofar as it enabled credit facilities to be granted to the central banks of the member-states of the zone. As a counterpart, the mechanisms of the Franc area involved free transfers of funds between member-states and France. The fixed parity between the CFAF and the Franc (1 CFAF = 0.02 FF) also meant in practice that any variation in the rate of the Franc

1. Ibid., i, p. 25.

to international currencies immediately affected the CFAF. For this reason, the French decision to devalue the Franc in 1969 aroused considerable resentment in francophone Africa which was neither consulted nor even informed of such a move.¹

France's overwhelming influence on the educational system of francophone African states was described at length in the Rapport Gorse. Aid in the spheres of education and culture represented one third of France's overall public aid and was channelled mostly towards francophone African states. French teachers and experts often contributed to the day to day running of administration and educational services in francophone Africa.² French aid rarely provided for the training of future teachers. The teaching could be equally criticised because it lacked adaption:

...les systèmes éducatifs dans les pays que nous aidons reproduisent le plus souvent nos propres schémas scolaires et universitaires; déjà inadaptés en France, ils ne correspondent que de très loin aux besoins des pays Francophones où ils ont été transplantés. Ils se sont développés en marge de la croissance économique plus qu'ils n'y ont contribué. Alors que le développement nécessiterait une formation orientée vers les secteurs productifs, les systèmes en place orientent les élèves vers l'administration et les services souvent hors d'état d'absorber les jeunes diplômés.³

In late 1972 it was only with reluctance that Pompidou agreed to pressing requests from Niger, Congo, Mauritania and the Malgasy Republic for a renegotiation of the co-operation agreements. The new agreements signed with all the francophone states but Guinea during the three following years involved changes in the style of France's relations with francophone Africa. However, there were few substantial differences with those signed in 1960-61. A reform of

1. Financial Times, 7 November 1972.

2. Rapport Gorse, i, p. 33.

3. Ibid., i, pp. 33-4.

the Franc zone accompanied the renegotiation. African membership on the various management boards was increased, while French representation was reduced.¹ Politically, starting from 1973, a regular conference between France and francophone African states was convened once a year to review issues affecting the participants. These reforms marked an evolution that could be described as Africanization, marked by new procedures of consultation in France's relations with its ex-colonies.

5. Giscard d'Estaing's election: the end of Gaullism

In April 1974 the election of Giscard d'Estaing, France's first non Gaullist President since 1958, formally embodied policy changes towards Africa. Under Pompidou, pressure for the preservation of the network of relations installed under de Gaulle had been linked to the continuing influence of such staunch Gaullists as Foccart, whom Pompidou had been induced to reappoint in July 1969.² Foccart had remained Secrétaire Général pour les Affaires Africaines et Malgache but was no longer attached to the presidential office. He became responsible to the Prime Minister and was therefore bound to follow his policy line. After the Gaullist Messmer became Prime Minister in 1972, Foccart's influence on French policy was eroded. As France's High Commissioner in Dakar at the time of the Loi-cadre, Messmer had been opposed to the division of the FWA federation. In 1969 he had fought against France's support for

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1. For a comprehensive description of the Franc zone reforms see J. Alibert, 'L'Evolution de la Zone Franc en Afrique Noire', Afrique Contemporaine, 74(July-August 1974), 2-5.
 2. After the resignation of de Gaulle on 27 April the President of the Sénat, Alain Poher, was ex-officio President ad interim until the election of a new President. Poher's most remarked gesture during his short tenure of office was his dismissal of Foccart.

Biafra, and within a few months of his appointment in the Spring of 1972, French troops who had been fighting in Chad since 1968 were withdrawn. Until 1974, Foccart's power in the Government remained a reality largely owing to his important functions in the Gaullist party, the Union des Démocrates pour la République (UDR). Foccart was a member of the Central Committee of the UDR and, according to persistent rumours, his links with francophone African leaders were instrumental in providing funds for his party.^a

Following his election, Giscard d'Estaing dismissed Foccart. The Secretariat which he had headed was dissolved and its responsibilities shared between the Quai d'Orsay and the Ministry of Co-operation. This move symbolically marked the end of the Gaullist era in French politics. Insofar as Africa was concerned, it meant the halt of France's specific policy moves in comparison with those of other Western countries.

Within a few months, France's relations with Guinea and Nigeria, the two outcasts of de Gaulle's policy in Africa, improved markedly. In the case of Nigeria, they led to a visit by Arikpo to Paris in November 1974.¹ It was characteristically presented as the reversal of a long deterioration in relations since 1961. This normalisation reflected changing French interests in Africa. As Senghor complained on 2 May 1974 in Paris, France was 'plus dynamique au Nigéria que dans les pays d'Afrique Noire Francophone'.² Indeed, in 1975 Nigeria became France's first trading partner in Sub-Saharan Africa. Between 1974 and 1975, French exports to Nigeria increased by 138% as a result of the Nigerian oil boom.³ French

1. West Africa, 18 November 1974, 1394-5.

2. L. Senghor, 'Les Rapports Franco-Africains à la Croisée des Chemins', Afrique Contemporaine, 73(May-June 1974), 43.

3. See table 17 in appendix.

attitudes to the CEA0 and the ECOWAS were now in complete contrast with de Gaulle's policy moves. France now favoured the expansion of markets in West Africa.

The civil war in Nigeria highlighted important changes in the rationale of France's policy in Africa. De Gaulle's intervention in the conflict had been prompted not only by his concern at the plight of Biafra's population but also by his unremitting vision of Nigeria as a threat to French political influence in West Africa. Houphouët Boigny, acting in close association with Foccart, had played a decisive role in de Gaulle's commitment in July 1968 to the survival of Biafra. Francophone states had however refused to follow and even actively opposed the Gaullian policy move in Africa. This was not anticipated by de Gaulle and occurred for the first time since 1960. Francophone attitudes towards Nigeria were partly the result of Nigeria's growing influence in West Africa. They also followed an awareness that their national interests should be dissociated from those committed to the preservation of a strong francophone bloc. De Gaulle's support to Biafra had counterproductive effects on France's political relations with francophone African states. In March 1969, de Gaulle's attempt to impose a timely compromise on the Biafran leadership failed to achieve any result. The originality of de Gaulle's policy stemmed from its being unaffected by economic pressure in France for an improvement of diplomatic relations with the FMG.

The specific individuality of the French outlook on Africa as opposed to those of other Western powers was progressively lost under Pompidou's Presidency. The continuation at reduced pace of French support to Biafra constituted a residual responsibility imposed by pro-Biafra pressure from such Gaullist barons as Debré and Foccart. Pompidou was increasingly reluctant to compromise French commercial and oil interests in Nigeria. De Gaulle's view

of Nigeria as a threat to a francophone bloc no longer influenced the policy of his successor. Until 1974, concern for the preservation of close political ties with France's ex-colonies in Africa was diminishing. This prompted a serious crisis in the policy of co-operation; francophone African states now perceived it as a silent recolonization process. When the civil war was over, political links between active supporters of the FMG like Achille Fould and the French Government contributed to the lack of retaliatory action against French interests in Nigeria. The 'normalization' of relations between Nigeria and France was officially proclaimed in May 1970. It only became effective four years later with the departure of Foccart and the abolition of his Secretariat. During 1975, Nigeria's emergence as France's first trading partner in Sub Saharan Africa illustrated this shift of French interest in the African continent.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has focussed on the emergence of Nigeria as a regional power in West Africa, with the premise that this was prompted by the Nigerian civil war. Three principal conclusions, closely inter-related, result from this study. These concern Nigeria's role in West Africa; the dilution of the historical francophone-anglophone division; and the changes in the intensity or nature of the relationship between West African states and their former metropolitan powers, France and Britain.

Until the Nigerian civil war, Nigeria's concern for the preservation of its own unity was reflected in its active role in preserving the political status quo in West Africa. This policy amounted to a continuing respect for the influence of Ivory Coast over Dahomey and Niger. Ivory Coast's role as a mediator of French influence enabled it to assert its own influence and protect its own interests in West Africa through such organisations as the Conseil de l'Entente and the Union Africaine et Malgache. Under the Balewa Government, any forward West African policy towards neighbouring Niger or Dahomey would have involved risks of stimulating regional centrifugal forces which would have at once threatened the fragile unity of the Nigerian Federation.

The Federal Military Government's increasingly self-assertive West African policy after 1968 was at first Nigeria's response to the Franco-Ivorian challenge to its unity. In order to counter French, Ivorian and Gabonese policy moves in support of Biafra, Nigeria had to create support in the Organisation of African Unity as well as among its neighbours in West Africa. In the end, Nigeria's diplomatic offensive was to result in extensive changes in Ivory Coast's relationship with its francophone neighbours. The creation of the

Economic Community of West African states in 1975 reflected this new Nigerian influence in West Africa. The decision of the member-states of the Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest to participate in ECOWAS confirmed Nigeria's new power in West Africa. At the same time, it resulted in the division of West Africa into new spheres of influence, Dahomey's blunt refusal to join the CEA0 revealed a new relationship with Nigeria, comparable to that existing with Ivory Coast prior to the Nigerian civil war. Niger, for its part, now pressed for the adoption by CEA0 of a policy line which would not conflict with Nigeria's initiative vis à vis ECOWAS.

Nigeria's active role in West Africa was considerably facilitated by the dramatic increase in its oil revenues in the early 1970s. Nigeria appeared ready to contribute substantially to the setting up of new mechanisms for the harmonisation of economic development within ECOWAS, a factor of critical importance to its success. Furthermore, it was Nigeria which acted as an effective spokesman for the African, Caribbean and Pacific states during the negotiation of the first Lome convention, at a time when the EEC member-states were deeply concerned to retain good relations with oil-rich Nigeria. Again, Nigeria's emergence as a regional power, prompted by the Nigerian civil war and enabled by the increase in its oil revenues, was the result of the new internal political balance achieved through its creation of twelve states and the consequent reallocation of power, both measurably contributing to a strong centre within the Federation. Domestic unity paved the way for more coherent and more enterprising foreign policy moves. Lastly, the birth of ECOWAS was largely attributable to the low profile and soft-spoken style of Gowon's diplomacy, reminiscent of that of the Nigerian foreign policy under Balewa.

The second major conclusion argued in this study is that the

political division between francophone and anglophone states declined markedly during the period under review. This resulted in part from Nigeria's active West African policy after 1968, in part from the weakening of links between France and Africa, as well as the loosening of ties between the francophone West African states themselves.

The weakening of francophone links followed the crisis in relations between Ivory Coast and other francophone states generated by diverging policies over the Nigerian civil war and, later, by the question of relations with South Africa and the Arab countries. De Gaulle's departure in 1969 contributed substantially to the weakening of the francophone links, further undermining Ivory Coast's leadership. The creation of ECOWAS accurately reflected this diminution of the francophone-anglophone division yet it did not mark its ending. Within ECOWAS, the CEAO established a closer network of economic relations around Ivory Coast and Senegal. Unlike the Conseil de l'Entente, the Union Douanière des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, the Union Africaine et Malgache, or the Union Africaine et Malgache de Coopération Economique, CEAO did make important provisions for greater harmonisation of development projects and for co-ordination between richer Ivory Coast and Senegal on the one hand and the poorer landlocked states of the Sahel on the other. Because Ivory Coast no longer acted as a privileged medium of French influence in West Africa, its leadership in francophone Africa was no longer assured.

The third conclusion which emerges from this study is that there have been unambiguous changes in the relations between the ex-metropolitan powers and their former colonies during the period considered. Independence did not bring about any drastic change in relations with the one-time metropolitan power in either Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Niger or Dahomey. The change in relations between Nigeria and Britain since

1960 refers less to shifts in policy lines than to a decrease in the intensity of existing links. Continuity in the links with the ex-colonial power was the predominant feature of Nigeria's external relations until 1966. Although during and after the Nigerian civil war relations between Nigeria and Britain became appreciably less intense and friendly, they were by no means transformed in the way that France's relations with its former West African colonies were after de Gaulle's resignation in 1969.

The thesis has argued that de Gaulle's attitude towards Nigeria constituted a good example of his policy of maintaining a strong independent francophone bloc. It was this consideration rather than simply economic or commercial factors which was of prime importance in de Gaulle's African policy. Therefore, until he resigned in April 1969, France's African policy retained specific features which clearly differentiated it from that of any other Western power. In the early 1960s, regional institutions like the Conseil de l'Entente and later OCAM ensured the preservation of an exclusive relationship with France barely distinguishable from that established during the colonial period. At the bilateral level, co-operation agreements continued to channel financial aid and assistance; at the same time they perpetuated African dependency on the former metropolitan power. Somewhat naturally, because of its size, Nigeria challenged the preservation of French influence in West Africa. Thus, de Gaulle's policy during the Nigerian civil war was the outcome of his concern at Nigeria's potential influence on France's close relations with francophone West Africa. It was therefore logical that after de Gaulle's resignation changes in Nigeria's relations with France should accompany broader changes in French African policy. The five years of Pompidou's Presidency represented a period of transition for France's policy in Africa. His policy of seeking new markets to improve France's trade

balance involved changes in Franco-Nigerian relations.

The election of Giscard d'Estaing marked the end of Gaullism. There quickly ensued a re-alignment of French policy so as to coincide with the guiding principles of the other Western powers. France's relations with Nigeria were no longer motivated by the Gaullist priority of preserving a strong and independent francophone bloc. Because of the new primary importance of trade links, the larger markets implied by the creation of ECOWAS were looked upon favourably. Naturally, France wished to retain specific interests owing to its past role in Africa, but these became increasingly of a residual nature. Under Giscard d'Estaing, France's policy in Africa cannot be described and explained in the same terms as that of de Gaulle. Only their format would justify such comparisons. Such discussions as those between Carter and Giscard d'Estaing in New York at the time of the UN Conference on disarmament in June 1978 would have been impossible to conceive under de Gaulle.

The decline of French and British influence in Africa has been a major feature of its evolution since the mid-1960s. This weakening of political relations between France, Britain and their former colonies has opened the way to new influences such as those of the United States, the Soviet Union, China and Cuba. At the same time, France's African policy has moved increasingly closer to that of the United States and Britain. Such an evolution may be held responsible for the fact that, less than two decades since the independence of most of Africa, it gives the appearance of a continent increasingly at stake in the politics of world superpowers.

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Note on the project of sale by Biafra of
mineral rights to the Rothschild Bank

This document, which purports to be the schedule to the 'Power of Attorney' given by Lt. Col. Ojukwu to Francis Nwokedi, cannot be considered as genuine. It contains spelling mistakes in words like 'extension' and names like Onitsha and Rothschild. Also, there were omissions (da instead of day), faulty punctuation (YEARS; ONLY. instead of YEARS ONLY.) and typing errors (DO this da.... of, instead of DO this.... day of; typing of, 'within the territorial'). The appearance of this document, contrasts sharply with that of the 'Power of Attorney'.

With regard to the style, the 'Grant of Exploitation' uses a terminology very similar to that of the 'Power of Attorney'. There are, however, internal inconsistencies. Ojukwu grants to the Rothschild Bank exclusive rights of exploitation of Biafra's minerals 'for ten years only'. A subsequent clause in the document provides for renewals and extension. This contradicts

the sense of the first provision, which implies finality. The inclusion of provisions for the renewal of rights ten years in advance of the date of expiration would have been, in any case, unrealistic and commercially unsound in view of the uncertainty of Biafra's future.

While the 'Power of Attorney' would constitute an acceptable legal document once signed, the 'Grant of Exploitation' would not.

Lastly, the 'Grant of Exploitation' makes no provision for those details that one would expect in the 'attached schedule' mentioned in the 'Power of Attorney'. Provision should have been made in exact terms for the amount, date and place of payment of the second (and possibly subsequent) instalment(s) of the remaining £5,000,000.

International Organisations in West Africa since 1958

African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP)	1973	All independent sub-Saharan African states
African Development Bank (ADB)	1964	All independent West African states
<u>Air Afrique</u>	1961	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger, Senegal, Togo <u>other African states:</u> Cameroun, (1962-72), Gabon (1962-1973), Chad (1962-72), Congo (B) CAR.
African Peanut Council (APC)	1965	Gambia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Upper Volta <u>other African states:</u> Zaire
<u>Autorité de Développement intégré du Liptako-Gourma</u>	1971	Upper Volta, Niger, Mali
<u>Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO)</u>	1959	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Niger, Mauritania (1959-72), Upper Volta
Brazzaville group	1960-1961	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Niger, Upper Volta, Senegal <u>other African states:</u> Gabon Congo (B), Malgasy Republic, CAR, Chad.
<u>Conférence des Administrations des Postes et Télécommunications de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CAPTAO)</u>		Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Senegal.
Casablanca Group	1961-1963	Ghana, Guinea, Mali <u>other African states:</u> Algeria (GPRA until 1962), Morocco, UAR.

Commonwealth		Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria Sierra Leone <u>other African states:</u> Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Uganda, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia.
<u>Communauté Française</u>	1958	Sénégal, Ivory Coast (1958-1960), Dahomey (1958-1960), Niger (1958-60), Upper Volta (1958-60), Mali, Mauritania. <u>other African states:</u> CAR, Gabon, Chad, Congo (B).
<u>Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEAO)</u>	1972	Ivory Coast, Dahomey (1972-73), Upper Volta, Mali, Sénégal, Mauritania.
<u>Communauté Economique du Bétail et de la Viande</u>	1970	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Niger, Upper Volta, Togo, Mali.
<u>Conseil de l'Entente</u>	1959	Dahomey, Niger, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Togo (since 1965).
<u>Comité Inter-Etats de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse au Sahel</u>	1973	Niger, Mauritania, Gambia, Mali, Sénégal, Cape Verde Islands. <u>other African states:</u> Chad.
Cocoa Producers Alliance		Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Togo Ghana. <u>other African states:</u> Cameroun
<u>Etats Africains et Malgache Associés à la Communauté Economique Européenne (EAMA)</u>	1963-1975	Upper Volta, Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Niger, Mauritania, Sénégal, Togo, Mali. <u>other African states:</u> Cameroun, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo (B), Zaire, CAR, Chad, Gabon, Malgasy, Mauritius.
Economic Commission for Africa		All independent African States.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	1975	All independent West African states
Inter-African Coffee Association (IACO)	1964	Dahomey, Togo, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, <u>other African states:</u> Zaire, Malgasy, Ethiopia, Congo (B) Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya.
Lake Chad Basin Commission	1964	Niger, Nigeria <u>other African states:</u> Chad, Cameroun.
Lomé Convention	1975	All independent African State South of the Sahara
Monrovia Group	1961 1963	Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone. <u>other African states:</u> Congo (B), Zaire, Cameroun, Ethiopia, Gabon, Libya, Malgasy, CAR.
Niger River Commission	1963	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Nigeria, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Guinea. <u>other African states:</u> Chad, Cameroun.
<u>Organisation Africaine et Malgache du Café (OAMCAF)</u>	1960	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Togo. <u>other African states:</u> Cameroun, Congo (B), Gabon, Malgasy, CAR.
<u>Organisation Africaine et Malgache de Coopération Economique (OAMCE)</u>	1961 1964	UAM states.
<u>Organisation Africaine et Malgache de la Propriété Industrielle</u>	1962	Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Togo. <u>other African states:</u> Cameroun, Congo (B), Gabon, Malgasy, CAR.

<u>Organisation Commune Africaine et Malgache (OCAM)</u>	1965	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Sénégal, Upper Volta, Mauritania (Febr.-June 1965). <u>other African states:</u> Cameroun, (1965-73), Congo (B) (1967-73), Zaire (1965-72), Gabon, Malgasy (1965-73), Mauritius (since 1972), CAR, Rwanda.
<u>Organisation Africaine et Malgache de Coordination et de Coopération contre les Grandes Endémies (OCCGE).</u>	1960	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Togo, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sénégal.
<u>Organisation of African Unity</u>	1963	All independent African States.
<u>Organisation Commune de Lutte Anti-Acridienne et de Lutte Anti-Aviarie (OCLALAV).</u>	1965	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Sénégal, Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Upper Volta. <u>other African states:</u> Cameroun, Chad.
<u>Organisation pour la Défense du Tourisme en Afrique (ODTA)</u>	1967	Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Sénégal, Togo. <u>other African states:</u> Cameroun, Congo (B), Gabon, Chad, CAR.
<u>Organisation des Etats Riverains du Sénégal (OERS)</u>	1968 1971	Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Sénégal.
<u>Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur du Fleuve Sénégal (OMVS).</u>	1971	Mauritania, Mali, Sénégal
<u>Union Africaine et Malgache (UAM)</u>	1961 1964	Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mauritania, Niger, Sénégal, Togo (since 1963) <u>other African states:</u> Cameroun, CAR, Gabon, Malgasy, Chad, Congo (B), Rwanda (since 1964).

<u>Union Africaine et Malgache de Coopération Economique</u> (UAMCE).	1964 1965	UAM states but Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger and the CAR refused to Initial the charter.
<u>Union Africaine et Malgache des Postes et Télécommunications</u>	1961	UAM states
Union of African States (UAS)	1958 1966	Ghana (1958-1966), Guinea, Mali (1960-68).
<u>Union Douanière des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (UDEAO)</u>	1966- 1970	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Niger, Mali, Sénégal, Upper Volta, Mauritania.
<u>Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine</u> (UMOA)	1962	Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Niger, Sénégal, Upper Volta. Mali did not ratify the treaty.
West African Rice Association (WARDA)		All independent West African states.

Source: F. Wodie, Les Institutions Internationales Régionales en Afrique Occidentals et Centrale (Paris, 1970), p.1;
L. Mytelka, 'A Genealogy of Francophone West and Equatorial African Regional Organisations', The Journal of Modern African Studies, XII, 2 (1974), 297-320
and le Monde, passim.

The Transit of the groundnuts of Niger
via Nigeria and Dahomey
1961-1962 to 1972-1973.

Season	Total	Via Dahomey	Via Nigeria	tonnes
				% of exports channelled via Nigeria
1961-62 ¹	67,281	26,460	40,821	60.6%
1962-63	82,595	25,630	56,965	68.9%
1963-64	98,705	19,637	79,068	80.1%
1964-65	85,305	16,200	69,105	81.0%
1965-66	133,192	27,300	105,892	79.5%
1966-67	175,945	75,752	100,193	56.9%
1967-68	162,290	59,350	102,940	63.4%
1968-69	139,269	44,318	94,951	68.1%
1969-70	131,358	37,646	93,712	71.3%
1970-71	96,064	26,306	69,758	72.6%
1971-72	84,647	23,578	61,069	72.1%
1972-73	38,750	11,000	27,750	71.6%

1. Figures not available before the 1961-62 season.

Source: BCEAO, Notes, March 1965, 17; April 1966, 4;
October 1968, 4; August-September 1971, 3;
May 1976, 3.

YEAR	FROM COTONOU TO PARAKOU OR NIGER			FROM NIGER OR PARAKOU TO COTONOU				Total traffic for Niger	% of OCN traffic for Niger	
	Total traffic	traffic to Niger	% of goods for Niger	Total traffic	traffic from Niger		% of goods from Niger			
					Groundnuts	Total of all goods				
1960	74,286	55,353	74.5%	66,221	22,586	24,779	37.4%	140,507	80,132	57.0%
1961	75,317	61,362	81.5%	54,120	25,006	28,088	51.9%	129,437	89,450	69.1%
1962	86,671	70,363	81.2%	57,115	28,889	30,922	54.1%	143,786	101,285	70.4%
1963	81,391	67,614	83.1%	59,209	21,812	27,466	46.4%	140,600	95,080	67.6%
1964	66,008	53,942	81.7%	53,302	17,587	24,288	45.5%	119,310	78,230	65.5%
1965	70,143	58,306	83.1%	48,766	16,863	21,678	44.4%	118,909	79,984	67.2%
1966	82,772	70,828	85.5%	58,285	28,920	32,399	55.6%	141,057	103,227	73.1%
1967	88,579	73,139	82.5%	101,312	76,170	77,739	76.7%	189,891	150,878	79.4%
1968	88,512	77,266	87.3%	101,605	60,942	62,602	61.6%	190,117	139,828	73.5%
1969	115,872	96,747	83.4%	99,793	43,358	47,856	48.0%	215,665	144,603	67.0%
1970	150,380	111,739	74.3%	97,385	34,785	43,602	44.8%	247,765	155,341	62.7%
1971	199,008	94,793	47.6%	100,312	26,457	36,396	36.2%	299,320	131,189	43.8%
1972	242,349	128,551	53.0%	88,584	23,590	30,352	34.0%	330,933	158,903	48.0%
1973	291,114	171,479	58.9%	59,965	1,394	4,508	13.0%	351,079	175,987	50.1%

From BUEAO Notes d'Information et de Statistiques, April 1967, 5; January 1968, 5; April 1971, 4; January 1976, 6.

1. Enroachment and laterite transported by the OCN are excluded.

The traffic of the Organisation Commune Dahomey-Niger, 1960-1973

Appendix 5

Member States	Cumulative contributions to the Fund	% of total of contributions	Cumulative loans from the Fund	% of the Total amount of money on loan	projects supported		
					Total cost of the investments	Amount of the loans	Interest rates
Dahomey	168 (42 each year)	6.2%	1,100	49.1%	Kenaf Industrial project I (1967)..... see Kenaf II Textile Plant (1968) Kenaf Industrial project II (1970)	275 150 450 675	4.87% 6.50% 5.00%
Upper Volta	168 (42 each year)	6.2%	545	24.3%	Warehouse in Abidjan(1967). Agricultural machinery (1969) Flour mill at Banfora(1970) Oilmill(1970)	80 68 125 272	7.00% 5.85% 5.50% 7.00%
Niger	168 (42 each year)	6.2%	51.5	2.3%	Well digging Equipment (1968).....	51.5	7.00%
Togo	96 (24 each year)	3.5%	545.2	24.3%	Sewage system of Lomé (1968) Maison de l'Entente (1969) Gravel Plant (1970)	300 110 135.2	6.00% 5.25% 7.80%
Ivory Coast	2,000 (500 each year)	74.1%	Ivory Coast undertook in 1967 not to use the Fund during the five following years.				
TOTAL	2,700 ²	96.2%	2,241.7	100%	6,316.10	2,241.7	

1. all figures in million cfa.

2. This figure includes the subvention of cfa 100 million from the Fond d'Action et de Coopération. (May 1967).

SOURCE: derived from Fond d'Entraide et de Garantie des Emprunts du Conseil de l'Entente, Rapport d'Activité 1974 (Conseil de l'Entente, Abidjan) p.29 and Bulletin de l'Afrique Noire, 12 October 1966, p.8782.
I am indebted to the Secrétaire Administratif of the Council of Entente for completing this information.

The Activities of the Fond d'Entraide et de Garantie des Emprunts du Conseil de l'Entente, 1967-1970.

ICRC Expenditure in Dahomey

	in '000 CFAF		
	1969	1970	Total
Purchases of goods and services	39,269	526	39,831
Goods for Biafra	19,195	350.5	19,545.5
Other goods (purchases of fuel, etc...)	65,116.5	2,813	67,929.5
Services (local freight, insurance, transport, rental of building, etc...)	131,540.5	29,273.5	160,814
Investment expenditure (extension of the tarmac of Cotonou airport)	75,790.5		75,790.5
Salaries and allowances paid to Dahomean personnel	9,938.5	2,620	12,558.5
Expatriate personnel (daily subsistence allowance)	73,558	3,982.5	77,540.5
Local expenditure in Dahomey in addition to that previously mentioned (personal effects, medical expenditure, travel entitlements...)	48,735.5	2,037.5	50,773
Total	463,143.5	41,639	504,782.5

Source: ICRC, 'letter from the ICRC to the Dahomean Foreign Ministry' (Geneva, 17 March 1971, mimeo).

Total relief supplies to Biafra

		in tonnes		
		ICRC	JCA	CRF
1968	April - August	398	940	63
	Sept. - Dec.	6,405	7,709	830 ¹
1969	Jan. - May	13,463	17,637	410
	June - Sept.	742	13,558	645
	Oct. - Dec.		17,028	
1970	January			1,125 ²
Total		21,008	56,872 ³	3,073

1. From 3 September.
2. Including 533 tons which were supplied and paid for by the International Committee of the Red Cross but transported by the CRF.
3. The few flights made by JCA in January 1970 should raise the overall total above 57,000 tonnes.

Source: Appendix 8 and T. Hentsch, Face au Blocus, La Croix Rouge Internationale dans le Nigéria en Guerre, 1967-1970 (Geneva, 1973), appendix VIII, p. 278.

Period	Resources u = '1,000 FF	Employment of the Resources	Relief Aid Transported (Tons)				No. Flights
			Brought to Libreville	Used in Libreville	Quantities	Flown into Biafra Aircraft Operated	
1963							
3 September - 4 October 1968	Public APPEAL I (July-August 1968) Subvention	13,245 125(2)	470	60	390	1 DC-6 and 1 Super constellation	43
5 October - 31 December 1968			830	120	440	1 DC-4	78
1969							
1 January - 31 May 1969	Public APPEAL II (December 1968) Subvention Public APPEAL III (March 1969)	1,700 1,000 8,210	550	120	410	1 DC-4	68
1 June - 30 September 1969			600	50	645	2 DC-4 (3)	94
1 October - 31 January 1970 (7)	Cheques Subvention	291 3,000	1,200	60	1,125 (4)	Either 2 DC-4 or 1 DC-4 and a Super constellation	150 (4)
1 February 1970 15 April 1970 (withdrawal)	Cheques	28				1 Aircraft returned 2nd Aircraft returned	
					63 (2)		
Total		27,599	3,650	410	3,073		433

SOURCES: Information contained in this table was kindly supplied to the
author by General Nicolle, Head of the CRF operations in the
conflict.

1. All notes on the following page

The Activities of the Croix Rouge Française during the Nigerian Civil War

Footnotes

1. Also includes expenses for the Libreville base.
2. Government subvention to the CRF (50,000 FF + 75,000 FF).
63 tons of foodstuffs and drugs were transported in
Gabonese aircraft between May and August.
3. After 20 September.
4. 533 tons (representing 48 flights) of foodstuffs and
drugs transported by the CRF were supplied and paid
for by the ICRC.
5. Operation following an ICRC request.
6. French medical teams in Biafra operated under ICRC
auspices. By the end of the war, a total of 64
doctors and nurses had worked in Biafra.
7. The airlift of the CRF to Uli was interrupted on
12 January 1970.

'000 US dollars at constant 1968 prices							
Origin Year	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	Total ³	
France		350 2 Douglas B-26 Invader(1)	384 4 Sud Alouette II and III(1)			734	
Portugal		700 2 Douglas B-26 Invader (to replace above)				700	
Sweden				238 19 MFI-9B Militrainer		238	
Unknown				595 2 Gloster Meteor ⁽²⁾ 6 NAT-6 2 Douglas C-47		595	
Total		1,050	384	833		2,267	

1. Supplier uncertain
2. Never reached Biafra.
3. These estimates do not include items which were hijacked or otherwise seized.

Source: SIPRI, Arms Trade Registers, The Arms Trade with the Third World, (Stockholm, 1975) pp. 81-3;

SIPRI, The Arms Trade with the Third World, (Stockholm, 1971), pp. 858-9; I am indebted to Mrs. S. Landgren-Bäckström of SIPRI for supplying me with detailed estimates of the value - and not the price actually paid - of the weapons imported by Nigeria and Biafra. The methods used for the calculation of these estimates are described in SIPRI, Arms Trade Registers..., pp. 173-6.

Biafra's imports of major weapons, 1966-1970

'000 US dollars et constant 1968 prices

Origin	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	Total
USSR: Aircraft		Mig-17(f) 1,500	1 IL-28(a) Mig-17 (e) 900	1 IL-28 Mig-17(e) SU-7 and Mig-19P(b) 5,930	Mig-17(e) 1,500	9,830
Ships	3 Seaward Defence Vessels 328	1 Seaward Defence Vessel 2,241	1 Seaward Defence Vessel 2,241			4,810
Tanks	(40) Ferret(o) (50) Saladin(d) 1,167	1,167	2,067	900	900	6,201
Tracked Tanks			13 Panther 60/90 650			650
Czechoslovakian Aircraft		12 L-29 Polpin Mig-17(f) 5,250				5,250
Polish Aircraft		6 Mig-15 UTI(a) 1,050				1,050
Austrian Aircraft		8 Westland Whirlwind 2 672				672
Swedish Aircraft		2 PAC Jet Provoost (Gift) 140				140
Yugoslav Aircraft			2 IL-28(e) Mig-17 600	Mig-17(e) SU-7 and Mig-19P(b) 3,800	Mig-17(e) 1,500	5,900
Polish Aircraft				5 Douglas DC-3(a) 1 Piper Aztec D(a) 196		196
Algerian Aircraft			1 IL-28(e) Mig-17 300	Mig-17(e) 900	Mig-17(e) 1,500	2,700
Total	1,495	12,020	6,758	11,726	3,400	37,399

Source: Same as for the previous table.

- (a) Supplier uncertain.
- (b) 4-5 SU-7 a-4 2 Mig-19P supplied by USSR and Egypt according to unconfirmed reports.
- (c) Ferret supplied between 1966 and 1970.
- (d) Saladin supplied between 1966 and 1970.
- (e) 31 Mig-17 supplied between 1968 and 1970 by USSR, Algeria, Egypt.
- (f) 10 Mig-17 supplied by USSR and Czechoslovakia.

Nigeria's imports of major weapons 1966 - 1970.

Crude Oil Production in Nigeria

'000 barrels a day							
Year	Total	Shell-BP	Gulf Oil	SAFRAP	Mobil	Agip-Phillips	Texaco-Chevron
1958	5	5					
1959	11	11					
1960	17	17					
1961	46	46					
1962	68	68					
1963	76	76					
1964	120	120					
1965	270	243	27				
1966	415	352	51	12			
1967	317	243	55	19			
1968	142	44	98				
1969	540	352	188				
1970	1,084	807	217		51	5	4
1971	1,531	1,108	277	25	72	39	10
1972	1,817	1,208	325	55	167	52	10

For an approximate conversion of barrels per day into metric tons per year multiply by 50.

Source: R. Meyer and S. Pearson, 'Contribution of Petroleum to Nigerian Economic Development', in S. Pearson and J. Cownie, eds., Commodity Exports and African Economic Development (Lexington, 1974), p. 163.

French imports of Nigerian crude oil

in million tonnes			
Year	Total	Nigeria	% of Total
1963	43,258		
1964	49,192	273	0.5%
1965	58,555	499	0.8%
1966	62,752	1,748	2.7%
1967	72,348	2,165	2.9%
1968	77,176	1,818	2.3%
1969	86,306	2,256	2.6%
1970	96,230	5,190	5.3%
1971	102,010	11,980	11.7%
1972	112,380	12,590	11.2%
1973	127,110	11,920	9.3%
1974	125,060	9,070	7.2%

Source: République Française, Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, Annuaire Statistique de la France (Paris, annual), (1965), p.223; (1968), p.239; (1973), p.215; (1976), p.230.

Year	FOB in million CFAF			
	Total	France	Nigeria	Niger
1961 ¹	3,579	2,582	141	71
1962	2,698	1,900	128	71
1963	3,154	2,255	63	3
1964	3,254	2,442	46	5
1965	3,366	1,845	76	39
1966	2,585	1,365	127	35
1967	3,774	1,301	169	71
1968	5,507	2,014	304	34
1969	7,067	2,565	913	98
1970	9,062	3,573	846	133
1971	11,648	4,839	570	124
1972	9,189	3,442	410	n.a.
1973	9,794	3,494	370	n.a.
1974	8,184	2,227	702	n.a.
				152
				30
				30
				26
				20
				39
				18
				58
				30
				113
				41
				n.a.
				n.a.
				n.a.

1. no statistics available before 1961

Source: see following table.

Dahomey's export trade, 1961 - 1974

Year	CIF in million CFAF				
	Total	France	Nigeria	Niger	Ivory Coast
1961 ¹	6,275	3,721	137	1	240
1962	6,626	3,934	148	2	159
1963	8,249	5,110	371	E	116
1964	7,762	4,534	344	2	91
1965	8,490	4,653	212	7	102
1966	8,269	4,299	171	12	103
1967	10,720	5,328	177	60	192
1968	12,208	5,071	248	6	224
1969	14,128	5,479	302	3	414
1970	17,660	7,455	339	1	413
1971	21,202	8,123	381	1	528
1972	23,510	9,421	427	n.a.	n.a.
1973	24,859	8,989	1,017	n.a.	n.a.
1974	35,173	11,566	612	n.a.	n.a.

1. Statistics not available before 1961

Source: République du Dahomey,
 'Annuaire Statistique du Dahomey' (Cotonou, 1969, mimeo), pp. 227-236;
 BCEAO, Notes, April 1971, 6; République du Dahomey,
 'Bulletin de Statistique' (Cotonou, 1975, mimeo), p. 13.

Dahomey's import trade, 1961 - 1974

	Total official Trade of Dahomey	in million CFAF Unrecorded trade with Nigeria
Imports	4,329	cloth.....800 enamelled wares 240 cigarettes and matches ...240 Bicycles and radios 160 tins, perfumes, alcohol...160 Total 1,600
Exports	3,841	smoked and dried fish...1,000 Total 1,000
Total	8,170	2,600

Source: quoted in République Française,
'l'Avenir du Port de Cotonou; Rapport de mission de MM Henri
Leroux et René Condomines' (Paris, 1961, mimeo), p. 83.

Dahomey's estimated unrecorded trade with Nigeria, 1959.

FOB in million current FF.

Year	Total	Africa total	Nigeria	Ivory Coast	Niger	Dahomey
1960	33,881	10,182	69.77	409.81	32.81	81.99
1961	35,645	9,412	68.87	562.72	47.41	71.58
1962	36,345	7,507	86.93	480.42	58.69	75.77
1963	39,904	8,066	98.87	575.04	64.53	101.99
1964	44,398	8,296	124.08	676.47	74.95	88.26
1965	49,619	8,624	122.70	627.14	79.99	86.83
1966	53,807	8,220	136.87	623.70	77.53	80.60
1967	56,177	8,482	107.92	734.51	87.30	87.76
1968	62,576	8,995	81.49	734.25	98.11	84.44
1969	77,017	9,964	94.11	759.51	99.79	109.84
1970	98,531	12,548	164.07	929.77	133.29	147.80
1971	113,004	13,428	273.92	1,022.09	133.64	155.85
1972	130,368	14,000	383.13	1,145.60	103.35	169.74
1973	158,065	15,568	479.02	1,370.32	156.13	168.72
1974	217,181	26,791	833.46	1,723.94	233.54	207.69
1975	194,844	n.a.	1,981.99	1,750.32	269.27	234.84
1976	236,274	n.a.	2,555.85	2,356.53	297.98	303.49

Source: see following table

France's export trade, 1960 - 1976

CIF in million current FF.

Year	Total	Africa (total)	Nigeria	Ivory Coast	Niger	Dahomey
1960	31,001	7,227	101.94	505.53	60.32	73.84
1961	32,967	7,474	151.05	535.2	74.36	61.14
1962	37,104	8,102	86.06	552.4	74.20	49.13
1963	43,079	8,344	214.31	644.9	92.17	51.33
1964	49,702	9,034	165.56	680.36	110.20	58.03
1965	51,042	8,851	235.21	610.34	97.08	44.36
1966	58,629	9,524	361.76	716.51	115.70	43.67
1967	61,108	9,235	363.69	734.18	173.86	37.60
1968	68,761	9,235	173.49	867.78	125.41	46.50
1969	89,128	11,060	443.52	948.77	154.50	62.89
1970	105,101	12,843	665.80	1,062.3	130.03	86.60
1971	116,957	11,609	370.45	1,029.44	168.27	110.69
1972	134,742	12,439	1,748.17	1,083.67	126.95	96.17
1973	164,262	13,037	1,837.15	1,240.30	223.48	101.20
1974	217,181	26,043	4,205.07	1,789.05	157.58	124.86
1975	216,092	n.a.	3,630.99	1,636.58	236.42	60.91
1976	289,796	n.a.	3,642.31	2,321.65	374.78	59.11

n.a. = not available.

Source: République Française, Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances, Annuaire Statistique de la France (Paris, 1963 to 1977), passim. I am indebted to Eric Joint-Lambert of the Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques for information on the years 1975 and 1976.

France's import trade, 1960-1976

CIF in million CFAF					
Year	Total	France	Nigeria	Niger	Dahomey
1960	38,808	19,560	E	E	461
1961	47,118	22,540	1	201	432
1962	47,693	22,148	2	118	278
1963	56,818	26,615	48	74	191
1964	74,501	26,720	112	6	124
1965	68,418	25,771	67	189	146
1966	76,659	29,733	117	253	173
1967	80,263	29,981	154	429	244
1968	104,887	36,215	214	282	270
1969	118,223	37,112	387	339	507
1970	130,190	42,526	436	501	480
1971	126,558	42,210	352	509	390
1972	139,541	40,664	160	1,140	672
1973	190,856	49,218	295	999	714
1974	291,770	76,139	615	1,547	1,719
1975	254,571	69,116	1,321	2,830	1,597

Source: see following table

Ivory Coast's export trade, 1960 - 1975.

FOB in million CFAF

Year	Total	France	Nigeria	Niger	Dahomey
1960	32,364	20,429	E	1	221
1961	41,970	26,221	1	E	204
1962	38,534	22,422	109	2	87
1963	41,908	27,122	158	1	36
1964	58,873	37,145	18	n.a.	20
1965	58,343	35,937	83	4	65
1966	63,613	36,272	232	87	50
1967	65,050	35,934	184	96	13
1968	77,627	38,946	10	118	24
1969	86,284	39,966	41	126	62
1970	107,704	49,788	30	168	85
1971	110,838	51,778	1,754	160	34
1972	114,317	53,870	3,276	142	13
1973	157,521	69,690	2,463	94	39
1974	232,286	90,104	11,468	155	42
1975	241,393	94,883	11,921	210	20

Source: République de Côte d'Ivoire,
'Situation Economique de la Côte d'Ivoire' (Abidjan,
annual, mimeo), (1962), pp. 167 and 176; (1969), p. C.75; (1972),
p. C.34; BCEAO, Notes, July 1975, 12-3.

Ivory Coast's import trade, 1960 - 1975

Year	FOB in million CFAF			
	Total	France	Nigeria	Ivory Coast Dahomey
1960	3,108	2,192	463	E 3
1961	3,824	2,969	628	E 41
1962	4,834	2,943	944	24 72
1963	5,338	3,437	874	20 135
1964	4,665	3,017	987	31 38
1965	6,250	3,512	1,586	104 114
1966	8,574	4,705	1,497	165 183
1967	8,573	6,504	1,392	120 172
1968	7,125	4,033	1,388	165 246
1969	6,250	3,921	1,006	207 191
1970	8,795	4,109	1,737	355 373
1971	10,670	5,509	2,727	264 478
1972	13,711	5,260	3,772	300 145
1973	13,816	7,007	3,580	n.a. n.a.
1974	12,621	6,874	3,402	n.a. n.a.
1975	19,555	12,450	4,284	n.a. n.a.

Source: see following table

Niger's Export trade, 1960-1975

in million CFAF			
	Official trade		Unrecorded trade with Nigeria (estimate)
	Total	with Nigeria	
Imports	2,198	338	Printed cloth 400 to 500 Cola nuts 400 to 800 Domestic goods 200 to 300 Total <u>1,000 to 1,600</u>
Exports	3,819	667	Bovins..... 800 Caprins, sheep, dry fish skins, haricots, arabic gum <u>200</u> Total..... <u>1,000</u>
Total	6,017	1,005	Total imports & exports 2,000 to 2,600 ¹ Groundnuts 250 to 400 Total..... <u>2,250 to 3,000</u>

1. imported or exported according to the year.

Source: M. Scriber, 'Le Trafic Frontalier Clandestin entre le Niger et le Nigeria', (Paris, 1958, mimeo), pp. 3-4.

Niger's trade with Nigeria, 1958

Niger's trade with Nigeria, 1970

in million CFAF		
	Imports	Exports
Unrecorded trade with Nigeria (estimates for 1970 - 71).	manufactured products.....2,000 Kola nuts.. 500 groundnuts and food- stuffs..... 400 Other..... 100 Total.....3,000	Livestock 2,000 Other..... 500 2,500
Official trade with Nigeria	234	1,737
Total official trade of Dahomey	16,213	8,795

Source: République Française, 'Conjoncture et Coopération;
le Niger' (Paris, 1970, mimeo), pp. 43-4 and
appendices 67 and 70.

FOB in N£1000					
Year	Total	France	Ivory Coast ¹	Dahomey ¹	Niger ¹
1960	161,714	6,426			
1961	173,546	9,708			
1962	203,009	6,711			
1963	189,669	15,902			
1964	214,566	9,996	n.a.	383	670
1965	268,361	18,241	n.a.	222	981
1966	284,084	25,909	508	290	1,551
1967	241,818	22,425	140	549	1,314
1968	211,085	11,540	52	269	1,275
1969	318,116	31,946	19	211	725
1970	442,682	37,310	61	208	645
1971	646,669	95,285	2,365	284	1,102
1972	717,105	101,943	3,312	785	1,128
1973	2,277,444	285,690	7,203	322	2,131
1974	5,794,837	580,809	31,601	595	3,891
1975	4,925,493	537,223	29,812	403	3,666

1. No statistics available prior to 1964.

Source : see following table.

Nigeria's export trade, 1960 - 1975

Year	CIF in N£1000				
	Total	France	Ivory Coast	Dahomey	Niger
1960	215,891	4,884			
1961	222,463	5,839			
1962	168,680	6,736			
1963	207,556	7,455			
1964	253,930	9,941	n.a.	252	129
1965	275,322	12,095	n.a.	76	101
1966	256,550	14,497	197	18	54
1967	223,550	9,420	381	38	8
1968	193,185	7,183	384	44	5
1969	248,771	8,012	443	26	26
1970	378,210	12,635	705	177	81
1971	539,453	21,842	356	209	77
1972	495,032	29,197	204	290	62
1973	1,224,786	86,709	857	121	89
1974	1,737,324	114,622	1,013	1,411	20
1975	3,721,476	308,597	4,347	4,987	358

Source: Federal Republic of Nigeria, Annual Abstract of Statistics (Lagos, annual), (1970), p.97; (1972), p.98; Nigeria Trade Journal, X,2 (April-June 1962), 77; XII, 2 (April-June 1962), 67; XV, 2 (April-June 1966), 69; XVI, 2 (April-June 1962), 55; XVII, 2 (April-June 1970), 67.

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Professeur Georges Balandier	Sociologist Oxford, 4 and 7 December 1975.
Dr Ola Balogun	Playwright and film maker; Press and Cultural Attache to the Nigeria Embassy in Paris (1969-1971). Lagos, 27 October 1974.
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Yves-Guy Bergès	Journalist; author of Rolf Steiner's memoirs. Paris, 20 April 1975.
Mgr Bernier	Archbishop of Niamey; active mediator during the Niger-Dahomey crisis in 1963. Niamey, 8 January 1975.
Bridget Bloom	Journalist, <u>Financial Times</u> . London, 17 December 1973.
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