The Aburi Accord of 1967and the Challenges of Constitutional and Political Development of Nigeria.

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Abstract.

Nigeria's current political and constitutional structures have exacerbated the country's inability to achieve national integration and development. This has been particularly the case since the intervention of the military in national politics, beginning from 1966. That intervention started with the putsch of January,1966, and the counter coup d'etat of July, 1966. Both events put Nigeria on a precipice. To avoid the outbreak of war after the counter coup, a series of peace and reconciliation meetings were brokered by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The most important of these was the Aburi Accord held in Ghana in January, 1967. The objective of this paper is to interrogate the provisions of the Aburi Accord and see whether they are still relevant in addressing what has come to be known as the " National Question" in contemporary Nigeria. To achieve this objective, it becomes imperative to also bring into focus the Report of the 2014 National Conference, which is considered to be the most important effort at addressing Nigeria's crises of statehood. The idea is to juxtapose both, with a view to finding an acceptable formula for tackling the county's two most important obstacles to peace and development. The research method adopted is basically content analysis of documentary sources. This paper posits that there is a compelling need to review the present unitary federal system and the presidential system of government which have not solved many of Nigeria's problems. The paper recommends a confederalism, corruption reduction amongst others.

Keywords: Coup d'etat, Aburi Accord, Civil war, Politics, National Integration

Introduction

Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and Republic in 1963. An interval of six years from independence, there was a coup d,etat when Tafawa Balewa was dethrone and killed by the coup leaders led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu, Emmanuel Ifeanjuna, Michael Adewale Ademoyega etc . The army took over from the corrupt politicians on the 15th of January 1966. The government was taken over by General Arguiyi Ironsi. In the same year 1966, 29th July, Arguiyi Ironsi was kidnapped and killed by Northern Army officers led by Martins Adamu, Theophilus Danjuma and Murtala Mohammed. The government was taken over by General Yakubu Gowon. It was the emergence of Yakubu Gowon that made Ojukwu to question the where about of General Arguiyi Ironsi through the Federal Government. The argument by Ojukwu and his none-recognition of Gowon as the Head of State lingered up to Aburi as they were invited by General Ankrah at Aburi in Ghana to be settled amicably between 4th and 5th January ,1967. The problem is, how can we develop, or have national integration, it is a national question.

Conceptual Clarification

Constitution: According to Mifflin it is the act or process of composing or setting up, or establishing. It can still mean the composition of something or the make-up of something. It also means the system of fundamental laws and principles that prescribes the nature, functions and units of government or other institutions. It also means the document by which such a system is recorded.[1]

Coup d'etat: - A Sudden overthrow of government by a group of persons in or previously in position of authority in deliberate violation of constitutional forms.

Development: The act of improving or increasing in size or value. The state of being developed e.g a set of dwellings built by same contractor. A significant event or occurrence in a country.

Federalism: According to Mifflin a system of government whereby the vasal state recognizes the existence of a supreme or sovereign central authority while retaining certain residual powers of government.

National integration: This is the process of the uniting or caring together of the various components of the country or nation.

National question: These are problems or challenges affecting the peaceful co-existence and development of the nation. According to Ota, he said National question include sence of identify as Nigerians, protection of citizens, fairness and justice of the state towards the

citizens, the place of leadership on citizens, and whether citizens can express their uniqueness [2] **Politics**: This is the act or science of governance or government or political science. It is the manner by which the activities that are involved or the affairs of government by politicians or political parties in a country are executed. It also means the conduct or methods of political affairs in a country.

Background to the Aburi Accord

Nationalism in Nigeria was mainly piloted by Igbo and Yoruba who inspired the movement. It grew up after the First World War. [3] After years of negotiations, Nigeria became independent in 1960. The constitution of the new state was a Federal one. This Federal constitution allowed a large degree of self-government to each of the country's three regions. With the creation of Mid-West from Western region in 1963, the regions became four. The old tensions among the regions in the pre- independence however were not settled after independence. The northerners who dominated the country politically feared and distrusted the southerners. [4] The southerners also were not comfortable of the northerners' born to rule policy as the Hausa/Fulani claimed. They distrusted each other also. Due to corruption, political crisis and other factors, the military struck on the 15th of January 1966. The participants in the coup include, Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna, Major Okafor, Major Michael Adewale Ademoyega and Major Anufuro who were then led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu.

The First and Second Nigerian Military Coups (15th January, 1966 and 29th July, 1966) as Prelude to the Aburi Accord.

The January 15, 1966 coup which was also the first coup in Nigeria was carried out by the group of young officers of the Nigerian army. They were graduates from universities and were more educationally equipped than being professional soldiers.



1: Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu. Leader of the January15th, 1966 Coup in Nigeria.



Plate 2 Alhaji Amadu Bello; Saduana of Sokoto and Premier of Northern Nigeria.



Plate 3 , Alhaji Abubakar Tafewa Balewa; Nigerian First Prime Minister (1963-1966). **Plates** 2 and 3 were among the victims of the First Coup of 15th January, 1966 in Nigeria.[5]

These young armies were the most worried by the problems of the country. They normally discussed among themselves and ended unanimously on changing the government. The question was how and when for them to topple the corrupt civilian government. Some said let it be later. The group that wanted it immediately was led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu. Other prominent ones in the group were Major Tim Onwatuegwu, Major Emmanuel Ifeanjuna, Major Michael Adewale Ademoyega and Major Nwobosi. They masterminded the January15, 1966 coup (the first coup in Nigeria).

Very close to the coup period, some reorganisations were made by the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) led Federal Government in the security system of the country. One of the major changes was in the Police. Mr. Louis Orok Edet a South Easterner and the first Nigerian Inspector General of Police was sent on a compulsory retirement and was replaced by Mr. Kem Salem. According to Enemugwuem Mr. Kam Salem was a core Northern Nigerian who was not even the Second- in- Command to Louis Orok Edet . Tafawa Balewa also went ahead and gave order for the military to shift their loyalty from the President to him which the Southerners refused to welcome. Major General Arguiyi Ironsi would also have been sent on the terminal leave and be replaced by Brigadier Zakariya Maimalari, but Nnamdi Azikiwe the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces went on a medical checkup trip to West Indies, only to be back after the coup. When Azikiwe came back, already their government has been overthrown by the majors who led the coup. [6]

Based on the prevailing circumstances dragging the nation to disintegration, these armies shared themselves into four groups. Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu and Major Tim Onwatuegwu were to be in charge of North (Kaduna),Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna to be in charge of Lagos Federal Territory, Major Michael Adewale Ademoyega was in charge of the West (Ibadan)and Major Nwobosi was in charge of East and the Mid –West. Nwobosi was in charge of the larger portion (East and Mid-West) because in their plan the coupists did not mean to kill anybody from those places unless the person showed signs of resistance of the arrest. The aimed politicians to be killed were in Lagos, Northern and Western Regions. On the night of Friday breaking Saturday (14th and 15th January, 1966), Major Nzeogwu mobilized the soldiers with him to Sir Ahmadu Bello's office and residence in Kaduna. The place was then surrounded by the armed men.Lieutenant Colonel Nzeogwu, heavily armed, broke the gate to Sir Ahmadu Bello's residence and entered in. He got Ahmadu Bello. One of his wives and one of his body gaurds were also gunned down during the operation. As Nzeogwu was operating, his second in the North, Major Tim Onwatuegwu and his soldiers went to Brigadier Samuel Ademulegun, the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Brigade, Kaduna and shot him in a way to take charge of the Brigade.[6]

In Lagos, Major Emmanuel Ifeajuna's group kidnapped the Prime Minister; Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, the Federal Minister of Finance; Chief Festus Okoti-Eboh, the Premier of Western Region; Chief S.L .Akintola and some of their aids from their official residence. They were conveyed in military cars and were taken outside Lagos to Abeokuta road where they were killed and dumped. Their corpses were later found in a nearby bush. Before that time, the Commanding Officer at the 2nd Brigade Lagos, Brigadier Zakariya Maimalari had been shot dead in order for the coup leaders to take over the Brigade. At Ibadan; Major Michael Adewale Ademoyega also did his job. This he did at the 4th battalion, Ibadan, where the Commander Leiutenant Colonel Largema was killed by the coupists .[7]

A prominent Igbo army officer called Colonel Unegbu was also a victim of the coup. While some people claim that he was killed because of the key to the Doddan Barrack's Armoury (for he was the Chief Armourer) as he refused to give to the coupists in course of dragging the key to the armoury, Unegbu was shot. Others posit that the coupists killed him to prevent him from revenging the killing of his friend Brigadier Zakariya Maimalari .[8]

Unfortunately, the coup was generally a failure. They only succeeded in the killing of public figures. They could not establish any authority. It was General Johnson Thomas Umunakwe Arguiyi Ironsi who was not prepared to rule that assumed office of the Head of State.This set the country backward rather than moving the country forward. Apart

from the ones mentioned above as victims of the coup, others include Colonel Mohammed, Colonel Sodiende and Sodiende's wife and Colonel Pam.[9]

When the first coup was executed on the 15th of January 1966, and was announced by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, Major Ojukwu resisted it. He did not surrender his post as a commander unlike others of his colleagues until the General Officer Commanding; Major General Arguiyi Ironsi took over on Monday 17th of January as Commander in Chief of the Federation, through Senator Nwafor Orizu the Senate Presdent. Senator Nwafor Orizu even announced to the public of the handover.



Plate .4. General Johnson Thomas Umunakwe Arguiyi IronsI.
The First Nigerian Head of State from 17th January,1966 to 29th July,1966.[10]

Hon. Nwafor Orizu said,

> I have tonight been advised by the Council of Ministers that they have come to the unanimous decision to voluntarily hand over the administration of the country to the Armed Forces of the Republic of Nigeria.

General Aguiyi Ironsi was the highest army officer in the country at the time of the first coup in January 15, 1966. On his assumption he gave the broadcast to the Nation as follow;

The Military Government of the Republic wishes to state that it has taken over the interim administration of the Republic of Nigeria following the invitation of the Council of Ministers of last Government for the Army to do so. For some time now, …….

I,GENERAL JONHSON THOMAS UMUNAKWE AGUIYI –IRONSI,the General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army have been formally invested with authority as Head of the National Military Government and Supreme Commander of the Nigerian Armed Forces.[11]

When Arguiyi Ironsi came, he promised to keep the country out of corruption as stated by the coup plotters. He also promised to try the coup plotters; he embarked on a unitary government, promoted 21 army officers to the rank of Leiutenant Colonel, 18 of whom, were Igbo soldiers. A major event done by Ironsi was the appointment of four military administrators or governors as Leiutenant Colonel Hassan Katsina was for North, Leiutenant Colonel Francis Adekunle Fajuyi for the West, Leiutenant Colonel David Ejoor for Mid-West and Leiutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu for the Eastern Region. The four Regional Governors resumed duty on the following day been Wednesday 19th January, 1966. On Thursday 20th January, the first Supreme Military Council was constituted.There were nine persons in the council. The first person was the Head of State.He was the supreme commander and chairman of the Council; General Arguiyi Ironsi the Supreme Commander was followed by Brigadier B.O.A. Ogundipe the Chief of Staff Supreme Headquaters.Next was Leiutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon, the Chief of Army Staff, then followed by Commodore John Wey,the Head of Naval Staff then followed by Colonel George Kurubo the Head of Air Force and the four Regional Governors.[12]

The Counter Coup of 29th July, 1966.

The people of the North were not pleased with the coup of January 15, 1966. Hence as from 21st of January 1966, virtually a week after the coup, there was sadness, pains and unrest everywhere in the North.

The people of the North could not believe to have lost their two greatest men in one night. The cry was everywhere for Tafawa Balewa and Ahmadu Bello. The civilians and the soldiers from Northern Nigeria felt badly by the coup of January15, 1966. Hence riots erupted.

The riots also caused mass movements of Easterners to the South. At this point, General Ironsi attributed the riots to foreign incitements. It was the Governor of the Northern Region in the person of Hassan Katsina who calmed the region after five days of the crisis. The manner in which the first coup was executed, those killed in the coup, the person who took over the thrown after the coup and the frequent showing of the pictures of slain top politicians of the North proved to the North that it was a calculated attempt by the Eastern soldiers to take over the government from the Northern hegemony. Even the killing of Unegbu the Commander of the Lagos Artillery (Dodan Barracks) an Igbo in the process of resisting the coup plotters could not convince the Northerners that the coup was not an Igbo coup. Though,according to Nworgu, Madiebo said,Ojukwu and Ironsi including Unegbu (all Igbo) foiled the coup.[13]

The anger of the Hausa against the Easteners was increased when on Monday 24th of May 1966, General Johnson Arguiyi Umunakwe Ironsi announced that the country had been changed from Federal to a unitary system. The Northerners also heard of the rotational governors, hence could no longer hold their peace. On the 29th of May, five days after Ironsi's broadcast, serious riots and hot protest began . The people of the North believed that the coup of January 15, 1966 was the coup of the Igbo people due to the following reasons:

- That the majority of the leaders of the coup were Easterners indigenes; 4(four) out of 5(five) majors were from the East.
- That all the civilians and military officers killed in the coup were not from the East.
- That the five Majors who were the leaders of the 1st coup; Major Nzeogwu and others were not arrested, tried and punished in accordance to military laws but were allowed to remain in the force.
- That the person that took over the government after the coup was from the East; Leiutenant General Arguiyi Ironsi.
- When Arguiyi Ironsi came to power, he promoted twenty-one (21) army officers, to the rank of Lieutant Colonel, eighteen (18) of whom were Eastern soldiers and gave them sensitive positions in the Nigerian Army and Airforce.

By the first week of June 1966, there was heavy chaos in form of attacks on the Easterners including the Niger Delta in Northern Nigeria. The Decree 34th on the 24th of May 1966 to bring unitary system of government was also seen as a challenge to the North. Explanation for the counter coup was the North's fear that General Ironsi's proclamation of the Unification Decree 34 of 1966 would centralize the Federal civil service which would open up to enable only the more educationally equipped Easterners to fill the service and dominate the Hausa or the Northerners again. Before the news of the promulgation of this

decree, the North rallied among themselves to what was seen as a threat, from the South. Samples include; "Federalism is good for Nigeria," "Unitary system not for us" and "Leave the North as it is." These screaming headlines came with a warning that imposing a government on a people without an even impartial referendum is setting the clock backward.[14]

Ironsi's regime ignored all the above slogans and went ahead and promulgated the Decree 34 abolising the regions on May 24th, 1966. The North replied quickly with riots, in which many Southerners were killed. The North also saw the unification decree as a measure to perfect the Eastern domination of the North hence their battle cry of *Araba*- let us secede. General Ironsi spent the rest of his reign putting out the files of araba until his overthrow and killing by Theophilus Danjuma, Martins Adamu, Murtala Mohammed and their group on July 29th, 1966 at Ibadan. General Ironsi's death was accompanied by Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi who tried to defend him from the hands of the coupists .

What happened was that on that faithful day, General Ironsi visited Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi the Governor of the Western Region. All the members of the entourage were asked to sit down on the floor by Colonel Martins Adamu and his group while Danjuma went up the stair case to meet the Head of State, General Ironsi. According to Nworgu, General Arguiyi Ironsi heard of the humiliation given to the government officials who came to welcome him and his entourage, he immediately tried to communicate to other brigades to come and rescue the situation but all the telephone wires were disconnected. When General Ironsi saw Colonel Theophilus Danjuma, Ironsi asked what was happening and what had he (Danjuma) got up to see him for? Colonel Theophilus Danjuma boldly told General Ironsi that he had deceived them a lot. When he came, he promised to arrest the coup plotters but nothing was showing to that effect and that he the General was under arrest.That let him go and explain to themselves. Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi the host of the General pleaded for the General's release but was rather killed with him at the outskirt of the city of Ibadan.[13] The inability of the coup leaders to kill him (General Ironsi) by the bullet of the gun made them to resort to dragging his body tied on a vehicle that moved along the rough road at the suburb of Ibadan. This is what Ekanem called the *Return Match* and *An Eye for An Eye* .[15] General Ironsi's death was followed by the massacre of the Easterners and their mass exodus to their place of origin. However, Niven (1970) posits that some people from the East were even saved by their Hausa friends and hosts. However, some Hausa indigenes were also killed by the Easterners in the Eastern part of Nigeria.

The country remained without a leader for three days until the emergence of General Yakubu Gowon on the 1st of August 1966 as the Head of State of the nation. Lieutenant

Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu resisted and refused to honour and respect Gowon. It would be recalled that at the exit of the General Officer Commanding (G.O.C) Major General Welby Everard in 1965, Brigadier Babafemi Ogundipe was the next most senior officer after Aguiyi-Ironsi. He acted as Ironsi's deputy. The next most senior officer was Colonel Adebayo. This military tradition was brushed aside by junior officer Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon then Chief of Staff (Army).

To him, Ojukwu, Gowon was not the most senior military officer in the pecking order or the ladder to be the Head of State. Ojukwu failed to realize that in a successful revolution, seniority is not followed for any position. This coup brought Colonel Gowon as Head of State because Ogundipe was not willing but was busy allocating houses to the officials of the Nigerian Army. [14] Ojukwu refused to recognize Gowon.

The Crisis between General Yakubu Gowon and Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu.

Gowon's inability to stop the killings of the Easterners in the North heightened the number of victims between 10,000 and 30,000 and further million fled the region. The Igbo ran to the East though with the hope of the availability of oil wealth in the Niger Delta. Crisis every place. Sunny Okosun (1980s) asked which way Nigeria?[16]

Ojukwu, Gowon with others were invited by General Ankrah of Ghana at Aburi for peace talk on the 4th and 5th of January 1967. Ojukwu at the meeting at Aburi won the confederal slot which all of them signed. On this Accord, a region is to control her resources only to submit an agreed percentage of her money to the centre. Also a region is free to secede from the confederation under the slightest provocation.

Why the Journey to Aburi (Ghana).

There was the problem of none recognition of Colonel Yakubu Gowon as the Head of State by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu. According to Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, Gowon had six other military personnel ahead of him based on the army hierarchy. Still, Ojukwu said, he Gowon was commissioned six months after Gowon was commissioned. Hence, he said, he would not recognize Gowon as Head of State. Another reason was that the where-about of General Arguiyi Ironsi has not been known. Also after the exit of Arguiyi Ironsi, it could have been Major General Ogundipe that would have been the Head of State. [17] He was the second in command to General Arguiyi Ironsi. According to Colonel Ojukwu, Colonel Ogundipe was the Chief of Staff to Gen. Arguiyi Ironsi. How could Gowon assume the leadership of the country? Hence Colonel Ojukwu said he would not recognize Gowon as Head of State and at the same time, he would not discuss any national issue with him (Gowon).

Colonel Ojukwu said what he has seen especially the massacre of the easterners at other parts of the country (especially the North) he would not honour any call at any point within the country unless outside. Hence different efforts were made at Addis Ababa and Ghana to broker peace between them. It was at this stage that General Ankrah of Ghana called for Colonel Yakubu Gowon and Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu including their Secretaries and Regional governors to go to Aburi in Ghana between 4th and 5th of January 1967 for the peace talk .[18]

Terms of Agreement on the Aburi Accord

Among the agreements reached at the meeting, **are** the items bellow. Firstly, was the army to be governed by the supreme military council under the chairman known as the commander in chief of the Armed Forces. [19] Secondly was the establishment of a military headquarters commission with equal representation from the four regions and to be headed by a chief of staff.

Still was the creation of Lagos Garrison including Ikeja Barracks. Also was on the re ognization of the army, a committee was agreed to form in order to take statistics of the total army in the four regions.

On the non-recognition of Gowon as the supreme commander, Ojukwu still stood on his ground that no one could properly assume the position of supreme commander until the where-about of the former, supreme commander Major General Arguiyi Ironsi, was known. He opted for the country to be informed the where about of General Ironsi. In their deliberation, they went on break till the 5th of January 1967. When they came back, it was agreed that a collective agreement should be made before any decision to be taken. However, Gowon took the bull by the horn and announced the demise of General Arguiyi Ironsi and his assumption as the new Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

On the issues of the displaced Easterners, their welfare was also given much consideration. A major agreement was on the confederation policy that was opted by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu. He said there should be confederation meaning that every region should be in control of her resources only to submit an agreed percentage of their resources to the central. The regions could be more powerful than the center based on the confederation policy opted by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu .[20]

They accepted and signed. General Yakubu Gowon, General Ankrah and Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu signed. When they finished signing, they drank and hugged and shook hands together with the happiness that at last peace has been reached.

Unfortunately, when they came back to Nigeria, based on the advice of Chief Anthony Enahoro and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, General Yakubu Gowon reneged on the implementation of the Accord. When Ojukwu waited for the implementation of the Accord and Gowon's delay to implement made Colonel Ojukwu to declare that if by 31st of March 1967 and Gowon failed to implement the Accord, he would take the bull by the horn and it happened. Why, because, the displaced Easterners from the other parts of the country were in serious demand started crying for help. [21]

On the 2014 comprehensive Constitutional Conference, convened by the rest members of the country as piloted by the former President Goodluck Jonathan, was also not successful. It was disrupted by the Northern leaders. Important resolutions were reached by the delegates even under concession not by voting. These include the devolution of powers and the adoption of the existing six geopolitical zones instead of the thirty- six states. This was not accepted by the Middle- Belt and the South -South. However, it was recommended. Secondly was that, they recommended that the presidential seat should be rotated between the north and the south and within the six geopolitical zones. Also on religions, the Federal Government should not sponsor any pilgrimage whether Christian or Islam. Still on fiscal policy, it was recommended that the federal government should receive 42.5% instead of 52.69%, the states to get 35% instead of 26.72%, the local government to get 22.5% instead of 20.60%. On resource control, the recommendation was made on the review of the revenue allocation to states producing oil and other resources. Also, they agreed that the police should be decentralized with a Federal Police on certain matters. Still on cattle grazing and related matters, ranching and preserved grazing was recommended instead of the open grazing. [22]

Unfortunately, when President Buhari came on board, he was supported by the Arewa Consultative Forum negated the implementation of the report of the 2O14 Conference. This was like the refusal of General Yakubu Gowon, supported by the Northern elders in the implementation of the Aburi Accord in 1967, that made Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu to say, "On Aburi We Stand". What a failure of the Federal Government on implementation of agreed policies.

Conclusion:

The paper has exposed the place of the refusal of the implementation of the Aburi Accord by General Yakubu Gowon and the refusal of Buhari to implement the 2014 constitutional conference. These activities stunted the smooth process of the political and constitutional development of the nation and rather led to the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). The civil

war greatly obstructed the development of Nigeria. This was because the Nigerian Civil War caused huge destruction of lives and property that could not be recovered for years despite efforts to remedy the lost. On the part of the 2014 constitutional conference, the refusal of General Muhammadu Buhari to implement the report drew the nation backward as far as national political and constitutional development is concerned.

Recommendations

Some recommendations were made to avoid crises and future wars that would likely lead the nation to serious calamity.

Let there be a confederal system of government. This could enable the states to be up and doing not to count for the monthly allocation from Abuja that is majorly catered for by the crude oil of the south.

Corruption should be reduced. It was the corrupt practices of the politicians that called for the first and second coups of 1966. These coups started the difference that led to the Aburi Accord and to the Nigerian civil war.

Agreed modalities should be kept as agreed and be implemented. Every accord should be respected. If Gowon had not taken the advice of Chief Anthony Enahoro and Chief Obafemi Awolowo and implemented the Aburi Accord, the civil war would have been averted. If General Buhari had taken the 2O14 Constitutional Conference seriously, Nigeria would have been a better nation by now. National challenges would have reduced more than this situation we are.

Endnotes

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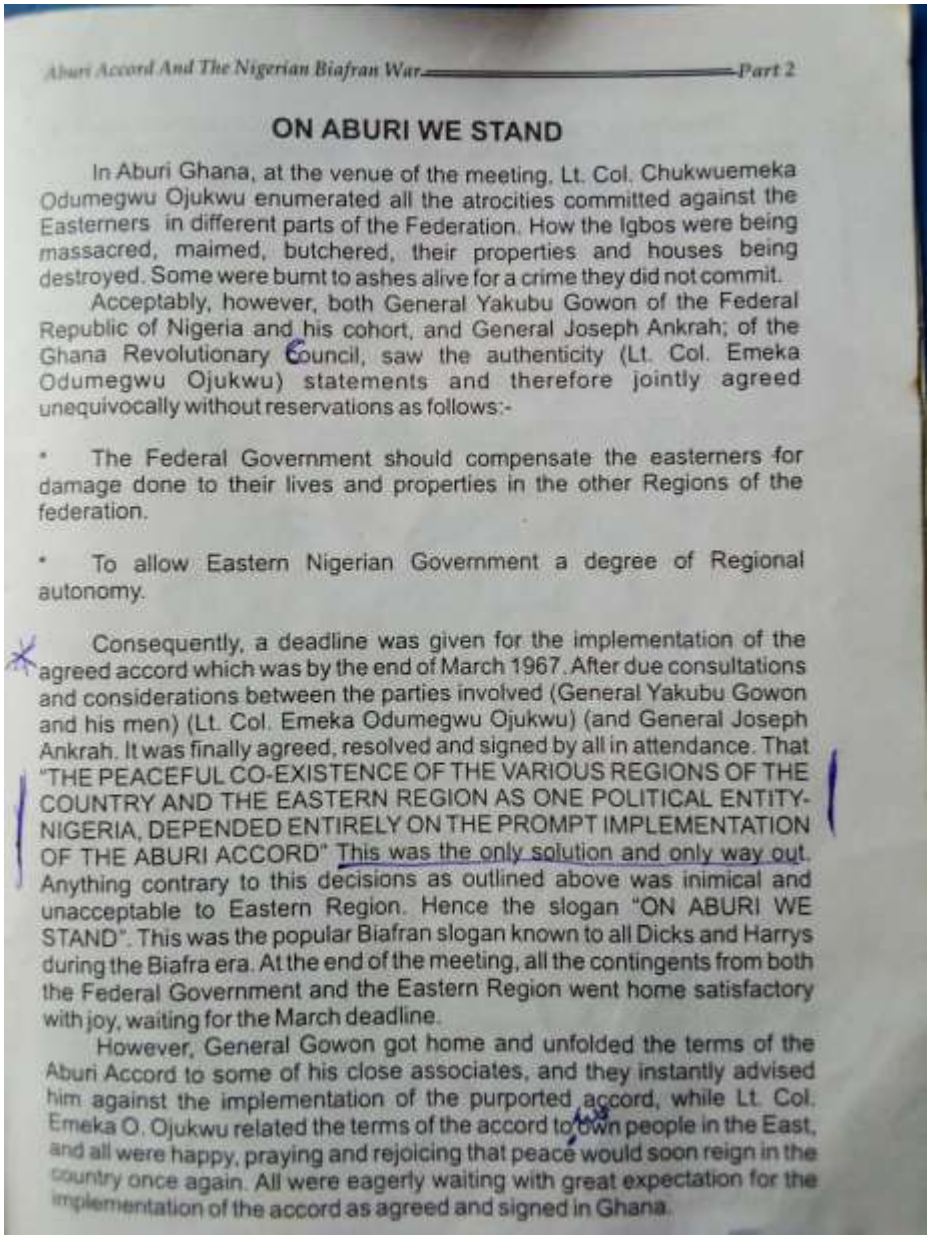
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APPENDIXES



Aburi Accord And The Nigerian Biafran War — *Part 2*

ON ABURI WE STAND

In Aburi Ghana, at the venue of the meeting, Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu enumerated all the atrocities committed against the Easterners in different parts of the Federation. How the Igbos were being massacred, maimed, butchered, their properties and houses being destroyed. Some were burnt to ashes alive for a crime they did not commit.

Acceptably, however, both General Yakubu Gowon of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and his cohort, and General Joseph Ankrah; of the Ghana Revolutionary Council, saw the authenticity (Lt. Col. Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu) statements and therefore jointly agreed unequivocally without reservations as follows:-

- The Federal Government should compensate the easterners for damage done to their lives and properties in the other Regions of the federation.

- To allow Eastern Nigerian Government a degree of Regional autonomy.

Consequently, a deadline was given for the implementation of the agreed accord which was by the end of March 1967. After due consultations and considerations between the parties involved (General Yakubu Gowon and his men) (Lt. Col. Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu) (and General Joseph Ankrah. It was finally agreed, resolved and signed by all in attendance. That "THE PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE OF THE VARIOUS REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY AND THE EASTERN REGION AS ONE POLITICAL ENTITY-NIGERIA, DEPENDED ENTIRELY ON THE PROMPT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ABURI ACCORD" This was the only solution and only way out. Anything contrary to this decisions as outlined above was inimical and unacceptable to Eastern Region. Hence the slogan "ON ABURI WE STAND". This was the popular Biafran slogan known to all Dicks and Harrys during the Biafra era. At the end of the meeting, all the contingents from both the Federal Government and the Eastern Region went home satisfactory with joy, waiting for the March deadline.

However, General Gowon got home and unfolded the terms of the Aburi Accord to some of his close associates, and they instantly advised him against the implementation of the purported accord, while Lt. Col. Emeka O. Ojukwu related the terms of the accord to own people in the East, and all were happy, praying and rejoicing that peace would soon reign in the country once again. All were eagerly waiting with great expectation for the implementation of the accord as agreed and signed in Ghana.

Source<Fig.1 Ajawara, N. (2009). *The Aburi Accord and the Nigerian/Biafra War*. Email Rosh-production@yahoo.com



Source<Fig.2. Ajawara, N. (2009). *The Aburi Accord and the Nigerian/Biafra War*. Email Rosh-production@yahoo.com