COMMAND AND CONTROL OF MAJOR- GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON, 1966 – 1970

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Wukari International Studies Journal, Vol.6, No.1 *www.wisjournals.com*

Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine how command and control by Gowon was used in winning the war. In the ensuing years after the war, very scant regard has been accorded to the study of command and control. The concept is one of the areas where there is always a shifting dynamic between command and equipment deployed for military operations.The study relied on secondary and tertiary sources for data. The study submits that despite the initial mis-steps which characterized the military assault by the federal forces, it able to turn the tide of events by command and control under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon.

Keywords: Gowon, Command, Control.

No doubt, you have been following with considerable interest and concern the progress of the war. Our achievements to-date have been made possible not only by the courage and devotion to dutydemonstrated by our gallant troops but also by the unwavering support and loyalty of the people of thiscountry.[1]

Introduction

The civil war officially ended with the word, 'no terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted'-by Yakubu GowonHe was indeed the commander-in-chief and by that singular act was affirmed a national hero.

He said, "we reiterate our promise of a general amnesty for all those mislead into the futile attempt to disintegrate Nigeria"[2]. The Nigerian civil war posed a multifaceted challenge to both the armed forces and the nation. The suffering that goes with war was terminated in part with the capitulation of Biafra on 12 January 1970. Gowon asserted that "the so-called rising sun of 'Biafra' is set forever". An august 1968 editorial in the Times of London, stated "few wars in modern times have aroused such widespread anguish as that between the Federal Government and

The series of political crisis which culminated in a coup, counter-coup, cycle of violence and pogroms led to the eruption of a civil war, waged between 1967-1970 and justified the saying that, "Nigeria was becoming a deadly combination of zero-sum game androulette.Thehoneymoonjoyofindependencewastheprologuetoadeepe ningcrisis."[3]

Author Akachi Ezeigbo avers that; 'it is ironical that rather then remove these contradictions, the war only succeeded in accentuating them in addition to generating its own contradictions. Some of these

[1]Yakubu Gowon, "The Challenge of the Future" an address by His Excellency, Major General Yakubu Gowon, Head of The Federal Military Government and Visitor to the University of Ibadan, 1969.

[2] Cited in Adewale Ademoyega, Why We Struck: The Story of the first Nigerian Coup, Ibadan: Evans Nigerian Publishers Limited, p. 181.

[3]Richard Bourne, *Nigeria: A New History of a Turbulent Century*.

new contradictions were expressed in the heightening of tension, not just between Northerners and the Igbos, but between the breakaway Biafra and the rest of Nigeria and an intensification of violence which made the 1966 massacres a child'splay.[4]

The two leading proponents of the war were Major-General Yakubu Gowon (Supreme Commander and Head of State of Nigeria) and Colonel Emeka Ojukwu (formerGovernor of Eastern Region and Head of State of Biafra). The heightened political intrigues and tension allowed for all manner of forecast. The build-up and eventual declaration of the war became inevitable with the formal declaration of independence of Biafra. Two important factors that determined the scope, duration and intensity of the Nigerian civil war were "the internationalized scale of the war and the escalation of propaganda"[5] mounted by the two belligerents.The declaration of "a free, sovereign and independent state by the name and title of the Republic of Biafra" made the war inevitable. Meanwhile, federal fortunes in the war began to suffer inexplicable series of humiliating reversals. The loses in men and materials were heavy and the morale of the troops sank considerably low such that on April 25, 1969, federal forces lost Owerri to the rebel forces and in quick succession, morale, desertions, self-inflicted injuries and increasingly agitation for change in the command of the fighting troops. Gowon finally agreed and changed field commanders with a view to inject fresh and new blood.[6]

[4]T. Akachi Ezeigbo, *Fact and Fiction in the Literature of the Nigerian Civil War*, Lagos: Unity Publishing and Research Co. Ltd, 1991, 44.

[5]A.H. M. Kirk-Greene, Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria, Vol. II, July 1967-January 1970, London: Oxford University Press, 1971, P. VI of the prefatory Note.

[6]Adinioyi Ojo Onukaba, Olusegun Obasanjo: In the Eyes of Time, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, p.160.

Conceptual Clarification

Command and control is a multi-faceted are and creative activity consisting of deliberate regulation of combat power to achieve its goals within the specific time and with minimum losses. Commanders plays crucial and irreplaceable role. In the process of command, he decides how to use military force and imprints to subordinates his will and intentions. It is essentially about how the commander processes control as well as manages and coordinates activities of subordinates to meet targets.

Command and Control involves a complex military system that deals with elements of warning, communication, data collection, processing, executive decision-making tools and supporting facilities during war had become the central idea in the American approach to warfare. The deployment and used of the Nigerian military forces during the war necessitated an extensive long-range communication system that maintained contact with all military forces at all times and ensured compliance to the instruction of the military commanders in order to achieve victory over the Biafran forces. Command and Control system under Gowon made it possible for the military government to make necessary arrangement regarding personnel recruitment and re-enforcement, prosecution, coordination and controlling the operational activities of Nigerian military forces.

The system enabled the Head of State, General Gowon to receive oversee and assign military assignments, direction and implementation of battle orders. The directive establishing the system stressed five essential system characteristics: survivability, flexibility, compatibility,

standardization and economy.[7]

In Gowon's own words "Nowhaving decided on a military action against the secessionists, my strategy was to confine them, to their estate, the East-Central State, and then progressively diminish their hold on their territory. My commanders had my instructions to pursue a systematic programme of shrinking Ojukwu's area of influence until he would be forced to surrender or flee".[8] Prior to that, Gowon was reported to have said, "After a careful appraisal of the nation's political security profile in the months between October 1966 and July1967, the Supreme Military Council approved in principle the creation of states as the best solution to the political question. Therefore, on May 27, 1967, twelve states were created to replace four regions".[9] The import of this is much in sync with the saying of Carl Von Clausewitz, 'war is an act of force to compel your enemy to do your will...not merely as an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political instrument, a continuation of politics by other means'.[10]Also, Mao Tse Tung sees war asa continuation of politics, and there are at least two types of war: just war and unjust war, which only serve bourgeoise interest.[11]Gowon declared through a national broadcast: a state of emergency throughout Nigeria with immediate effect. I have assumed

[7] M. Wallace, Barry; H. Gero, George, "Worldwide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS), h-6000 Tuning Guide, Volume iii, TSS Response Time Analysis Procedure":110-via Research Gate, 1978.

[9]Yakubu Gowon, Ojukwu (ed), Lagos: Mayfive Media Limited, 2012.

[10]Yakubu Gowon, Ojukwu.

[11]Carl Von Clausewitz, in Olusegun Obasanjo, My Command: Account of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967- 1970, Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 37.

[12]Jeremiah UkoAkpe, Nigerian Civil War in Oron Area; Socio--Economic Impact, 1967-1970, Kaduna: MA Project submitted to the Department of History, Nigerian Defence Academy, 2018.

full powers as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Head of the Federal Military Government for the short period necessary to carry through the measures which are now urgentlyrequired.[27]

Federal Battle Order

On 6th July 1967, the Federal Government launched what was then described as a "police action" intended to discipline "Lt. Col. Ojukwu and his cliques." The campaign was expected to last a few weeks or months at most.[12]In the buildup to the war, the Federal Military Government ordered immediate and total economic blockage of the breakaway republic with the aim of strangulating all attempts by the rebels from accessing arms and possible recognition from other countries. Richard Ibu argued that, "the plan also was to prevent any attempt to export oil (in exchange for weaponry); freeing the minority areas of Biafra as a matter of priority in order to get the two new states of Rivers and South-East operational and to capture Biafran capital, Enugu, thereby crushing Ojukwu's rebellion.[13]

Mass mobilization was quickened and divisional brigades were added to the Army with the Air Force too. Delivery of arms and armament for the war was initiated on a large scale even as some global powers revoked arms shipment to the country. The Federal authorities reckoned that for the Biafrans to survive the war, they

[12] Raph Uwechue, Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War: Facing the Future, USA: Africana Publishing Corporation, p. 7.

[13] Richard Ibu, "Gowon, Ojukwu and the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970 in (ed.), Leadership and Complex Military Operations, Kaduna: Nigerian Defence Academy Publishing, 2016.

will require to keep their supplies through either the Sea or Air and as such it became a strategic imperative to capture Calabar and Port Harcourt. Thus, a naval blockade was imposed and the 3rd Marine Commando was tasked with amphibious landing and capture of the areas. Thus, it became imperative once the secessionist was declared, the Federal side sent warships to secure all sea routes into the secessionist enclave.[14]

Code of Conduct

The Federal Government issued an operational 'Code of Conduct' in prosecution of the war to be conversant with the Geneva Convention which governs the conduct of wars between two belligerents.[15]some of the rules of the code of conduct obliged the members of the Armed Forces to observe strictly as stated below:

i. Under NO circumstances must pregnant women be ill-treated or killed;
ii. Children will NOT be molested or killed. They will be protected and cared for;
iii. Youths and school children must NOT be attached unless they are engaged in open hostility against Federal Government Forces. They should be given all protection and care;
iv. Hospitals, hospital staff and patients should NOT be tampered with or molested;
v. Soldiers who surrender will NOT be killed. They are to be

[14] Luke Aneke, The Untold Story of the Nigerian-Biafran War, New York: Triumph Publishing Inc, 2007, p.121.

[15]Okon, E. Okon, Biafra War Revisited: Civil War May Not Be A Bad Thing, Abuja: National Defence College Printing Press, 2017, p. 194.

disarmed and treated as prisoners-of-war. They are entitled in all circumstances to humane treatment and respect for their person and honour;

vi. No property, building, etc, will be destroyed maliciously;

vii. Churches and mosques must NOT be desecrated;

viii. No looting of any kind-a good solider never loots;

ix. Women will be protected against any attack on their person, honour and in particular against rape or any form of indecent assault;

x. Male civilians who are hostile to the Federal Forces are to be dealt with firmly but fairly. They must be humanely treated;

xi. All military and civilian wounded will be given necessary medical attention and care. They must be respected and protected in all circumstances;

xii. Foreign nationals on legitimate business will NOT be molested but mercenaries will NOT be spared-they are the worst enemies.[16]

FORMS OF STRATEGY

All through the history of wars, the push to defeat the adversary is the ultimate desire which guide all strategies. Lord Hankey tries to summarize the elements of victory by arguing that: "the first aim in war is to win, the second is to prevent defeat, the third is to shorten it, and the fourth and most important, whichmust never be lost to sight, is to make a just and durablepeace".[17]

[16] Olusegun Obasanjo, My Command: An Account of The Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970, Lagos: Kachifo Limited, p.238-239.

[18]Hobbs, R. The Myth of Victory: What is Victory in War? Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979.

Indeed, effectiveness is harnessed through adequate provision of arms and boosting of the morale of the fighting force by boosting their morale.[18] Doubtless, adequate provision of arm is fundamental to the outcome of any war but essentially resolve of the commanders and the fighting force is equally important.[19]

The Federal force had the luxury of preponderant of military might and as such expectantly won the war.Right from the outset, the concept of victory needs to be divided into two highly interconnected yet distinct time phases. Specifically; war is won, or lost, in two phases-military outcomes on the field of battle, and the battle to win the peace through reconstruction and reconciliation afterwards. What is won on the battlefield can belost entirely thereafter if the countries attacked are not turned intobetter and saferplaces.[20]

The first phase-called here war wining-occurs when a state attempts to bring a war to a successful military conclusion, affecting the mode of battle in terms of how one fights and whether once continues or ceases to fight. The second phase-called here peace winning (alternatively termed stabilization, reconciliation, post-conflict transition, or Phase IV operation) occurs when a state attempts to reap the payoffs of war, affecting the mode of post-combat activities in terms of how one manages the transition afterwards and whether one stays in or leaves the area where the fighting occurred. Clearly, involved in this second phase is the exten to which triumph in battle can yield durable post war

[18] Jeremy Black, Rethinking Military History, London: Routledge, 2004, p.111.

[19] Abiola Lipede, "Strategies and Military Technology during the Nigerian Civil War", Nigerian Defence Academy Journal, 1996, p.32.

[21]Orr, R.C. "After the War: Bring in a Civilian Force," International Herald Tribune, April 3, 2003.

stability. Many (Including the United States Department of Defense) have begun calling overall success after this second phase "strategic victory". In most warfare, practitioners have paid much attention to the first phase than the second, with implicit downplaying of military victory simply being a means to pursue political ends:

History shows that gaining military victory is not in itself equivalent to gaining the object of policy. But as most of the thinking about war has been done by men of the military profession there has been a very natural tendency to lose sight of the basic national object, and identify it with the military aim. In consequences, whenever war has broken out, policy has too often been governed by the military aim- and this has been regarded as an and in itself, instead of as merelya means to theend.[21]

The war had moments of lack of coordination between and within divisions. According to Major General David Jemibewon, each of the divisions "operated more or less as a separate and independent army and some of whose commanders behaved like tin gods".[22] The divisional HQs were far away from Lagos and those of days when networks were poor and simply reinforced their de-facto autonomy. There were stories of how commanders initiated their own procurement arrangements and developing their own operational plans either without reference to other divisions or the army HQ, or occasionally in flagrant contravention of directives from the body. This situation fostered a

[22]Liddell, Hart, Strategy, New York: Penguin, 1991.

[23]Tamuno, Tekena. (Ed), Proceedings of the National Conference on Nigeria since Independence, Vol.3. Ibadan: University Press, 1980, 65.

climate of absence of overall strategic coherence. As de St. Jorre putit:

the rivalry between the three Divisions…covered every field from the honour and glory deriving from the capture of significant Biafran towns to the most cut-throat competition for arms, supplies and reinforcement from Lagos. Co-operation and co-ordination, hard enough to achieve in view of the huge mass of men, the vast tracts of difficult terrain and the poor communications, were rendered virtually impossible by these rivalries which greatly harmed the Federal war effort…each (Division) had its own officers watching and waiting for the arms ships at Lagos docks…Recruits waiting at Ikeja airports for transport to take them to the 1st Divisionwould suddenly find themselves on a plane heading for the 3rd, and vice versa… Yet more extraordinary was the fact that at least two of the Divisions had their own arms buyers operating in Europe independently of the Federal Government-though sending it their bills-at different stages of thewar.[23]

Many observers of the war differ on their assessment of the war, however, Major-General Shelleng wrote of the war:

it is rather unfortunate to note that most of the officials who wereentrusted with the purchase of military hardware from abroad lacked the national consciousness and were only interested in the kick backs they could get from the deals. Glaring examples of these shortcomings could be seen when twelve 105m martillery guns of Spanish origin were order edin1968. Of the twelve guns received, only one fired one round despite numerous complaints from the war front commanders against the poor performance of these guns, and against

[24]De St. Jorre, cited in Hubris: A Brief Political History of The Nigerian Army, Princeton: AMV Publishing, 78-79.

expert advice, 24 more of the same type were ordered and received later in the same year. These unpatriotic officials saddled the Nigerian Army with 36 Artillery guns that were only fit for a museum.[24]

By this statement and many other virile attacks on the Army commanders, it was evident that Gowon lost any direct grip on the army commanders, however, this situation may not been tirely a shortcoming, a she was heavily involved in the politics of the war, the rounds of peace talks, efforts to limit international recognition for Biafra and other such as international relief efforts. Two issues were sources of irritation to the Federal Government of Nigeria; they were the consequences of the economic blockage and flights bearing relieve materials into the Biafran enclave. While the economic blockage was obviously meant to undermine the Biafran forces and federal strategy to win the war, the intended resultant mass starvation of civilians, especially of children created diplomatic pressureof the FGN. As for the "mercy flights", under the terms of Geneva Convention, the FGN, was well within its rights to insist on inspecting and supervising the transport of any relief material to its destination and offered to permit day light relief flights into Biafra, provided the flights were inspected.[25]

As de St. Jorreputit; "there life operation as it stood, though far from satisfactory in terms of saving lives, was doing Biafra a power of good abroad, publicizing its case and filling its coffers. A relief pact with the Nigerians would have taken the steam out of the firstand dried

[25]Tamuno, Tekene (Ed). Proceedings of the National Conference on Nigeria Since Independence, Vol. 3. Ibadan: University Press, 1980, 68.
[26]Akintunde Akinkunmi, Hubris: A Brief Political History of The Nigerian Army, Princeton: AMV Publishing, 2018, 82.

up the second". It is worthy of note that from the advent of the war, Gowon made is clear that this was a struggle and not a war against the entire Igbo race but against "Ojukwu and his rebel clique", and thereafter issued a code of conduct to the federal forces which moderated their fighting. That is not to note that the federal forces didn't commit some infractions during the war but to underscore his maturity and ability to separate his "issues" with Ojukwu from the entire Igbo race, which moderated his conduct and disposition on how the war wasprosecuted.

Command and Control and Decision-Making Process and Implementation

Gowon strove from the advent of the crisis to be a team player and endeavour to ensure that a needless resort to war was both uncalled for and unnecessary. By his utterances and posturing, he ensured that no rash action was deliberately taken that would precipitate war. He was deliberately dovish in action but firm on principle. He wouldn't yield to the balkanization of the nation. While some officers within the army and especially withinthe Supreme Military Council wanted a full and quick military action, he was restraint and ensure that he was able to stir the Council on such a pathway for as all asnecessary.

From the beginning he favored 'police action' but when it was inevitable that a total war was inevitable, he braced up for it but not without rallying the nation and critical sectors such as the armed forces, the political class and traditional rulers behind the agenda to keep Nigeria one and united. On the 1st October 1967, General Yakubu Gowon broadcast a stirring Independence Day broadcast. Hesaid;

Fellow Nigerians, I wish to call upon you all, on this seventh anniversary of our independent existence as a nation, to rededicate yourselves to the task of building a strong united and prosperous Nigeria; a Nigeria in which every citizen regardless of his or her religious belief or ethnic origin will have equal opportunities with his fellow Nigerians.

He further stated;

The Government does not underrate the task before it and I hope that I can count on your support in this fight for the survival of our fatherland and in the work of national reconstruction and reconciliation which lies ahead. The Ibos, when they are returned to the fold, must be given their rightful place and, as they are a people who have been misguided and misled by their leaders, the rest ofus have a duty to bind their wounds and give them our right hand of fellowship.[26]

As much as the FMG was desirous of decisive military victory, Gowon was not for a moment averse to a political settlement. He preached the need for a quick cessation of military action and the commencement of re-integration. At the Supreme Military Council and even beyond, he pitched for clam and immediately the FGM was in possession ofhalf of the territory, originally claimed by Ojukwu as the Republic of Biafra, General Gowon decided that the time was ripe for the appointment of an administrator. The process of selecting one such person that fits the bill was difficult. He had stated that, 'for understandable reasons, we have pursued the military operations with the greatest caution'. He continued, 'I could not have approved a brutal campaign for I had to consider the

[27]Yakubu Gowon, Speech Delivered on the Occasion of the 7th Independence Day Celebration, 1, October 1967.

situation at the end of the war. We are fighting to keep the country united, not a war to destroy Ibos'. Speaking at the University of Ibadan, Gowon hadsaid;

It is unforgivable crime for a learned man, with all his privileges and opportunities for a wider vision, to limit his horizon to his personal aspirations and those of his own ethnicgroup.[27]

He demonstrated the open-mindedness in the selection process leading to the appointment of Dr. Ukpabi Asika, a lecturer in the department of political science, University of Ibadan, who had refused to leave his teaching appointment since the crisis broke out in 1966. He braved it and was evidently not in support of secession. In a broadcast, Asika made his first appeal to his fellow Ibos to forget secession; 'we have proved that we are equal to other Nigerians in love of our homeland. Now, enough is enough'.

He said, "Those of us who have the privilege to serve this country must always bear in mind that we are only trustees for a limited time for our children and their off- spring".Based on that, he invited reputable national leaders and politicians of note into his government to help surge up support for the federal cause. Men such as Obafemi Awolowo, Anthony Enahoro, Aminu Kano, Shehu Shagari and a lot of more served the government. Gowon says;

The system was to encourage everyone in both public services and the private sectors (university dons and skilled technicians) tomake theirowncontributionstotheplanningofnationalpolicy.Although Ministers and Civil Servants were anathema to many people, I was proud of them.

[28]Yakubu Gowon, National Day Speech, September, 30, 1966.

We could not have had a better set. There may have been the odd bad egg but most of them were men of great ability who were glad to serve the nation. I had chosen them and they respected myleadership.[28]

Similarly, his relationship with the military top brass and especially with his field commanders was similarly cordial. He mentioned;
I was the G.O.C. my contacts with my Chief of Staff and my Divisional Commanders were cordial; they had my total respect. We had a shortage of experienced senior officers. To those we had, I gave orders about policy and gave them a free hand to carry them out in their respective areas. In general, my orders were to control the rebel forces and keep Nigeria one. Some commanders were unorthodox and I left things to them; I did not interfere in minor matters. In the case of the Mid-West invasion, however, I had appointed Lt. Col. Murtala Muhammed to check the rebel advance and to turn it back. He did this admirably. I knew the operational problemsofattemptingtotakeandholdtheNigerBridge.Itoldhim therefore not to pursue the rebels to the bridge, which they would destroy. He disobeyed and we lost the bridge. A very great loss. I could have sacked him but we were short of officers and his rank andability.Hehaddoneagoodjobsolpardonedhim.Myprinciple was never to destroy a goodofficer.[29]

In other to ensure cohesion and victory, Gowon allowed for flexibility and the use of discretion by officers, especially field

[28]Interview with General Yakubu Gowon (Former Head of State), 86 Years
[30]Daily Sketch, 19.

commanders. He stated that, "at all times operational orders came from me but I left the local details necessarily to the divisional commanders.Somewereyoungandinexperiencedbutlearningfastanddoing anexcellent job, some were occasionally "difficult" but one ignored their personal idiosyncrasies. We were good friends and we were in touch daily by radio-telephone. It was mutually understood that I could better control things from thecenter".[30]

He pointed out, 'no army commander, when planning the deployment of his forces welcomes their effective reduction by having to provide protection for a wandering Head of State'. From the moment of the crisis to its end, Gowon was anxious for a quick and peaceful resolution. He gave several dates as the possible end of the conflict and when it failed to end as predicated, he excused the failure to meet the deadline by stating that the militaryaspectoftheoperationswasmoderatedsoasnottoswipetheentiretyof thepeople of the East. He went on to state that he was however, optimistic ofvictory.
He stated that; …we are quelling a rebellion, not fighting an external enemy…The responsibility for healing the nation's wounds in the future lies with us, not with any foreigner. So, us not forget why we have gone to war-to keep Nigeria one.[31]

This position required unwavering focus on the process of making sure the crisis come to an end within a relative short time and developing measures of economic recovery programmes for the restoration of human and material dimension.[47]Hence, the leadership ofGen.Yakubu

[30]
[31] Gowon

Gowon acted with some measure of human consideration which otherwise might have been lacking had the personality at the helms of affairs was different and of a different temperament. The 1966 to 1970 civil war, the possible outcome of the war was due substantially to the effectiveness of the leader(s), mainly Gowon and his commanders on the battlefields and officials of states charged with state responsibilities but essentially because Gowon ensured his vision for fighting the war was not blurring and the need for avenue for a post-war reintegration process was mandatory.[32]

General Yakubu Gowon's amenable and amiable disposition was evidently on display all throughout the conflict. He admitted when he was wrong, found new ways to adapt to challenges, and most importantly, assembled a crack team of seasoned diplomats, policy-makers, first generation politicians and rallied the Army behind him as he charged into the conflict with growing confidence. His biographer, Eliagwu wrote of him; 'in General Yakubu Gown's leadership and personal styles of life, a number of traits can be identified- compassion, honesty, transparency, empathy, foresight, nationalism, puritanism, resoluteness, humility and deep religious convictions'.[33] On the other hand, same could not be said of the Eastern Region who evidently was reeling under the weight of economic blockage, massive military build-up and apparent lack adequate military hardware before the commencement of battles. Gowon never stopped questioning the source of his own power. He admitted that his emergence was not procedural

[33]Alaba Ogunsanwo, 78 Years, Professor, Ibadan, 2nd October, 2020

[34]Isawa Eliagwu, Leadership and Nation-Building in Nigeria: The Yakubu Gowon Example (ed) Leadership and Complex Military Operations, Kaduna: Nigerian Defence Academy, 2016, 579.

but that the uncertainty of the moment was responsible for his fate not his will. Before the commencement of military operations, the FMG, under the leadership of General Gowon had outlined certain conditions that must be met to avert possible military action and the de-escalation of tension. These conditions included;

1) Public announcement of the withdrawal of the declaration of independence of the so-called 'Biafra Republic' and the revocation of the Independence Edict and associatededicts;
2) Public announcement of acceptance and recognition of Federal Government authority over the then Eastern Nigeria by the former Military Government authority over the then Eastern Nigeria by the former Military Governor, East (Ojukwu) or any other Eastern Officer;
3) Public announcement of the acceptance of the twelve states in Nigeria and the immediate installation of the new Military Administrations in Rivers and South- Eastern States, subject to marginal boundary adjustments by the States Boundary Commission;
4) Acceptance of the appointment of civilians as commissioners into the Federal Executive Council and State Executive Councils (Ojukwu has been persistently opposed to any efforts to bring civilians into the militarygovernment);
5) Agreement to revoke the Revenue (collection) Edict ad related measures; and
6) Agreementthatconstitutionaltalksonthefutureof Nigeriawillbeheld bytheduly accredited and equal representatives of 12 States.[34]

[35]Daily Sketch, Sketch Souvenir, 44.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to Gowon's leadership skills is the fact that he defined his role in the conflict to be that of public interest and servant in the defence of the common- good. His actions, positive and negative, could not be traced back to the oath he took todefend the national interest and unity of Nigeria. Gowon vowed to defend Nigeria and not to oversee its balkanization. He kept faith to that intent by doing all that was necessary in the preservation of the state-even if it was at variance to his Christian faith. History validates the fact that the disposition of a leader in the task of nation-building or disintegration is fundamental and of supreme importance. Leadership style can make or mar a society in both its building efforts and destruction process.[35]

Command and Control and Gen. Gowon's Policies

From the moment, Gowon busted into the national limelight, he maintained consistently a commitment to the continued unity of the country and made no pretext to the contrary.He initiated a combination of political, military, economic, diplomatic and social policies for the attainment of Nigeria's unity. Afterall, 'war is the continuation of politics by other means', he continued to vigorously take steps in the direction of his vision and the attainment of the objective(s). He was never in doubt that the task was herculean. That muchhedeclared,'asaprofessionalsoldier,Iknowthatawarcannotbebrought toacomplete stop on a predetermined date. A commander knows when a war may start but cannot tell when it will end'. He further stated; 'we are not fighting a non-discriminatory war or total destruction as would

[36]Emma Okocha, 60 Years, Author, Asaba, 26th September, 2020.

have been the case in a total war against an enemy'.[36]When there was a noticeable lull in the military operations and accusations were rife that fieldcommandersdisobeyingorders,lacktheabilitytoco-ordinatetheireffortsinthefield withtheheadquarterswiththeattendantfactthatthefederalcommanderswere 'seemingly spent', Gowon, changed the commanders on May 12, 1969. Colonel Bissala took over command of 1st Division from Colonel Shuwa; Colonel Jall orelived Colonel Haruna in the 2nd Division, while Colonel Obasanjo relived Colonel Adekunle in the 3rd Marine Commando.[37]

On the diplomatic plane, Gowon explained to the OAU Assembly of Heads of State at Addis Ababa on September 6, 1969 that there were four reasons for the delay in military triumph. He listed them;

1) International conspiracy
2) The activities of humanitarian organizations and relief agencies who were helping to sustain the secessionist regime through moral and material support including the 'direct supply of foreign exchange, arms and military equipment'.
3) The third factor holding up the war the 'vicious propaganda and unparallel falsehood' dished out by the secession is the regime which made the common man in the area feel that he was fighting for survival-againstgenocide.

[37]Zdenek Cervenka, A History of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970, Ibadan: Onibonoje Press, 1972, 69.

[38]Isawa Eliagwu, Gowon: The Biography of a Solider-Statesman, Ibadan: West Books Publisher Limited, 1985, 118.

(1). He stated that the deliberate attempt not to go all out military against the secessionist in the belief that it was a war waged to quell a rebellion.[38] When asked about allegations of the excessive of some of his war time commanders, Gowon was quick to pointout;

When I appointed my commanders, I gave them a free hand to run their own show. I think it unnecessary for the man at the top to keep on pestering the lifeofthepersonheappointed…Iallowedmycommandersfreehand.They were on the ground; they knew the problems on the ground. All that we wantedtoknowwashowtheoperationwasgoingandtheyweretokeepus well informed just as it is done militarily anywhere. We would read the bigger battle map and then say, 'This is what you should do, this is what you should not do…' But how you run your operations was left to you. Of course, there was the code of conduct which I had given to all the troop son how to fight a battle-but humanely; how to conduct yourself and how to treat prisoners of war that were captured and how you really looked after the civilian population in the areas that had been captured…but the actual way of running the battle, how you placed your troops, how they advanced and so on, were left to you. We supplied you with the equipment, arms, ammunition, with the reinforcement and you get on with thejob.

Gowon saw the appointment of field commanders as a position of trust and such it was incumbent for them the need for interference was needless. However, this has elicited strong criticisms leveled against

[39]Lindsay Barrett, 78 Years, Author, Lagos, 20th October, 2020.

him. His supposed free-handling of the situation led to charges of loose supervisor which in-turned made some field commanders tin-gods with cases of abuses.[39]

Conclusion

War is a social activity which entails a lot of social activity. It involves the mobilization and organization of individual men and as some have argued almost never women, for the purpose of inflicting physical violence and regulating 'certain logics. Command and control played a significant role in the Nigerian Civil War, during the period under review. Generally, wars are fought on the battle fields but it is in the place of strategy and its implementation that makes victory or defeat possible. The war for example was enhanced by rapid technological change, in which military strategy became part of grand strategy, that is, the proper planning and utilization of the entire resources of the society such as military, the technological, economic, political potentials for victory.

All of these aggregated resources were harnessed through the command and control under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon.

[40]Dan Agbese, 72 Years, Author/Journalist, Lagos, September 2020.