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A review of British policy and influence on the external meddling in the peacemaking and conflict resolution of the Nigerian-Biafra War, 1967–1970

Introduction

Post-independence Civil Wars were a defining feature of Africa after independence. Civil conflicts had consequences for the social well-being of people. A major feature of these wars is the frequent external meddling that has blocked the sensibility of devising indigenously oriented peace mechanisms in resolving them. Many scholars have argued that Africa's weak mediation prowess created a loophole for the external forces to become part of the peace conferences held concerning conflicts on the continent¹.

The Nigerian-Biafra war is one of the many cases of civil wars and conflicts that saw the theatre of external interference in the peace negotiations of wars in Africa. The civil war erupted owing to the internal political upheavals that bedevilled the Nigerian State immediately after gaining independence from British colonialism. The causes of the Nigeria-Biafra war hinged on the eruption of several factors ranging from deep-rooted acute disputes between the Northern and Southern regions of Nigeria over colonially inherited conflicts on the equitable distribution of the nation's resources and struggle for political power. This is in addition to demonstrations over electoral and census controversies that brought the leaders of each region against one another². The war resulted in significant loss of life and humanitarian

crises. The conflict attracted the attention of major powers due to Nigeria's strategic importance in the region, and their interventions had profound implications for the peace settlement process.

The most strategic factor was the coming of the military in January 1966, which brought about a military regime under Major-General Johnson Thomas Umunakwe Aguiyi Ironsi and the counter-coup of July 29, 1966, which led to the death of the Head of State and his host Lieutenant Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi, Military Governor of Western Nigeria. These circumstances midwife the General Yakubu Gowon regime as successor (Ekwe Nche Organization, 1972)³. However, the coup that installed Gowon as the leader of Nigeria in Lagos was unpopular in the Eastern region. Consequently, constitutional conferences and talks were held to build trust amongst the various military leaders and establish a roadmap for Nigeria's future⁴.

After the Lagos Ad-hoc Constitutional Conference's initial round of talks ended in September 1966, a second massacre occurred, killing scores of Igbos of the Eastern region in their thousands, especially those who resided in the North⁵, as a result, there were strained relationships, mutual distrust, and hostility across the country. All attempts to bring peace to the nation's mess were deeply tainted with suspicion and persistent resentment⁶.

During this period, peace efforts were initiated towards reconciling the contending factions in the dispute. These peace efforts were not devoid of external influence that saw the Nigerian crises as threats to their fundamental stake in the country. On the January 4 and 5, 1967, the Supreme Military Council (SMC), as the apex legislative and executive authority in Nigeria was invited to a meeting in Aburi Ghana at the instance of Malcolm Macdonald, a British diplomat in Africa. Throughout the war, the British government brought this fact numerous times when it came under fire for failing to reconcile the two warring factions⁷.

Following the disagreement between the Gowon-led administration and Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Governor of the Eastern region, it was envisaged that the peace meeting to be held at Aburi would mark a watershed in the ongoing tension in Nigeria. The discussion gave rise to a contentious agreement⁸. The prolonged negotiations from the Aburi Peace Accord and Gowon's bid to break the power base of Ojukwu in the East by creating additional states out of the existing four regions gave Nigeria a twelve-state framework. Done without the Eastern region's agreement, it led to major tensions and the Republic of Biafra proclamation. The civil war finally broke out due to the Nigerian government's refusal to acknowledge Biafra⁹.

External influence and peace mediation in the Nigerian-Biafra War

The military operations of the Nigerian-Biafra War began on July 6, 1967. Some form of external interference played out in the peace process, as neither side was ready for peace negotiations. Gowon was not willing to accept the secession of

Biafra. Ojukwu was not willing to settle for anything less than the sovereign independence of Biafra¹⁰. This intransigence stance complicated the peace process. Other early peace initiatives regarding the Nigeria-Biafra War came from outside the continent. Africa lost the opportunity to be the first to utilise its indigenous knowledge of peace mediation to resolve the conflict.

Britain became the first to initiate diplomatic moves towards peace in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Commonwealth in London. By August 11, 1967, the British government had considered the possibility of encouraging the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Arnold Smith, to take advantage of contacting Gowon and Ojukwu to see whether any basis for peace talks existed in the civil war using the Commonwealth Secretariat¹¹.

Arnold Smith had proposed to appeal to General Gowon designed to bring a ceasefire and diplomatic talks without pre-conditions. He proposed to fly to Lagos to discuss the possibilities with General Gowon. From the known attitude of both sides of the conflict, there was little hope of an early agreement to peace talks. Britain saw the advantage in Smith floating his proposal as soon as possible¹².

The Nigerian government refused to accept any peace moves from the British government. It was recommended that on his return to Lagos, the British High Commissioner should speak to General Gowon on the basis that: "The British Government has all along been distressed at the failure of the Nigerians to settle their disputes peacefully and did their best to urge that there should not be a resort to war. They have recognized that the Federal forces have traditionally relied largely on British equipment and so have allowed outstanding orders to be completed and have continued to supply normal items of military materials in reasonable quantities. This policy has aroused interesting criticisms in the United Kingdom on traditional humanitarian grounds. HMG's position has been made more difficult by the press publicity given to the efforts of the Nigerian authorities in London to purchase and arrange shipment for large quantities of arms which go beyond the undertaking given in the Prime Minister's letter to Gowon on 16th July 1967..."¹³

On April 5, 1968, the British Prime Minister sent a letter to Gowon to accept peace negotiations with the Biafran government. The Prime Minister reminded Gowon of a letter Lord Brockway had from Ojukwu, that he would be ready to take a ceasefire followed by unconditional discussions. He, therefore, informed Gowon that Nigerian friends plan to test the sincerity of the Biafran government in negotiations¹⁴.

On May 6, 1968, Arnold Smith invited the Federal and Biafran representatives in London for preliminary discussions on the venue for peace negotiations. The next meeting was held on May 7, 1968. The agreement reached was that Kampala should be the site for Negotiations and that the Commonwealth Secretariat should provide administrative cover. These points were regarded as part of a package, which included the question of Chairmanship. Biafrans wished Obote as chairman, while the Federal suggested Arnold Smith. The possibility of having no chairman at all was also considered¹⁵.

The diplomatic initiative of Arnold Smith, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth led to the development of Kampala peace negotiations between the FMG and Biafra at the time of War. On May 15, 1968 the Commonwealth Secretariat released a press statement that the two sides with their representative, had a preliminary talk in London under the auspices of Arnold Smith, the Commonwealth Secretary-General. It was agreed that peace talks would be held at Kampala Uganda¹⁶. Meanwhile, the Minister of State at the Commonwealth Office, George Thomson told Arnold Smith that it was a great thing to know that he would be closely associated with the next round of talks in Kampala, from which they were all hoping for so much¹⁷.

Despite any stance that went against her own, Britain was eager to see the war resolved peacefully. That was the vital way through which her trade and investment in the country could be sustained when it was clear that the Commonwealth Secretariat, which supported her peace moves could not restore peace but suggested another peace negotiation in Africa, became the British key priority to rally around her African supporters towards ensuring total sympathy to her position in the conflict.

Britain prioritized a peaceful resolution of the war, maintaining Nigeria's unity, to sustain trade and investment. The Commonwealth Secretariat's support for peace moves did not restore peace but suggested another peace negotiation in Africa.

Britain was not the only country meddling from abroad in the Nigeria-Biafra War's peace settlement, despite her dominant role in the battle. The US, which had obstructed peace talks during the conflict, was eager to see peace returned to Nigeria, especially the peace accords supported by the Organization of African Unity. The United States had kept an eye on the war's peace settlement to hasten the elimination of some forces, which provided military support to both sides because their actions were jeopardizing global peace and security. The Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Portugal, and the four African nations of Gabon, Ivory Coast, Tanzania, and Zambia that recognized Biafra are examples of these outside pressures. France also interfered in the war's peace talks by pushing for Biafra's independence to be recognized by the OAU Consultative Committee, despite opposition from the United States, Britain, and certain African nations¹⁸.

African diplomacy and external meddling in peace mediation

African States' initiative to initiate diplomatic and peace negotiations significantly highlighted external intervention in the conflict. The OAU's civil war decisions and resolutions were constructed to serve Anglo-American interests and implement the "One Nigerian" agenda. On September 14, 1967, early in the morning, according to Onianwa¹⁹, the US envoy in Lagos, Albert Mathew, received a note from the envoy in Congo to Yakubu Gowon asking for his written opinion on the proposed documents for the resolution of the Nigerian crisis, which had been given to the US Ambassador. Moreover, Mathew was instructed to let Gowon know which nations

had introduced the resolution draft: Cameroun, Zambia, Uganda, Congo, Niger, Liberia, Ghana, and Ethiopia²⁰.

After the OAU resolution was passed and the news of the Peace Mission to Nigeria announced, a letter was sent by the British High Commissioner in Lagos to the Foreign Office on September 16, 1967. He believed everybody in London was pleased with the OAU resolution. They didn't have to stick their neck out; at least it seemed like there were signals that something was being done.

He welcomed the resolution as letting them off. The language of the resolution gave an excellent cue when pressed for a statement of British attitude in the war. It emphasised OAU's passion to sustain Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He suggested the need for the British officialdom to adopt the language of OAU and state that this was the position they maintained all along²¹.

In reaction to the British High Commissioner's letter, the Foreign Office said the High Commissioner was right to assume everybody in London was pleased about the OAU peace initiative and had already discussed the OAU initiative with the United States officials. He agreed that they should be careful to avoid jumping too enthusiastically behind the OAU initiative, in case they gave those not enthusiastic about it any excuse to suggest that it owed something to American and British pressure²². Later, the High Commissioner told the Foreign Office that for the sake of British relations with Africa, they should avoid giving any impression that they disapprove of the wording of the resolution or idea of the OAU Mission.

Britain and the US had developed strong confidence in the OAU as an instrument in revolving the Nigeria-Biafra War and expected to have good working relationship with the regional organization in persuading both sides of the conflict to accept settlement. With this line of argument, it was easy for them to work with Nigerian supporters in Africa to project positions that would go against their peace designs capable of sustaining Nigeria as one country as against the secession policy of Biafra.

Britain and the US through their diplomatic missions in Niger and Ethiopia worked tirelessly to know the outcome of the meeting. Both countries had designed their foreign policies regarding the civil war on the perception that it was an African affair to be resolved by Africans but in a manner suitable to their vested interests in the conflict.

As and when the Niamey conference began there appeared to be communication challenges experienced by the British representatives. This prompted the British *Charge d'Affaires* in Abidjan, Mark McMullen, to inform the Foreign Office on July 27, 1968, about the difficulties in exchanging information with American officials. He said: "The Americans and myself (sic) were handicapped from the start of the conference by deciding to keep very much in the background since Niamey was a small fish pool in which the two delegations were in any case mostly confined to the open-plan ground floor of the Palace in which everybody's movements could be observed and to heavily guarded villas"²³.

The US Ambassador could not have been more helpful. He provided the British *Charge d’Affaires* with a room, secretarial support, and communication facilities, and they studied all telegrams sent regarding the OAU Consultative Committee meeting in Niamey. A great number of these telegrams were results of drafting sessions involving the Ambassador, and at least one other member of staff; a technique the *Charge d’Affaires* found very confusing as the American style and approach to reporting was different from the British method, and the wordage expended thereon extremely extravagant by British standards²⁴. In a letter sent to the Foreign Office on his return to Abidjan, McMullen paid tribute to the help and cooperation he received from the US Ambassador, Ryan. Mark McMullen said: “Ambassador Ryan extended to me facilities and collaboration far beyond what could have been expected even from the representative of a friendly and allied country. Not only was I offered full office and communications facilities, but coverage of the meeting was conceived and carried out as a ‘joint operation’, <...> in the Mediterranean. Our visits to Diori were synchronized to avoid the impression of more than a minimum British and US presence at the Palace, information was pooled and telegrams reporting developments were drafted in common²⁵.”

The Anglo-American joint policy of keeping out of the way except when summoned by Hamani Diori, the first President of the Republic of Niger, meant that information about the conference proceedings had to be gathered from the often-inaccurate gleanings of the press, corrected at regular intervals by accounts given to the US Ambassador and McMullen by Diori. Thus, the only inside information they received was filtered through the personality, changing moods, and sometimes hazy grasp of the finer points of the issue of the President himself²⁶.

Geopolitical motive behind external interference in peace settlement

The Nigerian-Biafra War remains one of the most significant conflicts in African history, characterized by external interference driven by geopolitical motives. As regional and global powers became involved in the conflict, their strategic interests shaped the trajectory of the peace settlement process.

Interference in the Nigerian-Biafra War peace process was meant to achieve certain geopolitical motives, to put in check certain actions that would warrant the two factions in the war to make decisions that would go against the interests of the great powers. The external forces wanted a situation where it would be easy for their ideas in that direction not to be tempered but rather assist in working out a seamless peaceful negotiation. To achieve this, certain things have to give way. For Britain and America, the most important is the downgrading of the French and Soviet Union intervention during the war, which they saw as an obstacle to an early peace settlement or even victory²⁷.

The involvement of international bodies, such as the OAU, the United Nations, and OCAM, was considered to find a suitable mediator for the conflict. The global context of the Cold War also influenced foreign actions in the region. Foreign propaganda played a significant role, with exaggerated death tolls and sensational reporting shaping public opinion and fundraising efforts for Biafra.

The external interference impacted the conflict's duration and the suffering experienced by civilians. It emphasized the complex geopolitics and the struggle to achieve meaningful progress in peace settlement without undermining African-led initiatives. Geopolitical motives often played a significant role in shaping external interference in conflicts and peace settlements around the globe, and the Nigerian-Biafra War was no exception. Conflict arose in 1967 when the southeastern region of Nigeria, known as Biafra, declared independence, leading to a devastating civil war. During this period, external powers became involved due to their strategic interests in the region and their desire to influence the outcome of the conflict²⁸.

Nigeria held strategic importance for Britain and America, due to its oil reserves and position as a potential ally in the Cold War context. Therefore, British interests lay in preserving its territorial integrity and avoiding the dissolution of a nation that they had previously controlled. The United States, on the other hand, saw Nigeria as a potential ally and a valuable economic partner in Africa. Thus, both countries were keen on preventing the breakup of Nigeria and ensuring a peaceful resolution to the conflict²⁹.

France's involvement in supporting Biafra can be understood within its historical ties to certain regions of Africa and its desire to assert its influence in the continent. France's support for Biafra was seen as an opportunity to gain leverage and strengthen its presence in the African international arena. However, France's stance was controversial; it created tensions with other Western powers who supported Nigeria's unity³⁰.

The Soviet Union's involvement in providing military aid to Nigeria can also be seen through a geopolitical lens. The Cold War rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States led to proxy conflicts in various regions worldwide, and Nigeria became one such battleground. The Soviet Union's support for Nigeria aligned with its aim to expand its influence and counter Western interests in Africa³¹.

External interference was not limited to military aid and diplomatic maneuvering; it also involved extensive propaganda efforts to shape public opinion. Western media outlets portrayed the conflict to arouse sympathy for Biafra, depicting scenes of suffering, malnutrition, and starvation. These sensationalized reports garner support for Biafra's cause, mobilizing public opinion and raising funds for the secessionist state. However, the propagandistic nature of these reports also contributed to misinformation and exaggeration of the scale of the suffering in the region.

Amid this geopolitical maneuvering, African-led efforts to resolve the conflict were affected. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union, played a central role in mediating the conflict. However, external interference and

the involvement of major powers complicated the peace process. African leaders were wary of being overshadowed or influenced by external interests, which hindered the effectiveness of regional mediation efforts.

The search for a suitable mediator, proposed by both the United States and Britain, reflects the challenge of finding a neutral actor who could facilitate dialogue between the warring parties. The nomination of an American citizen, Wayne Fredericks of the Ford Foundation, highlighted the delicate balance between foreign involvement and respecting African agencies in peace negotiations³².

Phillip Efiog claims that Ojukwu arranged for what appeared to be French recognition of Biafra to help get recognition from other countries worldwide³³. The French backing of Biafra fell just short of giving Biafra full recognition as a sovereign state. Achebe's observation about the breadth and depth of support from France to Biafra is instructive: "The government of France considers that the bloodshed and suffering endured for over a year by the population of Biafra demonstrate their will to assert themselves as a people. Faithful to its principles, <...> the present conflict should be solved based on the Right of people to self-determination and should include the setting in motion of appropriate international procedures"³⁴.

France continued to meddle in the battle but never considered the price of lives lost and property destroyed. France never imagined that the war could be managed through official negotiations; otherwise, the French administration would have worked arduously to provide a framework for conciliation, where the two sides in the conflict (Nigeria and Biafra) could have convened and laid down their swords.

British publication *The Sun* in 1968 branded the French engagement as naughty. It went on to say that if France had truly felt that self-determination could be a basis for resolving the situation, she would have put forth that idea earlier and saved others the trouble they had suffered. One indication of the impact of French sponsorship is Biafra's reluctance to participate in talks after Mr. Christopher Mojekwu's peace proposals. With support from France, the rebels hardened even further and declined to engage in talks³⁵.

The sincerity of Britain and France in the peacemaking and resolution of the Nigerian-Biafra War left much to be desired in several ways. For instance, the Anglo-French conversation during the Nigerian-Biafra War was a significant cause of concern at the Western European Union meeting of foreign ministers. What France had done for the Biafrans was exposed at that conference, but France was equally ready to accuse Britain of aiding the Federal Government of Nigeria in numerous ways, including by providing mercenaries and weaponry³⁶.

France continued to make the case that her support for Biafra was solely humanitarian and motivated by the suffering of the populace, a case of blatant genocide. The British government countered that although there was an agreement for the British to send weapons to the Nigerian government, France was acting dishonestly³⁷ because a contingent of 800 French soldiers was flown into Biafran territory from Gabon with weapons meant to support Biafra. According to Colonel Benjamin Ade-

kunle, the Third Marine Commander of the Nigerian Army, this not only prolonged the War but also made it possible for Nigerian soldiers to engage in combat with French mercenaries³⁸.

The difficulty in solving the problem at the international level is balancing the competing interests of states with an interest in the Nigerian-Biafra War. France felt confident that Russia and the United Kingdom supported the Nigerian government: given her interest in the regions controlled by Biafra and that the suffering of the Biafra people prevented her from siding with them³⁹. As a result, the French government believed in helping people in need who had the right to self-determination⁴⁰. Because of this, no offence was committed, either in national interest or international law.

At a meeting between the Nigerian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Brigadier Babafemi Olatunde Ogundipe, and the British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Lord Shepherd, on August 1, 1968, it was argued that the French decision was regrettable and embarrassing as it was never discussed with any of the major powers, particularly Britain. This called for urgent and strong diplomatic action⁴¹. The following action was taken as a result: to express opposition to France's shift in perspective during the civil war, especially at the OAU⁴².

To cope with the French, the British officialdom advised the Nigerian government to release a statement with facts outlining the weapons and ammunition it had obtained from France from the start of the conflict, particularly on June 12, 1968, when France declared an arms embargo. The Nigerian government needed to arm itself with Documents like the OAU decisions from Algiers because this exercise was intended to provoke thought in the French people and the French government⁴³. Furthermore, a promise was made to the Nigerian government to have some vital official information that could be used to protest against the supply of arms through the French channel to Biafra⁴⁴.

External interference is to help promote the notion that not only an African approach is required to resolve the conflict. This was meant to weaken any other initiative suggested to tackle the conflict. For instance, after his inauguration as the United States President, Richard Nixon, on January 24, 1969, ordered an urgent review of the United States policy on the Nigeria-Biafra War and requested recommendations for additional action. The Chairman of the National Security Council and Foreign Policy Adviser to Nixon, Henry Kissinger, was appointed to head the Presidential Task Force⁴⁵. One possible option opened to the Task Force was the appointment of a suitable person who would play the role of a mediator in the civil war. The nomination of this person would have to be made by some international body like OAU or *L'Organisation Communé Africainé et Malgaché* (OCAM)⁴⁶.

The British Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, Maurice Foley, was impressed that an individual might be able to carry out a mediation role regarding the war. He realized that there could be no question of an appointment of this kind made by the United Nations. Nor an appointment usefully be made by OAU because anyone appointed by OAU would be unacceptable to Biafrans and might

not be willing to appoint anyone who was not an African⁴⁷. In this circumstance, he proposed that Wayne Fredericks of the Ford Foundation could carry out such an assignment⁴⁸.

Meanwhile, the intention of appointing an unofficial American mediator for OAU was an idea supported by U-Thant⁴⁹. At a meeting with the British Parliamentary Under-Secretary, on March 19, 1969, U-Thant declared that the OAU Consultative Committee on Nigeria was too unwieldy for its task and that he had intended to suggest to the Emperor of Ethiopia before the Committee's meeting in Liberia on April 17, 1969, that the Committee should appoint a Special Representative with a full mandate to act as a mediator on its behalf⁵⁰.

The global realities at the time which coincided with the Cold War politics between the Eastern and Western blocs rekindled the British and the US desire to see peace restored in Nigeria, hence, suggesting the need for a competent individual to be nominated as a peace mediator. However, such action means taking over the responsibility of Africans towards settling the Nigeria-Biafra War, thereby, weakening the African-induced peace ideas, if not disabling its prowess of achieving meaningful progress in conflict resolution.

Foreign propaganda played a vital role in the peacemaking and resolution of the Nigeria-Biafra War. In 1968 foreign press such as the British *Observer* on June 23, The *Guardian* on July 8, and *The Times* of London on August 13 among others quoted outrageous figures of the death toll and unimaginable suffering of civilians especially women and children⁵¹. No doubt, these fantastic figures were most likely based "on wild guessing of unsubstantiated nature and usually accompanied by hallucinatory and sensational articles, a typical example of these being the series of articles in *The Times* of London by Winston Churchill, grandson of the former British Prime Minister, who claimed to have witnessed gigantic bombing raids of inhabitant localities by the Federal air force and depicted the Biafran capital of Umuahia as having been virtually razed to the ground by intense aerial bombardment. When a party of Western European journalists visited the town shortly after its capture by Federal troops soon after Churchill's articles, their surprise at finding it virtually intact led one of them to ask in his article on Umuahia: 'Where DID all those bombs go?'"⁵².

Television viewers, for their part, were spared no details about the suffering of Kwashiokor-stricken children, which no one bothered to explain as a prevalent illness in all underdeveloped countries, caused more by protein deficiency than by actual starvation as such. Night after night, gruesome images that sickened one to the marrow were directed at both adults and children, with predictable effects. The word genocide was freely bandied about, while books and pamphlets were produced in innumerable quantities, each vying to outdo the other in sentimental and sensational prose that is truly amazing to read in retrospect.

The extraordinary propaganda machine of the Western media outlets had the dual effects of preparing Western public opinion for eventual recognition of the Biafran state and guaranteeing the effectiveness of Biafra's fund-raising endeavours,

which ultimately provided millions of pounds in foreign currency for the purchase of weapons and ammunition, making the conflict last longer and the suffering that the misled public was being subjected to.

The Nigeria-Biafra War is a compelling case study of how geopolitical motives drove external interference in the peace settlement. Major powers sought to shape the conflict's outcome to serve their strategic interests and influence the negotiations. African-led mediation efforts were hindered by the involvement of major powers and foreign propaganda, which had a considerable impact on the conflict's settlement. The case of the Nigerian-Biafra War serves as a reminder of the complexities of international involvement in internal conflicts and, emphasises the need for autonomy and effectiveness in regional mediation efforts. Understanding the geopolitical motives behind external interference is crucial in avoiding similar challenges in future conflict resolution processes.

Conclusion

The article provides profound evidence that the British government played a significant role in external meddling during the Nigerian-Biafra War from 1967 to 1970. Through examination of historical documents and policy analysis, it becomes evident that the British government's policies and actions were instrumental in determining the trajectory of the war and its resolution, leading to implications for peace and stability in the region.

The findings of this research underscore the importance of understanding the role of external actors in conflicts and peacemaking processes. It also raises questions about the ethical considerations surrounding foreign interventions in sovereign states' internal affairs. As the Nigerian-Biafra War remains a significant historical event with lasting impacts, this study contributes valuable insights into the complexities of conflict resolution and the responsibility of external powers in shaping the course of conflicts. Further research is warranted to delve deeper into the long-term repercussions of British interference in the Nigerian-Biafran conflict and its implications for international relations and conflict resolution strategies.

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Abstract. The Nigeria-Biafra War (1967–1970) constituted a pivotal conflict in the history of Africa, characterised by external interference. This study analyses the role of external powers, with a particular focus on Britain, in the context of peacemaking and conflict resolution in the war. This article examines the role of major powers, including Britain, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union, and their influence on the peace settlement process. The historical narrative approach was employed to examine the subject matter in

greater detail. The primary data was obtained from the British National Archives in Kew, London, and from contemporary secondary sources. The article demonstrates how these interventions influenced the outcome of the conflict and affected regional mediation efforts. The paper highlights that external involvement in peacemaking in an internal armed conflict has the potential to undermine the efficacy of internally-driven peace initiatives, and even impede the capacity to make meaningful strides towards conflict resolution. By analysing these historical events, this research offers valuable insights into the complexities of international involvement in internal conflicts and their implications for peace settlement processes.

Key words: external influence, conflict resolution, peacemaking, Nigeria-Biafra War, propaganda, civil war, genocide, mediation, strategic interest.

ДЛЯ ЦИТИРОВАНИЯ

О. И. Онианва, У. Б. Окпевра. Обзор британской политики и роль внешнего вмешательства в разрешении конфликтов и миротворческом процессе в ходе нигерийско-биафрской войны 1967–1970 гг. // Петербургский исторический журнал. 2024. № 3. С. 149–163

Аннотация: Нигерийско-биафрская война (1967–1970) была ключевым конфликтом в истории Африки, отмеченным внешним вмешательством. В этом исследовании рассматривается политическая и дипломатическая история, в которой иностранные державы, особенно Великобритания, стремились к разрешению конфликтов и установлению мира в ходе войны. Изучаются действия крупных держав (Великобритании, США, Франции и СССР), их влияние на процесс мирного урегулирования. Исследование опирается на документальные материалы Британского национального архива (Кью, Лондон) и современную историографию. В статье исследуется роль иностранных держав в завершении конфликта и региональные посреднические усилия. В статье подчеркивается, что внешнее вмешательство в урегулирование внутреннего вооруженного противостояния может подрывать эффективность внутренних мирных инициатив и даже помешать достичь значимых результатов в направлении разрешения конфликта. Анализируя эти исторические события, данное исследование дает ценную информацию о сложностях международного участия во внутренних конфликтах и их последствиях для процессов мирного урегулирования.

Ключевые слова: внешнее влияние, разрешение конфликтов, миротворчество, война между Нигерией и Биафрой, пропаганда, гражданская война, геноцид, посредничество, стратегический интерес.

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