

DISPATCH

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D Comments on NIE 64-2-70

ACTION REQUIRED - REFERENCES

REF: A. Terms of Reference, NIE 64-2-70

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PA/HO Department of State

E.O. 12958, as amended

April 21, 2005

The [REDACTED] took part in preparation of Reference B but would like to add a few comments for possible use by ONE. The points made below refer to the breakdown listed in Reference A paper.

I.A. Recent reporting indicates that the FMG is going to go much slower than originally thought on demobilization of the Army. General Gowon has indicated he will not consider large scale releases from the Army until the Nigerian Army Rehabilitation Scheme (NARS) is functioning and can absorb some of the veterans. Our current reading of NARS, however, is that it is going very slowly and it will be a long time before a meaningful rehabilitation scheme is operative. There has been little coup talk in recent months and the situation remains basically the same as during the fall of 1969; that is, key units of the Army, particularly the Federal Brigade of Guards and I Div, remain under control of Middle Belt officers completely loyal to Gowon. Gowon is well aware of the problems of the Army in the domestic security field and is trying to build up the Police to take over law and order functions. However, as the time frame now mentioned for return to civilian rule is 18 months to two years, it is quite obvious the Army will be in a dominant position for at least that period.

I.B. Reintegration of the Ibos into the national life has gone much better than could have been expected. Large numbers have returned to Lagos and increasingly, Ibos are going back to the North. Civil Service jobs are being opened up to Ibos and the Police effort in absorbing something over 3,000 ex-"Biafran" Police is noteworthy.

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CROSS REFERENCE TO

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31 July 1970

CLASSIFICATION

HQS FILE NUMBER

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<p>II.A. The problem of revenue allocation is going to be crucial. [REDACTED] it is likely that an outside body will be asked to come up with the formula. However, this issue could cause major problems between the oil-producing states and the North particularly.</p> <p>III.A. [REDACTED] reporting over the past six months has continued to underline the growth of stature and confidence in General Gowon. His state visits within the country have been great personal successes and as he embarks on a round of foreign travel this fall, his international prestige should also grow. His major strength is clearly his incorruptibility and dedication to his job. He lives an almost monastic life and appears to have no great need for recreation or release from his Dodan Barracks duties. Gowon still, however, is a basically naive and impressionable young man with all of the merits and defects of his military background. He does lose his temper from time to time and sometimes takes a shallow view of events. There is nobody else on the horizon, however, who could really challenge him and his popularity among his senior colleagues as well as the public has grown.</p> <p>III.B. Corruption is of course an absolutely key issue in Nigeria and it is hard to see how it could be erased from the social fabric. However, it is probably too much to say that corruption has been institutionalized on a scale comparable with the pre-coup regime. In our opinion, the present payoffs are much smaller and going to a fewer number of people than previously. Whether or not the present scale of corruption is such that it will have a multiplier effect on the economy or whether it will cause more disequilibrium remains to be seen. It is too early to judge what factions in the political spectrum have prospects for power, but it now seems doubtful that Awolowo will be among the postwar leaders. It is everyone's assumption there will be an orderly turnover of power to the civilians somewhat in the manner as took place in Ghana.</p> <p>III.C. The key to the Federal structure will be the amount of money which is passed on to the 12 States. Since the war the State structure has become even stronger and Gowon has said that he does not wish to remake State boundaries in the near future. Although there is the usual grumbling among tribes, the lesson of the "Biafran" rebellion was that it didn't pay to try to break away. In a negative sense, what holds Nigeria together is the understanding that all sections have to stay together.</p> <p>IV.A. The most noteworthy aspect of postwar Nigeria is its xenophobia. The Nigerians are very cocksure of their strength at present. However, this does not appear to cause them to take a harsh line against their neighbors. The most likely new role for Nigeria will be to take an increasing interest in the anti-white redoubt campaign particularly to assist anti-Portuguese refugee groups.</p> <p>IV.B. It is at least arguable that the major Soviet interest in Nigeria is to attempt to make this the key country in their Black Africa policy. The Soviets continue to expand and push their interests vigorously. Their multi-faceted approach includes everything from support to high level politicians to promises of economic assistance. Basically the Soviets have come out of the war in a fair position and they should be able to maintain it.</p> <p>IV.C. The major problem in U.S.-Nigerian relations is the memory of U.S. policy during and just after the war. The Military Government has indicated that future U.S.-Nigerian relations will largely depend upon U.S. provision of military training and military equipment. If the U.S. fails in both of these fields, relations could quickly worsen.</p> <p>IV.D. The FMG has indicated that it plans to make a major effort to return to good relations with France. Nigeria was impressed by</p>		
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<p>the ability of the French to make problems for them and they have decided not to cross the French in the future.</p> <p>IV.E. The British continue to have the major influence in Nigeria and will undoubtedly continue to keep their position in both the economic and the political fields. However, their position is open to attack as the Scott report and the arms to South Africa issues have indicated. Locally the British are working closely with the Nigerians and should be able to maintain their influence in the country. The British will remain, however, a vulnerable target for nationalist and left wing campaigns just because they are so visible and heavily engaged. The recent growing resentment against the Lebanese business community gives some indication of the kinds of problems the British may face in the future.</p> <div data-bbox="812 693 1169 766" style="background-color: black; width: 220px; height: 35px; margin: 20px auto;"></div>		
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