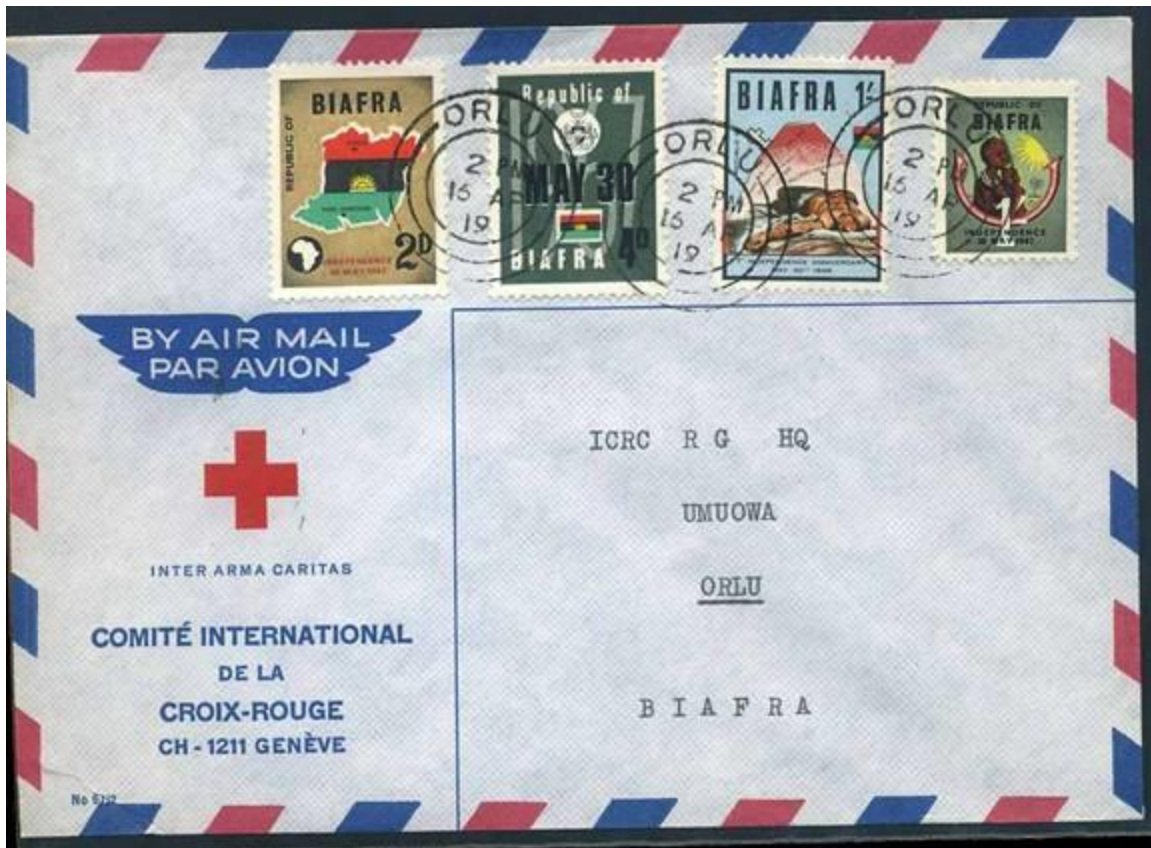


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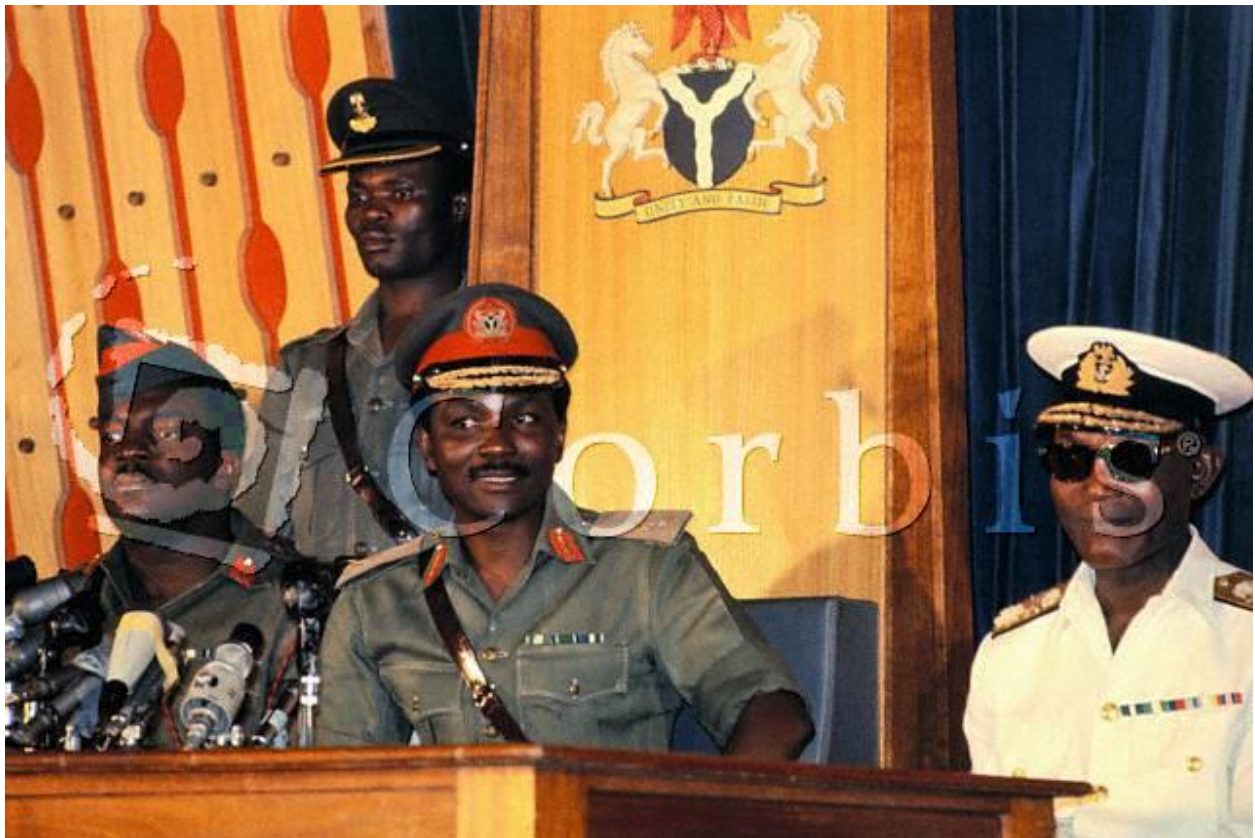
Quest for Internet

In the 97th installment of our weekly series at emeagwali.com, we present letters pertaining to Philip Emeagwali's war memoir "THUNDER ROAD TO BIAFRA." One million people died during that 30-month Nigeria-Biafra Civil War.



Though a dark, dreadful and eerie aspect of our history, I could not but enjoy and appreciate looking through the pictorial presentation of the Nigerian Civil War! When the war broke out in 1967, I was 13. I was captivated by the vividness of trauma of war captured in those monumental pictures. Interestingly, I was also musing over the conspicuous absence of General Phillip Effiong's picture when I ran into the feedback provided by his son, Dr. Phillip Effiong. I could not but agree with him that General Effiong's role in Biafran struggle deserves a place in the annal of Nigerian history. Please, go back to the archives. I am sure, there will be pictures of this noble Nigerian that could best reflect his contribution to the definition of what we call Nigeria today. Thanks for doing what you are doing, Dr. Emeagwali. Peace! Michael O. A.

Michael O.A. 27 Nov 2001



General Yakubu Gowon (center), Leader of the Nigerian Army

I wish to add to what must already be a long string of commendations. Philip. All Biafrans (and that is not just Igbo people) owe you a tremendous debt for your personal achievements and your online archive of Biafran history. I also endorse

the views of Philip Effiong jr. His father's General Philip Effiong's role in Biafra appears to be under-acknowledged. Something needs to be done not just literally but by other equally meaningful and practical gestures. You, Sir can set the ball rolling. You do not have to wait for any prompt.

Dalu.

C.I. London U.K., 16 Oct 2002



Bianca Odumegwu Ojukwu, Philip Emeagwali, Dale Emeagwali

[Takoma Park, Maryland, August 10, 2001]

I feel greatly fulfilled reading this part of the gory history of the Biafran state. Honestly, it is the very first time i'm doing that, and am so happy. I have always

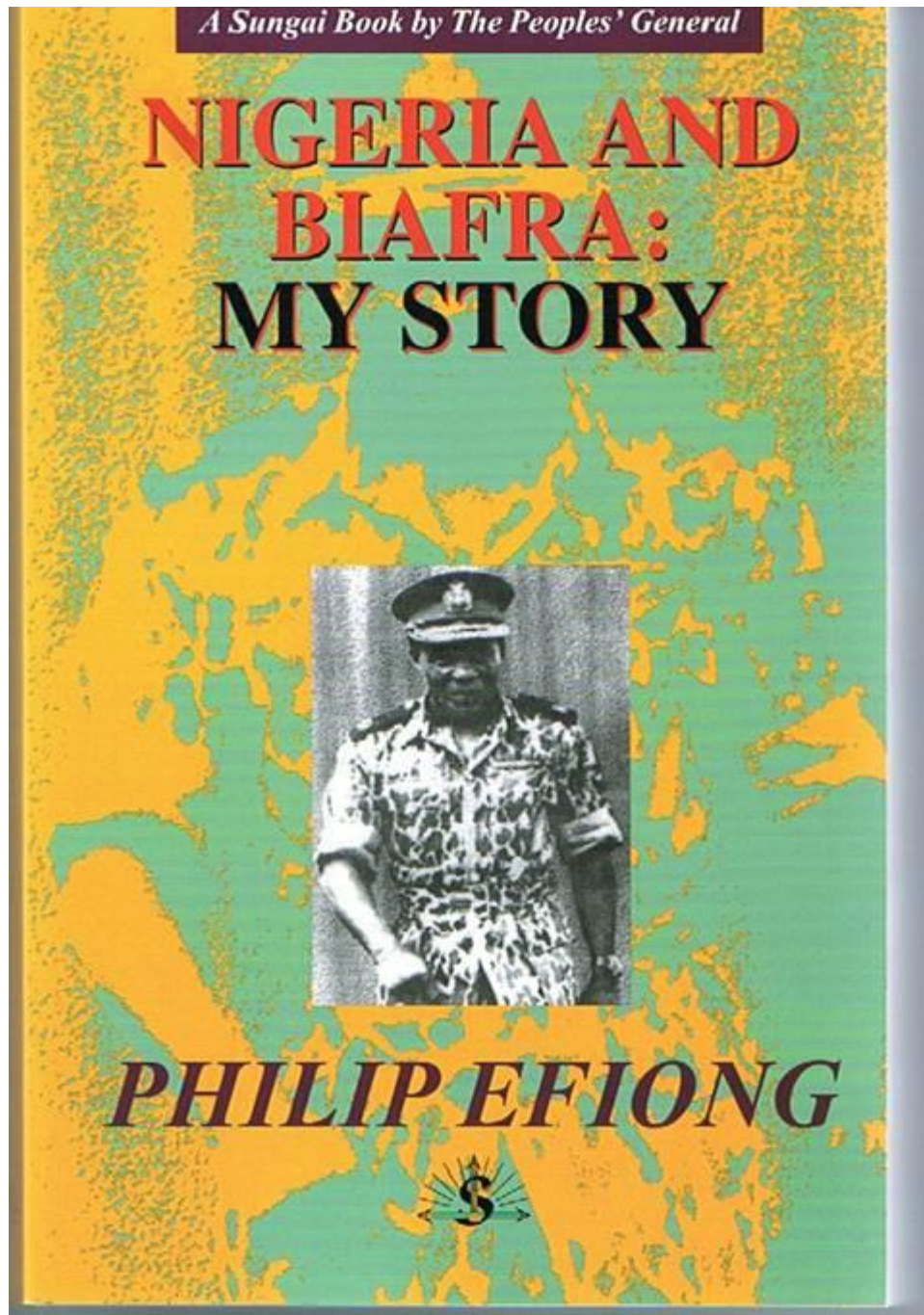
heard the phrase, 'on aburi we stand', but have hardly been able to make out the build up. Its also my first time visiting this site. I'll love to say, WELLDONE.

If i have a thing to say, it is that those principles on which Ojukwu stood in 1966, has remained the crux of todays quest for national reconstruction. What i tend to believe is, perhaps, given the tension in the country at that time, the military would be unable to provide a fruitful solution to the crisis. But, we should be asking ourselves, what lessons have we learned from that whole experience? the answer is not far-fetched; 'we have learned nothing'. The crisis that have engulfed Nigeria today is worse off compared to 1966. What else would anybody say, for a country still reeling in the pangs of poverty and starvation, shamefully in the midst of plenty; whose youth cannot see a future with it, but would prefer a low life in London, or slavery in South Africa.

It must be placed on record that no economy or society anywhere in the world is developed by foriegners. Nigeria must be developed by Nigerians, and nobody but Nigerians. I believe in the fact everybody will be accountable for his actions, first to posterity, and finally to Almighty God. Sadly, enough, God is usually forgiven in His infinite mercies, but posterity does not.

GOD SAVE NIGERIA

Justus Ekeigwe, 12/28/2002
London, England



The speech transcript below is the origin of the famed Biafran expression: **"On Aburi we stand"**

"The Distortion of Aburi Accord"

Biafra: Selected Speeches and Random Thoughts; C. Odumegwu Ojukwu, Biafra Lodge, May 30, 1969.

Anybody who was present at the Aburi meeting or has read the minutes, the communiqués, statements, and verbatim reports would be surprised that a person who calls himself a head of state could so deliberately mislead accredited representatives of foreign governments by saying that the implementation of each item of the conclusions required prior detailed examination by the administrative and professional experts in the various fields. The conclusions in Aburi were no proposals but decisions taken by the highest authority in the land.

What happened in fact was that specific matters, namely, the decrees and sections of decrees to be repealed, the mechanics of army reorganization, and the question of rehabilitation of refugees, were referred to experts. The meeting of the financial experts to consider the question of rehabilitation of displaced persons has not been held because the Ministry of Finance does not think that such a meeting would serve any useful purpose. The army experts met and reached agreements, but these were rejected.

Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon told the Heads of Missions that the agreement about returning the regions to the positions before January 17 also meant in effect that the federal government in Lagos would continue to carry on its functions as before. He failed to inform the world that the decisions taken at Aburi, the federal government meant no more than the Supreme Military Council. No one of course who knows the sort of advice Lieutenant-Colonel Gowon is receiving in Lagos would be surprised by this suppression and distortion of the truth.

The actual Aburi decisions read as follows:

Members agree that the legislative and executive authority of the Federal Military Government should remain in the Supreme Military Council, to which any decision affecting the whole country shall be referred for determination provided that where it is possible for a meeting to be held the matter requiring determination must be referred to military governors for their comment and concurrence.

Specifically, the council agreed that appointments to senior ranks in the police, diplomatic, and consular services as well as appointment to superscale posts in the federal civil service and the equivalent posts in the statutory corporation must be approved by the Supreme Military Council.

The regional members felt that all the decrees passed since January 15, 1966, and which detracted from previous powers and positions of regional governments, should be repealed if mutual confidence is to be restored.

It is difficult to understand the introduction of the word "veto" into the matter. The Aburi Agreement was that any decision which affected the whole country must receive the concurrence of all the military governors because of their special responsibilities in their different area of authority and so to the country as a corporate whole.

On the reorganization of the army, it is for Lieutenant-Colonel Gowon to explain to the world what he means by the "army continuing to be under one command," when in the very next sentence of his statement he also speaks of an agreement to establish area commands corresponding with the existing regional boundaries. This contradiction in itself tells the truth, and one does not need to belabor the point.

The actual decision of the Supreme Military Council as recorded in the official minutes reads as follows:

The Council decides that:

(i) *on reorganization of the army:*

(a) Army to be governed by the Supreme Military Council under a chairman to be known Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and Head of the Federal Military Government.

(b) Establishment of a military headquarters comprising equal representation from the regions and headed by a Chief of Staff.

(c) Creation of area commands corresponding to existing regions and under the charge of area commander.

(d) Matters of policy, including appointments and promotions to top executive posts in the armed forces and the police, to be dealt with by the Supreme Military Council.

(e) During the period of the military government, military governors will have control over area commands for internal security.

(f) Creation of a Lagos garrison, including Ikeja barracks.

It is clear from the Aburi decisions that what was envisaged was a loosely knit army administered by a representative military headquarters under the charge of a Chief of Staff and commanded by the Supreme Military Council, not by Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon as he claimed in his present statement to the diplomats.

According to the Aburi Agreements "the following appointments must be approved by the Supreme Military Council; (a) diplomatic and consular posts; (b) senior posts in the armed forces and the police; (c) superscale federal civil service and federal corporation posts."

Everyone with even the most superficial acquaintance with the Nigerian civil service knows what those expressions mean and connote.

To confuse issue, Lieutenant-Colonel Gowon gave the impression that the main difference between him and me on this particular decision was that I insisted on canceling the appointments of existing civil servants. I can think of nothing more slanderous.

It is clear from Gowon's statement in question that he is prepared to distort the verbatim reports of the Aburi meeting. To keep the public informed, the Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting Service will be playing the tape records of the proceedings live at scheduled times.... Arrangement have been completed to transform those tape recordings to long-playing gramophone records ... We are also going ahead to print and publish the documents and records of Aburi meeting. We in the East are anxious to see that our difficulties are resolved by peaceful means and that Nigeria is preserved as a unit, but it is doubtful, and the world must judge whether Lieutenant-Colonel Gowon's attitudes and other exhibitions of his insincerity are something which can lead to a return of normalcy and confidence in the country.

I must warn all Easterners once again to remain vigilant. The East will never be intimidated, nor will she acquiesce to any form of dictation. It is not our intention to play the aggressor. Nonetheless, it is not our intention to be slaughtered in our beds, We are ready to defend our homeland.

Fellow countrymen and women, on Aburi We Stand. There will be no compromise. God grant peace in our time.



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