

Sources of Nigerian Influence and Significance

An assessment of a pivotal state revolves around the nature of the influence and example of that state within its regional realm and also in a global context. Nigeria, through its political mechanisms and cross-cultural linkages, offers a primary model of a pivotal state attempting to achieve national unity by linking Muslim-Christian religious domains. The 2007 presidential election, in many ways, was a test of this model.

This chapter examines three major themes:

- what constitutes a pivotal state in the Muslim world, including types of potential pivotal Muslim states; the federal character model in Nigeria that attempts to create a level political playing field; Nigeria as a “people of the book” model and its role as a bridge between Muslim and non-Muslim cultural Africa; Nigeria’s pivotal role globally as a major example of postcolonial development within an initially artificial set of boundaries;
- Muslim organizations in Nigeria and how they crosscut ethnoregionalisms, including the Sufi brotherhoods and the Izala movement; student and youth organizations; women’s organizations; national umbrella organizations; antiestablishment organizations and networks;
- Nigerian links to transnational systems and issues, including non-state and state-sector networks, international-security issues, and economic development.

The Idea of Pivotal States in the Muslim World

Most countries with large Muslim populations—Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Turkey, and Iran—are overwhelmingly Muslim in their demographics. (India is not included here because its Muslims are a clear minority.) By contrast, Nigeria has a large Muslim population but an almost equally large Christian element: about 50 percent Muslim and 50 percent Christian (and traditional religious believers). Middle-sized countries, such as Ethiopia or Sudan, are also faced with the challenge of creating a workable political system that bridges this religious identity divide. A

westernized or Christianized southern zone and a Muslim interior zone characterize most of the smaller coastal countries in West Africa. Hence, Nigeria is clearly a prototypical test case in accommodating religious balance. Can a nation with about 70 million Muslims and about 70 million Christians set a pivotal or global example in terms of stability and progress?

In addition, because Nigeria is one of the major OPEC producers, it has an obvious significance in the global economy. As an example, in 1973 Nigeria helped break the Arab oil boycott of the West by increasing its production. Arab OPEC countries such as Algeria (32 million Muslims), Saudi Arabia (27 million Muslims), and Iraq (25 million Muslims) also are complex and obviously significant, but their internal dynamics revolve around factions and cleavages within the Muslim community (or *ummah*). Other major Arab countries such as Morocco—with 32 million Muslims—do not produce oil. The largest Arab state, Egypt—with about 73 million Muslims and 7 million Coptic Christians—is not in the major leagues of oil production. It does serve as a significant bridge figuratively and geographically along the Nile into sub-Saharan Africa and has always been part of African continental politics.

Nigeria, however, is very much part of the non-Arab state cluster within the global Muslim community, including Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mali, Senegal, Niger, Somalia, and Guinea in Africa and Turkey and Iran in the Middle East. The Central Asian cluster that includes Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan is becoming increasingly significant, along with Southeast Asia (such as Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia) and the giants of South Asia (Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh). As the Muslim world globalizes, it is increasingly clear that non-Arab cultures will play a significant role in its evolution and direction.

Relations between Muslim communities outside of the Middle East have become and will continue to be salient, and West African forms of Islam seem to be having an impact on Arab countries such as Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia.¹ Historically, West African Islam has tended to follow the Sunni form of Islam and, within this tradition, Sufism.²

1. See, for example, "In Saudi Arabia, a Resurgence of Sufism: Mystical Sect of Islam Finds Its Voice in More Tolerant Post-9/11 Era," *Washington Post*, May 2, 2006. Thus, "The centuries-old *maulid*, mainstay of the more spiritual and often mystic Sufi Islam, was until recently viewed as heretical and banned by Saudi Arabia's official religious establishment, the ultra-conservative Wahhabis. But a new atmosphere of increased religious tolerance has spurred a resurgence of Sufism and brought the once-underground Sufis and their rituals out into the open. . . . 'This is one of the blessings of September 11. It put the brakes on the (Wahhabi) practice of *takfir*, excommunicating everyone who didn't exactly follow their creed,' said Sayed Habib Adnan, a 33-year-old Sufi teacher. The government 'realized that maybe enforcing one religious belief over all others was not such a good idea.'"

2. See John N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

Three major political centers in Africa represent two great religious traditions: Egypt is predominantly Muslim, South Africa is predominantly Christian (and traditional), and Nigeria is religiously mixed (Muslim and Christian plus traditional). It is the challenge of bridging this religious divide that makes Nigeria a pivotal state.

The Federal Character Model in Nigeria

Several features of the Nigeria model are noteworthy in terms of politically bridging ethnoreligious and regional gaps. First, there has been a tradition of progressive conservatism that constitutes a strong political center and has always resisted more extreme forms of political belief. Second, religious and ethnic political parties have been banned (or denied recognition) in Nigeria since the colonial era. Third, national political parties require cross-regional alliances to be successful. Finally, the provisions for “federal character” in the constitution (and in accepted practice) have meant that each of the thirty-six states is entitled to representation in the executive (as well as legislative) branches of government. It is this power-sharing mechanism that has created a sense of a level playing field in the country’s politics.

Thus, whether in the army, the police, the ministries, or the cabinet itself, every effort is made to include representatives from the diverse states. Originally, inclusiveness began as a northernization policy during the First Republic (1960–66) to include those from the Northern Region in government ministries.³ This was to balance the overwhelming preponderance of those from the southern regions of Nigeria, who had more access to Western education and English language skills. In short, there was to be a rough parity between northern and southern Nigerians in the ministries.

In the aftermath of the civil war (1967–70) and the demise of formal regions, an informal attempt was made to achieve rough parity of state representation in executive appointments. With the creation of more states, especially after 1991, equal representation based on states became somewhat unwieldy, and the administration of General Sani Abacha (1993–98) proposed dividing the country into six geographical zones. The geographic designations, which were generally accepted by political elements, became surrogates for ethnoreligious or regional identities. The six zones are the northwest, north-central, northeast, southwest, southeast, and south-south.

The country underwent a series of military coups or leadership shifts between 1983 and 1998. With the return to civilian rule in 1999, the newly

3. See John N. Paden, *Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986). Ahmadu Bello, the first (and only) premier of Northern Nigeria (1960–66), was the architect of the “northernization” policy.

written constitution remained silent on the issue of north-south regional balance and of geocultural zones. It did, however, return to the idea of equal representation in the federal government of each of the thirty-six states. But in practice the idea of north-south balance is very much alive. It has always been the basis for selecting presidential and vice-presidential teams (even during the military periods).⁴

Likewise, the idea of representation by geocultural zones continues. For example, at the National Political Reform Conference in 2005, representatives were selected from each of the thirty-six states and then clustered within the six zones for purposes of caucusing and final reporting. In spring 2006, the failed attempt to authorize a third term for the president relied on zonal meetings to represent the thirty-six state assemblies. In 2008, the election reform commission is scheduled to hold public hearings in each of the six zones.

In this spirit of balance, the political question most paramount in Nigeria in 2005 and early 2006 was whether and how the presidential tickets for the 2007 election (which was the constitutionally mandated end of President Obasanjo's term) would be affected by the perceived need for regional rotation and balance. Thus, that Obasanjo was a Christian from the south and his vice president (Atiku Abubakar) a Muslim from the north suggested to many that the next ticket should be reversed, with a northern Muslim for president and a southern Christian for vice president.

A number of youth-oriented Muslim organizations in Nigeria (described below) seem keen to apply the federal character principle to religious-identity issues, as well as to the more obvious state, zone, or regional identities. They have counted the number of Muslims and Christians on various national councils and commissions and have argued for parity based on the federal character principle. Seeking to confirm their belief that Nigeria has a Muslim majority, they have also argued that the census in March 2006 should have included religious identity questions. Paradoxically, many Christian groups also argued for religious-identity questions in the census, convinced that Christians had become a majority.

Yet, the federal character model was not designed to accommodate religious identity, except in an indirect, proximate way. The basic assumption is that using state identities will cover the basic complexities of diversity in Nigeria, without some fine-tuning to address religious identity. Thus, citizens from Kano State are assumed to be Muslim, and citizens from Anambra State are assumed to be Christian. Some of the sharpest

4. See John N. Paden, *Muslim Civic Cultures and Conflict Resolution: The Challenge of Democratic Federalism in Nigeria* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005). Also see Adeoye A. Akinsanya, "Federal Character in Nigeria: Bane or Blessing?" in *Nigeria in Global Politics*, ed. Alayiwola Abegunrin and Olusoyi Akomalafe, 31–46 (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2006).

political contests occur, predictably, in the zones with an overlap of religious identities, such as the Middle Belt or the southwest.

The federal character model is also assumed (and constitutionally mandated) to apply at the state level. This means that each of the 774 local government authorities within Nigeria (and enshrined in the constitution) are entitled to representation at the state level. Clearly, those in state government are meant to show evenhandedness and not favor certain areas of the state over others. This takes on ethno-religious significance in some of the Middle Belt states—such as Plateau State—where Christians are seen to be the dominant political power. It is also true in Kaduna State, where the northern portion, especially Zaria emirate, is predominantly Muslim and basically controls political power. The southern portion of Kaduna State is largely made up of smaller ethnic groups influenced by Christian missionaries.⁵

The priority of a workable political system in Nigeria (to be discussed in chapter 3) in part reflects the efforts to get the horizontal and vertical issues of federalism in balance. (Thus, the challenge is not just one of democracy in Nigeria but of democratic federalism.) Constitutional design features are also rooted in the evolving political culture consensus in Nigeria on issues of federal character. Yet, in the white heat of political campaigns and coalition building, some of these principles are likely to be breached. The basic challenge of democratic federalism in Nigeria is to produce leaders who have a long-term vision and will abide by guiding principles rather than temporary expediency.

Even political expediency, however, requires cross-regional (and hence cross-religious-identity) coalitions. No political party or candidate can succeed if he or she is unable to maintain a cross-regional coalition. While the military rulers, for the most part, have respected this principle, some of the civilian politicians appear to be less experienced in how to maintain local grassroots constituencies (that is, how to win state primaries) and then move to the center on matters of progressive conservatism and cross-regional alliances. This has been a major challenge of the 2007 elections at all levels.

Nigeria as a “People-of-the-Book” Model

Although the British joined Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria as a single entity in 1914, they administered the two regions de facto, as separate colonies. This changed after World War II when the decolonization process began. A fateful decision was made, both by the British and the

5. See Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993). Also see Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Whistling in the Dark: Selected Interviews during the Abacha Era* (Sovereign Prints Nigeria, 2006).

Nigerians, to combine both regions into a political whole. (By contrast, the British territories of northern and southern Rhodesia became two separate countries: Zambia and Zimbabwe.)

During the pre-World War II period in northern Nigeria, the British, working through local, predominantly Muslim traditional authorities, had encouraged the idea of a "people of the book" (*ahl al-kitab*) formula for cooperation. Thus, Muslims and Christians felt they had more in common than they had with indigenous, animist (or polytheist) communities.

The first generation of northern leaders absorbed this model or paradigm. During the early independence era, there was close cooperation in the north between Muslims (whether emirs, civil servants, or teachers) and their Christian counterparts (whether chiefs, civil servants, or teachers). During this period, the premier of the Northern Region, Ahmadu Bello, initiated the northernization policy in which Muslim and Christian northerners were promoted rapidly, both at the regional and national levels. In the wake of the 1966 coup, key northern Muslim leaders were killed, including Bello, by junior officers mainly from the Christian southeast. Yet, after the counter coup in July 1966, it was a northern Christian officer, Yakubu Gowon, who was selected by the northerners to be the military leader for all Nigeria.

The people-of-the-book model continued in practice at the national level, through the federal character mechanisms and political coalition constraints mentioned above. There were stresses in this model, especially in 1986 when Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida announced Nigeria's membership in the OIC. In April 1990 disgruntled Christian army officers from the Middle Belt attempted to overthrow Babangida. Among other things, the officers declared they would excise the far northern (Muslim) states from Nigeria. The coup was put down, but interfaith tensions persisted.

The oil boom economy of the 1970s and 1980s brought opportunities for new business ventures in Nigeria. A common pattern was for military, political, and business partners to set up domestic joint ventures, which explicitly crossed religious and regional boundaries. Many of these political or business coalitions persist today and have thus linked the Nigerian power brokers into webs of interdependency.

In the late 1970s, decisions were made by the military to begin planning a shift of the capital from Lagos to Abuja. Subsequently, at the new federal capital in Abuja, every effort has been made to create the symbolism of tolerance and parity between Muslims and Christians. The national mosque in Abuja was planned with the idea that a national Christian cathedral would also be erected. Initially, divisions within the Christian communities disrupted plans for such a Christian edifice, but the interior of the Christian Ecumenical Center had been completed and the building dedicated by 2006. Exterior work, however, has continued into 2007. The

center has been used for state occasions, such as the funeral for the wife of President Obasanjo and Remembrance Day.

Despite attempts at unifying efforts in the country's capital, including various national "peace committees," cooperation at the state and local levels has not always been easy. In particular, the fallout of sharia issues since 1999 in the twelve northern states has tended to harden Christian and Muslim identities. The challenges continue and are discussed further in chapter 4 (see map 3). The need for understanding among Muslims and Christians often permeates official visits by international delegations. In May 2006, for example, Vice President Atiku Abubakar welcomed to his office a six-man delegation of members from the Muslim World League, commending the league for "branches in Afikpo and Enugu. This will no doubt enhance the better understanding of Islam, having in mind that poverty and ignorance are definitely anti-Islam."⁶ Afikpo and Enugu are in the southeast and predominantly Christian.

Koranic injunctions are used in public meetings to emphasize the theme of interfaith tolerance. At a national conference in Sokoto in December 2004 on the challenges of peaceful coexistence, Governor Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa opened the proceedings saying "the Almighty created us in tribes and nations, so that we understand and relate well with each other and that best among us is he who fears God most, and he who fears God most is he who lives peacefully and harmoniously with his neighbor."⁷

Nigeria's Pivotal Role in Africa

Nigeria should not be considered a Muslim state in Africa, but rather a multireligious country with a secular constitution that serves as a bridge between Muslims and Christians in Africa. Because of its relative oil wealth and demographic resources, Nigeria is in many ways a key player in African affairs. Nigerian military peacekeepers have served in important roles worldwide, including in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Darfur (Sudan), and Democratic Republic of Congo.⁸ And Nigeria holds a leadership position in West Africa through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and in continental Africa through the African Union.

6. "Atiku on More Opportunities for Muslim Youth," *Daily Triumph*, May 12, 2006.

7. Ibrahim Jumare and others, eds., *Nigeria: The Challenges of Peaceful Co-Existence*, December 13–15, 2004. Conference proceedings (photocopied).

8. See Abiodun Alao, "Peacekeepers Abroad, Trouble-Makers at Home: The Nigerian Military and Regional Security in West Africa," in *Nigeria in Global Politics*, 63–78; Aderemi Ajibewa, "International Constraints on Foreign Policy Formulation: A Case Study of Nigeria and Regional Security in West Africa," in *Nigeria in Global Politics*, 79–94; Adebayo Oyebo, "Restoring Democracy in Sierra Leone: Nigeria's Hegemonic Foreign Policy in West Africa, 1993–1998," in *Nigeria in Global Politics*, 95–106.

MAP 3 NIGERIAN STATES WITH SHARIA LAW, 2000



In addition to federal-level affairs, Nigerians in other domains are playing pivotal roles. Sometimes the line between state and nonstate initiatives gets blurred. The devastating locust infestation in the Sahel in 2004, which wiped out crops from Senegal to Chad, also affected the northern Sahelian states in Nigeria. States such as Sokoto also were hard hit but, because of their resource base, were able to provide seeds and fertilizers to farmers so that the 2005 agricultural season was not disrupted.

Yet, in neighboring Niger Republic, which borders at least five northern states in Nigeria (and shares several ethnic groups with northern Nigeria), the 2005 agricultural season was a disaster, resulting in famine and refugees. In July 2005 two of Nigeria's northern states—Jigawa and Yobe—offered direct assistance to populations in Niger Republic. Previously, Muhammadu Buhari, leader of the All Nigeria People's Party, had appealed to neighboring states and the Nigerian Red Cross Society to lead appeals funds for food and drugs for the peoples of Niger Republic. Buhari personally donated about N100,000 to Niger through the Nigerian Red Cross. According to

newspaper accounts, "General Buhari said that watching news clips of the devastating effect of hunger and disease, especially on children, women and the aged people of the Republic of Niger should stir every African to action. 'This disaster has long been there, enough for any responsible government to arrest the situation—but alas, we have been caught unprepared again. . . . While I note the rather belated response of the federal government, effort ought to be made to sensitize private organizations and individuals to contribute more, not only in the spirit of African brotherhood but more importantly in the spirit of helping our neighbor.'"⁹

In short, Nigerian Muslims are fully aware of developments in the Sahelian zone, and, despite preoccupations with politics in Nigeria, are engaged in trying to alleviate the crises. Niger Republic is regarded by the United Nations as the poorest nation in the world. Its close proximity to Nigeria, and the arbitrary nature of the Nigerian border, has meant that events in Niger directly impact Nigeria. During an earlier drought in the Sahel, tens of thousands of refugees from Niger Republic crossed into northern Nigeria in 1979 and were absorbed through religious, kinship, and charitable connections.

The argument used in Nigeria for intervention in the crises in West Africa—both coastal and interior—has been "when your neighbor's house is on fire, your own house is not safe." In short, Nigeria has the will and the means to engage in crisis management in West Africa. It remains to be seen how effective Nigerians will be as peacekeepers in the Darfur crisis in Sudan, both through their key role in the African Union and through peace negotiation efforts in Abuja.

Nigeria's Pivotal Role Globally

Nigeria has significant links in Africa, in the developing world, in the Muslim world, and in the Western world. As of 2005 Nigeria stood as one of the major candidates for permanent membership on the UN Security Council. Nigeria's ambiguous status in the OIC may be a necessary condition for its larger role as a bridge between Muslim and Christian communities in Nigeria and worldwide.

On the Nigerian Christian side, one of the major candidates for the head of the Roman Catholic Church in April 2005 was Cardinal Francis Arinze of southeast Nigeria. He was identified, during the selection process, as someone who could reach out to the global Muslim community based on his experience in Nigeria. At the same time, many of the Muslim leaders in Nigeria have been active in interfaith dialogue not only in Nigeria but also within a global context. The emir of Kano (Ado Bayero) has been a preemi-

9. *Daily Trust*, July 28, 2005.

nent example of interfaith tolerance and cooperation at home and abroad. The new sultan of Sokoto, Sa'ad Abubakar, as formal leader of Nigeria's 70 million Muslims, has taken on this challenge as well.¹⁰

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), consisting of twenty-five Muslim leaders and twenty-five Christian leaders, was revived in fall 2007 after several years of dormancy, in part under the influence of the new sultan, who serves as cochairman along with the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria. Rather than just meet in Abuja, beginning in 2008 NIREC is scheduled to hold quarterly meetings throughout each of the six geocultural zones. Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar also made a historic visit to the United States in November 2007. During this visit, he spoke at the United States Institute of Peace, where he discussed Muslim-Christian relations in Nigeria, called for strengthening the foundations of peace and religious harmony in Nigeria, and expressed the need to build bridges of understanding between Muslim and Christian communities.

Nigeria tends to alternate its ambassadors to the United States and the United Nations between Christian and Muslim representatives. This has created an impression that Nigerian diplomats are professional, knowledgeable, and cooperating members of the international community. The balancing of Muslim and Christian ambassadors is an extension, of sorts, of the federal character principle and is a symbol of interfaith balance. When Jibrin Aminu (a Muslim from Yola in the northeast) stepped down as ambassador to the United States in 2003, he was succeeded by George Obiozor (a Christian from the southeast).¹¹ When Obiozor stepped down in summer 2007, the *chargé d'affaires a.i.* was Ambassador Usman Baraya, originally from Argungu, Kebbi State. Nigeria opened a new embassy in Washington in 2002, and the structure is one of the most modern in the capital area, catering to the needs of Nigerians from every region and faith.

10. Sa'ad Abubakar was born August 24, 1956. He attended Barewa College, Zaria, before proceeding to the Nigerian Defense Academy, Kaduna, in 1975. He was commissioned in December 1977 as second lieutenant and posted to the Nigerian Army Armored Corps. He spent the next thirty-one years in the Nigerian Army, including in Sierra Leone (working with ECOWAS) and in Pakistan as Nigeria's defense adviser there, with concurrent accreditation to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, from February 2003 to February 2006. He returned to Nigeria after February 2006 to attend the senior-executive course at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, where he wrote a research thesis titled "Religious Extremism as a National Security Problem: Strategies for Sustainable Solutions." He was appointed the twentieth sultan of Sokoto on November 2, 2006. As the new sultan, he is already playing a key role in interfaith cooperation and dialogue. "The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III has expressed willingness and determination to work with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and other religious groups to end incessant religious crisis in the country." "Sultan: I'll Partner with CAN to End Religious Crisis," *ThisDay*, May 15, 2007.

11. Obiozor is originally from Imo state. Prior to his Washington assignment, he was Nigeria's ambassador to Israel. "Nigerian Envoy Seeks to Repair 'Uneasy Friendship' with U.S.," *Washington Diplomat*, August 2006, 15ff.

In short, Nigeria has enormous potential to play an important role globally and has made significant contributions to the cadre of international civil servants and diplomatic statesmen. For example, in 2007, Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, originally from Ilorin, Kwara State, served as United Nations special envoy to Myanmar on behalf of UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon. However, the country's internal stresses, unless addressed, may undermine the potential of Nigeria to continue its global role.

Muslim Identities and Organizations in Nigeria

Nigerian Muslim identities and organizations cover a full range of demographics and perspectives. Most are well within the mainstream of Nigerian society and thought. Following is a selected sample of such organizations to illustrate the nature of the spectrum. In general, the English names of organizations are used, except in a few cases where Hausa language is the commonly accepted basis of the acronym.

The key to understanding Islam in Nigeria is to recognize the central place of the Sokoto Caliphate, which serves as a framework or model even today. The Sokoto Caliphate, founded in the early nineteenth century by Usman Dan Fodio, continues to exert strong cultural influence in Nigeria and West Africa. Originally, the emphasis by Dan Fodio was on "justice"—including the removal of unfair taxes—and the need for Islamic education as a guide for the community. The challenge was to "polytheism" and "syncretism" prevalent in the Hausa states at that time. The founders of the Sokoto Caliphate, especially Usman Dan Fodio, his brother Abdullahi, and his son Muhammad Bello, were prolific writers in Arabic, Hausa, and Fulfulde. As of 2007, more than one hundred of their three hundred known works have been translated for publication in English and French.¹²

Five broad categories help to cluster contemporary Muslim identities and organizations within the broader historical and cultural context: Sufi brotherhoods and the Izala; student and youth organizations; women's organizations; national umbrella organizations; and antiestablishment networks, including the so-called Shiites and Taliban organizations. It is beyond the scope of this monograph to be systematic in recounting the origins, evolution, geographic distribution, and profiles of each group. Rather, the idea is to be illustrative and give a sense of central tendencies.

12. For more background on the Sokoto Caliphate, see H. Bobboyi and A. M. Yakubu, eds., *The Sokoto Caliphate: History and Legacies, 1804–2004*, vol. 1, *History, Economy and Society*, and vol. 2, *Values, Intellectual Tradition and Contemporary Significance* (Kaduna: Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, 2006). See also A. M. Yakubu, I. M. Jumare, A. G. Saeed, eds., *Northern Nigeria: A Century of Transformation, 1903–2003* (Kaduna: Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, 2005).

Sufi Brotherhoods and the Izala

The two main Sufi brotherhoods, Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya, both have a strong base in Kano in the north. The Izala movement sprang from a reaction against the Sufi brotherhoods after Nigerian independence by legalists who criticized Sufism as “innovation” and hence unacceptable. Although the Qadiriyya originally was associated with the Sokoto Caliphate, because of the perceived affiliation of the founders in the early nineteenth century, it came to be identified with Nasiru Kabara of Kano in the twentieth century. The location of his home and school, just opposite the central mosque and emir’s palace in Kano City, gave the impression that the practice of Qadiriyya was part of the emirate establishment. That it was part of the “Fulani” ethnic side of the old city (as distinct from the “Hausa merchant” side of town) only strengthened that impression. Nasiru linked West African forms of Qadiriyya with a number of North African branches, such as the Shaziliyya (with its two subbranches, Arosiyya and Salamiyya), although over time the local Nigerian leaders tended to predominate over the original Arab leaders. Thus, Nasiru’s main connections were with five main branches of Qadiriyya in Hausaland: Ahl al-Bayt, Kuntiyya, Shinqitiyya, Usmaniyya, and Sammaniyya.

Nasiru’s trip to Baghdad (the international headquarters of Qadiriyya) in 1953 resulted in whole new sets of ritual practices in Hausaland, especially controlled breathing exercises and all-night drumming that could produce trancelike states. In 1958 Nasiru became head of Shahuci Judicial School and Library in Kano, and in 1961 he opened the Islamiyya Senior Primary School in Gwale ward. He served as a *tafsir mallam*, a teacher qualified to render the Koran into Hausa during the month of Ramadan. At the time of Nasiru’s main influence in the 1960s, approximately 25 percent of Kano City residents were followers of this Sunni brotherhood. After Nasiru’s death, his sons continued teaching at his school. At present, Kano still serves as the main Nigerian location for Qadiriyya teaching, practice, and group worship.¹³

Through much of the mid-twentieth century, Tijaniyya, also in Kano, was the dominant brotherhood in northern Nigeria. A traditional form of Tijaniyya stemmed from the nineteenth-century conversions by Umar Futi, a Tukolor Fulani from Senegal, and was based on individual, rather than group, supplementary prayers. With the arrival in Kano during World War II of Ibrahim Niass (a Wolof sheikh from Kaolack, Senegal), a “reformed” version of Tijaniyya developed and emphasized the use of group prayers. Initially it appealed to the Hausa side of Kano City, mainly traders and craftsmen, and was led by the *mallams* from the Salga extended family,

13. See Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*.

commonly known as “Salgawa.” Later, with the accession of Muhammad Sanusi to the emirship in 1954, Reformed Tijaniyya spread to all parts of the city and emirate, and indeed throughout the urban centers of Nigeria. The Tijaniyya was clearly the dominant Sufi brotherhood in Nigeria.

Reformed Tijaniyya also emphasized the need to modernize means of communication. This meant using radio and cassettes, photo-offset print media, and the Hausa language and led to a number of Reformed Tijaniyya youth groups. The Hausa long-distance traders, based in Kano, could stay in brotherhood guesthouses (*zawiyas*) throughout West Africa on their travels. Many chose to set up semipermanent residence in Kaolack, Senegal, to be closer to their spiritual leader, Ibrahim Niass. Although the international headquarters for Tijaniyya was in Fez, Morocco (at the tomb of Ahmed Tijani), it was less likely that northern Nigerians made that pilgrimage than Senegalese disciples, who were able to navigate through the French-speaking bureaucracy. In short, Kano became the major commercial center in Sahelian West Africa (and in northern Nigeria), and the Tijaniyya provided a link along the domestic and international trade routes.

With the death of Niass, his grandsons in Kaolack have continued the family tradition, and wealthy Kano merchants still send gifts and money to the Senegalese city. In Kano, with the death of former emir Sanusi, and spiritual leaders such as Tijani Usman, the Salgawa mallams on the Hausa side of the city have continued the Reformed Tijaniyya tradition, relying on wealthy Hausa merchants for support. The oil boom in Nigeria has produced a class of Hausa-speaking merchants who have the means to build mosques and schools and support brotherhood activities in Nigeria and throughout West Africa.¹⁴

By contrast, the Nigerian Izala movement, with its anti-Sufi bias, continues to be based in Kaduna—and to some extent Jos—which is inhabited more by civil servants and the site of modern light industry without the influence of the traditional Hausa merchants and traders. The key figure in this movement was Abubakar Gummi, teaching from his home in Kaduna. The full name for Izala is Jama'atul Izalatul Bid'ah Wa'ikhamatul Sunnah (Society against Innovation and in Favor of Sunna), and the organization is widely known by its Hausa acronym, JIBWIS.

Details of the competition between Kano and Kaduna, the two major cities in northern Nigeria, are beyond the scope of this monograph, but it came to a head in 1963 when the premier of the Northern Region, Ahmadu Bello, deposed Emir Sanusi of Kano on grounds of financial irregularities.¹⁵ Since the death of Bello in 1966, there have been clashes between Izala youth

14. Ibid.

15. See Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, and Paden, *Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto*.

groups, based in Kaduna and Zaria, and the youth wings of the Reformed Tijaniyya in Kano.

With the death in 1992 of the formative Izala leader, Abubakar Gummi, the Izala movement became decentralized.¹⁶ The focus on “back to the Koran and Hadith,” and the widespread availability of classical texts (including the Koran) in Hausa language, meant that a wide variety of interpretations became possible.¹⁷

It is important to emphasize that the Nigerian Izala movement is not co-terminous with Saudi Wahhabiyya or other forms of Salifiyya. While some elements of Izala may preach a more literal “back to fundamentals” (based on seventh-century precedents), other elements have been among the most modern elements in Nigeria. Certainly, Saudi influence has been significant in Nigeria, not least because oil wealth has allowed an increasing number of pilgrims each year. Yet, Nigerians and Saudis in the modern sectors have more in common as part of the global economy than as ideological soul mates. And Saudi officials are also aware of the strong Sufi legacy in West Africa and are keen to emphasize the Sunni connection rather than a Wahhabi connection. Finally, while the Izala movement appears consolidated, it is quite diverse and decentralized in practice.

Student and Youth Organizations

Five contemporary Nigerian student and youth organizations are described below to illustrate the variety of youth movements. On the student level, three are representative: the Muslim Students Society (MSS), the National Association of Muslim Law Students (NAMLAS), and the Muslim League for Accountability (MULAC). Of the youth organizations, the most important is the National Council of Muslim Youth Organizations of Nigeria. Smaller groups are also salient in light of contemporary politics, for example, the Global Network for Islamic Justice, based in Zamfara State.

The MSS of Nigeria was founded in 1954 in Lagos and in 1956 was based at the University of Ibadan. The predominantly Yoruba students opened a branch at Ahmadu Bello University (Zaria) and Abdullahi Bayero College (Kano) in 1963. In 1969 the national convention elected a Hausa student from Kano as president. By 1970 there were four hundred branches throughout Nigeria located at secondary schools and universities, and a faculty-level organization was set up to parallel the student organization. Weekly meetings were held to discuss Islamic issues, and students were encouraged to help teach Arabic and religious knowledge in primary schools. All

16. See Abubakar Gumi (sic) (with Ismaila Tsiga), *Where I Stand* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1992).

17. For background on Izala, see Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003).

communications within MSS are in English, including the national journal, *Muezzin*. Patrons include most of the major Muslim political-religious leaders in Nigeria. Throughout its history, the theme of MSS has been to emphasize Muslim unity in Nigeria. At present, it is very much part of the establishment in Nigerian higher education and has been influential in the “peace committees” on many higher-education campuses.

More specialized Muslim student organizations have emerged, especially during the Fourth Republic. Of particular significance, given the sharia law issue, have been the NAMLAS and the MULAC, both emerging on northern campuses. MULAC was set up as a male counterpart to the Federation of Muslim Women’s Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN), in which cohorts of women students had helped monitor the 1999, 2003, and 2007 elections. In addition to helping monitor elections, MULAC sought to promote good government. NAMLAS, MULAC, and FOMWAN are very much part of the establishment.

In terms of general youth movements, the largest organization is probably the National Council of Muslim Youth Organizations (NACOMYO) in Nigeria. As with the MSS, it began as a predominantly Yoruba federation of organizations and is still dominated by groups from the southwest, which often take a critical stance on government policies. The national secretariat is located in Ikeja, Lagos. In general, NACOMYO has insisted at every turn that Muslims be represented in the political life of Nigeria. In 2005 this took the form of protesting the lack of Muslim representation (especially from the southwest) at the National Political Reform Conference. Protesters noted that of the 382 members in the conference, only 165 were Muslims compared to 217 Christians. NACOMYO has also been critical of the relative lack of Muslims on the 2005–06 national census council, arguing that “the outrageous and obnoxious appointment of 15 directors of the 2006 population census with 12 Christians and 3 Muslims makes one lose confidence in the headcount from the start.”¹⁸

Finally, a youth group called the Global Network for Islamic Justice (GNIJ) appears to have emerged in the wake of civilian rule in 1999 and is based in Zamfara State. As noted, the sharia issue began in Zamfara, and this organization seems to be a strong proponent of strict sharia law. Members have been active in Internet communications on a wide range of related issues in Nigeria since 1999.¹⁹

18. See <http://AmanaOnline.com/articles/art1129>.

19. See, for example, from the group’s Web site, “*Almajirance: The Menace of Child-Begging: Control and Solution*” and “*Being a Proposal Submitted to Zamfara State Government with Special Consideration to Shari’ah Practicing in Northern States of Nigeria*,” P.O. Box 55, Gusau, Zamfara State, glonij@justice.com (December 2003).

Women's Organizations

The Muslim Sisters Organization (MSO) was set up at universities in Kano and Zaria in the early 1980s to offset the influence of the so-called feminist organizations such as Women in Nigeria (WIN). The MSO has continued on campuses but has become a part of FOMWAN, the dominant women's organization in Nigeria.

FOMWAN's constitution came into effect in October 1985. The headquarters rotates, depending on where the president (*amirah*) is living. (The presidency rotates between states on an annual basis.) FOMWAN was set up to counteract the role of "custom," that is, traditional ethnic culture, in Nigerian Muslim society. In the early 1990s, it had four hundred member associations, of which about three hundred were in Yorubaland. By 2003 there were more than five hundred associations nationally, with most in Yorubaland. The national secretariat is in Abuja. English is the official language of FOMWAN. As noted above, FOMWAN has become an active civic organization on a wide variety of fronts.

Other Muslim women's civic organizations include Professional Muslim Sisters Association (PMSA), based in Abuja, which renders "professional and financial assistance to the less privileged members of society, particularly women and children."²⁰ PMSA has helped to establish women's health and legal aid clinics schools for disadvantaged children, orphanages, and rehabilitation centers for the disabled and for drug addicts, and has begun a microcredit scheme for women.

Other civic groups include the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA), founded in 1999, which has provided legal assistance to women in many of the sharia court cases. In general, WRAPA has been critical of the way sharia law in the northern states has impacted women. A Muslim women's organization, BAOBAB, has been especially active in contesting sharia laws that affect women unfairly.²¹ BAOBAB is effective in part because it has attracted educated northern Muslim women who understand local cultures.

National Umbrella Organizations

One of the earliest umbrella organizations—embracing a wide range of participants and perspectives—was the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI, or Society for the Victory of Islam), set up in January 1961 in Kaduna by Premier Ahmadu Bello. Its focus was northern Nigeria, and it assumed

20. Professional Muslim Sisters Association, pamphlet.

21. See Mohammed T. Ladan, *A Handbook on Sharia Implementation in Northern Nigeria: Women and Children's Rights Focus* (Kaduna: League of Democratic Women [LEADS-Nigeria], 2005), especially chapter 3, "Comments on Safiya Hussaini and Amina Lawal's Cases Decided by Sharia Courts," and chapter 4, "Annotated Decisions of Nigerian Courts Relevant to Women and Children's Rights," <http://www.leadsnigeria.org>.

that every Muslim in the region was a member of the JNI. Abubakar Gummi was a key member of the Central Caretaker Committee, and most of the other members were senior civil servants. In 1964 its influence was extended during the inaugural meeting under the chairmanship of *waziri* Junaidu of Sokoto. The sultan attended, as did representatives from each of the northern provinces. The JNI built a headquarters and an Islamiyya school in Kaduna. After the death of Bello in 1966 and the dissolution of the Northern Region in 1967, the JNI ceased to receive government support but continued to be led by Abubakar Gummi. It focused increasingly on Muslim unity within Nigeria and internationally.

Yet the JNI has remained primarily a northern organization. It has stressed modern education and, in 1967, established the Sheikh Sabbah College in Kaduna with help from the Kuwaiti Sabbah family. The college was the first Muslim secondary school in northern Nigeria. In 1972 it was taken over by the North-Central State government as part of a policy to control all parochial schools. Subsequently, the JNI has continued to be active as a non-governmental organization within Nigeria but with a special sphere of influence in Kaduna State and parts of the north. Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar has attempted to revive the JNI in 2007. However, its role has been assumed partly by the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), which has a more clearly national focus, and is presided over by its president-general, Sultan Sa'ad Abubakar.

In 1974 Muslim leaders from throughout Nigeria met to consider creation of a new organization to cater to the needs of Muslims throughout Nigeria and to serve as a channel of contact with the government on matters of interest. The NSCIA was officially inaugurated in 1974. In the 1980s it became more active under the leadership of Ibrahim Dasuki and Abdul-Lateef Adegbite. After Dasuki became sultan of Sokoto in 1988, he assumed the post of president-general of NSCIA. The deputy president-general was Mustapha Umar El-Kanemi, shehu of Borno, and the secretary-general was Abdul-Lateef Adegbite, seriki of Egbaland. Vice presidents were drawn from the (then) thirty states of the federation. The design of the organization is "federal" but with the three top leaders drawn from the Sokoto caliphate, Borno, and Yorubaland—the three major Muslim culture zones.

The constitution of the NSCIA identifies scope and structure as follows: promoting Islamic solidarity among Muslims in Nigeria and other parts of the world and coordinating external contacts with the Nigerian government and with foreign governments on Islamic matters. The eleven main standing committees are elders, official opinions (*fatwa*), finance, conversion campaigns (*da'wah*), research and policy, youth and social welfare, media, international relations, economic affairs, legal affairs, and pilgrimage.

With the deposition of Ibrahim Dasuki by Sani Abacha in 1996, the leadership of NSCIA went to the incoming sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu

Maccido.²² Until his death in October 2006, Sultan Maccido continued to play an active role in NSCIA, encouraging cooperation throughout Nigeria. As noted, his successor, Sa'ad Abubakar, was selected on November 2, 2006, and formally installed on March 3, 2007. Regular NSCIA meetings are often held at Arewa House in Kaduna, the former home of Northern Region premier Ahmadu Bello and now a research center affiliated with Ahmadu Bello University. Arewa House also serves as a conference center with a focus on peacebuilding and conflict resolution in northern Nigeria.²³

The NSCIA is obviously an establishment organization with both traditional and modern components. It is often seen as the counterpart to the CAN, which is the umbrella organization for the very diverse spectrum of Christian groups, ranging from Roman Catholic and mainstream Protestant to the Yoruba "praying people" movement (Aladura) and inspirational, evangelical, and Pentecostal churches.

With the return to civilian rule in 1999 and the establishment of sharia law in the criminal domain in the twelve northern states, new Muslim organizations have emerged in support of this development. A national umbrella organization, of sorts, has been the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria (SCSN). The SCSN tries to coordinate sharia law across the twelve sharia states, and encourages the extension of sharia in the civil domain in southwestern states. The relationship of the NSCIA and SCSN is not quite clear, but the latter has a special focus on legal domains.²⁴

In addition, regional umbrella groups have emerged during the Fourth Republic, notably, a forum of Northern States Traditional Rulers²⁵ and a Southwest Muslim ummah conference.²⁶

22. See Abdulkadir Adamu and Muhammadu M. Gwadabe, *Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido Abubakar III, The 19th Sultan of Sokoto: The Bridge Builder* (Zaria: Amana Publishers, 2005).

23. See H. Bobboyi and A. M. Yakubu, eds., *Peace-Building and Conflict Resolution in Northern Nigeria: Proceedings of the Northern Peace Conference* (Kaduna: Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, 2005).

24. See "Conference of Muslim Organizations Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria," glonij@justice.com, August 24, 2005, AmanaOnline (accessed September 5, 2005). Thus, "The leaders and representatives of some Muslim Organization under the auspices of the Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria (SCSN) met on Saturday, 15th Rajab, 1426 (20th August, 2005) to discuss important national issues. At the end of their deliberations, the Conference of Muslim Organization (CMO) took the following decisions:" The topics on which positions were taken included: "i. Child rights law; ii. Attempt to cover up the case of American terrorist caught with explosives and arms in Plateau State; iii. Marginalization of Muslims in Nigeria polity; iv. National census; v. Famine in Niger Republic and the abject poverty of millions of Nigerians." The conference called on state governments to release grains from their strategic reserves to bring down the cost of grains.

25. See "Constitutional Amendment Divides Northern Emirs," *ThisDay*, April 30, 2006.

26. See "South-West Muslims Now under One Umbrella," *Daily Triumph*, May 3, 2006. Thus, "Worried by the lack of cohesive leadership and unity among their members, Muslims in the South West yesterday resolved to come together as a body to speak with one voice. This is one of the highlights of a five-point resolution reached at the end of a one-day Stakeholders Summit of the South West Muslim Ummah held in Ibadan, Oyo State. The group, under the interim leadership of Prof. Babatunde Fafunwa, resolved to speak with one voice on

Antiestablishment Networks

A Muslim youth group emerged in the north during the military period (1984–99). Called “Shiites” by the Nigerian Muslim establishment, members of the group referred to each other as brothers (*ikhwan* or *‘yan brotha*). Economic problems at the time, few prospects for some graduates of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) in Zaria, and the prohibition on political forms of protest all contributed to this youth group’s formation.

Inspired by the Iranian Revolution, and apparently with funding from Iran, Ibrahim Zakzaky, an economics graduate from ABU, challenged the corruption of the Nigerian military regimes and called for a return to an Islamic model of government. Zakzaky and his followers clashed with authorities in Katsina in 1991. Finally, in 1996, Zakzaky was jailed by the Abacha regime. With the Fourth Republic, he was released and has continued to be an active critic of the Muslim establishment in Nigeria. For example, in June 2005 there were confrontations between “Shiite” groups and the emirate authorities in Sokoto over access to the central mosque.

Despite efforts by the northern establishment to co-opt the “Shiite brothers,” they have resisted, for the most part, from being included in the formal umbrella organizations described above. Although they did not engage in ostensible violent behavior immediately after the return to civilian rule,²⁷ this changed on July 18, 2007, when a Sunni cleric, Umar Dan Maishiyya, was killed while leaving a mosque in Sokoto. He had been leading the verbal attacks on the Shiites in Sokoto, calling them “infidels.” His death sparked reprisals and the killing of at least five Shiites and the destruction of scores of homes.

An even more violent network has emerged since 2003, sometimes called “the Taliban.” In December 2003 an incident occurred in Yobe State in the

matters of development and welfare of the Muslim community in particular and humanity in general. . . . The group, which is yet to adopt a name, noted that its guiding principle shall at all times be consulting themselves in offering comments and solutions on matters of Islamic and national interest. . . . Earlier in his welcome address, Prof. Fafunwa had explained that the group decided to focus on the South West because Muslims in the region had suffered double disadvantage as the south is generally regarded as ‘Christian’ in spite of the preponderance of Muslims.” Abdul-Lateef Adegbite, secretary-general of the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), the Aare Musulumi of Yorubaland, Alhaji Abdul Azeez Arisekola Alao, and representatives from Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Lagos and Oyo states also attended the conference.

27. During the Abacha military period in the 1990s, the Shiites became a presence in Kano, often attracting young men who could not afford to pay the bride price for marriage but who were attracted to the traditional Shiite doctrine of “temporary marriages” practiced in the Middle East. Their dress became distinctive, and they celebrated such Shiite festivals as Ashura during the month of Muharram. Increasingly, the Shiite identity became self-ascriptive. Yet, according to scholarly studies of this movement, the basic theology is still Sunni. See Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria*.

northeast. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs,

A student-led Islamic sect launched an armed uprising . . . with the aim of setting up a Taliban-style Muslim state in northern Nigeria. . . . [T]he authorities were swift to quell the insurrection. However, political analysts and security officials fear the emergence of the Al Sunna Wal Jamma (Followers of the Prophet) may be an indication that extremist Islamic groups have found enough foothold in Nigeria to make Africa's most populous country a theatre for worse sectarian violence than it has seen in recent years and actions of terrorism.²⁸

The fact that the leader of the group had taken the name "Mullah Umar" and that the group was flying the flag of the Taliban in Afghanistan raised questions as to whether a Taliban organization had indeed emerged in Nigeria.

Although most members of the Yobe "Taliban" group were killed by the police, the remnants appear to have dispersed throughout northern Nigeria. While the number in this group is estimated by Nigerian authorities to be small (perhaps in the two hundred to three hundred range), they are well organized and structured. They are armed and actively recruit. Their main focus seems to be on the Nigerian government, which is seen as a puppet of the United States and Great Britain. Their goal is to establish an Islamic government throughout Nigeria. The extent of external support and funding the group receives is not clear. The network, or structure of the organization, is very much underground, but it appears to be drawing on educated (or semieducated) young people who are disillusioned with what they perceive as the injustice of the current situation in Nigeria. Nigerian religious leaders who have met with members of this group suggest there is a lot of idealism but not much serious religious knowledge informing the group. Indeed, the term "taliban" has been used for centuries in northern Nigeria in reference to students of Islam and does not have the negative connotations common in the West.

Adding to the ambiguity of the "Taliban" phenomenon is an incident in Kano that occurred between the April 14 gubernatorial election and the presidential election on April 21, 2007. Rumors were rampant. Kano sources and the media characterized the so-called Taliban as a community of about 200–300 people, including men with red headbands and women who were completely covered in Afghan-style burqas, who, along with their children, had come from outside Nigeria—from Niger or Chad—and not speaking

28. Integrated Regional Information Network/IRIN, "Nigeria: Muslim Fundamentalist Uprising Raises Fear of Terrorism," January 25, 2004.

Arabic or Hausa. Since they did not speak Hausa or Arabic, the assumption was that they must have come from the east—Chad or Borno—rather than the north. This community was located near the waterworks in Challawa just outside of Kano City. Apparently, it had been there for some time, trading with local Kano people, via hand signs, their needs for food and water. A clash with local authorities in mid-April 2007 led to the killing of more than a dozen police. After burying their own dead, the “Taliban” group simply disappeared. Subsequently there has been almost no mention of this group in the press, even though some were caught unexpectedly on the road to Kaduna in a roadblock after the presidential election.²⁹ Some observers describe the group as a cultlike “flight” (*hijra*) group, although such a distinctive group would have been noticed by local village heads or district heads. Given the tensions of the election and the attempt of the PDP federal government to unseat the stronghold of the All Nigerian People’s Party (ANPP) in Kano, many speculated locally that the government may have been behind this “timely” event. Others see it as related to the killing of Sheikh Ja’afaru Adam (noted earlier). Some local observers describe the Kano “Taliban” as “hired bandits from Chad.” Kano State set up a commission of inquiry, but no report has been issued as of fall 2007.

In November 2007, Nigerian authorities arrested five so-called al-Qaeda militants in the north, accusing them of preparing to attack government facilities, and reported that three of them had received training in a “terrorist camp” in Algeria. Many informed Nigerians dismiss this claim. Clearly, disillusioned youth in the Muslim north are an issue of concern to the Nigerian government, to the established Muslim organizations, and to the international community.³⁰ Given porous borders, the possibilities for

29. A large truck was stopped at a routine checkpoint on the Kaduna road and was found, surprisingly, to be filled with so-called “Taliban.” This suggests some sort of logistical infrastructure to the group, since they had access to weapons and transportation. At the time of the presidential election, there were many rumors as to the identity of the group, from Shiites (because of their dress) to remnants of the Maitatsine movement, to north African al-Qaeda affiliates, to Chadians, among others. The bottom line was that most observers agreed that they were not Nigerians, although even this is open to question. The “Taliban incident” caused the cancellation of a trip to Kano by international observer groups to oversee the election. The author was privileged to discuss this issue with the deputy inspector general (DIG) of police in Abuja, April 19, 2007, although at the time the police were very uncertain as to what was happening. The DIG indicated that the police were flying a plane over the Kano area to try to identify the area where the “Taliban” were located.

30. By coincidence, in late April, the U.S. State Department issued its controversial report stating that Nigeria was becoming a “terrorist camp.” This added to the perception in opposition areas of northern Nigeria that the Obasanjo government was working to create a sense of crisis, which could even justify state of emergency decrees. See “U.S. Report Names Nigeria as ‘Terrorist Camp,’” *Guardian*, May 2, 2007. Thus, “A report by the United States (U.S.) government has listed Nigeria as a recruiting group for terrorist organizations. The report added that not only are there individuals with suspected ties to terrorist groups around the world in Nigeria, such activities as recruitment of terrorists are common trends in the country. . . . According to its yearly report titled ‘Country Reports on Terrorism,’ the U.S. said, ‘While the Nigerian government did not support international terrorism or terrorists,

transnational network links are high. How the dynamics play out in this establishment versus antiestablishment confrontation, which so far has been quite localized, remains to be seen. Clearly, an overreaction by the authorities in their hunt for “terrorists” would exacerbate the situation.

Nigerian Links to Transnational Systems

Much attention is given to Nigeria’s leadership role in the fifteen-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the fifty-three-member African Union (AU). Many ECOWAS facilities are in Abuja (including secretariat offices and a parliamentary convention center). Nigeria has provided the bulk of the military resources used to stabilize countries in West Africa, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, through the organization’s military component known as ECOMOG.³¹

The African Union (AU), launched in 2002, evolved under the chairmanship of Nigerian president Obasanjo until new leadership emerged in spring 2006. Successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the AU includes the Peace and Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force, and the Council of the Wise. The AU is heavily involved in Sudan through its African Mission in Sudan (AMIS), which began in June 2004 as an observer mission and within a year had evolved into a military force with 2,300 troops deployed in the Darfur region. Most of these troops were Nigerian. In 2007, there was an agreement that a hybrid AU/UN peacekeeping force of considerable size would be established in Sudan, although this remained under negotiation with the government in Khartoum. Nigeria has been much more reluctant to contribute to an AU peacekeeping force in Somalia, which is seen as beyond its national sphere of concern.

The porous and fragile nature of international boundaries in Africa have contributed to a natural linkage between Nigeria and its neighbors. When the boundaries were drawn by Europeans at the Berlin Conference (1884–85), often straight lines on a map, as a prelude to “the scramble for Africa” by Britain, France, Germany, and others, Nigeria’s major ethnic groups were separated by country borders. Nigeria shares the Hausa-Fulani, a major group, with Niger Republic, the Yoruba, a dominant element, with Benin Republic, the Igbo with southern Cameroon; and the Fulani with northern Cameroon.

there were some individuals and private groups in the country with ties to probable terrorist elements in Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, and Libya. Members of terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda and the al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (AQIM/GSPC) have operated and recruited in Nigeria.”

31. See Abegunrin and Akomolafe, eds., *Nigeria in Global Politics*.

The intense debates in the early postcolonial era wrestled with the question of whether the artificial colonial boundaries should be respected, or whether there should be an attempt to reconstruct some semblance of pre-colonial logic to the political communities. It was agreed in 1963, with the founding of the OAU, to respect the inherited colonial boundaries as a way to avoid irredentism, bloodshed, and perpetual conflict. But the underlying realities persist and have become more apparent as trade links between English- and French-speaking countries in West Africa have deepened, perhaps mirroring the closer ties between Great Britain and France within the European Union.

Nonstate Transnational Links

At the same time, in the interior of West Africa and in many of the coastal cities, Hausa has become the major lingua franca for grassroots level commerce, much as Swahili has been in East Africa. The oil-backed Nigerian currency (naira) is used widely throughout West Africa. Many of the newer Nigerian industries are producing goods distributed throughout the region.

Since much of the focus in this monograph is on the predominantly Muslim areas of northern Nigeria, the geographic regions of the country should also be explored. The ecology of West Africa (and Nigeria) is divided essentially into two zones: savanna and rain forest. Much of the savanna region—between the Sahara desert to the north and the rainforest to the south, from Senegal in the west to Chad in the east—is overwhelmingly Muslim. Many basic trade and migration patterns in the savanna zone thus move from west to east. This is also the historic pilgrimage route to Mecca and Medina, which continues from West Africa through Chad and Sudan to the Arabian peninsula. One of the major ethnolinguistic groups in West Africa, the Fulani (also called Peul and Fellata) spread from Senegal to Sudan. The Fulani were also the major factor in establishing the Sokoto caliphate in the nineteenth century, which stretched from Niger through Nigeria and into Cameroon. Many of the early Sufi leaders were Fulani. Because of the pastoral herder nature of Fulani groups, as distinct from the settled agriculture of the Hausa, they were often identified by their clan names even though linguistically they were considered Fulani.

After the Muslim reformist movement conquered the Hausa states in the early nineteenth century, the high degree of intermarriage resulted in what is now designated as a Hausa-Fulani group (with Hausa as the lingua franca rather than Fulfulde). Rural Fulani, sometimes called Bororo, still speak Fulfulde and move their cattle around in northern Nigeria, depending on the seasons. The bloody conflict in 2004 in Plateau State was largely between herder Fulani and local settled agricultural groups, whom

the Fulani accused of stealing their cattle and not respecting the traditional rights of usage to graze in return for manure on their fields. The farmers, in turn, accused the Fulani of ruining their crops by moving cattle through the fields. The fact that the Fulani were Muslim and the local farmers were largely indigenous religious followers or Christian added to the perception that this was a religious conflict.

The historic links between northern Nigeria and Sudan are important to understand in light of contemporary politics. Nearly one-quarter of the Muslim population of contemporary Sudan is regarded as “Nigerian”—often a term meaning “West African,” because of historical migration patterns, especially by Fulani (Fellata) groups. The situation is complicated by the fact that Nigerians consider themselves African, while many Sudanese see their identities as Arab, African, or Arab-African. Notably, African identities in Sudan may include Christian ethnic groups in southern Sudan and also Muslim ethnic groups in the west. Often “African” is used to indicate “non-Arabic-speaking” populations. (Arab is not a racial category, because Arabs may be of any physical type, but rather it represents a language category, that is, those who speak Arabic as their first language. Thus, in Nigeria, the Shuwa Arabs in the northeast are indistinguishable physically from other Nigerians.) This is a delicate issue since Arabic-speaking Sudanese also regard themselves as African, and Sudan has always been a member of the OAU and, more recently, the AU.

This issue is most clear in the conflict in the western region of Darfur (“The Land of Fur”) between Muslim settled African farmers (especially the Fur groups) and Muslim Arabic-speaking herder-raiders, known as *janjaweed*, who are in alliance with the powers in Khartoum. There is great variety among the non-Arab groups in Darfur, as there is among the Arab clans, and it would be a great mistake to see the Darfurian crisis as simply African versus Arab.

Khartoum has long been not only an epicenter of Arab culture and influence but also a confluence of sub-Saharan and north African populations. During the colonial era, many northern Nigerians were sent by the British to Khartoum (or its neighboring twin city, Omdurman) for higher education, especially in Arabic and Islamic legal studies, which were essential in administering sharia law. Khartoum was considered “safer” by the British than places such as Cairo. As a result, many of the first generation of legal scholars in northern Nigeria after 1960 were trained in Khartoum, including the grand *khadi* of northern Nigeria, Abubakar Gummi. Because Khartoum was also on the pilgrimage route from Nigeria, some of the early Nigerian diplomats were sent to Khartoum as “pilgrimage officers,” including Ibrahim Dasuki (who later became sultan of Sokoto, 1988–96).

In the 1960s and 1970s, many of the senior professors at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria and Bayero University, Kano especially in the fields of

law, Islamic studies, and Arabic, were seconded from universities in Sudan. They were English speaking and professional and made a real contribution to the establishment of higher education in northern Nigeria. Some even self-identified as Fulani. Over time, they were replaced by a new generation of northern Nigerian scholars, some of whom had studied in Khartoum or Omdurman.

An equally important feature of northern Nigerian links in West Africa has to do with the Senegalese connection, through the Tijaniyya Sufi brotherhood. North Africa was off-limits to West Africans during World War II because of the fighting, and, as a consequence, Kano became a major military base and airport during World War II. Cut off from northern routes, Muslim Sufi leaders in Senegal began to make the pilgrimage by way of Kano. In particular, Sheikh Ibrahim Niass of Kaolack, Senegal, became linked to the emirate authorities in Kano and also to some of the long-distance Hausa trading groups. While many in Kano were already affiliated with the Tijaniyya through the nineteenth-century efforts of Umar Futi, the spread of Reformed Tijaniyya, linked to Niass, became a major pattern in the post-World War II era and into the early independence period. From Kano, the movement spread throughout northern Nigeria (except Borno) and well into the southwest.

The emir of Kano, Muhammad Sanusi, was the key connection with Ibrahim Niass. A successor to Sanusi, Ado Bayero, who came to the emirship in 1963 and was still serving as of 2007, had previously served as Nigerian ambassador to Senegal, in part because of the large number of Kano (and Nigerian) pilgrims who were making visits to or settling in Kaolack. Many of the Kano long-distance traders, that is, those functioning throughout Nigeria and West Africa, were affiliated with the Reformed Tijaniyya brotherhood. Thus, a strong transnational link was established with areas that had previously been off limits to Nigerians, the French-speaking areas of West Africa. And, as previously noted, the Hausa language, rather than English or French, has become the lingua franca of the grassroots commercial world.

Ibrahim Niass was also a key liaison with the international base of Tijaniyya in Fez, Morocco, and he had excellent ties with the Saudi royal family. On many occasions he accompanied senior Nigerian pilgrims on pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. That he was a West African Sufi was less important to the Saudis than his Sunni credentials and their obvious desire to establish ties with Muslims in West Africa. Niass's Nigerian base in Kano, rather than Sokoto, also was important given the growing tensions between Sokoto and Kano in the early independence era. Yet, the influence of transnational Sufism in the postindependence era was now a permanent feature of the Nigerian scene. The other major Sufi brotherhood in northern Nigeria, the Qadiriyya, under the leadership of Sheikh Nasiru Kabara of Kano, also became involved in transnational links, especially

with Sufi groups in North Africa. The international base of Qadiriyya was at the Baghdad tomb of the founding saint, Abdul Qadir al-Jailani, but there is little evidence that West Africans visited Baghdad as a pilgrimage site. The dominant feature of both Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya in Nigeria was their insistence that local West African rather than North African Arabs assume leadership roles.

The stage was now set for the ideological confrontation between those northern Nigerians who followed Sufism (of whatever variety) and those who were of a younger generation. The latter tended to be Western educated and felt they did not have time for the voluntary Sufi prayers and rituals but wanted to get back to the Koran and the sunna—that is, the actions and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad—as their sole reference in religious practice. The oil revenues of the 1970s and thereafter made possible a rapid expansion of secondary schools and university facilities. As noted, English was the medium of instruction, which facilitated the access of a whole generation of northerners to the broader English-speaking world, including portions of the Muslim world.

Abubakar Gummi was the principal leader and teacher of this Koran and sunna movement, which became known, as discussed earlier, as the Izala. From his home base in Kaduna, Gummi led a life of piety and teaching, especially after the dissolution of the northern Nigeria region in 1966. Prior to 1966, he served as grand khadi, or chief Islamic law officer and judge, in northern Nigeria. An outstanding Arabic and Islamic scholar, Gummi also interpreted the Koran into Hausa, which made it more widely available to non-Arabic-speaking local constituencies.³² Trained in Khartoum, Gummi was the main liaison to the Saudis for senior Nigerian pilgrims and could garner international support (mainly from Gulf and Saudi Arabian sources) for schools and mosques in Nigeria.

In short, Nigerian Muslims have a strong legacy of transnational links, whether of the ethnic variety—the Fulani throughout West Africa and the Hausa in Niger—or of the religious variety—Senegal, Morocco, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia. Historically, the trans-Saharan trade routes to Algeria and Morocco were also significant, and some ethnic groups, such as the Tuareg, who live mainly in what is now Mali and Niger Republic, as well as Nigeria, were skilled in facilitating such trade. Commercial cities such as Kano were the sub-Saharan entrepôts, receiving and sending goods to North Africa.

More recently, with the widespread use of English after about 1970, northern Muslims had access to Muslims in Great Britain and throughout the British Commonwealth countries. At the same time, Hausa language also became a lingua franca in northern Nigeria and in many parts of West

32. See *Alkur'ani Maigirma Zuwa Harshen Hausa* [The Glorious Koran in Hausa Language], interpreted by Abubakar Gummi, n.d.

Africa. Many of the upcoming generation of northern university graduates were thus fluent in English, Arabic, and Hausa (plus, in some cases, a variety of indigenous mother tongues). This multilingual capacity is quite remarkable. As the post-cold war era of globalization unfolded (including new technologies of communication and transportation), northern Nigerian Muslims were feeling confident in their place in the larger political and economic scheme of things.

Yet, with the death of Gummi in September 1992, new patterns of Islamic practice emerged as the Izala movements (based as they were on the Koran) moved to a wide variety of local interpretations and leadership patterns. By 2000, with sharia law in the twelve far-northern states, there was no single formula or pattern. Some of the local patterns of ethnoreligious conflict throughout the north also had very different root causes. Additionally, the diffusion of authority and the ready access to Koranic sources meant that those younger Muslims educated in the languages and ideas of transnational contexts had a variety of lifestyle, political, and religious options, including flight (*hijra*) from the “land of injustice,” that is, Nigeria in its oil boom “get-rich-quick” mode. The gap between grassroots, or civil society, and the infrastructure and transnational reach of the Nigerian state grew wider, especially during the military period between 1984 and 1999.

State-Sector Transnational Links

In many ways, the state-based subregionalisms of Africa have been the building blocks for the AU. ECOWAS has been the key structure in West Africa. Other African subregional components include the East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the South African Development Community (SADC). Headquartered in Addis Ababa, the AU, as mentioned, has an African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and one in Burundi (AMIB).

The formation of the AU emerged between 1999 and 2002. The Sirte Extraordinary Session in 1999 designed the AU, and the Lome Summit in 2000 agreed to the Constitutive Act of the Union. The Lusaka Summit in 2001 designed the implementation process, and the Durban Summit in 2002 launched the AU and witnessed the First Assembly of Heads of State of the African Union. While all AU members are equal, clearly Nigeria, Libya, and South Africa (plus to a lesser extent, Kenya and Algeria) dominate and often pay the dues for the less-rich states. The involvement of the AU (especially Nigeria) in Darfur to protect civilians emphasizes the reality that Nigeria is becoming the colossus of Africa—a point not always appreciated by smaller, non-energy-producing states. Since prior to 2007 the United Nations Security Council had been unable (or unwilling) to get involved in Darfur, Nigeria had become crucial in convening peace talks in Abuja and

in supplying peacekeeping groups. The 2006 Abuja accords were intended as a peace settlement but fell apart because some rebel groups were not represented. As noted, in 2007, the United Nations Security Council has been edging toward supplementing the AU involvement in Darfur, pending negotiations with Khartoum. In October 2007, peace talks were held in Sirte, Libya. Yet, several of the Darfurian "rebel" groups were reluctant to go to Libya, in part because it was an Arab state. Meanwhile, twenty-six thousand UN/AU peacekeeping troops were scheduled to go to Sudan in early 2008.

The AU has also been directly involved in discussions regarding reform of the UN Security Council. In July 2005 the fifty-three members of the AU proposed that six new permanent members be added to the Security Council, two of which would be from Africa. Presumably Nigeria and South Africa would be the leading candidates, although Egypt was also contesting for the position. President Obasanjo had suggested publicly on numerous occasions that since one in five black people in the world is Nigerian, it would be appropriate for Nigeria to be a permanent member. With the expectation in 2005 that the 2007 Nigerian presidential elections would produce a northern and Muslim president, this would mean that, for the first time, a Muslim-led country would be a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

The politics of the United Nations have shifted since 2005, but the election of Umaru Yar'Adua in 2007 does provide a Nigerian Muslim civilian president for the first time since 1983. The UN Security Council membership issue was still under discussion within the General Assembly in 2007, but back room negotiations have not reached any consensus on enlargement of the council or on which African country would be the choice for the seat.

Also, as of 2005, former president Obasanjo may have been more popular in the international community than he was at home. But the attempt to change the constitution to allow for a third term and the obvious rigging of the 2007 election has altered many of these perceptions. On May 16, 2006, the Nigerian National Assembly rejected efforts to change the constitution to allow for a third term, but Obasanjo's international reputation was already damaged. President Yar'Adua's participation in the UN General Assembly session in September 2007 was well received and served as his major debut on the international scene. His modesty, integrity, and intelligence are appreciated, but he still remains an unknown quantity in the eyes of many at the global level.

At the same time, Nigeria has been very active in a range of other international organizations, including OPEC, where Rilwan Lukman from Kaduna has played a key role as secretary-general. Lukman has served a record eight times as president and secretary-general of OPEC and is high-

ly regarded as a leading international statesman. He served as a minister in the first administration of President Obasanjo (1999–2003), but he became disillusioned with the money politics and heavy handed role of the president and returned to the OPEC headquarters in Vienna.

In the World Trade Organization (WTO), Nigeria has been a strong proponent of eliminating agricultural subsidies in the advanced industrial countries. President Obasanjo was a guest observer at the G-8 meeting in Scotland in July 2005 and, given the London bombings that occurred during the conference, was seen to be a strong ally in the global war on terrorism. The next year the G-8 apparently declined to invite Obasanjo because of his efforts to extend his administration beyond its two-term constitutional mandate. The June 2007 G-8 summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, included President Yar'Adua, despite domestic protests in Nigeria over the flawed election. Two of the key issues at the G-8 in Germany were Africa and climate change.

Nigeria's involvement with the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) has been rocky, but the country now plays an active role in it. During the Abacha period, the British Commonwealth expelled Nigeria after the 1995 hangings of dissidents (including Ken Sara Wiwa) who had been implicated in the murders of some traditional rulers in the Delta area. But in December 2003, the meetings convened in Abuja and were attended by Queen Elizabeth II.

Most salient from the perspective of this monograph, Nigeria joined the Saudi-inspired OIC in 1986 under the Babangida administration. In part, this was as a political balancing act by Babangida who was in the process of recognizing Israel. Nigeria had ruptured relations with Israel in 1973 after the OAU expressed concern that "Israeli forces crossed the West Bank into Egypt, hence African soil."³³ Egypt was a member of the OAU, and African states protested the Israeli invasion as an act of solidarity.

The guidelines for OIC membership at that time were that a country should be at least 50 percent Muslim and have a Muslim head of state. When Nigeria was accepted by the OIC, a political crisis developed in the country, with the CAN protesting. Subsequently, Nigeria has been represented at OIC summits by diplomats or senior officials and has tried to downplay the controversy. At the same time, the OIC remains an official observer at the United Nations and is very much a part of the international community.

The 2004 OIC summit in Malaysia, at which the three-year leadership term shifted from Qatar to Malaysia, represented a wide cross section of Muslim countries and societies and saw observers from Russia, India, and other nations. With a Muslim president of Nigeria in 2007, it is not clear

33. See Alufolajimi Adejokun, "Nigeria and Israel: Change and Continuity in Diplomatic Relations," in *Nigeria in Global Politics*, 172.

whether Nigeria will be more active in the OIC. (In general, Nigerian voters focus more on domestic issues than international ones.) Yet, the pattern is clear. Since the inception of the Fourth Republic—and especially since the 2003 surge in oil prices—Nigeria is playing an increasingly pivotal role in international affairs.

Issues of International Security

The new global realities since September 11, 2001, include the fact that non-state networks have attacked not only Western interests abroad (embassies in Africa, naval ships, and other targets) and Western countries at home (London and Madrid) but also Muslim civilians in places as diverse as Morocco, Indonesia, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. The al-Qaeda network and its affiliates are presumed to be active in at least sixty countries. Osama bin Laden has specifically mentioned Nigeria as ripe for Islamic revolution. Not surprisingly, the Nigerian government takes this threat seriously, as do others in the international community.

Official Nigerian government statements claim that there are no al-Qaeda cells in Nigeria, and most U.S. officials agree.³⁴ Nigerian immigration authorities have turned back certain Pakistani preachers at the Lagos airport. Nigerian police and military were involved in violent clashes with so-called Taliban elements in Yobe in December 2003, in which dozens were killed. The Nigerian State Security Service (SSS) and National Intelligence Agency have been very active within Nigeria. In early spring 2007, the SSS detained suspects in Maiduguri for questioning in Abuja. And the Kano incident in April 2007 has been mentioned above.

Yet the prevailing mood within the northern Muslim community seemed to be skeptical, sensing that the Obasanjo government was using this issue to increase its powers, appease its foreign allies, and intimidate its political opposition. Since many in southern Nigeria (and in the international community) have only stereotypes in mind when it comes to the Nigerian Muslim community, the whole question of perceptions and definitions becomes critical. Many southern Nigerian publications tend toward an alarmist position, complete with doctored photos, claiming that the “jihadists” and “terrorists” from the north are somehow trying to take over Nigeria. The ethnoreligious clashes in Plateau State and Kano in May 2004 added fuel to this perceptual fire. The earlier clashes in Kaduna, including the so-called Miss World riots in late 2002, were seen as part of vast Islamist conspiracy. The symbol of “sharia” was used to mobilize Christian

34. See Princeton Lyman and J. Stephen Morrison, “The Terrorist Threat in Africa,” *Foreign Affairs* (January-February 2004), 75ff. Yet, note Nigerian government allegations in November 2007 that five “al-Qaeda” members intended to attack government facilities in three of Nigeria’s largest cities.

groups. Terms like "Wahhabi" and "Izala" appeared in some elements of the Nigerian press and Internet as synonymous with terrorists.

As Nigerian politics prepared for the 2007 elections, these perceptual challenges and negative attacks on individuals and groups increased, especially against the major leader of the opposition, Muhammadu Buhari. The need for communication, education, and mediation could not have been greater. Into this mix, the real security concerns of the international community became extremely sensitive. A storm of protest and resentment broke out in the Nigerian press and on the Internet when, in spring 2005, parts of a U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC) report from January 2005 were published, suggesting that Nigeria might become a failed state. The U.S. naval presence in the Gulf of Guinea also became an issue in the Nigerian press, including questions as to how much transparency the Nigerian government was providing. An editorial in the Lagos- and Abuja-based *ThisDay*,³⁵ a news daily generally sympathetic to the government, expressed concern that the Nigerian government was not sharing with the Nigerian people the country's emerging military links with the United States in the volatile Gulf of Guinea coastal waters.

Clearly, U.S.-Nigerian naval cooperation in a globally significant oil zone has taken on more importance since 9/11. While turmoil in the on shore and off shore oil-producing areas of the Delta has been essentially a Nigerian domestic matter since the early 1990s, it now caught the world's attention. International oil companies often are required to provide their own security,³⁶ and the kidnapping of expatriate oil workers, which has happened at both onshore sites and offshore rigs, inevitably is a matter of international concern, especially for the countries whose citizens are involved.

35. "US Navy in Gulf of Guinea," *ThisDay*, July 5, 2005. Thus, "with the news of increased presence of US naval ships in the Gulf, Nigerians are still largely in the lurch as to what it all represents. The little that is known about the military manoeuvre came from the US military authorities. It took weeks before the Nigerian Army volunteered a terse statement. A spokesman of the US military said that deployment of troops in the Gulf region which began six months ago, is to 'deter potential terrorists in the global war on terrorism as well as counter its proliferation and organized crime.' Admitting increased deployment of US marines in the Gulf, US authorities said the troops are there not only for training exercise but to enhance quick response to possible terrorist attacks within the West African region whose strategic importance to the US has been on the rise. US's increasing dependence on oil from the Gulf of Guinea nations makes it easy to understand any military involvement by the country in the region. The country's annual West African Training Course (WATC) which started since 1979 is perhaps one evidence of its increasing concern about the security situation of the region."

36. "Shell to Acquire 70 Boats to Boost Security in N/Delta," *BusinessDay* (Lagos and Abuja), May 17, 2006. Thus, "Royal Dutch Shell, the Anglo-Dutch energy group, has issued a tender for about 70 boats in an effort to strengthen security in Nigeria's delta region. According to a Shell tender document obtained by the Financial Times and dated January of this year, the boats would be required '24 hours a day, seven days a week . . . to support round-the-clock drilling and production operations of Shell.' Shell has been the target of attacks in the Niger Delta this year. The attacks have cut oil production by 455,000 barrels per day, basically halving output, and coincided with the kidnappings of several Shell oil contractors."

Since the coastal oil-producing areas of Nigeria are outside the Muslim demographic zone, the tensions are more often between elements of local ethnic communities, such as Ogoni, Ijaw, and Itsekiri. Confrontations have also occurred between local groups, often unemployed youth, and the Nigerian government, or the international oil companies, or both. The Nigerian military has been used, sometimes in a heavy-handed manner, to put down local unrest. Hence, the increasing cooperation of U.S. and Nigerian military units raises larger issues, not only of sovereignty but also of how ordinary people perceive the global war on terrorism. The need for conflict resolution is critical as an alternative to military action.

The increasing emphasis on far offshore, deep-water drilling, plus the political insistence that the international oil companies do more refining in Nigeria, joins the issue of domestic and international security concerns. While turmoil in the oil-producing areas of Nigeria has not been linked to al-Qaeda types of activities, the Nigerian government is increasingly likely to take preventive, rather than reactive, approaches to security issues in these areas. In all likelihood, this means closer cooperation with elements of the international community. The need for appropriate political leadership on all sides is imperative to manage the sensitivities of these issues and to provide effective deterrents to international criminal activities.

Transnational Issues of Economic Development

The contemporary global economy has largely bypassed Nigeria, except in the oil-producing industries. In part, this has been a legacy of political disengagement during the military regimes of the 1990s, although the environment has changed dramatically since 1999. But global economic actors also are watching Nigeria for signs of corruption and bureaucratic mismanagement.

For example, although a U.S. consortium produced the master plan for the federal capital in Abuja in the late 1970s,³⁷ very few U.S. companies were involved in the design and construction efforts. Japanese and German companies, who were not under the constraints of the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, took the lead. Subsequently, U.S. pressure led countries within the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to take a tougher line on corruption, including not allowing "facilitation fees" as tax-deductible business expenses.

Despite congressional restrictions on aid to OPEC countries, the Nigerian transition from military to civilian government in 1999 allowed Congress

37. See *The Master Plan for Abuja: The New Federal Capital of Nigeria* (Federal Capital Development Authority, 1979). The author was one of two U.S. social scientists who participated in this project.

to fund a series of “transition initiatives,” administered by USAID, to strengthen this democratic development. The international community has had a real stake in the success of democracy in Nigeria. During her term, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright selected Nigeria as one of four countries to receive special resources in its transition to democracy. Subsequently, the war on terrorism has resulted in concessionary aid in a variety of ways.

Yet, as noted, economic development is primarily a domestic matter. The unusual advantage that Nigeria has is not only its oil wealth but also its human capital. These human resources are dispersed internationally. How they interact with domestic interests and resources remains to be seen. The international community is well aware that Nigerian criminal groups have become globalized—especially in the area of drugs and confidence scams. Yet, there have been increasing instances where overseas Nigerians are using their resources in a legitimate and constructive way in their home areas and within the Nigerian macroeconomic environment.

In short, Nigeria may be at a tipping point, toward either constructive development or a situation in which turmoil and corruption prevail. The efforts of the former finance minister, who has World Bank experience, and her “dream team” of economists may have been a necessary but not sufficient condition in effecting meaningful reforms. The real direction will be set by broad segments of Nigerian society as they come to grips with the challenges of nation building.

Finally, because of its “mono-crop” economy (that is, its oil and gas), Nigeria has had less contact with Arab business communities, except through OPEC. The Lebanese merchants in Nigeria—mainly Maronite and Shiite—have gradually been displaced by the emerging Nigerian business class. As Nigerian oil wealth circulates at higher socioeconomic levels within society, some of the Nigerian Muslim oil beneficiaries are exploring investment opportunities in Dubai and the Gulf states.

In overview, the sources of Nigerian influence and significance within the Muslim world revolve around its demographic size, its oil economy, its prototypical West African approach to religion (including Sufism), its people-of-the-book balance of identities, and its experiments with political mechanisms (such as the federal character approach) to accommodate ethnoreligious diversity. Historically, Islam in Nigeria has had trans-Saharan connections with North Africa, but, more important, it has provided the west-east links in the Sahelian zone of West Africa. In the postindependence era, and with oil revenues coming on stream, the Nigerian links with Saudi Arabia have increased through pilgrimage opportunities and through an increased awareness of their joint Sunni heritage.

