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By SP NARA Date 1/22/08 35

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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DECLASSIFICATION DATE 6/14/76

PER Sue F. Patuck OFFICE AF/W

October 6, 1969

FADRC FOI CASE NO. 620370

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Nigeria

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PA/HO Department of State

E.O. 12958, as amended

April 21, 2005

Our present course emphasizes relief. We are also probing for opportunities to stimulate mediation efforts and talks between the belligerents.

RELIEF:

Night flights by Joint Church Aid (JCA) and the French Red Cross, both illegal in Nigerian eyes, continue to be Biafra's sole relief channel. Last week we delivered two additional C-97 aircraft to JCA over strong Nigerian objections. The bulk of the JCA's air lift is provided by C-97s which are flown by American volunteers.

The impasse over the ICRC daylight flight proposals continues. We have repeatedly emphasized to the Biafrans that we consider the current ICRC proposal, already accepted by the FMG, to be a reasonable one. (As a by-product, agreement might permit legalization of the JCA flights.) The Biafrans continue to claim that daylight flights without third country guarantees would endanger their security. To meet this concern, we are encouraging the Canadians to offer observers who could report any violations.

Ambassador Ferguson's face-to-face discussions with the parties in Geneva have recessed without obtaining an agreement on the Cross River route. However, the seasonal drop in the water level will drastically reduce the capacity of this route until February.

GROUP 3

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BIAFRA - NIGERIA

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The prospects for achieving agreement on relief arrangements are not good. For both sides and for other Africans relief is clearly secondary to political considerations. Biafran political objectives are served better by parallel French and American-supported illegal relief operations than by agreed daylight flights. At the same time it is not clear how long the political situation in Lagos would permit a legal airlift to continue. Nevertheless, the sympathy of the Western world requires continuing efforts on our part to achieve effective relief arrangements.

PEACE:

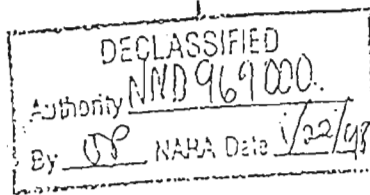
Peace remains the only ultimate answer. The military situation is stalemated and no break is in sight. Each side is acquiring additional arms. Serious escalation, particularly in the air, is possible. There are also signs of possible internal dissension with the Nigerian military.

In the wake of last month's OAU meeting a major initiative by the Emperor of Ethiopia, supported by President Nyerere, is currently underway. In that connection President Houphouet-Boigny has just told us that Gowon has suggested an October 17 meeting for peace talks at Monrovia or Addis Ababa without preconditions and with a temporary cease fire. Houphouet-Boigny has endorsed the proposal and is trying to persuade Ojukwu to agree. Nyerere, during his forthcoming trip to the Soviet Union, intends to discuss possibilities for an arms embargo. (A recent Special National Intelligence Estimate sees little hope for an effective arms embargo.)

An earlier Papal peace effort which we stimulated through the Emperor, and which involved a Vatican emissary to Ojukwu, has not as yet produced any visible results, but Papal interest continues.

We have been following and, where possible, encouraging all reasonable peace efforts. We have not

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taken a public role in the belief that it would probably be counter-productive. We feel that it is through contacts with both sides and their supporters that we can most effectively contribute at this stage to peace efforts. However, the basic positions of the two sides remain far apart. There is no evidence as yet that either is prepared to make the concessions required for meaningful negotiations. The Africans still hope to solve the problem themselves, while an objective of Biafran diplomacy is to involve the United States. We have expanded our discussions with key governments in Africa and Europe (particularly the French) where our persuasion, properly timed, might be helpful. William Brubeck, head of the Special Staff for Nigeria, is currently completing a three week tour of these capitals.

In this country Congressional and public interest has declined. American opinion generally has become increasingly aware of the complexities of the situation. A relatively small but influential group continues to press for greater U.S. involvement. The black community largely supports the FMG.

FURTHER STEPS:

1. Continuing diplomatic efforts in support of legal relief arrangements.
2. A further Presidential statement in support of the ICRC daylight flight proposal may be desirable shortly, after the status of the Canadian observer initiative clarifies.
3. If these efforts fail, increased support to the JCA night airlift to ensure a more adequate flow of supplies. However, we should discourage the use of additional American crews.
4. Continued recognition of Nigeria as well as open lines to the Biafrans so as to maintain a degree of confidence on both sides. This would enable us to

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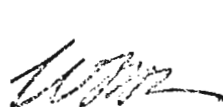
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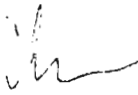
play a role in encouraging the acceptance of a peace plan at the proper moment. Avoidance of exclusive support for any particular solution.

5. Close and continuing contact with key European and African capitals.


William P. Rogers

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A. R. G. G. G.


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