OUTCOME OF MEETING WITH GOWON AND ARIKPO THIS NOON WAS THAT GOWON REITERATED HIS VERSION OF ASSURANCES TO FERGUSON ON JUNE 3 I.E. DESPITE FACT ALL NIGHT FLIGHTS QTE ILLEGAL UNQTE FMG WOULD CONTINUE QTE DO EVERYTHING HUMANLY POSSIBLE UNQTE TO PREVENT SHOOTING DOWN RELIEF FLIGHTS. GOWON SAID HE WOULD NOW MAKE ONE AMENDMENT WHICH WAS THAT ASSURANCES APPLIED TO QTE GENUINE UNQTE RELIEF FLIGHTS. FURTHER DISCUSSION REVEALED THAT WHAT HE HAD IN MIND WAS THAT ANY AIRCRAFT WHICH WAS INTERCEPTED BY NAF AND DID NOT COMPLY WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO FOLLOW AND LAND (AS IN CASE OF ICRC AIRCRAFT SHOT DOWN JUNE 5) WAS IPSO FACTO NOT QTE GENUINE UNQTE RELIEF FLIGHT AND THEREFORE SUBJECT TO ATTACK. THIS WOULD REMAIN FMG POSITION UNTIL FMG HAD DECIDED ON AND ANNOUNCED NEW PROCEDURES WHICH ALL RELIEF FLIGHTS MUST FOLLOW.
2. RE URGENT QTE ONE SHOT UNQTE CROSS RIVER OPERATION
GOWON SAID HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO PROPOSAL INCLUDING
FMG PLEDGE OF SAFE CONDUCT BUT FMG MUST FIRST ENSURE
THAT LSM WOULD NOT BE ATTACHED ON STRETCH OF RIVER
UNDER FMG CONTROL. HE OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT EITHER BUSH
PATROL OF FMG TROOPS OR REBEL INFILTRATORS MIGHT FIRE
UPON LSM AND REMARKED BITTERLY THAT IF THIS HAPPENED
WORLD PUBLIC OPINION WOULD ACCUSE FMG OF BAD FAITH.

3. I OPENED DISCUSSION WITH PRESENTATION USG POSITION
AS INSTRUCTED REFTELS. RE RELIEF FLIGHTS I EMPHASIZED
ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES IF FMG SHOT DOWN OTHER RELIEF
AIRCRAFT. RE CROSS RIVER OPERATION I STRESSED PRACTICAL
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE OF DEMONSTRATING SOONEST
ALTERNATIVE TO RELIEF AIRLIFT AND WILLINGNESS USG
PUBLICLY TO PLACE BLAME IF REBELS BLOCKED OPERATION.

4. GOWON HAD SPENT MOST OF HIS PASSION IN TALK WITH
UK HICOMER YESTERDAY (LAGOS 5351) AND WAS MUCH CALMER
WITH ME. HE WAS HOWEVER EQUALLY TOUGH. HE SAID
THAT HIS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY WAS SECURITY AND
SURVIVAL OF NIGERIA AND THAT HE WAS CONVINCED NIGHT
FLIGHTS AND SOME OTHER ACTIVITIES OF RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS
WERE DANGER TO NIGERIA. HE MUST DEAL WITH THIS DANGER.
UK HICOMER HOWEVER HAD SHAKEN GOWON'S DISPOSITION
OF YESTERDAY TO DISREGARD WORLD PUBLIC OPINION, AND I WAS
ABLE TO BRING HIM TO AGREE TODAY THAT WORLD OPINION WAS FACTOR
WITH IMPORTANT BEARING ON SECURITY AND SURVIVAL OF NIGERIA.
HE REMAINED SKEPTICAL THAT WORLD OPINION COULD BE BROUGHT
TO FAVOR FMG CITING FACT THAT OJUKWU REJECTION OF
DAYLIGHT RELIEF FLIGHTS DID NOT SEEM TO AROUSE WORLD
WHEREAS FMG OBJECTION TO NIGHT FLIGHTS CAUSED STORM OF
PROTEST.

5. I TOOK OCCASION TO STRESS LONG STANDING ICRC REPUTATION
FOR NEUTRALITY AND PROPER CONDUCT DEFENDED ITS
ROLE IN NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR AND URGED GOWON AND
ARIKPO TO RECEIVE HOFFMAN. GOWON SPOKE WELL OF
HOFFMAN BUT I DOUBT THAT HE WILL RECEIVE HIM.
GOWON'S DEMEANOR AND GENERAL TENOR OF HIS COMMENTS
WHEN DISCUSSING ICRC TAKEN TOGETHER WITH OTHER
Indications by responsible FMG officials lead me to believe that FMG is giving serious consideration to terminating or drastically reducing IRC role in Nigeria.

6. Olson recalls that in June 3 conversation with Ferguson (Lagos 5026) Gowon emphasized illegality of night flights and said all were QTE at risk UNQTE but is quite sure Gowon did not say FMG would do everything humanly possible to prevent shooting down relief aircraft. Gowon therefore today put gloss on his June 3 comments which considerably modifies assurances given Ferguson. I am convinced nothing more can be got from Gowon at this stage. Best we can hope for now is that UK HICOMER and my demarches and other expressions of concern will induce measure of caution within FMG. If however NAF aircraft does intercept relief aircraft which refused to obey signal to land latter will be attached.

7. While I judge FMG continuing review of relief flights will not lead to prohibition it almost certainly will produce rigorous control procedures. Gowon said to me as he did to UK HICOMER that he though all relief supplies should pass through federal checkpoint such as Lagos or Obilago.

GP=3.
MatheWS