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OUTGO

INDICATE:  CHARGE TO

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Authority NID 96900D  
By AT NARA Date 2-5-88

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Classification

Origin

ACTION: Amembassy LAGOS      IMMEDIATE

Info:

INFO: Amembassy ADDIS ABABA      IMMEDIATE  
Amembassy LONDON      "  
Amembassy PARIS      "  
USMission GENEVA      "  
USUN      "

STATE

1. There follows Department changes in Embassy draft reply to FMG note contained Lagos 15720:

BEGIN TEXT: Embassy of United States of America has honor to convey views of USG in response to the note of Ministry of External Affairs dated December 30.

A. Throughout more than eight years of direct relations between Nigeria and US, USG has consistently supported concept of Nigerian unity. As is known within FMG, USG tried in critical months of April and May 1967 to persuade the then military governor of Eastern Region and his associates to seek peaceful solution of their differences with rest of country within framework of one Nigeria. USG deplored secession when it came, has since given ~~maximum~~ neither encouragement nor support to secessionists, and continues to desire a peaceful settlement of Nigerian crisis negotiated by Nigerians themselves in context of single Nigeria.

Drafted by:  
AF/CRMoore:AF/W:DSmith:RMelbourne  
1/11/69

Tel. Ext.  
2619

Telegraphic transmission and  
classification approved by: AF - Mr. Palmer

Clearances:

UK per RPH  
U - Mr. Katzenbach  
S/S - Mr. Walker

DOD/ISA - Mr. Lang (subs) per  
AID - Mr. North (subs) per

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B. This basic policy of USG in respect of Nigerian crisis has since outbreak of civil war been paralleled by another policy, deeply rooted in American tradition, of providing assistance to civilian victims of warfare, a commonly accepted obligation of all nations. USG has accordingly since early 1968 provided assistance in various forms to Nigerian National Rehabilitation Commission, Nigerian Red Cross, ICRC and private voluntary relief agencies for relief of civilian victims of Nigerian civil war wherever located.

C. The USG does not believe that its decision to sell cargo aircraft to American relief agencies and the ICRC for relief purposes should adversely affect relations between Nigeria and the US. Responsive to humanitarian requirements, this decision represents no change in well-known USG policy towards Nigeria and the USG has so emphasized publicly. Its sole purpose in providing these aircraft, which it no longer requires, is to expand the relief airlift to ~~xx~~ civilian victims in the secessionist area. It cannot agree, as suggested in the Ministry's note, that the provision of these aircraft increases the arms-carrying capacity of the secessionists. The agencies acquiring them have undertaken to cooperate with the USG in establishing workable procedures to ensure that aircraft are engaged solely in carrying relief supplies. USG is confident that in these circumstances the FMG will take every precaution to assure that these and other humanitarian aircraft are effectively safeguarded from any possibility of hostile action by Nigerian armed forces.

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D. USG continues to believe that, short of a peaceful settlement of the civil war, only the establishment of land or water corridors and daylight flights can adequately meet the problem of civilian relief in the secessionist area. It has made this clear to the secessionists and will continue to urge them to agree to such arrangements.

E. The Ambassador offers following comment on other points raised in Ministry's note under reference:

(1) The Ministry stated that USG has paid over 80 percent of the cost of relief efforts of Caritas and the World Council of ~~XXXXXX~~ Churches. The USG has supplied food for civilian ~~KEKE~~ victims of the civil war on both sides of the line, wherever they could be reached, through the ICRC, UNICEF and voluntary agencies and it has borne the freight costs for transportation of this food. In addition it has made cash contributions to the ICRC. It has made no cash contributions to voluntary ~~agencies~~ agencies. ~~XXX~~

~~XX~~  
~~XX~~

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

(2) Students from secessionist territory who applied for entry into US from Portugal were invited to US by American National Students' Association. USG traditionally follows liberal policy with regard to travel of foreigners in US. Travel documents issued by secessionist authorities to these students were neither visaed /<sup>nor</sup> ~~XXXXXX~~ otherwise recognized.

(3) Conversation between ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Departmental officials and

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Mr. Ralph Nwakoby on December 23 was conducted on same informal basis as previous contacts with secessionist spokesmen except for fact that Mr. Nwakoby came to Department of State. This practice is not uncommon with respect to representatives of non-recognized groups who may wish to present a point of view. Moreover, Mr. Nwakoby was told categorically ~~at~~ that meeting portended no change whatsoever in USG policy with respect to Nigerian crisis, as Nigerian Ambassador in Washington was informed on same day.

(4) Use of word ~~QTE~~ Biafran ~~UNQTE~~ in official USG ~~statements~~ statements is merely ~~merely~~ descriptive and has no political intent.

(5) As regards concern expressed in American press and by individual Americans about increasing Soviet influence in Nigeria, FMG will appreciate that USG cannot prevent speculation on this subject among private Americans. USG appreciates FMG's reiteration of its position on nature of its relations with USSR which His Excellency, head of FMG, conveyed to Ambassador at their meeting on December 30.

F. Policy of USG with respect to Nigerian crisis has not changed. USG continues greatly to value and wishes to maintain unimpaired its close and mutually beneficial relations with FMG. USG will continue as in ~~past~~ past to consult with FMG on difficult problems of relief and is prepared to cooperate fully with FMG in ~~as~~ practicable arrangements to ~~as~~ bring relief to civilian victims of civil war wherever located. END TEXT

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2. Department will ask Embassy to inform FMG when procedures established per para 1F. Department does not wish FMG to have implied veto over procedures to be arranged.

3. Re para 1E (1) you may state orally that \$500,000 which USG announced in November might be made available under certain conditions for chartering of relief aircraft by voluntary agencies has not been utilized.

4. Re para 8 ref tel Nwakoby press conference, although Ambassador Iyalla may have stated such a press conference occurred, Department after inquiries has no evidence of this.

5. Re para 10 ref tel Ambassador may convey orally that C-97's have never been armed or armored. We think that to include it in reply to note which does not raise issue may be misunderstood.

6. Department attaches greatest importance to continuation of ICRC relief airlift from Fernando Po. If atmosphere propitious, you should therefore use opportunity provided by delivery of note to emphasize to highest appropriate FMG official importance we attach to continuation this operation and urge FMG to use its ~~influence~~ influence with GEG to this end. (Ref Geneva 040).

Drafted by:

Tel. Ext.

Telegraphic transmission and  
classification approved by:

Clearances:

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7. Urge earliest possible delivery of foregoing since sale of C97's to volags has now been completed. We have urged volags not rpt not announce until early next week but cannot be sure when news will break.

END

RUSK

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