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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

*Intelligence
Note* - 811

November 14,

To : The Secretary
Through: S/S
From : INR - Ray S. Cline

RSO

Subject: NIGERIA-BIAFRA: New Weapons May Delay Peace Talks

Biafra has received new aircraft that will extend significantly the striking range of its air force. Nigeria in turn has new long-range guns that increase its chances of destroying the principal Biafran airfield. Both sides probably will intensify their military activity to exploit these new weapons. While they are doing so, there will be less desire by either to undertake serious peace talks.

Planes for Biafra. Since May 1969 the Biafran air force has been carrying out attacks on Nigerian targets, particularly oil installations, with its Swedish-designed, single engine, "Minicon" aircraft, of which it presently has 11. Although these attacks have not altered the military balance, they have led to a decrease in Nigerian petroleum production, and shown Nigeria's vulnerability to offensive air action. In early November 1969 Biafra took delivery of two T-6 aircraft. North American Aviation, Incorporated, built over 15,000 of these planes during World War II for use as trainers. The Biafran models, which may have been acquired from the French, are fitted with weapon mounts for combat. Their normal operating range is about 870 miles. Five more Biafran T-6's are in various stages of readiness outside the enclave. In addition, one British-built Gloster Meteor jet fighter is believed to be in Bissau, Portuguese Guinea, awaiting delivery to a point from which it can be used against Nigeria.

*Page 27 Biafra - Nigeria**Ref 12-5 Biafra
Ref 19-6 U.S.S.R - Nigeria**3*

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- 2 -

Guns for Nigeria. Nigeria has received 24 Soviet-made 122 mm field pieces having a range of 13 miles. Some of them are assembled, and Nigerian crews are being trained. If the Nigerians can bring these guns close enough to targets in Biafra, they might be able to do more damage with them than they have with the 20-25 Soviet jet air craft that they now have in operating condition.

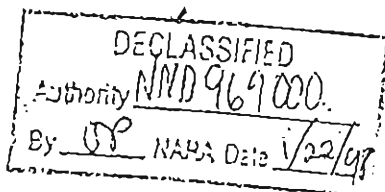
New Offensives for Both. Biafra apparently has already used its T-6's in action against Port Harcourt. If they are able to keep them flying, the Biafran authorities will almost certainly use these aircraft to attack Nigerian airfields. Oil installations, many of which are beyond the range of the "Minicons", will also be targets. Every target of military significance in Nigeria is within range of the T-6's, including Lagos. Biafran authorities have threatened to bomb civilian targets in retaliation against Nigerian Air Force raids.

The Federal Military Government is supposedly preparing an offensive intended to put its new field guns within range of the principal Biafran airport of Uli. The Federal First Division has as its objectives Nnewi, to the north of Uli, and Orlu, to the east. The Third Division's objective is Oguta to the south. These three points are all within 13 miles of Uli. Biafran attacks on the southern front might delay the Third Division's offensive. (See map.)

The Nigerian Air Force will probably give priority to the destruction of the T-6's. If they fail in this effort, as they have in their attempts to shoot down the "Minicons", they might in frustration endeavor to destroy another unauthorized relief plane.

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- 3 -

Negotiation Prospects Unchanged. Continuing and determined efforts by several nations are under way to bring the belligerents to the negotiating table, but it is not likely that either side will agree to negotiate seriously until it is hurt sufficiently to force concessions or loses confidence in its longer range military position.

Biafran.org

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