

OUTGOING TELEGRAM 20875

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Department of State

ACTION: Amembassy LAGOS

INFO: Amembassy LONDON

STATE

SUBJECT: Godfrey Amachree Mission to USG

1. Godfrey Amachree, prominent Nigerian lawyer and former UN Under Secretary for Trusteeship Affairs, arrived US February 4 as "personal representative" of General Gowon and Commissioner Arikpo. After meetings with American oil companies in New York February 5, Amachree held lengthy discussions in Washington February 6 with Congressmen Diggs, Culver, Brademas, Morris and Fraser and with staffs Senators Brooke and Pearson. Secretary, whom Amachree knew from UN service, unable receive Amachree but Assistant Secretary Palmer had hour and half discussion with him February 7. Amachree expects call on Senator Kennedy before returning Lagos.
2. Amachree stated purpose of his mission was to get sounding of USG policy at beginning new administration. He said in confidence that some in Lagos are "panicked" over what they regard as lack understanding in US for realities Nigerian war and worried about future policies of new administration. Since some FMG officials blame Ambassador Iyalla, Amachree was asked by Gowon and Arikpo to undertake trip to get independent assessment. After few days here, Amachree believes he has better feel for depth US humanitarian concern and better understanding Iyalla's problems. Real difficulty lies in Lagos which has ignored many constructive suggestions made by Iyalla to improve FMG image in US.
3. Amachree told Palmer that it had been suggested to him that FMG could improve its position by acting in consonance with Pearson-Brooke resolution. Towards this end, he wondered whether it would not be useful arrange trip to US by Arikpo, Rehab Commissioner Omo-Bare and Enugu Administrator Asika to confer with USG officials re relief and rehabilitation, publicize what it doing on relief and be available interested Congressmen in next six weeks before resolution voted on. FMG delegation would be prepared talk specifics and Amachree mentioned various possibilities even including construction of new airfields in Biafra, emphasizing latter his own idea. He did not state absolutely that FMG would cooperate in even-handed relief efforts to extent indicated by Pearson-Brooke resolution but he promised to urge his government to do so. Comment: It evident that Amachree deeply impressed by suggestions and comments he had received during Congressional visits.
4. Palmer replied it certainly be helpful if FMG were independently to address itself con-

structively in words and deeds to range of problems covered by resolution. However, it should be most careful not to insert itself or appear to insert itself in matter currently under consideration before US Congress. To Amachree's insistent query re usefulness of Arikpo delegation at this time, Palmer said Commissioner always welcome but as we reassessing relief situation ourselves at a later date might be better. We hoped meanwhile FMG would make greater effort understand depth our humanitarian concern and come up with some workable proposals (not generalities) to effectively move relief into Biafra. We realized latter a stumbling block to assistance but somehow food must be moved. As long as children die from hunger it difficult for US public to understand political obstacles. Publicizing what FMG doing on its side no answer since public expects this as matter of course. For present, he suggested we each collect our thoughts and keep possibility of visit in mind for somewhat later date.

5. Palmer emphasized deep US concern re FMG bombing of civilians in Biafra and damage they do to FMG. Amachree agreed with this appraisal both in humanitarian and political terms. He felt sure they were not deliberate but felt margin of error such that in any situation warfare such incidents bound occur. Palmer left him in no doubt our strong feelings re necessity corrective measures.

6. Amachree raised issue of USG concern over Soviet influence in Nigeria. Palmer reiterated that communism not controlling concern of USG especially among officials who know independent Nigeria. On other hand, it obvious that "Soviets are after something in Nigeria" and have taken advantage of the war to foster anti-Americanism. Example of increase in Soviet influence was recent improper statements of USSR Ambassador which were not reprov'd by FMG. However, major factor in US policy remains primarily and overwhelmingly humanitarian concern for people. This concern important in open society such as US and western European countries but also becoming apparent in African countries as war drags on.

7. In response to Amachree concern that Senator Kennedy and other departing from humanitarian concern to political by urging ceasefire without conditions, Palmer stressed that logic of a situation of frustrated humanitarian concern inevitably leads to support for such a view as only effective means of getting relief into secessionist territory. While we strongly support peaceful settlement in any event, minimal FMG rebuttal to ceasefire demand is successful transportation of relief to needy on both sides of line.

8. Amachree promised urge FMG to propose additional airfields in Biafra in context responding to Ojukwu offer of new airfield to be built and set aside for relief only. He asked to be kept informed of USG thinking on overall problem and asked also for help in formulating "compromise" proposals on relief. Particularly hoped USG and FMG could work more closely together. Palmer observed that specific proposals should be offered, not generalities. We presently doing our homework and FMG should do its own, proposing relief action along workable lines and within most flexible boundaries of military security.

9. Palmer stressed to Amachree importance of resolving Companies Decree problem so that we will not be faced with a further complicating dimension on our relationship. Ama-

chree said Executive Council had met on subject week ago Monday (i.e., 27 January) and had been sympathetic to "London Formula", subject to approval of to technical advisers. Arikpo had stressed/Executive Council international relations aspect of decree and Awolowo had agreed to need for improvement. In private conversation with Amachree later, Perm Sec Finance Atta had "brought in politics," (comment: apparently referring to USG policy on war), On other hand, Min Fin had sent middle level "oil expert" to Hugh Keeley of Mobil who had convinced him that Mobil would lose considerable money under Companies Decree as issued. Amachree had reported status of decree negotiations to Mobil in New York and had useful discussion with senior officials. Amachree seemed generally optimistic about decree.

10. Amachree showed understanding that Secretary Rogers' departure for Florida with President same afternoon prevented call. He had apparently hoped, following meeting with Secretary, to return Lagos with both final word on USG support for FMG plus invitation for Arikpo et al to visit. In this sense he undoubtedly disappointed since he aware that (a) USG review of policies for new administration still underway and (b) agreement on timing of visit by senior officials deferred for time being. Dept however, pleased to have additional direct channel to FMG leadership.

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