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PA/HO Department of State

E.O. 12958, as amended

April 21, 2005

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-20 10-13 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCENDG USIE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1825
INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

~~UNCLAS~~ ADDIS ABABA 5483

DEPT PASS VOA

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN PEACE TALKS

REF: ADDIS 5482

DR. P. N. C. OKIGBO AS LEADER BIAFRAN DELEGATION TO ADDIS ABABA PEACE TALKS ISSUED FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO PRESS AT ADDIS AIRPORT IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO DELEGATION'S DEPARTURE THIS AFTERNOON: QTE THE BIAFRAN DELEGATION HAS CALLED THE ATTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA TO THE NEWS REPORT ATTRIBUTED TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY TO THE EFFECT THAT HE HAD SPONSORED THE PROPOSED BIAFRA/NIGERIA PEACE TALKS IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE OAU CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE. AT A SUBSEQUENT MEETING THIS MORNING WITH HIS EXCELLENCY THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF ETHIOPIA, THE BIAFRAN DELEGATION REMINDED HIM THAT NEGOTIATIONS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE OAU COMMITTEE AND ITS MANDATE WHICH HAD ALREADY PRE-DETERMINED THE FORM OF SETTLEMENT, VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. HIS EXCELLENCY THE FOREIGN MINISTER CONFIRMED THE NEWS REPORT AND SAID THAT HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY COULD NOT ACT OUTSIDE THE TERMS OF THE OAU CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE EITHER NOW OR IN THE FUTURE. IN THE

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CIRCUMSTANCES, THE BIAFRAN DELEGATION WHICH CAME ON THE CLEAR ASSURANCE FROM HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY THAT HE WAS CONVENING THE TALKS PURELY IN HIS ROLE AS EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA AND AS AN AFRICAN LEADER, HAS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RETURN TO BIAFRA.

THE BIAFRAN DELEGATION REGRETS THAT THE NIGERIANS HAVE SO FAR FAILED TO TURN UP FOR THE TALKS. THE BIAFRAN DELEGATION BELIEVES THAT THIS TRAGIC WAR WHICH HAS BROUGHT NOTHING BUT SHAME TO AFRICA AND HER LEADERSHIP MUST BE ENDED AND CONDITIONS CREATED FOR NEGOTIATIONS FOR A JUST AND HONOURABLE SETTLEMENT. BIAFRA REMAINS, AS ALWAYS, READY TO ENGAGE IN TALKS WITHOUT ANY PRECONDITIONS AND GENUINELY HOPES THAT ANY SPONSORING AGENCY WILL OBSERVE THIS PRINCIPLE TO FACILITATE MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS.

THE BIAFRAN DELEGATION THANKS HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA FOR THEIR HOSPITALITY; WE WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY OUR APPRECIATION TO ALL OUR FRIENDS AND TO LOVERS OF PEACE ALL OVER THE WORLD WHO HAVE SHOWN INTEREST IN AND CONCERN FOR A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE BIAFRA/NIGERIA WAR. UNQUOTE.

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