

NYQ 969033  
By ST/VSW Date 2/2/99



POL 37 BIAFRA - NIGERIA

Department of State

TELEGRAM

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-20 IO-13 RSR-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00  
USIE-00 PM-05 NSC-10 SS-20 RSC-01 L-03 H-02 P-03  
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 UCF-05 SR-01 ORM-03 AID-28  
SCS-04 SCA-01 PRS-01 UPW-01 /148 W  
----- 039908

O P 102245Z JAN 70  
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 741  
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION GENEVA  
USMISSION USUN  
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE  
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
CINCSTRIKE  
DIA

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1. REPORTS OF IMMINENT BIAFRAN COLLAPSE PUT OUT BY PERSONS ARRIVING LIBREVILLE FROM ENCLAVE, WHICH SEEM IN TURN TO HAVE PROMPTED RATHER FRANTIC FRENCH MOVES TO STAVE OFF "GENOCIDE" BY FEDERAL FORCES, SUGGEST THAT REPORT ON SITUATION AS SEEN FROM LAGOS MAY BE IN ORDER.

2. FMG HAS MADE NO VICTORY CLAIMS AND NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US WOULD SUGGEST THAT BIAFRAN DEFENSES HAVE DISINTEGRATED OR THAT VITAL ULI AIRSTRIP IS IMMINENTLY THREATENED WITH CAPTURE OR INTERDICTION. FEDS ARE PRESSING STRONGLY FROM NORTH, EAS AND SOUTH, AND OWERRI MAY HAVE FALLEN (THOUGH WE HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE OF THIS), BUT AT THIS POINT WAR IS CERTAINLY NOT OVER.

3. AS REGARDS THREAT TO BIAFRAN POPULATION WE MAKE NO PREDICTIONS BUT WE DO POINT OUT THAT IN RECENT DAYS WELL

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OVER 100,000 RESIDENTS OF ENCLAVE, INCLUDING SOME 60,000 IBOS, HAVE COME UNDER FEDERAL CONTROL. WE HAVE HARD EVIDENCE FROM COMPETENT U.S. OBSERVERS THAT THEY ARE BEING WELL CARED FOR AND HUMANELY TREATED BY FEDERAL TROOPS AND NIGERIAN RED CROSS.

4. ON EXPANSION OF OBSERVER GROUP, BELIEVE BEST CHANCE OF ACHIEVING THIS IS IF GROUP ITSELF PROPOSES EXPANSION. THEY HAVE APPOINTMENT WITH GOWON AT MID-WEEK ON RETURN FROM WAR ZONE AND COULD RAISE MATTER AT THAT TIME. IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER AN EARLIER APPROACH TO FMG WOULD IMPROVE CHANCES OF FEDERAL COOPERATION, BUT THEY WOULD BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO U THAN ANYONE WE CAN THINK OF.

5. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER, WITH WHOM WE ARE IN CONSTANT TOUCH, HAS SPOKEN TODAY TO BABA GANA (CURRENTLY IN CHARGE EXTAFF), TONY ENAHORO AND HAMZAT AHMADU. BURDEN OF HIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN: WE HAVE REPORTS OF SUBSTANTIAL FEDERAL ADVANCES. IF THESE ARE TRUE, WE HOPE FMG IS GIVING URGENT THOUGHT TO QUESTION OF CARE OF CIVILIAN VICTIMS AND TO POSSIBLE NEED FOR OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE. THESE APPROACHES HAVE BEEN SYMPATHETICALLY RECEIVED BUT HAVE NOT PRODUCED CONFIRMATION OF MILITARY PROGRESS (ALTHOUGH GLASS THOUGHT HIS INTERLOCATORS CLEARLY IN GOOD FRAME OF MIND) NOR AS YET REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE.

6. HOCKE, ICRC REP HERE, HAS NO INFORMATION ABOUT SUSPENSION RF AIRLIFT OR FRENCH REQUEST FOR ICRC TAKEOVER OF FRENCH RED CROSS ASSETS.

TRUEHEART

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