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E.O. 12858, Dec. 3, 1981

NND 969042

By fst Date 2 June 58

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POL 23-9 NIGERIA  
TR SOCIO NIGERIA

TELEGRAM

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ACTION AF-18

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

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O P 151703Z JAN 70  
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 863  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION GENEVA  
USMISSION USUN

~~SECRET~~ LAGOS 432

LONDON PASS ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR FERGUSON

REF: STATE 6457 *241*

SUBJECT: CONDITIONS IN FORMER BIAFRAN ENCLAVE AS OF NOON  
JANUARY 15

1. THE BEST PICTURE WE CAN DRAW AT THIS POINT OF CONDITIONS  
IN FORMER ENCLAVE IS THIS:

A. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF MISBEHAVIOR OF FEDERAL TROOPS.  
THEY HAVE NOW BEEN ORDERED BACK TO BARRACKS AND SECURITY RES-  
PONSIBILITY ASSIGNED TO POLICE.

B. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF GUERRILLA ACTIVITY OR OTHER  
RESISTANCE BY REMNANTS OF BIAFRAN FORCES.

C. UNTIL THIS MORNING WE HAD NO EVIDENCE OF POCKETS  
CONTAINING SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF PERSONS SUFFERING FROM

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SERIOUS MALNUTRITION. HOWEVER, WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED FRAGMENTARY REPORT FROM BRITISH DOCTOR WITH RED CROSS TEAM WHICH REACHED ORLU (EAST OR ULI) JANUARY 13 INDICATING THAT CONDITIONS THERE ARE BAD WITH FOOD AND DRUGS URGENTLY NEEDED. "SEVERAL THOUSAND" PERSONS IN DESPERATE SHAPE. SEPARATE REPORT FOLLOWS ON THIS SITUATION. ACTION IS UNDER WAY TO BRING IN RELIEF. ELSEWHERE IN NEWLY RECOVERED AREAS RELIEF OPERATIONS AFFECTING SOME 250,000 PERSONS IN RELATIVELY GOOD CONDITION HAVE BEEN PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY.

D. ADEQUATE FOOD AND DRUG SUPPLIES ARE STOCKED AT POINTS ADJACENT TO FORMER ENCLAVE AND CAN BE REPLENISHED AS NECESSARY WITHOUT RESORT TO AIRLIFT. SUPPLIES IN HANDS RELIEF AGENCIES IN COUNTRY AND EN ROUTE SUFFICIENT FEED 2 MILLION PERSONS (20 PERCENT FULL FEEDING, 80 PERCENT PARTIAL) FOR TWO AND ONE-HALF MONTHS.

E. THERE IS REQUIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL SURFACE TRANSPORT AND VARIOUS STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO SUPPLY ADDITIONAL VEHICLES FROM LOCAL SOURCES AND FROM ABROAD, INCLUDING AIRLIFT. STILL OTHER VEHICLES MAY WELL BE NEEDED BUT REQUIREMENTS HAVE NOT YET BEEN DEFINED BY FMG. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, TRANSPORT SITUATION THOUGH SERIOUS IS NOT RPT NOT CRITICAL, IN SENSE OF INABILITY TO BRING FOOD TO THOSE KNOWN TO NEED IT.

2. IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS OUR SOURCES OF INFORMATION: PRINCIPALLY RED CROSS TEAMS AND MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP. (WE ALSO HAVE OF COURSE INFORMATION FROM NIGERIAN SOURCES. WE DO NOT WISH TO IMPUGN LATTER BUT IT IS NOT BASIS FOR THIS REPORT.) AT PRESENT TIME RED CROSS TEAMS (WHICH ARE MADE UP ALMOST WHOLLY OF EXPATRIATE MEDICAL AND TECHNICAL PERSONNEL) ARE CONVERGING ON HEART OF ENCLAVE, ENTERING IT FROM ENUGU AND ONITSHA AREA IN NORTH AND FROM OWERRI IN THE SOUTH. WE ARE CONFIDENT--AND THIS IS BORNE OUT BY ORLU REPORT--THAT ANY ADVERSE CONDITIONS, EITHER IN TERMS OF MALNUTRITION OR OBSTRUCTION OF RELIEF WORK, WILL BE PROMPTLY REPORTED BY THESE TEAMS AND WILL BE IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION, IF NOT BY NIGERIAN RED CROSS THEN BY AMERICAN ELEMENTS THEREOF. FOR EXAMPLE, PRINCIPAL MEDICAL ADVISOR TO RED CROSS DIRECTOR IN SOUTHERN AREA IS AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE DOCTOR. LAGOS HAS RADIO CONTACT WITH THESE TEAMS ONLY THROUGH

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PORT HARCOURT AND ENUGU (AND SOON ABA AND OWERRI). HENCE SOME DELAY IN REPORTING IS INEVITABLE.

3. OUR SECOND MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION IS THE MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP WHOSE FIRST REPORTS SINCE BIAFRAN COLLAPSE ARE JUST COMING IN. CONCLUSIONS ABOVE REFLECT JUST-CONCLUDED OBSERVER GROUP VISITS TO BOTH NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN SECTORS OF FORMER WAR ZONE.

4. ALL-AMERICAN U/CF SURVEY BEGINS TOMORROW, IF THERE ARE NO LAST MINUTE HITCHES ON CLEARANCES. SURVEY TEAM WILL INCLUDE USAID PERSONNEL LAST ABOUT TWO WEEKS. THEY WILL BE COVERING ALL PARTS OF FORMER ENCLAVE AREA AND WILL BE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO FILE BRIEF REPORTS OF FINDINGS WHENEVER THEY TOUCH POINTS WHERE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE, PROBABLY EVERY OTHER DAY. I HAVE CONSIDERED BUT DECIDED AGAINST ATTACHING POLITICAL OFFICER TO TEAM BECAUSE THIS WOULD PROBABLY AROUSE SUSPICION AND COULD JEOPARDIZE SURVEY.

5. WE ARE NOT COMPLACENT ABOUT SITUATION AND HAVE BEEN AS PUZZLED AS THOSE OUTSIDE NIGERIA AT FAILURE UP UNTIL TODAY TO ENCOUNTER POCKETS OF SERIOUS MALNUTRITION. NEITHER RED CROSS NOR OBSERVER GROUP HAS COVERED ALL PARTS OF ENCLAVE, PARTICULARLY CENTRAL CORE BETWEEN OWERRI AND ONITSHA. THE REPORT JUST RECEIVED FROM ORLU SUGGESTS THAT RELIEF TEAMS MAY NOW BE GETTING INTO AREAS MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO JUDGE DIMENSIONS OF PROBLEM BETTER WITHIN 48 HOURS.

6. THIS REPORT HAS CONCURRENCE ALL ELEMENTS THIS MISSION AND U/CF. IT ALSO ACCORDS WITH VIEWS BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER.

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