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By W NAPA Date 2/17/08

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996

PAGE 01 LAGOS 02674 261348Z

50

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INFO 10 13,UCF 03,UPW 01,EUR 15,SR 01,ORM 03,SCS 04,SCA 01,AID 28,

CIAE 00, DODE 00, NSAE 00, NSCE 00, SSD 00, USIE 00, JPM 04, H 02,

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5671

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

COMMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN

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SUBJ: FERGUSON MISSION

REF: LAGOS 2524, 2454 AND 2419

A. PIAFRAN VISIT

1. DURING MARCH 21-23 STAY IN BIAFRA ALL OFFICIAL CONTACTS TRIED TO ENGAGE FERGUSON IN POLITICAL ASPECTS CIVIL WAR BUT HE REJECTED ALL EFFORTS ON GROUNDS HIS ROLE PURELY HUMANITARIAN. FERGUSON IMPRESSED WITH DETERMINATION BIAFRANS ALL LEVELS TO CONTINUE FIGHT AGAINST FMG BUT ALSO SENSED THAT AT SAME TIME MANY BELIEVE FIGHT HOPELESS AND BIAFRA DOOMED SOONER OR LATER. FERGUSON TOLD BY MANY BIAFRANS AND HIMSELF BELIEVES FMG BOMBING OF CIVILIANS HAS BEEN GREATEST UNIFYING FACTOR IN BIAFRA DURING PAST SIX MONTHS.

2. ON RELIEF ROUTES OJUKWU TOOK FOLLOWING POSITIONS
IN LONG TALK AFTERNOON MARCH 23:

A. FOR SECURITY REASONS BIAFRA COULD NOT AGREE TO USE OF ULI AIRSTRIP FOR DAYLIGHT RELIEF FLIGHTS.

B. AS OBILAGO AREA NOW CONTESTED AND FOR OTHER REASONS BIAFRA COULD NOT AGREE TO ANY USE OF OBILAGO AIRSTRIP FOR RELIEF FLIGHTS DAY OR NIGHT.

C. ONLY REAL SOLUTION FOR RELIEF FLIGHTS WAS NEW

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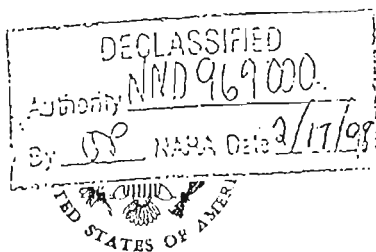
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32



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PAGE 02 LAGOS 02674 261348Z

AIRSTRIIP AS PROPOSED BY CANADIAN AND OTHER CHURCH GROUPS. FERGUSON MADE CLEAR HE COULD NOT SUPPORT NEW AIRSTRIIP FOR REASONS SET FORTH LAST PARAGRAPH LAGOS 2419. D. OF SURFACE ROUTES BIAFRA PREFERRED NIGER RIVER TO OGUTA BUT OJUKWU CONCEDED THAT THIS ROUTE PRESENTED SERIOUS LOGISTICAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS. E. AFTER BEING ASSURED CALABAR IKOT OKPORO ROUTE WAS US AND NOT FMG IDEA OJUKWU DISCUSSED IT OBJECTIVELY AND SAID IT OFFERED POSSIBILITIES WHICH HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES WOULD EXPLORE. HE STATED HOWEVER THAT LAGOS COULD NOT RPT NOT BE USED AS STAGING AREA FOR RELIEF SUPPLIES DESTINED FOR BIAFRA. OF THREE ALTERNATIVE OPERATIONS OJUKWU GREATLY PREFERRED USE OF HELICOPTERS. NEXT CHOICE WAS BARGING UP CROSS RIVER. TRUCK ROUTE THROUGH FEDERAL TERRITORY WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE ONLY WITH US GUARANTEE OR OTHERGUARANTEE GTE OF SIMILAR QUALITY UNQTE AGAINST TAMPERING WITH RELIEF SHIPMENTS WHILE ON ROAD. D. AFTER INITIAL RESISTANCE OJUKWU SAID HE WOULD BE WILLING TO SEND REPRESENTATIVE TO MEET FMG REPRESENTATIVE TO DISCUSS CALABAR IKOT OKPORO ROUTE. HIS CONDITIONS WERE THAT IT BE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THAT MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING RELIEF ROUTES BUT THAT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE STRICTLY SECRET. ANY LEAKS OR BREACHES OF CONFIDENCE WOULD KILL WHOLE PROJECT. OJUKWU THOUGHT BEST VENUE FOR MEETING WOULD BE WASHINGTON WHICH FERGUSON SAID UNLIKELY APPEAL TO USG. OJUKWU RULED OUT ANY EUROPEAN SITE BUT SAID WOULD ACCEPT MOST PLACES IN AFRICA EXCEPT LAGOS AND ADDIS. HE THOUGHT DAKAR MIGHT BE GOOD VENUE.

3. FERGUSON GIVEN AIDE-MEMOIRE SETTING FORTH BIAFRAN POSITION ON RELIEF WHICH IN SEPTEL. THIS PAPER DATED MARCH 20 AND ACCORDINGLY DOES NOT ADDRESS ITSELF TO CALABAR IKOT OKPORO ROUTE.

8. RETURN VISIT TO LAGOS

4. FERGUSON REPORTED RESULTS HIS TALKS WITH OJUKWU TO GOWON AND ARIKPO MARCH 25. THEY NOT SURPRISED AT OJUKWU REJECTION USE ULI OR OBILAGO AND MADE POINT THIS PROVED ONCE AGAIN IT REBEL REGIME AND NOT FMG WHICH BLOCKING ADEQUATE RELIEF TO BIAFRA.



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GOWON AND
REJECTION
ONCE AGAIN
ADEQUATE

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PAGE 03 LAGOS 02674 261348Z

5. GOWON AND ARIKPO CAUTIOUSLY ENCOURAGED BY OJUKWU VIEW CALABAR IKOT OKPORO ROUTE HAD POSSIBILITIES. GOWON BRISTLED WHEN FERGUSON REPORTED OJUKWU STATEMENT LAGOS COULD NOT BE USED AS STAGING AREA BUT DID NOT COMMENT. GOWON SAID HE WOULD BE WILLING SEND FMG REPRESENTATIVE TO MEET REBEL REPRESENTATIVE SOMEWHERE IN AFRICA (HE THOUGHT NIAMEY WOULD BE GOOD SITE) AND APPARENTLY CONCURRED IN PROPOSAL THAT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE STRICTLY SECRET. HE ASKED FOR INFORMATION IN WRITING ON BIAFRAN POSITION AND ON CALABAR IKOT OKPORO ROUTE WHICH COULD BE STUDIED BY HIS ADVISERS. FERGUSON AGREED PROVIDE MEMO WITH TWO ATTACHEMENTS: BIAFRAN AIDE-MEMOIRE AND LOGISTICAL DESCRIPTION (WHICH WILL BE DRAWN FROM STATE 44790 (NOTAL). MEMO AND LOGISTICAL DESCRIPTION FORTHCOMING IN SEPTEL.

6. FERGUSON TOLD GOWON THAT HE WAS CONVINCED SOME NAF ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS IN REBEL TERRITORY HAD BEEN DELIBERATE, AND HE HAD SEEN PIECE OF BOMB WHICH WAS OF FRAGMENTATION RATHER THAN CONCUSSION TYPE, THUS INDICATING PEOPLE RATHER THAN STRUCTURES WERE TARGET. HE STRESSED THAT HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT BOMBING HAD SERVED AS MAJOR UNIFYING FORCE AMONG REBELS. GOWON LISTENED SADLY MADE NO ATTEMPT TO REFUTE FERGUSONS STATEMENTS, COMMENTED THAT HIS OWN INTELLIGENCE CONFIRMED THAT BOMBING HAD STIFFENED REBELS' WILL TO RESIST BUT SAID FMG WOULD HAVE TO CONTINUE AIR STRIKES AGAINST MILITARY TARGETS IN EFFORT BRING WAR TO END.

7. FERGUSON ON MARCH 24 GAVE UK HICOM FULL BRIEFING ON TALK WITH OJUKWU. LATE AFTERNOON MARCH 25 FERGUSON MET WITH CHIEFS OF MISSION OF DONOR GOVERNMENTS AND GAVE THEM MORE GENERAL BRIEFING ON HIS ACTIVITIES TO DATE. HE GAVE NO DETAILS RE SURFACE ROUTES. SCANDINAVIAN CANADIAN AND DUTCH CHIEFS OF MISSION AS WELL AS UK HAVE HOWEVER SOME KNOWLEDGE OF CALABAR IKOT OKPORO ROUTE.

8. DANISH AMBASSADOR ON BEHALF ALL NORDICS SUBSEQUENTLY SUGGESTED TO FERGUSON THAT IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IF FERGUSON COULD BE PRESENT AT NEXT MEETING NORDIC FOREIGN MINISTERS IN COPENHAGEN ON APRIL 23. FERGUSON SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD CONSIDER THIS.

GP-3.
MATHEWS

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