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Nigeria Situation Report
June 6, 1969 - 1600 Hours

ICRC Airplane Shot Down

On June 5, an ICRC airplane was shot down by a Nigerian MIG while en route to Biafra with relief supplies. Two of the crew of the plane, a DC-7, are reported to have parachuted and to be in Nigerian military custody at Uyo. The crew consisted of an American pilot, a Swedish co-pilot, a Norwegian flight engineer and a Swedish loadmaster. It is not yet known which two parachuted, nor the fate of the other two.

Our Charge' in Lagos immediately called on External Affairs Commissioner Arikpo, who appeared "visibly shaken" and confirmed that General Gowon had given strict orders that relief planes were not to be attacked in the air. The Nigerian Air Force commander described the downed plane as suspected of being a DC-6 gunrunner.

The ICRC is suspending relief flights for the night of June 6/7 pending clarification of the situation. On June 4/5, the ICRC had landed 18 planes at Uli without incident. The JCA operation from Sao Tome completed 11 flights to Uli during the night of June 5/6. JCA has not yet reported any plans for interruption of their operations from Sao Tome.

In London, Ambassador Ferguson consulted with British officials, who are planning to urge the FMG to cooperate with the ICRC in an investigation of the incident and to include in any public statement renewed offers of cooperation on surface corridors and daylight relief flights.

At the noon briefing today, our spokesman issued a statement of deep regret and deplored the attack. On background, he also explained the problems arising from the intermingling of relief and arms flights.

Copies to:	S	S/R	U/CF
	U	S/P	White House
	J	O	SecDef (LDX)
	C	USUN	CIA (LDX)
			Members Nigeria Task Force

Approved: Nigeria Task Force-RMMelbourne *RMW*

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PA/HO Department of State
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