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PSL 27-9 BIAFRA - NIGERIA

Department of State

TELEGRAM

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 065

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ACTION SS 70

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O P 021430Z AUG 69
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8149
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NY

LAGOS 6969

LIMDIS

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: ICRC FLIGHTS

REF.8 STATE :29202

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED IN PARA 3 REFTEL, I CALLED ON UKHICOMER AND PROPOSED THAT HE MIGHT WISH RAISE SUBJECT WITH GOWON ALONG LINES PARA 1 AND 2 REFTEL. BEFORE REPLYING HE ASKED ME TO READ THE FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RE ICRC NOTE WHICH HE HAD SENT YESTERDAY EVENING: BEGIN TEXT: THIS DRAFT IS EVEN WORSE THAN I EXPECTED. IT MAKES NO CONCESSIONS TO THE FEDERAL POSITION AND IGNORES EVERYTHING THAT WAS DISCUSSED IN LAGOS. IT APPEARS IN A SENSE TO BE A TRAP FOR THE FEDERAL GOVT, WHO COULD SCARCELY ACCEPT IT AS IT STANDS WITHOUT DETAILED CLARIFICATION OF ITS AMBIGUITIES, WHEREAS OJUKWU COULD NO DOUBT ACCEPT IT IN PRINCIPLE. IN ANY CASE THERE IS LITTLE HOPE OF PERSUADING THE FEDERALS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS UNLESS THE ICRC ARE ABLE TO EXPLAIN TO THEM WHAT THEY HAVE DONE TO ASCERTAIN OJUKWU'S OFFICIAL REACTIONS TO THE ARRANGEMENTS DISCUSSED IN LAGOS. IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE FOR NAVILLE OR SOME SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE TO COME OUT TO LAGOS FOR THIS PURPOSE. 2. BIGNAMI, WHO HAS BEEN SHOWN THE DRAFT, ENTIRELY AGREES THAT TO HANDLE THE MATTER IN THE WAY PROPOSED WOULD BE A MAJOR BLUNDER LIKELY GREATLY TO REDUCE

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PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
April 21, 2005

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* Authority NND 969000
* By CAF NARA Date 3/10/98

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CHANCES OF A REASONABLE COMPROMISE AND INTENDS TO FLY TO
GENEVA TO SAY SO. END TEXT.

2. HICOME SAID HE FAILED SEE WHAT THERE WAS ABOUT THE ICRC
NOTE WHICH HE COULD COMMEND TO GOWON SINCE IT IGNORES THE
AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN GOWON AND NAVILLE. IS NOT RESPONSIVE
TO FEDERAL CONDITIONS, "IGNORES ARTICLES 22 AND 23 OF THE
GENEVA CONVENTION." HE THEN STATED THAT HE WAS NOT CERTAIN
FMG HAD ACTUALLY RECEIVED THE NOTE AND THAT HE WOULD NOT RPT
NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES RAISE THIS SUBJECT WITH GOWON
UNLESS HE RECEIVED DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS TO DO SO FROM
LONDON. HE THEN COMMENTED THAT HE WOULD ALWAYS BE WILLING
TO PUSH FOR ACCEPTANCE OF A "PROPERLY PRESENTED" PLAN FOR
INSPECTION OUTSIDE NIGERIA BUT THAT IN THIS INSTANCE HE
REGARDED THE MANNER OF PRESENTATION AS "LAMENTABLE" AND
COMMENTED WAS REMINISCENT OF LINDT'S FATAL MISTAKES OF
PRESENTING THE FMG WITH A FAIT D'ACCOMPLIS.

3. I THEN MANAGED TO DETERMINE FROM ENAHORO IN EXTAFF THAT
THE FMG HAD NOT RPT NOT RECEIVED ANY NOTE FROM THE ICRC NOR
HAD HE EVEN HEARD OF ONE. I BELIEVE MOST UNWISE SEE ARIKPO
UNTIL FMG HAS RECEIVED NOTE DIRECTLY FROM ICRC. GIVEN PRESENT
MOOD FMG, I ANTICIPATE THAT OUR INTERVENTION IN THIS MATTER MAY
NOT REPEAT NOT BE TOO KINDLY RECEIVED BY ARIKPO AND FMG.
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