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TELEGRAM

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ACTION AF 18

INFO OCT 01, IO 13, EUR 17, AID 28, UCF 5, UPW 01, ORM 03, SR 01, SCS 04,
SCA 01, CIAE 00, JPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03, NSAE 00, NSC 10, P 03,
RSC 01, PRS 01, SS 20, USIA 12, MC 02, E 15, COM 08, ACDA 16, RSR 01,
/197 W

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R 161111Z SEP 69
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8998
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
DIA
CINCSTRIKE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ LAGOS 8336

SUBJECT: SOURCES OF BIAFRAN AVIATION GAS SUPPLY

1. RECENT MESSAGES (USDAO LISBON 111600Z SEP. 69; LAGOS' 8144 AND 8118) REPORT STRENGTHENING OF BIAFRAN AIR FORCE WITH ACQUISITION T-6 AIRCRAFT. IN ADDITION, THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE PRESS SPECULATION, BOTH IN EUROPE AND IN NIGERIA, THAT VON ROSEN HAS SUCCEEDED IN MAKING ADDITIONAL DELIVERIES MINICON AIRCRAFT.

2. WITH BUILD-UP IN AIR FORCE, BIAFRANS WILL REQUIRE LARGER QUANTITIES AVIATION GAS WHICH WE UNDERSTAND IS OBTAINED BY SIPHONING OFF PORTION IN FUEL TANKS OF SAO TOME AND LIBREVILLE BASED FLIGHTS. BIAFRANS DISTILL LOW OCTANE GASOLINE AND APPARENTLY MIX WITH AVGAS FOR OPERATION MOTOR VEHICLES, BUT STRAIGHT AVGAS NEEDED TO OPERATE MINICON-TYPE AIRCRAFT.

3. FMG HAS LONG BEEN EXERCISED BY DELIVERIES DIESEL FUEL AND SPARE PARTS TO BIAFRA BY RELIEF FLIGHTS, WHICH IT REGARDS AS FORM MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ENEMY. THIS ISSUE PRECIPITATED DECEMBER 1968 STOPPAGE ICRC FLIGHTS FROM FERNANDO PO. FMG REITERATED FIRM STAND AGAINST

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FUEL DELIVERIES IN JUNE 30 POLICY STATEMENT ON RELIEF WHICH INTER ALIA LIMITS PERMISSIBLE RELIEF TO FOOD, DRUGS, CLOTHING, SEEDS AND SEEDLINGS.

4. FEDERAL AWARENESS OF BIAFRAN AVGAS SUPPLY TECHNIQUE EVIDENCED BY CAREFUL SCRUTINY AND ALLEGATION OF DISCREPANCY 1000 GALLONS IN FUEL RECORDS OF TWO ICRC AIRCRAFT EMPLOYED IN AUGUST 5 ONE-TIME EMERGENCY NIGHT FLIGHT WHICH INSPECTED LAGOS ON RETURN FLIGHT FROM ULI TO COTONOU. ALTHOUGH ICRC WAS ABLE ACCOUNT FOR QUANTITY FUELED, ACCORDING BIGNAMI, ICRC HAS ADOPTED STRICT POLICY FUEL CONTROL FOR FUTURE FLIGHTS AS RESULT THAT INCIDENT.

5. SINCE BEGINNING NIGERIAN CONFLICT, AIR ATTACKS BY EITHER SIDE HAVE BEEN POWERFUL EMOTIONAL ISSUE, INCREASING RESOLVE OF BIAFRANS TO RESIST AND HEIGHTENING ANTI-RELIEF POSTURE OF FEDERAL POPULATION (WITNESS DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT OF VON ROSEN RAIDS ON FMG RELIEF POLICY). IF BIAFRAN AIR ATTACKS ARE STEPPED UP, WE CAN EXPECT MORE SHRILL CHARGES THAT RELIEF FLIGHTS ARE GUNRUNNERS IN DISGUISE. IF RENEWED AIR ACTIVITY COINCIDES WITH DISCLOSURE ADDITIONAL C-97 DELIVERIES TO JCA, ADVERSE IMPACT TO USG POSITION IN NIGERIA WOULD BE FURTHER AGGRAVATED. IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE EFFECT OF POSSIBLE CHARGE THAT USG-SUPPLIED AND US REGISTERED C-97S OPERATED BY JCA ARE ENGAGED IN SUPPLYING AVIATION GAS TO PERMIT BIAFRAN AIR STRIKES AGAINST FEDERAL NIGERIA, WE BELIEVE IT MAY BE USEFUL, AS JCA TAKES DELIVERY ADDITIONAL C-97S, IF DEPARTMENT SEEKS JCA AGREEMENT TO ADOPT CONTROL MEASURES WHICH WILL AFFORD STRICT ACCOUNTING FOR FUEL CONSUMPTION. GP-3
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