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PA/HO Department of State

E.O. 12958, as amended

April 21, 2005

Approved by Brown, 10/2/69, NYC

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September 26, 1969

SECRETARY'S DELEGATION  
TO THE  
TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
New York, September, 1969

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE: September 26, 1969

TIME: 1000 a.m.

PLACE: USUN

SUBJECT: Secretary's Bilateral with Nigerian Foreign  
Minister, September 26  
(Part I of II - Biafra)

PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.: The Secretary  
Ambassador Yost

Amb. Dean Brown

NIGERIAN: Arikpo, Foreign Minister  
J.T. Iyalla, Ambassador  
to U.S.

B.A. Clark, Nigerian  
Delegation

Distribution:

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AmEmbassies LAGOS, LONDON, GENEVA, PARIS

*Let's make C.H.S.*

The Secretary opened by expressing his strong personal interest and sympathy with a country he had visited and enjoyed. The U.S. has done what it can in a humanitarian way for Nigeria and was distressed that the problem had not yet been solved.

The Foreign Minister said that the FMG had done its best. It appreciates relief that is given but is disturbed by the arms which continue to slip through. Nigerian agreement with the latest ICRC proposal is the FMG's last effort. It hopes that Ojukwu can be persuaded to accept. He would do so if he were really interested in his people's welfare.

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The Secretary asked if the Minister had seen French Foreign Minister Schumann.

The Minister said that he had tried to but Schumann had left. He hopes to see someone in the French delegation soon.

In response to the Secretary's question as to how he saw the future, the Minister replied that the majority of Ibos now believe that the problem must be settled within a Nigerian framework. They know that there will be no genocide. More and more of them are crossing back into Nigeria. In time, the solution will be found in a re-integration of Ibos into Nigerian society. This can come about through negotiations; Nigeria is ready at any time. It can also come about through military means. In either case, Nigeria is not going to change. Many push Nigeria to make further concessions. It will not do so any longer; there is no more give on the Nigerian side.

The Secretary asked if Nigeria might be raised in the GA. Ambassador Yost said he doubted it although many delegates will mention the problem in their speeches.

The Minister said that he knew there had been unfriendly and critical speeches. He intended to answer them. He had heard that the French were trying to promote an appeal or statement by the GA President or the Secretary General concerning the problem.

The Secretary asked about Clyde Ferguson.

The Minister said that he had met Mr. Ferguson several times. He found him a brilliant and sympathetic man. They planned to meet in Washington soon.

The Secretary said that we have tried to play a useful role, inspired by humanitarian concerns, and have avoided getting involved in political aspects. We are interested in seeing a settlement but not in involvement in the settlement itself.

The Secretary mentioned the question of influence. We are constantly advised not to interfere with other nations. At the same time many of those who so advise us ask us to do something special for them. In Africa we want to be

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sympathetic and helpful but we do not want people to have the idea that we have hidden motives or desires.

The Foreign Minister interjected that Nigeria had used the U.S. constitution as a model for its federal relationship. The Secretary said Balewa had said the same thing but had cautioned that it might not work because of tribal problems in Nigeria.

In response to a question, the Foreign Minister said he would go to Washington on the 8th. He hopes to see the Undersecretary, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Kissinger, and members of Congress interested in Nigeria.

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