

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


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AN BARRACKS
LAGOS, NIGERIA

1882/S.

/8th-September, 1971.

My Dear Mr President,

I wrote to you earlier in the year to accept with profound gratitude your very kind invitation to me to visit the United States of America. While our officials were trying to suggest mutually convenient dates for the visit, I continued my programme of State Visits to a number of African countries, particularly to thank their Governments and peoples for the unwavering support they gave to me during the civil war in my country as well as to promote vital interests common to our peoples. At the same time, I was, and continue to be, intensely preoccupied with the formulation and implementation of my country's current Development Plan.

In the midst of the foregoing commitments, I have had to accept a number of urgently necessary assignments under the aegis of the Organisation of African Unity affecting the peace and progress of Africa. In the firm belief that my visit to your great country would cement further the cordial and friendly relations which so happily exist between our two countries, I still hoped to be able to visit your country this year. Hence the delay in indicating my preferences for the dates in October suggested by your officials.

/I am ...

His Excellency
Mr. Richard M. Nixon,
President of the United States of America,
The White House,
WASHINGTON, D.C.



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I am afraid I am still not free of my immediate preoccupations at home and in Africa. With the coming fall and winter, and having regard to the arrangements which you will have to make in so short a time to receive me in the midst of your other many pressing engagements, I hesitate to suggest that the visit be postponed till later in the year.

Consequently, I want to take the liberty of our friendship to express the hope that your invitation to me to visit you remains still valid and open. I shall therefore be highly delighted if another mutually acceptable date for my visit can be fixed through our diplomatic channels, preferably not within this year.

I deeply regret my inability to visit your country this year. The decision has been forced on me by circumstances beyond my control. As a man with an abiding interest in my country and Africa, I trust that you will understand my position.

Accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours most sincerely,

(MAJOR-GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON)
Head of the Federal Military Government,
Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces
of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.