



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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Pol 27 Biafra - Nigeria

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ACTION AF 18

INFO ARA 08, EUR 15, IO 13, CIAE 00, DODE 00, JPM 04, H 02, INR 07, L 03,
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9437
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
USUN 1634

S E C R E T LONDON 2170

NOFORN

SUBJECT: AZIKIWE

REF: LONDON 1749 (NOTAL)

1. FORMER PRESIDENT AZIKIWE'S WIFE FLORA AND SON EMEKA HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO LEAVE UMUHA BY OJUKWU AND ARE NOW IN LONDON. WE CALLED ON ZIK YESTERDAY (MARCH 19) AND LEARNED FROM HIM THAT THEY ARRIVED FROM LISBON WITHIN PAST FEW DAYS. EMEKA'S LEG WOUND IS BETTER BUT, ACCORDING TO ZIK, HE WILL NEED ADDITIONAL TREATMENTS BEFORE RECOVERING COMPLETELY. GUARDIAN THIS MORNING CARRIES BRIEF ITEM REPORTING ARRIVAL.

(2) 2. WE ASKED AZIKIWE WHETHER THERE WAS ANY TRUTH TO NIGERIAN PRESS REPORTS THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO RETURN TO LAGOS. HE SAID INVITATION TO RETURN HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM GOWON BUT HE WAS STILL UNDECIDED WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT. HIS INCLINATION WAS TO AVOID IDENTIFYING HIMSELF TOO CLOSELY WITH EITHER SIDE IN STRUGGLE IN HOPES HE COULD PLAY USEFUL ROLE IN ASSISTING SETTLEMENT LATER. HE SAID HE WOULD LET US KNOW BEFORE MAKING ANY MOVE, BUT WAS CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT DISCUSSING

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SUBJECT AT ANY LENGTH.

3. HE TOLD US THAT HIS ELDEST SON CHUKWOMA (HARVARD '63) WAS ON WAY TO UMUAHIA VIA LISBON AT VERY MEMENT. HE HAD STOPPED OFF IN LONDON DAY OR TWO AGO AND TOLD HIS FATHER HE HAD JUST COMPLETED AT OJUKWU'S REQUEST, MISSION TO PORT AU PRINCE TO TRY PERSUADE PAPA DOC TO RECOGNIZE BIAFRA. CHUKWOMA CLAIMED MISSION WAS SUCCESSFUL AND STATEMENT "FAVORABLE TO BIAFRA" WOULD BE ISSUED MARCH 22. WE PRESSED ZIK FURTHER ON THIS, BUT HE CLAIMED NOT TO KNOW WHETHER HAITIAN GOVT WOULD ANNOUNCE FORMAL RECOGNITION OR SIMPLY CALL FOR SELF-DETERMINATION FOR IBOS AD DE GAULLE HAD DONE.

4. WE ASKED AZIKIWE WHAT HE EXPECTED TO COME FROM PRIMIN WILSON'S TRIP TO NIGERIA NEXT WEEK AND HE DOUBTED DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGH COULD BE ACHIEVED WITH BOTH SIDES IN SUCH INTRANSIGENT MOOD. HE GUESSED THAT WILSON WOULD TRY FOR MEETING WITH OJUKWU AND THROUGHT BIAFRAN LEADER WOULD BE TEMPTED, ALTHOUGH HE WOULD PROBABLY REFUSE TO MEET ABROAD BRITISH WARSHIP FEARLESS, WHICH PRESS WAS SPECULATING WILSON MIGHT PROPOSE.

5. ZIK SAID HE HAD RECEIVED NO DIRECT REACTION FROM OJUKWU TO HIS PEACE PLAN PROPOSED LAST MONTH IN OXFORD. VARIOUS BIAFRAN EMISSARIES HAD APPEARED, HOWEVER, AND REPORTED OJUKWU WAS ANGRY BECAUSE AZIKIWE HAD NOT CONSULTED HIM BEFORE MAKING PROPOSALS PUBLIC. ZIK WAS PHILOSOPHIC ABOUT GENERALLY NEGATIVE REACTION IN LAGOS AND SEEMED TO BELIEVE SOME PARTS OF PLAN MIGHT YET BE SALVAGED WHEN TWO SIDES WERE READY FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS.

6. COMMENT: THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT AZIKIWE IS UNDER PRESSURE TO GO TO LAGOS AND THAT DEPARTURE OF HIS WIFE AND SON FROM BIAFRA REMOVES ONE OBVIOUS RESTRAINT. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE HIM WHEN HE SAYS HE IS GENUINELY RELUCTANT TO CHOOSE SIDES. ELDEST SON CHUKWOMA'S RETURN TO BIAFRA WILL IN ANY CASE DELAY DECISION FOR TIME BEING.

7. FYI. ZIK TELLS US HIS YOUNGEST SON NWACHUKWU (HARVARD '68) IS IN ST LOUIS MISSORI, APPARENTLY STUDYING FOR ADVANCE DEGREE. DAUGHTER NGOZI HAS JUST STARTED AT MICHIGAN STATE. KAISER

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