

As the President made clear in his statement of July 11, our intention is not to interfere in Nigerian military or political affairs, but to alleviate the suffering of innocent persons on both sides.

The need is great and urgent. We are far from satisfied at the amounts of relief supplies which thus far have reached the suffering, but are working urgently with the ICRC and other governments to find a means of breaking the bottleneck now caused by the failure to reach agreement on how to get supplies through the lines of fighting. In the meantime, ICRC stockpiles are growing, and we are hopeful for an early agreement among all concerned which will permit adequate supplies to flow to the needy wherever they are.

The U.S. contribution to Nigerian relief, including estimated donations of \$2 million from private sources, has now reached \$7 million, including a Government donation of 5,500 tons of food worth \$2.7 million to UNICEF approved in July. In addition, Secretary Rusk has informed the ICRC that we are providing a reserve fund of \$1 million for that body to draw on in meeting Nigerian relief needs. This contribution should be particularly useful in giving the ICRC flexibility to procure vehicles, charter ships and aircraft, and purchase or lease other equipment for rapid deployment to the areas of need.

We recognize that the implementation of an effective relief program in Nigeria is an enormous enterprise. The ICRC is expanding its organization to carry out such a program and has just named Mr. Auguste Lindt, the Swiss Ambassador to Moscow and formerly UN High Commissioner for Refugees, as the High Commissioner of Nigerian relief operations.

A truly effective relief effort requires the full cooperation of both federal and rebel officials, for there are thousands of desperately needy people in both areas. I am confident that such cooperation will be forthcoming, for, as the President said on July 11, "mass starvation that can be prevented must not be allowed to go on." We shall continue to cooperate in every way possible with the ICRC emergency relief effort to achieve this result.

Mr. Chairman, I have given special attention to the Nigerian question, since it is one which concerns us all deeply and in which the Committee has a special interest. We should all work to mitigate the effect of civil war on the innocent and to bring hostilities to an end. I would like, at the same time, to return to the trends in Africa which I outlined at the beginning of my remarks. African leaders are undismayed by the admittedly major problems they face, for they have an increasing sense of direction in their efforts and they are using their resources with greater effectiveness. These developments portend better government, economic growth and individual progress. Along with the sense of urgency of particular problems I would like to leave with this Committee the sense of encouragement I draw from these general patterns. Within this perspective, I believe that the United States can develop constructive policies designed to meet the needs both of our national interest and that of the African nations.

Mr. O'HARA. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for a very encouraging report.

I know of your great personal concern for Nigeria, having been our Ambassador there, and your deep affection for the people of Nigeria. On the whole I take your report to be one of optimism.

Mr. PALMER. Yes.

Mr. O'HARA. I mean with regard to Nigeria.

Mr. PALMER. I think that it is one of optimism, Mr. Chairman. There are many difficulties that lie ahead, but I must say that I was encouraged by my talks with General Gowan and other officials to believe that they, too, regard Ibos as being a full and essential part of Nigeria, that they want to see an end to the bloodshed, and they do want to see an honorable settlement of this problem.

They are, of course, insistent upon maintaining the unity of the country.

It is my very strong hope that within this framework both sides will be able to reach understanding and accommodation that will result in an honorable peace and a safe and effective reintegration of the very important Ibo element of the population into Nigeria.