

very major and very expensive and very risky airlift involving a large number of planes to move that amount in every day. The expense of this also becomes a factor, whereas there is no reason why substantial quantities cannot be moved across by land.

Mr. TUNNEY. When you say "by land," are you referring to the land down on the coast and a corridor that would come from one of the seaports?

Mr. PALMER. No; they are talking primarily about moving it down from the north, and down into this area.

Mr. TUNNEY. Wouldn't it make more sense to have it move from the south?

Mr. PALMER. There are all sorts of complications in this problem. One is that the southern sector is still somewhat active militarily. The port facilities at Port Harcourt are still not able to be fully utilized because there are vessels sunk in that area and the channel has silted up over the period of the last year.

Also, the airfield has been damaged.

Another possibility is to move it in through Calabar. The trouble with this is that you have to get it across the river and the ferry service there involves difficulties. Then when you get up into the Ikot Ekpene area, you are in the area where some of the most active fighting is going on at the present time on both sides.

Things are quieter in the northern sector. From a logistical point of view the indications are that it could be moved easier and faster into that area than it can in the other areas. There is less dislocation there.

Mr. TUNNEY. Is our Government satisfied that the Federal Government is doing everything that is possible to facilitate the movement of food into Biafra?

Mr. PALMER. I think our feeling is that the Federal Government has really made a very major effort here to meet the requirements of the situation.

Mr. TUNNEY. We are satisfied with the major effort?

Mr. PALMER. We are satisfied with the extent of that effort, yes.

It seems quite clear to me that at this moment the major problem really lies on the other side. I think that this is true of the ICRC and I think it is the view of the Organization of African Unity which has also been working on this problem. I would hope very much that arrangements could be worked out to bring more of it in by air, particularly during daylight hours. This has not been worked out as yet because of the fact that the Federal Government does insist that any arrangements that are worked out would not permit the introduction of weapons. It is not that they are concerned about the Red Cross flying the weapons or anything of the kind, but if a lot of aircraft are moving in the area there is some concern that weapons could be brought in to any field that was designated for humanitarian supplies. I think the Federal Government is willing to be flexible in this respect, as Mr. Thompson indicated yesterday in his statement before the British House of Commons.

Mr. TUNNEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. O'HARA. Mr. Secretary, as usual you have made a large contribution to the work of this subcommittee.