

stipulated by the Nigerian authorities was that Canadian airplanes should operate their mission under the auspices of the Red Cross. We were also advised that this permission would not continue if transport operations were made under the auspices of other organizations, such as the churches for instance. Therefore, it was with the authorization of the Nigerian government that our Hercules airplanes went to Lagos last summer.

I should like to pause briefly at this juncture to recall what I said a moment ago about the inviolability of territory and about the principles of international law which support non-intervention. Much as we may argue that in this instance or that such principles may or should be bent, we must remember that we cannot take unto ourselves such a decision. To do so means that we are setting ourselves above the law, as judges in our own cause. Rules of international conduct are not perfect but they are designed to ensure order. Breaking these rules because we think it is right only leads to chaos.

Following the agreement reached between the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Nigerian Commissioner General for External Affairs, a Canadian Hercules aircraft did operate on the Red Cross night airlift from Fernando Po into the rebel area for some days. During that period it made a most significant contribution to the effort, carrying 20 tons of food each trip. Our experience quickly showed, however, that daylight flights by relief aircraft would be better; more flights could be made more safely, and much greater quantities of food could be delivered to those in need. We could see no reason why the rebel authorities should refuse to allow daylight flights if they were really interested in receiving food for their people in the quantities required.

It was about this time that I decided, in constant consultation with the Secretary of State for External Affairs and based on the continuous stream of information available to the Government from its missions in Africa and elsewhere, that it would be appropriate to send to Lagos a personal representative of the Prime Minister of Canada to discuss with the Nigerian Head of State the Canadian interest in an early settlement of the war. Accordingly I asked my legislative assistant, Professor Ivan Head, who had previously been in Nigeria, to fly to Lagos and speak on my behalf to General Gowon. This initiative was taken not because we thought that Canada possessed any wisdom not available to the Nigerians nor because we possessed some magic key which could solve the deadlock. I sent Mr. Head with instructions to explore the most effective avenues of Canadian relief assistance. And I sent him to assure General Gowon of our interest in a conclusion of hostilities in Nigeria and the establishment of a federal structure on terms which would guarantee the political and economic security of all minorities in Nigeria.

That initiative was successful. It was during Professor Head's discussion with General Gowon that it emerged that the Nigerians would have no objection to daylight relief flights by the Red Cross. I regard this statement as one of the most meaningful to date in this entire sequence of events, and one which is evidence of the good faith of the Federal Military Government in Lagos.

I therefore issued my appeal on November 4 to the rebel authorities to permit these relief planes to land by day in their territory. Shortly