

agreement included, at Nigerian insistence and in reply to the Biafran condition for what amounted to daylight military use of Uli Airport, a clause that the agreement should be without prejudice to military operations by the Nigerian Government.

The Biafran regime refused to conclude an agreement with the Red Cross. Biafra, instead, demanded, in a press statement dated September 15, "a third-party guarantee which will ensure that daylight flights are not used to military advantage by Nigeria". The statement went on to say that "the only guarantee acceptable to Biafra is that of a third government or international organization of a political character".

The Governments of Canada and the United States immediately attempted to provide assurances to meet this understandable Biafran fear of military disadvantage. Discussions toward this end took place in Ottawa and in Washington and involved officials of the Prime Minister's Office and the Department of External Affairs and officials of the White House and the Department of State. Included in these discussions as one element of these assurances was a proposal for Canadian observers to travel on board relief aircraft.

Canadian officials subsequently met with Biafran representatives in Geneva. Ambassador Ferguson, who had been agreed upon as the person who should convey formally these offers, travelled to Africa. As set forth in the Washington statement, dated November 12, 1969, the Biafran authorities, on October 24, formally rejected the offers which were designed to protect Biafra from military disadvantage, which is exactly what they had asked for.

Canadian officials in Geneva have been informed by Biafran representatives that Biafra demands more than military assurances; that, in addition, guarantees of a political nature are required in order to break the impasse. The Canadian Government is not willing to give the political guarantees demanded, as these would be tantamount to recognition of an independent state of Biafra, and an overt interference by Canada in the political affairs of another country, contrary to the resolutions of the Organization of African Unity.

During the past several weeks, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has continued his discussions about Nigeria with some 25 other foreign ministers, many of them from African nations, at the United Nations. I talked to Secretary-General U Thant about the problem in New York on November 11, as I had a year earlier. Canadian leaders have pursued the Nigerian issue with the leaders of two African countries who have visited Ottawa this fall. They were President Hamani Diori of Niger and President Nyerere of Tanzania. I can say that the unanimous view of these African leaders is that the Organization of African Unity resolutions must be respected.

The Government is now considering, as stated a few days ago, alternative means of delivering relief to Biafra in daylight. It does so while agreeing entirely with the recent statement of United States Secretary of State Rogers: "Daylight flights under agreed procedures... remain the only practicable scheme for an immediate and substantial expansion of relief operations".