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NIGERIA: INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER TEAM

REPORT ON VISIT OF REPRESENTATIVES OF CANADA, POLAND, SWEDEN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM TO THE FIRST DIVISION AND THIRD MARINE COMMANDO DIVISION AREAS JANUARY 10-14

The object of this short report on the visit shown above is to inform the addressees of the findings of the Observer Team in the areas visited.

The Team was composed of the following: Brigadier General John L. Drewry, Canada; Major Gordon Bristoe, Canada; Lieutenant Colonel Kazimierz Grymin, Poland; Brigadier General Yngve Berglund, Sweden; Major Olov Eriksson, Sweden; Colonel Douglas Cairns, United Kingdom; Major Paul Gray, United Kingdom; accompanied by Mr. Rupert John, United Nations.

The observers visiting Third Marine Commando Division had a discussion with the General Officer Commanding after their arrival at Port Harcourt on January 10 at which he said that Arochuku and the area between the Imo and Cross Rivers had been liberated and that there was no rebel activity in those areas. Approximately 2,000 rebel prisoners of war (POWs) had been taken, 600 of these were in Ikot Ekpene and the remainder in Port Harcourt. Refugees were streaming into Aba where it was estimated that there were 100,000. In addition a similar number was expected to emerge during the next few days and 50,000 were expected at Umuahia.

The GOC said that Owerri had just fallen but as there was some doubt whether the bridges on the Aba-Owerri road were usable, the observers requested to visit the Aba-Umuahia-Ikot Ekpene triangle on January 11 and Owerri on January 12. The GOC readily agreed to these visits which were carried out as scheduled and complete freedom of movement was enjoyed by the observers.