SUBJ: BOMBING OF CIVILIANS

1. I TOLD COMMISSIONER EXTAF ARIKPO THIS MORNING THAT I HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DISCUSS WITH HIM REPORTS OF NIGERIAN AIR FORCE (NAF) BOMBING OF CIVILIANS IN REBEL TERRITORY. I THEN MADE POINTS CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 5 STATE REFTEL AND PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3 LAGOS REFTEL.

2. ARIKPO RESPONDED THAT UK HICOMER HAD DISCUSSED BOMBINGS WITH HEAD OF FMG ON MARCH 3, AND FMG HAD SINCE BEEN ASSEMBLING INFORMATION ON NAF OPERATIONS. FMG RECOGNIZED WITH DEEP REGRET THAT RECENT NAF OPERATIONS HAD RESULTED IN LARGE NUMBER CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. IN SOME INSTANCES THIS HAD BEEN UNAVOIDABLE AS CIVILIANS DESPITE WARNINGS REMAINED IN VICINITY MILITARY TARGETS. FMG WAS, HOWEVER, TIGHTENING CONTROLS OVER ALL NAF OPERATIONS TO MINIMIZE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. ARIKPO SAID SPEAKING FOR FMG HE
ASSURED USG ONCE AGAIN THAT IT WAS NOT POLICY OR INTENT OF FMG TO HARM CIVILIANS.

3. ARIKPO EXPLAINED THAT SOME NAF AIRCRAFT WERE ASSIGNED FIRST DIVISION COMMANDER SHUWA AND THIRD DIVISION COMMANDER ADEKUNLE. IT HAD BEEN ASCERTAINED THAT SHUWA EXERCISED STRICT CONTROL OVER HIS AIRCRAFT AND RESTRICTED THEIR USE TO CLOSE SUPPORT OF GROUND FORCES. ADEKUNLE HOWEVER HAD BEEN USING HIS AIRCRAFT TO ATTACK MILITARY TARGETS REPORTED BY HIS INTELLIGENCE. ARIKPO INTIMATED ADEKUNLE'S INTELLIGENCE REPORTS NOT VERY GOOD, AND ADEKUNLE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO FOLLOW SHUWA'S PROCEDURES. ARIKPO EMPHASIZED THAT NAF OPERATIONS WOULD HENCEFORTH BE CLOSELY MONITORED FROM LAGOS.

4. RE ATTACK ON OZU ARAM, ADEKUNLE ADMITTED VILLAGE HAD BEEN ATTACKED BUT INSISTED THIS HAD BEEN DONE FEBRUARY 25, NOT ON FEBRUARY 26 DURING TRUCE PERIOD.

GP-4* MATHEWS