

95 ✓
FOR AM RELEASE
September 10, 1968

Statement of
RICHARD M. NIXON
450 Park Avenue
New York, New York

The terrible tragedy of the people of Biafra has now assumed catastrophic dimensions. Starvation is daily claiming the lives of an estimated 5,000 Ibo tribesmen, most of them children. If adequate food is not delivered to these people in the immediate future, hundreds of thousands of human beings will die of hunger.

Until now efforts to relieve the Biafran people have been thwarted by the desire of the Central Government of Nigeria to pursue total and unconditional victory and by the fear of the Ibo people that surrender means wholesale atrocities and genocide.

But genocide is what is taking place right now --- and starvation is the grim reaper.

This is not the time to stand on ceremony or to "go through channels" or to observe the diplomatic niceties ... The destruction of an entire people is an immoral objective, even in the most moral of wars. It can never be justified; it can never be condoned.

Voluntary organizations such as the Red Cross, The Church World Service and Caritas have rushed thousands of tons of protein-rich nourishments and baby foods to the vicinity of the stricken region. Much of the food remains nearby while these children starve to death.

The time is long past for the wringing of hands about what is going on. While America is not the world's policeman, let us at least

act as the world's conscience in this matter of life and death for millions.

The President of the United States is a man charged with responsibilities and concerns all over the world. But I urge President Johnson to give to this crisis all the time and attention and imagination and energy he can muster. Every friend of humanity should be asked to step forward to call an end to this slaughter of the innocents in West-Central Africa.

America is not without enormous material wealth and power and ability. There is no better cause in which we might invest that power than in sparing the lives of innocent men and women and children who otherwise are doomed.

##