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ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 SSO-00 ONY-00 /000 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9122

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 03720

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

FOR AF/W ONLY - AMBASSADOR COOK FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: OPRC, NI
SUBJECT: OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

REF: STATE 072719

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.



B2

3. BABANGIDA VISIT. I AM SORRY TO SAY THAT WE CAN NO LONGER PLAY LOW-KEY ON BABANGIDA'S DESIRE FOR A VISIT, WHICH I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO DO. SEPTEL REPORTS MOST EAGER REQUEST FROM BABANGIDA HIMSELF IN MEETING WITH JEB BUSH, WHICH FRANKLY CAUGHT US ALL OFF GUARD. IT'S NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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IN THE CABLE, BUT I MUMBLED AT THAT POINT. JEB BUSH AND

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: CHARLES L. DARIS
DATE/CASE ID: 18 MAR 2002 200101941

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I ALSO GOT STRONG PITCH FOR SAME FROM COLONEL GWADABE, GOVERNOR OF NIGER STATE AND A CLOSE BABANGIDA CONFIDANT. THE FAT IS IN THE FIRE. GOOD LUCK.

4. JEB BUSH VISIT. A SENSATION, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. THE FMG ROLLED OUT EVERY RED CARPET IN THE NORTH, FROM FIVE GOVERNORS ATTENDING THE PLANT OPENING, TO 1300 HORSES IN AN ABSOLUTELY SPECTACULAR DURBAR AT GOMBE. AMERICAN FLAGS LINING THE STREET, CHEERING CROWDS, YOU NAME IT. SECURITY FROM THE FMG WAS EXCELLENT, WITH ARMY, POLICE AND SSS ALL WORKING IN TANDEM (UNDER RSO BOB FRANKS COORDINATION WHICH THEY ALSO ACCEPTED GRACEFULLY, PERHAPS GRATEFULLY). WE'LL LIVE OFF THIS ONE FOR A LONG WHILE. JEB BUSH IS VERY PLEASANT, POLISHED, AND A SMOOTH DIPLOMAT. HE DID US ALL PROUD.

5. ISRAEL. THE ISRAELIS ALWAYS HAVE A PENCHANT FOR OVER-OPTIMISM. BABANGIDA IS CERTAINLY SENDING OUT SIGNALS TO TEST THE WATER IN NIGERIA, BUT WE EXPECT HIM NOT TO TAKE THE RISK FOR AWHILE. SOME NORTHERN ELEMENTS ARE INDEED DIGGING IN THEIR HEELS, AS WE HAVE REPORTED SEPARATELY. NEVERTHELESS, THE TREND IS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

6. MY IBB MEETING WAS POSTPONED UNTIL FRIDAY, INSHALLAH (BABANGIDA'S PHRASE). LYMAN

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