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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 16, 1993

PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW DIRECTIVE/NSC-17

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PER E.O. 13526
2010-1227-M(2.08)
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR ECONOMIC
POLICY
THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: U.S. Policy Toward Liberia (U)

Despite the historical relationship between the United States and Liberia, the threat of vicious civil war, and a widescale humanitarian emergency, the U.S. adopted a minimalist approach toward Liberia during the initial Charles Taylor rebellion in 1990. While moving vigorously to protect U.S. lives and Embassy Monrovia premises, the fundamental approach was to encourage first the Liberians themselves, and then their West African neighbors, to resolve Liberia's problems. The U.S. provided strong encouragement to the West African peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, and financial assistance to Senegal to join that force at a critical juncture. However, other than the aid to Senegal our role has been primarily diplomatic and supportive. Most recently, we have urged the UN to seize the lead in bolstering ECOWAS and searching for a negotiated return to the Yamassoukro process of encampment of the warring factions, disarmament, demobilization, and free and fair countrywide elections. (S)

Since ECOMOG's arrival in Monrovia, it has provided security and stability for the capital but has had little impact on the rest of the territory, which has largely been controlled by Taylor. In October 1992, Taylor pushed ECOMOG back to Monrovia proper, conducted raids inside the city, and launched artillery attacks on urban targets. Nigeria, the main force contributor, reinforced ECOMOG which gradually repulsed the NPFL, re-established its original perimeter, and then went on the offensive against Taylor. (S)

There are, however, serious questions about ECOMOG's staying power. The Senegalese pulled their contingent out in January. Nigeria's intentions are also uncertain, especially if the planned transition to civilian rule occurs on schedule this

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summer. Taylor is a resourceful survivor, and may be looking beyond ECOMOG for a renewed opportunity to seize power. (S)

The challenge for U.S. policy is to craft an approach which maximizes the odds of a successful and peaceful resolution of the Liberian civil war, preferably within the framework of ECOWAS's unprecedented regional initiative. This must be accomplished without encouraging the Liberians to look to the U.S. to resolve their problems for them, and within the confines of very limited financial resources and Brooke Amendment restrictions on assistance to Liberia. (S)

This policy review should be completed by March 17. It should include clear policy options/recommendations across the full range of options for dealing with Liberia. Any difference in view among agencies should be noted. At a minimum, the review should address the following questions and issues. (U)

Part I: Assessment

- What are U.S. interests and objectives in Liberia? To what degree is the historical relationship still a legitimate factor in our policy deliberations?
- What are the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict? Are there any circumstances under which Charles Taylor will voluntarily fulfill commitments?
- What is ECOMOG's staying power? How long can we expect the Nigerians to continue their military engagement in Liberia?
- What are the intentions and role of France?
- What are the likely costs (human, economic and political) of renewed active civil war? What pressures will this generate on the U.S., and what is the likely requirement for humanitarian relief? (C)

Part II: Options for Policy

- How actively engaged should the U.S. be in seeking a resolution to the conflict? How should our role relate to the regional countries, regional organizations, and the UN?
- What level of resources are we willing to commit? This should include consideration of both regional and UN peacekeeping operations, humanitarian relief, and post-conflict recovery and rehabilitation. It should address the source of funds, and relative priorities among competing funding requirements.
- What course should we pursue if Nigeria and/or ECOMOG withdraw from Liberia? (C)

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Part III: Tasking

- The IWG on Africa, under the chairmanship of the Department of State, should carry out this review. (U)



Anthony Lake
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