

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LAST DAYS OF BIAFRAN RADIO (Interim Report)

Nigerian forces, poised on the Owerri front since before Christmas, finally began the East push, coordinated with federal troops on the northern and eastern fronts. They broke through Biafran defenses and captured Owerri on Saturday, Jan. 10, and moved toward the Uli airstrip.

SUNDAY, JAN. 11 - 0606 GMT, Voice of Biafra international service, 6,143 kHz., at unusually good level and fairly clear. Apparently normal 0600-0610 newscast not aired, but only Afr. mx and XL ann. At 0610, played "Battle Hymn of the Republic." At 0615, time ck in GMT and Biafran time (0715). Concert type mx continued (Hirst). Had not found home svc R. Biafra on 7,305 at 0500, only Russian audible, but at 0620 ck, the trk-mounted R. Biafra mobile tx was also at good level with Afr. highlife mx, no amts. No newscasts hrd on either freq. (Hirst) On Sunday, Uli airfield bombed and shelled. Sun. night Biafran leader Ojukwu flew out of country, turning govt. to Gen. Effiong. Press accounts said that taped message by Ojukwu aired by R. Biafra. Report from Libreville said that Orlu, site of two Biafran txs fallen. Presumably, mobile, Swiss-made stn (10kw) on 41 m. moved out in advance of capture. The "permanent" 10 kw. installation on 6,143 not hrd after this time and presumably captured or destroyed.

MONDAY, JAN 12 - Despite careful tuning before 0500 to well past 0600, could not raise either tx, but no other Afr. stns observed, hence maybe propagation (Hirst) Likely, as R. Biafra hrd on 7,307 kHz., though not at 0430 normal s/on. At 0456 ck, IS observed and s/on with vy brief amnt at 0500. Immediately into "Early Bird" pga with usual lively highlife mx and cheery amts. No news at 0530A, as usual. Rare amts did not mention war crisis, no sign of panic or poor technical operation (Jensen) Later Monday, Uli field captured by federals. Shortly before this, over R. Biafra mobile tx at Uga, near Uli, Gen. Effiong at 1540 GMT broadcast capitulation amnt with order for Biafran troop surrender. Press reports said R. Biafra otherwise playing Beethoven and funeral mx all day. When Uli fell, mobile station believed moved eastward away from Nigerian troops. Nothing noted on 7,307 during 2200-2230 period, when audible sometimes in the States in the past.

TUESDAY, JAN. 13 - At 0000, Gowon went on R. Nigeria to accept surrender, R. Biafra not noted at usual 0430 s/on, nor at 0445-0508 ck. (Jensen) Hrd at good level just before 0600 on 7,307, then silence for minute or so, then on with obvious mike trouble. The first minute of the amnt cutting out almost completely. Finally on with vy bad modulation, although mx had been clear. Items hrd, "Negotiate settlement," "armesty," "appeals to all governments for urgent help for relief," "Biafrans will finally settle their differences with Nigeria by peaceful negotiations," "keep calm," "Maj Gen Effiong said in effect they have finally given up in the fight against Nigeria." This may have been amnt reported by press, which stated Gen. Effiong went back on Biafran radio to appeal to Gowon to slow the advance of the Nigerian troops to "allay the suffering of the people through increasing mass movements." Then followed mx, an older pop song sung by women's group (Hirst) However, Jensen tuned station at 0614 and, as did Hirst, hrd old records, including Louis Armstrong's "Sunny Side of the Street." Hirst lost signal in noise at 0620, Jensen able to follow til 0702 with difficulty, til fade. Pgm of uninterrupted mx, highlife mx, old Bing Crosby records, some with female in duet, incl. "Tennessee Waltz." Nothing noted during 2200-2230 period. Press accounts, referring to Tuesday operations, said "The Biafran radio was still besting its customary assortment of classical and popular records..."

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 14 - Mobile tx moved to village between Orlu and Umuahia in a still free area. Jensen tuned R. Biafra, 7,307, from 0515-0535 fede with what may have been last best from Biafra audible in the U.S. Operation obviously makeshift, signal extremely weak and poor modulation. Pgm consisted of uninterrupted Negro spiritual mx. Gradually faded to nothingness. Press stories said a few hours later, at unreported time, federal forces of Nigerian 3rd Marine Commando Div., under Col. Glusegun Obasanjo, moved into what was described as jungle fortress and captured mobile stn. This was then at Obolo-Uka village, 17 mi. SE Orlu, 20 mi. NW of Umuahia. Obasanjo armed. he had ordered his force to halt advance and hand over the job of maintaining law and order to Nigerian police.

As far as is known, this was last best of R. Biafra. On afternoon of Jan. 17, Schnabel hrd vy weak stn on 7,307 in Port., with mention of Biafran leaders. Nothing further known about disposition of the ex-Biafran tx or if Schnabel's loggings indicate now being used by Nigeria. Suspect not.