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EQUATORIAL GUINEA

On March 10, 1976, the Department received a telegram from the Foreign Minister of Equatorial Guinea, informing us that his government had declared two American diplomats personae non gratae. The two officers are U. S. Ambassador Herbert J. Spiro and U. S. Consul William C. Mithoefer, Jr., who are both resident in the nearby country of Cameroon, but are also accredited to Equatorial Guinea.

This action on the part of the Equatorial Guinean Government came without any official warning whatsoever, and without any explanation offered. We consider it an unwarranted affront not only to the two individuals concerned, who in their brief visits to Equatorial Guinea have worked in good faith to promote friendly relations, but also to the United States Government, and to the accepted norms of international diplomacy. There had never been any previous indication, direct or indirect, from the Government of Equatorial Guinea that it was dissatisfied with the activities of the U. S. representatives. On the contrary, these visits have been carried out with the concurrence and cooperation of the Government of Equatorial Guinea.

With some regret, we have decided that we have no reasonable alternative, but to suspend diplomatic relations with Equatorial Guinea, and we are so informing the Equatorial Guinean Government.

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The above statement was made at the State Department briefing Monday, March 15. Questioning was quite exhaustive and any White House inquiries can be referred to State. (See pp. A-3 - B-2, State briefing 3/15/76).