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PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended

April 21, 2005

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, October 15, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY KISSINGER

(BRIEFING)

FROM: Roger Morris

Roger

SUBJECT: Meeting with Foreign Minister Arikpo of Nigeria Today, 4:00 pm

Here's where we stand on Nigeria/Biafra, including our own initiatives:

- Richardson "decided" on Saturday to proceed with the relief initiatives the President previously instructed. We'll approach the Biafrans with (a) a Presidential statement to accommodate their position on inviolability of the Red Cross daylight flights; (b) the Canadian neutral observers; and (c) some communications help. The object is to lock in the Feds on their pledge not to violate the airlift, and thus meet Biafran objections to daylight flights.
- Richardson also "decided" to get moving on peace probing. But he recognizes Sec. Rogers (like AF) is against a political initiative, and E.R. is undertaking to bring the Secretary around this week. (Incidentally, E.R. was most cordial to me).
- Richardson got from Arikpo yesterday a renewed assurance that the Feds would not violate a daylight Red Cross airlift. He told Arikpo about our relief initiative only in vague terms -- that we were "getting in touch with the Biafrans to clarify their position on daylight flights".
- Arikpo put out a feeler with me Sunday on the US acting as a go-between among the French and the Feds on ending the war. (My mem-con, underlined, is attached.) This was an important overture from the Feds. Arikpo raised it again with Richardson, but was told we simply wouldn't get in the middle.

Talking Points

- I recommend you let Arikpo do most of the talking. Ask him:
 1. Are the Feds prepared to negotiate seriously? What are they ready to do, and what do they want from Biafra, to get productive talks started?
 2. The President is personally concerned that the fighting and suffering end as soon as possible. How can the US actively help? (If he mentions our going to the French, we should leave the door open.)

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If asked about our relief moves:)

3. We are in contact with the Biafrans to nail down the obstacles to daylight flights. We're still hopeful the airlift can go.

Attachment

Memcon of meeting with Arikpo at residence of Nigerian Ambassador on Sunday, October 12, 1969

Biafran.org