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Saturday - January 10, 1970
3:30 p.m.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

(Briefing)

FROM: Henry Kissinger ^{(2-10-70) HK}

SUBJECT: Your telephone call to Prime Minister Wilson on Biafra

I recommend you make the following points with the Prime Minister:

1. We have seen several reports, including information the French have given us, that Biafra may be collapsing. We are very concerned about the potential for further tragedy here, either by disruption of relief compounding the starvation or in military excesses by Federal troops.

2. The French seem very concerned as well, and have asked our cooperation in efforts to ward off disaster.

3. We want to do all we can to help avoid more agony for the Biafrans, who have already suffered enough.

-- We are contacting U Thant tonight in West Africa to urge the strengthening of the international observers.

-- We are readying various contingency plans to help the relief operation, and will be asking for Federal Nigerian cooperation.

-- We will also be urging Nigerians to redouble their own efforts to avoid military excesses by their troops.

4. You wanted the Prime Minister to be fully informed of these steps. Our two governments have a common stake in averting tragedy here. We hope to cooperate closely with the British.

5. Given the special position Britain has with the Federal Government, we would like to have British support for our representations to the Nigerians on these humanitarian issues. We are sure British advice to the Nigerians would be the most effective any outsider can give.

Rewrtn: HAK:RM:ms:1/10/70

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