

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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8 a.m., Friday, February 14, 1969

FOR HAK

FROM: Roger Morris *RM*

For your background at today's NSC meeting, the following check list of latest developments in the Nigeria-Biafra problem:

1. Relief flights to Biafra resumed two days ago from the island of Fernando Po. The Red Cross and Equatorial Guinea have a 30-day, two flights-per-night arrangement, pending negotiation of a longer term agreement. (You'll recall these Red Cross flights are 1/2 the current airlift; the other half is the Church Voluntary Agencies flying from the Portuguese-owned island of Sao Tome.)
2. The Federals are reportedly ready to consider an idea for a "neutralized relief airstrip and land corridor" put forward by Congressman Lowenstein (D, N. Y.), who visited both sides this week. Biafra has given no response to Lowenstein. The idea is roughly the same as one discussed in the NSC papers -- i.e. OBILAGO, an airfield in Federal territory, from which relief is driven 5-10 miles down a road to no man's land. Lowenstein gets back this weekend and will debrief Under Secretary Richardson tomorrow. This might be an opening for us to follow up.
3. The war continues to be a stand off, though (a) the Biafrans are getting an increasing supply of arms, and (b) the Federals are trying to mount a major offensive before the spring rains. The Federals think they have to win before Biafra celebrates the second anniversary of independence May 31. But their chances are not good, and the frustrations mount in Lagos.
4. The French told us yesterday in Paris that they're staying with a "wait and see" policy on Biafra. They'll probably continue military help but still withhold recognition. Clearly, de Gaulle thinks he should play out his gamble quietly until something changes substantially in the fortunes of the war.

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