

February 21, 1969 9:15 P.M.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

SUBJECT: Press Release on Nigeria-Biafra Relief Coordinator

At Tab A, for your approval, is the statement Secretary Rogers and Under Secretary Richardson recommend that you authorize today announcing the appointment of a Special Coordinator for Nigeria-Biafra relief.

The statement is cast as an initial report on your relief review announced 3 weeks ago. It reiterates the central facts of the relief problem:

- (1) humanitarian relief is entwined with the politics of the civil war;
- (2) the U.S. will endeavor to reconcile our deep urge to save lives with our equally deep desire to stay clear of political involvement.

The main element of the statement, however, is the appointment of the Relief Coordinator. Messrs. Rogers and Richardson recommend Clarence Ferguson, Jr. -- 44, Negro, Republican, former Dean of Howard Law School, now distinguished Professor of Law at Rutgers University. (Ferguson's biographic information is at Tab B).

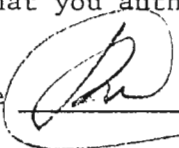
Elliot Richardson has broached the job with Ferguson, who is clear to accept. He would be appointed, at your direction, by Secretary Rogers, and would work under the wing of the Department of State. His mandate would be as strictly humanitarian and non-political as we can make it.

State is ready to do the appropriate Congressional consultations prior to release. They will touch base with Senators Brooke, Fulbright, Pearson, Goodell, Kennedy; Congressmen Lukens, Adair, Lowenstein, et al.

We need your decision on this statement soon if the consultations are to go forward and the press is to get the story before you leave for Europe. Secretary Rogers recommends prompt action for the maximum public impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you authorize the Press Statement at Tab A for release today.

Approve 

Disapprove _____

Speak to me _____

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
April 21, 2005