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April 15, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: Biafra

Enclosed is the record of a recent conversation between Ambassador Ahoua of the Ivory Coast and David Rockefeller on the general subject of Biafra. In order to protect the source and the sensitive information contained in the memorandum, I would appreciate your restricting it to your immediate office.

/s/

Henry A. Kissinger

Enclosure

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E.O. 12958, Sect. 3.6

By TDM/KW NARA, Date 11/29/97

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By TJM/K42 NARA, Date 11/29/97

Conversation with Ambassador Ahoua of the Ivory Coast

Mr. Ahoua came to see me at the request of President Houphouet-Boigny whom he saw a few days ago in Geneva. He wanted to bring me up to date on several points he had discussed with me at a previous meeting a few weeks ago.

(1) President Houphouet-Boigny believes that the Biafran problem is becoming increasingly important as the Soviet influence in Nigeria is gaining ascendancy over the British influence. Houphouet-Boigny believes that the present Nigerian regime no longer has full control of the government and that aid to Biafra is important in stopping the spread of Soviet influence in Nigeria.

(2) Houphouet-Boigny says the Soviet strategy in West Africa is to work with the UAR on the Moslem populations of Northern Nigeria and the other Saharan states which are Moslem. Arabic rather than English is now being taught in many of the schools in the northern region.

(3) According to Houphouet-Boigny, Prime Minister Wilson sent a confidential emissary to see him to discuss and get suggestions as to how Britain could disengage from her firm commitment to Nigeria since Britain also is now beginning to fear the rise of Soviet influence.

(4) Houphouet-Boigny has been having secret conversations with the governments of South Africa and Rhodesia in an effort to persuade them to support Biafra. The South African Government has agreed to such support and is providing a credit of \$2,000,000 for supplies and food for the Biafrans. This aid will not be revealed officially and will not go through International Red Cross sources. The South African Government justification is based on concern of the Soviets' growing influence in Nigeria and their feeling that it would be just as well for the Biafrans to remain independent of this influence.

(5) The relations of the Ivory Coast Government and the South African Government are becoming increasingly cordial. Their

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discussions have related particularly to the Biafran question but are also related to possible reopening of diplomatic relations between the two countries. At present, Houphouet-Boigny proposes to defer such recognition till after November when his Congress will meet and when he will have a chance to prepare the country for such a move. It is his belief that South Africa is rethinking their international relations more along political lines and less along racial lines. He believes that this could have an impact on their attitude to apartheid over a period of time.

(6) President Houphouet-Boigny feels that Assistant Secretary Palmer is so committed in his attitude toward the Nigerian Government that he is taking a rather rigid position on the question of Biafra. He feels that a new look on the whole question of Biafra and Nigeria is badly needed and that a change in the department would be helpful.

(7) President Houphouet-Boigny is now less sanguine about other African nations recognizing the South African Government promptly than he was earlier. This is due partly to the fact that most of the leaders do not have too strong a position in their countries and some of them are Marxist oriented. He believes, however, that there will be a gradual evolution in this direction. He specially indicated that President Zinsou lacks authority in Dahomey, one reason being that a large part of his population is Uruba, which is tied in with the northern region of Nigeria.

(8) The other countries which are presently helping Biafra are France, Gabon, Tanzania, Zambia and Israel. Houphouet-Boigny believes that Tunisia will be recognizing Biafra shortly.

(9) Dr. Dike of Biafra, who saw me at the request of President Houphouet-Boigny a few weeks ago, will be returning to the United States in a week or two with certain concrete proposals.

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David Rockefeller

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