

MEMORANDUM

~~THE PRESIDENT HAS READ.~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Thursday, April 24, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Congressional Criticism of Nigerian Policy

You should be aware that the Congressional chorus on Nigeria-Biafra may be rising again. There has been a clear moratorium on the subject since Clyde Ferguson's appointment as Special Coordinator. But apparently the critics were only waiting for Ferguson to return essentially empty-handed from his first trip to the war zone.

We now have reports from the Hill of a high-powered new organization to bring together private and Congressional personalities. It would be called "Americans for Biafran Relief." The moving spirits include Senators Kennedy (taking the lead), Pearson, Goodell; Congressmen Lukins, Fraser, Lowenstein; and various private figures in the relief effort such as Katherine Menninger, Bishop Swanstrom of Catholic Relief, and Fulton Lewis III. The broader membership pulls out all the stops: the JC's the Young Republican and Young Democrat Federations, and religious relief bodies.

I gather the group will assemble on the Hill today to issue a "manifesto" criticising U.S. policy and perhaps calling for political mediation of the civil war. There have also been plans for a student "fast-in" around the country to save money for Biafran relief.

It's not clear yet how far this group will go in mixing politics with relief. Senator Pearson, for example, has argued against U.S. political involvement in Nigeria. It is plain, however, that the pressure will build up again for some more dramatic step on relief or stopping the war.

I am enclosing, an earlier basic memo on the Biafran problem, including a run-down of our major options.