

DECLASSIFIED

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NIGERIA

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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July 1, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM : Roger Morris

SUBJECT: Nigerian Crack-down on Relief

You should be aware that the Feds have all but kicked out the Red Cross and imposed a de facto embargo on relief flights into Biafra. This is the climax of the mounting frustration and belligerence I have been describing to you over the last three or four weeks.

The new hard line was announced yesterday and today in Lagos in a meeting between the Feds and the International Red Cross. The official tack is that the Federal "Rehabilitation Commission" (an organization pretty much in name only) is "relieving" the Red Cross of responsibilities for coordinating a relief effort. In fact, this means:

- All relief contributions must be channeled through the Feds.
- Decisions on distribution, status of relief workers, etc. are reserved to Lagos.
- Most important, the Red Cross airlift into Biafra can only operate in daylight and after inspection on Federal territory. Since the Biafrans have objected all along to such daylight flights (as a possible cover for tail-gating MIGs to attack the vital Biafran air-strips), this really puts an end to the Red Cross airlift.
- The other half of the airlift, run by the church relief agencies out of the island of Sao Tome, is declared illegal and subject to military interdiction.

Technically, of course, the Feds are well within their rights of sovereignty. And they have probably satisfied what conscience they have by offering daylight flights which the Biafrans cannot accept for security reasons. The practical result is that the Red Cross relief

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