

April 21, 2005

NIGERIA

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday - August 1, 1969

5:30 p.m.

Dispatched

FOR HENRY KISSINGER FROM ROGER MORRIS

SUBJECT: Biafra

Following for your background in Paris should French raise Biafra.

1. Militarily, no major changes though Biafrans aggressive on most fronts. *French arms flow to Biafra continues unabated.*

2. Diplomatically, both sides sent reps to Kampala in response Pope's offer to mediate during his trip there, but no current prospect of serious talks. Other initiative we supporting with Haile Selassie -- Ethiopian probe of Fed position while Papal-directed black bishop probes Biafrans -- stalled pending Pope's personal effort at Kampala. No other diplomatic efforts apparent.

3. Most relief still blocked by failure of two sides and Red Cross to agree on conditions daylight flights. Feds still outlaw night flights, though church agencies flying in about 100 tons nightly against continuing inept efforts by Fed MIGs to interdict. Starvation slowly rising but church flights forestall mass impact.

4. Following up President's letters, Ferguson now has two sides together secretly in Geneva (French helped get Biafrans) to talk river relief corridor. Chances slim Feds will agree, but some give

on Biafran side and discussions still alive on technical details if not central political obstacle.

5. Following were main French points in ^{latest} exchange on subject (Ferguson-Shriver-Schumann, July 23):

a. French policy quote excludes unquote recognition Biafra. Yet best way achieve negotiated reunification is more even-handed US posture toward Biafrans. This would assuage Biafran fears in negotiating tribal security within unified Nigeria.

b. French would oppose US mediation role until we less tied to Lagos. Otherwise, four-power talks would be three-to-one against Biafra and relief negotiations have US and Feds conspiring to quote trap unquote Biafra.

c. Schumann believes US, rather than Ethiopians, ultimately behind black bishop probe. Probably suspects we have some other initiative in works which we not disclosing.

d. Shriver-Ferguson judge Schumann generally uneasy about his present policy because French have concluded Biafra cannot win independence, and therefore, new French government could be willing support a US effort at political settlement.

6. In light foregoing, I see no reason for you to raise Biafra with French at this juncture. Recommend you make two main points in response if they query:

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A. US working hard to get fair agreement both sides to resume relief via Red Cross airlift and river corridor. We hope for continuing French support these efforts.

B. US closing no doors in considering future steps Nigeria-Biafra. We want to stay in close touch with French on whole range problems, political as well as relief.

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