

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Done - FY
NIGERIA

Sunday, August 10, 1969,

SECRET/ EYES ONLY

HAK:

The following is an "aide memoire" on our talk today.

I strongly agree Richardson should "direct" the Biafra peace initiative. But there are two problems:

Role

1. A Direct White House/in the Probe.

- Left alone, ER has to turn to AF. Yet the Bureau (a) doesn't really want a settlement, (b) is hopelessly soft on the Feds, and (c) will concentrate on trying to trap the Biafrans and expose them in public.
- A State probe, without us along, won't be credible to the Biafrans, who know AF as well as I do.
- We must participate directly in the probe, clear all cables routinely, etc. if we're to protect the President's interests and goals.

2. Timing

- State, by natural penchant and calculation, will drag their feet.
- Now is the moment to move. Both sides have military and political incentives to respond.
- Other tactical details can be left to ER working with us. Timing should be "immediate" as part of the instruction.

If the President approves your memo, I recommend your instruction to Richardson include:

- (i) My direct participation in the probe. (Even if it comes to going into Biafra --and, believe me, I don't relish dodging MIGs--we just can't trust State to be neutral).
- (ii) Immediate approaches to both sides.

Page
Roger Morris