

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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August 21, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVID NEWSOM

FROM: Roger Morris

Having slept (with only an occasional nightmare) on our decision to launch a full-fledged initiative, I suggest that it's none too soon to begin thinking about what we do if, by some slim chance, the thing begins to work. The following are my own first thoughts at covering important bases:

1. Security. I strongly recommend that we henceforth christen all traffic in this exercise as NODIS-NETTLE -- after the poet's "Grasp the nettle, danger/ Pluck from it the flower, peace". The survival of the probe surely depends upon its secrecy, and we are showing our hand pretty baldly as it is with the Red Cross, JCA, etc. We should do all we can in Washington and the Embassies to minimize the risk of our own leakage of details. There are, after all, those in this government who are less than impartial on the outcome of this war. Besides, a NODIS label ensures that our principals will keep abreast without our worrying about it.

2. Canada. We have to level with the Canadians after the President's offer to Trudeau of "complete consultation". Moreover, Ottawa can be a useful ally with both the British and the French. I think it makes sense to give the Canadians a special nod by sending someone up to have a frank chat with Ivan Head in Trudeau's office.

3. Washington staffing. If we do start shuttling back and forth in Switzerland comparing notes on the real issues of the civil war, it seems to me that we'll need a small but full-time group of people with some special knowledge to do some instant analyses here in Washington. For starters, that means someone thoroughly expert in Nigeria, a military adviser, a relief expert, etc. I think it is clear to all of us that we are already spread perilously thin, not to mention staffing a negotiating team in Geneva, etc. Our problems will be ten-fold if we actually get some delegations to give us serious replies. I don't see how we can do without a Task Force, and we

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should begin to think now about personnel and procedure.

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I beg your indulgence of this nosing in your own organizational business. But with the meetings of the last two days, I see us more than ever as Schopenhauer's porcupines huddling for a long cold night.

cc: Ambassador Clyde Ferguson
Ambassador William Witman
Mr. Roy Melbourne
Mr. William Brubeck