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Wednesday, April 23, 1969

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MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY KISSINGER

FROM: Roger Morris *Roger*

SUBJECT: Status Report on African Policy Issues

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Nigeria  
Africa

Most of my day-to-day battles are fought out in the murky reaches of the 6th floor at State -- with a Bureau which is neither top heavy with talent nor excessively realistic about Africa's priority in U. S. foreign policy. I understand that I am paid to shield you from the unsavoury details of that process. But I thought it would be informative ( and maybe fair warning) to give you a random sample of some issues now percolating in the bureaucracy.

1. Nigeria

My task here has been to get State to face up to the critical period that lies immediately ahead in the civil war. I outlined in detail some of these problems in the two-month prospectus you requested last week -- to wit, a harsh occupation and belligerent foreign policy by the Federals if they win; endemic instability and tribal strife win or lose.

I have been pushing roughly along two tracks. First, we need to begin now some intensive contingency planning on possible developments following this current Federal offensive. For example: if we are backing the OAU, we should have a clear idea of how far we are willing to go in support of peace-keeping operations. We have got to have a plausible and thoughtful answer to Congressional critics who are likely to raise the specter of genocide in the wake of a Federal victory. We should know the alternatives and risks in post-war aid for a Federal side that may disintegrate even after it wins the civil war. And finally, as wrenching as it is for my State colleagues, they have to deal with the prospect of recognizing Biafra if the reality comes to that. All this I am trying to spur forward with my own thoughts and some general goading around town.

The second track carries more immediate problems. I asked for an African IG meeting last week when I discovered we were about to handle in the most routine manner the sale of IT&T military radios to the Feds. This is a private deal, but it does require an export license from Commerce.

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In effect, we would be endorsing the sale when our policy is a complete arms embargo on both sides of the civil war. State had given the initial go-ahead, however, on the grounds that (a) the items were non-lethal, and (b) we had approved a similar sale in August 1967. My concern was that even a sale of radios now could make a good Senate speech for anyone trying to discredit the President's scrupulous non-involvement in the civil war.

A related problem is to guard that we don't slip through at this stage any commitments to the Feds on post-war aid or rehabilitation. Our Embassy in Lagos all along has had a penchant for feathering our nest in Nigeria, based on their far too roseate view of the country's future.

State is now pledged to keep a careful eye on both the radios and aid conversations with the Feds. I understand Assistant Secretary Palmer is bucking the radio sale question to the 7th floor. I'll put in my 2¢ on the subject with Richardson's people, but I may still have to ask you to make a demarche if the problem doesn't get a careful look. Pending the 7th floor persuasion to the contrary, I don't think the radio sale is worth it (to IT&T or in relations with the Feds) compared to the headaches it could cause us here at home.

## 2. Southern Africa

Work has begun on the NSC study with predictable confusion and bureaucratic back-biting. State is dearly wed to the present hortatory policy, and would prefer something tougher if they can get it. Defense wants a softer line, but so much so that they have trouble defining what is realistic at the outer range of the options. Perforce, I have been operating as a sometime mediator in the IG Working Group, and have done a good deal of the first drafting. It is too early for real optimism, but I think we should have a fairly decent paper for the President. It will certainly reopen the policy debate on Southern Africa that has been stifled since 1961.

I understand Dean Acheson has his contribution on Southern Africa in draft. I should have some presentable draft options for his further comment and criticism, if that seems useful, later this week.

## 3. Conte-Long Problems with the Congo

I sent you a piece last week on the Conte-Long issue over the Rapier missiles purchased by Zambia. The African IG is now wrestling with a similar problem with the Congo left over from the Johnson Administration. Mobutu is apparently contracting to buy 15 Macchi trainer jets from Italy,

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with the clear intention of arming them as fighters of the Congolese Air Force. On one hand, State is arguing that the Macchis are not sophisticated -- which is a point I fail to appreciate for a country where 15 white men with sten guns have constituted an invasion force and a major threat to territorial integrity. They are also willing to argue, however, that the President can reasonably determine to the Congress that Congolese jets are "important to the national security of the United States." I stick on that argument also.

The other side of the coin is that enforcement of the Conte-Long penalties (in this case \$7 million) would be very hard on our aid program in the Congo at a time when the country has found its first tranquil moment since independence. Frankly, I'm not sure now where I come out on this question. But I am persuaded at the outset that we cannot dodge the issue with the Congress. In the long run, flimsy evasion of the amendment will do a lot more than \$7 million worth of damage to Congolese development.

#### 4. Succession Problems

In another effort to fill some major gaps in planning, I'm trying to persuade State and Defense to take a careful look at places like Ethiopia and Kenya, where the passing of elderly autocrats could create a volatile political reaction. The Ethiopian case is particularly noteworthy because (a) there is clearly no established line to the Emperor's successor, and (b) the country ranks near the top of our political and military interests in Africa. I am also tying this contingency planning for Ethiopia to the danger I flagged for you last week -- a possible attack by tribal dissidents on the major U. S. communications facility at Kagnev Station in the northern province of Eritrea.

#### 5. The African Aid Program

The problem here is painfully plain. On a Continent where development is the overriding job, we lack (a) money, (b) a long-run development strategy, and (c) a clear sense of short-run priorities. Again, I am trying to spark some new ideas and a reappraisal of practiced dogma. I am about convinced, however, that this may be fair game for a formal NSSM. The President should have his own African policy, but unless we get hold of aid strategy, we'll miss one-half of our policy stake on the Continent. I'll have a longer piece for you soon on this subject.

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