

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

(5384)

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INFORMATION

July 11, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM: MELVIN H. LEVINE *ML*

SUBJECT: Troublesome Relations with Nigeria

State's memo at Tab A flags for you the fact that we're having difficulties these days with sub-Saharan Africa's largest country, Nigeria. Obstacles have been thrown up to our desires to establish a Regional Trade Center, to open another consulate, and to revive an investment guarantee program. The tone various Nigerian officials are taking with our people is also troublesome.

Two things have happened -- First, General Gowon is personally unhappy that the U.S. has resumed imports of Rhodesian chrome in violation of UN sanctions, an unhappiness apparently shared by other key officials. Second, former Ambassador to the U.S. Joe Iyalla has become number two man in the Foreign Ministry. Always a prickly customer with us, Iyalla's feelings were hurt because President Nixon would not receive him for a farewell call last April (our Schedule Proposal was turned down).

We are not the only ones with headaches in Nigeria. The UK is under fire for failure to oust the white government in Rhodesia and France is still disliked because of the assistance it gave to Biafra. One probable result of Gowon's displeasure with the West is his decision to make his first state visit out of Africa to the USSR.

At this stage, there's not much for us to do about this state of affairs, except watch it.

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E.O. 12958, as amended  
April 21, 2005

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E.O. 12958, Sect. 3.6

By TDM/KW NARA, Date 11/29/21

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## DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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July 7, 1972

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER  
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Troublesome Relations with Nigeria

Although there is no crisis in our relations, you should know that the Nigerian attitude toward the US has become increasingly vexatious in recent weeks. We are beginning to encounter opposition over the Department of Commerce's plan to establish a Regional Trade Development Center in Lagos despite earlier indications that the center would be welcomed. Similar hostility is surfacing regarding our efforts to open a consulate in the oil center of Port Harcourt and to revive the OPIC investment guarantee program. While we continue to encounter a number of petty annoyances on such administrative matters as visas and our Embassy leases, at least some elements of Nigerian officialdom now seem intent on raising obstacles to our longer range commercial and investment goals as well. If nothing else, the abrasive tone that is creeping into their handling of our requests is a matter for concern.

Until recently at least the self assertive and nationalistic mood that has prevailed in Lagos since the end of the war has not had an anti-US thrust nor prevented useful exchanges with Gowon's regime. The present hardening of the Nigerians' attitude has been a definite setback in our improving relations. It seems to stem in some measure from bitterness over U.S. resumption of Rhodesian chrome imports. In a very emotional demarche last April, General Gowon complained of our non-compliance with UN sanctions and asserted that the U.S. does not share Nigeria's urgent concerns on Southern African issues. His

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displeasure on this subject has obviously affected the rapport that our Ambassador was developing with him. In addition we have had indications that Gowon's views are shared by other key FMG officials, including External Affairs Commissioner Arikpo. Annoyance over the Byrd amendment was a major reason the Nigerians took the lead on the recent OAU censure of the U.S. on Namibia and apartheid.

There is a personal element as well. The former Ambassador in Washington, Joe Iyalla, is now Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs. He still harbors resentments from the difficulties he experienced here during the critical days of the civil war. On top of this he was offended that he could not see the President for a farewell call prior to his departure last April. Assisted by a deputy long known for his antagonism to the U.S., Iyalla is in close touch with members of the Supreme Military Council and probably has as much influence on policy as Commissioner Arikpo. He undoubtedly influences decisions regarding the U.S.

While the situation in Lagos bears watching, it does not seem to require any special action on our part for now. Ambassador Reinhardt will be voicing some of our concerns directly when he next sees Arikpo. We may be able to mute some of our problems by frank discussions with the new Nigerian Ambassador, John Garba, when he arrives later this month. Garba comes highly praised for his reasonableness and responsiveness by U.S. officials who have worked with him over the years. When Garba does come we should do all we can to expedite the presentation of credentials. It could be an important factor in using his presence as a point of departure for providing a better tone to our relations with Nigeria.

*Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.*  
for Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.  
Executive Secretary

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