

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ACTION

June 18, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*

SUBJECT: West African Drought Disaster

UN Secretary General Waldheim has appealed to all permanent representatives of the United Nations for further assistance in the international relief effort in the West African drought disaster. Secretary Rogers and Ambassador Scali recommend that you respond positively to Secretary General Waldheim's appeal (Tabs B and C).

The drought affected area, with a population of 26 million, stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to Chad. The region is suffering the consequences of a disastrous drought, the cumulative effect of a series of very dry years. Crops have failed and livestock is sustaining catastrophic losses. Some starvation deaths are being reported and malnutrition is widespread.

A large-scale international relief effort is underway to prevent widespread starvation and save surviving livestock:

- A total of 600,000 tons of grain have been pledged, including 400,000 tons by the European Common Market. The U. S. has pledged 156,000 tons worth \$19 million and half of this has been delivered to West African ports.
- France is providing special grant assistance to Mali, Niger, and Chad.
- We have lent three C-130 aircraft to distribute relief supplies. The USSR, France, Belgium, and Germany have also lent aircraft.

Secretary Rogers and Ambassador Scali recommend that you respond to Secretary General Waldheim's appeal with a letter making known the considerable role we have already played in the international relief effort and expressing your willingness to continue assistance. Secretary Rogers also recommends that:

- Your letter be brought to the attention of the Chiefs of State of the six African countries directly involved (Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Upper Volta, Niger, and Chad) so our contribution in the relief effort will be widely known.
- You name Maurice J. Williams, Deputy Administrator of AID, as special coordinator for the U. S. effort in this emergency. (Williams already is coordinating our efforts.)
- You approve AID seeking special authorization for additional funds as emerging needs are identified.

I believe that Secretary Rogers' proposals represent both a useful way to highlight our on-going efforts, thereby evidencing our concern, and to enhance the effectiveness of our response. As to approval for AID to seek special authorization as needs emerge, your approval seems premature until the needs are defined and State presents a specific proposal to you.

The letter to Secretary General Waldheim at Tab A would express your concern, outline U. S. efforts to date, and name Maurice J. Williams as coordinator of the U. S. effort. Release of the letter to the press would both demonstrate your concern and describe the U. S. efforts.

The draft letter has been cleared with Dave Gergen's office. Roy Ash and Bill Timmons concur.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) That you sign the letter to Waldheim at Tab A, and approve releasing it here and in New York.
- 2) That you approve announcement of Maurice Williams as coordinator of the U. S. relief effort.
- 3) That you authorize me to inform Secretary Rogers that you will consider a specific proposal from him when the needs are more clearly defined.

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

June 8, 1973

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Sahelian Drought Crisis

As part of an international effort, we are responding with food aid, airlifts and other stopgap measures to the worst drought of this century in six countries of West and Central Africa (Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Upper Volta, Niger and Chad), but there is an urgent need for a strong, continuing effort. The dimensions of the problem will have to be underlined in a more visible way in order to get the resources for meaningful and longer range programs.

This has been the worst of several dry years in the band of Africa bordering the Sahara and known as the Sahel. Twenty-five million people inhabit this zone, and the majority of them are affected. Some face starvation, while famine conditions, malnutrition and disease are widespread. Cattle, camels, sheep and goats--the main source of livelihood for millions of herders and nomads--are dying by the millions. Wells and other water sources are drying up and forage is disappearing. The local governments are attempting with limited resources to feed large numbers of people scattered over vast distances.

The United States and other donors have responded energetically over several months. We have committed 156,000 tons of grain, valued at nearly \$19 million, about one-half of which has already arrived in West African ports or in the

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interior capitals and other distribution points. AID has provided \$2 million in disaster relief funds permitting the operation of two US Air Force C-130s in Mali and one in Chad, to lift grain to remote points, and the purchase of animal feed, vaccines and medicines. Distribution is severely complicated by port bottlenecks, inadequate rail and road networks. The next rainy season begins this month in most of the area, and will make many of the poor roads impassable. AID is holding an additional \$2 million in contingency funds which can be applied to these additional transport problems.

Other donors, notably the European Common Market, have committed 400,000 tons of grain. The Canadians, Russians and Chinese are also contributing grain. In addition, the Common Market has committed \$20 million for other forms of emergency assistance including some aircraft for transport of grain from African seaports.

Secretary General Waldheim has made an appeal to the UN Permanent Representatives to increase and intensify their governments' efforts and has named the Director General of the FAO coordinator for UN activities. Waldheim has made special reference to the immediate need for more grain, including seed distribution, possibly by airlift, within West Africa. Ambassador Scali has relayed his deep concern to you, which I fully share, that the US continue to be responsive to the area's needs, in the immediate future and over the longer term.

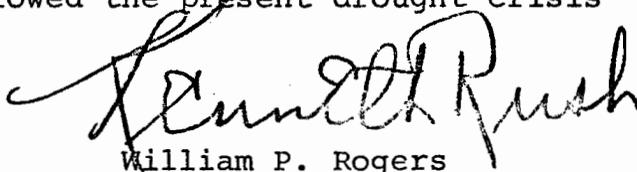
Recognizing the continuing trend of environmental deterioration in the Sahel, the Department and AID have already been studying ways that our assistance program, in cooperation with other donors, might help reestablish the viability of these lands, mitigate the effects of future dry years, and reduce the likelihood of catastrophic drought situations in the future. The effects of the drought indicate that a major medium term rehabilitation program will now be needed. Such a program will require substantial additional resources on our part from the donor community, for purposes that still need elaboration, but which would surely include

rebuilding herds, improving water and forage capacities, and raising cereal productivity.

I believe that a response from you to the Secretary General's recent appeal will give this tragedy the attention which it deserves from the American public. Such a letter will also note our willingness to consider additional assistance to meet emergency needs which still may be identified and, more particularly, for the important rehabilitation efforts which must be undertaken for the coming few years. I suggest that you send the attached reply.

It would also be useful to bring your letter to Waldheim to the attention of the Chiefs of State of the six African countries most affected and the other major donors. Since France remains the major source of assistance for the countries involved, we would wish to reassure Paris that our actions are not intended to affect its relations in Africa.

To underline the significance of this major humanitarian problem, I believe that you should consider naming a special coordinator for the African drought emergency and should approve AID's seeking special authorization for the Sahel program as emerging needs are identified. As Special Coordinator I propose for your consideration Maurice J. Williams, Deputy Administrator of AID who has had extensive experience in disaster relief and has followed the present drought crisis closely.


William P. Rogers

Attachment:

Suggested Letter.