

ILTA

THE FORD FOUNDATION

Inter-Office Memorandum

Rec'd Jan 31, 1966

TO: F. F. Hill and J. George Harrar

DATE: 26 January 1966

FROM: David Heaps

COPY TO: W. H. Myers
F. Champion Ward ✓
J. Donald Kingsley
J. Robert Mitchell

SUBJECT: International Institute of
Tropical Agriculture

AGR 1 Chron

Bill Myers' letter to Bob Mitchell of January 18th indicates that I should communicate any comments or recommendations on the current situation in Nigeria.

I have submitted a series of periodic memoranda to Don Kingsley which endeavor to provide some reports on this tangled and tortuous situation. There is no need to repeat their gist at this time. In brief, my own personal conclusion at this time is that recent events constitute a definite setback, although perhaps only temporarily, to plans for the establishment of any large-scale new enterprise in Nigeria. My basic reason for this conclusion does not stem from actual or potential instability within the country, but from the fact that the shape and direction of the new government, whose cooperation must be assured, are still shrouded in uncertainty.

Although the civil service remains in place, the legislative base upon which future agreements would be established is now in the process of transformation. It is pertinent I believe to quote in part from a memorandum I have sent today to Don Kingsley on this general subject:

"It will be quite sometime before the current situation shakes down into recognizable form. I understand that Elias and others have been delegated to work out a new constitution and I will try to see what they have in mind over the next few days. Currently, we do not know:

"1. If the military regime will remain in power or has plans to re-establish a civilian government.

If it does remain in power, there is some question as to whether its basic unity can be sustained over a reasonably long period.

"2. If a traditional parliamentary democracy or an executive presidential form of government will be established.

"3. If the current federal or regional balance of power will be maintained or if efforts will be made to establish some sort of unitary government.

"As you can see, the answers to these questions will have a direct bearing upon the types of relationships and programs which will have to be recommended in the period ahead. Certainly, we should continue, as I suggested in previous memoranda, to support existing institutions whose independent character and basic viability are demonstrably evident. We are not in a position to consider new projects, particularly those of real magnitude, which depend upon government sanction and cooperation."

I see no reason in the circumstances why the purely mechanical arrangements for the Institute should not continue. I would have some strong doubts as to the desirability in the foreseeable future of a major Foundation commitment of the magnitude and long-range duration originally envisaged.

DH:klm