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*Memorandum of Conversation*  
APRIL '76

DATE: May 26, 1976

SUBJECT: Secretary's Meeting with President Mobutu, aboard his Yacht

Date: April 28, 1976, 12:20 - 1:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary  
President Mobutu  
Commissioner Nguza  
Mr. Toumayan, Interpreter/Notetaker

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10/5/78

Mobutu: Earlier, I spoke of South Africa and the Namibia, but I didn't want to elaborate in the general meeting. Following the Angola tragedy, if those responsible in South Africa are smart -- and here the US and its other friends can help make sure the Republic of South Africa understands the situation; the time has come for South Africa to give the Namibia its independence. How can this be achieved? There are leaders inside the Namibia known to those who live there, who are moderate leaders. Give them independence because if not, SWAPO which is recognized by the UN and the OAU, will take over and that is just one more instance of the Soviet/Cuban threat in action.

With these moderate leaders, we would have a flexible administration as we do in Botswana and Lesotho and we would work with such an administration. The alternative is to have SWAPO take over.

Kissinger: Do you know these leaders?

Mobutu: No, but they are known to those who live inside the Namibia.

Kissinger: Will SWAPO fight against this development?

Mobutu: There will be no problem with SWAPO, who cannot do a thing in the face of a strong internal situation.

There is another problem of development which I wish to raise. I spoke earlier of making Zaire into a showcase of development surrounded by red-oriented countries. What I mean is that the time has come for the US to draw up a balance sheet and decide which countries are its friends, decide who your friends are in

(Drafting Office and Officer)

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Central Africa, in East Africa you have Kenya, for instance, in West Africa where you have Liberia, Senegal and the Ivory Coast; in North Africa where you might say your friends are Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. In terms of development, you should start with your friends. I believe that the time has come for the US to make this choice and not help make stronger those who oppose you. The Russians cannot give economic help. Ask them for tanks and you will get them the next day, but you never get rice or flour from them. I don't advocate sanctions on the part of the US against countries who oppose you, but I recommend that you choose to help your friends first. Thus, I can feel that as a friend of the US, I can let the other countries see that I have a strong economic position, that I have prosperity here at home. This already happened with my neighbor Congo/Brazzaville. They come here to buy necessities, but all they talk about is Karl Marx.

Kissinger: Basically, I agree with you. We both have problems. You must be non-aligned publicly. I must speak of the unity of Africa to avoid domestic criticism just as you must avoid non-aligned criticism. It is easier to defend our friends in the name of African unity than in the name of an alliance with the US. I must maneuver to get the Soviet Union to split Africa and I think I am making progress. That is my public position. But my private position is that without strength, there is no foreign policy. You know very well that if we had had a foreign policy, we would have won in Angola. If we had done more for Savimbi, there would have been a victory in Angola, but we must not permit this to happen again. We must try to give the American people a sense of pride in our African policy. Nyerere played into our hands, unintentionally, but he did. We will strengthen Zaire, which is a friend of the US, just as we have made Egypt stronger. Two and one-half years ago when I began my policy, Egypt was not receiving one cent from the US. Today, it receives one billion in direct aid and 900 million in indirect aid.

Mobutu: Compare this situation to Zaire.

Kissinger: I told Deputy Secretary Robinson that we must think in bigger terms for Zaire so there is full agreement with the principle, but my domestic problems must be overcome in order to achieve this. I think we can do it. Upon my return to Washington, I will remove Zaire from the routine and place it on the President's desk. I cannot, at this point, judge if I can do everything that is contained in the dossier (the report on national security prepared by Mobutu), but the visit of a general officer can be arranged immediately. I will, in fact, ask the Deputy Secretary of Defense to come here himself. He

is a good friend of mine and we work together very well.

Mobutu: Let me go back to the question the two US Congressmen asked, "How do we convince them that the security of Zaire is of interest to the security of the US?" I think the reply should be easy. You could say that two years ago, Egypt was receiving nothing from the US. Egypt was at war with Israel which receives total economic, military and financial support from the US. Now, with better relations, the US aids Egypt knowing that it can still make war against Israel.

Zaire has received military and economic aid from the US over the last 16 years and that country is in trouble because the Soviet Union is establishing bases all around Zaire in the Congo/Brazzaville, in Cabinda, Angola, Tanzania. These countries have become unreliable friends for the future as far as Zaire is concerned. The aid to Zaire is in the interest of its security because the US cannot sit idly by while the Soviet Union keeps on building up bases in these surrounding countries.

Because of the danger I face, I discussed the situation with the Chinese. They gave me 30 light tanks (30 tons), and subsequently, 24 medium weight tanks (40 tons), as well as two tank carriers. I have also received four escort vehicles and four coastal radar units. What bothers me is that I asked our friends in the west for this equipment, but they said no, this is too sophisticated. You don't need it. But the Chinese feel that we need this equipment. They have a special sense about Soviet danger.

Kissinger: In December, I talked with the Chinese about Zaire and I asked the Chinese to do something and they told me they would.

Mobutu: I appreciate very much what you said earlier in front of your associates about the 1,000 colonels sitting in the Pentagon, analyzing other people's problems so they can tell them how to solve them. In 1963, I came to Washington to see President Kennedy and in our discussions, President Kennedy said I ought to have a small jet aircraft so that I could more easily move about the country; in those days I did not even have a Piper Cub. But there was one colonel there who explained

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that I did not need an executive jet. What I really needed was a DC-3. If I want to fly from here to Lubumbashi in a DC-3, it's a five and one-half hour flight.

Kissinger: And what did you get?

Mobutu: The Colonel prevailed. I got a DC-3.

Kissinger: They always like to get rid of their old equipment.

Mobutu: When Mr. Robinson was here, I told him, what could I now say to General Rockwell if we were to meet face-to-face? Those tanks that he told me could be of no use, those 155mm long range guns that he told me would be of no use to me because I needed mortars -- all this equipment is now available to the other side. What would General Rockwell say to me?

Kissinger: I am sure he will find something to say.

Mobutu: I remember that you were present when I discussed the purchasing of C-130s with President Nixon in Washington in 1970. It was you who arranged this. Since it required a presidential determination, I am sure that these officers with whom I talked do not act in bad faith.

Kissinger: They acted in good faith, but they are under a great deal of pressure. They fear to be called to testify. As in the case of the C-130s, we must act by way of a presidential order because this is the way to get more serious attention.

Mobutu: As I recall, the C-130 could be supplied only to NATO countries or if there was a determination that the security of Zaire was of interest to the security of the US and President Nixon made that determination so this is a strong argument for you to use -- that the C-130 was supplied to Zaire because of this security determination. In fact, Zaire, of all of the African countries purchasing C-130s, is the only one who gets the military version. The other countries have the civilian version.

Kissinger: Egypt may get the military version of the C-130.

Mobutu: I have great sympathy and understanding for Sadat.

Kissinger: I know that he has great respect for you.

Mobutu: In the Arab countries of Africa, you really have four reliable leaders: Hassan, Sadat, Bourguiba and Ould Daddah.

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Kissinger: Do you really consider the Mauritanian president in that same category?

Mobutu: Yes, when you get to know him well, he is totally reliable. If you ever have any problems with Mauritania, come to me. I cannot promise to solve it right away, but I am sure I can help.

Kissinger: I appreciate this very much. I may very well take you up on your offer one day.

Mobutu: Mauritania has always voted with the US at the UN and at the OAU.

Kissinger: It is important that our friends in Africa do not always vote against us. We understand that they must maintain their non-aligned position.

Mobutu: I would like to suggest in conclusion to this private meeting that we should set up a procedure for periodic consultation on African or world issues.

Kissinger: I agree with you, but how shall we set this up?

Mobutu: Right now, you have a very good man here at the head of your embassy. We must have a system similar to the one I have with Giscard. His ambassador here is a former fellow student of Giscard at ENA and when there is a message to be transmitted directly to me, it goes from Giscard to the ambassador directly in a coded Telex. In any other way, the messages wind up in the New York Times the following day.

Kissinger: I picked our ambassador here myself very carefully and he is my man. Any messages will thus be going directly from him to me and vice versa.

I want to assure you that we will do our best for Zaire. I will speak to Giscard and to the European countries about being more effective. I am having breakfast with Giscard on my way back to the US from Africa.

Mobutu: Yes, I know. He told me.

Kissinger: Next month, when I go to the NATO meeting in Oslo on the 20th of May, I will talk with the UK, FRG and France and we must not leave out Belgium.

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PA/HO Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
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Mobutu: I think you should constitute a committee of the friends of Zaire with the US; UK, FRG, France and Belgium. Better to leave Italy out of it with all of their present problems. It is a very good omen that this meeting in Oslo is held on May 20th because that is the day of national celebration in Zaire, the anniversary of the founding of the party.

I wish to discuss a problem in connection with the SMTF project. It spoils the prestige of the US who is considered the leader of this project even though it is an international consortium where even the Soviet Union has a one million dollar investment. The slowdown of the project is attributed to the US and this harms you.

Kissinger: Is not the IBRD helping?

Mobutu: They are only making contributions to Gecamines.

Kissinger: I talked to McNamara. We are going to try to keep the companies from mothballing the project, and they are going to delay the decision.

Mobutu: They have slowed down already and laid off some personnel.

Kissinger: Who are those responsible?

Mobutu: It is primarily Maurice Templesman.

Kissinger: I have talked to him, but the costs are so high that the companies are reluctant to invest more funds. It is a \$500 million proposition.

Mobutu: That is the total investment, but here we are talking about a 100-150 million shortfall.

Kissinger: We must try to see if the IBRD will stand for \$100 million. I know this project; I have had it on my mind.

Mobutu: Protocol has advised me that lunch is ready..