

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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April 29, 1976

MR-7

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT *BS*

Secretary Kissinger has asked that I pass you the following report.

"Our first day in Kinshasa has been very warm -- both the friendly reception and the sultry post-rainy season heat.

"Zaire is one of the most important countries in Africa. Despite occasional ups and downs it has been one of our closest friends on the Continent from independence in the early 1960's through the rocky days of Angola. It is strategically located in the heart of Africa -- bordered by a large array of countries, many of them with hostile leftist regimes. It is a huge nation -- the size of Western Europe or the United States east of the Mississippi. And it is rich in resources such as copper and other minerals, hydro-electric power, and considerable agricultural potential.

"The airport reception yesterday evening was the most lively one yet -- with paratroopers, a cordial crowd, and very lively dancers and singers. We are staying in the President's marble guest house, the first time for a visitor other than a chief of state. It is a combination of Italian and African architecture, with large colorful murals -- all on a grand scale that never quite crosses the line from impressive to gaudy. I had a working breakfast with the Foreign Minister, a one-and-a-half hour meeting with President Mobutu at his pavillion overlooking the vast, swollen Congo; then a four hour boat ride up and down the river during which we talked alone for an hour as well as over lunch. Tonight we signed a joint communique, held a brief press conference, had dinner in a restaurant, and then watched the very colorful Zaire ballet.

"I recount this atmosphere to underline that Mobutu sets great store by our bilateral relationship, and he is determined to roll out the best possible reception. Like all other African leaders I have seen so far -- whether socialist, tribal-oriented, or conservative -- he runs a very tight ship, in his case with an omnipresent leopard skin hat and a large swagger stick.

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These qualities are now accentuated by his deep security concerns. He has an intense seige mentality in the wake of Angola, which he says shook the morale of his forces which had been considered the strongest in Africa. Everywhere he looks he sees red or crazy regimes -- Angola, Mozambique, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Sudan, Uganda, Libya. Zambia to the south is his one close nearby friend, but he is not sure that Kaunda is in real control; he knows that Zambia is working with radical regimes like Tanzania, Mozambique, and Botswana; and on the other side of Zambia lie the smoldering white redoubts.

"This security -- or rather insecurity -- theme has dominated all our talks, as we knew it would. He made a determined pitch for increased military assistance of a sophisticated nature, comparing the toys he has to the sophisticated tanks and planes of his neighbors. The Soviets supply whatever their clients request, he claimed, and some of the material can only be for a strategic stockpile. He emphasized our long ties of friendship and how Zaire is perhaps the last, best hope of the West in a spreading Red sea. He says our friends doubt our will after Angola and will be watching us; many now feel it is unsafe to be aligned with us because it exposes them to Communist pressure which we won't help them resist.

"In addition, Mobutu made a rather perfunctory pitch on Southern Africa about which he is really less concerned than most of the other African leaders. He made the standard points on early majority rule for Rhodesia, independence for Namibia, and dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. Like all other Black Africans on this trip, however, he volunteered that the South Africans are Africans not Colonialists with a right to stay in the Continent, though their system must change. Mobutu also made a pitch for economic help, especially on commodities and agriculture. They have been hard hit for the same reasons as Zambia. He is essentially bored with economics, however, and intensive discussions on this subject are being conducted by Deputy Secretary Robinson and his counterparts.

"I was very reassuring to Mobutu on our intentions. I explained our temporary domestic disarray, caused by Watergate, Vietnam, an unrepresentative Congress and the exigencies of the current campaign. I told him you were certain to win and that the mood of Congress and the people would begin to shift. All of this would allow us to conduct a more forceful foreign policy and ensure that there would be no more Angolas. On economic aid, I said that we had to find ways to raise large amounts of money outside of

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direct government assistance since Congress was tight-fisted at a time when we were slicing domestic programs. We had done this for countries like Egypt, using the World Bank, other countries, private investment, etc., and we would do so for Zaire. On Security Assistance, I said we would also urgently study Zaire's needs. When I get back I recommend we have an early NSC meeting to see what can be done."

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