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THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with the President and Botswanan President
Quett K.J. Masire (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Herman J. Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State
for African Affairs
John F. Kordek, U.S. Ambassador to Botswana
David Passage, NSC (Notetaker)

President Quett K.J. Masire
Botsweletse K. Sebele, Ambassador to the U.S.
Dr. Gaositwe Chiepe, Minister of External Affairs
Samuel Mpuchane, Permanent Secretary, MEA

DATE, TIME, AND PLACE, June 7, 1989, 2:00 - 2:30 pm EDT
The Oval Office

The President welcomed President Masire and his party to the White House, saying the U.S. was proud that he was here, and proud of the reason (Masire's honorary degree from the University of Ohio) for Masire's trip. He noted that he and Masire "could talk forever about southern Africa and East-West issues," but he wanted to begin by saying that the "U.S. has great respect for you and what you've done, and our relationship with Botswana." He commended Masire on Botswana's democratic traditions and respect for human rights. (U)

President Masire thanked the President for his warm wishes and said his visit was going very well. Secretary Baker had offered a very nice lunch, and he (Masire) was here to try to promote good relations with the United States. Botswana welcomed its association with us, he observed, and added that "democracy has to be conducted in an atmosphere conducive to democratic practices." "We live next to South Africa," he went on; "Botswana is democratic, however, and although they (South Africans) say they are democratic, they are not. We live by rule of law; they live by rule of men." He said Botswana lived in the constant shadow of commandos crossing its borders to kill its citizens. "We are enormously grateful to the U.S.; you have never been found wanting" when Botswana needed the support of friends. (S)

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President Masire also expressed appreciation for U.S. assistance to his country, saying Ambassador Kordek had told him Botswana needed to "tighten its seatbelt" against U.S. budgetary stringencies, but added that he (Masire) had replied "We are such a lightweight that you shouldn't have to jettison us." The President laughed and said the U.S. would do its best by Botswana. (U)

President Masire went on to say that he commended the U.S. for what it had achieved in southern Africa and Angola. Now, however, there was the even more challenging problem of South Africa. He hoped that the U.S. would use every bit of influence we had with South Africa to sustain the democratic process. He added that it wasn't just the internal black vs white situation inside that country; it was South Africa vs the whole region. "We count on the U.S. using its good offices to promote democratic principles and fundamental human rights." (Ø)

President Bush said he appreciated Masire's kind words about what the U.S. had done, and paid tribute to (former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs) Chet Crocker, and now his successor Hank Cohen, and said he was proud to have been part of the last U.S. Administration, "which took a lot of fire for its policy, but which played a catalytic role in getting the Angola agreements." (U)

The President said he and Secretary Baker felt very strongly about dispelling any notion that the U.S., under his leadership, would soften its stand against apartheid. But, he said, he had just been through "a considerable drill on sanctions against China" and just wasn't convinced that it wouldn't "hurt the man on the street more than the leadership." The President said the U.S. had a set of sanctions against South Africa "and they're going to stay there -- but the question is how do we move toward a dialogue on democracy." (Ø)

Regarding Mozambique, the President said there were some in this country who thought RENAMO was praiseworthy, "but that's not the way I feel." The U.S. wanted to be a catalyst for resolution of the Mozambican problem, however, as in Angola, and would try to be helpful. "In addition," he added, "we may need your help with some of the countries in southern Africa (clearly referring to Zimbabwe) who have opposed us in nearly everything we do." He invited Masire to stay in close touch with him. (Ø)

There was a brief discussion of the NATO Summit, with President Masire congratulating the President on a very forthcoming approach to world peace and relaxing East-West tensions, and the President saying the NATO discussions were evidence that the U.S. intended to be prudent but forthcoming. (U)

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Secretary Baker observed that the President was a very patient man, but commented that he'd like to get the President out to Botswana for some fishing, and noted that he had spent nearly three weeks there several years ago on a hunting and fishing trip. (U)

The President concluded by saying that he wanted very much to show the interest he felt, and the U.S. felt, for Africa; to make people know the U.S. cares. He said if there was any sense of benign neglect in Africa, it should be put aside; "we want to work with you." President Masire indicated he understood that and accepted it. (U)

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