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THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting Between the President and Zairian President Mobutu (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
David Passage, NSC Director for Africa (notetaker)  
Carol Wolter, Interpreter

President Mobutu  
Nkema Liloo, Zairian National Security Adviser  
(notetaker)

DATE, TIME June 29, 1989, 11:00 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.  
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President welcomed President Mobutu, observing that they had met many times over the years and that it was always a pleasure to see him again -- particularly under the circumstances of President Mobutu's diplomatic triumph in bringing together Angola's President Dos Santos and UNITA's Jonas Savimbi. "I congratulate you on your visionary leadership; this has been a significant step forward, which will put you in a good position and be of help to you with some of the problems (referring to Zaire's economic difficulties and its dispute with Belgium) that you and I have discussed in the past." (Ø)

The President said he wanted to open, in this small meeting, with the matter of human rights, observing "You know you have some critics in this country, and we cannot ignore them." The President said he'd heard that President Mobutu had established a Human Rights Commission, and invited him to tell him about it. (Ø)

President Mobutu said he had indeed done so, and was proud that one of the results had been a report by the UN Human Rights Commission "exonerating Zaire" of the opprobrium of being one of the "especially watched" countries. President Mobutu handed the President a single page report from the UNHRC removing Zaire from the Commission's "watch" list. (Ø)

Moving to economic matters, President Mobutu said he wanted to make the point frankly to a friend that Zaire did not consider that the level of (economic and military) assistance Zaire was getting from the U.S. was commensurate with Zaire's diplomatic efforts "on our joint behalf", and was "insignificant" in comparison with that given to "certain other countries." (Ø)

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President Bush said the U.S. was "in a real bind" on money and acknowledged that "a disproportionate share goes to just two countries, as you know." He said President Mobutu had made the point, on other occasions when they had been together, that "some countries which don't often stand with us seem to do better than others who are consistently loyal." The President said this, coupled with President Mobutu's Angolan triumph, "will surely help with Congress." President Mobutu said he had, in fact, been talking with various Congressional leaders, and that very morning a bipartisan coalition had introduced a joint "Sense of the Congress" resolution praising him. (Ø)

Returning to the matter of U.S. assistance, President Mobutu said he wanted to use Pakistan as an illustration: "Here is a country which you cross to get assistance to an anti-communist freedom group (the mujaheddin), and which has also had a human rights problem. Yet the U.S. gives \$400-500 million each year to Pakistan, compared to \$4-5 million to Zaire." He asked if Pakistan was more respectful of U.S. needs than Zaire. He recalled that a Pakistani Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had disparagingly described President Carter's offer of \$400 million in U.S. assistance as "peanuts", and spurned it, whereupon the U.S. increased its offer. President Bush replied that much of the assistance the U.S. gives Zaire goes through International Financial Institutions, and the assistance to the Afghan freedom fighters ultimately would help Zaire, as communism was rolled back. (Ø)

The President then suggested they join the larger group in the Cabinet Room for a discussion of these issues. (U)

In closing the "one-on-one" session, President Mobutu said he wanted to put in a word on behalf of a visit to President Bush by Rwanda's President Habyarimana. The President said he recalled with pleasure the time both Presidents Mobutu and Habyarimana had visited the Bushes at their summer home in Kennebunkport (in the summer of 1987) and told President Mobutu he would make a note of President Habyarimana's request and write him about it. (Ø)

The two Presidents then joined their advisors in the Cabinet Room.