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THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Deputy Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
William C. Harrop, U.S. Ambassador to Zaire
Herman J. Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State
for African Affairs
David Passage, NSC Director for Africa (notetaker)
Mary Carol Wolter, interpreter
Eliza Burnham, interpreter

President Mobutu Sese Seko
Nguz Karl-i-Bond, Foreign Minister
Katanga Mukumadi ya Mutumba, Finance Minister
Tatanene Manata, Chairman of Political
Social Commission, Zairian Legislature
Nkema Liloo, National Security Advisor to
President Mobutu
Mokonda Bonza, Director of President Mobutu's
Executive Staff
Mushobekwa Lalimba wa Katana, Zairian Ambassador
to U.S.

DATE, TIME June 29, 1989, 11:25 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Cabinet Room

The President opened the meeting by saying he wanted to repeat to President Mobutu's advisers the high praise he had for President Mobutu's triumphal achievement of getting Angola's President Dos Santos and UNITA's Jonas Savimbi to meet together on June 22, 1989, at Gbadolite, Zaire. The President said they had also talked together about human rights, and said President Mobutu had shown him a very encouraging report from the UN Human Rights Commission removing Zaire from the "watch" list. The President thought this would serve President Mobutu very well in his meetings on the Hill. (Ø)

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2000-0179-F

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-2-

President Mobutu thanked the President for his "very kind words" and said he chiefly wanted to talk about the "situation between our two countries." First, he said, he wanted to report that Zaire had reached agreement with the IMF and World Bank on an economic reform program and it had been approved by both the Paris Club and London Club (on debt rescheduling). He said Zaire's export earnings were increasing and inflation had fallen from 13% to 0%, and since January 1 of this year, his government had not had to resort to additional borrowing. (Ø)

During this same time, President Mobutu said, Zaire had been extremely active diplomatically, mediating the dispute between Rwanda and Burundi, and, as the President knew, working to move Angolan national reunification forward. He said he had been so successful that (Ethiopian) President Mengistu had asked him to talk to the Eritrean rebels, (Mozambican) President Chissano had asked him to intercede with RENAMO, and a former Sudanese Vice President had twice flown to Zaire to ask Mobutu's help with Sudan's southern rebels. (Ø)

"All this activity," President Mobutu added, "costs money," however, and Zaire did not think that U.S. assistance was commensurate with Zaire's contribution to our joint interests. "For us in Zaire, we look at U.S. assistance to other countries and we feel overlooked." He said it often seemed that "to receive an adequate amount of U.S. assistance, you have to engage in mud-slinging." For example, he said, at an OAU meeting in 1975 in Kampala then-Sudanese President Nimeiri had tabled a motion denouncing the U.S. for its dealings with South Africa. He (President Mobutu) had demanded a comparable condemnation of the Soviet Union, and his motion had been adopted -- but Sudan got \$100 million in economic assistance and \$100 million in military aid that year, whereas "Zaire got \$3 million in economic aid and \$6 million in military assistance." (Ø)

President Mobutu said another example was Zaire's responsiveness to (former U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations) Jeane Kirkpatrick, who asked his support at a Havana Conference on Human Rights: he had immediately sent a Zairian delegation to Havana to retrieve the situation, a tactic which had worked. "But on the very next day, your (U.S.) Executive Director at the World Bank voted against a loan for Zaire's GECAMINES copper mining project." (Ø)

Finally, President Mobutu said, the U.S. had been using Pakistan as an access route to get supplies to the Afghan rebels, and Pakistan had been receiving, in return, "\$400, 600, 800 million each year" even though Pakistan also had a human rights problem. "When I go up to meet with the Congress, I will speak frankly and bluntly about a U.S. policy which is shocking to us." "We attach no price tag to our friendship", he said, "but you need to review your policy." (Ø)

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-3-

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The President replied that it was important for President Mobutu to make these points to the Congress, and said the U.S. acknowledged that there were some inequities in the way the U.S. was able to divide its assistance resources. On the GECAMINES loan, he pointed out that there was a legislative prohibition, "the Garn Amendment", precluding U.S. assistance to foreign "copper" projects. And finally, he pointed out, "some of the things we do in other parts of the world, such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, indirectly help Zaire." But, the President said, "I'm listening attentively, and I sometimes wish the U.S. President could make foreign policy instead of the Congress." (Ø)

Secretary Baker noted that both the Departments of State and Treasury had wanted to vote in favor of the GECAMINES loan, but ran up against the legislative prohibition. (Ø)

Turning to South Africa, the President asked President Mobutu's views on how to deal with that country. President Mobutu said his experience was that if one dealt with the South African Government privately and quietly, it was more likely to listen than if one simply attacked them publicly. He recited a number of instances where he had dealt directly with South Africa's President P.W. Botha and Botha had been very responsive, including not sending Nelson Mandela back to prison after his recent hospitalization, commuting the death sentences of the "Sharpeville Six", and supporting Mobutu's efforts to bring Angola's President Dos Santos and UNITA's Jonas Savimbi together. (Ø)

When the President asked President Mobutu's view of future South African President De Klerk, President Mobutu said he had met with him on May 6th and De Klerk told him "once I am in power, you (Mobutu) are the first African head of state I want to meet with." He concluded by saying he thought the key to dealing with the South Africans was to be open to them and respect the confidentiality of private communications. (Ø)

The President expressed appreciation, and said if President Mobutu had further suggestions along those lines, he'd be grateful to have them. He said the U.S. objective was to move toward racial equality in South Africa, "but I think we probably have less influence with them (South Africans) than in the past -- but still, we must try." (Ø)

The President then suggested the group move to the Residence Old Family Dining Room for lunch. (U)

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