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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Conversation with Prime Minister Andre Milongo of the Republic of the Congo

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
Herman J. Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
Walter H. Kansteiner, Director for African Affairs, NSC Staff (notetaker)

Andre Milongo, Prime Minister
Jean-Blaise Kololo, Foreign Minister
Roger Issombo, Congolese Ambassador to the U.S.

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: December 13, 1991, 11:30 - 11:40 a.m.
The Oval Office

The President: I understand you were up at Yale University, that's my alma mater. (U)

First, I want to tell you how respectful we are of the reforms you have undertaken. Tell me what your priorities are now. (U)

Prime Minister Milongo: I want to thank you for this meeting. The Congo now has a transitional government, it was given 12 months -- we have 6 more months to go. We are organizing multi-party elections -- that is our major challenge. (U)

If we fail, then democracy for the region fails. We have municipal elections soon, and then Presidential elections in June. I want to thank you for the shipments of electoral equipment. (Ø)

We do face a debt problem. We owe the U.S. \$9 million, and we would like special treatment. We want to benefit from the Toronto system. We are unfortunately classified as intermediate income, but we really are not. (Ø)

The President: On that topic, have you made any headway with the IMF? (Ø)

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Prime Minister Milongo: We did have a program with them but we slipped off. We are now renegotiating the program. We have problems with our salaries for our civil servants. (Ø)

Regarding U.S. business, we like the U.S. companies, and we are reforming toward free markets. We want to reassure the U.S. oil companies with liberal investment codes. (Ø)

The President: We feel the answer to economic problems ultimately rests with the private sector. You need to encourage the private sector whenever possible. (Ø)

I want to thank you for the hospitality you provided for our people from Zaire when we had to get out. The Zaireans ought to take a lesson from you on democracy. You know we've always been friendly with Mobutu, but the sand is running through the glass. (Ø)

Prime Minister Milongo: We did our maximum to help your people when they arrived from Zaire. (U)

The President: Yes, thank you. (U)

Assistant Secretary Cohen: Perhaps the Congo's economic problems can be helped by receiving more equitable return on your oil production. (Ø)

Prime Minister Milongo: ~~Our French friends are producing oil and they have -- well, habits -- and they won't turn over their books.~~ (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Excuse my bluntness, Mr. President, but I am afraid our friend is getting ripped off. They're not paying you what you deserve. (Ø)

The President: Perhaps you should open up the oil sector. How long is their contract for? (Ø)

Prime Minister Milongo: I am not sure, it differs. (U)

The President: Are there any American companies producing right now? (U)

Prime Minister Milongo: Yes, Amoco and Conoco. (Ø)

Secretary Baker: Well Amoco is giving you a fair shake and making a profit. They're not in the charity business. (Ø)

Prime Minister Milongo: Yes. (U)

I also want to let you know we will be voting in favor of the Zionism resolution. (Ø)

The President: That's good news. Thank you for stopping by. (U)

-- End of Conversation --