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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

23 MAY 1972

STATE DEPARTMENT SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Paris, France
May 2, 1972

Withdrawal No. _____

SUBJECT: US-French Bilateral Exchanges on Africa:
I -- Overview

PARTICIPANTS:

✓
FRENCH EMBASSY

France: Hervé Alphand, Secretary-General,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Philippe Rebeyrol, Director, Africa
Guy de Commines, Director, North Africa
Pierre Carraud, Deputy Director, non-
Francophone Africa
Paul Gaschignard, Deputy Director,
Francophone Africa
José Paoli, Deputy Director, Algeria
Lionel de Warren, Deputy Director,
Morocco-Tunisia-Libya
Pierre de Cours, Desk Officer,
Sudan-Egypt

U.S: Arthur K. Watson, American Ambassador
David D. Newsom, Assistant Secretary of
State for African Affairs
William Witman II, Special Assistant, AF
H. Allen Holmes, Political Counselor,
Embassy Paris
Andrew L. Steigman, First Secretary,
Embassy Paris

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After welcoming Assistant Secretary Newsom, Secretary-General Alphand said that he wished to outline the principal problems which the French side thought warranted further examination. During the past few months, he continued, Africa has had no major conflicts and has enjoyed "a certain stability." Yet Africa is moving and developing rapidly, and bears close attention.

For all African governments, M. Alphand noted, the top priority is development and improvement in the living standards of their peoples. Unfortunately, the gap between the developed and underdeveloped

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countries is growing and is a subject of serious preoccupation for both. The UNCTAD Conference in Santiago, which is currently discussing this problem, finds the US and France in general agreement, though we differ in our approach -- for example, in the greater emphasis placed by the GOF on market and price stabilization for primary products. If we can in fact arrive at a common position on these issues, this would mark a major contribution to African development. In this connection, the UK entry into the EC recalls the importance attached by France to the maintenance of "certain privileges" for the associated states, which France believes to be in the interests both of these countries and of the West.

Turning to the role of the "Socialist countries" in Africa, M. Alphanth remarked that their effort has generally not been successful in Africa, though the PRC has recently made more headway than the Soviets. The rivalry between the two Communist powers has hurt them both, as has the tendency among African countries to view them both in practical terms as potential aid sources rather than in terms of ideology. There has been some "tendency" toward the Communist countries in such states as Mali, Congo-Brazzaville, and perhaps Mauritania, M. Alphanth observed, but Communist influence is nowhere dominant.

In Black Africa, the Secretary-General said, there have been both positive and negative developments recently. On the positive side, he cited (a) UNSYG Waldheim's visit to Namibia and the resultant opening of communications with South Africa, even though long-term results are still unknown; (b) the agreement ending the civil war in southern Sudan; and (c) the Chad/Libya agreement, hopefully ending a situation in which Frolinat propaganda from Libya risked serious degeneration in Chad. On the negative side, M. Alphanth listed (a) the probable negative report of the Pearce Commission on Rhodesia, leaving us all in a very difficult situation; (b) the ouster of Busia in Ghana, which the GOF "deplored" since Busia had restored democratic rule in the country and since the coup did nothing to improve the country's serious economic and financial problems; and (c) the withdrawal of Zaire from OCAM, a useful structure for African cooperation which benefited from the presence of this large and rich member.

In North Africa, M. Alphanth continued, there are problems within each of the countries of the region, though they have recently moved closer together and thus removed the shadow of certain problems which loomed a few months ago. Throughout the area, the French noted a new interest in Mediterranean security and increased attention to European plans in this regard.

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Taking the region on a country-by-country basis, M. Alphand said the French judged the situation in Morocco to be "very bad." The King was once again backing and filling, creating general uncertainty. Nevertheless, French-Moroccan relations remained good, despite the ever-present threat of further nationalizations by the GOM of French-owned land. Tunisia was facing its own internal difficulties in the aftermath of the Ben Salah affair and the uncertainties of Bourguiba's health. The President no longer rules as once he did, and recently has seemed to waver in his backing of Prime Minister Nouira. Again, however, bilateral French relations with Tunisia are excellent, and both economic and cultural assistance have been increased. Libya appears stronger internally than its neighbors, but for the first time there have been signs of opposition to a regime considered by some to be too dictatorial. Relations with France are good, with trade up and the Mirage contract proceeding normally. The principal motivation of LARG policy, in French eyes, is anti-Zionism, and the GOF sees this as a significant element of Libyan action vis-a-vis Chad "where Israel had a certain influence." In Algeria, Boumediene is clearly in charge, though he faces a number of economic problems. The GOF believes the Algerians regret not having accepted the French package offer conveyed to them over a year ago by Secretary-General Alphand (and which will not be repeated), but they have considerable domestic resources with which to work. French-Algerian relations are "not too bad," with the outstanding contentieux balanced by cooperation in various fields and French willingness to discuss Mediterranean security problems with the GOA.

Replying to M. Alphand, Ambassador Watson recalled that the present consultations are the third in the current series of formal exchanges on African problems and expressed appreciation for the warm welcome extended by the GOF. The Ambassador noted the wide measure of agreement we have found over the past few years in comparing our assessments of African developments, and the progress which has been made in developing joint aid projects. He then turned to Assistant Secretary Newsom for an overview of Africa as seen by the USG.

Mr. Newsom opened by reiterating the respect and admiration of the United States for French positions in Africa. The contribution made by France to development and stability on the continent, he said, is one for which all western nations should be grateful. This is one reason why we attach such high value to our consultations with the

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GOF and are so pleased by the excellent relations which prevail between our representatives both in Paris and in the field. He himself, Mr. Newsom noted, has now visited all but two of the independent nations of Africa, and in many countries has greatly appreciated the opportunity to exchange views with French Ambassadors and advisers.

We have no basic areas of disagreement with M. Alphand's overview, the Assistant Secretary said, so he proposed to outline US pre-occupations and interests. In recent meetings with American Ambassadors in Kinshasa and Addis Ababa, Mr. Newsom observed, the prevailing impression had been one of progress despite the problems faced by African governments. We thus remain optimistic about the ability of the Africans to solve their problems and maintain their independence.

Our initial concern, the Assistant Secretary continued, is to maintain satisfactory relations with all the independent countries of Africa -- i.e., an adequate level of diplomatic exchanges, equitable access to trade and investment opportunities, and transit rights. We seek to project our interest in these states, our respect for their independence, and our desire to help them to the maximum extent our resources permit. There are some particularly difficult cases in this regard. Algeria appears to be turning away from past dogmatism and emotionalism toward greater pragmatism, both with regard to its own development and to the Middle East, and to be showing more interest in the Maghreb. In Guinea, considerations of our substantial investment stake and the desirability of preserving a western presence have led us to keep a mission and to seek the best possible relations. We have slowed down the arrival of a new Ambassador, and have hopefully stirred some concern thereby within the GOG which will prove beneficial to our own relations and to relations between Guinea and the West generally. With Equatorial Guinea, our relations have survived the recent tragedy involving our personnel in Santa Isabel, in which the GOF and French representatives in the field were so helpful. With Congo-Brazzaville, there has simply been no progress toward restoration of relations, and it seems evident Ngouabi is not yet ready to take this step.

Our second concern in Africa, Mr. Newsom said, is to be responsive to the African preoccupation with economic development. This, as M. Alphand noted, is Africa's top priority and the first thing their leaders raise in talking to us. We have problems with Congress on our AID legislation, and may be led to some changes in emphasis and perhaps reduction in personnel. But we must continue to play a role, and in fact our aid to Africa has not dropped but has remained constant at about \$550 million/year in total resource transfers since

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1968. (This includes not only AID funds, Mr. Newsom explained, but also Peace Corps, PL-480, long-term ExIm credits, and \$200 million made available through the IBRD and UNDP.) We attach great importance to the creation of African institutions through which funds can be transferred, and this is one reason we have worked with the Entente, AFDB, and OCAM. With regard to the last-named, we regret the withdrawal of Zaire, and also regret rumors suggesting incorrectly that we were in some way involved. We are not, of course, in any way responsible for the twists and turns of Mobutu's impulses. As the Secretary-General observed, the Africans are concerned not only with aid but also with sure markets and prices for their products. We have serious Congressional problems in this regard, but the Senate has ratified the coffee agreement and the USG takes a positive attitude on a possible cocoa accord. With regard to reverse preferences, we understand the GOF position and this will undoubtedly be a subject of continuing discussion between our two governments.

The Soviet and Chinese role in Africa, the Assistant Secretary said, is our third major area of concern. We have told the Africans that this is essentially their own business, and that we do not want to perpetuate the cold war in Africa. We do not intend to base our own relations with Africa on African relations with the Soviets or PRC, and we have considerable confidence in the ability of the Africans to preserve their independence. The Soviets, in recent months, have made some progress in Arab Africa and the Horn, but not much in Black Africa; and even in Arab Africa, they have run afoul of Qaddafi's militant anti-Communism. There have been signals that General Siad in Somalia is unhappy about the burden of Soviet military aid, and this may merit closer attention. The Chinese have adopted an approach different from that which characterized their earlier efforts in Africa. They are seeking to present a respectable image, are avoiding contact with dissident movements, and are emphasizing economic cooperation. Their economic activities are not a cause for immediate concern, but bear watching. More worrisome is their presence in military establishments (notably in Tanzania) and their growing identification with southern African liberation movements.

Finally, Mr. Newsom said, we are concerned at the complex of problems in southern Africa. In South Africa itself, the USG has supported realistic change by seeking, for example, to open communications between elements in the U.S. and various communities within South Africa and by urging U.S. firms to improve labor conditions for their non-white employees. We distinguish carefully between our own imperatives with regard to US-South African communications and the question of dialogue between South Africa and Black Africa, leaving

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the latter entirely to the Black Africans to decide. We have indicated our view that better relations seem to us essential to peace and stability on the continent, but the means to this end must be chosen by the Africans themselves. With regard to Rhodesia, we will continue to enforce sanctions on the 86% of US-Rhodesian trade which is still covered by the program, and we hope for success in an effort now underway to repeal the Byrd amendment which permits importation of Rhodesian chrome. As for Namibia, we too welcomed the trip made by UNSYG Waldheim. We now face a very delicate situation in keeping open for him the opportunity to continue his new dialogue with the SAG, since the Africans in New York may press for tougher positions which would make further exchanges impossible. We hope the momentum can be maintained, though we expect no major immediate results.

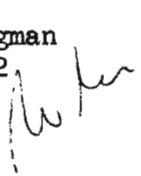
In closing, the Assistant Secretary mentioned three other areas which he felt warranted further attention in the remainder of the consultations: (a) following up Deputy Assistant Secretary Smith's talks on the Ghana debt problem (Paris 7182), he reemphasized the serious implications of failure to resolve this long-standing situation; (b) the Horn of Africa, to which he had already made reference in connection with Soviet aid (above); and (c) North Africa, where we too sense a greater feeling of Maghrebian common action, if not unity, and share French concern over the growing malaise in Morocco.

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