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PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
April 21, 2005

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.8
By RRS Date 3-18-98

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July 29, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *AK*

SUBJECT: Your Meeting with President Joseph Mobutu of Congo
(Kinshasa); (Phonetic: mo-BOO-too); 10:30 a. m.,
Tuesday, August 4.

You last saw Mobutu on your visit to Kinshasa in June 1967.

Your substantive meeting takes place immediately following the 10:30 a. m. arrival ceremony. You are hosting a State Dinner for him that evening. The Vice President will do the farewell honors on your behalf.

In Washington, Mobutu will also meet with Secretaries Rogers and Stans, Director Helms, Administrator Hannah, World Bank President McNamara and Congressional leaders. His official visit will be followed by a hard-working 5-day stay in New York devoted to promoting private U.S. investment in the Congo.

The Setting for the Visit

The Congo is one of our policy successes in Africa. In the Eisenhower Administration, we firmly committed ourselves to Congolese unity. After years of civil war Mobutu came to power in 1965, and has made a reality of Congolese unity. The Congolese -- and Mobutu personally -- are acutely aware that the U.S. was the only non-African power to support Congolese territorial integrity despite all the attempts at dismemberment. In addition, our economic and military assistance (about \$600 million since 1960) is recognized by the Congolese as an invaluable contribution to their stability and unity.

Mobutu is deeply concerned about the political instability and communist influence in Africa. He also feels that the Congo's size and wealth should give it a prime role in Central Africa. These concerns lead him, in meetings with foreign dignitaries, to focus on the Congo's strategic-political

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role. We, on the other hand, tend to the view that economic development should receive top priority. This difference of perspective can lead to vigorous discussion, as Secretary Rogers discovered in his meeting with Mobutu last February.

Since coming to power, Mobutu has extended government control to every corner of the country, and reduced insurgency to isolated banditry. He has ruled by decree, but on taking power promised a return to normal political activity within five years. Accordingly, he has scheduled Presidential and Parliamentary elections for November and December. The new Parliament will be largely a rubber stamp. Mobutu will be the only Presidential candidate on the ballot. His re-election is certain, but will not much diminish the fact that his rule is based on Army support.

The Man

Mobutu is 39 years old, Catholic educated, strongly pro-Western and firmly anti-communist. He is thoroughly comfortable with both the substance and trappings of power after five years of experience with it. He is courageous, politically astute, conservative in his approach to government, and relatively honest in a country where governmental corruption is a way of life. He recognizes in his bones that foreign private investment is essential to Congolese development. Not by nature a charismatic leader, he has nonetheless adopted a personal style redolent of DeGaulle. He sees himself as the "politician-soldier", who embodies the Congolese nation. He is a rational nationalist, sensitive to undue Belgian economic influence in his country -- but determined at the same time to nourish the reconciliation with Belgium and to maximize the practical advantages which this brings to the Congo. His domestic authority derives from the fact that he is the one person who can command a consensus within the Army. In addition, he has manipulated political forces in the Congo so that every potential rival for power, civilian or military, has been excluded from public office.

Mobutu is seriously worried with what he considers the dangerous penetration of neighboring countries by the Chinese Communists, particularly in Congo (Brazzaville). He is concerned that the Chinese are to build the railroad between Tanzania and Zambia, and are helping train southern Africa guerrilla forces. He believes the Chinese are also training and financing Congolese rebels in Tanzania. He is also disturbed by the pro-Nasser regime in the Sudan both because of his strong personal support for Israel and because the Sudanese permit the presence of a substantial number of Congolese rebels.

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In short, he sees a danger of "communist encirclement" and thus wants to expand his military forces. (An incentive of equal force is probably his need to keep his officer corps happy.)

What He Wants

1. Our recognition that Communist penetration of Central Africa requires special attention.

Suggested Response:

- We do not minimize this threat. We will continue to work closely with him in identifying Communist activities in Central Africa.
- Ask Mobutu for his suggestions on how best to deal with the threat as he sees it.
- Express sympathy with Mobutu's concerns and confirm that you will make every effort to facilitate steps which the U. S. can realistically undertake to assist him.

2. Military equipment, on the grounds that the Congo wants to be able to bear the primary burden of its own defense, in accordance with the Nixon Doctrine. He wants transport aircraft (C-130s) to improve the mobility of his army.

Suggested Response:

- In view of the Congo's size and recent history we appreciate his concern for adequate and mobile military forces.
- Confirm that you will facilitate the purchase of C-130s and other necessary equipment. Caution that increasing Congressional opposition in the U. S. has made the prospects for grant military aid dim, thus it will be necessary to seek other means to facilitate the improvement of the Congo's defense capabilities.
- Ask Mobutu for his assessment of the Congo's outlook for economic development in the light of its continuing need for military preparedness.

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3. Our help in encouraging American private investment in the Congo. He may also want U.S. aid to complete the railroad from the Katanga copper belt to the Atlantic.

Suggested Response:

- He is absolutely right in the importance he attaches to private investment -- and we wish him great success in New York. We will do what we can to help.
 - We admire his success in restoring economic stability and creating a better investment climate.
 - The World Bank can doubtless be of great help to him in creating the conditions necessary to attract private investment. He may wish to raise this in his meeting with McNamara.
 - We agree that a good transportation system is a high priority need. For that reason we are offering the \$10 million loan to help rehabilitate the river transport system.
4. Civil aviation agreement. Pan Am has been flying to the Congo since the mid-1950's. Since 1968 Mobutu has been trying to get reciprocal rights for Air Congo to fly to New York. We tried to discourage him because we do not think Air Congo is ready, but he has persisted and has made the grant to Pan Am of a second weekly frequency contingent upon our agreement. We are now prepared to agree.

Suggested Response:

- You are aware of his desires and the U.S. is ready to agree to a weekly Air Congo flight to New York.
 - You suggest that he discuss the details of this matter with Secretary Rogers.
5. Naval forces. Mobutu wants to establish a naval force of about 50 patrol craft to operate on the Atlantic Coast, the Congo River and his extensive eastern lakes. Mobutu's plan is extremely ambitious and beyond U.S. capabilities to support, especially since we

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will no longer provide or grant military aid to the Congo in view of their own increasing economic viability. On the other hand, we are prepared to assist with this project by the provision of \$1.5 million in AID money over a five-year period. This will result in the provision of approximately 10 patrol boats and 3 light patrol aircraft. The details of this assistance will be worked out by Mr. Hannah in discussions with Mobutu this week.

Suggested Response:

- We recognize the need for the improvement in the Congo's capability to patrol and secure its extensive waterways and we anticipate that we will be able, through AID, to assist with the provision of a few surface patrol craft and some light patrol aircraft.
- AID Administrator Hannah is prepared to discuss this matter in further detail with him.

What We Want

From our point of view the visit is mainly protocolary. Therefore, our main purpose is to enable Mobutu to air his concerns which will probably reflect his tendency to dramatize the external threat to Congolese security; to listen sympathetically to these concerns which are real from his perspective, and to confirm to him that the United States and you personally are conscious of his problems and oriented towards facilitating solutions. The responses suggested to you above should serve these purposes. In addition, you may wish to:

1. Express satisfaction at being able to return the hospitality he extended to you at Kinshasa in June, 1967.
2. Sympathize with the pressure he is under in an election year, and express your pleasure that he has nonetheless taken time for this visit.
3. State your appreciation of the hard work he is putting himself to in New York in order to promote American private investment in the Congo.

Attached is background and biographic material. ✓

There will be a brief photo opportunity at the beginning of your private meeting with Mobutu.

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