

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

NLRREF04-05 #33926 6969

BY CH NARA DATE 3/5/08

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

33926

SUBJECT: Summary of President's Meeting with President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire

PARTICIPANTS: President Ronald Reagan  
Vice President George Bush  
Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr.  
Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger  
Mr. Edwin Meese  
Admiral James W. Nance  
Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker  
Ambassador Robert Oakley  
Mr. Frederick Wettering, NSC Staff  
Mr. Alec Toumayan (Interpreter)

President Mobutu Sese Seko  
Minister of Foreign Affairs Yoka Mangano  
Ambassador to the US Kasongo Mutuale

DATE, TIME

AND PLACE:

December 1, 1981

1:00-1:45 p.m., the Oval Office

The President opened his remarks by thanking President Mobutu for the handsome memento he presented. The President stated that he appreciated very much Zaire's long time friendship with the US and looked forward to this friendship continuing. The President added that he was delighted to hear about President Mobutu's plans and programs for domestic adjustment. The President also expressed appreciation for Mobutu's cooperation in sending Zairian troops to Chad for the peacekeeping force.

President Mobutu thanked the President for the warm welcome and kind words both to him and the Zairian people. He observed that the US officials with whom he has met were very well prepared for talks with him. President Mobutu noted his satisfaction with the "good talks" with Secretary Haig and his people, Secretary Weinberger and his people, Director Casey, and the Congress.

President Mobutu then summarized four points which he had presented in his discussions in Washington. They are: internal security problems, external security problems, economic problems, and bilateral relations with the US.

-- On internal security problems, President Mobutu noted that he was experiencing real difficulties from the Communist Bloc embassies. They are attempting to subvert students, workers.

~~SECRET~~

Review 12/1/87

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

2

A few weeks ago he almost expelled the Cuban and East German Embassies, but decided to postpone this because of his trip abroad. President Mobutu requested US help in training security experts and obtaining equipment to monitor the activities of these communist diplomats.

-- On external security, President Mobutu observed that the USSR and its satellites had established a "belt of insecurity, a red belt" around Zaire. He noted that the communists were training Katangan rebels in Angola and then infiltrating them into Zaire. He mentioned he had discussed this with DCI Casey. He cited figures on tanks and aircraft possessed by the Marxist-Leninist states of Angola and Congo and how this compared to the few aircraft and tanks of Zaire. President Mobutu stated that there was no balance of forces in the area but an imbalance. He noted the buildup of Soviet and Libyan arms in Burundi. President Mobutu stated he was happy to note that he found considerable understanding of these problems in his talks at Defense and State. He noted that despite the sacrifice he has sent 800 troops to Chad and was prepared to send another battalion. He understood that the US had decided to financially help out the Chad peacekeeping force and congratulated the President on this decision. He referred again to the problem of the Shaba Province and the Katangan rebels. He reiterated his pleasure that this problem was well understood here and expressed the hope that measures agreed on can go forward quickly.

-- On economic problems, President Mobutu noted that he has worked out the "Mobutu Recovery Plan" with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Its implementation will be delicate and difficult. Zaire cannot do it alone, he added. Friends must also help out. President Mobutu noted that a strong approach to the IMF and World Bank by the US would be helpful and he had raised this with State. He added that on October 23 World Bank President Clausen had written him a series of questions on Zaire economic policy. President Mobutu stated that he had answered these questions in letters to the IMF and World Bank leaders and that they stated they were satisfied.

-- On bilateral relations, President Mobutu cited the excellent relations that had prevailed between the nations until the Carter Administration. We suffered greatly in morale terms, during the Carter years, he declared. As examples, he noted the cutoff of US food assistance due to so-called "human rights violations," immediately followed by a US request to support the US position on the Olympics. President Mobutu affirmed that he overrode the advice of his ministers and ordered the US position supported. "We have never bargained or bartered our friendship with you," he declared. Zaire has always sided with the US, even against our African friends at times, he added. President Mobutu complained that one country which had recently changed sides from hostility to friendship with the US was getting military loans at 2% while Zaire had to pay 15%.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

President Mobutu stated that in conclusion he had not come to criticize but to sensitize the President and his senior officials to Zaire and its strategic importance to the US. President Mobutu noted that he over the years has observed that it takes time for the US to deliver on military and security assistance. He expressed the hope that things could move faster.

President Mobutu offered an example of Zaire's diplomatic importance. He noted that the Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister visited Zaire yesterday and sought his counsel on the election of the UN Secretary-General. President Mobutu added that he encouraged the Chinese to support Secretary-General Waldheim. President Mobutu added that the Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister asked to see him in Paris next week.

President Mobutu added that in Chad, President Goukouni relied heavily on Zaire. This shows that we can be very useful to you, he concluded, because we share the same views.

The President stated that we are aware of Zaire's friendship and importance. We want to help, but it sometimes takes time, especially in dealing with Congress. Once you begin implementing your domestic programs and reforms, our efforts to gather more help to Zaire will be facilitated, the President added. We want to cooperate, and Secretaries Haig and Weinberger will work closely with you on this.

The President also noted that we were aware of the "colorful tinge" of some of Zaire's neighbors, and that we have discussed this at some length - especially Angola. We are hopeful we can improve the Southern African situation.

Secretary Haig praised President Mobutu's excellent preparation for this visit, not only in his statements to the President but in his talks with the IMF and the World Bank. This will help us in our efforts to get additional funding. Secretary Haig declared that prior to President Mobutu's departure we will be able to speak specifically on his Chad force, extra support to the two Zaire brigades, and other matters thanks to President Mobutu's excellent preparation.

The meeting concluded with pleasantries.