

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION:

PARTICIPANTS: President Nixon
President Bongo of Gabon
Brigadier General Brent Scowcroft,
Deputy Assistant to the President,
for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: August 2, 1973
10:10 - 10:56 a.m.

PLACE: Oval Office

[The Press entered for photos]

President: Did you have a good trip? Were you in Pittsburgh?

Bongo: Yes, at Duquesne.

President: This is your second trip to the United States.

Bongo: Yes, I came in 1970. I was in New York.

[The press left]

President: I want to welcome you to our capital and tell you that we appreciate the good relations our two countries have. We hope your country, which is so rich in minerals, can make good progress. So many countries in Africa are so poor in resources that it is very for them to develop. But your country has the resources and the spirit of the people to make good progress. Our companies are pleased with your people and their effectiveness and productivity. I would be interested in your views on Africa and the world in general. I have been interested in Africa ever since I visited it when Ghana got her independence. I have visited a number of countries since -- I visited the Congo and some other countries. in 1967. New countries have

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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5
NSC MEMO, 144409, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES, State Review 3/8/04
BY ML NARA DATE 9/2/04

problems -- as do the old ones -- but I would be interested in your analysis of the problems.

Bongo: I want to express my deep thanks for the welcome I have received in your country and the deep honor you give me by receiving me. I know you are convalescing and have a heavy schedule, so I will get right to the point.

I am happy to come at this time because since you have become President we have recorded progress.

If anyone has a secret to share, it would be from you to me, but the only secret of politics is courage -- and the courage you have shown in ending the war and in improving relations with the USSR and the PRC have made you more revered in Africa.

Gabon is not large, -- it has only one million people -- but it is rich in resources. But development of the resources is the problem. The 13 American companies in Gabon are all natural resources countries. We would be interested in companies that are interested in helping us in health, education and administrative infrastructure. I would like our meeting to bear first in that direction, because my meeting has great significance in my country. Our policy is liberalism -- there is no talk of nationalization; companies are free to withdraw their profits; there are no restrictions except taxation.

I come as a friend to ask someone with more experience. I have only been President since 1967. Up to now only France has given us substantial aid. France has not told us how to behave toward the United States.

We need aid in many areas. A new country needs more than food.

I wanted to mention the Gabon Railway. You have given us loans. I would like to ask for favorable terms, terms more appropriate to a developing country.

Our greatest needs are industry, the Railways, agriculture and education. We need not only technicians for things like aircraft, but also scholarships, so that Gabonese can come here and learn and return to Gabon to pass on their knowledge. English, science, etc. We have more airfields than any other African country. We need transport aircraft and helicopters. We are asking American companies -- not for the military but for the economy. There are no roads, so we need air communications.

First, we deeply trust the United States. We are not tied to France. We are free and independent.

Gabon can be trusted and needs assistance. We import no policy but we seek only to develop our country. Mobutu is a good friend -- but when I see how much you do in Zaire, I am pained that you do so much less for Gabon.

When I return, I will report to my people. You understand my concern to report to them something worthy of so great a trip.

At the time of Ambassador Funkhouser, in an area of many rivers, near Congo Brazzaville which is aggressive, I would like a team of agriculture and business experts which could report to me on Congo Brazzaville's activities.

You asked about the future of Africa. There is a trend to impose ideas on Africa. Take Israel -- North Africa wants us to break relations with Israel. I am opposed. This is an internal decision.

The other problem is reconciliation between East and West in Europe. Some say France is colonialist and the U.S. is imperialist.

We need someone to tell Africa that is not the course to follow.

I have been in touch with the U.S. about restoration of relations between the United States and Congo Brazzaville. Mobutu and _____ are also talking about it. Congo Brazzaville wants me to do it alone so I am working actively for it -- but I can't promise anything. And because economic policies are a predicament with Africans, the Congo Brazzaville President asks me; "What is in it for me? What has the United States done for your country?" I told him wait and see.

What I need is to be placed in contact with aircraft manufacturers and bankers and get aircraft. I will work through your Ambassador.

President: We consider you and your country to be one of our best friends in Africa. We welcome your relationship with France. A new country needs all the help it can get, as long as there are no strings. That is our, and France's, policy. It is for you to determine your future, not us. We can best help you through private enterprise. That is expansible. Government aid is restricted. I shall give every encouragement for private enterprise to invest.

With regard to EXIM credit and aid, I can't promise, but our government's policy is to be as helpful as possible, given the worldwide demands on us. You discuss this with Secretary Rogers. My attitudes will be transmitted through General Scowcroft to all agencies of the government.

You can't go back and say I have added so much to your progress; that is not fair. But tell your people that Gabon has a friend in this office.

In all areas, private and public assistance, intelligence operations, Gabon will have the fullest possible cooperation with the United States. You may think I say this to every President who visits here. That is not true. I know your philosophy -- which is undictatorial -- and your idea of respecting private investment, and I believe your kind of leadership will bring the greatest progress to Africa. That is why I speak in a forthcoming way.

I know you are interested in completing the Railway and the feeder lines. We will try to continue to be of assistance.

Most importantly, I think the future of Africa is in the hands of those like yourself, who are politically and socially responsible, but who know that you need investment -- under the proper conditions -- from outside. There lies the future of the development of Africa.

We will leave this way to join our wives.

[Mutual introductions on the roadway].

Pres/Bougo Mtg
1000 2 Aug.

[1973]

10/10

P. Good trip? Were you in Lgh?

B. Yes, at Daguerre

P. You 2nd trip to US

B. Yes in 1970 in N.Y.

Went to welcome to Capital & tell you appreciate
your visitation 2 countries here. We hope you are
which is rich in material can make good progress.
So many ^{do} eyes ~~is~~ in opinion are so, per in
resources it is hard to elly. But your people
have a resource & spirit of people to make
good progress. Our country are pleased w/
your progress their effectiveness & productivity
would be interested in your view on Africa
& world in gen.

Have been interested in Africa ever since
visited when Ghana got indep. Have visited
a number of eyes since, Congo, etc in 67.
These countries have problems - a bit old - but
would be interested in your analysis of
problems

B. Big thanks for welcome in your eye + what
you ~~can~~ give me by seeing me.

Knows you are committed + have heavy
schedule, so will get right to point.

Happy to come at this time since you know
we are having reached progress in assist gen, in
allgen, etc.?

If anyone has secret to share it would be for you
to me, but only secret of politics is courage -
+ concept you have shown in early work
and in improving relations w/ USSR & PRC has
made your name revered in Africa.

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E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5

NSC MEMO, 11/24/00, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES, State Review 3/8/04

BY: Red

NARA DATE 3/2/04

Gabon not large, / within, but rich in resources. But depleting of resources is a problem
The 13 ^{US companies} largest Gabon are all natural resource exp. We would be interested in companies interested in health, education, + admin infrastructure.
Would like some mty been put in that direction, cause my mty has great sig in my eye. Our policy is liberalization - ~~not~~ the task of nationalization, companies are free to us/draw profits, there are no restrictions except taxation.

Could use a friend to ask our w/face experience (only been plus since 67). Dept in our only France has given us substantial aid. France has not told us how to become toward US.

We need aid in many areas, but baby needs more than food.

About Gabon Rury, you have given no loans. Would like to ask for favorable terms, terms more appropriate to a developing country.

Wanted needs our work, Rury, agr + education. Not only technicians (craft etc) but scholarships to Gabonese come here + learn + return to Gabon to pass on their knowledge. Emphasis, ^{science, etc.}

~~And~~ We have more airports than any other African country. We need transport craft + help - are working US companies (not for mail but learn). There are no roads - need air communications

First we deeply trust US - we are not tied to France - not are free + independent

Gabon can be trusted + needs assistance

We M no policy, but seek only to develop.

Mobutu is good friend - but when I see how

would you do in Zaire I am proud you do
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At time of Anat Finkhman, in area of managers,
near Congo Brazzaville which is aggressive, I
would like a team of agents & business experts which
could report to me on Congo B activities.

You asked future of Africa. There is trend to injure
relation Africa. Take South N. Africa wants
to break relation w/ Israel. I am opposed. This
is crucial decision. Others push reconciliation
w/ East, West, Europe. Some say France is
colonialist, US imperialist, etc. We need someone
to tell Africa that is not a course to follow.

Have been in trouble w/ US about restriction of
relations but US & Congo (B). Washington & Paris are
also looking at it. Congo (B) wants me to do it alone
so I am working actively for it - but can't promise
anything. And because local policies are predominant
w/ Africans, Congo B (para) asks, what is it
for me, what has US done for your country I
feel him want to see.

What I need is to be placed in contact w/
a/cft info & books & get a ft. I will work
than your Arab

W - convince you & your gov to be one of
our best friends in Africa. We welcome
your relationship w/ France. ~~we~~ We will give
you all help they can get, as long as we
no strings. That is our, & Fr. policy.

It is for you to determine your future, not us.
We can best help you through private enterprise.
That is expansive, Govt road is restricted.
I shall give every encouragement for private
enterprise to invest.

W/ regard to X-N + Aid, Govt promise, but
good policy to use or help fed as possible, given
we demand ^{you} discuss w/ Rogers.

My attitude will be transmitted thru Secar
to all agencies of Govt.

You can't go back & say I heard about
so much to your props, that you join
But tell your people that Govt has
put in this office. In all cases, private
& public assist, int'l operations, Govt will
have fullest possible sup w/ US.

You may think I say this to every Pres
who visits here. Not true. I know your
philosophy - undisturbed - reg + your idea
of reporting private enterprises + your
kind of leadership will bring greatest
progress to Africa. I but in only a good
in a feathering way.

I know your interest in completely long and
further lines. We will try to contribute to
perseverance.

Most importantly, I think future of Africa is
in hands of those like yourself, political
& social reg, but who know that you
need involvement - under paper in -
from outside - I have two - future of depend
of Africa.

A

~~Zone~~ We will have this way to join
our arms.

1056

(Multiple intersections on the roadway)