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Date JUL 8 1976
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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: April 21, 1976
TIME: 3:00 PM
PLACE: John Quincy Adams
Room

SUBJECT: Secretary Kissinger's Meeting with
the African Ambassadors

PARTICIPANTS: African Ambassadors

Ambassador Edward Peal, Liberia (Dean of African Diplomatic
Corps)

Ambassador Abdullahi Ahmed Addou, Somalia

Ambassador Samuel Quarm, Ghana

Ambassador Habib Bah, Guinea, and 34 other African
Ambassadors and Charges

US

The Secretary

Deputy Secretary Charles Robinson

Assistant Secretary William Schauffele, Jr., AF

Winston Lord, Director, S/P

John D. Whiting, AF (Notetaker)

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The Secretary: I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you on such short notice. The fact that the notice was so short is an interesting study in State Department bureaucracy, but I will not explain that to you because you might think that we are an extremely underdeveloped country.

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Date:	<u>9/25 1976</u>

I wanted to have a brief meeting with you before I leave for Africa at the end of this week. As you know, I am going to take a trip to seven African countries. I am going to Kenya twice, the second time for the UNCTAD Conference.

I wanted to have an opportunity to meet all of you to make clear that, while obviously we can visit only a few countries on this visit, the purpose of the visit is to bring home to the American public

AF/I:JDWhiting
(Drafting Office and Officer)

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the increasing importance of Africa in world affairs and to deal with problems that are of major concern to Africa as well as to the United States in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill.

Despite the fact that I can visit only a few of the African countries, the trip is intended as symbolic for all of the African countries. I may later on this year visit a few additional African countries that I could not fit in, or where the schedule did not work out on this particular occasion. Finally, I am returning to Nairobi to the UNCTAD Conference because there is no continent to which the problem of development means so much as Africa. I wanted to underline the commitment of the United States to the process of development by leading our delegation there for the first few days of the conference and put forward -- what I hope will be considered by most of the nations there -- constructive proposals.

I would like to stress a number of points. I read in the press complicated "purposes" which the United States may seek to achieve on this trip to Africa:

"That we wanted to divide the African countries.

"That we wanted to gain dominance in certain African countries.

"That we are driven there by certain outside powers."

As you know, for over a year, I have planned to go to Africa at about this time. I announced the fact that I was going to go to Africa this Spring at the United Nations Session, long before there were any of the current controversies. Secondly, the basis of our African policy is that African problems should be settled by African nations. If we were to set one African nation against another African nation, the only result would be to bring great power rivalry into Africa -- which is precisely what we are trying to avoid.

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We think that the future of Africa can best be achieved by Africans, and for this we believe that African unity is essential. We have no peculiar American interest that we want to serve in Africa, in the sense that we have no interest in achieving a predominant position for the United States.

We believe, of course, that the development of Africa, the progress of Africa, is also in our interest. As you would have to expect, no nation does something that is not also in its own interest -- it is in our interest because it is a major continent and because conflicts in Africa have a tendency of spilling over as conflicts in other parts of the world. The relationship between the developed and developing nations (which is one of the crucial problems of our period) must find its reflection -- and its solution -- in Africa. For all of these reasons, I am looking forward to my visit to Africa and, as I said, I am going there in a spirit of goodwill and with the attitude of cooperation.

Quite frankly, as I have said on many occasions, there is no possibility of pressuring the United States. Nobody should think that it is possible to use this trip as an occasion to use pressure or to achieve by those devices, results. And I think it would be a great tragedy, because if this trip achieves what I want it to achieve -- and what, after all, we achieved in some situations in the Middle East -- we can bring to the attention of the American public the concern of the Administration about progress and development in Africa along with the solution of the political problems in southern Africa -- we can then put the Administration behind it and we can get the concern of the Congress and of the American people focused on it.

This cannot be done in an atmosphere of confrontation on either side. We are not going there in an attitude of confrontation, nor are we going there to tell Africans how to organize their internal affairs.

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We are going there -- and this is why I am taking Deputy Secretary Robinson with me -- to see whether we can respond to the economic needs of Africa and the political aspirations for majority rule of the African peoples. And it is in this spirit that I will be meeting with the various leaders, and I look forward to meeting the various leaders -- I wanted to say this before I got there. I simply want to stress that those countries that I do not have an opportunity to visit will, nevertheless, be included in our concepts, and we hope to have an opportunity to be in touch with those countries that we didn't have an opportunity to visit.

That is all that I really wanted to say, but I will be delighted to answer any questions, or respond to any other observations.

Liberia

Ambassador
Peal:

Mr. Secretary, I hope you will allow me to say just a few words.

I know my colleagues would, first of all, want me to thank you very much for holding this meeting with us. You say you "gave us very short notice." We don't mind that at all because the purpose of the meeting is of such vital concern to us that however short the notice, we appreciate it.

Naturally, we are very happy that you are going to make this trip. You will recall that you made this promise to us the first time you had a meeting with our group, over two years ago, and now that it is about to take place, we can only express our deep appreciation to you.

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We understand that your trip will be a very brief one and therefore, you will be unable to visit, as you have said, too many African countries -- only seven of them. Well let me say that its briefness and the fact that you are visiting only a few African countries can in no way detract from the interest which your visit has generated in all of Africa and the warmth of the welcome that I know will await you there.

Some of us in this hall hope to be present to join in welcoming you, and to assist in every way possible in insuring that you have a most enjoyable and productive visit.

Now that you are about to make this trip, Mr. Secretary, I also would like to hark back to that very first meeting and the indication you gave that you wanted our assistance to learn a little more about Africa and its development so that that knowledge would help you to develop a more responsive US policy for Africa.

I can only presume that now that you have decided to make the trip -- whether we have helped you or not -- you feel that your knowledge is such that you are willing to keep an open mind and to learn as much as you possibly can on such a short visit.

Let me also say that there are two burning issues in Africa. You have touched on them, and I believe that it would help you -- and help this meeting and the atmosphere that we hope to create on the eve of your departure -- if I stress them again. These issues are first of all independence and majority rule and second, economic development. We welcome your decision to make a special effort to lead the US Delegation at UNCTAD, to make the US views on development better appreciated and to contribute to a useful, productive dialogue.

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I guess I might indulge myself in a little hyperbole, if, in referring to the burning question in Africa about majority rule, I said that it has gripped the attention of our people and our leadership. In some way you can liken it to a traveler who has made a very long trip, coming from a very far distance (and God knows that as Africans, we have come from a very far distance) and he finds himself a little bit hungry and emaciated. And so he sits by the roadside and hoping that some Good Samaritan will offer him some food.

We know the great heritage of the United States and the heritage of your people, of the great American people. You have been most generous. All we are saying is that whether you visit two, or three, or seven of our leaders, you will feel there the consensus that will come from them regarding this very burning issue.

I have referred to it because I think we have raised it each time we have met here together. I know that in the seven countries you will be visiting our leaders there and our people will try to communicate to you the consensus of the feeling on the question of majority rule and of development in Africa.

We hope that you will enjoy your first trip to our continent -- it may be a little warm, but already it is warm in Washington, so you already are being conditioned. We hope that on your return, you will bring back the impression -- to bring to the attention of the American people -- our desire to cooperate, not to complicate relations, not to see that the world is any less peaceful or less free, or less prosperous -- but that we want to be given a chance so that we too might make our contribution in making our world the kind of place we know that you, in your long life and your very brilliant career, have worked so hard to see come about.

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I thank you.

I believe some of my colleagues may have some questions, but in a general sense I did want, on their behalf, to say bon voyage, and to thank you for this meeting.

The Secretary: I appreciate very much what you are saying, and I will be glad if anybody has questions, or observations. If you will just tell me where you are from.

Somalia

Ambassador

Addou:

Yes, I would like --

The Secretary: I know where you are from. (Laughter.)

Ambassador

Addou:

Sir, I thank you very much. We all appreciate the meeting and we have found it, as always, very constructive.

Your visit to Africa has been very much awaited. Perhaps it is overdue, but it is good that you are going there now.

Whenever we have a meeting with you, as diplomats of our countries of course we report our conversations to our governments. My question is -- and I am sure many have been doing the same thinking -- that because of the crucial problems in southern Africa, and particularly Rhodesia, people are expecting that something positive will come from your trip. This is especially true when we look back to your successful efforts in many areas of the world.

My question is whether you will be meeting with the freedom fighters, or liberation movement, leaders?

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The Secretary: As you may know, some of the liberation movement leaders have already been making pronouncements before I get there. As a general proposition -- and speaking very frankly -- it is not possible to ask the American people to support movements which at the same time insult the United States. So the movements will have to choose what they want. I am, in principle, prepared to meet some of the leaders of the liberation movements. I have made some efforts to see some of those that are in Lusaka, but I think it depends a great deal on their attitude. The United States gains no enormous advantage from it (a meeting with liberation movement leaders) but we do believe that the tide of history should be advanced and that the principles of majority rule ought to be valid in every part of the world. I will certainly give unambiguous support to these principles, and I am prepared to meet liberation movement leaders, especially the Rhodesian resistance movement, in Lusaka.

Yes, sir. (gesturing towards Ambassador Quarm)

Ghana

Ambassador
Quarm:

I am the Ambassador of Ghana and I hope to welcome you when you get there.

I would like to touch on Angola briefly.

There has been some concern about the "division" which the Angolan situation brought about in Africa. And, of course, the United States own attitude toward that situation. A few people are wondering whether, at this time -- and this is not a press conference -- whether the US could make a "gesture of reconciliation" and bring about a smoothing over of the unfortunate so-called "divisions" which came about in Africa.

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Could the United States take the opportunity of your visit to Africa to recognize, or have relations with, the MPLA Government of Angola?

The Secretary: I have always stated -- in fact, I stated to this group the last time I met you -- that the United States is not opposed to the MPLA as an African movement. As far as the Angolan civil war is concerned the United States would have felt no occasion to express any particular preference if it had been confined to African issues and been conducted in an African framework. Our concern has been, and remains, the massive outside intervention, first by the Soviet Union, and secondly by Cuba. And the introduction of 12,000 to 15,000 Cuban forces is a matter to which we cannot be indifferent and to which we are not indifferent.

Now as far as the recognition of Angola is concerned, diplomatic relations with Angola: If Angola wishes to be an African state in an African framework, rather than as a base for a foreign country -- we have absolutely no problem with that, and we are in principle, not opposed to establishing diplomatic relations with Angola. I think we can have constructive relations with Angola. There is no national interest that Angola pursues that is incompatible with the American national interest and I will certainly find an occasion to make clear while I am in Africa what I have said here -- that we are, in principle, receptive to this sort of an approach.

This gentleman from Guinea has been very patient.

Guinea

Ambassador Bah: My English is not very good. (Translated from the French).

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I want to join my colleagues in wishing you a pleasant trip to Africa.

Since you wish to have some ideas concerning these countries, I should like to say that in Africa today there are two major ideas. Both are aimed at liberating man. Africans are firmly convinced that if the United States of America will take hold of this problem it can help to a very substantial degree in the liberation Africa is demanding. This is a liberation on two scales:

One, the purely political -- you know very well the situation in southern Africa -- you know that it is one of the hot spots. In Africa, the Africans have suffered considerably and know the domination and know the racial discrimination, the injustice of all the arbitrary actions against the black majority of the people. We are convinced that the United States, if they wished to conquer this issue, could bring about a solution to the problems of southern Africa. And when you go to Africa, we believe you should not go there to divide, not at all. We believe and hope that you will do something so that now these people of southern Africa, these black peoples of southern Africa, will succeed in liberating themselves from this racial discrimination, from the state of injustice which is perpetrated upon them by the white ruling minority.

The second point is an economic issue; Africans also know what the United States can do -- and we have hope here also -- that the United States will bring their maximum contribution to assist us by contributing science, technology and funds. The United States could bring this to the assistance of Africa.

The trip you are about to begin in these various countries is a trip of bilateral relations. That is why we have spoken only in the very general terms, and I know that today on the eve of your departure, the

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peoples of Africa aspire to freedom, to liberty, and development. That is what we are looking for. It is why they seek the intervention of the United States, to liberate southern Africa and to liberate economically and scientifically the peoples of Africa.

That is what I wish to say to you -- and I wish you a very pleasant trip.

The Secretary: I appreciate your remarks very much.

As I hope you have noticed, I don't like to take ceremonial trips, and I have been pressing this on all of my colleagues. My going to Africa is designed to achieve concrete results, and I am going there in order to put the United States behind the aspirations for majority rule and to begin working out a complete program for achieving it.

Secondly, I am taking a trip clear across Africa, from Senegal back to Kenya, in order to emphasize the importance that we attach to the development and the economic progress of Africa.

So I hope that when I meet you gentlemen, after I return, which I hope to do, that you will feel that some progress has been made toward these two objectives and also that in the months to come you will see that we will attempt our utmost to implement these objectives.

(Applause.)

The Secretary: Well, in that case, I hope to meet with you all again when I return, and we can then exchange ideas about my trip.

Very nice to see you all.

(Proceedings terminated at 3:38 P.M.)

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