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...
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 expandable. 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].
Sure Trip? Were you in L.A.?

Yes, at Imperial.

Yes. I was there in L.A.

I want to welcome to Washington, D.C. next. We both saw you.

which is not in your memo and your papers.

Do you agree with me on the need to reform the European Commission? It is hard to accept that our countries have a common spirit of people to work together. Our common spirit is needed to support our future.

I am interested in your view on Africa.

It was great.

I was involved in Africa in the 80s. I visited when Ghana got independence. We visited a number of countries, but it was clear that their problems were old, but would be interested in your analysis of problems.

Please thanks for welcome in your city.

you gave me by visiting me.

Never sure what you think of the long term strategy, so will get right to point.

Hope to come at this time. You know you have wonderful progress in Soviet Union.

I hope to meet to discuss it should be going.

To me, it could be helpful to improve your basis there in Europe and in managing with the USSR. Can this be much upon your own needs in Africa?
When not large, rivulets, but such in
朝水。末末，末末，末末，末末，末末
The is [沪分] and all natural resources
exp. We would be interested in companies which
in health, education, and infrastructure
Would like one only been found in that direction,
cause my only has great sip in my up. Our
pity is education need the kind of skills
cause nowhere feel it why were pointed that one
are
in distinctions except tuition
cause we a friend God our from expensive (call
when plus mine 6). They come only for
which has given a substantial and France has not told us
about to螺丝 from us.
We need and in many cases, how lucky needs
more than feel.
About [沪分] you have given me know,
would like to ride for anything knows, here
more appropriate to a declining country
(could need and wind, horse, again & education
Atualy [沪分] (seminar) but scholarships
as we know can come true & learn & listen
in course of pass on their knowledge. English, etc
and we have been able to incorporate
special events we wish to get a help-
our country UI compare first for mid but
then, there are no made - need our comments
first we clearly trust OS. We are not cut to
France and are free & indirect
Solem can in times + needs occurrence
we M vis - helping but seek not to discuss
[沪分] is good friend - but when I was hurt
When I return I will try to get in touch with you and see if I can arrange a trip to a place of your choosing. My assistant will provide you with a copy of my itinerary which I will send you in a separate letter.

I can hardly wait to visit Africa. I have heard it described as a fascinating and complex continent. Africa is vast in size and diversity, with unique landscapes, cultures, and wildlife. This trip will allow me to explore these aspects.

I have been in touch with Dr. Jane Goodall, who has been instrumental in raising awareness about Africa's wildlife and conservation efforts. I hope to meet with some of the local communities and learn more about their way of life.

Please let me know if you're interested in joining the trip. We can discuss the details further. I am looking forward to exploring Africa with you and learning more about this incredible continent.
It is for you to determine your future, not me, we can both help you think your options. That is my goal, not to control or restrict. I shall give you every encouragement for prosperity.
We will hear them say 'join us' and come.

(Additional introductions on the roadway)