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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/NODIS/XGDS~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Sir Seretse Khama, President of Botswana
Archibald M. Mogwe, Minister of External Affairs
Amos M. Dambe, Ambassador to the U.S.
Charles M. Tibone, Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of External Affairs
Charles Robinson, Acting Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, June 9, 1976
11:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

[The press enters and takes photographs. There is small talk about President Khama's receipt of an honorary degree at Princeton. The press departs.]

Khama: Congratulations on yesterday.

The President: We did better than we expected [in the Ohio and New Jersey primaries] and they didn't do as well as they had hoped [in the California primary], so it was a good day. [There was a brief discussion of delegation hunting.]

It is very nice to see you. What Secretary Kissinger said on his trip to Africa has my full backing. We are dedicated to working out solutions to the very difficult problems in Southern Africa. My impression is the programs outlined by Secretary Kissinger have been well received. We intend to do what we can to implement our programs. I would be interested in your impression.

Khama: I very much appreciate your seeing me. I know you are very busy.

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BY 110, NARA, DATE 7/27/04



We appreciate the United States expression of policy that you weren't supporting Ian Smith in Rhodesia. We had wondered for some time what the U.S. position was, so we were happy to hear it.

I got a letter from Secretary Kissinger saying he planned to meet with Vorster. Vorster is the key man. Without him Smith couldn't survive.

We have been talking to the leaders of the liberation groups -- President Kaunda and I. Many people have said that talking to them was a waste of time, but we felt that violence doesn't achieve very much and it is better to talk a solution if possible. So we tried to talk for so long as talking didn't become difficult. We didn't get very far. We asked Vorster to put more pressure on. He said he could only go so far.

The President: Because of his domestic situation?

Khama: Yes. He has to be careful of his own nationalists. Smith has a lot of sympathy from the right wing group in South Africa and some within Vorster's own party. Many there think that majority rule won't solve the problem. There was a growing awareness of the growing bitterness of the blacks, the demand for majority rule and a question as to what the blacks would do if they got power in their hands. But the blacks saw other territories getting their independence and they were still being repressed. They felt that talking was a waste of time and that only violence would work.

I argued that we got independence peacefully, and that blacks and whites have lived in Botswana peacefully for ten years. We see no reason why it can't be so in Rhodesia.

The President: What are the proportions in Botswana?

Khama: About 5,000 whites and about 7,000 blacks. Vorster does seem to realize that the situation is becoming desperate. He has said a race war would be terrible to contemplate. And we hoped he would do more to put pressure on Ian Smith.

The President: Has guerrilla warfare increased?



Khama: Yes, it has. I hope you can be of help as Secretary Kissinger has recently declared.

The President: We want to be as helpful as we can to you in your situation. I understand we are discussing FMS in modest amounts and we do want to do what we can.

Khama: We don't want military equipment to join in the fighting. For a long time -- since our independence -- the basis of our defense was that we were unarmed. Now it is a great weakness, because all know there is no force to stop them.

There is one other point. Secretary Kissinger said the United States would be prepared to help any country which closed its borders with Rhodesia, and to help in conjunction with others. We would like to close the border if we thought it would hasten the end of the regime and bring majority rule. But it is difficult for us because our exports depend entirely on the Rhodesian-owned rail line. To close it would be disastrous for us.

We know Zambia has closed its border and is using alternative routes -- which is difficult. But for us there are no alternatives. South Africa would not be sympathetic to us if we deliberately closed the border. For these reasons we have been cautious. It is not just the money we would lose, but our economy would come to a halt. We have long hoped to take over the line so it would be ours, but what is difficult is the cost of the takeover. We had thought to do it over a number of years. So we know how Secretary Kissinger's remarks were meant but I wanted you to know how difficult it is for us.

The President: We are working for repeal of the Byrd Amendment to bring us into conformity with the UN, but there are some problems on the Hill.

One question I always get is how certain can we be that minority rights would be assured in Rhodesia? What can I answer?

Khama: I don't know how you can assure it. In Botswana, everyone's rights are equally guaranteed and are equally protected. There is no problem with us. To give special rights or protections isn't right either. We must treat all people equally. If you believe in justice and freedom,



you will abide by them. Just putting them into words doesn't mean they will be carried out. We have seen cases where things aren't going to the liking of leaders in some countries; the constitution is torn up.

The President: I assume you will continue to work toward a peaceful solution with Britain and others.

Khama: We really appreciate this. But we feel we are sitting on a volcano. If the rail line were closed through no act of ours -- for example, if Rhodesia needed all their manpower elsewhere and the trains stopped -- we would be in the same situation as if we closed it ourselves. Our effectiveness as an influence would end because so would our existence as a state. But we are powerless to do anything about it. That is why Secretary Kissinger's remarks about helping together with others of like mind was taken very seriously. I hope something could be done.

The President: We are looking into what can be done. What are your major exports?

Khama: We ship copper (?) to a U.S. company in Louisiana, beef to the European community, and most other exports are for South Africa.

The President: We will look with as much sympathy as we can both on economic and foreign military sales to be as helpful as possible. We appreciate your cooperation. You have been a very constructive influence for moderation in the area.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

MEETING WITH SIR SERETSE KHAMA
PRESIDENT OF BOTSWANA

Wednesday, June 9, 1976
11:00 a.m. (30 minutes)
The Oval Office

From: Brent Scowcroft 

I. PURPOSE

To emphasize the intention of the United States to play an active and constructive role in promoting peaceful change in southern Africa.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

A. Background: President Khama is on a private visit to the United States to receive an honorary LL.D. June 8 from Princeton University. He is most anxious to meet with you to emphasize his moderate approach to majority rule in Southern Africa. He opposes Soviet and Cuban intervention, but recognizes that liberation groups could ask for their assistance in the absence of concrete steps toward majority rule. He may also share with you his concerns over the impact on the economy and internal security situation of his country of possible steps against Rhodesia.

Botswana, which has a multi-party democracy and a free enterprise economy, has made good economic progress in recent years based largely on exports of livestock and minerals. These exports, however, are dependent on the continued operation of a Rhodesian-owned and administered railroad, which is also the major rail link between Rhodesia and South Africa. President Khama believes that closure of

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the Botswana-Rhodesian border, cutting off this vital Rhodesia supply line, would help bring down Smith and possibly minimize bloodshed. He does not presently plan to take this step because of the damage it would do to Botswana's economy, but he is concerned about the extent of U.S. support should the railroad be closed by an act of war. The State Department has told Khama that we have no wish to bring pressure to bear on him to close the border, but that we are willing to participate in a major international effort to assist Botswana if it does lose the use of the railway.

President Khama may also raise Botswana's internal security situation, which has been aggravated in recent months by insurgent activity aimed at Rhodesia and by Rhodesian reaction. Botswana's effective security force numbers only 60 men, and President Khama is concerned that in spite of his policy of not harboring liberation movements, Botswana is powerless to stop them from using its territory as a base for operations against Rhodesia. In view of this, Khama may indicate his need for limited amounts of military assistance. We are considering recommending to you that Botswana be declared eligible for FMS credits as an indication of US support for Khama's moderate course.

Your purpose in this meeting will be to listen sympathetically to President Khama's account of his fears for Botswana's economic and security situation, to encourage him in his attempts to find moderate solutions to the problems of southern Africa, and to assure him of our desire to be helpful should Botswana suffer because of actions taken against Rhodesia.

- B. Participants: President Khama, Minister of External Affairs Archibald M. Mogwe, Botswanan Ambassador to the U.S. Amos M. Dambe, Mr. Charles M. Tibone, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs [Biographic data on the foregoing are at Tab B], Acting Secretary of State Robinson and Brent Scowcroft.
- C. Press Plan: Press photo session. Meeting to be announced.



III. TALKING POINTS

1. Congratulations, Mr. President, on your receipt of an honorary LL.D. from Princeton. I think it is altogether fitting that your accomplishments should have been recognized by one of our great universities.
2. The United States values the increasingly close relations between our two nations. We look forward, in the spirit of Secretary Kissinger's Lusaka speech, to close cooperation with you on matters of common interest.
3. I would like very much to hear your assessment of developments in southern Africa, and particularly your assessment of prospects for an acceptable settlement in Rhodesia.
4. I understand why Botswana must keep open its borders with Rhodesia. We would certainly be willing to participate in an international effort to assist if you should lose use of the railway. We wish to remain in close touch and to consider how we might be of assistance.
5. Secretary Kissinger's Lusaka speech opens a new era in our relations with Africa. We hope to provide our African friends with an alternative to violence and to strengthen our relations with Africa by moving forward with you on critical problems of self-determination and economic development.
6. As you are aware, Secretary Kissinger will meet with Prime Minister Vorster in Europe later this month. I know that the Secretary has been coordinating closely with you and other African leaders in preparation for that meeting. I want to make clear that we are intensifying our contacts with South Africa to encourage South African support for the Lusaka program. We welcome your ideas on how this can best be accomplished.



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Sereetsa Khama / President

6/9/76

Press in

(Some talk about Khama degree at Perimeter)

News out

K Congratulations on yesterday

P We did better than we expected & they didn't do as well as they hoped, so it was a good day.

(Brief discussion of delegate meeting)
It is very nice to see you. What K said on his trip has my full backing. We are dedicated to working out solutions to every diff. prob in S. Africa. My impression is a prop outlined by K has been well received. We intend to do what we have to implement our prog. I would be interested in your impressions.

R I very much appreciate your seeing me. (way)

We appreciate US expression of policy that you weren't supporting South. We had wondered for some time what US position was so we happy to hear it.

Got a letter from K he planned to visit as Visitor. Visitor is a key name, w/o him Swick couldn't survive.

We have been talking to a bunch of a liberation group - Kamula + 2. They have said talking to them was a waste of time, but we felt sometimes doesn't achieve very much & it better to talk a solution if possible. So we tried to talk for so long as talking didn't be new obj. We didn't get

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very far. We asked Vester to put more pressure on. He said he could only go so far.

P Because of his domestic set?

K Yes. He has to be careful of his own nation. Smith has a lot of sympathy of a right wing group in SA & some within Vester's own party. Many there think majority rule isn't some a job.

There was a growing awareness of a growing bitterness of a blacks, a demand for majority rule & a question as to what a blacks would do if they got power in their hands. But the blacks saw other countries getting rid of it & they still being oppressed. They felt taking a waste of time & only violence would work.

I argued that we got rid of apartheid peacefully, that blacks & whites have lived in Botswana peacefully for 10 yrs. We see no reason why it can't be so in Rhodesia.

P What are the populations in Botswana?

K About 5000 whites & about 70000 blacks.

Vester does seem to realize a disadvantage of a set - he has said a civil war would be terrible & disruptive - we hoped he would do more to put pressure on Smith.

P Has guerrilla war increased?

K Yes, it has. I hope you can be of help as K has recently declined.

P We want to be as helpful as we can to you in your situation. I understand we are driving FMS in on what counts & we do want to do what

we can.

K We don't want our people to join in a fighting. For a long time since our independence a basis of our defence was we were unarmed. Now it is a great weakness, because all know there is no force to stop them.

K said
There is one other point. ~~It~~ ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~clear~~ ~~if~~ ~~the~~ ~~UK~~ ~~is~~ ~~prepared~~ to help any country which closed its borders w/ Rhodesia, help in emergency w/ retreats.

We would like to close a border if we thought it would hasten a end of a régime & bring majority rule. But it is diff for us because we are a dependant entity on a Rhodesian owned rail line. To close it would be disastrous.

We know Zambia has closed its borders & is using alt routes - which is diff. But for us there are no alt alternatives. SA would not be going to us if we deliberately closed a border. For these reasons we have been cautious. It is not just a money we would lose but our economy would come to a halt. We have long hoped to take over a line so it would be ours, but what is diff. is a cost of a takeover. We had that to do at one a # of years. So we know how K's remarks were meant but I wanted you to know how big it is for us.

P We are working for repeal of the Immorality Act & bring us into company of UK, but there are some points on ball.

One question I always get is how certain can we be that minority rights would be assured in Rhodesia. What can I answer.



K I don't know how you can assure it. In
Botswana & everyone's rights are equally
guaranteed & are equally protected. There is no
part w/ us. To give special rights & protection
isn't right either. We must treat all equally.
If you believe in justice & freedom, you will
stick by them. Just putting them into words
doesn't mean they will be carried out. We
have seen cases where things aren't going to
- taking of banks in ~~some~~ some countries, &
constitutional turn up.

P I assume you will ~~be~~ continue to work toward
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K We really appreciate this. But we feel we sitting
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then we are out of ours - for example if Rhodesia
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taken very serious. Hope something could be done.

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are you saying K.

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Bel to EC, and most other K are for SA.

P We will look up as much ~~as~~ as
we can both leave & FMS to be as helpful
as possible. We appreciate you exp. You have

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