

SUBJECT



Zaire

10 DOWNING STREET

cc Maste

From the Private Secretary

9 December, 1981.

Visit of President Mobutu

The President of Zaire called on the Prime Minister at 1545 today. He was accompanied by his Foreign Minister, M. Yoka, and the Zairean Ambassador to London, M. Matangulu. Mr. Richard Luce was also present.

The conversation lasted for 45 minutes, but was fairly insubstantial (there was consecutive interpretation). It consisted largely of an extended plea by President Mobutu for increased UK assistance to Zaire, followed by discussion of the situation in Chad.

Mobutu said he understood our problems. Britain could not do everything. But in the view of Zaire, co-operation between the two countries was not at a sufficiently high level. A Convention of 1976 had been reinforced by a series of agreements in 1978. A particular Protocol on military co-operation had envisaged the despatch of instructors to Zaire, but none had arrived. Despite an agreement on cultural matters, there was not a single Zairean student in the UK. It was true that there were 25 Zaireans here on courses, but they were all teachers of English. That was not sufficient to strengthen co-operation between the two countries.

Britain had recently promised £3 m in aid over the next three years, but this was largely to reinforce the efforts of British firms in Zaire. There was a time when Zaire sent officers to Sandhurst for training, and Royal Engineers visited Zaire and provided assistance.

The Prime Minister explained that, in addition to our bilateral aid, we were contributing about £12.5 m as our share of the European Development Fund's programme, and were supporting other multilateral agencies which helped Zaire. An ODA Mission would be visiting Zaire in the New Year to discuss how our bilateral aid could best be spent. She was not aware of the agreement requiring us to send military instructors to Zaire. The precise terms should be looked at. It might be possible to do more about placing Zairean students in Britain, but it would depend on finding the right applicants and, to derive full benefit, they would need to be thoroughly proficient in English.

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/ President Mobutu

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President Mobutu briefly explained how the earlier policy of a state-controlled economy had been replaced by wide scope for free enterprise. On his recent visit to the United States he had made contact with many businessmen, some of whom would be visiting Zaire. Mr. Luce said that this was an area where we might do more. An investment protection agreement would be useful. A draft of such an agreement had been handed to the Zairean Government recently.

Turning to African issues, the Prime Minister expressed gratitude for Zaire's help during the negotiations over the future of Zimbabwe, and sought Mobutu's views on the present situation in Chad, where Zaire had acted with admirable despatch in supplying troops. Mobutu said that Zaire and like-minded countries had long wanted to get Libya out of Chad and replace it with an African force. When the opportunity arose, the response had been very slow. Zaire had therefore supplied troops without budgetary provision, and was paying a heavy price. The United States had now offered help for the contingent including the second battalion which had recently been provided. The Prime Minister said that we had been asked by Nigeria to give help, and we were trying to meet this request. It was important that we should all succeed in our efforts. It would be very serious if Goukouni invited Libya back.

The meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.

R.M.J. Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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