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 By D NARA Date 4/10/88
 WASHINGTON

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October 9, 1973

1973-10-9, ~~President Nixon~~ African Leader
US, Nixon, African Leader

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S FILE

FROM:

Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT:

Meeting with President Houphouet-Boigny
 of the Ivory Coast
 on Tuesday, October 9, 1973
 11:05 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS:

President Richard Nixon
 Secretary of State
 Henry A. Kissinger (briefly)
 President Houphouet-Boigny
 of the Ivory Coast
 Alec Toumayan, Interpreter/Notetaker

President Nixon: Mr. President, as I told you in my welcoming remarks, we have a very special feeling for you and your country and a great deal of admiration for the example you have set for progress in that part of the world. The relations between our two countries are not controversial at all, and so I will be glad to discuss any bilateral issue you wish to raise, and I would also welcome the benefit of your thought on the present international situation and Africa in general.

President Houphouet-Boigny: You have referred to our bilateral relations which are indeed excellent. Nothing divides us. They develop very harmoniously and we receive very effective aid to our evolution and our development from the United States. American businessmen take increasing interest in my country and we hope this will become even greater. But we live in Africa and we cannot be an island of calm, peace and prosperity in a desert of misery and political instability.

The present problem in the Middle East can have serious and unexpected consequences in Africa. It is essential to attain peace in this region which is dear to all of us. A part of the world where one should expect only peace, love and brotherhood.

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As we listen to the news, we are very sharply aware of the great complexity of the problem. There is first of all the evacuation of the occupied territories. On this issue, the Egyptians have successfully sensitized African opinion to the extent that full decolonization of Africa is tied to the issue of evacuation of occupied territories, and the Arabs who display solidarity with the Africans on the issue of decolonization of Africa ask the Africans (and younger populations are more apt to listen to the heart than to the reason) to show solidarity with the Arabs on the recovery of the occupied territories.

I know that Algeria, Libya, Syria, and Iraq all think that the occupation of Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian territories are only temporary episodes in a structure which goes far beyond -- toward the reinstatement of the Palestinians in their own country, and so the very principle of Partition is being questioned. Our Israeli friends fear that if Egypt, Jordan and Syria returned to the 1967 situation, they would be subject to demands on the part of the Arab world to reestablish the Palestinian people in the Palestinian part of Israel. Those are the parameters of the problem. The very life of Israel is at stake, in issue of the evacuation of occupied territories and the concept of Partition. There is, in addition, the political exploitation of the problem by the Soviets which makes it even more serious.

The Arabs had felt that I was against peace in their part of the world and 100% pro-Israel, so I had to tell them my views when they thought that the U.S. was responsible for the situation. And I spoke not as an advocate of the U.S. but as a speaker for trust. I have been living with your problem longer than any of my colleagues, having been for 4-1/2 years in a succession of French governments including under De Gaulle. I feel that the initial mistake, for which we are now paying, is that Partition satisfied neither the Arabs nor the Israelis, and those who carried out the Partition would not have the presence of mind to decide to enforce the lines of demarcation by force if necessary. Failing that, a steady process of erosion set in, leading to the present situation where fear prevails on both sides. Israel fears for its own life; the Arabs fear that Israel will grab more of their lands.

May I convey to you my very grave concern, Mr. President, since you are responsible for peace and war in the world, and say that whether it is in Asia or in the Middle East or today in Africa, we deplore the lack of political concertation among Western powers. I consider this a very serious problem.

If, God forbid, war should break out tomorrow, you would devote your most precious resources to it: the lives of your young men. But in

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close at 1 explore this lack of cohesiveness. We
have deplored the fact that in the struggle of the U.S. and Asia to stem
the flow of Chinese and Soviet communists over Asia, the U.S. was left
alone. You sought neither material gains nor prestige, only to serve
the common cause of the West.

The present situation in the Middle East enables the Arabs to act upon
Africa on two levels: religion and money. This is all the more dangerous
in that they appeal to young African countries where the leaders are young
and inexperienced and can easily be deceived. In addition, most are very
poor.

Mr. President, late this year or early in 1974 you will go to Europe.
Beyond your consultations with the Europeans on economic and monetary
affairs you should without delay set forth a common policy towards
Africa. I will talk myself to the Europeans who will want to listen to me
about this, and I will talk to President Pompidou also. This is not for the
exploitation of Africa but to help place Africa outside the influences that
can do to Africa in the future what has happened to Asia in the past; what
is happening to the Middle East today. Africa is a very large territory
with great potential.

President Nixon: You are referring to the radical Arab influence as well
as the Soviet and the Chinese.

President Houphouet-Boigny: First comes the Soviet influence. Even
though they give aid to the Arabs, the Arab remains firmly anti-Communist.
He needs arms and instructors which he gets from them. The Arabs can
begin to exert influence upon Africa through people like Khadafi, who does
not measure what he can do with his money and turns the Africans away
from the proper approach to nation-building. I fear that these Africans
will seek the path of despair along Socialist-Communist lines. But this
will not help the Soviet Union. "Bolshevizing" Africa will help the Chinese
and not the Russians.

President Nixon: I agree.

President Houphouet-Boigny: The young today lean more towards the
Chinese than towards the Russians, whom they look upon as just another
group of Europeans. The Chinese have been very subtle. They say, "We
have shared with you Africa's slavery and colonization. Having been
brothers in slavery, let us remain brothers in freedom." This line has
great impact upon the inexperienced, though not upon mature persons.

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President se are at an earlier stage of development and are at a more interesting stage of revolutionary Communism.

President Houphouet-Boigny: Even if their means are not adequate, they show great skill, and we fear that they will cut us off from our friends. They come in with a 50-year interest-free loan and their aid personnel live as Africans do, but still they cannot help us all. A happy people will not turn Communist. They will try to break us away from our friends.

I went to Algiers, to the Non-Aligned Summit Conference, for the first time, but I did not speak there. They claim to be non-aligned but most of them are aligned. The real problems of underdevelopment are not taken up on the agenda. On the one hand you have billionaire countries like Kuwait, the Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Libya and even Algeria; on the other side, countries so poor they have nothing to sell. The common denominator has to be the underdevelopment, the lack of equipment and industry. But rather than talk about that all they do is talk about politics. Saudi Arabia is a bilateral country but it is not a developed country. It has no trained cadres, no infrastructure.

President Nixon: That goes for Libya and Iraq also.

President Houphouet-Boigny: I have outlined the dangers to you as I see them. Now to make my appeal to you, I feel that you should talk to the Soviet leaders.

President Nixon: What should I ask them to do?

President Houphouet-Boigny: I believe you should say that any action that will completely disorganize all of Africa and the Middle East, even if at first they gain some ideological satisfaction from it, will in the end be as much of a disservice to them as it is for the West. The anarchy that the Arabs will introduce into Africa will benefit only the Chinese. I do not believe that the Israelis will evacuate all the territories back to Jerusalem. It is desirable but it is not possible.

President Nixon: You are one of the rare African leaders not unfriendly to Israel. You are fair, as we try to be. What should Israel do? What should we say to them, even though we are not in any position to tell them to do anything? As you know, Mrs. Meir, who has often sat where you are sitting now, is a woman of very strong character, and she tells me that the Israelis would sooner die than accept a settlement not proper for them.

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President By There is need to create conditions towards a dialogue. The Soviet is interested in the present situation remaining unchanged. This is only a short-term interest. If there is a settlement tomorrow, they cannot keep the favors of the Arabs. You, Mr. President, and the Soviets must create conditions permitting a dialogue. The Israelis must make the scope of their claims very clear. They keep saying that they need a safe boundary, but that has never been defined. If the Soviets want to play their part for peace as you did -- it was not easy for you to go to China and go to Moscow -- the Russians must convince the Arabs to first define a solution acceptable to both parties. The concept of what is a safe border must be defined. We told our Israeli friends they cannot keep all the occupied territories. They say, "But we need a safe border." This concept needs defining. Will the Soviets guarantee a new border as a first step after troop withdrawal to help create a climate of peace -- which, after all the horrors and hatred, will not come over night? Will the Soviets be prepared to make the same contribution for peace that you would make and station troops in the area? Because if you send Swedes and Poles with their blue helmets, no one will take them seriously.

President Nixon: The danger that our Israeli friends raise then is that it is a mistake to allow a military presence of the Russians in the area. But of course they are there already.

President Houphouet-Boigny: They are there already and they prefer the status quo. This Mid-East problem is one of the most difficult problems confronting the world today.

President Nixon: Looking at Israel, while it is debatable that a mistake was made in setting up the state of Israel as it was without an adequate means to guarantee its independence, if Israel is allowed to be destroyed, isn't that a potential threat to any small and weak countries?

President Houphouet-Boigny: Without a doubt, and such a situation cannot -- must not -- be allowed.

President Nixon: We all oppose the Arab radicals who sound today as Nasser used to sound. And although I respected him as a man, I disagreed with him about pushing Israel into the sea. Israel has a right to live in peace with its neighbors. The only question is to define borders that can be acceptable to the two sides. In the present war, sad as it is with its attendant suffering and mourning, we might have a situation which may force both Israel and its neighbors to be more reasonable. A situation also which may force the U. S. and the Soviets to take a constructive position to influence a settlement. What is your view on that?

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I hope that will be the case. We are quite

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ask us to break relations with Israel but there are a few of us who refuse to break relations. I had a long talk with Sadat who said his limited goals are recovery of the occupied territories. I conveyed this to Mrs. Meir's envoy, Sadat's assurances concerning his limited goals. The Arabs expect moral support from us which we cannot refuse. All Africans were unanimous in the Algiers resolution, but we shall not go as far as a break in diplomatic relations. Sadat and I had a long talk at Algiers. Mobutu went to talk to Sadat after Algiers and then all of a sudden we learn of the attacks against Israel. Even though we talked to these leaders and they ask for help towards a peaceful settlement, still they do not trust us. Some Arab leaders claim that this war will go on for 10 or 50 years. But in my opinion war solves nothing. I find the lack of sincerity a great embarrassment.

President Nixon: As you know I have talked many times to Mrs. Meir, and I have said it is in the interest of Israel to settle now when they are stronger. Her response, and I speak to you very confidentially, has always been adamant -- that the Israelis will die to the last man or woman before they accept any settlement not suitable to them. And she has said confidently that they defeated the Arabs three times and the Arabs will never learn to fight. My reply, which in retrospect appears prophetic, was that the Israelis are better trained, equipped and led, and have defeated their neighbors in three wars and may (and I told her this one year ago) defeat them next time, but the day will come when the Arabs and the Egyptians also will learn to fight, and 2 million Israelis cannot survive surrounded by 100 million Arabs. It is important for Israel to make a deal now. In the present struggle the Syrians and the Egyptians are doing much better than in 1967 and Israel is no longer in the driver's seat in the diplomatic area. That fact may bring the Israeli leaders and their neighbors to a sharp awareness that war and struggle answers nothing.

I said in my welcoming remarks how much progress the Ivory Coast has achieved toward stability and peace. You have not had a civil war like Nigeria or a revolutionary struggle like the Congo, and now you are reaping the dividends. Egypt, Jordan and Syria are poor, and it is a tragedy to see such waste of human and material resources because of the war. Israel is richer largely because of the talent of its people and this may help it in the short-term, but in the long term their only hope resides in making a deal with their neighbors.

President Houphouet-Boigny: Indeed this is essential. They must do it.

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China will be the superpower in perhaps 15 years -- because of the present close association of the United States with Israel we can have no leverage with Israel's neighbors. It poisons our relations with their neighbors; hence a vacuum in which now the Russians and in the future the Chinese will enter. Egypt, and I know all its neighboring countries also, all would rather have diplomatic relations with the United States, and perhaps cooperation with the United States, rather than with the Soviet Union. They know the United States has no territorial or other designs. The Soviets may have territorial designs or revolutionary ambitions, but because of our close ties with Israel we are not trusted. It is in the interest of Israel to settle the situation, because then the U. S. can mobilize its relations with Israel's neighbors and have a voice to be heard so that the Soviets are not the only voice.

President Houphouet-Boigny: This will be very useful. There is certainly a lack of a U. S. voice in Africa because of the Middle East, and an absence of the U. S. overall strategy in Africa. We try between the Anglophone and the Francophone countries of Africa to have general economic understandings, because we have noted that if we left some of our neighbors to their own devices some leaned towards the Arabs and some towards the Chinese. Those of us who are close to the Commonwealth or the French community will attempt to resist until such time as you find a solution to the Middle East. How this war will end I don't know, but I am reminded of a comment to Napoleon by one of his generals: Napoleon had asked, "Are our younger soldiers not fighting as well as their elders?" And the General said, "They are fighting as well, but for the last 10 years that we have been fighting our enemy, we have taught him to fight." This applies very much to the present situation. In addition the Israelis fight on a very narrow terrain. We do not want our Israeli friends to lose, but perhaps the fierce resistance they encounter will make them more receptive. In Africa we see every day defections from among the ranks of Israeli supporters.

President Nixon: To conclude with this problem, I want to assure you that it has been very useful for me to have your views. Nothing is more important to me at this point than ending the fighting and bringing about a settlement. One tends to assume, the Arabs do, that any U. S. President is automatically pro-Israel and anti-Arab because there are 3 million Jews in the U. S. and no Arabs. This may have been true of past Presidents but it is not the case with this President. I am for the independence and freedom of Israel. I am not anti-Jewish. I have just assigned a Jewish Secretary of State. But I am not anti-Arab. I respect the Arabs and they have a right to peace and prosperity just as much as Israel. Please assure your colleagues in Africa that I feel a great responsibility

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It takes great courage for you to take the position you are taking in Africa.

I wish there were more responsible leaders like you, who take the responsibility of inviting private business and holding off the reactionary forces which bring only misery. Our friends in the press will ask, did we discuss reverse preferences and commodity agreements. On these complex issues I have instructed our experts to be as forthcoming as possible in working out solutions that are in our business interests and in the interests of the Ivory Coast. On commodity agreements, Congress today takes a hostile position, but we realize that the price of cocoa or coffee can ruin the government, and we recognize the part that consumer countries must play in promoting stability so that the producer countries can go forward.

Regarding your economic record, my business friends tell me that the Ivory Coast is the best and the safest investment in black Africa. I am happy that you are moving forward with Kaiser. Please assure your colleagues that it is not my view that African and Latin American countries should be consigned to raw material production. We are for diversification and industrialization and are happy to make a contribution towards progress.

President Houphouet-Boigny: Training is the first need. Look at a country like Japan with no resources but which, with the stability of its regime, has made great steps forward. And Africa has many more as it is. But peace is a prerequisite in Africa, as well as stability, and we count upon you. Outside of our bilateral matters, in your contacts in Europe, Mr. President, try to achieve a concerted policy vis-a-vis Africa.

President Nixon: Some Europeans are jealous of our role in Africa.

President Houphouet-Boigny: We understand but we will help you overcome that. There are many of us in Africa. Our needs are many. We need the cooperation of all. A healthy sense of competitiveness will help us but competition pitting one against the other will be very detrimental.

President Nixon: We shall continue this conversation tonight at dinner.

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