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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: March 15, 1973

SUBJECT: US/UK Consultations on Africa, March 15-16, 1973, London--Opening Statements, Agenda Item A

22 MAY 1973

PARTICIPANTS:

United Kingdom

Mr. Martin C.M. Le Quesne,
Deputy Under Secretary - FCO
Mr. Campbell, Assistant Under
Secretary - FCO
Mr. Foster, Head of Rhodesia
Department
Mr. Dawbarn, Head of East
Africa Department
Mr. Ratford, FCO Officer
Mr. John Wilson, Head of
West African Department
Mr. A. T. Smith, FCO Officer
Mr. Craig, Head of Near East
and North Africa Department
Mr. Keeble, Assistant Under
Secretary - FCO

United States

Mr. David D. Newsom,
Assistant Secretary
for African Affairs
Mr. George R. Kenney,
Director, Economic Policy
Staff for Africa
Mr. Donald Brown, Deputy
Assistant Administrator
for Africa (AID)
Mr. Edward Hogan, Director,
Office of Development
Planning (AID)
Mr. Charles C. Flowerree
Political Officer
American Embassy, London

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Opening Remarks by Martin Le Quesne, Deputy Undersecretary
For Africa and the Middle East

After welcoming Mr. Newsom and the US delegation, Mr. Le Quesne gave a brief overview of the African scene from the British angle. He said that during the past year two names had figured prominently--Pearce and Amin. The Pearce Report had been welcomed in black Africa where a suspicion of the Tory government had previously reigned, exacerbated by the Heath government's early attempt to sell arms to South Africa. Black African reaction to the 1971 proposals on Rhodesia had been critical. Mr. Le Quesne doubted that in January 1972 a single African leader would have correctly predicted the outcome of the Pearce Mission. When the report was finally published in the summer it was greeted with pleasure and relief. The African elite think that easy relations with Britain is a natural state of affairs, Le Quesne said. The Pearce Report was like the lancing of a boil. There was a sudden easing of tension and Britain now finds it possible to cultivate better relations with African leaders.

The British, however, are being selective in picking up their relations with African countries after the period of strain. Le Quesne added, without further explanation, that they were not going about being selective in a conscious or deliberate manner. It had developed that the greatest attention had been focused on Nigeria and Kenya. Getting on with the Nigerians had involved a good deal of sweat, but things are now going much better. Le Quesne believes that Gowon will accept HMG's invitation to visit Britain in June. The Kenyan delegation which had visited London last week came for flattery and money and got both. In regard to other countries of special interest to Britain, Le Quesne said that relations with Zambia were back on the tracks but relations were a little difficult with Tanzania and Ghana. Britain has not made much progress with Zaire over the past year.

Turning to General Amin, Le Quesne said his influence on the domestic scene had been disastrous. There was now generally less sympathy for Africa than there has been for a long time. Assessing some of the causes of the growing prickliness of African regimes, Le Quesne said there were fewer and fewer moderates among the African leaders (some would say they were becoming more African). He used to want to encourage the moderates to speak up more in the OAU and the United

Nations but doesn't think this would be productive now. Not only are there fewer moderate heads of state, but those that are left are less inclined to speak up (Senghor, Houphouet-Boigny). Eventually, there may be a united voice speaking for Africa. If that day comes, it will probably be the voice of Gowon, or perhaps Nyerere.

On a rather hopeful note, Le Quesne said that African countries are coming to the conclusion that foreign policy is more than UN resolutions. They are beginning to recognize the difference between a government's public face and its private face. The Algerians are a major exponent of this more realistic approach to foreign affairs and the Zambians are coming to learn it. (Some trains, for example, are still surreptitiously crossing the Rhodesian border despite Zambia's public insistence that the border is completely closed.) The Kenyans are also being hard-headed and realistic. This new trend toward realism is to be applauded. While the waning voice of the moderates makes things more difficult for Britain and other Western powers, the new realism of the African regimes tends to act as a counterbalance.

In conclusion, Mr. Le Quesne made reference to the situation in southern Africa. He said that the British are balancing on a tight rope at the Zambezi. So far they have succeeded in not falling off on either side.

Assistant Secretary Newsom's Response

Mr. Newsom opened by saying he would like to give a summary of our views on Africa at the beginning of the second Nixon administration. It was easy to tinge the future outlook with pessimism. Uganda as well as Burundi, where the unpleasant events of last year have already passed into history, had had a bad effect on the US administration. In Uganda we have reluctantly begun a gradual phasing down. The effort to end the war in Viet-Nam had been overshadowing relations with Africa during much of the past year. In this connection, warm messages from African leaders for the President's success in bringing the war to a conclusion have been appreciated in Washington, but the reaction to Amin's was distinctly negative.

The importation of Rhodesian chrome into the US under the Byrd provision has given us problems in black Africa, especially with Nigeria. The Kenyans have also voiced disapproval but less vociferously. The policy on Rhodesian chrome constitutes the most serious flaw in our posture in Africa, but our bilateral relations with Africans remain good. Repeal of the Byrd provision does not seem to be in the cards. Advocates of repeal in the Senate are in a fairly strong position but in the House of Representatives there is a great deal of opposition to sanctions, the imposition of which is regarded as interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Also there is still a great deal of concern in the House about the potential threat from the Soviet Union. Finally many resent the fact that others are violating sanctions and not being criticized for it.

We are still reeling from the shock of the recent events at Khartoum. The actions and attitudes of the Sudanese have been appreciated in Washington. But the murders in Khartoum have compounded our concern about terrorism and violence in all parts of Africa, even outside North Africa. In Libya we have, of course, been concerned about Libyan demands that passport information be translated into Arabic and are vexed by the almost total lack of access to the decision-making level.

A different type of concern has been the limitation on our ability to respond to various economic needs of African countries. This concern is not confined to aid. There are also problems involving commodity agreements and debt re-scheduling. There is a pattern of declining resources available for aid to Africa. This year is the first in history when we have been operating without an aid bill. Aid operations are being funded by authority of a continuing resolution. PL-480 agreements are in difficulty because of the much sharper limitations on Agriculture's budget, down to \$800 million from \$930 million last year. Other factors constraining the PL-480 program are the grain deal with the Soviets, world wide food shortages, and the high priority given to Southeast Asia. This year there will be a reduced transfer of PL-480 commodities to Tunisia, Morocco, Sudan and Zaire, countries where we have had substantial programs.

On the matter of participation by African nations in foreign-owned enterprises and their desire for more equitable employment policies, most US companies have proved sympathetic.

The disappearance of traditional leaders or the ones we have come to know has created difficulties. The new leaders are less confident and subject to pressures. The new OAU Secretary General Ekangaki has been trying to make his organization a going concern. One manifestation is the put up or shut up attitude which the OAU has adopted toward the Liberation movements. The step-up in guerilla activity in Rhodesia seems to have been related to this new attitude. There is a trend toward more challenging activity by Liberation movements evidenced in the initiative to organize the Oslo Conference. This sort of activity puts us more on the spot than did the rhetoric of the past. The Liberation movements see the US now as being less relevant to them. Aid from China, they believe, frees them from concern about what the US or other major powers may think. Mr. Newsom said it was his personal observation that we are becoming less close to Africans than we had been in the past.

Like Britain, the US sees a need to balance its policies between southern Africa and the rest. Views like those of Clark MacGregor on the possible recognition of Rhodesia are not unique in significant circles in the United States. However, the President is convinced that we need to maintain credible access to all African countries.

(There followed some discussion of Ekangaki and the African posture in international organizations with the British side expressing disappointment in Ekangaki and saying that Africans were becoming more exclusive at the OAU. Mr. Newsom remarked that the general African reaction to our demarches at the UN was "Thank you very much but your views are not important to us.")