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1976/10/15

MEMORANDUM

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By JW NARA Date 4-4

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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DECEMBER 31, 1978

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

- Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
- Charles W. Robinson, Deputy Secretary of State
- Amb. Anne Armstrong, American Ambassador to the Court of St. James
- Amb. John E. Reinhardt, Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
- Amb. Talcott W. Seelye, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
- Raymond Seitz, American Embassy, London
- Frank G. Wisner, III, Director, Office of South African Affairs
- Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *PNR*

DATE AND TIME:

Friday, October 15, 1976
10:05 - 10:59 a.m.

PLACE:

Secretary's Office
Department of State

SUBJECT:

Southern Africa

Kissinger: How did that Mauritian rug merchant do?

Reinhardt: I told him you'd be prepared to consider a public statement. He said the differences were very minor and he had talked to the Africans. I said the points weren't minor. He said release of prisoners. I said the Secretary couldn't make a statement today, but he could consider making a statement if there is an agreement from the African group. He said: "My Ambassador in Washington is one of my trusted aides."

Scranton called me and I told him what happened.

Kissinger: What does he think?

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Reinhardt: He says the Mauritian UN Ambassador is a disaster and should be kept out of it.

Kissinger: The Mauritians will drop like a stone.

Reinhardt: Walter will drop now like a stone in Geneva.

Kissinger: Have we told the British about the Mauritian idea of having him at the conference?

Wisner: No.

Kissinger: Tell everyone I'm sticking to the seven points and staying cool. Not as seven points, but as what I'm aiming at. I never told him the South Africans would be sitting there in that fashion.

Reinhardt: I told Walter that the prisoners might be released and the Turnhalle representatives could sit at the conference on the African side.

Seelye: Scranton knows our position was misrepresented by Walter.

[The Secretary puts in a call to Ambassador Scranton in New York].

Kissinger: They're a lovely bunch. Anne. Let's tell the British that Walter would like to attend as OAU representative in Geneva. We couldn't care less.

Reinhardt: He's going to London.

Kissinger: He'll claim I endorsed it. But I don't care.

Wisner: The British have had many requests for observers.

Kissinger: I know. The Nigerians.

Wisner: And rejecting them.

Kissinger: But the OAU representative isn't necessarily wrong.

Jack, do you think there is any good for him?

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Reinhardt: No. But no harm.

Kissinger: Tell the British he has a slight tendency to misrepresentation, but that doesn't distinguish him from the others. [Laughter].

Reinhardt: Diggs wants to go.

Kissinger: Out of the question. You'd better explain that to the British.

Wisner: I have.

Kissinger: He is one of the most irresponsible of the leaders. While we have to treat him with respect, you can be sure he'll use anything there in a destructive way.

Reinhardt: He'll show up for a few days, and talk to the nationalists, and use anything anti-American back here.

Kissinger: Frank, you should take Nkomo aside and tell him if they go too far, we'll drop it. No one can play around in our domestic situation -- especially after the election.

[The call comes in from Scranton. The Secretary makes clear the Mauritian misrepresented our position and knows it, but had thought the gap was so small he could bridge it himself. He says the last group he wants involved in it is the bunch of prima donnas at the UN. The Secretary says he told Walter he was prepared to make a statement if the Africans agreed, but he didn't specify which Africans. The phone conversation ends.]

Kissinger: Walter was so excited by the hot news you gave him, Jack, that he's staying over until later today.

You didn't tell him it was to be negotiated with the Perm Reps.

Reinhardt: No.

Kissinger: I want it out of the UN and in Africa.

I don't see why we should accede to these proposals that we take the initiative, until we know what they'll accept. I don't want a replay of the Rhodesian situation.

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Reinhardt: I think the Kaunda letter that went out yesterday will be helpful.

Kissinger: Anne, Vorster has agreed to seven points that go far beyond what the Africans wanted three months ago.

We were going to put them forward in early October, but when I saw how the Rhodesian thing was treated, I told him [Vorster] not to do it.

Most of them want to accept it but have a problem getting SWAPO to accept it. Isn't that a fair statement?

Reinhardt: Yes.

Kissinger: So they want me to put it forward.

I don't want this to spread all over London.

Armstrong: I know!

Kissinger: I mean I don't want the British to spread it all over London among the Africans.

I don't want the Africans to think we're in a panic.

I'm just telling the Africans what's achievable.

Their military capability against the South Africans isn't anywhere like what it is against the Rhodesians.

Nyerere is telling everyone he got a letter from me with important new proposals. The only new element is that I told him "That's it."

Wisner: You did tell him that it could be a delegation from the Turnhalle and not the whole conference.

Kissinger: I suppose that's new.

Where do we stand on Rhodesia?

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Wisner: There is nothing new.

Kissinger: Is Sithole coming?

Wisner: It's not clear. He's seeing Nyerere to promote himself.

Kissinger: I notice Nkomo has whites on his delegation. Maybe Smith will name some blacks!

Rodman: But the whites on the delegation aren't acceptable to the Smith people.

Wisner: Garfield Todd, the former Prime Minister.

Kissinger: He was under house arrest. [To Reinhardt] You Sherer what went on with Mauritian.

Don't say "We've reached the outside limit." Don't ever draw clear lines.

Tell them just to "use their influence." Don't tell them whom to see. They can figure it out.'

Reinhardt: Senghor and Houphouet won't see SWAPO anyway.

Kissinger: Because they think they're Communists. Don't make SWAPO the center of this.

Robinson: There are two related issues. One is the EXIM Bank.

Kissinger: Yes, did you get through to them?

Robinson: I did to one of them, but I'll be pushing them to at least hold off.

Kissinger: They have to. This would be going back on everything. I don't think we should make things worse for the South Africans, because his right wing will say the moves he made have made them worse even in America.

Robinson: Second is the communications group you should try to see, to give them guidance.

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Crosland and Richard now think the problem is what they can ram down Smith's throat.

What I want Mrs. Thatcher to do is hold them to Annex C, not the five points. Annex C is a little less than the five points, so there is room for negotiation.

You remember we discussed changes in it. We then took it to the Rhodesians and the South Africans.

If he says more, we're going to jump off. If he doesn't stand behind it, we will. And if he goes beyond it, he does it without us.

Armstrong: You have an ally in Mrs. Thatcher.

Kissinger: And it doesn't help him with the black leaders. They'll sit there and outbid each other in raising the ante.

It's their own bloody paper.

Armstrong: What Ray Seitz can't understand is the explanation Crosland is giving. He said he was afraid it would arouse opposition in the Cabinet, and I don't see what opposition there could be.

Kissinger: When you talk to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street in the Cabinet Room you don't ask them if it's been vetted by the Cabinet. It would be an insult.

Armstrong: Michael Foot was in the room.

Kissinger: But they had only seen the five points, not Annex C. That's the problem. But it's their problem.

There was one point after Zurich where a change was made -- in the African's favor. Then we gave it to the South Africans and the Rhodesians.

If Crosland goes too far off the reservation, the blacks will slip away.

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Kissinger: No. You can't give her a government paper that the Cabinet hasn't seen.

I think they're going ahead with it [the Conference] next Thursday.

Robinson: That's what it looks like.

Kissinger: The only reason they're doing it Thursday is to ease their problem in the debate Wednesday. It's murder for us, because there'll be bloodcurdling speeches.

Reinhardt: The blacks may not even show up on Thursday.

Armstrong: Can't Richard organize it so it adjourns right away?

Kissinger: The blacks will see the cameras there and will utter bloodcurdling statements and then run to us and say they don't mean it.

I wouldn't have asked for the delay, but the blacks did.

Armstrong: Can't they announce the delay on Thursday?

Kissinger: I'd leave it alone.

I don't understand how they could rule in Africa for 100 years and know so little about it. [Laughter].

There is no way the blacks can develop a program in such a short time. It's practically an invitation to radical positions.

They have another special representative running around there, soliciting views, whatever he says.

Anne, you read the cables and I'll see you tomorrow.

Maybe you can stay and go back later. We can decide tomorrow.

Armstrong: The only thing she [Mrs. Thatcher] ought to know is there is a little fall-back from the five points. Rogers' cable didn't reflect how adamant the Iron Lady really is.

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Kissinger: I don't think she understands it fully.

I don't think it's a good idea to be mucking around in their domestic situation, lining up their opposition.

Armstrong: He may not want me to see her.

[The meeting concluded at 10:59 a. m.]

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