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RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE IVORY COAST AT NO. 10 DOWNING STREET AT 1215 ON WEDNESDAY 27 JULY.

Present:

The Prime Minister	His Excellency President Houphouet-Boigny
Sir Geoffrey Howe	M Ake
Mr. Lawson	M Bra Kanon
Mr. Jopling	M Kone
Sir John Leahy	Governor Nairay
Mr. Willson	M Essienne
Mr. Daly	M Oueguin
Mr. Coles	

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After introduction by both sides of their delegations, the Prime Minister welcomed the President and proposed that the meeting should first deal with bilateral questions.

Mrs. Thatcher said that to mark the visit we had decided to give £3.5 million in aid to the Ivory Coast over four years and to support a £10 million line of credit. We also wanted to improve the machinery for bilateral consultation and she proposed that officials should draft a memorandum of understanding which should include subjects like incentives to investment, the role of the British Council, etc. Would the President want to comment on our bilateral relations? The President said these were excellent: the sky was blue. He thanked the Prime Minister for the aid and line of credit support she had outlined and said that the new Abidjan airport, though delayed by recession, will in due course be built by British firms and will be the finest in Africa.

Internationally, he continued, we shared a desire for peace and stability but as he had told President Kennedy, the Ivory Coast could not be an oasis of prosperity in a desert of poverty: what was needed was more oases to spread prosperity throughout the African continent. He wanted to stress the

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importance of Africa to Europe and the West. South of the Sahara Africa had known two main colonisers, Britain and France, who had left their colonies the invaluable legacy of two major languages. Linguistically, Africa should not be Balkanised - the Ivory Coast, with more than 40 indigenous languages, was obliged to adopt French as its official tongue and taught English as its second language (just as the Nigerians used English and taught French). This language barrier must be crossed to encourage cooperation - as was already happening within ECOWAS. The African states were young, but they wanted to go fast. They wanted their English and French friends to focus on the problems of Africa, which in the past had been neglected by the West because of difficulties elsewhere: in the Middle East, Latin America and Asia. But Africa was of importance not only to the West, but to the world. Time was short, there was much to do. The Russians and Qadhafi would profit from errors as their basic wish was to destabilise the continent. So Africa needed help - though not weapons. The West should reaffirm its position and Europe should speak with one voice, calling for Africa to be developed in peace and stability. The continent possessed huge reserves of mineral wealth. Japan had made progress fast without minerals: Africa could go faster and farther than Japan.

Mrs. Thatcher agreed that, as the President had earlier said in private discussion, it was our mutual aim to foster peace and development. But many African countries which had started well with help from the West now had neither stability nor internal unity and were thus ripe for the meddling of Qadhafi and his like, or led to distressing situations like Ethiopia and Somalia. But what could we do to help? As for this appeal to us to recognise the importance of Africa, the President was pushing at an open door. But more than just aid and investment was needed; how could we help practically? What political support should we give?

/President Houphouet-Boigny

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President Houphouet-Boigny said that most African countries faced common problems. But to put the situation in perspective an historical digression would help. After defeating the Axis in the last World War the West thought it could relax. Then came the Korean war, France's loss of Indo-China, then US defeat in Vietnam. Western countries had tried to act alone, and failed, so the West had lost a great deal of influence in Asia: he did not want the same to happen in Africa. He was going to talk to British businessmen and give them the facts. The Ivory Coast was no-one's chasse gardee. Since independence it had sought international co-operation: thus American firms were building dams, British ones Abidjan airport, and American firms exploiting oil resources where the French had failed. But none of the old colonial powers alone could protect their former colonies. A joint effort was needed: the West should concert its policies. Unity was strength: there was a lot in the saying, 'show force, and you won't need to use it'. As he was going to say at the United Nations, we were economically one world. But before North-South dialogue what was needed was concertation of their positions by both sides: not so that the South could better confront the North, but to improve collaboration. The Prime Minister, he said, had mentioned the problem of commodities. The Ivory Coast had signed agreements with the European Community - Yaounde, Lome, etc. But this only engaged them with the Ten: not the other Europeans, nor the United States, nor the Russians. The Community's Stabex plan helped, of course, but it was not enough, so wider agreement was needed before the next round of North-South talks. There were obvious limits to what Europe could do, but Europe must not lose Africa to poverty and let it slide into Soviet hands. We should collaborate, for example, to avoid over-production. Europe should listen to Africa: in the final analysis our interests were common.

Sir Geoffrey Howe said that when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer he had instructed his officials to avoid the phrase 'North/South' as being an over-simplification of a very complex situation. He recalled with pleasure cooperating with the Ivorian Minister of Finance in the Development Committee, the IMF and so forth; but there was a great contrast between the

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Ivory Coast with its sensible policies and a country like Uganda with enormous resources but no real government. The Ivory Coast had used European advisers and technocrats; should not other African countries do so too to make best use of development funds? The President agreed entirely. As a doctor he had seen medical specialists work together in the best interests of the patient: similarly the nations of the 'South' should concert to make best use of the help available from Europe. Regional organisations like ECOWAS and CEAO have made a good start on this. But just as Europe should get together, so Africa should make sure it deserved help by agreeing its own priorities. As Mr. Churchill had said, a few men, working together, could do great things. The Prime Minister thanked the President and said she would be interested in hearing his views on Southern African questions over lunch.

The meeting closed at 1305.

29 July 1983

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 July 1983

Dear Roger

VISIT OF PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY

I enclose a record of the Plenary Meeting held here at 1215 on Wednesday, 27 July.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to John Kerr (H.M. Treasury) and Robert Lowson (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food).

Yours ever

Willie Rickett

Roger Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

29 July 1983

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/ I enclose a draft record of the meeting
between the Prime Minister and President
Houphouet-Boigny on 27 July.

[Handwritten signature]

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing St

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THE PRESIDENT OF THE IVORY COAST AT NO 10 DOWNING STREET
AT 1215 ON WEDNESDAY 27 JULY

Present:

The Prime Minister	His Excellency President Houphouet-Boigny
Sir Geoffrey Howe	M Aké, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr Lawson	M Bra Kanon, Minister of Agriculture
Mr Jopling	M Koné, Minister of Economy and Finance
Sir John Leahy	Governor Nairay, Director of the President's Office
Mr Willson	M Essienne, Ambassador of the Ivory Coast
Mr Daly	
Mr Coles	M Ouéguin, Director of Protocol

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the Prime Minister welcomed the President and proposed that
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Mr Coles	

1. After introduction by both sides of their delegations, the Prime Minister welcomed the President ~~and paid tribute to his universally-acknowledge^d wisdom and experience in African and international affairs.~~ She was pleased he ~~was accompanied by a distinguished team.~~

2. ^{and} She proposed that the meeting should first deal with bilateral questions, ~~for our side there were no problems:~~ just a desire to strengthen our relationship - and then move to the problems and opportunities of Africa itself. It might be better to leave financial problems on one side since these really lay on the other side of the Atlantic rather than in Africa, though admittedly Nigeria and Zaire were in economic straits.

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3. To mark the visit Mrs Thatcher said ^{she} we had decided to give £3.5m in aid to the Ivory Coast over four years and to support a £10m line of credit. We also wanted to improve the machinery for bilateral consultation and she proposed that officials should draft a memorandum of understanding which should include subjects like incentives to investment, the role of the British Council, etc. Would the President want to comment on our bilateral relations? The President said these were excellent: the sky was blue. He thanked the Prime Minister for the aid and line of credit support she had outlined and said that the new Abidjan airport, though delayed by recession, will in due course be built by British firms and will be the ^{finest} first in Africa.

4. Internationally, he continued, we shared a desire for peace and stability but as he ^{had} told President Kennedy, the Ivory Coast could not be an oasis of prosperity in a desert of poverty: what was needed was more oases to spread prosperity throughout the African continent. He wanted to stress the importance of Africa to Europe and the West. South of the Sahara Africa had known two main colonisers, Britain and France, who had left their colonies the invaluable legacy of two major languages. Linguistically, Africa should not be Balkanized - the Ivory Coast, with more than 40 indigenous languages, was obliged to adopt French as its official tongue and taught English as its second language (just as the Nigerians used English and taught French). This language barrier must be crossed to encourage cooperation - as was already happening within ECOWAS. The African states were young, but they wanted

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5. Mrs Thatcher agreed that, as the President had earlier said in private discussion, it was our mutual aim to foster peace and development. But many African countries which had started well with help from the West now had neither stability nor internal unity and were thus ripe for the meddling of Qadhafi and his like, or led to distressing situations like Ethiopia and Somalia. But what could we do to help? As for this appeal to us to recognize the importance of Africa, the President was pushing at an open door. But more than just aid and investment was needed; how could we help practically? what political support should we give?

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6. President Houphouet-Boigny said that most African countries faced common problems. But to put the situation in perspective an historical digression would help. After defeating the Axis in the last World War the West thought it could relax. Then came the Korean war, France's loss of Indo-China, then US defeat in Vietnam. Western countries had tried to act alone, and failed, so the West had lost a great deal of influence in Asia: he did not want the same to happen in Africa. He was going to talk to British businessmen and give them the facts. The Ivory Coast was no-one's chasse gardée. Since independence it had sought international cooperation: thus American firms were building dams, British ones Abidjan airport, and American firms exploiting oil resources where the French had failed. But none of the old colonial powers alone could protect their former colonies. A joint effort was needed: the West should concert its policies. Unity was strength: there was a lot in the saying, 'Show force, and you won't need to use it'. As he was going to say at the United Nations, we were economically one world. But before North-South dialogue what was needed was concertation of their positions by both sides: not so that the South could better confront the North, but to improve collaboration. The Prime Minister, he said, had mentioned the problem of commodities. The Ivory Coast had signed agreements with the European Community - Yaoundé, Lomé, etc. But this only engaged them with the Ten: not the other Europeans, nor the United States, nor the Russians. The Community's Stabex plan helped, of course, but it was not enough, so wider agreement was needed before the next round of North-South talks. There were obvious limits to what Europe could do, but Europe

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must not lose Africa to poverty and let it slide into Soviet hands. We should collaborate, for example, to avoid over-production. Europe should listen to Africa: in the final analysis our interests were common.

7. Sir Geoffrey Howe said that when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer he had instructed his officials to avoid the phrase 'North/South' as being an over-simplification of a very complex situation. He recalled with pleasure cooperating with the Ivorian Minister of Finance in the Development Committee, the IMF and so forth; but there was a great contrast between the Ivory Coast with its sensible policies and a country like Uganda with enormous resources but no real government.

The Ivory coast had used European advisers and technocrats; should not other African countries do so too to make best use of development funds? The President agreed entirely. As a doctor he had seen medical specialists work together in the best interests of the patient: similarly the nations of the 'South' should concert to make best use of the help available from Europe. Regional organizations like ECOWAS and CEAO have made a good start on this. But just as Europe should get together, so Africa should make sure it deserved help by agreeing its own priorities. As Mr Churchill had said, a few men, working together, could do great things. The Prime Minister thanked the President and said she would be interested in hearing his views on Southern African questions over lunch.

8. The meeting closed at 1305.

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