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TO FLASH KINSHASA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 105 OF 19 NOVEMBER

VISIT TO BRITAIN BY MOBUTU

1. ZAIREAN AMBASSADOR TELEPHONED THIS MORNING TO SAY THAT MOBUTU WISHED TO VISIT LONDON NEXT WEEK ON HIS WAY TO WASHINGTON. HE PLANNED TO ARRIVE AT HEATHROW EARLY ON THE MORNING OF THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER AND LEAVE ON 28 NOVEMBER. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT MOBUTU HOPED THAT THE TWO-DAY VISIT WOULD GIVE TIME FOR TALKS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND MYSELF.
2. THIS TIMING COULD NOT BE MORE DIFFICULT. IT COINCIDES EXACTLY WITH THE EC SUMMIT MEETING (26/27 NOVEMBER) AND BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND I WILL BE FULLY ENGAGED ON BOTH DAYS WITH THE EUROPEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT.
3. PLEASE THEREFORE EXPLAIN TO THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE THAT WITH NINE VISITING HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT HERE AT THAT TIME WE MUCH REGRET THAT WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OFFER MOBUTU APPROPRIATE HOSPITALITY OR BILATERAL MEETINGS AND STRONGLY SUGGEST THEREFORE THAT HE SHOULD NOT PLAN A VISIT TO LONDON THIS TIME. IF THE ZAIREANS SUGGEST THAT THE VISIT COULD BE FITTED IN ON MOBUTU'S RETURN FROM WASHINGTON YOU SHOULD UNDERTAKE TO REPORT THIS SUGGESTION TO US. (FOR YOUR OWN INFORMATION IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER AND/OR MYSELF TO SEE MOBUTU IN THE WEEK 30 NOVEMBER TO 4 DECEMBER BUT WE CANNOT CONFIRM THIS FOR THE MOMENT.)
4. WE APPRECIATE THE DIFFICULT POSITION THAT THIS MAY PUT YOU IN. BUT WE THINK IT WOULD BE LESS DAMAGING FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS IF THE VISIT WERE CANCELLED THAN FOR MOBUTU TO BE RECEIVED AT AN INAPPROPRIATELY LOW LEVEL.

CARRINGTON

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