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DESKBY 200900Z
FM KINSHASA 200655Z NOV 81
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 156 OF 28 NOVEMBER

YOUR TELNO 105: VISIT OF PRESIDENT MOBUTU.

1. I SAW NIMI, DIRECTOR OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, YESTERDAY EVENING AND SPOKE AS INSTRUCTED. NIMI SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT, WHO PREFERRED TO AVOID FLYING ON FRIDAYS, WISHED TO ARRIVE IN LONDON, AS A CHANGE FROM PARIS, ON THURSDAY, AND LEAVE FOR THE UNITED STATES ON SATURDAY. HE WOULD NOT EXPECT ANY OFFICIAL HOSPITALITY, JUST "TEN MINUTES" FOR A GENERAL TALK WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

2. I REPLIED THAT, BOTH FROM MY OWN KNOWLEDGE OF SUMMIT MEETINGS IN LONDON AND FROM MY INSTRUCTIONS, I COULD HOLD OUT NO HOPE OF A SLOT IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S PROGRAMME ON 26 OR 27 NOVEMBER. EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY WOULD BE TAKEN UP WITH THE 10 HEADS OF GOVERNMENT. NIMI COMMENTED THAT, EVEN IF THE PRESIDENT HAD 6 HEADS OF STATE AS HIS GUESTS, HE WAS SURE THAT HE WOULD MAKE TIME TO SEE MRS THATCHER IF SHE WERE PASSING THROUGH KINSHASA. I SAID THAT THINGS WERE NOT QUITE THE SAME IN EUROPE, BUT STRESSED THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE A WELCOME VISITOR ON A LESS HECTIC OCCASION. HE DID NOT RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT ON RETURN FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND I DID NOT HINT AT IT.

3. I EXPECT THE PRESIDENT WILL ACCEPT THE POSITION (WITH EITHER A GOOD OR A BAD GRACE). BUT IF THERE IS ANY GIVE IN YOUR STAND, FOR EXAMPLE A MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ON THE MORNING OF SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER, PLEASE LET ME KNOW BY RETURN.

SNODGRASS

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