Prime Minister

You could give him 30 minutes on the afternoon of Wednesday, 9 Dec. Agree?

RB

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 December 1981

Reluctantly
RB

Dear Michael,

Visit of President Mobutu

In my letter of 20 November I warned that President Mobutu of Zaire was proposing to visit London from 26-28 November. This coincided with the European Summit and, as you know, we managed to put the Zaireans off.

They have now returned to the charge and are proposing a visit on 9-10 December when Mobutu is on his way back from a visit to Washington. Mobutu has asked on this occasion to call on The Queen and the Prime Minister.
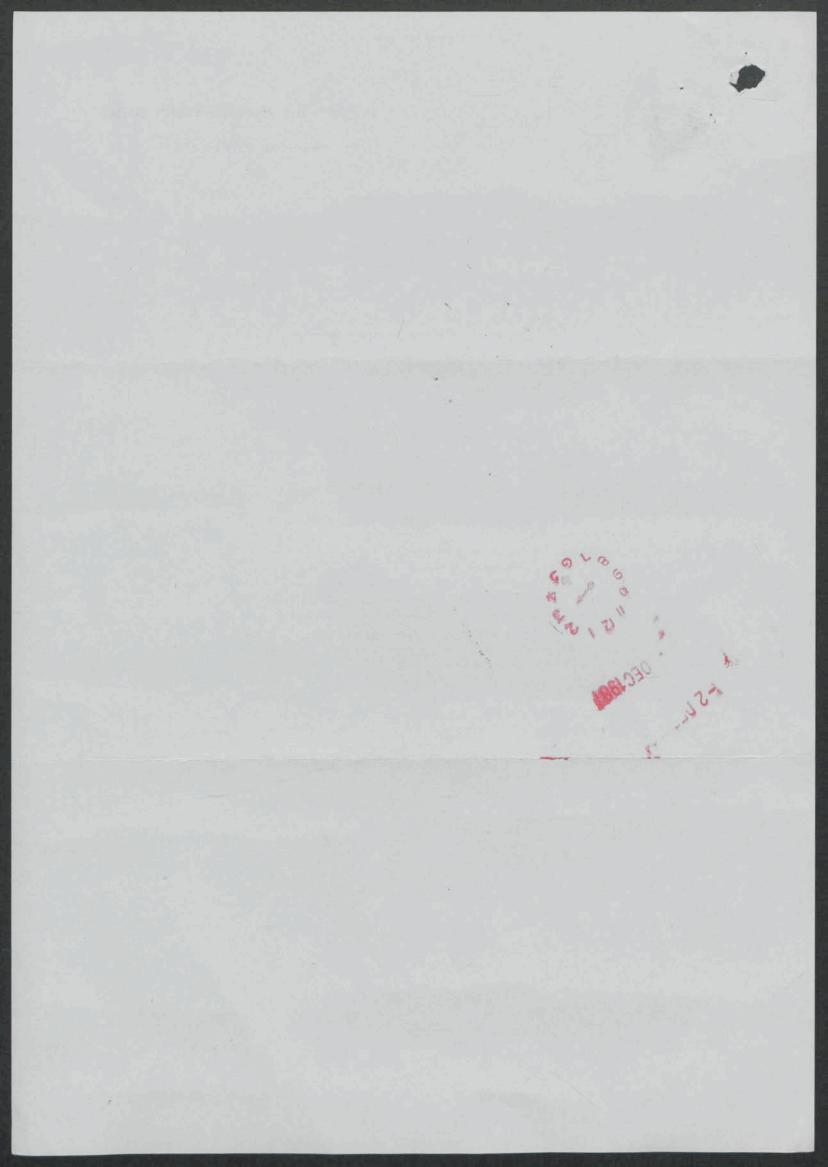
We have little useful bilateral work to do with Mobutu: but it would be difficult to put him off for a second time. I set out in my previous letter the reasons why Mobutu is so insistent on being seen to be a welcome visitor in Western capitals at the moment. Particularly in view of Zaire's helpful effort in sending troops to Chad, and imminent membership of the Security Council, it would be as well to accommodate Mobutu as far as is conveniently possible. If the Prime Minister could spare half an hour or so to receive Mobutu he would be more than satisfied.
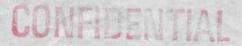
For the rest of his programme we shall not be setting up formal bilateral talks but the Lord Privy Seal - in Lord Carrington's absence - will give Mobutu lunch. We are enquiring whether The Queen will be prepared to receive him briefly.

yours ever

Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing St

3 December 1981

Visit of President Mobutu

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 2 December. She has agreed to receive President Mobutu for 30 minutes from 1545 on the afternoon of Wednesday 9 December. I should be grateful if you could let John Coles have a brief the previous evening.

MODBA

H.M.J. Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Zaire

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 November 1981

Pres Mobutu is now not coming

Rnd 23/XI

Dear Michael,

Visit of President Mobutu

/ As you know (Kinshasa telegram 156, enclosed)
HM Ambassador has so far been unable to ride President
Mobutu of Zaire off his proposal to visit London from
26 - 28 November. You will wish to have the background
in case you receive a direct approach from the Zaireans.

/ President Mobutu's office have been told (FCO telno 105)
that such a visit could not come at a more inconvenient
moment, and that the Prime Minister and Lord Carrington
will be fully occupied with the European Council Summit.
We are telegraphing again today to underline the fact that
there is no present prospect of either the Prime Minister
or Lord Carrington being able to see Mobutu.

The Lord Privy Seal will offer President Mobutu
lunch on 27 November, and we hope that Mr Luce may be able
to call on him at his hotel; otherwise we are planning no
official programme. In answer to any request from the
Zaireans for a meeting with the Prime Minister on the
morning of Saturday 28 November, HM Ambassador will say
that she is out of London.

President Mobutu will be en route for Washington
where we (and the US Embassy) assume that he will be meeting
President Reagan. Earlier this month, he took a prominent
role at the Paris meeting of Francophone Heads of Government
and his discussions with President Mitterand were given
publicity. His current round of visits to Western capitals
reflects his pressing need for international support at a time
of continued domestic insecurity and economic difficulties.

/It is also

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

It is also part of a general diplomatic effort which has included Zaire's election as a member of the Security Council in 1982/83, and Zaire's leading role in the African military force in Chad - the Zairean parachute regiment is the only force already to have arrived in Chad.

We have not told the Zaireans that the Prime Minister will be at Chequers, as this could lead to a suggestion (which we assume would be unwelcome) that he should call there en route to the airport.

yours ever

Rodric Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary