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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Aristides Pereira of
Cape Verde (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Robert Kimmitt, Acting Secretary of State
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President
and Deputy National Security Advisor
Herman J. Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State
for African Affairs
John M. Ordway, NSC staff (notetaker)
Marcel Bouquet (interpreter)

President Aristides Pereira
Jose Luis Fernandes-Lopes, Ambassador to the
U.S.
Joao Pereira Silva, Minister of Rural
Development and Fisheries

DATE, TIME April 27, 1990, 2:30 - 2:58 P.M. EST
AND PLACE The Oval Office

The President: I am very happy to see you again. I still remember your hospitality in Cape Verde so long ago. Are you going to other cities in the U.S. on this trip? (U)

President Pereira: No. I am only going to be in Washington for this medical checkup. (U)

The President: The floor is yours. When I heard you were coming, I wanted to take some of your time to express our respect for you and your relations with the U.S. We are excited about some of the changes taking place in areas of interest to us, including South Africa and Namibia. On Angola, I am very anxious to get your views. There are lots of things happening in your country, too, and I want to hear about them. (Ø)

President Pereira: I am very glad to see you again, and want to thank you for finding the time to spend with me. I even said to my ambassador that I was coming here for a private visit, but I wanted to say hello to you as a friend. Since we have the opportunity, though, perhaps I could say a few things beyond that. (Ø)

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The President: Please do. (U)

President Pereira: Let me start with the things that are happening in our country. There is a political transformation underway. There are a lot of changes happening, which is a natural development of the path we have been following since independence. We achieved independence in special circumstances. The country was all but destroyed, and priorities had to be taken care of, such as the survival of the people and the building of the state. I think we were lucky and successful in our effort, due in part to foreign aid, including the generous aid of the United States, which allowed us to build our state and achieved a rate of growth unparalleled in Africa. (Ø)

All of this economic and social progress had to be accompanied by political development, and the decision was taken to open up the system to many political parties. Much is left to be done. We must create the legislative basis for the process, and amend the constitution. But the first steps have been taken. We have opened the way for the process and are going through a period which requires much work on our part so that the process can be carried out in stable fashion. (Ø)

The President: We admire what you are trying to do in the economic area. I hadn't followed the political area so closely. Do you have dates for multi-party elections, or are they down the road further? (Ø)

President Pereira: The process is more or less structured. We will have legislative elections in December. All will depend on our ability to legislate the process and take steps to allow new parties to arise. All is ready for other parties to run in December, if there are other parties to run. (Ø)

The President: What is your view of the neighborhood? I am very encouraged by developments in South Africa. And, I'd like to hear your views on Angola. (Ø)

President Pereira: I think both leaders, de Klerk and dos Santos, seem to be on a good path, and have decided to continue on this path. Our view is that both presidents need to be helped. (Ø)

De Klerk has a problem with both the black and white communities. In think for Africa there is a consensus, among heads of state, that de Klerk wants to take reform to its ultimate stage: the elimination of apartheid. Of course, the first problem is the war among the black community, who are killing each other, preventing de Klerk from lifting the state of emergency. The

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situation is such that Mandela supports de Klerk keeping the state of emergency in place. (Ø)

The President: That's an interesting historical twist. (U)

President Pereira: It is a question of common sense. (U)

The President: Do you know Mandela personally? (U)

President Pereira: I knew him before -- in 1962 and 1963. (U)

The President: That was a long time ago. (U)

President Pereira: President de Klerk has another problem. The white community has now accepted his reforms, and economic sanctions are still in place. What whites are arguing is that, he carries out reforms, but sanctions stay in place. Therefore, we are now forced to think about economic sanctions, relaxing a little bit to give de Klerk better standing in the white community. The situation seems to be blocked. Sanctions stay in place because of the state of emergency. The state of emergency cannot be lifted because of the fratricidal struggle among the black community. Perhaps we could a middle of the road solution. (Ø)

The President: We have de Klerk coming --next month is it? And Mandela later -- in the fall? (Ø)

Mr. Kimmitt: De Klerk is coming in June. (Ø)

The President: I am looking forward to seeing them. (U)

I think people understand our position. We have no colonial heritage in that part of the world. Maybe we can be helpful. (Ø)

I'm not too hot on sanctions, but we will leave them on. I think giving de Klerk something to show for his moves is good, but I don't know what it would be. We will leave sanctions on for now, resist any further sanctions, and see what we can do. (Ø)

President Pereira: As far as Angola is concerned, President dos Santos, knowing I might meet with you, asked me to carry a message. He had meetings with Secretary Baker and Assistant Secretary Cohen in Windhoek, and this meeting was very encouraging for dos Santos. He re-affirmed his willingness to find a solution as soon as possible. When he was told that he might come to the U.S. and be received by President Bush as long as there was an agreement on a ceasefire, plus direct contacts with UNITA, he liked that idea, and wanted it to be confirmed by

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you, Mr. President. Once he has received confirmation, this will give him a better position to act in the leadership to get direct contacts with UNITA and to move toward peace. (S)

Dos Santos has a problem with the leadership in his country. There are different tendencies, some for peace and some for war. He needs to be strengthened. If he came to the U.S. and was received by you, as was said by the Secretary of State, he would be in a very strong position with the leadership. (S)

The President: Hank, where do we stand on this? (S)

Mr. Cohen: If there are ceasefire and talks, then he could come here on a private visit. (S)

The President: I mean on the status of the talks. (S)

Mr. Cohen: They have just had some preliminary talks, and that is a good start. We are unsure about the ceasefire, because many people in Luanda are opposed to it. (S)

The President: I have heard good things about dos Santos. I am anxious to see him. We have no hostility toward him. I have a feeling that he doesn't want to be locked into a Marxist Government, since that can't last anyway. (S)

President Pereira: President dos Santos is very reasonable indeed. For example, he very quickly gained strength when he got into office after President Neto died. He was only 37, and not ready, but he took office anyway. He didn't have enough charisma for Angola, and Africa. He was too young. Some people called him a young boy. But he has been steady, and has endeavored for peace. If he gets some help, he will get there. (S)

The two parties have met in Lisbon, and there is talk about meeting in Cape Verde. We are ready, as long as both parties want to meet. If they want to meet in Portugal, or Cape Verde, whichever, is a good sign. As far as the negotiation is concerned, dos Santos is learning lessons from the whole world, and Africa. He is ready to carry out reforms. (S)

The President: This is a very interesting coincidence with what we think about the man. (S)

How is your health? Is there anything we can do? (U)

President Pereira: I have done almost all the tests. So far, the doctors assure me that the results are excellent. (U)

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The President: Where are you doing them, at Walter Reed? (U)

Mr. Cohen: At Bethesda. (U)

President Pereira: My wife has some small surgery as well. (U)

The President: Give her our best. (U)

I am pleased that you are here in our country. (U)

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