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*see following memo*

1. Re para 2, AF is asking Embassy Dar es Salaam for confirmation no US officials were present at the ransom exchange.

2. Re para 4, AF notes the figure of 41,000 tons of arms and ammunition which Mobutu claims the Soviets have provided the MPLA during the past week. We have no confirmation of that figure, which seems extraordinarily large. The Agency believes it may be in error and is trying to verify its accuracy.

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: President Mobutu's Comments on Ransom Exchange with Rebels, the Situation in Angola and Zaire's Economic Problems.

1. [redacted] met with Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko on 13 July 1975. [redacted] delivered Ambassador Vance's message concerning the kidnapped students to Mobutu and discussed the Angolan situation with him.

2. In discussing the kidnapping, Mobutu reiterated that he had firm reports that Consul MacFarlane had been present during the ransom exchange with the rebels. He appeared to accept [redacted] unqualified assurances, however, that MacFarlane, although present in Kigoma, did not cross the lake and was not involved in the exchange. [redacted] nonetheless concerned at the obvious conviction with which Mobutu spoke about the Consul's presence and comments that both the credibility of Ambassador Vance [redacted] would be severely strained if any U.S. official had indeed participated in the exchange. [redacted] suggests that in order to assure protection of U.S. equities with Mobutu it would be helpful if the Department queried the Embassy in Dar es Salaam--prior to Ambassador Vance's forthcoming trip--for reconfirmation that no U.S. official was present during the ransom exchange.)

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3. Mobutu went on to say that his reports also indicated that MacFarlane had a powerful portable radio which he used for direct contact with the rebels. [redacted] pointed out that our biggest problem had been that of making contact with the rebels and that, in this regard, we still have to rely on foot messengers. Mobutu then referred again to his "humanistic" reaction to our request for his help, saying that to this very day the Government of Zaire (GOZ) is exercising restraint in not pursuing the rebels. Had it not been for our pleas, Mobutu said he would have sent in three battalions and "mopped up the area". [redacted] said that unknown elements apparently are exploiting

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the kidnapping in an effort to further divide the U.S. Government (USG) and the GOZ. He noted the false reports of USG supply of 400 weapons to the rebels and also noted that we had received reports, presumably equally false, that Zairian armed forces had in fact launched operations against the rebels despite Mobutu's assurances to the contrary. Mobutu expressed some surprise at this but made no further comment; however, he did sound convincing in his assertions that the GOZ is fully cooperating with the USG and standing down on military operations.

4. Mobutu then turned to the Angolan situation, and it was obvious that he is more preoccupied with it than with anything else. At one point during the discussion, Mobutu asked if President Ford and senior levels of the USG are aware of the critical situation in Angola, and he was assured that awareness certainly existed. Mobutu said the situation in Angola is extremely serious, and although he has emptied virtually all his depots and warehouses of arms and materiel vitally needed by his own armed forces, this obviously has not been enough. He has reports that three Soviet vessels delivered more than 41,000 tons of arms and ammunition to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) during the past week, deliveries which he said we could verify [redacted]

5. [redacted] the USG is well aware of the gravity of the situation in Angola and of the possibility that the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) might be forced to withdraw from Luanda. [redacted] every effort is being made to obtain aid, but it is difficult in view of FNLA President Holden Roberto's reluctance to go to Angola, particularly since we have reports that Roberto's credibility is diminishing because of this reluctance. While recognizing the arguments in favor of Roberto's remaining apart from the internal machinations of the competing forces in Angola, [redacted] Roberto can no longer play the role of a Samora Machel and make a last-minute arrival on the scene. For example, Mobutu's own presence had been vital on numerous occasions to the retrieval or reversal of a particular situation, and this explains why the Presidential yacht is appropriately named "Kamenyola", the site where Mobutu himself had turned the tide of battle. The analogy led Mobutu to wax enthusiastically on his past exploits.

6. Following the discussion on Angola, Mobutu again brought up the absence of "even one cartridge" from the USG. He asked about the results of General Rockwell's military mission to Zaire and pointed out that the time had long since passed when he

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had been promised a response. [ ] said he hoped a reply would be forthcoming soon.

7. Mobutu then commented on his latest economic measures. He seemed particularly proud that he had been able, in one stroke, to cut all rents in half, and said he is taking other actions to obtain money without having to dip into the GOZ treasury. It seemed obvious to [ ] that Mobutu was trying to make the point that he is tightening his belt and doing his best to rectify Zaire's economic problems. [ ] the Embassy has reports that indicate the GOZ is in fact making a good try on more than 20 measures designed to alleviate the economic situation.)

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