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COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, INC.
THE HAROLD PRATT HOUSE 58 EAST 68TH STREET
NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

CABLE ADDRESS: FORAFFAIRS, NEW YORK

ROUND TABLE MEETING IN HONOR OF

His Excellency Felix Houphouet-Boigny
Premier of the Republic of the Ivory Coast

"Prospects for the Community in Africa"

Tuesday, November 17, 1959
5:15 - 6:30 P.M.

You are cordially invited to a private and off-the-record, round table meeting in honor of the Premier of the Ivory Coast, to be held here at the Council on Tuesday, November 17th, from 5:15 to 6:30 P.M. The Premier will discuss the relations between the Ivory Coast and the French community in Africa. Mr. R. Gordon Wasson will preside.

THE MEETING WILL BE CONDUCTED IN FRENCH

The Premier was founder of the Africa Democratic Rally, one of the most influential political parties in French Africa. As Minister Delegate to the Presidency of the Council in France, he took an active part in the drafting of the universal suffrage law and the granting of greater political autonomy to the peoples of the French Union. He was elected Premier of the Ivory Coast in April of this year.

I hope very much it will be possible for you to attend. Please mail the enclosed card if you are able to do so.

Melvin Conant
Director of Meetings

Mr. Sudeck

Round Table Meeting in Honor of

His Excellency Félix Houphouët-Boigny
Premier of the Republic of the Ivory Coast + 3

TOPIC: PROSPECTS FOR THE COMMUNITY IN AFRICA

Tuesday, November 17, 1959
5:15 P.M.

J. Alley
Mr. R. Gordon Wasson
Presiding

W Barber

VAH Garetson

✓ F Altschul

- Aley Allan
- A. W. Allport
- ✓ Hamilton Fish Armstrong
- Henry G. Aubrey
- ✓ Robert R. Barker
- ✓ Jonathan Bingham
- ✓ Carter M. Braxton
- ✓ Henry G. Breck
- ✓ Donald F. Bush
- Thomas W. Childs
- Edmund Coffin
- ✓ Melvin Conant
- ✓ John J. Conidine
- ✓ Howard A. Cook
- ✓ Charles F. Darlington
- ~~Carter Davidson~~
- ✓ Albert E. Ernst
- Lawrence S. Finkelstein

- ✓ Michael Florinsky
- ✓ Arthur B. Foye
- H. J. Friendly
- Lewis Galantiere
- ✓ R. D. Graff
- ✓ Lyman Hoover
- ✓ Philip Horton
- ✓ Hans Kohn
- ✓ Hal Lehrman
- ✓ John F. Leich
- ✓ Kennett Love
- ✓ Thomas H. McKittrick
- Forrest D. Murden, Jr.
- ✓ F. Taylor Ostrander, Jr.
- ✓ Kenneth M. Spang
- ✓ Ralph I. Straus
- ✓ Giorgio Uzielli
- ✓ James P. Warburg
- ✓ J. Campbell White
- W Clifford Shields

W Levay

Regen
M. Vauvs

~~Boris Shizhkin~~
Boris Shizhkin

November 10, 1959

Dear Mr. Wasson:

Our very many thanks for agreeing to preside at our round table meeting in honor of Felix Houphouët-Boigny, Premier of the Ivory Coast. He is one of the really outstanding Africans and we are pleased to have been able to arrange this.

I enclose a biography of him on which I have indicated points you might want to note for your introduction.

As usual, we shall ask members to meet here at 5:15 on Tuesday, November 17th. We adjourn by 6:30.

Please let me know if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Malvin Conant
Director of Meetings

Enclosure:
Biography.
MC/bjw

R. Gordon Wasson, Esq.
23 Wall Street
New York 5, N.Y.

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE

SERVICE DE PRESSE ET D'INFORMATION

972 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 21, N. Y. REgent 7-9700

Biography

September 1959

FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY

Premier of the Republic of the Ivory Coast
Advisory Minister to the French Government
for the Community

Elected Premier of the Republic of the Ivory Coast in western Africa on April 27, 1959, Félix Houphouët-Boigny was appointed Advisory Minister to the French Government for matters relating to the Community by the President of the Community on July 23, 1959, at the same time as MM. Lisette, Senghor and Tsiranana. The four Advisory Ministers may be called upon to join the members of the French Government in examining matters concerning the Community; they may also be appointed as members of French delegations to international bodies or international conferences.

Born on October 18, 1905 in Yamoussokro, a village in the Ivory Coast, M. Houphouët-Boigny went to school in Bingerville and later graduated from the Medical School in Dakar. He practised his profession in the Ivory Coast from 1925 to 1940, when he started to take an active interest in local politics and became chief administrator of his native district.

Immediately after the Liberation of France in 1944, he established the African Agricultural Union of the Ivory Coast, an organization of farmers. In 1946, he was one of the founders of the African Democratic Rally (Rassemblement Démocratique Africain or R.D.A.), one of the most influential political parties in French Black Africa, of which he has been chairman ever since. In October 1950, he broke off all relations between the R.D.A. and the Communist Party. In 1952, the R.D.A. affiliated with the U.D.S.R. in the French Parliament.

As Deputy for the Ivory Coast, he took part in the two Constituent Assemblies of the French Republic held in 1945 and 1946. Until 1959, he sat in the National Assembly as Deputy for the Ivory Coast and played an important role in the adoption of the Labor Code for France Overseas.

He was elected to the Territorial Assembly (1) of the Ivory Coast in 1946, and later to the Grand Council of French West Africa (2), of which he was

- (1) Territorial Assemblies were set up in the French Overseas Territories in 1946. Their powers were enlarged by the "Loi-Cadre" of June 23, 1956.
- (2) The Grand Council of French West Africa, like that of French Equatorial Africa, was composed of delegates elected from the various Territorial Assemblies of the federation.

President from May 1957 to May 1958. He has been mayor of Abidjan since November 1956.

Since 1956, M. Houphouet-Boigny has been associated with the formulation of French Government policy on questions concerning France Overseas. Minister Delegate to the Presidency of the Council from January 1956 to June 1957, he took an active part, in this capacity, in the drafting of the "Loi-Cadre" of June 23, 1956, a law which established universal suffrage and gave greater political autonomy to all the peoples of the French Union. He was also in charge of drafting the plan for the economic development of the Sahara desert, which set up the "Common Organization of the Saharan Regions" (O.C.R.S.).

Minister of State from June to November 1957, M. Houphouet-Boigny was Minister of Public Health and Population from November 1957 to May 1958, then Minister of State in all the following Governments until April 1959.

In January 1957, he took part, as a member of the French Delegation, in the work of the eleventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Following the Referendum of 1958, which instituted the Community, the Ivory Coast, which had voted for the Community, became a self-governing Republic and member State of the Community on December 4, 1958. M. Houphouet-Boigny served as President of the Constituent Assembly of the Ivory Coast and was elected Premier of that Republic on April 27, 1959. Thereupon he resigned his post as Minister of State in the French Government.

Active not only in the political realm, M. Houphouet-Boigny has been instrumental in bringing about economic and social reforms as well. He has given special attention to the problems of African youth and has been one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Union of the Students of Black Africa. Above all, he has taken an interest in the University of Dakar.

Among the specific goals toward which he worked were:

- broadening the powers of the local territorial assemblies,
- creating and organizing rural collectivities,
- employment of persons born in the African territories in all ranks of the administration, and creation of local territorial cadres,
- development of the African economy and coordination between Metropolitan France and the African territories in economic and financial matters.

Round Table Meeting on "Prospects
for the Community in Africa", at
the Council on Foreign Relations,
Tuesday, November 17, 1959, 8:15 PM

~~Mr. R. Gordon Wasson presided at the meeting and introduced His Excellency Felix Houphouet-Boigny, Premier of the Republic of the Ivory Coast. Mr. Houphouet-Boigny practised medicine at Abidjan for many years until he became active in politics at the end of World War II. He is head and founder of the African Democratic Rally, one of the most influential parties in Africa. Mr. Houphouet-Boigny is strongly advocating close ties for the Ivory Coast and the other African countries with their European friends and former colonial powers. The French Community, according to Mr. Houphouet-Boigny, enables the African members to enjoy all the advantages of local autonomy plus all those accruing from a common currency, a sound educational system, and from development aid which France is offering on a large scale to the African members of the Community. Without the benefits of a close alliance with France, none of the former French colonies can expect to make rapid progress toward development of a modern state. - The Premier pointed to the dangers of communist infiltration in Africa. When representatives of French Africa first sat in the French Parliament, they were isolated and ^{then} bourgeois and communist ~~fractions~~ ^{briefly} cooperated to present a united front. The disruptive policies of the communists, aiming at immediate sovereignty of the African territories in preparation for communist domination, quickly disillusioned the bourgeois Africans. Mr. Houphouet-Boigny is very conscious of the communist influence either on African students in Paris or on the labor unions through international affiliation of African labor movements. Mr. Houphouet-Boigny is taking all necessary steps to neutralize the ~~dangers of communist infiltration~~. - Mr. Houphouet-Boigny spoke at length of the unfortunate efforts of Mr. Sékou Touré to achieve independence for Guinea outside of the French Community and largely with communist help. As a result Guinea has ^{one} party regime which is intolerant of any opposition. Sovereignty has been achieved at great cost and socio-economic development without the large scale aid of an advanced Western democracy will be slow if not impossible. It is difficult to see how Guinea can avoid communist domination. The aims of Mr. Sékou Touré for African unity are entirely unrealistic in view of the political, administrative, and economic ~~is~~ unpreparedness of Africa. - The members of the French African Community resent the committees for liberation established in Guinea for their respective countries. Mr. Houphouet-Boigny reproached Mr. Sékou Touré for placing his ideology ahead of the welfare of his people. He also warned that rich in resources and thinly populated, Africa must be aware of the interest East and West alike will certainly take in the continent.~~

Rapporteur
Ulf Sudeck

Council on Foreign Relations, Round
Table Meeting in honor of His Excellency
Felix Houphouet-Boigny on "Prospects for
the Community in Africa", Tuesday,
November 17, 1959, 5:15 P.M.

Mr. R. Gordon Wasson presided at the meeting and introduced His Excellency Felix Houphouet-Boigny, Premier of the Republic of the Ivory Coast. Mr. Houphouet-Boigny, following his medical studies in Dakar, had been a doctor at Abidjan^a for many years. He turned to politics after the last World War. Since then he has gained high office in several fields. He is a principal founder and head of the African Democratic Rally, one of the most influential political parties in Africa, he is President of the French Delegation to the United Nations, and he is a strong proponent for close ties between Africa and the West European countries.

Mr. Houphouet-Boigny pointed out that the French-African Community is a very much alive institution which is hardly known or understood abroad. The community resulted from the free ^{elections} vote held on September 28, 1958 without pressure from metropolitan France and whereby eleven African and the ^{MADAGASCAR} nations expressed their desire to continue close ties with France and Europe. Africa and the Western countries will no doubt benefit from this community.

In 1945 under the Government of General de Gaulle, African representatives, for the first time, were sitting in the French Assembly. They were quite isolated in the French Legislature and the communist influence became quite threatening. The bourgeois elements of political influence in Africa entered into an alliance with the Communist Party until it became clear that the communists followed their own objectives of agitation on orders from foreign communist headquarters rather than establishing policies in harmony with African aspirations and beneficial to social and economic development of Africa. The communists supported a radical

break with the past as expressed in complete emancipation of the African States and termination of all ties with France. To counter the communist threat Houphouet-Boigny and fellow Africans founded the African Democratic Rally. Regardless of religion the Africans believe in private property. They go a step further in providing collective help in building houses for villagers or bringing in crops. The beneficial results of which, however, accrue to the individual owner.

The avowed aim of the African Democratic Rally is to achieve equality ^{for} ~~with other nations~~ ^{their countries} through close cooperation with the former colonial power, France, and by benefiting from close contact with more advanced Western European nations. At the time the African Democratic Rally was organized a certain vacuum existed in Guinea. With the support of the African Democratic Rally Mr. Sékou Touré was asked to assume the direction of the political activity in Guinea with the condition, however, that he end his alliance with the communists. Mr. Touré kept his word until 1958. In fact, Mr. Sékou Touré with the support from certain political quarters, including a High Commissioner, broke with the African Democratic Rally in order to request full independence for his country. Mr. Touré does not believe that France, the former colonial power, can assume the role of a helping friend in the socio-economic development of the African countries. The principal error, however, of Mr. Touré is the very unrealistic objective of uniting Africa at the earliest possible moment into an independent republic. Mr. Touré does not realize that Africa does not have the capability of fully realizing at this moment its natural and human resources. Mr. Touré, who has built his political power through the trade unions, is probably not fully realizing the danger he is running of becoming a mere instrument of world communism. Seeing that none of the powerful nations in the world, such as the United States in the Western Hemisphere or China or the Soviet Union in Asia, have been

able to create states covering the entire continent, one must realize that no African nation can or should even attempt the unification of the African continent. It is absurd to place African unity before the well-being of the Africans, and the development of Africa in all social fields can best and most quickest be accomplished with the help of the more advanced Western countries. The French-African Community offers these advantages to the African member countries by giving the Africans all the advantages of freedom and all the benefits of a common currency, and a sound system of education, public administration, and economic development. Mr. Sékou Touré is willing to delay real independence in favor of an ideology which will leave a wide opening for the communists. Once the communists are allowed to gain a foothold, independence will become impossible. The Soviet Union obviously favors nationalism and very cleverly seeks to influence young Africans through contacts with French communists in metropolitan France. If French communism were allowed to influence the rising African intellectuals the Soviet Union fifty years from now will occupy a dominating position in Africa.

Africa is rich in resources but is very thinly populated and this makes it a much desired prey of East and West.

It is essential to rally the bourgeois elements in Africa for the African progress in alliance with France and other Western countries. Sékou Touré eliminated the bourgeois class in Guinea where his party has instituted a popular democracy which does not tolerate any opposition. Worse than that, committees of liberation have been established in Guinea for all the other African countries which have chosen to remain in the French-African community. Nationalism which believes in using communist support to attain its own aims cannot escape *eventual domination by Communism.*

In the discussion Mr. Houphouët-Boigny explained that the code of working

conditions must be adapted to local circumstances. He strongly objected to any affiliation of the unions with world-wide union organizations since that is the only way of preventing the communists, in his own country through the French communists, of infiltrating in the local union or political organizations.

Through the elections of September, 1958, three countries, i.e. Somali, Sudan, Senegal chose to remain part of metropolitan France, guided by the thought of the creation of a multi-national state.

Mr. Houphouet-Boigny pointed out that many refugees had been coming from Guinea to the Ivory Coast and that 65,000 Guineans had voted for the Community in the Ivory Coast. He said that when the thousands of Guineans now in the Ivory Coast express their desire to return to Guinea then he would believe that Sékou Touré had won popular support for his policies.

One question concerned the political administration of the Sahara. Mr. Houphouet-Boigny pointed out that the Sahara is not a department of France for the time being, that geographically and politically the Sahara is divided among several countries but that the exploitation of mineral resources had become the responsibility of one organization.

Rapporteur
Ulf Sudeck