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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

21 SEP 1976  
I-10220/76

INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

21 SEP 1976

SUBJECT: State Visit by President Tolbert of Liberia - INFORMATION  
MEMORANDUM

*Liberian*

Liberian President William R. Tolbert, Jr. arrived in the US on a state visit yesterday. After overnighing in Williamsburg, he traveled to Washington this morning where he met with President Ford at the White House.

President Ford will give a state dinner for President Tolbert at the White House at 8:00 P.M. tonight. On 22 September, President Tolbert will speak at the National Press Club and will host a state reception at Anderson House from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.; President Ford is expected to attend, at least briefly. You have received an invitation to that reception. At 10:00 on 23 September President Tolbert will lay a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He will address a joint session of Congress at 12:30, after which Congressional leaders will host a luncheon for the Liberian leader. He will meet with Vice President Rockefeller later that afternoon. President Tolbert also is scheduled to receive an honorary degree from Howard University on 24 September.

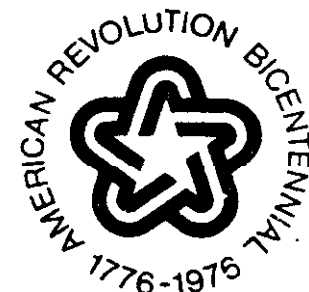
After completing the Washington part of his state visit, President Tolbert will depart Washington on 24 September to visit Maryland, Connecticut and Oklahoma at the invitation of the Governors of those states. He also will visit Philadelphia.

No political/military issues are currently outstanding with Liberia. The country has strategic importance to the US, chiefly because of its important airfield and port facilities at Monrovia, access to which is guaranteed by Executive Agreement. The Liberians also permit us

*21 Sep 76*

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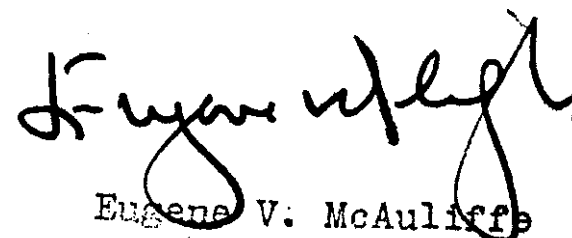
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to operate VOA and other communication facilities including an Omega Navigational Station important to the safety of US aircraft and ships in Africa. Liberia's armed forces--mostly ground forces and totaling nearly 6,000 men--are armed with light equipment of US origin. The US has a g-man military mission in Liberia (LIBMISH)--our only MAAG in West Africa--which trains and advises the Liberian armed forces. US security assistance has totaled some \$12 million since 1950 and is currently limited to CONUS training and small amounts of FMS credit.

I have attached a biography of President Tolbert.



Eugene V. McAuliffe  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
International Security Affairs

Attachment

a/s



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BIOGRAPHY ON

WILLIAM RICHARD TOLBERT JR.,

PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA

Addressed as. Mr. President.

William Tolbert succeeded to the Presidency in 1971 after the death of William V. S. Tubman. A shrewd politician and a successful businessman, Tolbert, has worked toward changing Liberia's image as a country run by a corporate elite for its own benefit. He entrusted many State decisions to his younger brother, the late Finance Minister, Stephen Tolbert. The latter's death in a plane crash in April 1975 left a void in the government's structure that the President seems to be trying to fill-himself.

Tolbert, 63, is western-oriented and definitely pro-United States. Believing that friendly, relations with all nations are essential for world peace, he is one of the few African leaders who have held talks with South African Prime Minister John Vorster. to try to promote a dialogue between South Africa and other African states.

A member of a very wealthy and prominent family, Tolbert is an Americo-Liberian. As pastor of the Mt. Sinai Baptist church which he founded in 1965 he was President of the Baptist World Alliance during 1965-1970. An articulate conversationalist, Tolbert is good-natured and hospitable. He does not drink alcohol. He is a 33rd degree Mason. In October 1974 he received the Family of Man Award in New York. He is married and has seven children. One son, Adolphus, is married to the daughter of Ivory Coast President Felix Houphouet-Boigny.

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