

SALIM'S DIARY

GENEVA CONFERENCE ON ZIMBABWE

Wednesday, October 20, 1976

Left New York for London around 10:00 p.m., by BA 510. Travelled together with Dunstan Kamana, Zambia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, who was also going to the Geneva talks as a member of the Zambian delegation. I had received a telephone call last Sunday, October 17, from Minister Kaduma, informing me that the President had appointed me to lead the Observer delegation to the Conference. The other member of the delegation was the Attorney-General, Ndugu Joseph Warioba. (Having worked closely with Warioba for several years, and considering our personal friendship and compatibility, I had no doubt that we would work together most harmoniously.)

By the same telephone call, Ndugu Kaduma had informed me that the Zambian delegation was to be led by President Kaunda's Personal Assistant, Mark Chona; the Mozambique delegation by Ndugu Oscar Montero, Minister of State in the President's Office; and the Botswana delegation by Foreign Minister A. Mogwe. There was no word yet whether Angola would be represented at the talks and if so by whom.

Thursday, October 21, 1976

We arrived in London around 9:30 in the morning. I had originally planned to see our High Commissioner, Ndugu Amon Nsekela, in order to have his own assessment of the British

thinking with regard to the Conference. In this connection, I had sent messages to Tanzanrep London, giving them details of my arrival, etc. Unfortunately, on arrival in London Airport there was no transportation, and also not a word from the High Commission. In such circumstances, and in view of the limitation of time at my disposal, I decided that it was best to spend a few hours or so at the Hotel near the Airport. I got a lift, courtesy of the Zambians, whose High Commissioner had sent an officer to meet my colleague Dunstan Kamana.

I was later to learn that Ndugu Davis Mwaikambo was supposed to meet me, but somehow something went wrong. Furthermore, Ndugu Nsekela had arranged for a working luncheon, but because of a breakdown of communication, I was not aware of this until only one or two hours before my departure for Dar es Salaam.

Around 7.30 p.m., I left London for Nairobi by EC 645. The plane was in fact late in its schedule and was subsequently further delayed when it made its transit stop in Rome. (I was getting worried that I would miss the connection from Nairobi to Dar es Salaam. And this was certainly one connection I did not want to miss). Fortunately, East African Airways was most cooperative. Cognizant of the delay in the flight, they radioed Nairobi Airport, which in turn facilitated my quick change of flights immediately on my arrival.

Friday, October 22, 1976

Arrived in Nairobi in the morning only ten minutes before my scheduled flight was to leave for Dar es Salaam. I, however, managed to catch it, and I was taken directly from the aircraft to the Dar es Salaam bound EC 923 (DC 9). The flight made transit stops in Mombasa and Zanzibar, arriving in Dar es Salaam around 12.30 p.m.

At Dar es Salaam Airport I was met by Warioba, Suedi and Ben Mkapa, whose appointment as our new High Commissioner designate to Nigeria had been announced only a few days before. I was then informed that we had to leave immediately for Zanzibar. And approximately one hour or so after my arrival, we left in a Government plane back to Zanzibar. (I had no business to come to Dar es Salaam under the circumstances! I should simply have stayed in Zanzibar when the DC 9 made its transit stop. I had thought that I would be given sometime at least to go to the city to leave my things. This was not to be. My young brother, Mohamed, who had also come to the Airport to meet me took care of this.)

Around 2.30 p.m. we arrived in Zanzibar and went straight to the First Vice-President's residence at Mazizini. We had a short chat with Ndugu Jumbe, and then around 4.00 p.m., we went back to the Airport to receive Mwalimu, who was coming from Butiama. (The initial plan was for me to go to Butiama immediately on arrival in Dar es Salaam. However, due to the impending eclipse of the sun in Zanzibar, the President had decided to come to the Islands to witness this historical scientific spectacle.

Thus our trip to Zanzibar instead of Butiama.)

Around 4.45 p.m., Mwalimu met with the three-man delegation from ZIPA. The delegation, which was led by Ndugu Dzino Machingura, Deputy Political Commissar, also comprised the Director of Logistics and Director of Intelligence. Both Warioba and myself were present in these discussions and so was Ben Mkapa (who had in fact come to Zanzibar to say his farewell to Mwalimu and to First Vice President, as he was leaving the next day to assume his new responsibilities in Lagos.) Others present in these discussions were Ndugu Joseph Butiku, Ndugu Suedi and Ndugu Sam Mdeu.

The ZIPA delegation briefed Mwalimu on the status of their military operations, some of the logistics and other problems confronting them, and their need for intensified training for some of their cadres. They also inquired and solicited Mwalimu's advice on their possible participation on the Geneva talks. To which Mwalimu responded that ZIPA should concentrate on the struggle in the field. Essentially, the President's message was clear. While the negotiations went on in Geneva, the struggle must be intensified as it is the latter which would have the foremost impact in the deliberations in Geneva. Mwalimu also informed the ZIPA delegation that he had appointed me and Ndugu Warioba to follow the discussions and to provide such assistance as might be necessary and needed by the nationalist delegations.

Around 6.00 p.m., after the ZIPA delegation had left, Mwalimu then proceeded to give us a briefing on our role in Geneva.

He reiterated that the raison d'être of our presence in Geneva was to support the nationalist delegations. He gave us the background briefing on the developments leading to Geneva and how he evaluated what has to be done there. Mwalimu stressed the importance of forging the unity, (at least of objectives) of the nationalist delegations and directed that our role would be to liaise with and assist all the four nationalist delegations.

Mwalimu then had to proceed to Makunduchi where he had to spend the night. But he directed both Warioba and myself to go there as he might have other ideas to impart and directives to give (we had no plan to go to Makunduchi, and we were banking on the hope that after our meeting with Mwalimu (at former Karimjee's house), we would stay in Zanzibar town.) Around 9.00 p.m., the President's motorcade arrived at Makunduchi. There we had an opportunity for further discussions with the President and the First Vice President. We had dinner together with Mwalimu and Ndugu Jumbe. Besides Joseph and myself, those present included Ndugu Joseph Butiku and the President's elder brother, Mzee Nyerere. Joseph and myself left Makunduchi around 10.45 p.m. and arrived in Zanzibar town around 11.30 p.m. where we had spent the night at the former Karimjee's house.

Saturday, October 23, 1976

We left Zanzibar for Dar es Salaam around 10.00 a.m. Earlier in the morning, Suedi and myself were privileged to observe the eclipse of the sun. This was quite a sight.

Sunday, October 24, 1976

Evening: We left Dar es Salaam for Rome enroute to Geneva by EC 674. The plane was about three hours late. Fortunately, however, we did not miss our connecting flight from Rome (Swiss Airways flight SR 611).

Our flight from Dar es Salaam to Rome was quite a remarkable one. We had with us the full entourage of two of the nationalist delegations - that of Bishop Muzorerwa, and that of Ndabaningi Sithole. In a sense, one quarter of the aircraft was full of the freedom fighters. (I remarked jokingly to Joseph that this is one flight which was good material for high-jacking!)

Monday, October 25, 1976

Around 11.00 a.m. we arrived in Geneva. The Press was in full force awaiting the Bishop and the Reverend. Joseph and I were met by the Charge d'Affaires of Trinidad and Tobago, Mrs. Annette Auguste who proved helpful throughout our stay in Geneva. We were temporarily booked at the President Hotel due to the fact that the Inter Continental Hotel on that particular day was fully booked. We found on our arrival at the President Hotel that Mark Shona and Dunstan Kamana were in fact booked in the same Hotel.

After some consultations with them, we had come to the conclusion that it would be better for us not to stay in the Inter-Continental Hotel since most of the nationalist delegations were staying there. For the one thing we wanted to avoid was the impression that "the big brothers" were watching.

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Tuesday, October 26, 1976

This morning we had a meeting of the Front-line States. The meeting took place in Mark Shona's suite at the President Hotel. Up to now only three observer delegations had arrived, namely, that of Botswana, Zambia and ourselves. Botswana delegation comprised of its Foreign Minister, A. Mogwe, and the Private Secretary of President Seretse Khama, Ndugu Joseph Legwaila. Zambia's delegation was a three-men team comprised of Mark Chona, Dunstan Kamana, and Ammon Bosco Chibanda. Besides, the Zambian delegation had also brought some Secretaries.

At this meeting, I proposed that Botswana's Foreign Minister should be the Chairman of our Group. (As President Nyerere is Chairman of the Front-line States, it was logical that we should assume the chairmanship of the observer delegation of the Front-line States. But both I and Warioba agreed that in view of the presence in our midst of a Foreign Minister, it was wise both from the protocol point of view, as well as diplomatic acumen, that the Botswana Foreign Minister preside over our group.)

At this meeting, we agreed to have regular consultations by meeting daily if necessary coordinating our position and render collective advice to the nationalist delegations. We felt that that would be the wisest way to ensure the maximum harmonization of positions.

The Mozambican delegation was expected in the next day or so, but there was no word yet concerning the possibility of the participation of the observer delegation from Angola.

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Since our arrival, we have made some contacts with the nationalist delegations. On the basis of these contacts, we have come to find out that the issue of the chairmanship was still being made a fundamental question by two of the nationalist delegations, namely, the Patriotic Front of Comrades Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe. In fact we were made to understand that the Patriotic Front would insist that a cabinet minister must preside over the Conference. They would also insist on a clear clarification on the role of Britain in this Conference. We were further made to understand that unless these questions were resolved, the Patriotic Front would refuse to take part in the Conference. Thus, even before the Conference began, the crisis was in the making.

In our meeting of this morning with the other observers, we discussed this problem. We all felt that at this point of the game, it would really be unfortunate to prevent the opening of the Conference because of these questions. We recollected the fact that our Heads of State had earlier on raised this question with the British Government. The latter had insisted on retaining Ivor Richard. There was absolutely no likelihood that the British Government would at this stage change its position, and to push them by confrontation on this question was unlikely to achieve any significant result. Furthermore, we (of the Tanzanian delegation) briefed our colleagues on Mwalimu's thinking on this question. When we met the President in Zanzibar on 22nd October, he did point out that there was no point

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belabouring the question of the chairmanship any further.

Another question of interest is the question of observer status in this Conference. Here it should be recollected that the British Government has hitherto refused to allow any observer as such. But the Front-line Presidents did take a decision to send us anyway, irrespective of whatever status we may have. For the important thing was not the status we possessed in this Conference, but rather the role we were supposed to play in assisting the nationalist delegations. Again here, when we met Mwalimu in Zanzibar he did tell us not to make any fuss about whether or not the Chairman would give us an official status of observer.

Since our arrival we have been able to find out ^{that} the British Government was in fact reconsidering its own position, and it was a foregone conclusion ~~that~~ they would allow us (of the Front-line States) together with the representative of the OAU, and the representative of the Commonwealth Secretariat to take part as observers. (The Chairman of the Council of the Ministers of the OAU, Sir Harold Walters, the Foreign Minister of Mauritius, and the Assistant Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat Mr. Emeka Anouk were in fact already in Geneva. We were also informed that Ambassador Modibo Isa, the Nigerian High Commissioner to Tanzania was soon to arrive in Geneva as part of the OAU delegation. In the meantime, Ambassador Clarke, the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations in Geneva, will be performing that role pending the arrival of Ambassador Modibo.)

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As a matter of interest, it is important to record here that Sir Harold's presence in Geneva is not necessarily an asset. He has a capacity for confusion. Somebody described him as both confused and confusonist. Only a week ago or so in New York, he richly deserved this characterization by the confusion he caused in the African Group when he informed us of the discussions he had with Secretary Kissinger concerning the question of Namibia. At that meeting, he over simplified the issue, and according to the Americans who talked to various Africans later, actually he did not convey correctly what Secretary Kissinger had told him in respect to the negotiations which he, Kissinger, had with the South Africans. Sir Harold Walter's problem was that, he was always going to the Press, taking^{the}/initiative on issues which he knew very little, a habit which could certainly cause us problems in view of the delicate nature of the present negotiations and the sensitivities of the nationalist delegations. No wonder that Ndugu Legwaila of Botswana was later to characterize Sir Harold as "a walking disaster".

Wednesday, October 27, 1976

The issue of the chairmanship continues to cloud the atmosphere. The Patriotic Front maintains its position that Britain must send a Cabinet minister. There is another question which seems to infuriate the nationalist delegations, and more particularly, the Patriotic Front. This concerns the financing of the nationalist delegations' ^{stay}/in Geneva. The Patriotic