

I told President Diouf that he and other African leaders should encourage President Mobutu to go back to Zaire. The Senegalese Head of State said that he agreed with my assessment and analysis of the situation in Zaire and the country's importance to the sub-region and the continent. He also agreed with my suggestion that he should get in touch with President Mobutu and encourage him.

President Diouf and I also reviewed developments in Eastern Zaire with particular reference to the plight of the refugees and displaced persons. I stressed the fact that (a) there is a need to reassess the situation bearing in mind the more than 500,000 Rwandese refugees who have gone back to Rwanda and (b) the need to provide humanitarian relief assistance to those who are still stranded in Eastern Zaire. President Diouf reaffirmed his country's readiness to contribute to the proposed multi-national force whose fate remains uncertain given the differences of views of the potential contributing countries (especially the differences between the U.S. and France).

#### Issue of the Election of U.N. Secretary General

In bringing up this subject, President Diouf made, inter alia, the following points :

(i) It has now become very clear that the United States will continue to block the re-election of Boutros Boutros-Ghali. It was therefore important for alternative candidates to be considered so that Africa continues to have the second mandate.

(2) A number of leaders have approached him to present the candidature of his Foreign Minister Mustapha Niassé. He has in principle agreed although he has also *pointed out* that Senegal's candidature will face two main obstacles. These are (a) A Senegalese, Jacques Diouf is the DG of FAO and (b) China's position (in view of Senegal's relations with Taiwan).

(3) President Mandela has talked to him over the phone and referred to him candidatures of Kofi Annan and my own potential candidature. According to President Diouf, President Mandela showed clear preference to my own possible candidature.

(b) President Diouf had drawn attention of President Mandela to President Chirac's public statement of stating the next SG of the UN must be a fluent speaker of French. He went on to say that it was unfortunate that Chirac has made a public statement like the U.S. had gone public on its opposition to BBG. In a way, this issue of the UNSG election has become part of the big power game (rivalry).

In my response to President Diouf's remarks, I inter alia, made the following observations.

(i) There is no doubt in my mind that the U.S. will continue to block BBG. He has become a victim of domestic politics. It is impossible for President Clinton to change his position vis-à-vis BBG without eroding his credibility. It is unfortunate that BBG has become a victim of such circumstances because he has really tried hard to perform his responsibilities.

(ii) Africa has rightly supported BBG and has remained faithful in its support. No one can accuse Africa of failing or even hesitating in its support. But the fact remains that given the U.S. position - as a Permanent Member of the Security Council, BBG cannot be re-elected. It was therefore important within the meaning of the Yaounde Resolution for Africa to consider alternative strategies. We should not miss the post by default. Thus the need to move and to move with deliberate speed.

(iii) There are a number of eligible African candidates. They should be presented. There is no need and nor is it advisable to start zeroing in on any particular candidate. We should propose candidates for the Security Council to pronounce itself.

(iv) I did not believe that the fact that a Senegalese is heading FAO should be a disqualification for Niasse to become UNSG. But the real problem can be the Chinese given Senegal's relations with Taiwan.

(v) As for my own position, I have repeatedly stated that given my position as SG of the OAU and given my experiences of 1981, I would not want to have my name in the list unless I have some indications that I will not be opposed. Currently given France's position on the language factor, then I am disqualified. But I wonder whether the real issue is one's capacity to speak French or one's understanding of the legitimate interests of France including the importance of the French language. I was of the view that this consideration was more important than whether or not one speaks French. I recalled that in 1981, France consistently voted for me. And in the last seven years as OAU SG, I have worked very closely with the French. I said that perhaps President Diouf could find out the bottom line of the French position on this. But if the French persist on the language factor, then clearly I could not be a candidate though many African leaders have approached me and urged me to run.

President Diouf agreed with my observations. He said that while in Ouagadougou, he will undertake consultations with his peers so that this issue of the election of UNSG is finalized. He

seemed to imply that he will also discuss the issue of the French language in respect of my possible candidature.

Issue of Re-election as SG of the OAU

The main original purpose of my visit to Senegal this time around was to follow up the issue with President Diouf. I recalled his positive response and encouragement when I brooded over the subject last April (?) in Paris. I pointed out that though the media believes I am here to discuss the issue of UNSG, the reality is that I am following upon our Paris discussion. I therefore would like the President's advice, counsel and assistance.

President Diouf responded. "If you do not become Secretary General of the United Nations, then clearly you must continue to serve Africa as SG of the OAU. You have an excellent record. And Africa clearly requires your service. Who will even dare to stand against you?" President Diouf went on to assure me of their full support and assistance.

The meeting ended at 1915 hours as it began in a very cordial atmosphere.

Following is a full record of my meeting with President Diouf prepared by my Director of Cabinet, Said Djinnit