

SAS/SG/OAU: DIARY/NOTES
THURSDAY, 05 DECEMBER 1996

namely that France will continue to insist on the language factor being one of the criteria for any candidate.)

I also told him of the contacts/surveys which my Director of Cabinet, Said Djinnit has had with President Chirac's Advisor on African Affairs, Monsieur Dupuch earlier in the evening during the dinner. When asked on the issue of the language, the Advisor of the French President made it quite clear that they are determined to use command of the French language as a condition prerequisite. Monsieur Dupuch inter alia told Said, "I am sorry for Salim. We like him", but the language factor for us is important.

I told Legwaila that given the position of France, it would be unwise to present my candidature. Joe and I agreed that we should continue to monitor the situation while efforts are being made to persuade France to show flexibility.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 06, 1996

Issue of UNSG

This has been quite a day in so far as my own possible candidature for the post of UNSG is concerned. In this context, it has also been a day of dramatic surprises when all of a sudden when watching CNN around 1700 hours local time, I heard that Vice President Thabo Mbeki had declared in New Delhi full support for my possible candidature as UNSG. This development should be seen within the context of the fact that I had no idea that such a public declaration was forthcoming. It also came amidst a number of developments earlier today which all led to the conclusion that it was neither wise nor desirable for my name to be presented given what was becoming the increasingly clear French opposition for linguistic reasons - irrational as that may be given France's support for my candidature in 1981.

Following developments related to the question of UNSG are worth noting.

(i) At 0515 President Benjamin Mkapa telephoned me from Iringa, Tanzania to inquire about the situation and more specifically if

the Ouagadougou Summit has come out with any concrete position on the issue. I briefed the President accordingly including my consultations with President Compaore and General Sani Abacha. I concluded by asking the President that given the situation it would not be wise to submit my name. Rather, consultations should be intensified with a view to determining the bottom line position of France and in the process attempt to persuade them to demonstrate flexibility.

(ii) At 0615 and late at 0900, Amne telephoned from Addis Ababa. On both occasions, we discussed the issue of UNSG and I told her that it is my firm position that unless the French position is clarified in a more flexible manner, there is no point for my name to be presented to the Security Council. Amne was fully supportive of this positive.

(iii) At 0915 hours (while I was still trying to sleep though I went to bed at 0400 hours, I have been constantly awakened by telephone calls. They are undoubtedly important and relevant ones), a gentleman who identified himself as French Ambassador coordinating the France-Africa Summit telephoned me. He said that he was informed by the French Ambassador in Pretoria that I should telephone President Nelson Mandela at 1100 hours South African time at 27-11-4831227 (on checking, I found out that that was the number of the residence of the President in Johannesburg) or 1900 hours South African time at (27-21)6899121 (Cape Town). Since the time the gentleman called me was already past 1100 hours South African time, I telephoned the President at 1700 hours local time (which was 1900 hours South African time) only to find that he was not in the residence. I was informed that he was attending an official dinner but that they will call me when the President returns. It was after I had made the call to Cape Town that I saw the CNN news about South Africa's support for my candidature.

The issue of the UNSG was one of the topics of discussion when Foreign Minister Jakaya Kikwete accompanied by Ambassador Kibello came to see me in my hotel suite at 1215 hours and stayed until 1330 hours. (N.B. other issues discussed included the question of the relevance or otherwise of the continued sanctions against the regime in Bujumbura; the impact of those sanctions, the danger that sanctions will lapse by circumstances; the importance of remaining or at least drastically reviewing them in order to encourage the negotiation process since Buyoya says he cannot move or is unable to move without movement on sanctions and finally the Nairobi II Summit on Eastern Zaire which could also discuss the situation in Burundi).

In evaluating the prospects of my possible candidature, we agreed that it was first important to establish how far the French are prepared to go in their insistence on the French language issue and that if their position of insistence becomes a condition prerequisite, then clearly my candidature is still-born and thus there is no point in having my name presented.

At 2015 hours, Abdul Minty, Deputy Director General for Multilateral Affairs and Organization in the Department of Foreign Affairs telephoned me from Pretoria. He then briefed me on what Deputy President Thabo Mbeki had said in New Delhi. He went on to explain the South African position as follows :

- After consultations between President Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and others, President Mandela has decided not only for South Africa to support me but to formally present my candidature to the President of the UN Security Council.

- They are prepared to do so immediately but they wanted first to have my okay.

- They were conscious of France's position on the issue of language but they do not believe that that is enough to make France veto my candidature.

- President Mandela has spoken separately to Presidents Clinton and Chirac and will brief me accordingly. But it is their feeling that we should not allow the French position to obstruct the presentation of my name. If the French veto my candidature, they will be seeking a confrontation and their interests in Africa will be affected.

I told Abdul Minty that I very much appreciated President Mandela's confidence in me and his preparedness to push my candidature. At the same time however, it was in my opinion important to check again on the French position. If they are determined to veto, I saw no point in pursuing the issue. I maintained that a confrontation will not help any one and certainly not me. Furthermore such a confrontation besides the fact that it will not lead to my election has the potential of creating division within our own ranks. I pointed out that in the last seven years as Secretary General of the OAU, I have endeavoured with some success, to bridge the differences between the so called Anglophones and Francophones in our Organization. I cannot therefore afford to do anything which could be used to rekindle Francophone-Anglophone divide and in the process undermine all that I have been fighting for.

At this point, Abdul Minty urged that I should speak to President Mandela who has said that whatever time I came back I should call him.

Telephone Conversation with President Mandela

I called President Mandela in Cape Town - (27-21-6899121), our conversation lasted from 2040 to 2055 hours local time (corresponding to 2240 to 2255 hours South Africa time).

President Mandela informed me as follows :

(i) He had telephoned President Clinton and asked him what would be his attitude if my candidature were presented. The President of the United States told President Mandela that he could get back to him. But Clinton did not come back. However, Ambassador Jelly, South Africa's Permanent Representative at the United Nations was informed by his counterpart - Ambassador Marlene Albright (now designated as Secretary of State) that "things do change". (This, according to President Mandela was the response to his message and what it means is that the United States will not veto me this time around.

(ii) He has spoken to President Chirac who had raised the issue of the language. Then Chirac promised to send an emissary because it was not appropriate to discuss the issue in detail over the phone. The envoy of President Chirac did come to South Africa and met him. The emissary explained that France will not support any candidate who does not speak French. President Mandela told the envoy that to make the election of the Secretary General dependent on the language basis was unreasonable. He urged the envoy to send a message to President Chirac to reconsider his position and that he would also himself take up the matter with Chirac. He has however not spoken to Chirac since his envoy came to see him. Neither has he heard anything from the French Head of State.

(iii) He has spoken to Mwalimu and South Africa is prepared to nominate my name for consideration by the Security Council. He has also talked to President Biya, the OAU Current Chairman.

(iv) He has also talked to President Diouf (N.B. when I met the Senegalese Head of State in Dakar last Monday, December 02, he did tell me that President Mandela had telephoned him and has spoken in favour of my candidature). The President of Senegal had informed him that he was going to present his Foreign Minister Mustapha Niasse as a candidate but he was concerned that China would veto him since Senegal has no relations with the Peoples Republic of China, having established diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

President Mandela concluded by emphasizing that he is prepared to present my name on behalf of South Africa.

I thanked President Mandela for his great confidence in me and his support. I then briefed him on our assessment of the French position here. It was clear, I pointed out, that thus far France is determined to insist on the language factor. It was thus important to establish whether they are going to stick to this position and veto me. If that is the case, then there is no point of having my name submitted. I did not see what can be gained through a confrontation. I therefore urged the President to get in touch with President Chirac with a view to persuading him at least not to be so negative. President Mandela agreed with my assessment and promised to get in touch with President Chirac tomorrow.

Further telephone conversation with Abdul Minty

At 2100 hours, Abdul Minty telephoned me. I briefed him on my discussion with Mandela and underscored the importance of consultations with the French. About 30 minutes later, Abdul Minty telephoned again from Pretoria. This time he informed me that they will start tomorrow working to mobilize the members of the Security Council by contacting the Governments either at President's level, Ministerial level or Ambassador's level. Put succinctly, South Africa is prepared to pursue the issue with determination and deliberate speed. We agreed that tomorrow I shall be in Lome, Togo which is my next stop.

N.B. In the course of the night, I telephoned separately Ambassadors Mwakawago and Legwaila and briefed them on the evolving situation i.e. the South African initiative and my discussions with President Mandela.

Other Engagements

(1) As already stated, among the appointments of the day was a meeting in my hotel suite with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, Hon. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete. This took place from 1215 to 1330 hours.

(2) From 1500 to 1615 hours, I met in my hotel suite with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uganda, E. Kitagaya. We reviewed developments in the Great Lakes Region, Burundi, my meeting with President Mobutu in Cap Saint-Martin near Nice as well as the developments in Zaire proper.

(Notes by Professor Johnson)