

Lake would be introducing me before I deliver what has been characterized as a keynote address.

Otherwise I watched on TV the continuing World Cup matches.

## **Sunday, June 26, 1994**

### Trip to Washington

Since the White House Conference on Africa is expected to start at 1400 hours, we left New York driving to Washington at 0815 hours. We went in two office cars. I was with Ambassador Sy While Ambassador Bandora drove with Assistant Executive Secretary, Dr. Solomon Gomez.

By 1230 hours we were in Washington, DC. Gomez and I were accommodated at Embassy Suites Hotel located 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and M Street.

### The White House Conference on Africa

The Conference which was held at the White House started a little after 1400 hours after Security clearance we proceeded to Room 450 – the auditorium where Plenary Sessions were being held.

The Conference was the first of its kind by any United States Administration and it came at a time when there have been considerable criticisms on U.S. policy on Africa with special reference to the current tragedy in Rwanda. The conference was somewhat “tainted” by the boycott of the congressional Black Caucus who said they were not consulted on the preparations of the Conference. They accused the organizers of hasty and poor planning. It was in my view an unfortunate development. Not that the White House should and have deliver enough consultations. But whatever the defects, the fact that the administration role on unpredicted initiative for Africa should have been given more -- that other minor shortcomings. In any case, the effect of the boycott was restrained by the impressive personalities – Afro Crusts who participated. Then that was Jesse Jackson who addressed the Conference the next day during which he dismissed those who said that the Conference was too early by asserting that it was W. B. Dabois who had called for such a conference in 1901. This in effect the Conference, in the words of Jesse Jackson was 93 years late!!! Furthermore, two members of the Congressional Black caucus did address the Conference as part of a Peace of House of Representatives and Senate members. These were Senator Carol Moseley – Brawn and Congresswoman Maxine Walters.

The significance of the Conference was reflecting by the wide variety of the premier personalities including Administration officials Senators and congresspersons, Academics, private business personalities, prominent individual, Non Governmental organizations and some Americas working in the UN such as the UNICEF Executive Director James Crant. Above all, Top Administration officials including President Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and

National Security Advisor Tony Lake took part. The Secretary of State Warren Christopher also participated by delivering a short address at the dinner which he hosted at State Department and at which I was the featured Keynote Speaker.

This was essentially an American Affair to discuss American policy on Africa only two Africans were specifically invited. These were myself and Professor Wangori Muta Maathai, Professor, Founder of Green Belt Movement, Kenya. There were also some African Journalists and a distinguished Academician working as a scholar in residence at Brookline Institute in Washington, Dr. Francis Derg (Sudanese).

The Conference met in Plenary Session as well as the working Groups/workshops. These were held at the White House, old Executive Building. The First Plenary Session was held this afternoon with the following:

- ❖ Welcome and overview by National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake;
- ❖ Video message from President Nelson Mandela of South Africa,
- ❖ "The State of Africa" by Assistant Secretary of State for American Africa Affairs, George Moose and
- ❖ "Promoting Development in Africa" by the USAID Administration Brian Atwood.

Following these presentations the Conference participants proceeded to the Working Groups. There were six Working Groups each with two Co-chairpersons. The Working Groups were:

- i) Meeting the challenge of Global Issues;
- ii) Promoting Sustainable Development;
- iii) Addressing African's Internal Conflicts;
- iv) Fostering Human Rights and Democracy;
- v) Promoting Bilateral Trade and Investment and
- vi) Developing an American Constituency for Africa.

I attended the Plenary Session and participated fully in the workshop dealing with Internal Conflicts. The story went out that I dominated the Session!!

#### My Keynote address

For me, my main function was at the dinner hosted by the Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the State Department. More than 150 guests including all the Top brass of the state Department were present as well as all the conference participants including some Senators and Congressmen as well as such old heads as Ambassadors Andrew Young and Donald McHevy were present.

I was seated at the main table with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa of the House of Representative Congressman Harry Johnston, Under Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff and the prominent TV personality Charlane Garat Hunter of the Mc Neil. Lehner Report – the Public Broadcasting System i.e. Channel 13 TV. In the reception which preceded the dinner, I was introduced to my Guests by the President of the African American Institute Mrs. Vivian Derryiks and Assistant Secretary of State George Moose.

I took centre stage at the dinner Secretary of State Christopher made a brief address before dinner was served. And before dessert, National Security Advisor Tony Lake took the podium and introduced me. He made a glowing tribute to my role. He recalled that I was from Pemba in Tanzania and recited my various roles in the country and at the UN. He was very effusive in his praise in particular in my role as Secretary General of the OAU. He particularly highlighted what he characterised as my crucial role in the efforts by the OAU at Conflict resolution.

My address, which was interrupted several times by hand applauses focussed on the situation in Africa and what the OAU was doing. It touched on the challenges of democratisation, economic reforms, peace and stability through conflict resolution. At the end of the address, which lasted some thirty-five minutes, I was given a standing ovation! The statement was in great demand and modesty apart did go along way to basically set the stage for serious discussion in the respective working groups.

#### Conversation/Discussion with Secretary of State Warren Christopher

Since Secretary of State Christopher was seated on my left at the Dinner. I had ample time to caring on a discussion with him during the meal before my address as well as subsequent to my address but revel so during the forum.

One of the issues that I raised with was the situation in Algeria and the need to understand and where appropriate support the efforts of the secular forces in that country as they try with considerable difficulties to overcome the forces of extremism. I underscored this importance of Algeria not only in the context of the ---- but the Continent as a whole. I also stressed the serious implications for the entire continent if the forces of religious extremism were to have their way in that country. I stated that the Algerian Government should be encouraged in its efforts to promote dialogue with all the senator and worldwide forces in that country. All those who abandon the path of senseless violence should be incorporated in the dialogue framework.

Secretary Christopher stated that they are clearly concerned on what is happening in Algeria. He appreciated my observation. He stated he took it from what I have said that I believe that the Algerian Government should be supported. To which I replied in the affirmative.

The other issue which I raised was Rwanda and the need to ensure a rapid deployment of UNAMIR II by providing logistical and technical support to African troops. This is a point which I had also made as part of my key note address at the dinner. The Secretary of State assured me that they were working into the matter and that the United States will do what it can.

We also touched on Sudan. I reiterated the importance of supporting the IGADD Initiative. Significantly Secretary Christopher told me that in the latest conflicts the Sudanese Government seems to be more sensitive and fourth coming with respect to international concerns. This is clearly a more positive evaluation on the relations between the U.S. and the Sudanese Government coming from the Chief of U.S. diplomacy. And interestingly during the course of my discussion with Administration official here in Washington this time around were raised the issue of Sudan. This is a far cry from the experience of last year when everyone did so.

### **Monday, June 27, 1994**

This was the second day of the White House Conference on Africa. And it was quite event.

The morning was devoted to two Plenary Sessions. The first was to listen to Professor Wangari Mathai who was introduced by Vice President Al Gore. Unfortunately I was not able to attend the address though I did get a copy of the speech which was a no nonsense type and which was very much applauded and

I arrived when she was finishing her address. But I was in time for the statements made by the Congressman Panel and these were also quite incisive. Those who spoke giving the view from the Hill were:

1. Senator Amo Houghton
2. Congress Woman Maxine Walters
3. Senator Paul Simon, Chairman Senate Sub Committee on Africa
4. Senator Carol Mosley – Braun
5. Congressman Harry Johnson, Chairman House Sub Committee on Africa
6. Senator James Jefford and
7. Congressman Tony Hail, Chairman House Committee on Hayer

Not surprisingly, the Law matters besides demonstrating the interest and concern on developments in Africa and the support for a more committed role on the part of the United State in support of efforts by undertake in the continent towards development democratisation and promotion of peace and stability, they also under serve the necessity build a constituency for Africa in the United States. Without such a constituency it becomes very difficult for the congressman and senators to do as much as they would like to on behalf of the

continent. Two examples would suffice to demonstrate this point. Senator Paul Simon said that when he gets back to his state and his constituency a number of interest groups to try for the cause Jews-American, Italian- American, Polish-American all lobbying for the respective countries of origin. But he does not get any pressure from the Africa- American electorate Congressman Johanson recalled that his own chief of Staff had advised him to move from the Sub Committee of Africa which chairman because it is those of a liability than an asset when it concerns to the electorate!!!

### The Luncheon I was supposed to attend but could not

Understandably security was very tight. But like so many such situations that was also an element of exaggeration and confusion in variably leading to mishaps which then embarrass the hosts! We had a taste of this today.

The Plenary Session was on by 1215 hours. Together with Vivian Derrycks and Chaine Gant Hunter and such other participants including the entire OAU delegation Sy, Bandora and Gomez we decided to walk by ourselves without a guide from the old Executive Building to the Treasury where Vice President Al Gore was hosting a lunch and was scheduled to deliver an address

Upon arrival at the Treasury, the Security people (Secret Service?) checked everyone individually not as per ---- each one of us either produced an ID or a national passport. I produced my national passport and apparently they had my name and were denied. But the names of all my three collaborators were not in the list. So the Fracas began. The Security Service people started telephoning the superiors. For my part I waited aside for them. Vivian and Chaine unaware of what was happening went upstairs. After a minute or so the Security Service guy who had cleared me requesting me to give him my passport saying that he was asked to check on something then he asked me for my birthday. It is the same guy who gave me no a Security clearance. I thought enough was enough. So we decided to leave, the Security Service guy told his superior that I had refused to give my birthday (Dummy – he should have read it in the passport) and that I was leaving. Thus we missed the Vice President Luncheon and instead we went to luncheon at Chinese restaurant.

When we went back late at the old Executive Building we discovered that all hell had broken loose. I was supposed to be at the Vice President's table. When Vivian and a Vice Presidential Assistant came to check for me they discovered that I had gone and was briefed on what happened they were properly embarrassed and furious at what the Security guy had done. But in reality it was not fair to blame them. They should have had someone to wait for us. A ----- of apologies then started flowing: It started with the Vice President's staff (I believe was Chief of Staff), followed by Vivian, followed by Assistant Security George Moose and ultimately by the National Security Advisor. I began to fill bad about the whole thing. I assured my hosts that it was a simple mishap and they should not worry about it. They however remained visibly uncomfortable!

### President Clinton's address

The address by President Clinton was in itself a manifestation of the Administration's service mean and working on how to shape the most effective U.S. Policy on Africa. The content of the address though general in character was quite powerful; the speech seems to project a sense of concern and conviction. Among the points ad--- grated by President Clinton two stood out. First: the fact that the U.S. did not have an Africa policy as such. To quote the President "***When I became President it seemed to me that our country really did not have a policy toward Africa, that we had policies towards specific countries and very often we tried to do the right thing. We did have a policy towards South Africa that had been the subject of much decision and this was the subject of a lot of country after the election. But it occurred to me that we cause daily suffering from having paid insufficient attention to the entire continent as well as to various regions and specific countries and specific problems and certain great promise!!***

The second point was the need to build an American constituency for Africa and be rightly underscored that in the workings of the American democracy, such a constituency is a condition ---- a non-for meaningful action and for mobilising interest and support for Africa. Let me again quote President Clinton's own words:

***"..... I want to ask all of you who are American's at least when you leave here to help us to develop an American constituency for Africa that creates lasting links between our people and their peoples, and that will help to drive not only the continent ahead but will help to drive a meaningful, sustained agenda here at home.***

***We can do that. And may be the most important thing I can do to work with you in the aftermath of this conference is to do what all the President can do to develop that constituency, to explain to the American people of whatever race, region or background, why Africa matters to all of us and to our ---- future*** (emphasis added)

***But all members here of the congress who have participated in this including many who have tried to have more attention drawn to Africa for years and years know that is the first thing we must do in our democracy."***

President Clinton was introduced by Vice President Al Gore. The President and the Vice President came some 3 minutes late and he apologised for that explaining that he was at a press briefing concerning changes in the White House involving his Chief of Staff and the Budget Director etc.

Here again is part of the Clinton Administration's problem on term of prior Timing of events that even when they do remarkable things they are often dwarfed or completely magicalized. Here was President Clinton making a major address on Africa which should have received worldwide attention and

would have made Headline. But then just before making this address he proceeded to make the changes in the White House. Result: All the Media attention was clearly on the White House changes and very little if all mention was made of his Statement on Africa this unwillingly undermining. The White House's own important initiative in convening this first ever White House Conference on Africa... Couldn't the President delay the announcement of his White House Reshuffle for a day?