

SAS/SG/OAU

Salim's personal notes

Tuesday, March 13, 1990.

I am today on my second day of my working visit to Libya. And the highlight of today's activities and indeed the highlight of my visit to the Jamahiriya was my meeting with the leader of the Libyan Revolution (recently proclaimed by the Congress of the People as the supreme leader of the revolution) Colonel Muamer Al Gaddafi.

I had three other official activities and one private one. The official functions included the visit to the former residence of the Libyan leader which was brutally and massively bombarded by the United States fighter planes in 1986 with the objective of killing the Libyan leader. That objective miserably failed but there were many civilian casualties including the killing of the adopted daughter of Colonel Gaddafi - the little baby girl Hannah. This place has now been turned into a shrine for Libyans and foreigners to come and witness "the barbarism of United States imperialism". The visit to this place took place in the morning from around 09.40 to 10.15 hours.

In the afternoon from about 15.50 to 17.50 hours, we visited the Azzawia Oil Refinery located some 70 kilometres from the city of Tripoli. This is a refinery which was the first of its kind, established in 1974 with one unit refinery producing 60,000 barrels of oil a day. Another unit with a similar capacity was added in 1977.

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Now the Azzawia refining units produce 120,000 barrels per day. The refinery is managed and run exclusively by Libyan personnel.

Before going to the refinery, I gave two interviews - one to a correspondent of PANA and the other to a radio correspondent of the Popular Committees of the Jamahiriya. The interview with PANA lasted from 15.30 to 15.50 while that of the radio correspondent took place from 15.50 to 16.15.

At 18.30 subsequent to my return from Azzawia Oil Refinery we went to visit and had tea at the residence of Ambassador Shaban Gashut, the OAU Director of Administration who was at that time visiting Libya on official business. It was a short but warm visit which enabled me to meet Ambassador Gashut's family.

Finally from 20.00 hours to 22.00 hours I had a working dinner with Foreign Minister Jedallah at the Roof-top Restaurant of the EMAHARI Hotel. At this dinner I took up some of the issues which I had earlier discussed with the Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi. And this then brings me to my meeting with the brother Colonel.

Meeting with Colonel Gaddafi

As already stated, the climax of my visit to Libya was my meeting with the Libyan leader. Due to security considerations and these are quite genuine considering among other things

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American attempts to physically liquidate the Libyan leader, the circumstances of my meeting with Colonel Gaddafi had all the air of melodrama.

Yesterday, during my discussion with the Foreign Minister, he told me that it was almost 90% certain that I would be meeting with the Libyan leader yesterday afternoon. But this did not materialize. And today the only thing that was certain was that I would meet him but nobody would tell us for certain when and where the meeting would take place.

As we were leaving the former residence of the Libyan leader, in the compound which is heavily guarded, word came through my security escort that we were waited for the meeting with Colonel Gaddafi. And it happened that the place was somewhere in the same huge compound. Djinnit, Zongo, Gashut and myself were then taken to an office building where a few minutes later we were joined by Foreign Minister Jedallah. We must have stayed about 20 minutes or so when a protocol officer came to fetch me and the Foreign Minister.

We were then taken in a car and after a few rounds and corners we stopped. It would appear that even Jedallah had no idea where the meeting with the Libyan leader would take place! Eventually our car stopped and we were taken a few yards or so and there in front of us near a tent and with a background of some camels was the Libyan leader, standing impressively dressed in the Libyan national attire.

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Colonel Gaddafi greeted me warmly and invited me to sit. And there were only two chairs. The leader sat on one and I on the other. The Protocol Official then rushed in another chair which was used by Foreign Minister Jedallah. Colonel Gaddafi understands English well. He also does speak the language. Nonetheless, the Foreign Minister served as interpreter. Colonel Gaddafi did not need interpretation when I spoke though occasionally Jedallah would butt in to explain a point or two. At times Colonel Gaddafi responded directly in English but most of the time he spoke in Arabic and Jedallah interpreted.

The following is a resumé of our discussion which lasted some 1 hour 20 minutes - from 11.35 to 12.53 hours.

Col. Gaddafi: I am very happy to see you. We in Libya have every reason to be happy with you holding this important position. We know of your credentials an outstanding African. We have great hopes and expectations in you.

Salim: I am happy to be in Libya and to have the opportunity of meeting with you. You know you are held in high esteem by many Africans for your defence of the legitimate rights of the African people.

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Col. Gaddafi: We had high hopes in the Team of President Mubarak and Secretary General Salim. We had hoped that the Mubarak-Salim team can address itself to the solution of such african problems like Chad and Sahara (Western Sahara). But President Mubarak is very busy with many things and this does not allow him time to concentrate on African problems. Salim should therefore take the initiative. When I met President Mubarak recently, I discussed with him the question of Chad. I said that the OAU should investigate the allegations by Chad on Libya's involvement in the recent clashes in Dhafur. Mubarak said that he has asked Salim to send a team to investigate (The Libyan leader was implying that despite Mubarak's assertion nothing had been done).

This accusation of Libya using the so-called Islamic Legion is such nonsense. We are ready for investigation. Chad is itself Muslim country. How can the Islamic Legion be of any relevance to the Chadian situation. These are attempts by Christian Europeans and others to build the image of Muslim intervention by invoking the ghosts of the Islamic Legion.

They are afraid of the impact of the Libyan Revolution among the Africans and the Muslims. They therefore want to tarnish its image. What I do not understand is why Habré, himself, a Muslim should use the same anti-Muslim propaganda?

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We are sincere and keen to help Chad. We had paid expensively to help Chad. In the past Libya had helped FRONLINAT to fight against French colonialism. There are long historic connections between the Chadians and the Libyans. Habre himself was assisted by Libya when he was in FROLINAT. He was also educated here. Many Chadian leaders and their families were helped here. Our stand has always been not be hostile to Chad. We have always been friendly. But the US and France have always sought to create difficulties and division. But these efforts on their part will not change our fraternal attitude towards Chad. I wonder if Habre really knows where his interests are. It seems that sometimes he does not understand. It is not in Libya's interest for Chad to have instability.

I profoundly hope that a solution can be found by the efforts of Mubarak/Salim team both on the Chad and Sahara situations.

Salim:

Upon receipt of Libya's message calling for the investigation of Chad's allegations, I briefed both President Bongo and President Mubarak. I met with President Mubarak in Cairo in November last year but he did not tell me anything about sending a team to investigate. I am sure, Brother Leader, you understand the constraints under which the Secretary General of the Organization has to operate. In view of the fact that this

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question of Chad/Libya dispute is dealt with by Heads of State (in this case Presidents Bongo and Mubarak), I have to consult with them and seek their guidance.

Col. Gaddafi: It is important to send a team to investigate the allegations on the so-called involvement of the Islamic Legion.

Minister Jadallah: President Bongo has sent an emissary who has stated that Chad does not object to the sending of an investigating team.

Salim: It may indeed be a good idea to send such a team. It may have the effect of confidence building. When I met with President Habre last January, I formed a distinct impression that one of the stumbling blocks in arriving at a solution is the existing climate of suspicion as to the motives of Libya. For example, in an answer to my question on the issue of Libyan POWs, President Habre told me that he could easily release them if he believed that such a step would lead to peace. But through the extensive contacts that he has with Libyans, he has been told that such a release could usher in a new wave of aggressive activities by Libya against his country. Clearly therefore, the important though intangible factor of mutual suspicion must be overcome.

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Col. Gaddafi: Prepare a team. Once that is done, President Mubarak will support it. For our part, we are sure that it will find nothing. We have no presence of any sort in Dhafur.

Salim: How do you see the role of OAU in the light of major developments in the world?

Col. Gaddafi: I have sought to emphasize on Chad and Sahara because these are purely African problems and are capable of African solution.

With respect to the developments in Southern Africa, I expect the struggle there will be won in two years. There should be majority rôle there. Then there are two problems: getting rid of colonialism and solving internal problems.

With respect to internal problems, Africa has its fair share of them. The Ethiopian question is an internal question. According to the social theory in the Green Book the (world) map will change according to the struggle of nationalities. Ethiopia constitutes different nationalities. What we are witnessing is the struggle between these nationalities. The USSR is facing the same struggle and dilemma. In the United States, there is also a conflict and struggle between the blacks and the whites.

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This is an era of the people as foreseen in the Green Book. I am afraid Africa will go through this process. It will be difficult to keep the map as it is. In Africa there will be a struggle between different races (sic). But in the Continent it is not just a question of race but also tribal conflicts. But these struggles are universal - Poles against Germans, Slaves against Czechs; Struggle between different races in Romania. Different nationalities will struggle to assert themselves. I think the map of the world will be reshaped. I am afraid, and I am sorry for it, Africa will have its part. What is going on in Ethiopia will be repeated in other African countries.

Salim:

On the Ethiopian situation, Libya has had historic links of friendship with that country and especially with the Government of President Mengistu. I believe that Libya can help by playing a moderating influence.

Col. Gaddafi:

Unfortunately, the Ethiopian situation has now crossed the Red Line. Mengistu is responsible for that. He is very stubborn. I advised him sometime ago that to involve himself in support of opposition groups in Sudan and Somalia would eventually boomerang. Now you can not persuade

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any opposition groups in Ethiopia, the Eritreans, Tigreans and the Oromos to go back. I told him that communism is no solution for Africa - it is no solution even in Europe.

I have tried to mediate between him and the Eritreans. I proposed the solution of a federation. But he was depending on the USSR, Cuba and others. They have withdrawn their assistance. He has no other alternative.

Husak (Czechoslovakia) once told me that he was not afraid of a coup and could sleep confidently because of the Soviet military presence in his country; Castro too was relaxing under Soviet nuclear umbrella.

This is what has happened to Mengistu too (basking under the Soviet sun). We never lost touch of these realities. That is why we in Libya refuse to depend on anyone. We are willing to suffer with dignity.

The Ethiopian Government yesterday appealed to me through a public demonstration (in front of the Libyan Embassy in Addis Ababa).

Salim:

Ethiopia is very important not only for its own but also for the stability of the sub-region. It is inconceivable that there can be stability in the Sudan if there is none in Ethiopia. And the issue is not President Mengistu as such.

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Any Ethiopian Government will continue to fight. Mengistu himself took up where Emperor Haile Selassie left. Thus there must be a negotiated settlement (to the Ethiopian conflict) and you can help.

There is also another factor. This is Africa's concern over what is going on in Ethiopia. The continuation of the conflict and the belief that some Arab countries are helping opposition groups can have far reaching repercussions for African solidarity and cohesion. In particular it would have adversely affected Afro-Arab understanding and cooperation. Furthermore, while there is currently a marriage of convenience between the EPLF, the TPFL and Oromo, this would seem to be based only on the common hatred and opposition to Mengistu. But how long can such a marriage last?

Col. Gaddafi: We understand and we shall consider your analysis.

On Sahara, why is the Referendum being delayed? Why is it not being held now? It is important that it should be held this year.

Salim:

At one time there was great optimism. But recently there have been drawbacks. The UN Secretary General's representative has been in the region. Javier Perez de Cuellar himself is expected to visit the region later this month.

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Among the issues outstanding are the presence of the Moroccan forces and what to do with them as well as the issue of the Moroccan administration in the Sahara. The United Nations' experience in Namibia is being studied as a possible point of reference.

But what is your own evaluation of the prospects for a solution?

Col. Gaddafi: The Sahara question is an African problem. The OAU must exert pressure so that steps are taken to hold a referendum - all the concerned parties - Morocco and SADR say that they agree to a referendum. There is a clear readiness. This should be exploited to the full so that a solution is found.

Salim: The situation in Sudan is a source of great concern. This is not just because of the serious implication for the unity and territorial integrity of the Sudan itself but also for the larger goal of African and Afro-Arab unity. The spectre of North versus South; Arab versus Africa and Islam versus Christianity is haunting our Continent because of developments there.

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Col. Gaddafi: I would like to talk to John Garang. We created him. We trained and supplied his forces. Between 10,000 and 11,000 of his fighters were trained in Libya. We provided him with arms.

Ideologically we are very close. He shares the theories articulated in the Green Book. He is a friend of mine. Can you bring him here? If he is afraid to come you can come with him. I am convinced that if I talk to him we will be able to reach some understanding.

Salim:

There is only one last point which I want to raise with you. This concerns the resources i.e. financial situation of our Organization. We still have a perennial problem of some Member States not paying their contributions. Any organization or association can not perform effectively if its members do not abide by the rules of the game. I shall highly appreciate your assistance in this regard.

Col. Gaddafi: I am appreciative that you have raised this matter. We feel morally bound to help you for many reasons. Be assured that we shall do our best.

The meeting with the Libyan leader which commenced at 11.35 hours ended at 12.53 hours.