

SAS/SG/OAU: DIARY/NOTES
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1994

Meeting with Shimon Perez

I continue to maintain a busy schedule meeting Ministers and other personalities. One rather historic encounter today was my meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. Shimon Perez. I say historic because to my knowledge since the 1973 October (Ra... Yom Kipur war) this was the first ever official meeting between the Secretary General of the OAU and a Foreign Minister of Israel. And for me personally this was also the first time that in my capacity, I have had formal meetings with an Israeli Minister. Of course while serving at the UN in the 1970s I had several informal contacts with Israeli Permanent Representatives including Ambassador Tekoa, Herzog and Bluur.

The meeting with the Israeli Foreign Minister was held at his request. It took place at the Chinese Lounge and lasted thirty minutes - from 1630 to 1700 hours.

I complimented Perez for the achievement made in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, between Israel and Jordan and encouraged them to reach a comprehensive peace settlement noting in the process the rumours and realities of Israeli-Syrian situation.

I commended the courage and vision of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders in marching forwards towards a settlement. I told Shimon Perez that I have been citing the example of the Palestinian-Israeli peace Process to stress that if it is possible to achieve peace between these long time antagonists and enemies it is certainly possible to overcome the many conflict situations in our continent.

For his part the Chief of Israel diplomacy apart from expressing gratification at meeting me recalled with satisfaction what I had told his Ambassador in Addis Ababa (on Wednesday, September 21, 1994) to the effect that the principal reasons which led Africa to terminate relations with Israel no longer existed. These were first and foremost the occupation of African land by Israelis (i.e. Egypt); secondly, the issue of Palestinian struggle (now that a peace process between Israel and the PLO was underway and thirdly Israel's collaboration with apartheid South Africa (now that a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa has been born).

Mr. Perez and I then exchanged views on the status of Israeli-African relations. The Israeli Foreign Minister stated that with the exception of a very few countries in Africa - south of the Sahara, all African States have restored relations with Israeli - the latest being Zimbabwe, Senegal and Ghana. Among the exceptions were Tanzanians but he was optimistic that soon relations will be restored. He mentioned that Zanzibar's Minister of Planning Isaac Sepetu had been to Israel and whilst there he had said that Zanzibar wishes to establish ties of cooperation with Israel (in those areas where Zanzibar can do so independently). Israel will assist accordingly and very soon (next week?). A delegation is to go to Tanzania to explore possibilities of resuming relations.

The Foreign Minister expressed particular interest in cooperating with African countries in such areas as combating desertification and in water and agricultural development.

He said that Israel was also very interested in establishing and maintaining cooperation links with the OAU. Is it possible for non-African States to have an observer status with the OAU. I responded in the negative. But I did point out that like other non-African states representations in Addis, the Israeli Ambassador can make contacts with the OAU and also attend public sessions of the Organization as well as receive public documents.

Meeting with the President of the UNGA 49th Session

I started my day today by paying a courtesy call on the President of the 49th Session of the UN General Assembly, Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire.

The meeting took place in the President's Office G-200 and lasted from 0905 to 0930 hours. Several invited officials including former Ambassador to OAU and now Envoy to Japan were present. I was with Sy, Bandora and Conteh.

Our discussion focused on different areas of African priority between UN both at the General Assembly and the Security Council with special reference to conflict situations in Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, Angola, Mozambique and Burundi.

It was a relaxed and most cordial encounter. Amara has been my friend for a long time. Indeed I was among the first people to know of his intention to seek the Presidency of the UNGA. He had conveyed this to me both directly and through our mutual friend Bon Balala Adjali during the first week of October 1993 when I was in