

CAM/040/0098/2

REPORT OF THE MISSION IN ALGERIA

29/11/90

INTRODUCTION:

Following my brief visit to Lusaka in April 1990, where I presented an initial report, I returned to Algeria early in May to pursue duties and prepare for the Deputy President's visit. The visit took place from 18/05/90.

Points of note on the visit were:

- a) Arrival was at 22.30 hrs, six hours after the planned 16.30 hrs arrival. This deprived tens of thousand of Algerois of the opportunity to welcome their hero and forced Protocol to drastically cut the welcoming ceremony. Transport arrangements had been changed without reference to the Algerians.
- b) As Friday is a holy day for Moslems and given the pressures of fundamentalism current in Algeria everything had to be squeezed into Thursday 17th except for the press conference the programme events of the last day (18th) were ad hoc.
- c) A combination of points a) and b) plus local tensions and anxieties may have contributed to what was perceived as a down-grading of the visit from a fully-fledged state visit to "receiving a highly honoured guest and comrade"

During the visit the Deputy President met

- the State President
- Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Foreign Minister
- Party Secretary General and Polit Bureau of the FLN
- President of the National Peoples Assembly and

Parliamentarians, Heads of Diplomatic Missions; Heads of the parties; Veterans; Delegates of the Arab Lawyers Union.

Three press briefings and an Arab-net interview were held and the Prime Minister of the SADR was given an audience.

After the visit administrative tasks to re-establish the office were undertaken.

1. Status of Representation.

- 1.1 The office is still hosted by the FLN through its council for Friendship and Solidarity. (hosts to all the liberation movements and public international organisations).
- 1.2 Whilst the political and material needs of the office are to be met by the FLN, discussions with the Africa Division of the Foreign Ministry have led to granting of diplomatic status to the office. Local developments have forced the

FLN to relinquish all administrative-legal authority progressively. (see Country Report attached).

- 1.3 The office was able to move premises (both chancellery and accommodation). The new address was forwarded. (38/40 Rue Didoceche Mourad  
Mailing Address: B.P. 595 Alger-Gare  
Tel: Work 619208 Res: 788714

## 2. Finances

- 2.1 The financial situation is still word and promises to get worse, given national developments. The FLN provides a cash sum of 10,000 DA (Algerian Dinar), all inclusive. Having lost all state subsidies under the new multi-party constitution, it is drastically cutting back in financial support to the NLM's and public organisations. (For details of the consequences see country Report). Parliamentary elections are due in February elections are due in February 1991 and the FLN is likely to loose or retain authority only as a weak ally in a coalition.

No clarity can be obtained, neither from the FLN nor government, as to our future in Algeria in this regard.

- 2.2 Current expenditures are:  
Telephone/telex/fax  
water/gas/electricity  
petrol/maintainance/repairs/taxis  
renovations/personal up-keep  
mail/stationery etc.

The insufficiency of the subsidy forces us to pay our bills alternately.

The debts left by the previous representative are still unpaid, however Treasury-London at last set off the money for this (15.11.1990) and I should find it on my return.

## 3. Transport and Communications

- 3.1 The present vehicle is more off the road than on and is consuming money in maintainance and repairs that is more than its worth.

Taxis are utterly unreliable and expensive.

No public transport system to speak of.

The Zimbabwe and Cameroon embassies assist with a telex service, however one has to contend with distances and working hours. There is a commercial fax and telex service which we sometimes use at the going rates.

- 3.2. Algeria still holds to total sanctions so it is impossible to communicate with HQ in Johannesburg. Lusaka does not communicate nor respond to communications. Lusaka mail (once in July) takes some three weeks. London ordinary

airmail some eight to twelve days. Result is complete isolation and ignorance or massive phone bills, phoning European representatives for information or to request mail.

- 3.3 The request of the mission for equipment for communications has not been responded to.
4. Political and Diplomatic Work Mobilisation.
  - 4.1 Work continues with the FLN and other parties, unions, womens, youth and students organisations and the diplomatic community. However it is all at an initial stage. The issue of greatest interest is the violence; Buthelezi's role and ANC strategy in the present phase.
  - 4.2 The press is also focused on violence and the absence of communications from Lusaka and Johannesburg is not a help.
  - 4.3 The Middle East crisis has engendered a new upsurge in Arab and Moslem solidarity and made most other issues, including South Africa, peripheral. The crisis is perceived as North/South in the broader context and Arab/Islam versus the West in the narrower.