1981

NOT FOR QUOTATION OR ATTRIBUTION

To: A Few Friends

From: George M. Houser

I have just returned from a five and a half week trip to Africa. The notes which I dictated on my tape recorder are not yet transcribed. But I thought it would be useful to make a brief report on the atmosphere as I observed it, especially in relation to the United States and the Reagan administration. A full report of this most fascinating trip will come in due course.

I will be outlining a general position which is familiar to those who follow Africa closely. Since I was fortunate to meet with a number of people in leadership positions, I thought it useful to share my information and impressions even before I have prepared a fuller report. Those with whom I spoke included President Kenneth Kaunda, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe as well as several other Zimbabwe ministers; Alfred Nzo and Tom Nkobi, secretary general and treasurer respectively of the ANC; Joaquim Chissano, Foreign Minister of Mozambique; and Marcelino dos Santos, a top leader in Frelimo; Paulo Jorge, Foreign Minister of Angola and some of the top members of the Central Committee of the MPLA; some SWAPO leadership although I missed Nujoma. President Julius Nyerere was travelling to the Far East while I was in Dar es Salaam but I saw some of my old friends such as former Foreign Minister, John Malecela, now Minister of Natural Resources.

When I arrived in Dar on March 17 the Crocker mission had not been announced, and talk was more generalized about the Reagan administration. When the Crocker delegation arrived in Africa, discussion became more specifically related to it and its purpose. I criss-crossed the Crocker delegation; we were in Maputo and Luanda at the same time.

Let me report some of my impressions under several headings:
<u>First, the Reagan Administration</u>: Many of the discussions at the beginning were almost identical. What is Reagan trying to do?

Is the U.S. really going to choose South Africa over the rest of Africa? The discussions reflected the importance African leaders were attaching to the position taken by the U.S. There was almost disbelief that the U.S. could be retrogressing as far as the initial statements emanating from the Reagan administration implied. Everyone was familiar with Reagan's comment to Cronkite that South Africa was "a friendly nation." They were familiar with the details of the debate on the Clark Amendment. They were very familiar with the El Salvador situation. They brought up in an unbelieving way the discussion that Jeane Kirkpatrick had had with the South African military. They were deeply concerned about assistance to Savimbi and possible CIA involvement again in Angola.

I didn't detect as much anger as I did incredulousness in the attitude of most of the leaders with whom I talked. Kaunda was the first to tell me that at a recent meeting in March in Lusaka, the front line states had agreed that an OAU delegation consisting of Nyerere and Shagari should plan to go to Washington to talk with Reagan to present the seriousness of their view of the situation in southern Africa and the necessity for the U.S. to have a positive policy. Kaunda is a very religious man. He thought rather highly of Carter as did most of the other leaders with whom I talked. Kaunda said he prayed for a Carter victory, "but it was not to be." There was probably more goodwill towards the Carter administration than would have been reflected if Carter had been re-elected. But he looked good in African eyes compared with what was happening under Reagan.

Second, Namibia: Of course this was the major substantive question. What would be the policy of the U.S. on Namibia? Kaunda reported to me that at the recent front line meeting in Lusaka a four point strategy had been adopted. One, eliminate as far as possible the dependence of the front line states on South Africa. They should help one another in this regard. Two, put real pressure on the West and the U.S. in particular to press South Africa to negotiate a settlement. Three, give greater assistance to strengthen SWAPO in every way possible. Four, try to organize another Geneva conference. As everyone knows the front line states were unanimous in rejecting the idea of a constitutional conference on Namibia (a la Lancaster House) before U.N. controlled elections are held. No compromise on resolution 435 was contemplated.

Third, The Crocker Mission: The reality of the Crocker mission didn't really hit me until I was in Maputo. I was there from April 2nd to the 15th, and had the opportunity to talk with various people prior to Crocker's arrival. The most important discussion

was with Joaquim Chissano, the Foreign Minister. As luck would have it I saw him for about an hour and a half the late afternoon and early evening of the very day he had talked with Crocker. In addition to the two of us, the only persons in on the discussion were Sharfudine Khan (for many years the Frelimo representative in New York) and my companion on the trip, Irving Wolfe. Khan told me afterwards that Chissano had given me the most detailed report of the discussion that he could imagine.

It was indeed quite a discussion which reflected the tension between Mozambique and the U.S. at this juncture in history. For example, Crocker said to Chissano that he had "come to negotiate" on the Namibian question. Chissano countered by saying "If you want to negotiate you will have to do so with SWAPO. We are only here to exchange views."

Chissano pointed out at some length why the Namibian and the Zimbabwe situations were not parallel and that therefore it would be impossible to reach a solution by having a constitutional conference first. South Africa is in Namibia illegally. Therefore where is the parallel with the role of the United Kingdom? How do you choose the parties that are to participate in the constitutional discussions? Over 30 of them? Do they all participate? Who decides?

Crocker asked Chissano what kind of relations Mozambique wants with the U.S.? Chissano responded that they wanted to have friendly relations as they do with all countries including those, he said, who supported the Portuguese during the struggle. It is not Mozambique that has changed its policy towards the U.S., he pointed out. It is the U.S. that has put it on its black list, then taken Mozambique off the black list, then has put it on again and now is not sending food any longer. Of course the CIA explusions were in the background of all of this and I shall comment on them in a moment. At one point when Crocker accused the Mozambique government of telling lies Chissano said that they might as well end the discussion. Crocker backtracked from the charge. Still the meeting ended rather abruptly when Chissano said after an hour or so "I think we have gone as far as we can in this discussion. Thank you for coming. Goodbye." Crocker was "grim-faced," according to the press, when he left Mozambique.

I talked with Paulo Jorge before his discussion with Crocker rather than afterwards. Crocker left the impression in Angola, according to a member of his delegation with whom I talked after he had departed, that the Angolans are "pragmatic" people. An important part of the discussion seemed to revolve around the question of getting the Cubans out of Angola in exchange for new

initiatives with South Africa on Namibia and U.S. recognition. From what I observed, there will be no agreement on removing Cuban troops as long as South Africa invades Angola and supports UNITA. There is a "no compromise" attitude in Angola. In any event there was agreement among the front line states at the meeting in Luanda which took place the day I arrived there. They were standing behind resolution 435 without compromise.

While I was in Luanda as the guest of the MPLA, I was taken to the Panorama Hotel. Strangely enough Crocker was put in a room right next to mine. I didn't realise this until after he was already in. He was only there for one night. We greeted each other in passing at breakfast. By chance however, I did run into the three members of the crew who were flying the plane on which the Crocker delegation was hedgehopping around southern Africa. I asked them how things were going on their trip. They said, "Everything is fine except in Mozambique. There Dr. Crocker wasn't able to meet Machel" (the pilot pronounced the name Ma - shell). I pointed out that he hadn't seen Prime Minister Botha in South Africa either. Nor did he see Dos Santos, the President of Angola.

Fourth, The CIA: This of course was a major topic in Mozambique. I can't go into details. This topic was brought up by Crocker in his discussion with Chissano. Crocker more than implied that Mozambique had lied although there has never been a serious denial with details from any American source that the CIA indeed was active in Mozambique. In fact in their discussion, Chissano informed Crocker that the American Chargé d'Affairs in Mozambique had arranged a meeting with him just before the U.S. embassy staff personnel had been expelled. He brought with him to this meeting another American who was identified only as "coming from Washington." Mozambican authorities subsquently discovered that this American had been picked up by car and brought to Maputo. So this official U.S. delegation asked that the expulsions not be publicized, that they take place quietly without fanfare. The Mozambique government, through Chissano, steadfastly refused to do this. They said it was impossible to do this because they had arrested some Mozambique citizens for complicity with the CIA. They had to make explanations to their own people as to why they arrested Mozambicans.

This was the first that Crocker had heard about this meeting. The U.S. Chargé had not briefed him on this incident and embarrassedly had to do so in Chissano's presence. There never was an argument as to whether the expelled Americans were CIA agents. When I first arrived at Maputo on April 2nd, I was taken aback when I asked one of my American friends where Joe Massinga was. He said to me "haven't you heard? He was arrested for working with the CIA."

Indeed I had known Joe Massinga when he was a student here in the U.S. It had come out in the Press Conference after Massinga had been arrested that he had been recruited by the CIA when he was a student at Fordham University. I was given chapter and verse on the sorts of things Massinga had been doing. His task was to recruit other Mozambicans to talk with the CIA agents in Maputo.

There was a great deal of first hand information available about the activities of the CIA and how they worked with Mozambicans to get information. One of the CIA agents, it was reported, asked all kinds of questions relating to ANC military bases in Mozambique, the extent of Mozambique military support for ANC, etc. The Mozambique government did not officially charge U.S. complicity in the South African commando attack on the three ANC houses in Matola. Whether the U.S. had information to pass on to South African intelligence is a matter of speculation.

Four, The Possibility of Mozambique-South African War: This is somewhat realistically talked about by pretty responsible people. They think it is likely to come sometime. If it does they believe South Africa will very quickly take over Maputo, but they said that this would be different than any other war with which South Africa has been involved because there would be Mozambicans inside South Africa as well. How realistic it is to talk about a war is a matter of opinion. Nevertheless the attitude of those with whom I talked among the Frelimo and the Mozambique leaders was that if it came they would be prepared. They could carry on the same kind of a guerrilla conflict they had with the Portuguese.

One of my very sobering experiences on this trip was to visit the three houses in Matola that had been bombed and raided by the South African forces on January 30th. I got special permission to go inside the houses and to photograph what I saw. I also talked with a friend of mine who lived a few blocks from the house which was most severely hit and where 6 of the 12 killed died. There is no question whatsoever that these houses were not any kind of a military headquarters. They were all located in the residential area in Matola in the midst of a very quiet neighborhood. The person whom I know described being awakened at 12:45 a.m. when the first bazooka shot was fired. He said he counted 30 flares which were dropped to brighten up the whole area as light as day. Bombardment continued for about an hour and a half. The houses had gaping holes in their sides. Bullet marks were all over the floor, the ceilings and walls. There were blood stains still on the wall and on the steps as those who had been hit tried to escape. Reading material such as Sechaba, various ANC, SWAPO pamphlets, Newsweek and other

material in English was strewn all over the floor. They have been left as they were on January 30th except for the removal of the bodies.

Fifth, Sanctions: The question of sanctions came up in my discussions because the Security Council meeting was on everyone's mind and the feeling was that sanctions would be a critical part of any resolution to be debated. There was pretty much of an identical view taken by Kaunda, Mugabe and Chissano. They said in effect, "We will vote for sanctions but we cannot implement them." They went on to explain (in particular detail by Chissano and Mugabe) that if they implemented sanctions they would be implementing sanctions against themselves as well. Especially in the case of Mozambique would this be true. Chissano said that what it would amount to is that the port of Maputo would be bypassed and those who were breaking sanctions would go to Durban. To paraphrase Chissano, he said, "We will implement sanctions if they are seriously going to be implemented by those who are primarily involved in trade with South Africa. We will also implement sanctions if war breaks out. Or we will implement sanctions if we are asked to do so by the ANC. We implemented sanctions against Rhodesia and had to suffer for it. We will do it again but only if it is a serious effort. We are not the ones who can effectively make sanctions work."

Angola is in a different position from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. There is no trade or transportation between Angola and South Africa. Therefore Paulo Jorge was able to say that sanctions do not represent a problem for them. He says he understands the position in which the other front line states are caught.

I was most impressed by the frankness and openness expressed by key leaders whose countries have inherited a dependence on South Africa in their discussion of this very sensitive issue.