

AFRICA

THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS, ECONOMIC & POLITICAL

Nigeria: Democracy in Action
Zambia: Union Leaders in Trouble

Salim Salim

President Jawara

UNITED NATIONS

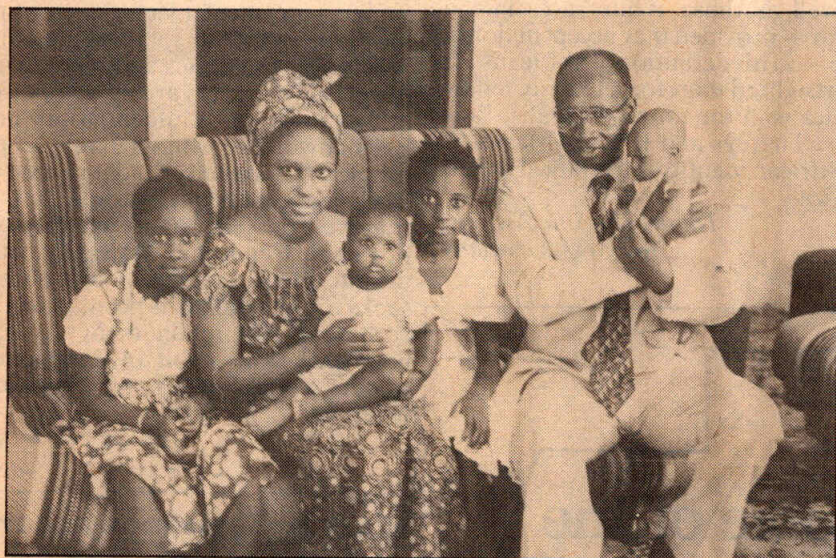
Africa's Candidate

GAMBIA

Battle for Banjul

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ALTHOUGH the 50 African member-states of the United Nations represent one third of the UN's total membership, their large numbers have not often been matched by a large say in international affairs. Nowhere has this been more glaring than in the choice of the organization's chief executive — the Secretary-General — a matter on which like many others the five members of the Security Council have held virtual sway. This year however is different. For the first time, Africa is putting up a candidate for the post. He is Salim Ahmed Salim, the Foreign Minister of Tanzania. Europe and Asia having had their turn, will it be Africa's now? General Editor MARCELINO KOMBA reports on the race and talks to Salim. **Page 11**



THE GAMBIA long regarded as a haven of political stability had its aura of tranquility rudely interrupted on July 30 by the bloody attempt to topple President Dawda Jawara from power. With the help of troops from neighbouring Senegal, however, President Jawara, who was abroad at the time soon regained control of his country. An immediate aftermath of the coup attempt has been the stepping up of long delayed discussions to merge the two countries into a confederation. General Editor NICK FADUGBA, who arrived in Banjul before the coup was crushed, reports on the bloody episode and its consequences for the shaken nation. **Page 14**

AS THE International Monetary Fund and the World Bank gear up for their annual meeting at the end of this month, Africa will be closely watching the unfolding of their new policies as the international financial institutions expand their roles in the lives of developing countries. A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT reports on the intensifying love-hate relationship with the IMF. **Page 42**



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Africa's
candidate Salim
Ahmed Salim, the
Foreign Minister of
Tanzania.



Top left to right:
Trygve Lie
(Norway) 1946-
1953; Dag
Hammarskjöld
(Sweden) 1953-
1961; U Thant
(Burma) 1961-
1971; Kurt
Waldheim
(Austria) 1972 to
present



UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

Africa's turn

by Marcelino Komba

WHEN the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization goes into its thirty-sixth regular session in New York this month, one of the items on its very long agenda will be the appointment of a Secretary-General for the world body. While in the past African members of the UN may have carried out this exercise with nothing more than academic interest, this year they will be watching every move leading to the appointment. This is because, for the first time since the Organization was formed four decades ago, Africa is fielding its own candidate — Salim Ahmed Salim, the Foreign Minister of Tanzania.

The selection of Salim, a long time career diplomat who, before he became Foreign Minister last year was for 11 years his country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, was made by acclamation at last June's OAU Heads of State and Government Summit held in Nairobi. In a sense the manner in which this was done was itself proof that Africa, most of whose countries have been members of the UN since their independence some two decades ago, have become acutely aware of the need to contribute in a leadership role to the activities of the world body.

Kurt Waldheim, the current UN Secretary-General from Austria,

ends his second five-year term on December 31. He has indicated that he will run for the post again, but many UN member-states, certainly all African countries, consider a third term for him excessive. In any case, there is a strong feeling among Africans that it is their turn to fill the office. It is now accepted that no candidate representing either of the two superpowers or their closest allies in the East-West blocs stands a chance. Perhaps because of that none has been put forward as yet.

The choice of a new UN chief executive would therefore come from a country that is neutral and small, and developing. Apart from Austria, which is again fielding Waldheim, no developing country had, by the time we went to press, officially announced the intention to contest the Secretary-Generalship.

There were reports, however, that Mexico was considering putting up the name of its Ambassador to the United Nations, Porfirio Munoz

Ledo, but certain African diplomatic sources hinted that in view of Africa's declared intention to have Salim as the next UN Secretary-General Mexico would, as an act of Third World solidarity, stand down to give Africa a chance. If that were to happen, and going by the information available, Salim would be pitted against only one man — Kurt Waldheim.

The choice of a Secretary-General is not guided solely by geography and the candidate's country's neutrality. There are considerations of race, religion and ideology. And certainly the voting nations cannot avoid emotional considerations either. This is why Salim, being African, is not only guaranteed Africa's 50 votes, but can also count on the votes of the Caribbean states. To those can be added the votes of the member-states of the Arab League to which Libya has undertaken to present Salim's candidature for endorsement. Much, however, will depend on the conduct of the Security Council, and especially of its five permanent members with the power of veto — Britain, France, the United States of America, the Soviet Union and China.

The Rules

According to Article 97 of the UN Charter, the Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council, and Rule 141 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly stipulates that when the Council has submitted its recommendation, the Assembly shall consider the recommendation and vote upon it by secret ballot in private meeting. In practice, however, the Assembly has never held a private meeting, and on three occasions it did not take a vote by secret ballot either. The resolutions on the appointment of the present Secretary-General, for instance, were adopted by acclamation.

China, one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, is understood to have already committed itself to supporting Salim's candidacy. The other members are being lobbied to do the same.

Last month high-powered emissaries of both President Daniel arap Moi, the current OAU Chairman, and of President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, were crisscrossing the globe to drum up support in



the world capitals for Africa's candidate.

It is too early to speculate on the outcome of these efforts, but there is a strong feeling in Africa that this should be its turn to fill the job. Europe has had its fair share, pro-

viding three of the four Secretary-Generals since the organization's inception. The first Secretary-General was Trygve Lie, from Norway, who led the Organization from February, 1946. He had been nominated by the Russians but during the Korean War which broke out in June, 1950 he came under continual criticism from the Russians. He eventually resigned on November 10, 1952 because he believed that his presence in the post had become a hindrance in the search for a solution to the war.

He was succeeded in April 1953

INTERVIEW

'The OAU is hopeful of the support and confidence of all countries...'

KOMBA: The OAU Summit in Nairobi unanimously nominated you as Africa's candidate for the Secretary-Generalship of the UN. How did you receive the Summit's decision?

SALIM: I was clearly overwhelmed by the confidence and trust repositied in me by the Heads of State and Government of free African member states of the OAU. As an African I was particularly moved by the impressive display of Africa's eloquent determination to speak with one voice and in unambiguous terms on such an important issue. This unity of purpose was in itself a historic event. At the same time I fully recognize that the Summit's decision constitutes both a great honour for me as well as a tremendous challenge and responsibility.

Q: Your nomination has been described in some quarters as the beginning of a hard battle for the post. Do you agree with this description. How do you rate the competition for the office?

A: There is no doubt that the OAU decision to present me as Africa's candidate for the post of the Secretary-General is the beginning of a still long way ahead. But it was an important beginning. Indeed from an African perspective it was a crucial beginning.

Every historic decision or event must be considered in its context and background. The significance of the Nairobi Summit's decision must be

viewed amidst the background of what was being said and/or speculated both in some diplomatic circles and certain sections of the media.

It was, for example, being said that while Africa had the possibility this year to have an African elected to the post of Secretary-General. Its prospects depended on whether the African states would unite behind one single candidate. Indeed there were some who even maintained that Africa's united voice and position on the issue was not possible. Yet the OAU in Nairobi shattered the myth of Africa's inability to unite.

I do not wish to describe the way ahead in terms of being a battle as such — hard or otherwise. Nor would it be proper for me to rate what you describe as the competition for the office. All I can say is that Africa's objective which is certainly my own is to do our utmost to universalize support for my candidature.

Q: It has taken the OAU nearly two decades to field its own candidate for the UN Secretary-Generalship despite the obvious important role the UN plays in shaping political events in our continent. Why, in your opinion, did Africa have to wait for so long?

A: First of all, let me say that I have no doubt in my mind that given an opportunity an African could have ably occupied that post at any time during the last two decades. But

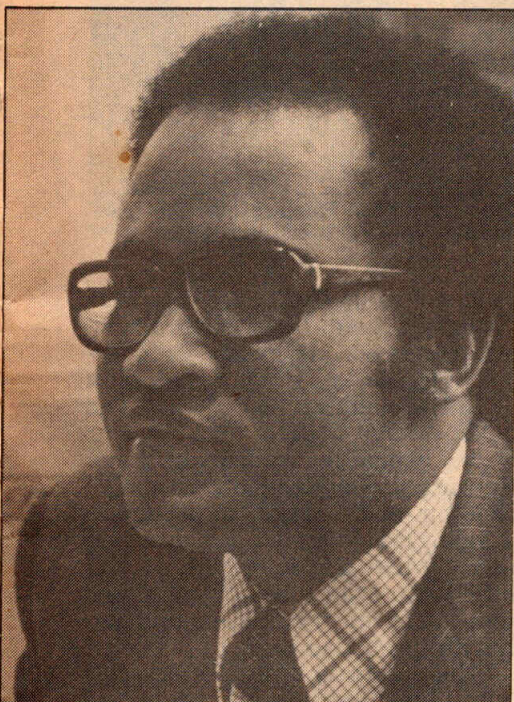
by Dag Hammarskjöld, a Swede, whose tenure of office was marked by three of the gravest events which have threatened peace since the end of the Second World War: the Anglo-French Suez invasion in 1956, the Hungarian revolt and the Congo strife in the early sixties. He was under constant attack from the West and the Soviet bloc Africa. He died in a plane crash in Africa in September 1961.

After him came U Thant, from Burma. His 'Third World' image of an umpire was strengthened by the neutrality of his country. He too,

had his problems as a peace-maker in the many explosive issues that were being fought by the various political groups in the UN. But he was never seriously accused of working in the interests of either of the two super-powers.

After his two-year term and his retirement in December, 1971, he was succeeded by Waldheim. Waldheim's term of office has also been characterized by explosive issues, most important among them the continuing war in the Middle East, and Africa's war for liberation and the struggle against apartheid in

southern Africa. The Secretary-General's conduct during this period in relation to these two issues has not earned him many friends in the Middle East, and have left most of Africa frustrated at what seems to be the UN's inability to deal more forcefully with such situations as Namibia's decolonization. The appointment of an African, it is believed, will enable the UN to have a fresh and hopefully urgent look at the problem of Namibia and the Middle East — problems which are becoming increasingly explosive and potential dangers to world peace. ■



circumstances were such that the OAU had not addressed itself to the question.

In the last two decades the OAU had concentrated its efforts and resources in the liberation struggle of our continent. These collective efforts effectively supplementing as they did the struggle waged by the liberation movements, have resulted in the present situation where with the exception of Namibia and the apartheid situation in South Africa, the continent is now free. Among the obvious by-products of the decolonization process has of course been the greater contribution of Africa in international affairs. Indeed with its 50 independent states, Africa constitutes a third of the present membership of the United Nations and plays its due role in the organization.

Now that the second term of the present Secretary-General comes to an end on December 31 this year — after serving the organization for ten years — it was only natural that Africa should solicit the support of the world community for an African to occupy the post of Secretary-General. It is of course clearly understood that that post transcends regional and national considerations.

It is out of this recognition that Africa has not only contributed to the election of the previous and present Secretary-General but has not failed to give the holders of that office its full support and confidence. It is with the same consideration that I believe the OAU is hopeful that the African candidate will enjoy the support and confidence of all regions and countries.

Q: From the beginning, real power in the UN has resided mostly in the hands of the industrially-developed nations with the veto power. Do you think it is time the veto system in the Security Council was changed to take into account the interests of such blocs as Africa, Asia and Latin America. Or do you see any difficulties for the UN to effect these changes?

A: The United Nations organization today is vastly different from that of 1945 when the founding fathers signed the Charter at San Francisco. Then the UN comprised of only 51 states. Today there are 154. Taking Africa as a case in point there were then only two independent Africa states excluding South Africa. It is also self-evident that some of the priorities of that period are different from those of today. And while some of the problems and challenges have continued, new problems and greater challenges have emerged. Any dynamic institution must also

change with the passage of time and changed circumstances.

It would be presumptuous for me at this stage to say what I will or will not do if my candidature is to receive the support of the international community. But what I can say is that the United Nations is a unique and indispensable institution for the maintenance of international peace and security as well as for the promotion of international understanding and cooperation. We are today living in very turbulent times when old conflict situations have been exacerbated by the addition of new crises and hotbeds of tension. The escalation of the arms race with its concomitant dangers to the human race, the east-west confrontation, the dangerously ever-growing hiatus between the rich and the poor nations are examples of the vital agenda before the world community.

The UN has a vital role to play in finding solution to these and other problems or at least in diffusing the different areas of potential explosion. It is my conviction that the Secretary-General of the organization — representing as he does at least the collective moral authority of the world community — must play his role. Above all, at a time of growing cynicism in the relevance and effectiveness of the world body, the Secretary-General must strive to overcome this dismal trend and make the institution as central a place as possible in the pursuit of solutions to global problems. In so doing, he must make effective and efficient use of the services and talents of the dedicated men and women who constitute the international civil service and whose internationalism and professionalism must be vigorously encouraged and respected. ■