

Mozambique Agency Director on Discrepancies in Machel Crash Evidence

Maputo home service in Portuguese 1752 gmt 23 Jan 87

Text of report (ME/8475/B/10):

An item just in: We have just received an important item from AIM Director Carlos Cardoso containing important revelations on the Mbuzini tragedy.

[Cardoso] The phrase referring to the appearance of a very high frequency omnidirectional radio [VOR] in the instruments of President Samora Machel's plane was only detected in South Africa on 14th January 1987 - one-and-a-half months after listening to the cockpit voice recorder [CVR] in Zurich.

Last Friday, AIM was informed by a reliable source that the sentence: VOR points to this direction, pronounced by the navigator at 2111 and 32 seconds was not detected in Zurich. The three commissions comprising the international commission of inquiry met in this Swiss city between 25th and 28th November 1986. They then listened to the CVR with equipment supplied by the USSR. At the time copies of the original transcript were made for the three delegations, after which the CVR was taken to South Africa. The first formal transcript - the translation from Russian to English - was done in Moscow in the first week of December. This first transcript did not contain about 10 phrases which now appear in the transcript of the factual report signed by the three delegations and already issued. Some of these phrases are of the type: OK, yes, it is all

right. Some doubts remained after this first investigation about some words and who has spoken them. The Moscow transcript was signed by the three delegations.

In the second week of January, the Mozambican team was contacted by telephone by the South African delegation, which stated the following: Through the use of more sophisticated equipment, it was discovered that some phrases which had previously been attributed to a certain crew member were in fact spoken by another crew member. The South African delegation also disclosed that, by using that equipment, it had found two new sentences right at the beginning of the tape. These sentences referred to communication between the aircraft and Beira.

In the course of the same telephone conversation, the Mozambican side agreed to a joint listening of the CVR and the ADC [expansion unknown] during its visit to South Africa the next week for the conclusion and signing of the factual report, as agreed beforehand. ADC refers to communication with Maputo tower. They thus sought to clear up some unresolved issues.

Mozambican and USSR delegations arrived in Johannesburg on 12th January. This work was carried out between 13th and 16th January. On the afternoon of 14th January, the three delegations met at the Jan Smuts airport conference room. While some of the members of the three delegations listened to the CVR and the ADC in a nearby room, other investigators worked on the factual report.

At one point, Col Desmond Lynch, of the South African Air Force, burst into the conference room. He showed great agitation. He hurriedly approached Rennie van Zyl, head of the South African delegation, with whom he spoke in a low voice. Soon afterwards the Mozambique and USSR delegations learned that one of the Mozambican experts listening to the CVR had picked up the phrase on the VOR.

These facts highlight the following fundamental question: Is it not strange that despite the use of more sophisticated equipment, which had permitted the detection of new phrases and the correction of voice attribution, the South African delegation failed to pick up the phrase on the VOR until that moment? This is the question that any expert on this type of investigation will ask.