

# **REPORT ON RECONSTRUCTION OF PROBABLE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CRASH ON SEPTEMBER 18th, 1961, OF AIRCRAFT SE-BDY AT NDOLA**

## 1. Short facts about the flight.

Aircraft SE-BDY departed from Leopoldville airport at 15.51Z hours (17.51B Ndola time) with a flight plan filed only for Luluabourg for security reasons. It was, however, known that a meeting was to take place between Mr. Tshombe and Mr. Hammarskjold at Ndola in Rhodesia, and it was not held secret that Mr. Hammarskjold was aboard aircraft SE-BDY. Knowledge of the above facts may rapidly have been dispatched from sources in Leopoldville to the "intelligence center" in Katanga.

As precaution against hostile action towards the aircraft carrying Mr. Hammarskjold it was decided to fly with radio silence as long as possible, and to avoid flying in the vicinity of Katangese airports, where armed aircraft were believed to be stationed. Therefore the aircraft after departure from Leopoldville took an easterly course and maintained this until it reached Lake Tanganyika, where it headed south. At 20.00Z (22.00B) hours approx., SE-BDY on request from Salisbury FIC gave following information over the HF radio "SE-BDY from Leopoldville for Ndola. ETA 22.35Z (00.35B) Aircraft DC-6". (w.s. No, 74 by L.E. Thoroughood). At 20.41Z (22.41B) BDY gave its position as, being over Lake Tanganyika. From then on there was at intervals communication between the aircraft and Salisbury FIC and between Salisbury and Ndola ATC. At 21.31Z (23.31B) Salisbury handed over BDY to Ndola approach on frequency 119.1. Shortly after this BDY gave his corrected ETA as 22.20Z (00,20B) to Ndola ATC.

There is no problem in overhearing this communication from Katanga and it must be judged as obvious that the ETA at Ndola of SE-BDY could be known in sufficient advance time by Katangese "intelligence" in order to send jet or piston engined aircraft from known Katangese airports in time to intercept BDY in the vicinity of Ndola airport.

As stated later in this report, Jadotville or Kipushi are airports from which the intercepting aircraft is likely to have departed. Assuming that the transmission between SE-BDY and Salisbury FIC at 22.00B and 22.41B has been overheard by the team which planned the attack on SE-BDY. The aircraft to make the attack can have departed say at 22.45B. Flying from Jadotville at a speed of 250 km/h it would arrive over the Mokambo and Kaniki area about 1 hour later or 23.45B time. This is about the time several witnesses in the mentioned areas have heard an aircraft overhead flying in a southerly direction.

## 2. Events at and after the arrival of SE-BDY over Ndola airport.

According to various witnesses BDY arrived from an approximately easterly direction at 22.05Z (00.05B) hours and passed over or slightly south of the western end of the runway in an approximate WNW-erly direction. It does not appear to have taken position right over the Ndola ND beacon.

About 60 seconds after the aircraft has passed the western runway end, traveling at a speed of about 160 knots, the aircraft is in a position

marked (L) on the map at the end of the document. Here the aircraft SE-BDY is intercepted by a piston engined aircraft, which has been waiting at considerable altitude somewhere in

between the two circles marked (M) on the map. This aircraft, after spotting BDY, dives down , and although with throttled engines, cannot avoid to cause a considerable roar from the fast turning propellers over the house of Mr. and Mrs. Bermant at position (F) (w.s. No. 38). (Direction of aircraft South to North ). Alternative: The attacking aircraft may have misjudged how to intercept without using power, and been forced to pull full power over (F) in order to catch up with SE-BDY at point (L).

The pilot aligns his aircraft at a suitable distance above and slightly ahead of SE-BDY and lights a floodlight to identify the aircraft. The action is seen from the ground by T.J. Kankasa, observing from point (C) in Twaipa township (w.s. No. 88), and the survivor Julian's uttrance: "There was another flashlight". Captain Hallonquist is called on the radio of the attacking aircraft and demanded to divert to Elisabethville. Mr. Hammarskjold, is asked what to do and may now have ordered "go back" which may be interpreted either as an order to the pilot to return to Leopoldville, or go back to Ndola. Captain Hallonquist understands that he is under attack and increases the speed of the aircraft in order to complete the landing as quickly as possible.

The attacking aircraft now drops two bombs as SE-BDY refuses to divert to Elisabethville. The events is later on by Sgt. Julien described as an explosion over the runway and a speed increase. (There was great speed - great speed) (Mr. A.V. Allen w.s. No. 16).

The explosions of the bombs in the vicinity of the aircraft are observed as flashes in the sky by the following witnesses:

1. R.A. Phillips (w.s . No. 13) , observing from point (B) on the map, has seen two flashes with about one seconds interval in the vicinity of point (L) on the map.

2. D. E. Peover (w.s. No. 14 ), observing from point (D ), has seen two flashes in the vicinity of point (L). His statement is quoted: " I saw a red glow of considerable intensity in the sky which diminished and brightened again".

3. D.A. Clarke (w.s. No.8 ) observing from point (A), has seen a flash in the vicinity of point (L).

4. D.J.F. Buchanan (w.s. No.46 ). This witness, observing from point (E), has seen a flash at approx. 00.10B hours in the same direction as the aircraft, was heading.

5. D. D. Lowe (w.s. No. 49) observing from point ( E) states, that he at 00 .07B hours has seen what he believed to be the flare up of a bushfire in the Kitwe direction. This observation points towards point (L).

6. M.U. van Wyk (w.s. No. 15) observing from point (E), has seen SE-BDY fly over and have 3-4 minutes later seen "an unusual deep red glow of light spreading upwards into the sky". The glow lasted for a second only.

The theory of events is further evidenced by the witness W.J. Chappell (w.s. No. 47 ), observing from the Raylton Club, Ndola, who states: "At about the same time the aircraft passed by, I heard the sound of what I thought was a jet aircraft in the air". In a later adjustment to his statement he had said, that he would not know the difference between the sound of a jet aircraft and a piston engine aircraft. It is likely that in addition to the sound of SE-BDY, this witness has also heard the sound of the attacking aircraft.

Mrs. O. Anderson (w.s. No. 80), observing from 19 Hurstbourne Road, Ndola, may have seen or rather heard the explosion of the bombs.

The event is seen by the charcoal burner D. Simango (w.s. No.36) on the map marked as (O). Simango has reported that when the aircraft returned (after the procedure turn) after a short time, he spotted the aircraft mainly by means of the sound, until he saw "a white flash and it went down, and there was a very loud noise, an explosion."

The event is also seen by the charcoal burner F. Mazibisa (w.s. No.37). Mazibisa, observing from position (N ) on the map, has apparently seen two aircrafts almost right overhead. The lights Mazibisa states he has seen are the position lights of SE-BDY, and the exhaust flames of the attacking airplane flying at full power (blue color) . Mazibisa's statement "I think several of the lights appeared to be catching up the lights in front" may indicate, that the attacking aircraft was catching up with its intended victim.

### 3. Witnesses stating the presence of two aircraft in the air.

a) Mrs. J. Hunkin (w.s. No. 22 ) living at point ( J ) on the map, has during the night heard the noise of an aircraft flying very low near to her house. She is of the opinion, that the aircraft was heading south, and it might have been the attacking aircraft on its flight from Jadotville/ Kipushi to take up position at Ndola.

b) Mrs. Gray (w.s. No. 67) (Kaniki Smallholdings) has heard a plane fly over very low around midnight.

c ) Mrs. W. van Heerden (w.s. No. 28 ) living at point (I ) on the map, has at some time during the night heard the sound of a low flying airplane, not being a jet aircraft.

d) Mrs. A. Wright (w.s. No. 76), living at point (H), has been woken up by an aircraft passing low over her house. Mrs. Wright stated, that it appeared to be traveling in the general direction of Ndola airport. Mrs. Wright may have heard either the attacking aircraft on

its southbound leg to take up position south of Ndola or, should her judgment of the heading of the aircraft be wrong, the attacking aircraft on its homebound leg.

e) Mrs. Y. Joubert (w.s. No.27), living in Mufulira, has at about 1 a.m. heard a jet aircraft flying over, and 10-15 minutes later a large transport plane. It is possible, that she has heard the attacking airplane and its return, or she has maybe only heard one aircraft. (See para. 7 for adjustment of the statement of time given by Mrs. Joubert).

f) Mr. M. G. Vosloo (w.s. No. 39) has between 10 and 12 o'clock p.m. at Mocambo Camp heard a twin engine small aircraft flying fairly high in a southerly direction. He could not see any lights. The aircraft this man has heard is believed to have been the attacking aircraft on its outbound flight to take position over the Ndola area.

g) Mr. W. J. Chappell (w.s. No. 47). This witness, living in Ndola, has heard two aircrafts.

h) Mr. P. Pratt (w.s. No. 66) has stated, that in the Kaniki area Mrs. Gogen and Mrs. Burton have heard an aircraft approaching Ndola at 23.30. Mrs. Lee has heard an aircraft approaching Ndola at 23.45 and later on returned.

According to the statements referred above, at least eight witnesses in the Kaniki Smallholdings area ( 20 km NW of Ndola airport ) has heard an aircraft over flying the area either in southerly or northerly direction. One observation is made at Mokambo camp (70 km. NW of Ndola) of a southbound twin-engined aircraft.

#### 4. Base of the attacking aircraft.

Judging from the places where an unidentified aircraft has been observed, it is likely that the attacking aircraft was based either at Kipushi or Jadotville in Katanga.

#### 5. Type of attacking aircraft.

There is almost nothing in the statements of the witnesses, indicating that a jet aircraft should have been engaged in the attack. There are many statements though, indicating that it has been a small to medium sized twin-engine piston-powered aircraft. It is known that Katanga amongst other aircraft also had a number of De Havilland Doves, which according to the press have operated as armed aircraft. It is accordingly possible that the attack has been carried out with one of those Dove's, which have sufficient speed, endurance, etc. to carry out this operation.

