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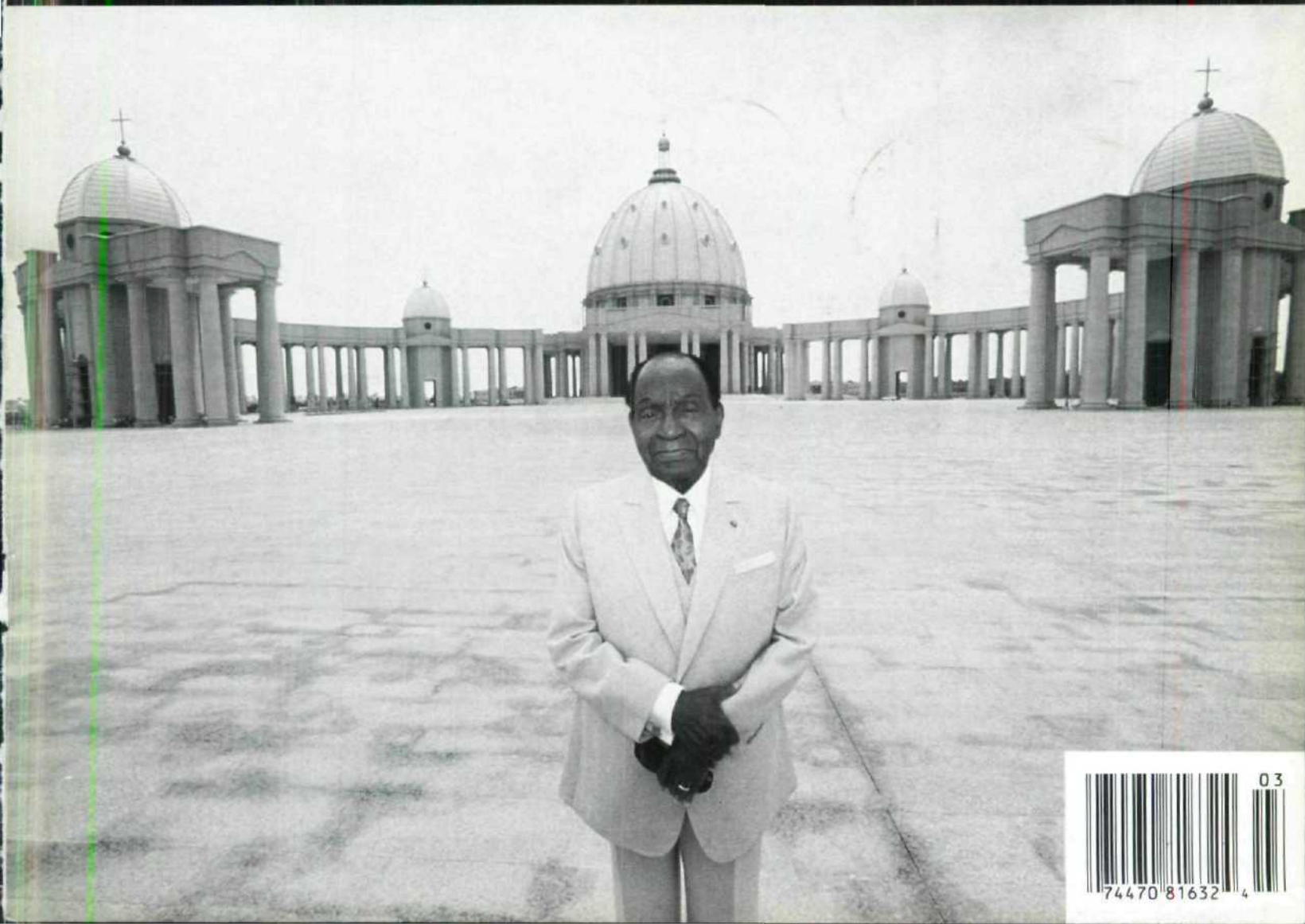
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MARCH-APRIL 1994

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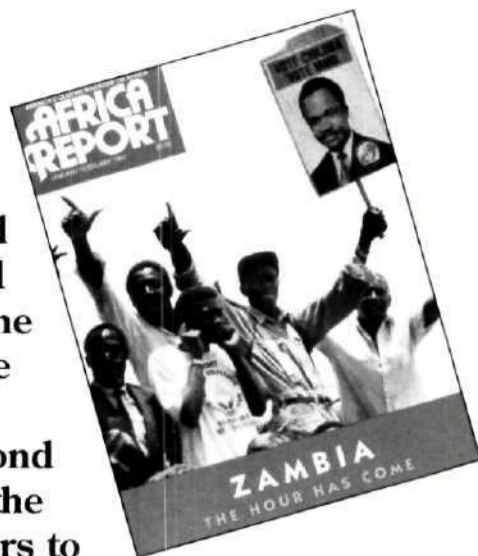
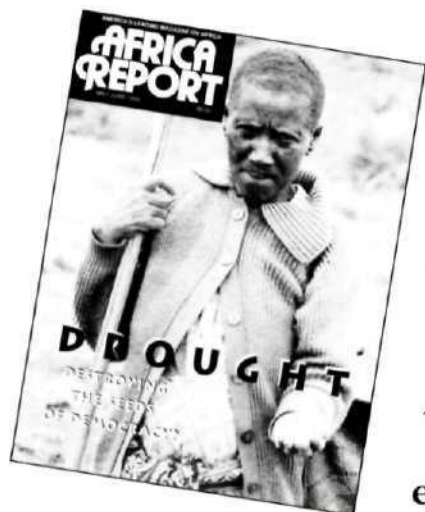
FRANCE AND AFRICA

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Rawlings's Republic
Page 23



An End to War?
Page 26



The Countdown Begins
Page 36



Going Home
Page 46

Letters to the Editor	4
Update <i>Editor: Russell Geekie</i>	5
France/Africa The Party's Over <i>By Kaye Whiteman</i>	13
Côte d'Ivoire Closing a Chapter <i>By Howard French</i>	19
Interview President Jerry Rawlings: Ghana's Fourth Republic <i>By Margaret A. Novicki</i>	23
Liberia The Forgotten Country <i>By Peter da Costa</i>	26
Refugees The Kindness of Strangers <i>By Arthur Helton</i>	33
South Africa The 11th Hour <i>By Patrick Laurence</i>	36
A Wing and a Prayer <i>By Anne Shepherd</i>	40
Spy Master & Spy <i>By Denis Herstein</i>	44
Mozambique Repatriating the Refugees <i>By Andrew Meldrum</i>	46
Fantasy Islands <i>By Heather Hill</i>	52
Angola Peace or War? <i>By Chris Simpson</i>	55
Zambia Chill for Chiluba <i>By Jowie Mwiinga</i>	58
Madagascar Trouble in Paradise <i>By Andrew Meldrum</i>	61
Kenya Wildlife and Politics <i>By Mark Doyle</i>	64
Gabon The Tainted Win <i>By James Barnes</i>	67
The Back Page <i>By Vivian Lowery Derryck</i>	70

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter in support of the article "The New Oligarchy" in your September-October 1993 edition written by Makau wa Mutua, a Harvard law professor, about the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE). In the article, many important points are mentioned, for example that the qualifications of the TGE officials are not good. The quickness of the government to recognize Eritrean independence creates tension or suspicions in the people's minds.

Dr. Mutua understands the situation in Ethiopia very well. As he mentions in his article, the composition of the government is very unrealistic. The prime minister, Tamrat Layne, is a high-school dropout. The special legal adviser to the president is a law school dropout. In addition, these people were chosen for pure propaganda purposes. How does anyone expect good administration from the people who cannot even govern their own lives? One way or the other these people are quitters.

Second, the TGE was quick to recognize Eritrean independence. This was one of the tragic moments in Ethiopian history. The government has a responsibility to represent its people. However, in this case, the group which overthrew the Mengistu regime, the Tigrayan People's Democratic Front, made the decision against its people.

I have been out of Ethiopia for the past five years. Many Ethiopians hope for better days for Ethiopia. However, the situation seems headed for the worst. The country does not need war, dictatorship, and mass exodus. The TGE needs to recognize the people's power, and it has to let them

choose their leaders without any interference. The country has many well-educated and experienced people, and they have to be allowed to participate in leadership posts. In addition, the TGE is not the official Ethiopian government, and many of the decisions made by this transitional government are questionable. Therefore, the TGE needs to stop making key decisions in the life of the people. The TGE is doing what Mengistu did for the past two decades. What has been done did not help anyone. We cannot allow this to continue forever. We need to establish a free and democratic Ethiopia, so we all can go back and help the change.

The situation that Dr. Mutua has explained is true, even though he cannot explain everything in his short article. I admire his work. I hope your magazine will do its best to show the future political and economic situation in Ethiopia.

—Daniel Wondaferew
Clarkston, Georgia

To the Editor:

The overzealous reply of Mr. Richard Okwaro (*see Letters, Nov-Dec 1993*) in response to Makau wa Mutua's article on the Kenyan elections ("Ticking Time Bomb," Jul-Aug 1993) epitomizes the partisan use of the entire Kenyan civil service and administrative machinery in support of Moi and Kanu in those elections. One of the odious legacies of British colonial rule was the immense powers it bestowed on local administrative officers, from licensing of all political meetings to being the overlords of all development activities. This whole administrative machinery has been maintained intact by the

post-colonial rulers essentially because it has served them well in maintaining themselves in power.

Furthermore, in a country where over 90 percent relies on the radio for information, Moi's control and use of the broadcast services provided him immense access unavailable to the opposition. Coupled with control of the electoral commission, a war chest of billions of illegally printed money which almost ruined the entire Kenyan economy, plus a host of other intimidatory and gerrymandering tactics, it is that much more remarkable that Moi could only gather a third of the popular vote. And Mr. Okwaro and others in the civil service know this for a fact.

The sad fact is that this scenario has been duplicated from Cameroon to Gabon and other African countries where the promises of democracy were just beginning to flower but have been exterminated through the ruse of rigged elections. At a time when competition for investment and trade are the principal concern of other regions in the world, Africa is witnessing a steady collapse of its political and social infrastructure. Countries that once held great promise, like Kenya, are being run aground by leadership whose single consuming aim is its maintenance of power and that cannot differentiate between public trust and private gain.

One can only "keep hope alive" that, just as the baby-boomers are taking power in America, the emerging educated African middle class will, when it gets its chance at power, act in the best interests of the African people. In the meantime, the struggle continues!

—V.A. Bhatia
Vienna, Austria

UPDATE

IN THE NEWS

Fiery Father of Kenya's Opposition Laid to Rest

Kenya has lost a great son, a nationalist, and a patriotic citizen," President Daniel arap Moi said after the country's senior opposition leader, Jaramogi Odinga Odinga, died on January 20 at age 82.

In words that perhaps revealed more about the president's relationship with Odinga, Moi added that the late leader pursued his political objectives with "determination and stamina" matched by few others.

Indeed, Odinga was a formidable critic of independent Kenya's government from the time he resigned as the country's first vice president in 1966. After his various attempts to form an opposition were thwarted by the ruling Kenya African National Union (Kanu) over three decades, he played a leading role in the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), the movement which forced the regime to open up the political system in December 1991. And a year later, the 81-year-old Odinga led one of the divided opposition's parties, FORD-Kenya, in the country's first multi-party elections in 26 years.

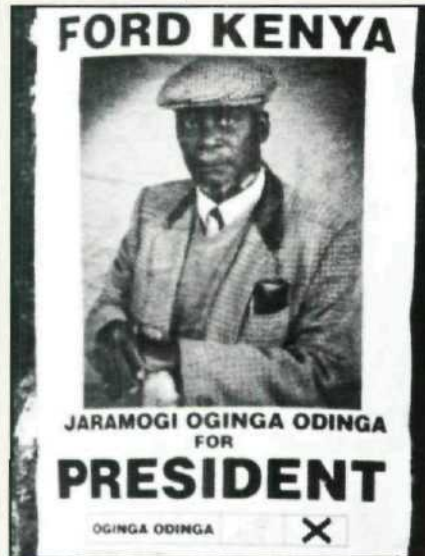
In his last months of life, Odinga sought to reconcile FORD-Kenya with Kanu, and his reputation was tarnished when he admitted to taking a campaign contribution from a scandal-ridden bank. In addition, since the 1992 elections, many Kenyans were saying that it was time for old-style politicians like Odinga to make way for a new generation of leaders.

But to his supporters, the man known affectionately as "Double O" will be remembered as a confrontational pre-independence leader who never lost his free spirit and penchant for questioning authority.

Odinga, a Luo from Bondo in Nyanza Province, gained national recognition for resisting British authority after the African nationalist leader Jomo Kenyatta was jailed in 1953 for his alleged involvement in the Mau Mau revolt. During the years that Kenyatta

was in prison, Odinga remained one of the most outspoken leaders calling for his release.

In 1960, Odinga and other members of pre-independence Kenya's legislative council formed Kanu. The party used its strong showing in the 1961 general elections to help secure Kenyatta's release that year.



A 1992 campaign poster of Jaramogi Odinga Odinga

When Kenyatta became president at independence in 1963, Odinga was the obvious choice for vice president. He had proven his loyalty to the president and was widely recognized as the leader of the Luo, the country's second largest ethnic group after Kenyatta's Kikuyu.

Kenya became a de facto one-party state in 1964 when the opposition Kenya African Democratic Union merged with Kanu. But by 1965, Odinga's socialist leanings put him at odds with the less radical and more pro-Western elements of Kanu, including his Luo rival Tom Mboya. Odinga resigned the following year and formed a new opposition party, the Kenya People's Union (KPU).

For the next three years, the KPU faced government harassment, includ-

ing detentions of its leaders.

Then in July 1969, Mboya was assassinated by a Kikuyu, setting off Luo riots against Kenyatta. The government responded by banning the KPU and detaining Odinga for 15 months.

Following Kenyatta's death in 1978, the new president, Moi, made an attempt to bring Odinga back into the Kanu fold. In 1980, Odinga was reinstated into the ruling party. But he used the exposure to attack Moi and the late Kenyatta as corrupt neo-imperialists and to protest the U.S. military presence in the country.

In 1982, the president kicked Odinga out of Kanu for attempting to create a new party and in June of that year, an amendment to the constitution (section 2A) made Kenya a de jure one-party state.

By the end of the decade, however, Odinga's untiring call for Kanu to open up the political system was echoed by an increasing number of voices. Some of the new multi-party advocates were prominent former members of the ruling party who either defected from Kanu or were kicked out. The most prominent was Kenneth Matiba, the popular Kikuyu transport minister who resigned his post and was expelled from the ruling party in 1988.

The regime was also under fire from abroad, as the international community stepped up demands that Kenya improve its human rights record.

Odinga founded the National Democratic Party in February 1991, but the government refused to register the new party. After harassing Odinga for several months, the authorities jailed him briefly in May of that year. But the detention—and the international community's protests that it triggered—only strengthened the veteran dissident politician's resolve to unseat Kanu.

In August 1991, Odinga and five other leading opposition figures formed the political movement, FORD, which

Russell Gaekke

became the nucleus of the campaign for democracy.

After the international community cut off aid to Kenya to force political change in November of that year, Kanu repealed section 2A of the constitution, legalizing opposition activity.

But the political opening was followed by a split in FORD in August 1992. In October, two separate FORDs registered for the elections: FORD-Kenya and FORD-Asili, led by Odinga and Matiba, respectively. In addition, the former vice president, Mwai Kibaki, who left Kanu in December 1991, formed his own party.

The opposition remained divided through the December 29 elections, allowing Moi to win the presidency with little more than a third of the vote and his Kanu party to win a majority of the seats in Parliament.

The father of the opposition movement, Odinga, polled a disappointing fourth in the presidential election with less than 18 percent of the vote. The results were drawn roughly along ethnic lines with Matiba and Kibaki splitting the Kikuyu vote, Odinga winning most of the Luo vote, and Moi winning votes from an alliance of groups allied with his minority Kalenjin ethnic group. FORD-Kenya fared better in the legislative vote, tying FORD-Asili for a second place finish with 31 seats each out of 188 total (the president was entitled to name an additional 12 seats).

As leader of the opposition in Parliament, Odinga led the call for financial reform and good governance in 1993. But in September, FORD-Kenya's secretary-general Gitobu Imanyara accused Odinga of accepting a questionable campaign contribution from the head of the trading company Gold-berg International. Odinga later admitted to taking the funds from Gold-berg, which, along with its sister organization, Exchange Bank, was accused of receiving millions of dollars in government payments for exports that did not exist and bribing government officials.

Nonetheless, Imanyara was sacked from the party's leadership on September 18. The next day FORD-Kenya's first vice chairman and deputy leader, Paul Muite, and two other party officials, Kiraitu Murungi and Farah Maalim, handed in their resignations to protest the dismissal.

Since the younger leaders left FORD-Kenya, speculation has persist-

ed that a "third FORD" is in the works.

Indeed, there was talk in February that a think tank, led by Muite and other new generation leaders, will be put together in the next few months to discuss the formation of a party with a national outlook. But the 1992 split in FORD suggests that holding such a grouping together for the 1997 general elections will be an uphill struggle.

Meanwhile, Moi has said that the reconciliation Odinga was brokering between Kanu and the predominantly Luo FORD-Kenya was in question. The Kenya News Agency reported the day of Odinga's death that Moi was re-examining the cooperation because some of the opposition party's senior officials had incited acts of violence. The president recalled a statement by the party's secretary-general that "the

cooperation was only confined to the precincts of the Parliament," according to the news agency.

In an address to mourners at Odinga's funeral in Bondo on February 5, Moi sounded a more conciliatory note toward the Luo themselves, recalling that Odinga had cooperated with Kanu to help foster development among the ethnic group in Nyanza.

In February, Kigali Wamalwa was selected to replace Odinga as chairman of FORD-Kenya. But observers say the Luo politician has nowhere near the following of Odinga and could have a hard time holding the party together.

Odinga died in the Aga Khan hospital in Kisumu after suffering a heart attack. He was laid to rest in a marble tomb in Bondo, near Lake Victoria, on February 5. ■

Guinea-Bissau's da Costa Acquitted

On February 4, Guinea-Bissau's supreme military court cleared the country's main opposition leader, João da Costa, of charges that he was involved in plotting a March 1993 coup attempt.

The acquittal of da Costa—who asserted throughout his trial that he was framed by the ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) "for political purposes"—came two months before the country was scheduled to hold its first multi-party presidential and legislative elections.

The alleged March 17, 1993 putsch attempt involved the murder of the commander of the Rapid Deployment Force, an elite 30-soldier guard responsible for the president's safety. Armed forces headquarters initially confirmed that the commander, Maj. Robalo de Pina, was killed in an attempted coup, but the army chief of staff later announced that the assassination was "an isolated incident which disproves the theory of a coup attempt."

By the following month, however, the authorities had again reversed themselves and arrested some 50 people, including da Costa. Two months later, da Costa, who leads the Party for Renewal and Development (PRD), and other opposition leaders were released, but banned from political activity.

Da Costa was re-arrested and detained once more, in August, before standing trial with more than a dozen other defendants in January. Many of da Costa's co-defendants had earlier signed statements that they had taken part in a plan to overthrow the government. But the case against the PRD leader—who had already declared his candidacy for the upcoming presidential elections—quickly unraveled when many of the accused retracted their admissions of involvement in a coup plot.

Then one of the main defendants in the trial, army private Amadou Mane, charged that the director-general of state security, Col. João Monteiro—who presided over a military commission of inquiry into the coup attempt—had coerced the soldiers into making accusations against da Costa. Mane, who admitted to killing Pina, and other defendants said that security forces threatened their lives in order to obtain false statements. The soldiers on trial said that the events of March 17, 1993 were part of a demonstration against poor living and pay conditions in the armed forces.

Following his acquittal, da Costa said he would lodge a criminal complaint against Monteiro, as well as Guinea-Bissau's interior minister.

In the meantime, the country's elections, originally set for March 27, were expected to be delayed until April or May, due to a lack of preparation. Da Costa is considered the leading opposition candidate against President João Bernardo Vieira. ■

BURUNDI

On January 13, Burundi's National Assembly elected 38-year-old Cyprien Ntaryamira as the country's new president. The post had remained vacant since the first president from the majority Hutu ethnic group, Melchior Ndadaye, was murdered in an ill-fated military coup attempt on October 21.

The assassination of the democratically elected president—at the hands of an army dominated by the Tutsi minority that ruled Burundi until Ndadaye's inauguration last July—plunged the country back into the ethnic bloodshed which has repeatedly marred it since independence in 1962.

Indeed, in comments made shortly after being elected by the National Assembly, the Hutu Ntaryamira—who was minister of agriculture and livestock under Ndadaye—promised that restoring peace and security would be the immediate priorities of his regime.

But the selection of Ntaryamira was met by a court challenge from Burundi's opposition parties, forcing a postponement of the new president's inauguration ceremonies originally scheduled for January 22.

At issue was the National Assembly's January 9 amendment to article 85 of the constitution which allowed it to elect a successor to the murdered president, rather than holding general elections to fill the post. (The person who would have been the constitutional successor was also killed in the October putsch attempt.)

The opposition, led by the former ruling party, the Union for Progress and National Unity (Uprona), charged that the amendment was illegal because article 182 of the constitution disallowed changes to Burundi's highest law when the country is facing serious internal troubles, according to a Radio Burundi report.

But it was precisely because of ongoing instability that MPs from the ruling party, the Front for Democracy in Burundi (Frodebu), asserted that an election attempt would be impossible and that it was necessary for the National Assembly to select a new president.

The Constitutional Court—which is comprised of two Hutus and five Tutsi—

POLITICAL POINTERS

sis—sided with the opposition. After the two Hutu judges on the court resigned, the government dismissed the remaining five Tutsi, who refused to accept Ntaryamira's appointment on January 29.

The government sackings were followed by three days of ethnic and political clashes in the capital, Bujumbura, which led to 46 deaths and 73 arrests, according to the police.

By February 3, however, the government and opposition parties—some of which had been calling for their supporters to turn Bujumbura into a "ghost town"—met in the capital and agreed that Ntaryamira would take the oath of office on February 5. The agreement between the parties—which was witnessed by the UN and OAU—also called for the president to reinstate the Constitutional Court judges and appoint a new prime minister from among the ranks of the opposition.

During his February 5 inauguration ceremony, Ntaryamira—who is a founding member of Frodebu—said that the main goals of his government would be "to do everything possible so that peace, tranquillity, and mutual trust return among Burundians," to teach respect for human rights, and to resettle the 200,000 internally displaced people "without forgetting" the more than 700,000 refugees abroad. The goals were similar to those of his predecessor.

But in recognition of the crisis facing Burundi, the president also said that "we are going to act fast to restore discipline in the country," including in the army, the schools, and the leadership. "Nothing else will save Burundi, apart from work, justice, and respect for human rights," he said.

TOGO

To be sure, Gen. Gnassingbé Eyadéma has shown remarkable survival instincts since he seized power in a coup d'état 27 years ago. After apparently being stripped of his power in a

1990 national conference, the general clawed his way back to the top and eventually won 96.42 percent of the vote in Togo's first multi-party presidential election last August.

For many Togolese, the election win confirmed what they already suspected: The hard-fought-for democratization process had been—and would be—*manipulated to ensure a continuation of autocratic rule under the general*. Indeed, many international election observers, including a team led by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, refused to monitor the August vote on the grounds that they did not believe it could be conducted in a free and fair manner.

But an apparent come-from-behind victory for the opposition in the country's February legislative elections—depending on the results in five constituencies, the opposition could have a majority in the new National Assembly and the premiership—suggests that the president has not cornered the market on political survival skills.

The limited legitimacy that Eyadéma's rule gained from his presidential election win—thanks to an opposition boycott and voter turnout at under 40 percent—may have prompted the president to ensure that the opposition took part in the legislative elections, originally scheduled for October.

When the voting was finally held for the 81-seat legislature on February 7, the opposition participated. But Eyadéma's Togolese People's Rally (RPT) took 33 of the 57 seats that were won outright and appeared on its way to controlling the National Assembly.

After backing down on a threat to boycott the second round, the main opposition grouping, Yao Agboyibo's Action Committee for Renewal (CAR), agreed to join the Togolese Union for Democracy (UTD) in a "common front" for the second round of voting.

By late February, the known overall results in both rounds of the election gave the opposition 38 seats, the RPT 37 seats, and Prime Minister Joseph Kokou Koffigoh one seat. The remaining five constituencies—where disturbances took place—were being determined by the Supreme Court.

Both the CAR and the RPT accused each other of fomenting the disturbances.

AFRICAN OUTLOOK

South Africa Joins Neighbors to Mediate in Lesotho

Margaret A. Novicki



Frontline state leader, President Robert Mugabe, left, worked with President F.W. de Klerk

Alfredo Mueche/AIM

Less than a day after two army factions opened fire on each other in Lesotho's capital, Maseru, on January 14, South Africa's Foreign Minister Roelof "Pik" Botha was on the scene to facilitate negotiations.

"Don't even start a small fire. You don't...know how much dry grass there is around," he rhetorically warned the rival Royal Lesotho Defense Force (RLDF) factions. The two sides ostensibly began fighting over a demand for a pay raise, but were also said to be divided over an opposition-supported attempt to overthrow the nine-month-old government of Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle.

Pretoria's stake in resolving the crisis was high: With South Africa's watershed elections around the corner in April, it could not afford a potential civil war or coup d'état in the country it completely surrounds.

But the ex-pariah state was not willing to meddle unilaterally in tiny Lesotho's affairs as had been the case in the past. In a move that was heralded as a glimpse of future regional cooperation, South Africa—represented by both President F.W. de Klerk and his almost certain successor, Nelson Mandela—teamed up with other southern African nations to consider joint action in Lesotho.

With the warring factions facing the threat of sanctions or a possible peace-keeping intervention by countries in the region, Commonwealth representatives

brokered an accord on February 1 to return the opposing forces to their respective barracks.

But the causes of division in the 2,000-man RLDF—which has a long history of involvement in Lesotho's politics—were left to be worked out in subsequent negotiations. And the prominent role South Africa and its neighbors played in helping to resolve January's crisis would remain crucial in efforts to reconcile the highly politicized RLDF with itself, the government, and the opposition.

Ties between the opposition Basotho National Party (BNP) and the army were cultivated in the years following independence in 1966, when the BNP was the duly elected ruling party. When Mokhehle's Basotho Congress Party (BCP) won the 1970 general elections, the army supported Prime Minister Chief Leabua Jonathan's refusal to hand over power. The BNP government suspended the constitution, declared rule by decree, and jailed opposition leaders, including Mokhehle.

The army's relationship with the BCP worsened even further after Mokhehle and other BCP leaders in exile in South Africa formed the party's armed wing, the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), in 1974.

But the Defense Force's loyalty to the BNP has always had limits. In 1986, the army ousted Jonathan and established a military council to rule Lesotho. The army remained in power

until the country's first democratic elections in 23 years on March 27, 1993.

In the run-up to the voting, the head of the military council since 1991, Maj.-Gen. Phisoane Ramaema, supported the BCP, but lower-ranking soldiers were said to back the BNP.

When the BCP—which won all 65 seats in the new Parliament—took power in April, observers questioned whether the army would remain accountable to the democratically elected government. The matter was complicated by army suspicions of the government's relationship to former LLA members in Lesotho and the continued existence of a 1,000-strong LLA in South Africa.

Indeed, less than two months before the January crisis, government attempts to bring former LLA leaders into the army were resisted by RLDF officers, leading to coup rumors.

The spark that ignited January's conflict, however, was an unsigned letter to Mokhehle from the armed forces demanding a 100 percent pay raise. According to a January 11 Radio Lesotho report, the letter instructed the prime minister to reply to the demand by January 24. But Mokhehle responded that the salaries of the country's public servants would all be reviewed together, and the army's concerns would not receive precedence.

On the morning of January 14, RLDF troops in favor of the pay raise exchanged fire with soldiers who supported Mokhehle's position at a military base, just outside the capital. The troops demanding the pay raise—who it soon became clear also had political grievances against the BCP government—took Lesotho's air force wing commander, Lt.-Col. Patrick Majare, hostage, after he had been shot in the shoulder.

By the time Botha arrived in the capital the following day, the first round of fighting had calmed. South Africa's foreign minister—who insisted that his visit was at the request of Maseru—met with Lesotho government officials, including Mokhehle, who is also the defense minister; RLDF officers; and opposition party leaders, whom the

government implied were instigating the fighting.

Responding to concerns that a putsch attempt was in the works, Botha told the press that South Africa would make it "impossible" for a government which came to power by force to survive in Lesotho. "We will close the border," he said, adding that he was confident that any future government in South Africa would concur with the policy.

Indeed, Lesotho's economic dependence on South Africa, coupled with Pretoria's long history of involvement in the country, gave teeth to Botha's threats. In 1982, South African commandos raided Maseru in their war against the banned African National Congress, killing at least 30 ANC members and 12 Basotho residents of the capital. The following year, Pretoria forced Lesotho to expel some 3,000 South African refugees under the threat of sanctions. And it was a South African blockade of Lesotho that led to the 1986 coup.

Pretoria's past involvement in Lesotho, however, also meant that its attempts to resolve the crisis were looked at suspiciously by Basotho who are fiercely proud of their sovereignty. After Botha's confidence that the conflict had been defused during his initial one-day stay in Maseru turned out to be premature, South Africa's cooperation with other countries in the region, as well as international organizations, added legitimacy to its mediation efforts.

In mid-January, various diplomats flew to Maseru, including ones from the Commonwealth, the United Nations, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU); southern African nations, including South Africa, made preparations for a high-level meeting to address the crisis; and local church groups became involved in the mediation efforts. But despite the flurry of diplomatic activity, the fighting in and around the capital intensified.

At least 800 soldiers were said to be involved in the sporadic clashes, with the vast majority on the side supporting the pay raise demand. But the "rebellious" troops from Makonyane barracks, just outside the capital, were up against 150 elite and well-equipped soldiers from Ha Rakamose barracks, also near the capital.

For its part, the government waffled on its description of the root of the

fighting. Government officials, who toned down early assertions that the conflict was part of a coup d'état attempt, sometimes confirmed the widely held view that the conflict grew out of political grievances. But at other times, the officials tried to portray the dispute as resulting solely from differences over the pay raise demand.

Radio Lesotho reported that government officials sent a statement to the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the BBC requesting that foreign news agencies refrain from referring to the factions as "rebels" and "loyalists."

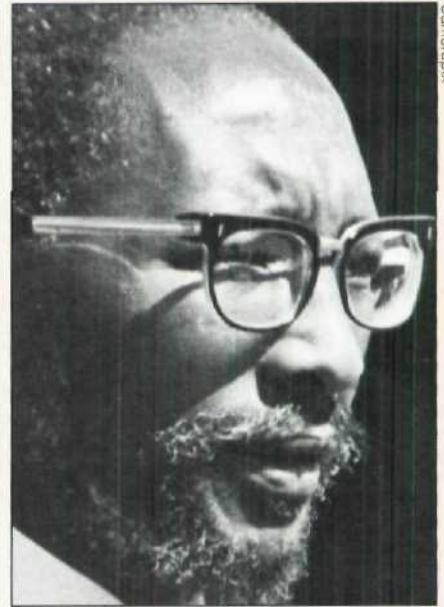
While the cause of the crisis could be disputed, its seriousness could not, especially after the heaviest fighting took place on January 23. Machine gun fire and mortar round exchanges were reported throughout the capital before heavy rains doused the fighting in the evening.

But with at least five soldiers and 11 civilians dead as a result of 10 days of clashes, the South African foreign minister said on January 24 that his country had turned down a request from Lesotho's government to send in peace-keeping troops. The decision—which was taken with South African forces already deployed on the border with Lesotho—was influenced by the ANC's opposition to the proposal.

Nonetheless, South Africa's Transitional Executive Council issued a statement that day in support of the "democratically elected" government in Lesotho. And the following day, in a sign that the international community's efforts to defuse the conflict were bearing fruit, the SABC reported that an OAU negotiator from Botswana had negotiated a truce between the two sides.

This was followed by a southern African leaders' meeting to address the crisis, held in Botswana's capital, Gaborone, on January 26. A powerful sign of the region's resolve to defuse the conflict, this meeting brought Zimbabwe's staunch anti-apartheid president and frontline state leader, Robert Mugabe, face-to-face with the South African president for the first time, along with Mandela, Botswana's President Quett Masire, who was also invited as president of the Southern African Development Community, and Lesotho's Deputy Prime Minister Selometsi Baholo.

At the conclusion of the one-day meeting, the governments of South



Another issue: The army does not trust King Moshoeshoe II

Africa, Botswana, and Zimbabwe set up a joint task force to recommend a "possible plan of action," which held out the possibility for the group to form a peace-keeping force for Lesotho. A team of 17 envoys from the three countries arrived in Maseru on January 28.

But the task force was not greeted with open arms by all of the players in Lesotho's crisis. Indeed, shortly after the tripartite task force was announced, a coalition of six opposition parties, led by the BNP, issued a statement against the "interventionists." The statement reportedly said: "Their action will be construed by sovereign Lesotho as naked interference and a rape against our nationhood."

And recognizing the distrust Basotho harbor for South Africa, Lesotho's foreign minister, Molapo Qhobela, initially denied the existence of the task force, stressing that it was only Commonwealth envoys who were helping the government to resolve the dispute, according to Radio Lesotho.

But the Commonwealth—at the behest of Lesotho's government—had requested the meeting of the regional leaders. And although it was the Commonwealth which eventually brokered the accord to return the troops to the barracks, few doubted the key role that South Africa and its neighbors played in making this possible.

In announcing the accord on February 1, Commonwealth negotiators Moses Anafu and Maxwell Gaylard said that the army factions would each send 10-person delegations for talks

Continued on page 11

Highest Ranking U.S. Official at UN Resigns

In March 1993, when the highest-ranking American official at the United Nations, Dick Thornburgh, completed his one-year term as undersecretary-general for management and administration, he did not leave quietly.

In his final report to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Thornburgh blasted the UN chief's management style and said the world body was "almost totally lacking in effective means to deal with fraud, waste, and abuse by staff members."

Boutros-Ghali's spokesman, Joe Sills, replied that it would have made more sense for the undersecretary to have pointed out the UN's deficiencies during his one-year tenure instead of complaining about them upon leaving.

But the spokesman could not say the same for Thornburgh's U.S.-appointed successor, Melissa Wells, when she too fired parting shots at the secretary-general in a January 14 resignation letter—Wells had clashed repeatedly with Boutros-Ghali over UN shortcomings during the 10 months that she held the post.

Wells promised to step down on February 17 in the resignation letter, which she sent to the secretary-general after learning that he had effectively fired her.

In part, the friction between Wells and the secretary-general was a reflection of differences between the United States, which has led the call for stricter limits on UN spending, and Boutros-Ghali, who has overseen a massive expansion of the UN's global mission.

While streamlining the UN's bureaucracy and fighting corruption was a priority for Boutros-Ghali when he took office on January 1, 1992, diplomats say he later neglected these aims to focus instead on the organization's growing number of peace-keeping and humanitarian missions.

When the secretary-general tried to persuade the U.S. to allow him to select Thornburgh's successor, the request fell on deaf ears. The U.S.—which is the UN's largest contributor—insisted that the Clinton administration make the appointment in order to maintain pressure for financial reform at the UN. The undersecretary-general for administration and management is in charge of reforming the world body's bloated bureaucracy, as well as overseeing security, contracts, and support services for peace-keeping operations.

Wells's clashes with Boutros-Ghali included an episode late last year when she directed the General Assembly's budgetary committee to slash funds for

many of the projects he had requested.

But the undersecretary's criticism of Boutros-Ghali was not limited to his choice of priorities or unwillingness to curb spending on his initiatives. In her January resignation, Wells reportedly wrote, "While many of us heads of departments have varying degrees of individual contact with you, I have not once during my tenure here experienced that sense of in-house collegial spirit under your leadership." The letter, marked "strictly confidential," was leaked to the press by Wells's backers.

The criticism of Boutros-Ghali's management style is shared by senior diplomats at the UN who also find him difficult to work with.

But U.S. officials—who reportedly found flaws in Wells's performance—went along with the secretary-general when he requested that her one-year contract, which was due to expire in April, not be renewed.

The officials said, however, that it was imperative that Wells's replacement be a competent manager who is committed to reforming the UN bureaucracy.

The U.S. also intends to continue to push for the naming of a UN inspector general, which was called for by both Thornburgh and Wells. During Wells's

First UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Named

On February 1, United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali nominated an Ecuadorian diplomat, José Ayala Lasso, to be the first United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The General Assembly was expected to approve the nomination to allow Ayala Lasso—who served as Ecuador's ambassador to the UN since 1989—to begin his four-year term on February 28.

As chairman of the General Assembly's Third Committee, which addresses social, humanitarian, and cultural issues, Ayala Lasso helped to create the new post last year.

But international human rights groups expressed concern over the selection of Ayala Lasso, citing his lack of experience in the human rights field and noting that he served two years as foreign minister under a repressive military regime in Ecuador in the 1970s.

Nonetheless, the rights groups promised to judge Boutros-Ghali's appointee by his future actions. "The challenge for Ayala Lasso will be to prove that he can overcome his past as an official of an abusive military government, and become a forceful public advocate for human rights," said the director of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth.

And Amnesty International released a statement which said,

"Human rights activists the world over have high expectations for this post and will be watching closely to see that he plays a bold and effective role in the protection of human rights."

Ayala Lasso will be responsible for coordinating UN human rights initiatives and integrating human rights considerations into the organization's peace-keeping operations, according to Human Rights Watch. But the powers of the new post are yet to be fully defined. Most Western governments and human rights groups want the new high commissioner to take an aggressive approach to his job, which could include investigating alleged human rights abuses on his own initiative. But many less developed nations have sought to limit the new high commissioner's powers.

At last June's UN Conference on Human Rights, developing nations argued that the West was unfairly forcing the less developed countries to conform to "Western" political and human rights standards as a precondition for economic aid. After Western nations moved closer to accepting development as a human right, the conference recommended that the UN create the new post of High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The General Assembly approved the establishment of the post on December 20. ■



Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali

tenure, the General Assembly agreed in principle to the establishment of such a post, despite resistance from Boutros-Ghali.

Wells, a career foreign service officer who has served as ambassador to Zaire, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde, was expected to return to work at the State Department.

Her replacement—the seventh person to hold the job in eight years—was to be named by the secretary-general in February.

Boutros-Ghali also hoped to name a successor to Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Eliason, who resigned in January. ■

Lesotho *Continued*

with the government. And while a compromise over the pay raise was announced, it was also recognized that the problems between the two groups involved political concerns.

But while Mokhehle's efforts to resolve the military question have been given a shot in the arm by international support, they may also be complicated by another issue: Lesotho's monarchy. King Letsie III insists that his father, Moshoeshe II, be reinstated as the country's monarch. But the army—which ousted the former king in 1990, after he clashed repeatedly with the country's military rulers—is still distrustful of the monarchy. On the other side of the equation are Moshoeshe's supporters, who have threatened violence in the past if Moshoeshe is not reinstated with a degree of the authority the monarchy once wielded. ■

New Algerian Head of State Named

In a move that could signal the beginning of negotiations between Algeria's government and the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the High Security Council appointed Gen. Lamine Zeroual as the country's sixth head of state on January 30.

In a nationally broadcast speech following his January 31 swearing-in ceremony, the 52-year-old Zeroual promised a "serious dialogue" with all Algerians, "irrespective of their political affiliations."

While the military-backed regimes of the last two years have negotiated with other opposition groupings in the country, the new president's comments were widely seen as a sign that his regime would seek to deal with the FIS. The Islamic fundamentalist party is involved in a bloody two-year-old conflict with the government.

The dispute began after the military seized power in January 1992 and canceled Algeria's democratization process in the middle of two rounds of voting for the National Assembly. The FIS had taken an overwhelming lead in the first round and was virtually assured of controlling the Assembly had the second round taken place.

The conflict between government security forces and Islamic guerrillas—who are not always accountable to the FIS—has left some 3,500 Algerians dead. And since the guerrillas began targeting foreigners in November, some 30 nationals of other countries have been killed.

Zeroual is not limiting his response to the crisis to dialogue, however. The new president—who is known as a hard-liner—was expected to step up the fight against the guerrillas. Indeed, he retained the defense portfolio which he had held since July when he came out of retirement.

Nonetheless, for now the new president appears to favor the conciliation he called for upon taking office over "eradication," which has been pursued by the army-backed regimes of the last two years.

In a February 7 television address, he said, "We are convinced that the security solution alone is not enough to extricate the country from the crisis, and that it is inevitable that radical and comprehensive solutions be found to the political, economic, social, and cultural issues."

But to date, the FIS—whose representatives have reportedly met secretly with government officials to no avail in the past—has not warmed up, at least publicly, to Zeroual's apparent overtures.

In a communiqué published shortly after Zeroual's appointment, the FIS said that the new regime was "meaningless" and that its "days were numbered," according to a Radio Morocco report.

Even if Zeroual is able to use his apparent carrot-and-stick approach to nudge moderate FIS leaders to the negotiating table, supporters of the banned movement are becoming increasingly more radical. And groups which are more radical and violent than the FIS—such as the Armed Islamic Group—continue to gain supporters, which could erode the effectiveness of any negotiations between the FIS and the government.

But finding a solution to the impasse between the fundamentalists and the government is only half of a twin challenge facing the Zeroual regime: The president must also address Algeria's economic crisis, which has contributed greatly to the unpopularity of the government.

The economy suffers from decades of mismanagement and corruption, as well as a drop in the prices Algeria receives for its main exports, oil and gas. In February, the government appeared close to closing a deal on a package of economic reforms with the IMF and continued talks to reschedule its foreign debt payments, which were expected to consume all of its export earnings this year.

The Algerian government has been under increasing pressure to deal with the FIS from Western governments, including the United States. ■

MALAWI

Malawi was scheduled to float its currency, the kwacha, on February 7.

The decision to lift foreign exchange controls and allow the kwacha's value to be determined by market forces was announced in a February 4 Reserve Bank of Malawi press release. Authorized exchange banks were to begin freely buying and selling the currency on February 7.

An additional measure announced by the bank was an increase in the amount of foreign exchange Malawians traveling abroad could purchase. Under the new regulations, a resident of Malawi can now purchase the equivalent of U.S.\$3,000 for holiday travel abroad, \$4,000 for medical expenses, and \$5,000 for business purposes, according to a Malawi Broadcasting Corporation report.

Prior to floating the currency, Malawi was facing chronic foreign exchange shortages.

SOUTH AFRICA

When ANC officials called for an end to U.S. sanctions against South Africa last year and gave the green light for joint ventures between U.S. and South African firms, this was not what they had in mind.

After a two-year anti-trust investigation by the U.S. Justice Department, South Africa's De Beers Centenary A.G. and the U.S. company General Electric were indicted on February 17 on charges that they conspired to raise and fix world prices for industrial diamonds.

Together, the two concerns—which deny collusion—are said to control 80 percent of the \$500 million a year industrial diamond market.

The Justice Department investigation began after a GE employee, Edward Russell, claimed that he was dismissed from the American company for "blowing the whistle" on price-fixing. Less than a week before the February indictment of the two companies by a federal grand jury, however, Russell withdrew his allegations apparently after striking a deal with GE.

Nonetheless, the grand jury—which also indicted a De Beers official, Philippe Liotier, and a GE employee—alleges that the price-fixing con-

BUSINESS BRIEFS

spiracy began in 1991 and continued into the next year.

Industrial diamonds are generally produced synthetically from carbon and are used in industrial tools.

De Beers Centenary A.G.'s parent company, De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd., is no stranger to price fixing. Its Central Selling Organization (CSO) has fixed the world price of rough diamonds for decades.

And it was in the sale of rough diamonds that De Beers had somewhat better news to report earlier this year. In January, the conglomerate reported record sales of \$4.37 billion for its rough diamonds in 1993. This is an increase of over 25 percent from last year's sales of the gems, and almost a 5 percent increase over the previous record sales of \$4.17 billion in 1988.

De Beers is the second largest company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Market after Anglo American.

NIGERIA

The 1994 budget unveiled by head of state Gen. Sani Abacha in a January 10 address to the nation marks the regime's apparent abandonment of the economic reform program begun by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida in 1986.

Abacha, who seized power in a coup d'état in November, announced a fixed exchange rate of 22 naira to the U.S. dollar, interest rate ceilings of 12 to 15 percent, and a ban on the free repatriation of export revenue.

The reimposition of economic controls outlined in the new budget is seen as a major setback to Nigeria's efforts to reach an agreement with the IMF.

The most populous sub-Saharan African country needs a deal with the lending organization to convince Western donors to grant it substantial debt relief. Nigeria is \$6 billion in arrears on its \$30 billion external debt.

Abacha claims that the 1994 budget—which outlined a three-year economic plan—is not a repudiation of the free-market economy, as Western donors have suggested. In comments

made in late January, he said the budget represents a "fine-tuning" of the structural adjustment program to meet the needs of society, according to a report on Nigerian television.

But Nigeria's donors are not the only ones unhappy with the budget. According to *African Business*, Abacha made his 1994 budget speech nine days late because of disputes within his cabinet over the country's future economic direction.

Leading the resistance to the reintroduction of economic controls and abandonment of free market reform was Nigeria's recently appointed finance minister, Kalu Idika Kalu, who is a former World Bank economist.

Regardless of economic direction, Nigeria has been hurt by the fall in the world price for oil. This is not expected to change. The 1994 budget predicted a price of \$14 a barrel, down from \$17.50 in 1993's budget.

ECONOMY

The Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) is planning to establish a stock market, according to a February 2 Pan-African News Agency (PANA) report.

Under the plan, which was outlined by PANA, the 20-member PTA will establish stock exchanges in member-states that do not yet have them and strengthen existing national stock markets by linking them to the PTA exchange. The intention is to increase cross-border investment and capital mobility in the PTA.

According to PANA, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Botswana were the only PTA countries operating stock markets in the beginning of February. Zambia was on the verge of opening one.

ZAIRE

The World Bank was scheduled to close its office in Zaire's capital, Kinshasa, on January 31. A bank official reportedly said that the closing was "for a temporary but indefinite period."

The bank—which had previously declared Zaire "insolvent"—said that it would maintain a liaison office in Kinshasa.

The country also reportedly faced expulsion from the IMF in February.

FRANCE/AFRICA
BY KAYE WHITEMAN

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BANQUE CENTRALE
DES ETATS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

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THE PARTY'S OVER

The devaluation of the CFA franc, by 50 percent, although widely predicted, was a shock, prompting fears of social unrest, labor agitation, and political instability. The end of the CFA's parity with the French franc—after 45 years—signaled a turning point in France's relationship with its former colonies in West and Central Africa. Coincidentally, the African leader with the closest ties to France, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire, died in December. The two events clearly marked the end of an era in France's special relationship with Africa.

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BANQUE CENTRALE
DES ETATS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

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Les auteurs ou complices de
fausseté ou de contrefaçon
de billets de banque seront
punis conformément aux lois
et actes en vigueur.

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he major, obsessional, inescapable topic of conversation through all of francophone Africa (and in African circles in France) since the beginning of the new year has been "la dévaluation." This is the reduction in the parity of the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc, the currency of the countries of the franc zone

(Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo—all French territories—and ex-Spanish Equatorial Guinea), from 50 CFA to one French franc to 100 CFA to one French franc. The decision was made at a summit in Dakar, Senegal, of the countries involved from January 11-12, originally convened to discuss the problems of Air Afrique, the regional airline.

Although it had been widely and regularly predicted for some two years before, the decision has still come as a bitter shock which is seen by the countries concerned as marking a turning point in the special relationship between France and Africa. This has thrived in the past 30 or more years, with economic, military, and cultural dimensions, with the financial underpinning of the franc zone.

"Why nothing can ever be the same again," wrote *Jeune Afrique* forlornly as one of its cover lines after the ax fell. There is a sense of something having been lost or broken, never to be repaired, that goes beyond the simple fact of a change in the value of the currency.

Incredibly, the parity of the CFA franc with the French franc has remained unchanged since 1948, even if the French franc had revamped itself with de Gaulle's "new franc" of 1958. The French franc has also subsequently been devalued several times as well, moving within the bounds of the exchange rate mechanism of the European Monetary System.

But whatever the French franc has done, the CFA has followed. When President Georges Pompidou devalued in 1969, the Africans were not consulted and were, it was said at the time, "like Mme. Pompidou, not in the know."

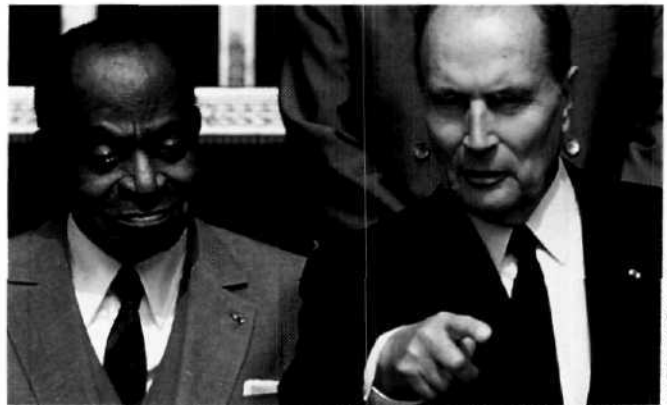
The longer the parity remained the same, through a variety of conditions, the more it seemed inviolate and the harder to break, especially in the context of the post-independence sphere of influence. As such, it acquired, along with the much vaunted convertibility, the value of a fetish, surrounded by all kinds of myths.

None appreciated this more than Félix Houphouët-Boigny, president of Côte d'Ivoire, whose death at age 88 on December 7 also marked a significant turning point for francophone Africa. For he was the principal machine-minder of the "special relationship," a key player in the system set up by General Charles de Gaulle after the "year of independence" in 1960. For the French, he is irreplaceable. There is no one now who can speak for the

francophone Africans the way he did, or carry the same weight in Paris. He was the doyen of the francophones, and it is enough to see that the new doyen (in simple terms of longevity in power) is the disreputable Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire to know that Houphouët, like the myth of parity, can never be replaced.

The Ivorian president had always been implacably opposed to devaluation, not because there might not have been advantages for Côte d'Ivoire from the measure, but because he feared the psychological and political consequences of the move. His concern was for all the francophone countries—their political as well as their economic stability, for which he saw the continuing engagement of the French as vital. The franc zone with its fixities was one of the means by which France's commitment to Africa was cemented. This is what has now been loosened.

In the 1960s, there was serious criticism from African



nationalists of the "neo-colonial" nature of the franc zone. The critics, among whom figured President Sékou Touré of Guinea (who had been obliged to leave the zone after his 1958 break with de Gaulle in claiming full independence), concentrated on the French control of the zone and its central banks, the holding of reserves in Paris by the French treasury, and the loss of independence involved. These critics were to a limited extent answered by the Pompidou reforms of the early 1970s, which decentralized the zone and its banks, although retaining 65 percent of the reserves in Paris.

What caused criticism to fade, however, was the success of the zone in bringing higher than average growth to its members, while economies outside like Guinea, Mali (which had also left the zone and had to return humiliated in 1967), and Madagascar, which left after the revolution in 1972, all were seen to be suffering.

The zone was seen not just as facilitating development by attracting investment through its convertibility, and through the stability offered by the fixed parity. It was vaunted because, in the 1970s, it brought higher growth rates, even if these were helped along by transient high prices for cocoa and coffee, but above all by the two oil booms. This golden age (seen especially in Gabon, Cameroon, and Côte d'Ivoire) con-

Above, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny and French President François Mitterrand

Kaye Whiteman is editor-in-chief of West Africa magazine in London.

tained the seeds of later problems, as the attractiveness of the franc zone in the lending frenzy of the late 1970s built up the debt problems of the 1980s.

It was only in the mid-1980s that the alarm bells began to ring, even if the poorer countries of the zone, such as Senegal and the Sahelians, were already experiencing more and more difficult times. High interest rates, and the catastrophe of debt headed the list of woes, closely followed by the slump in commodity prices, notably petroleum. The other ills that affect Africa in its "lost decade," such as the cumulative sclerosis of single-partyism, mismanagement, and corruption, also took their toll on the earlier confidence which had surrounded the franc zone.

In 1987 for the first time, the *compte d'operations* of the zone in the French treasury, the sinews of the zone, went into overall deficit for both the West and Central African parts of the zone. Coming at the same time as evidence of declining French trade and investment in sub-Saharan Africa, doubts began to be expressed as to how long the zone could remain a viable operation, as its contradictions became apparent. As one ambassador in Dakar said to me in 1990, "You can't have a strong currency based on weak economies."

The doubts emanated principally from Washington institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which in the 1980s assumed a commanding role in determining the fate of the economies of many

Arguably, the CFA franc was always over-valued. According to Teresa Hayter in *French Aid* (ODI, London, 1968), this was deliberately so, to make Africa more attractive to French expatriates (as long as they were paid in French francs) who would go to Africa in order to make money (*faire le CFA*). At various stages, it has been more or less so, but in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as France became more preoccupied with maintaining its own currency value (and staying with the deutschmark in the ERM), the position of the CFA became more conspicuous. The relatively low dollar and the dramatically cheap Ghanaian cedi and Nigerian naira (not to mention the leone, dalasi, and indeed the zaire) all contrived to highlight its apartness further.

Resistance to the idea of change was strong, however. First of all, the French-African business lobby, which benefited from the high-value CFA and feared losses in the event of devaluation, has maintained a remarkably effective pressure group near to the heart of government in Paris. Secondly, the elites and bourgeoisie in francophone Africa, particularly partial to the lifestyle offered by things French, were deeply hostile to the idea. These two groups converged to play on the suspicion in Paris that the whole thing might be an American plot to undo France's special relationship in Africa, so that when early in 1992, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Herman Cohen told newsmen in Paris that the

CFA should be devalued, the fear and loathing set up took months to overcome. It was a "provocation" that has now entered legend.

Meanwhile, the drain of CFA liquidity into neighboring countries was running out of control. In 1992, CFA notes returned to the central bank through London and Geneva (hence from Lagos, Accra, and Banjul) were put at 1.2 billion French francs, and in the first half of 1993, the seepage was reportedly worse.

Ironically, in March 1993, the Rassemblement Populaire Republicain, the Gaullist party, won the

French parliamentary elections. And although the Gaullists traditionally have the most sentimental and business ties in Africa of all the French political parties, it happened that the man who became prime minister, Edouard Balladur, had none. His previous job had been minister of finance, and his background was bureaucratic.

Confronted with the appalling imbalances being cre-



Kenneth Ross

African countries, recommending free market policies such as deregulation, privatization, and most controversially, devaluation. They began to be applied in the franc zone's neighbors, notably Ghana and Nigeria, where massive devaluations were undertaken in the mid-1980s. These merely highlighted the growing problem of the "over-valuation" of the CFA franc.

The Squeeze on the Gambia

As analysts assess the fallout of January's 50 percent devaluation of the CFA franc against its French cousin, economic relations between two of West Africa's most interdependent states continue to be fragile following Senegal's decision to stop the transit of goods-laden trucks from the Gambia destined for a third country.

Senegal put the embargo in place last September after complaining its treasury was losing \$7.4 million a year in unpaid customs duties because of the informal cross-border trade it condemned as *la fraude*, or smuggling.

Shortly before, Senegal, in tandem with six other West African francophones, had announced the suspension of the French-supported currency's convertibility, ruling that CFA franc notes could only be exchanged for other convertible currencies within the West African Monetary Union (UMOA). UDEAC, UMOA's Central African partner in the African Franc Zone, also announced a similar suspension, which was widely interpreted as a precursor to devaluation.

The two major policy changes have placed a huge strain on natural resources-starved the Gambia, which is almost entirely engulfed by its francophone neighbor and depends to a large extent on the re-export trade. Officially, some 60 percent of goods imported through the tiny enclave's only port in the capital, Banjul, are re-exported into the sub-region by road via Senegal. Privately, analysts confirm at least 90 percent of some imports are re-exported.

The Gambia, with its major earner, the groundnut, in decline, has used its comparative advantages—among them a liberal banking and customs regime—to steal a march on other West African states where prohibitive tariffs and excessive red tape make importation an expensive, often nightmarish, business.

The advantage is evident in prices. At December 1993 prices, wholesale rice was available in the Gambia at \$13 per 50-kilogram bag. In Guinea-Bissau, less than a half hour's flying time away, the going rate for the same size bag was a staggering \$70.

ated, and the fact that the IMF/World Bank were increasingly withholding funds because of the alarming financial holes even in once-prosperous countries like Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon, without even mentioning some of the more headline cases, something had to give. The French managing director of the IMF, Michel

Initial panic among Gambian importers accustomed to often obscene profit margins and fearing unprecedented austerity has proved well-founded as the effects of Senegal's action begin to set in. Textiles, re-exported by road mainly to Senegal, Guinea, and Mali, have already been devastated by the border restriction, with dealers reporting a significant sales drop and some declaring themselves close to bankruptcy.

Banjul, at the height of the trade a bustling, active city, is beginning to feel the pinch as annual laborers and other affected informal workers brace themselves to join the ranks of the unemployed. "We depend 95 percent on the re-export trade for our livelihood and have been very badly hit, not like the sugar, rice, and other bulk commodity importers who have at least something of a local market," Rifaat Farage, a major Gambian-Lebanese textile importer, told *Africa Report*.

Omar Sey, the Gambia's foreign minister, has lobbied the sub-regional and international community with which the country enjoys trading links. He argues the action to stifle the transit or re-export trade, which he views as "distinct and separate" from informal bilateral trade, contravenes Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) as well as GATT regulations.

"Two countries cannot be so close to each other, have this geographic contiguity, and not experience trade between them," Sey told *Africa Report* in an interview, adding that most of the so-called smugglers were in any event Senegalese and not Gambians.

Sey insists the trade "has been going on between the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, landlocked Mali and Mauritania, Guinea, and even Sierra Leone for many, many years. On our side, businessmen have paid Senegalese customs officials to export their goods in trucks from the Gambia to these third countries, [and] there is...no reason at all for stopping this transit trade."

Economic policy-makers, anxious to minimize the effect of Senegal's actions on the Gambia, complain

Camdessus, who himself had been converted to the necessity of devaluing, found willing ears in Balladur and the French treasury.

Despite continuing official denials that devaluation was going to happen, a highly significant development took place on August 2, 1993. In the middle of a Euro-

that mediation efforts have reached an impasse. Senegal's finance minister, Pape Ousmane Sakho, postponed a scheduled visit to the Gambia in January, deeming a pre-devaluation meeting with senior French and Bretton Woods officials more crucial.

"Senegal doesn't have the political will to implement the economic policies required for the devaluation to achieve its objectives," says a senior Gambian Central Bank analyst. "That's why it's keeping the border closed.

"The major assumption is that most of the goods stay in Senegal but that's not so. Senegal's imposition of these non-tariff barriers on legitimate internationally sanctioned trade is tantamount to sabotage."

The francophone neighbor, thrust into double jeopardy by International Monetary Fund conditionalities, then by the CFA's devaluation, has introduced price controls, which many insist undermine the goals of devaluation and defeat the object of structural adjustment. With a black market for the French franc already developing even before the January 11 devaluation, many predict food shortages and social unrest.

Last August's suspension of convertibility eroded confidence in the CFA franc, once a favored currency shipped to Europe by Gambian merchants to pay for commodity imports. The devaluation has since dealt the franc zone currency a death blow. In Banjul, the dalasi has appreciated against the CFA franc. Banks no longer deal in the currency, resulting in more pressure on the dollar and other major currencies. The ubiquitous bag-toting Fulanis who run the parallel exchange market now turn their noses up when the notes are proffered.

Up until November last year, the Gambia had not suffered a downturn in the volume of trade since orders placed by importers before the closure were still arriving at the port. Trade is however expected to decline markedly in 1994. Responding to alarm from the business sector and donors alike, Finance Minister Bakary Dabo slashed nonessential budgetary expenditures and increased the pump price of gasoline by 0.5 dalasi a liter (9.5 dalasi = \$1).

Finance officials say the measures are designed to ensure that for the first half of this year, the burden of the border crisis will be carried by the government. But hard times are just around the corner for the

country of little more than a million people—with an annual per capita inflow of \$100, ranking among sub-Saharan Africa's most aid-dependent nations. "By the end of 1994, if the problem is not resolved, budgetary support will be necessary from the international donor community," admitted one official.

Spurred by donor concern, the Gambian authorities are attempting to diversify the country's volatile and narrow economic base. To circumvent Senegalese territory, coastal freighters and air cargo are now being employed. The government insists its corrective measures have defeated the doomsday scenarios painted by the IMF.

"Predictions had been made that re-export revenues would drop by 50 percent, but because of the measures put in place, that figure is now revised to 25 percent," said the Central Bank official. "Where they had predicted negative growth of 5 percent, we now believe the economy will register positive growth, albeit at a slower pace."

While the Gambia sets itself up to avoid economic decline, its neighbor is sitting on a socioeconomic time bomb. The common belief is that austerity-hit Senegal—which before the devaluation slashed civil service salaries and raised import duties on rice and other staple commodities—would do well to de-restrict the frontier as soon as possible and put in place a transparent system that works against smuggling, yet sets realistic conditions on importers.

"It's not in the interests of the Gambia for Senegal to have economic problems, we all recognize that we want Senegal to prosper," declared one Gambian official who, like most who spoke to *Africa Report*, demanded anonymity because the issue is so sensitive. "A prosperous Gambia can be a market for Senegalese goods. Wherever there's trade, there's mutual benefit."

According to one outgoing Western ambassador, Senegal's policy—and the ensuing diplomatic impasse—is a threat to sub-regional trade. "The geopolitical closeness of the Gambia and Senegal is one of the most compelling arguments for sub-regional economic integration," he told *Africa Report*. "If they can't get their acts together and sort out this ridiculous mess, what hope is there for Ecowas and a single monetary zone? I venture to suggest none, whatsoever." ■

—Peter da Costa

pean currency crisis, it was quietly announced by the West and Central African central banks (BCEAO and BEAC) that CFA currency notes would no longer be convertible outside the zone. This was followed a month later by the ending of convertibility of notes between the Central and West African zones.

Although official convertibility through banks remained, this was a blow struck at the heart of the franc zone idea, and clearly implied that a change in parity could not be far away. A parallel market in CFA sprang up over the borders, and traders in Dakar, Bamako, Cotonou, and Abidjan began to unofficially discount the

currency as well as engage in speculative hoarding of French francs.

Another devious harbinger of impending change was a letter which Balladur wrote to African leaders in September 1993 indicating that France would no longer provide structural adjustment assistance to African countries unless they were signed up with the IMF and World Bank. This letter was seen as an admission that France could no longer cope with African problems on its own, and was virtually handing over responsibility for the economic direction of its former territories to the Washington institutions.

A meeting of franc zone ministers in Abidjan in the same month received the same crisp message from Finance Minister Edmond Alphandéry. Reports began to appear that a secret deal had been arranged between the French and the IMF. With remarkable prescience, the Paris daily *Libération* reported that there would be a devaluation early in 1994, once the Gabonese presidential elections were over. Never had something that ideally should be top-secret been so often and so repeatedly foretold.

Michel Roussin, the former senior security man who rather surprisingly had become Balladur's minister of cooperation, visited a number of countries to preach the message that they all had to seek help from the financial institutions, that the era of the permanent handouts to help with the *fin du mois* (monthly salary payments to civil servants) was over. Roussin's tergiversation on the subject ("I never heard of the devaluation of the CFA," August 3, 1993; "Edmond Alphandéry and myself, we don't want a devaluation," October 10, 1993) became less and less convincing.

With an air of sanctimonious abdication, French ministers increasingly stressed that any devaluation was a matter for the franc zone heads of state to decide, almost as if France would have no role in the matter. At the same time, they were telling the Africans that they were under intolerable pressure from the Washington institutions, on whom blame was consistently laid.

At this moment came the death of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, removing the one person whose leadership might conceivably have delayed the decision, as he may well have done in July 1992. Now it is being said that it would never have happened if he had been alive, but this is probably escapism (there were those who thought that the decision would wait until a decent interval after his burial). Even Houphouët would have had to bow to the pressures, but a new myth is abroad that, if nothing else, will help immortalize his memory, even if it is of no practical value to his successor, Henri Konan Bédié, for whom devaluation has only added to the problems he faces in trying to consolidate his newly acquired power.

The Dakar summit, originally called to discuss Air Afrique, found itself a "devaluation summit" to which Roussin and Camdessus, an unlikely pair of assassins,

invited themselves to ensure that the foul deed was done. It was not without irony that the Air Afrique recovery program approved at the summit was immediately rendered out-of-date by the devaluation decision, but few saw this droll aspect.

Subsequently, the leaders of the franc zone, injured and bitter, above all with the French, complained pathetically that the level of French representation should have been higher, and insisted that Mitterrand and Balladur hold a summit with them in Yamoussoukro after the Houphouët funeral on February 7. It was in fact a non-event that took no decisions, simply an occasion for the Africans to complain about their situation and ask for more money, but at least hurt feelings were slightly soothed.

Balladur tried to tell them that things were not as bad as all that—it was "a beginning, not an end." Mitterrand (who privately must have been glad that it was mainly Balladur who was on the receiving end of the flak, even from his own party, the Gaullists) said to the summit with as straight a face as he could manage: "The opposition is not between you and us, but between us and the international institutions."

In fact, these institutions, as well as France and its EU partners and other interested parties, were all anxious to be seen to be rallying around. Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire led the queue to sign back on at the IMF, now expected to show some indulgence instead of stony-faced rigidity. The bad temper of some African presidents was worrying to France, but it was reckoned that sulks would pass. More disturbing was the risk of social disturbances, labor agitation, and political unrest (which did in fact break out in February), that could threaten the new multi-party democratic experiments. If some dwell on the positive aspects—increased competitiveness, upswing in government revenues—especially for some of the richer, better endowed countries, which had previously been feeling the pinch most, others were concerned that the Sahel countries and poor but politically volatile countries like Senegal and Benin might experience particular problems.

In an atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty, hoarding and speculation, there are real doubts that inflation can be checked enough to make the devaluation of any lasting benefit, giving rise to concerns that, given the limitations of trying to maintain a fixed parity rather than floating, another devaluation might be on the cards, which could even lead to a fragmentation of the zone itself.

Not even the present and former presidents and prime ministers of France packed into the resplendent Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in Yamoussoukro could mask the fact that the devaluation, like the death of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, signified the end of an era for France's special relationship in Africa. Whatever forms and structures might evolve in the future, the 45-year franc zone party was over. ○

||| COTE D'IVOIRE |||
BY HOWARD FRENCH

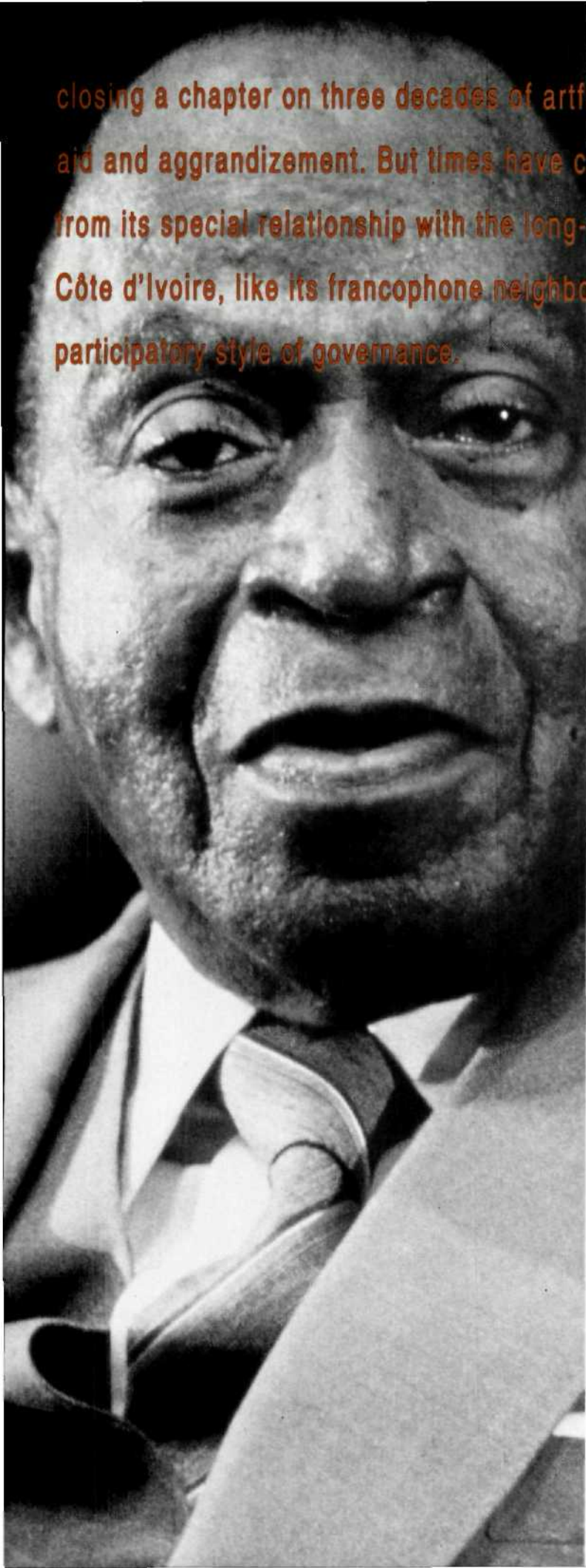
CLOSING A CHAPTER



Patrick Robert/Sygmia

President Félix Houphouët-Boigny was buried in February,

closing a chapter on three decades of artful authoritarianism fostered by French aid and aggrandizement. But times have changed and France is rapidly retreating from its special relationship with the long-time dictators of West Africa. Now, Côte d'Ivoire, like its francophone neighbors, must grope toward a new and more participatory style of governance.



Alan Keler/Sygma

Throughout a political career that spanned half a century, Félix Houphouët-Boigny often looked suspiciously at Western-style democracy, viewing it as a Pandora's box that, once opened, would unleash centrifugal energies that could never again be contained.

To look at West Africa's current disarray in the wake of the Ivorian president's death, one could be tempted to state that this pessimistic vision, true to Houphouët's favorite self-image as the sage, was a powerfully prescient one.

But across West Africa, and already now in the deceased Ivorian leader's own land, those who would draw this conclusion are learning the impossibility of rolling back time.

The unfolding lessons for West Africa's next generation, already seem, in fact, to be quite different from those Houphouët-Boigny would have had them draw, particularly if they are to be culled from the post-Houphouët experience of Côte d'Ivoire.

For all of its vaunted development, Côte d'Ivoire must now go forward to face the same problems of debt, unemployment, poverty, and ethnic tensions that plague the rest of the region. The land of Houphouët-Boigny faces the added disadvantage, however, of being a relative infant in terms of political experience.

And now, however chaotic the approaching period may prove, it seems inevitable that this country's future,

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Ivorian neighbors, have always been associated in the work of building their nation.

With France now pulling back from the region with impressive speed, Côte d'Ivoire seems set to absorb precisely this lesson: There is no substitute for experience.

Although France's policy of withdrawal from its former francophone possessions began years ago, Houphouët-Boigny, like many observers, only seemed to realize what was happening in the last year or so, when the question of support for the once-sacrosanct CFA franc became the subject of open debate.

In fact, Paris, following the de Gaulle dictum that countries have no friends, but rather interests, had long begun to forage in other pastures. The turning point in fact was Nigeria, where, beginning in the late 1970s, France began to increase its trade and investment, reversing culturally guided attempts to isolate or even dismantle the anglophone giant, in order to take advantage of the largest and one of the most viable markets on the continent.

By the mid-1980s, Paris, against the protests of Houphouët, had begun to water down the annual Franco-African summits, bringing in leaders of other states where new French interests lay, and diluting the importance of its traditional allies.

Much has changed in the world since the mid-1980s, and Houphouët-Boigny's death and burial seemed for France a neat way to close a long chapter in its special post-colonial relationship with Africa. With France worried about remaining competitive with Germany in Eastern as well as Western Europe now, Africa has clearly lost much of its long-enduring appeal.

Their respects freshly paid to the Ivorian leader, who was buried in grandiose fashion in his native Yamoussoukro, French President François Mitterrand, a socialist, and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, a conservative, immediately turned their concerted attentions to retuning francophone Africa's diplomatic violins.

No longer would France foot the bills, they said in meetings with their African counterparts while still on Ivorian soil. To those looking for succor in the wake of the 50 percent devaluation of the CFA franc, the French leaders said significant new aid would come only through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, both strongly American-influenced institutions whose prescriptions in the region Paris had once almost seemed to encourage its African partners to snub.

Of France's major political tenors, only former prime minister and longtime mayor of Paris Jacques Chirac strikes a different chord these days. Chirac, long the closest to Houphouët-Boigny of French political leaders, has been a lone voice decrying France's decision to entrust the management of its longtime preserve to the Bretton Woods institutions.

"Between countries that know and love each other, the bilateral must prevail over the multilateral," Chirac told *Jeune Afrique* magazine, after condemning the

United States and Japan for their "selfishness" with regard to the continent.

If Chirac stands out, however, for West Africa, it is all but clear that he offers no true alternative. Struggling to keep pace with its main Western competitors, France no longer has the luxury of floating the mostly moribund economies of francophone Africa.

More importantly perhaps, the palsy style of Chirac that enabled him to avert his eyes from their dictatorial practices while bolstering the regimes of Eyadema, Mobutu, and Bongo, among others, in the 1980s is the last thing that a continent desperate for rigor, transparency, and participation needs.

Beginning with a wave of contestation in 1988, West Africa preceded, rather than followed, Eastern Europe in shaking up its old dictatorships and seeking a democratic way of life. The instincts of France were to brace its reliable old friends against change, rather than to nudge them toward the kind of evolution that is required if Africa is to soon emerge to attract the attentions of foreign investors or even retain the talents of its own educated elites, who in ever greater numbers become professional exiles abroad.

Although he has been given credit for encouraging democratization, François Mitterrand, while more progressive than Chirac, embraced the theme late, and then only cautiously with his famous summit of La Baule, at which he declared, somewhat deceptively, "From now on, France will link its aid to the efforts of those heading toward more freedom."

Togo, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, and others soon went on to violate the spirit of democracy, sometimes brutally, provoking little effort from France to throw its weight behind change. France, of course, was not alone in its cynicism.

Where promising rays of democracy have shone, the United States has done little to help secure them. Where dictators have stood fast, there has been little stomach to help uproot them.

It may be hard for some to imagine, but like the devaluation of the CFA franc, the death of Houphouët-Boigny and the retreat of France from the region he helped it watch over, may ultimately bear salutary effects for francophone West Africa as the region, for the first time since the wave of independence in 1960, finally seeks to find its own way.

"Faced with a new situation, African leaders must, like Paris, give in to realism: diminish the lavishness of the state apparatus, making it serve the needs of the people, promoting regional and continental integration, in short to take charge of itself," wrote Albert Bourgi recently in an editorial in *Jeune Afrique*. "In this way, the devaluation of the CFA will have been a catharsis, one that mentally emancipates African leaders from their relations with Paris, and thus definitively cuts the umbilical cord that for more than three decades has weighed on the relations between their states and the former metropole." ○

interview

PRESIDENT JERRY RAWLINGS BY MARGARET A. NOVICKI



Ernest Harschi

Ghana's Fourth Republic

After heading the Provisional National Defense Council since 1981, Jerry Rawlings became Ghana's first civilian elected president in more than a decade in 1993. Although the defeated opposition boycotted the parliamentary elections, President Rawlings explains that Ghana has a healthy democracy, with plenty of criticism of government policies.

Africa Report: After a controversial start, Ghana's Fourth Republic is now one year old. What lessons have you learned about the implementation of democracy, i.e. the electoral process, and its practice after a year?

Rawlings: I don't think there was a "controversial start," as you put it. The majority of Ghanaians and the international observer groups did not think so either. It was those who lost fairly resoundingly in the first round of elections and then boycotted the second round who have raised a controversy.

Also, when you ask what we have "learned about the implementation of democracy and the electoral process" in the past year, I have to point out that the building of a meaningful system of democracy dates back to some 12 years ago. Decentralization in government administration, the creation of district political authorities was part of this electoral process. So democracy and elections did not just drop down from the sky a year or two ago. They were a stage in a long process. After all, what is democracy if the people at the grassroots are not empowered to take decisions affecting themselves?

I must say, however, that the past year, operating under a constitutional, multi-party parliamentary system, has demonstrated that constitutional safeguards are costly, particularly in terms of lengthy procedures which can

In this wide-ranging interview, the Ghanaian president comments on democracy Ghana-style, as well as the economic successes his country has recorded over the past decade.

President Rawlings also explains the kind of assistance his country would like to receive from the U.S.—fair prices for its products and honest investment.

sometimes erode the urgency of necessary measures. I have had occasion to draw attention to some of these as well as some conflicting clauses in the constitution. Despite these, we will remain faithful to the constitution even as we recognize that with time Ghanaians may have to take a second look at some aspects of it.

Africa Report: You have always been a proponent of grassroots democracy. With the advent of the Fourth Republic, have you achieved your goal of democracy "from the bottom up," or with the pressure to hold multi-party elections, was this principle sidelined? Is Ghana's democracy different in this respect from others around the continent?

Rawlings: We have had to make some compromises, it is true, but not of principle. The flavor of grassroots democracy, the confidence of the ordinary man or woman to challenge injustice, the spirit of communal endeavor, though alive, has been slightly dampened by the encumbrances and procedural requirements in constitutional rule—some of the old healthy spontaneity is gone. But let me emphasize that the people at the grassroots can never again be marginalized in Ghanaian politics.

You ask if our democracy is different from others around the continent? I would say the revolt of June 4, 1979 and the revolutionary process that was initiated on

December 31, 1981 changed the political culture in our country. It created the conditions for the involvement of the ordinary people in the decision-making processes and it changed the political and economic direction of the country. The lessons and experiences have given our democracy a character of its own.

Africa Report: The opposition parties maintain that the conduct of the presidential election was flawed, causing them to boycott the parliamentary elections. They allege that the Fourth Republic is a mere reincarnation of the PNDC, with most of the same personalities and a rubber-stamp parliament. How do you answer these charges?

with opposition leaders. However, we find that some of the statements from the opposition outside these meetings send contradictory signals. For example, to tell opposition supporters that their only reason for "doing business" with government is to set the scene for the 1996 elections, or to threaten to boycott these elections if certain conditions are not met, is hardly conducive to useful interchange of views.

Africa Report: The independent press is among the main pillars of a working democracy. However, your critics maintain that with the implementation of democracy in Ghana, there has not been a commensurate blossoming

“The revolutionary process that was initiated on December 31, 1981 changed the political culture in our country.”

What is the current status of government-opposition relations?

Rawlings: The truth is they tried to portray us—with some measure of success—to the outside world as a dictatorial military government. The truth as manifested by our people in the voting pattern for the presidential election proved them wrong. They knew they were going to face another humiliating defeat in the parliamentary elections, hence that tactical ploy of withdrawing under the pretext of those fraudulent allegations. They based their campaign on false economic promises and ethnic issues. They were out of touch with reality. The new mood of the country had no time for cheap, childish, and unrealistic promises. They simply underestimated the new sense of awareness of the people of this country.

How long this awareness can be sustained in the face of their persistent false allegations and divisive ethnic pronouncements against the background of economic difficulties is what I cannot say.

It is true that apart from the couple of independent MPs, the seats are occupied by members of the Progressive Alliance made up of three parties. But Parliament is by no means a rubber stamp, as they have demonstrated by their radical amendment of some of the bills put before the House and their open and frank criticism of even some government policies.

There are many new faces in the cabinet and in other key positions. At the same time, if a person has served with competence and integrity in the past, and is involved in important ongoing development programs, I see no need to sideline that person merely for the sake of a new face.

On the question of government-opposition relations, some members of government have held some meetings

of the independent press, and the state-owned media remains tightly restrained. Why is that? What should be the role of the press in a democracy in your view?

Rawlings: The views of your so-called critics of the press in Ghana are untenable. I would have wished you had done your own assessment to ascertain the validity of that criticism.

In my view, the independent press has not merely blossomed, it has proliferated in all directions, but the quality has not matched the quantity. I concede the private press has an important role to play in nation-building, but in our case, it is full of abuse, distortion of facts, and downright vicious sensationalism. There is little by way of sober examination and analysis of issues. It is doing some fair amount of damage to the national psyche. A few individual members of government have sued for libel, but if we all had to resort to the courts to counteract their lies, we would have no time for anything else.

Whatever it is, we will continue to remain tolerant hoping that the Media Commission will help instill discipline and a high sense of professionalism in the conduct of the press.

You also talk about the state-owned media being tightly restrained. There again, that observation is misplaced. The public service media has got distinguishing characteristics. They owe it to their readers and viewers to present accurate stories and facts in a professional and decent manner.

Africa Report: It is common knowledge that the World Bank and IMF consider Ghana the star pupil in economic reform, but how do you see your country's economic efforts over the past decade? Would you do things differently if you could start over again?

Rawlings: No, I wouldn't do things differently, in terms of general policies and fiscal measures, but I would hope to see us maximizing the gains from all the sacrifices our people have made through stricter and more efficient management. As regards our performance over the last decade, I think we could have achieved even more if the international economic order was favorable. For example, we tripled production in certain export commodities only to earn less in revenue owing to falling commodity prices.

Africa Report: You have been head of state of Ghana for over a decade, a period of tremendous change in your country, the region, and the continent. What are your reflections on this period of history? How would you assess your own record over the past decade?

Rawlings: I think you should really ask the generality of Ghanaians these questions. It is not for me to assess my own record. Perhaps when I retire, I can look back and document my thoughts.

Africa Report: The West African region is in a period of flux with the death of Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d'Ivoire and the devaluation of the CFA signaling the end of an era, and continued turmoil in Togo, Liberia, and Nigeria. What is your assessment of the current political situation in the region?

Rawlings: We are witnessing some significant political and economic changes in the sub-region and we have to manage these very carefully. Political instability continues to undermine our efforts to regional economic integration. It is for this reason that Ghana has played an

to all of us that South Africa's transition receive the necessary support, political and economic.

At the same time, American policy-makers should not forget that other African nations still face the same old problems. Declining or unstable commodity prices still play havoc with our development programs. The withholding of aid and investment from countries which do not have what constitutes "good governance" in Western eyes simply creates more hardship and instability, making meaningful democracy even harder to achieve. Some African countries are quite close to achieving sustainable economies, and a small supporting push can help them attain it, while the absence of support will let them slide back, with all the painful work to do again.

Recently, the U.S. administration announced that its international affairs budget which includes development aid and contributions to the World Bank and IMF is expected to fall from more than \$32 billion in 1993 to \$17 billion in 1996 and beyond. The U.S. Agency for International Development [U.S.AID] on its part is to close 21 of its foreign posts. These developments tend to reinforce the notion that the U.S. may be considering a strategy of global withdrawal. Obviously any cuts in the contribution of the U.S. to the IMF and World Bank and the review of the development funds administered by U.S.AID would be felt in Africa considering the needs of the continent for financial support.

But by and large, we want to stand on our own feet, and the help we need to do this is fair prices for our

“The withholding of aid and investment simply creates more hardship, making meaningful democracy harder to achieve.”

active role in the Liberia peace process. It is my hope that the combatants will come to respect the Cotonou agreement and bring stability to that country. I also hope the process of political and economic reform in other countries in the sub-region would serve to strengthen democracy and regional integration.

If the nations of West Africa, individually and collectively, are to build a better future for our people, then we must all cooperate to ensure that development can go on in peace and understanding.

Africa Report: What is your view of American policy toward Africa under the Clinton administration? What would you like American policy-makers to understand about Ghana and what should their policy priorities be?

Rawlings: South Africa is understandably at the center stage of America's perceptions of Africa. It is important

products, and honest investment. African countries do not want to be dependent on the industrialized nations. We do not want to see thousands of our people seeking economic refuge in Europe and America.

Ghana is fortunate that the pressures to accelerate political reforms did not cause disruption and instability. This was because we had been systematically preparing for the constitutional era. We are also fortunate that we have been able to maintain a respectable economic growth rate over several years, and could therefore absorb the considerable financial costs of political reform. However, even with the assistance of some friendly countries toward the cost of democratic processes, we have had to curtail programs to provide social amenities such as hospitals, schools, roads, water supplies, and so on. ■

like that of the surrounding region, will depend upon how well it can grope its way toward some new and more participatory style of governance.

Rather than build upon the energies of a fast-growing population, the ambitions of elites, and the talents generated by the newly acquired literacy and training of his people, Houphouët-Boigny's guiding philosophy in politics always seemed to be one of distrust and deferral. "Follow behind me," the actions of Africa's own would-be Great Helmsman seemed to say, his courtiers going so far as to publish his "Thought of the Day" for over three decades. "Don't trifle with the weighty decisions of the world, entrust them to me."

Houphouët's grace was that he was generally able to pull off his unique brand of authoritarianism with gentle, often artful coercion, usually avoiding the heavy-handed tactics of the region's other dictators who, awed of this ability, paid him almost ritual homage.

Few other African leaders have been able to long imitate the smooth style of Houphouët in building a consensus, or at least making it appear that he had done so even when he had failed. In this skill, which was essential to his kind of rule, it is unlikely that his successors will prove as deft either.

That the clock cannot be turned back is underscored by another important, but now badly eroded cornerstone of Houphouët-Boigny's paternalism. His unquestioned prestige and authority were made possible, fostered even, by a France still intensely jealous of its colonial empire.

The Ivorian leader's career marched hand in hand, if not altogether hand in glove, with a metropolitan power that for a generation raked in enormous revenues from the uncompetitive contracts, kickbacks, financial and political networks, and sheer theft that the relationship favored.

Throughout this period, France's practices in its "chasse gardée," and Houphouët's role as Paris's regional godfather went unchallenged by an outside world caught up in the Cold War.

Democracy, even trade in the region, mattered little to a Washington only too glad to have Paris retain its lockhold on what many in the American national security establishment saw as a diplomatic backwater, thus keeping it out of the grips of the Soviet Union.

In this game too, Houphouët-Boigny played a quiet but most effective role, providing logistic, financial, and diplomatic support whenever called upon. From his ties with the Angolan rebels and support in bolstering Zaire's Mobutu to his diplomatic hand in helping rally efforts to block Libya's thrusts in Chad or prevent the emergence of an independent Western Sahara, the Sage of Yamoussoukro seemed ever available to lend the West a helping hand.

With Houphouët-Boigny's help, leaders from the francophone fold who sought their own routes toward independence and national development were quickly isolat-

ed or brought to heel, witness Sékou Touré and Thomas Sankara.

Paying him homage for these services in a lavish photo essay after his death, *Paris Match* neatly summed up Houphouët's role, but left much else unsaid. "His secret: Succeed in decolonizing alongside France and not against it," the magazine said in one large headline.

What did Houphouët's singular allegiances earn him or his country? While the shimmering skyscrapers of Abidjan and the other increasingly grandiose monuments to his own rule were rising to crowd the horizon, Houphouët's rule gained a critical bolster in the form of a permanent military presence meant to deter coups. Another, even more important army, was constituted of French "coopérants."

These technical assistants, whose presence numbered about 50,000 at its peak in the 1980s, filled jobs from the banal to the most sophisticated, from secretaries and rural development consultants to a powerful shadow government that oversaw and often trumped the decision of the president's own nominal ministers.

Lending the country a sheen of efficiency, contributing to Côte d'Ivoire's proud image of "the Africa that works," this "help" also brought with it heavy costs whose true weight will only now come to be known.

Few Ivorians in the system that Houphouët built were entrusted with policy decisions. Almost systematically, management roles were farmed out to foreigners. From the economy to foreign policy, Côte d'Ivoire appeared as much as any other country in the world, to be led by a single man: Houphouët. But if his authority was unquestioned, his decisions were often informed by policy options furnished by the foreigners

HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY'S AUTHORITY WAS FOSTERED BY A FRANCE STILL JEALOUS OF ITS COLONIAL EMPIRE.

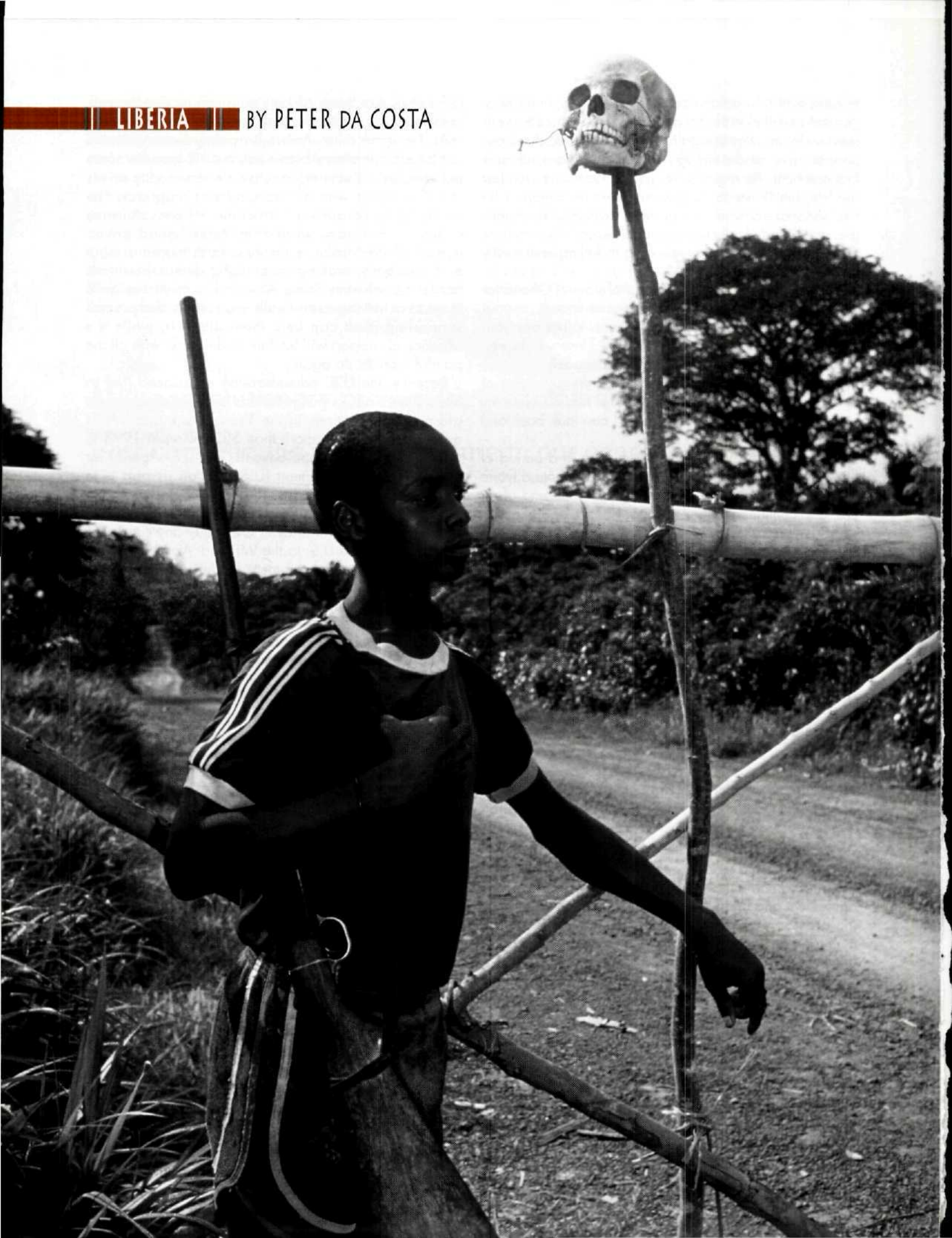
he trusted more than he ever felt he could his own people.

One of the most often-told anecdotes about Houphouët-Boigny concerns his legendary bet at independence with Kwame Nkrumah over which country, Côte d'Ivoire, with its seemingly laissez-faire capitalism, or Ghana, with its distinct socialist bent, would progress faster.

Nowadays, more than the ideological options the two leaders subscribed to, which seem almost quaint in retrospect, a rising Ghana seems to have been better served by a system that favored the employment of home-grown talents. With all of Ghana's coups and other setbacks, one of the most important, if almost unheralded, ingredients of the country's recent successes seems to be the fact that Ghanaians, unlike their

LIBERIA

BY PETER DA COSTA



Can peace finally be settling on Liberia four years after the start of a disastrous civil war that has left 150,000 people slaughtered and a million displaced?

Maybe. A small United Nations force is monitoring disarmament of the warring factions. But with donor nations virtually ignoring Liberia, the big question for relief workers is whether peace can prevail in order to return displaced refugees and help them get started in rehabilitating the devastated country.



Four years and a series of international mediation efforts later, Liberia's civil war—confusingly complex and a profoundly human tragedy—appears to be edging toward a messy and potentially dangerous climax.

The focus is now squarely on the dynamics of disarmament, deemed a necessary first step toward repatriating and resettling more than a million Liberians currently either internally displaced or living as refugees in neighboring West African countries.

If last year's July 25 Cotonou Accord—signed between the three key players in the conflict/stalemate cycle under United Nations, West African, and continental co-brokerage—is taken at face value, Liberia's militias should have long been relieved of their weapons and propelled, via demobilization camps, into a peaceful civilian existence.

Cotonou recognized the need for countrywide security so as to ease the passage of 30 or so relief agencies working in Liberia. It also prescribed a broad-based Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG), which should have been in place to shepherd the country through seven months of preparations for a multi-party poll organizers hoped would be the first in nearly 150 years of nationhood.

Six months after Cotonou, mediators prodded by the UN Security Council and impatient donors are accelerating a disarmament agenda critics say is fundamentally flawed and at odds with the political, military, and humanitarian realities currently on the ground.

Under Cotonou, elections were slated for early 1994. But intense bickering over the composition and leadership of the transitional government has helped put such elections beyond immediate reach. Electoral technical assistants, including Liberia-based staff, say even if the peace process suddenly takes a quantum leap forward, a well-organized poll is not realistically achievable before the end of the year.

From the day that details of a five-member Council of State were fleshed out at a post-accord meeting, again in the Benin capital, Cotonou, conflict has condemned political negotiation to a series of inconclusive duels. First, Council chairman Bismarck Kuyon refused to take his seat in the capital of Monrovia until factions were disarmed. Then Kuyon, nominated by the civilian Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) in control of Monrovia and so-called "liberated areas," was fired.

The replacement of Kuyon with IGNU Justice Minister Phillip Banks set a precedent. Main faction leader Charles Taylor, who had started the civil war in December 1989 in a bid to end the 10-year dictatorship of Samuel Doe, replaced his civilian nominee, Dorothy Mussuleng Cooper, with his top battlefield commander, Isaac Musa.

Though Musa was eventually accepted, his place on

the Council raised the issue of whether perceived perpetrators of gross human rights abuses—the lion's share of the 150,000 people estimated to have died in the war were civilian victims of factional massacres—should have a role to play in a new Liberia. The pre-eminence of Musa, nominated by Taylor to pacify his increasingly marginalized Gio and Mano foot soldiers, demonstrates to what extent the hangover of the civil war and fear of retribution will endure long after the war is over.

The LNTG's composition continues to be stymied as the factions vie over what one commentator described as "the interim spoils of war." Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and Ulimo—an anti-Taylor faction linked to the ousted Doe regime which is Taylor's biggest battlefield headache—are united in their political goal to share between them the portfolios of finance, foreign affairs, justice, and defense.

The IGNU, led by political science professor Dr. Amos Sawyer, argues that key transition ministries and public corporations must not be allowed to fall into the



Cheryl Hatch

hands of armed factions. "We need defense because...Ecomog [the West African military force] will not interact with rebels in charge of the defense ministry," IGNU information minister Lamini Waritay told *Africa Report*. "And justice, that's a law and order situation and we have to maintain peace in this area. Can you imagine rebels taking over those key ministries? People will pack their bags and leave..."

The factions are condemned to resolve their differences in Monrovia after being effectively banished from Benin's capital, Cotonou, by a mediation-weary President Nicéphore Soglo, current chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (Ecomog), which intervened in Liberia on humanitarian grounds in August 1990.

As per Cotonou, much-delayed battalion-strength contingents from Tanzania and Uganda arrived in late December 1993 to bolster Ecomog, a response to Taylor's insistence on diluting the Nigeria-led task force, which had reacted to his October 1992 attempt to storm Monrovia by employing heavy-handed and at times indiscriminate air and naval power to push the NPFL deep into Liberia's hinterland.

Peter da Costa is a freelance journalist based in Banjul, the Gambia.

In February, the new battalions were in bases at front-line locations near the towns of Kakata and Buchanan, but had yet to begin physically disarming combatants. However, Unomil, the 300-member UN military observer mission mandated last August by the Security Council to be Liberia's and Ecomog's policeman, had begun deploying throughout the country, a move attacked by Sawyer's IGNU as premature and "in direct violation of Cotonou."

According to Maj.-Gen. Daniel Opande, the Kenyan appointed Unomil commander, 40 monitors were deployed in late January in central Liberia, covering NPFL territory. Another 50 were deployed in the west, 50 in the north, and 40 in the east, with 65 held in reserve.

"They're getting themselves established and building confidence," said one Unomil source, insisting the observers had overcome initial Ulimo and NPFL intimidation. Coming at a time when growing insecurity has slowed reduced humanitarian convoys to a trickle in much of rural Liberia, the Unomil deployment is one of many pieces of the disarmament jigsaw that critics argue just doesn't fit.

The U.S., which has contributed significantly to humanitarian and, lately, demilitarization efforts after initial indifference to Liberia's plight—late last year the Clinton administration allocated \$20 million to the UN Trust Fund for Liberia—is said by reliable sources to be considering withholding funds if the process is delayed any further.

Added to a deadline set by the UN Security Council that disarmament be under way and the LNTG in place by February 15, the perceived U.S. threat to pull funds from an already under-subscribed peace-keeping effort is an expression of the cash-strapped international com-



Cheryl Helich

munity's frustration at the seeming lack of political will to end Liberia's civil war.

That fatigue is relegating the West African trouble spot to the bottom of donor priority lists is another time bomb threatening to explode in the faces of Liberia's itinerant peace-makers. In 1991, the first full year of its operation in Liberia, the UN Children's Fund (Unicef) raised

LIBERIA FACES A SILENT EMERGENCY WHOSE EFFECTS MAY PROVE EVEN MORE DAMAGING THAN FOUR YEARS OF CIVIL WAR.

\$9 million in emergency appeal money. It could only manage \$4 million in 1993.

Unicef Liberia representative Carl Tinstman says the shortfall will affect the Fund's portfolio of rehabilitation-oriented projects. Unicef is poised to launch a 1994 emergency appeal. Tinstman, however, warns: "Donors are tired and are saying, 'It's about time Liberians bring

peace to Liberia, and if they can't do that we are not going to fund interventions.' This is a forgotten country, you just don't read about Liberia in the international media these days. It's a forgotten war."

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates nearly \$100 million is needed to voluntarily repatriate hundreds of thousands of Liberians living in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, and Ghana. A recent survey of refugee camps revealed more than half a million, keyed up by the expectation of peace post-Cotonou, expressed their desire to return home.

The questions every aid worker in Liberia are asking remain: what sort of welcome are these would-be returnees likely to face, and to what extent are mediators aware of the crisis the ravaged country faces in what development specialists dub "the continuum from emergency to rehabilitation."

Faced with international indifference, Liberia—tangible signs of self-help notwithstanding (*see sidebar*)—faces a silent emergency whose effects may prove even more damaging in the long term than four years of civil war. The UN recently warned more food aid was needed for an estimated 2.5 million war-affected people in Liberia and surrounding countries.

"The problem for us at Unicef," adds Tinstman, "is that when the factions go off to Cotonou or Yamousoukro, they don't perceive Unicef as a key player in the peace negotiations. Other UN system parts like Unomil and the special representative [Trevor Gordon-Somers] might be, but we're not."

Experts predict food security will be a problem in 1994. "It's now February and farming is still disrupted in significant parts of the country," a U.S. national working on food distribution in Liberia told *Africa Report*. "So people are not yet in a position to start growing their own food and the prospects for a good harvest this year begin to look bleak."

Charles Taylor, center: The composition of the transitional government is stymied as the factions fight over the spoils

Counseling Victims of the Civil War

We had a girl here who was raped when she was nine by government soldiers," recalls trauma counselor Genevieve Freeman-Massa. "They used to give her food in return for raping her. Now she will never walk past anyone in a soldier's uniform, she always avoids them."

Freeman-Massa, 32 years old, a mother of five and a journalist before the war, talks passionately about her job as a counselor, a role she has carved herself after personally living through the horrors of Liberia's civil war.

Five times a week, Freeman-Massa and other counselors visit the five displaced persons camps in and around the capital, Monrovia. Trauma counseling is increasingly being seen as the weapon of choice in Liberia's rehabilitation battle, an effort to rebuild the shattered lives of hundreds of thousands of war-affected people—the majority of these women and children.

Freeman-Massa and her colleagues are graduates of a 90-day War Trauma Counselors Course run by the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Mount Zion, a Liberian NGO. The project, set up with help from Unicef, is fast developing as a model for post-war rehabilitation efforts in the West African country where virtually every one of its population of 2.5 million has been touched by four years of often brutal conflict.

AME Mount Zion brings together candidates nominated and sponsored by a range of community-

based organizations, teaching them counseling skills, creative therapy, play therapy, conflict resolution, personality theories, and how to apply traditional psychology.

While some remain as instructors after their training, most are sent out into the field. By the end of 1993, 103 Liberians, trained in groups of 30 at the college in Monrovia's Sinkor suburb, have successfully completed the course.

They can be found working in rape crisis centers, child combatant rehabilitation schemes, and community sensitization programs, all part of the civilian post-war effort.

"I realized there would be a need for helping people to bring out their problems after the war, so I set up my own NGO, Combat Stress Liberia Inc., to offer counseling services," explains Freeman-Massa. "Unicef identified me and I got on the course."

VOA1, an assortment of tents and locally constructed huts on the grounds of an abandoned Voice of America broadcasting relay station at Brewerville, four miles northwest of Monrovia, is home to several thousand displaced people.

Many fled battles in late 1992 between the NPFL and Ulimo for control of the western counties. A surprising number are victims of multiple rape or survivors of massacres. Nearly all bear the scars of a conflict conservative estimates say claimed 150,000 lives.

"When the women first come to the shelter, they

With the "hungry season" due to begin mid-year, the food security situation remains unclear.

A serious constraint to food distribution is the ever-present specter of low-level but relentless hinterland conflict, despite a six-month ceasefire. Added to the emergence of new factions outside the Cotonou Accord, sustained harassment, mainly by the Ulimo militias in western Liberia, has forced the suspension of humanitarian efforts in much of rural Liberia.

In Upper Lofa, Bomi Hills, and Cape Mount—the north westernmost of Liberia's 13 counties—armed Ulimo militias made life unbearable for relief workers. On Christmas Eve, five Ulimo members looted a UNHCR base camp at Vahun near the border with Sierra

Leone, confiscating 11 vehicles and making off with stores including 160 tons of World Food Program (WFP) food valued at \$170,000.

No WFP or Catholic Relief Services food has entered these Ulimo-controlled areas since Christmas. The situation has been exacerbated by the emergence of the Lofa Defense Force, an anti-Ulimo militia informed quarters claim is a creation of Charles Taylor, in response to attacks on the NPFL in the southeast by the Liberian Peace Council, a Ulimo offshoot gaining ground in Grand Bassa County.

At time of writing, a UNHCR and Unomil reconnaissance team was due in the northwest to assess the possibility of resuming relief work. However, despite the

neglect their physical appearance and ignore the basic services available to them," explains Freeman-Massa. "Some of them were wives of chiefs but because of the situation they tend to forget how proud they once were. We try to get them back to their former glory by stressing how important their appearance is."

Counselors often find clients are so traumatized they fail to seek treatment for bullet wounds, anemia, and other serious conditions. These special cases are quickly referred to medical centers.

Aware that members of their constituency have suffered some of the most brutal consequences of guerrilla war, the counselors routinely have to listen to stories of carnage beyond imagination.

Typical of the stories to be heard at VOA1 is that of a pregnant woman walking toward Monrovia with her mother, father, husband, and pregnant sister. The group was ambushed by armed rebels, who publicly beheaded her husband, and then her father and mother, before subjecting her to multiple rapes.

"After being told to keep walking, the woman was forced to watch as her pregnant sister was raped, her stomach ripped open, and her unborn baby thrown into a pit latrine," recounts Freeman-Massa.

"She was spared, made it to Monrovia, but for months refused to utter a word. She refused to eat, went to the toilet where she sat, and lost the will to live. But with counseling, she's coming around."

Children, often the most difficult to break down, are subjected to intensive art therapy. At VOA1, the school that provides temporary education to some 600 children is built from bamboo matting, woven by the children themselves.

delivery of food behind NPFL lines through Kakata on January 31 for the first time in nearly three months, Ulimo still continued to make life difficult, seizing a Lutheran World Service vehicle at Guthrie.

More than 250,000 people, displaced from one place to the next, are said to be threatened by the skirmishes. "The general picture is one in which all the factions are splintering, and there are internal problems within both the NPFL and Ulimo," a longtime Liberia watcher explained.

In response to the tense situation, Ecomog's commander, Maj.-Gen. John Innienger, has ordered a tightening of the nightly curfew that keeps residents of Monrovia and Buchanan indoors between 7 pm and 6 am.

Most vulnerable are the lone survivors, scarred by the memory of witnessing at first hand the massacre of their closest relatives. "These are the ones you really have to talk to," says Freeman-Massa. "You have to tell them they have been spared for a purpose, that they should not feel downcast, and that they have a role to play in the future of Liberia."

Since the war trauma counselors course began in September 1992, the role of healing therapy in exorcising the ghosts of Liberia's civil war has become more and more defined.

Experts concerned at dwindling donor interest say efforts must be made to build local capacity in trauma counseling, without which they fear sustainable rehabilitation work in Liberia may be impossible.

Unicef says it will fund AME Mount Zion's work and provide technical assistance until 1996, by which time it hopes the college will be self-sustainable.

Plans are also under way to make the college a center of excellence for the West African sub-region, a fitting role for a country whose conflict caused so much social and economic disruption to the sub-region.

For counselors like Genevieve Freeman-Massa, the proof of how trauma counseling works is in the pudding. "When we started at VOA1 some of the women told us it was the first opportunity they had really had to cry, to weep for their loved ones.

"They would tell us that giving them food and clothing made little difference, but that when we talked to them, they regained the will to go on living."■

—Peter da Costa

Innienger, aware the West African force may sooner or later be compelled to enter the disarmament fray, recently told an interviewer he was clear about his mandate to attack again if provoked.

For Unicef's Tinstman, nothing can be achieved without peace. His biggest fear is that "disarmament may happen in a very real way, but we could still end up a year later with plenty of small and not-so-small arms out there. Individuals may hide guns to settle scores." In the clamor for disarmament, piecemeal as it is likely under the circumstances to be, few have even considered the fact that the perceived panacea for Liberia's security problems may only succeed in arming the post-war phenomenon of revenge. ○

Cold War-inspired conflicts were largely responsible for Africa's estimated 6 million displaced persons. With the end of proxy wars on the continent, the West's attention has been diverted, and its commitment to repatriating the refugees has waned. And African governments—reluctant hosts to the refugees—are not necessarily concerned for their rights and security. Our correspondent argues that protection of the refugees requires a strong and indigenous NGO voice.



THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS



WFP/M. Sayagues

T

he young Liberian woman at the refugee center in Danané city in Côte d'Ivoire was pleading with her eyes. Neither she nor her son had had food for weeks, she explained to me last November, because she had not yet been granted a registration card by the center's administration. She followed me determinedly as I walked around the compound, in which about 300 homeless Liberians were being sheltered. She had been reduced to a beggar in order to take care of her child.

Africa is rife with refugees. The circumstances of these dislocated persons are as diverse as one can imagine. Mozambicans, some of whom have now resided for almost a decade in Malawi and Zimbabwe, watch with trepidation to see if a fragile peace holds between the erstwhile warring factions fighting in their home country. Some have returned and begun tentatively to re-establish their lives; others remain in exile worried about retribution or even the capacity of Mozambique to sustain them

should they return. Somalis in Kenya, having recoiled from famine and fighting at home, find themselves in northeastern Kenya at the mercy of armed bandits who commit murder and rape with virtual impunity. Liberians in Côte d'Ivoire, like the young woman and her son in the Danané center, await the end of a seemingly intractable conflict. Families are torn asunder in this modern diaspora which has affected some 750,000 individuals.

Yet, all of these dispossessed persons have one irreducibly common characteristic—they have been deprived of the protection of their own countries, and they are in need of essential humanitarian assistance and a new home. They are refugees, and they are powerless and almost always dependent upon the generosity of others for protection and care.

African countries are currently hosting some 6 million refugees who have fled and sought asylum abroad. The largest displacements have been occasioned by conflicts over the past decade in Angola, Liberia, Mozambique, and the Horn. Many of these conflicts were fought by proxies in the Cold War, and the end of this ideological confrontation provides cause for some refugees to hope

Arthur Helton, a lawyer, directs the Refugee Project of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. He led missions of inquiry to several African countries last year as part of a project, supported by the Ford Foundation, to examine and enhance refugee protection.

to return home. Indeed, almost 600,000 African refugees went home in 1992. But violations of a peace accord in Angola have halted a large repatriation program there. And other conflicts are animated by endemic hatreds, like the ethnic warring that has caused the sudden exodus of more than 700,000 refugees from Burundi, who since last October have sought asylum in Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zaire.

The end of the Cold War, however, has had an ironic consequence. Wealthy Western governments no longer view Africa with the same degree of strategic interest in a vast ideological contest, and financial support for refugee repatriation has been inadequate. A United Nations-sponsored appeal in 1993 for \$262 million for repatriation of Eritreans resulted in pledges of but \$32 million by mid-September 1993.

This strategic re-orientation is manifested also in the difficulties in obtaining aid from donors for the care and maintenance of refugees in countries of asylum. A \$192 million appeal for Kenya for mainly Somali refugees resulted in donations of only \$75.4 million by September 1993. Over 60,000 Mauritanian refugees in Senegal face the elimination of food assistance by the United Nations in May 1994. Foreign policy has in many instances ceased to be a factor favoring arrangements to assist and protect refugees. Reflecting this trend, assistance to African refugees from the U.S. State Department was reduced from \$140.4 million in 1992 to \$109.9 million in 1993.

In addition, many of those seeking refuge in Africa are hosted by countries with meager resources and weak infrastructure. Examples include diminutive Malawi, which hosts over 1 million Mozambican refugees despite severe economic underdevelopment; or war-ravaged Ethiopia, which hosts well over 400,000 refugees from Sudan and Somalia. While financial aid has been rendered by Western governments, such largesse is coming under increasing pressure as budgetary considerations come to the fore in a period of global recession and economic uncertainty. At the diplomatic level, therefore, the protection of African refugees is increasingly the exclusive responsibility of governments, inter-governmental organizations, and NGOs in Africa.

The international community has traditionally sought to find solutions in Africa to the plight of the continent's refugees. On average, the United Nations refugee program has given only about 5 percent per day to such "Third World refugees" during the last decade. Resettlement of refugees outside of Africa is rare; only about 2 percent of the over 1 million refugees resettled by the United States since 1980 have come from Africa, and many of those were from communist Ethiopia, reflecting an ideological predilection that has dominated U.S. resettlement policy.

Yet, the rights of African refugees are, in theory, protected by the most progressive treaty in the world—the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugees in Africa. In addition to providing protection for refugees in flight from persecution under international standards, the OAU Refugee Convention also extends protection to those people who have fled civil strife and other events seriously disturbing the public order. This broad definition of the refugee has permitted host governments to swiftly recognize entire groups of refugees without the need for asylum seekers to establish an individualized fear of persecution on a case-by-case basis.

The OAU treaty, however, has not prevented refugees from being subject to military attack, forced recruitment by insurgent or government forces, and periodic expulsions from countries of asylum. The humanitarian foundation of the OAU Convention has often been sorely tested in practice, and not enough has been done to secure the rights of African refugees.

Even a cursory examination reveals the various tactics that governments use to avoid responsibilities concerning



Cameroon

refugees. Some simply decline to sign the treaty. Others sign, but decline to consider the affected populations as refugees in need of protection. Still others recognize the persons in question as refugees, but nevertheless deny them the various civil, political, and economic rights; and the individuals have little or no effective recourse. Indeed, on this 25th anniversary of the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention, the adequate implementation of the treaty looms as the largest issue. Specific steps, discussed below, must be taken to enhance refugee protection in Africa.

Forty-two countries have now signed the OAU Refugee Convention. But many have not, such as South Africa, in which approximately 300,000 Mozambicans are estimated to reside. Non-signatory countries are not obligated to extend the various treaty guarantees, including the right

Refugees are powerless and almost always dependent upon the generosity of others

to receive asylum from persecution. Those seeking refuge may be considered as merely "illegal aliens" whose stay is tolerated by the authorities and who are perpetually subject to expulsion. In 1992, for example, over 40,000 Mozambicans were forcibly returned from South Africa to Mozambique.

A campaign should be led at the diplomatic level by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the secretary-general of the OAU, and the chairman of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights to encourage accession to the treaty. National governments and NGOs should participate in the campaign.

One avoidance strategy utilized by governments is to refrain from designating whole categories of individuals as refugees, even though such group determinations are common, indeed encouraged, under the OAU Convention.

A good example is found in the situation of the approximately 260,000 Liberian refugees who have sought asylum since 1989 in Côte d'Ivoire. Currently, those who remain in the demarcated area of the "refugee zone" near the Liberian border have only documents issued by UNHCR evidencing registration for food rations. Those who reside outside of the zone, including in Abidjan, do not receive any form of social assistance. The failure to confer formal refugee status and identity documents has the effect of rendering Liberians vulnerable and restricted in their movements and the enjoyment of other basic human rights. Formal status should be granted and proper documents issued immediately. This is particularly so in view of the indefinite character of the displacement.

This is not an isolated example in West Africa. Similar disabilities are experienced by the Mauritanian refugees who have remained in Senegal since the disorder and expulsions of 1989. Formalized status and identity documents would enhance their protection as well.

Government non-compliance with refugee rights ranges from denial of basic civil rights to economic discrimination. Refugees are exposed to extreme physical insecurity, such as that experienced by Somalis in northeastern Kenya, who have been attacked repeatedly by bandits and even abused by Kenyan police and soldiers. They are restricted in their movements and confined to camps, such as the Mozambicans near the border in Zimbabwe. Or they may be subject to abuse by rogue elements given the essentially lawless character of refugee camps, as has been documented in Malawian camps, where women were found to be specifically at risk. Economic discrimination can take the form of differential treatment in terms of labor fees and access to social security benefits, as is the case in Sudan. However, these examples are not unique; such deprivations exist for refugees elsewhere in Africa. The international community, conceived of in its widest sense to include governments, inter-governmental organizations, and NGOs, should launch an international campaign to secure the human rights of African refugees.

Moreover, structural change and new enforcement

mechanisms are needed to secure refugee rights. The current international framework is inadequate. The OAU's Refugee Bureau in Addis Ababa has a tiny staff with meager resources which have traditionally been devoted to assisting in the education and employment of a small number of so-called "urban" refugees—generally highly educated students, intellectuals, and political activists. The African Commission on Human and People's Rights has just begun to consider refugee matters in its 1994 seminar on the issue. These regional inter-governmental entities should have adequate mandates and resources to address issues of refugee protection.

The political remedy under the OAU treaty is an impractical procedure that has never been invoked on behalf of refugees. Neither have the various remedies under the UN refugee treaty nor the universal and regional human rights treaties proven much more effective. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an African court on refugee protection, perhaps modeled in part on the European Court of Human Rights. Cases could be initiated by aggrieved refugees or groups acting on their behalf. Such an arrangement would clearly strengthen treaty enforcement in Africa.

Perhaps no single step would be more effective in advancing the protection of refugees in Africa than the establishment of a strong indigenous NGO voice on the issue. Currently, protection efforts by NGOs are highly localized. There is no regional NGO entity nor even a viable network of refugee advocates in Africa. This is an absence that contributes significantly to the failure to secure the rights of refugees. A network of NGO monitors and advocates should be immediately established to better protect and assist refugees in Africa.

In particular, a meeting should be held immediately among concerned individuals resulting in the founding of an African refugee watch group, which should then proceed to develop organizational and action plans. There should be geographic representation among the founders, including from francophone Africa. Such an organization would have liaison relationships with local groups concerned with refugees and initiate programs to assess protection needs and to advocate on behalf of refugees throughout Africa to governments and inter-governmental organizations. NGO experience and expertise from North America and Western Europe should be drawn upon in the establishment of such a watch group.

Much of the progress that the world has made over the past century in terms of refugee protection has been at the behest of independent NGOs. Such groups are able to give the highest priority to humanitarian objectives instead of succumbing to sometimes stultifying diplomatic and political considerations. A concerted effort should be undertaken immediately to nurture and cultivate such a resource in Africa. Indeed, a fiercely independent NGO voice in Africa will be crucial to achieve the fundamental reforms needed, including increased physical security. Millions of African refugees would thus be better protected. ○



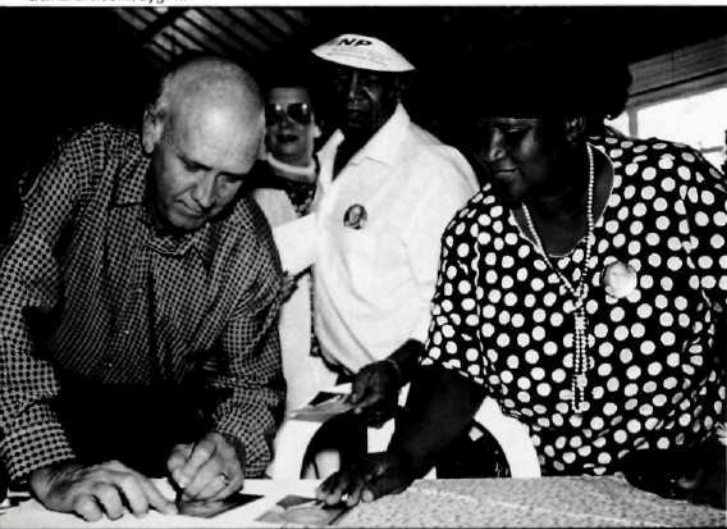
|| SOUTH AFRICA ||
BY PATRICK LAURENCE

J. Markowitz/Sygma

THE 11 TH HOUR

The optimism over South Africa's first-ever free and fair elections, to be held April 27-28, is clouded by the boycott of Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party, a coalition of Afrikaner nationalist groups, and the government of the Bophuthatswana homeland. There are also serious doubts about the capabilities and leadership of the new National Peace-keeping Force being put together to police the poll.

David Brauchli/Sygma



Patrick Robert/Sygma

But when the dust settles after the votes are counted, the African National Congress will be in power and Chief Buthelezi will have placed himself out in the cold.

On the campaign trail: Nelson Mandela, above right, and President F.W. de Klerk, left

The boycotters: Gen. Constand Viljoen, above, and Mangosuthu Buthelezi



David Brauchi/Sygnia

As the final countdown starts for South Africa's first non-racial election, two interrelated developments have jeopardized the chances of holding a relatively peaceful—and therefore free and fair—poll for a government of national unity on April 27-28.

The first is the breakdown of concerted attempts by the de Klerk administration and the African National Congress to coax the dissenting Freedom Alliance (FA) into participating in the election by offering concessions aimed at meeting its objections to the transitional constitution.

The consequences of that failure are starkly etched before South Africa: The three FA members—the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Afrikaner Volksfront (AFV), and the Bophuthatswana government—are not on the list of 19 parties which registered to contest the election by the March 4 deadline. Instead, they are determined to boycott the election and, more ominously, oppose it vigorously.

The second development is the acknowledgment by the newly appointed commander of the National Peace-keeping Force (NPF), Maj.-Gen. Gabriel Ramushwana, that the fledgling force is unlikely to be ready for deployment in the final weeks before the April election. Ramushwana's acknowledgment is linked to another admission: that an unspecified number of black volunteers marched around their training camp near Bloemfontein calling for

the death of "settlers" and "Boers" and, by implication, of white recruits in the NPF.

Either of these developments poses a threat to a peaceful poll on its own. The first increases the chances of violence, the second reduces the capacity of the NPF to contain it. Their combined impact exponentially raises the risk of a conflagration.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi's IFP has resolved to contest the election itself, rather than be a contestant in the election, "in any and every way which is permissible by law." Ferdi Hartzenberg, an AVF leader, talks of "inhibiting the election," a catch-all phrase that stretches from passive to armed resistance. The Bophuthatswana government is less vocal, but is nevertheless lined up with its allies in an anti-election front. Its president, Lucas Mangope, has resisted attempts by no less a person than the ANC leader, Nelson Mandela, to dissuade him from blackballing the election.

The FA's decision to challenge the election is, of course, qualified by reassertions of its willingness to pursue a negotiated settlement, if necessary through international mediation. But its quest for a much greater degree of regional autonomy is seen by the ANC as the first gambit in a game plan for a separate Afrikaner state (AVF), the revival of the 19th century Zulu kingdom (IFP), and the retention of Bophuthatswana as an autonomous polity. For that reason, an 11th hour negotiated compromise seems unlikely.

The FA decision to resist the election can easily develop into an attempt by its members to turn those parts of South Africa where they are strongest into "no-go" areas for voters. It does not require much imagination to envisage armed barricades at the entrances to conservative white towns, IFP loyalists parading on the roads in KwaZulu, and Bophuthatswana police and soldiers interfering with polling in the nominally independent territory.

But any attempt to prevent voters from exercising the right to choose South Africa's first democratic government is certain to invoke counter-resistance, the more so because for black voters it will be the first time that they have an unfettered right to vote in a parliamentary election.

There is an even greater danger. Afrikaner nationalists, either acting on their own or in concert with Zulu zealots, may attempt to achieve their aims by overtly violent means.

A spate of explosions since late last year—the bombing of ANC offices by suspected right-wing zealots and the blowing up of railway tracks by saboteurs proclaiming loyalty to the "Boer Republican Army"—shows that the question is neither idle nor abstract.

So, too, does a warning to President F.W. de Klerk by the general staff of the South African Defense Force (SADF) of a threatened rebellion and even a possible coup bid by the rightists. The warning—first reported by the Afrikaans newspaper *Rapport* and later admitted by de Klerk's office—contains a chilling element: the prediction that in the event of a rebellion, a substantial portion of the SADF will side with the rebels.

Another unmistakable sign of rightist belligerence and impatience is evident in the jeers which greeted Constand Viljoen, a former chief of the SADF and now a convener of the AVF, when he outlined a "strategic alternative" to the establishment of a separate Afrikaner *volkstaat* by force at an AVF rally in Pretoria.

The "strategic alternative," hammered out in talks between the AVF and the ANC, consists of three core elements:

- Participation of the AVF in the April 27-28 elections.
- Interpreting the AVF vote as support for the establishment of an Afrikaner *volkstaat* and using it to indicate where the boundaries of the state should be.
- Deploying the AVF vote to elect an Afrikaner *Raad* or Council to represent Afrikaner nationalist interests and to advance the establishment of an Afrikaner state.

The "strategic alternative" now seems moribund, a victim of the inability of negotiators from the ANC and the government to reach a *modus vivendi* and a sign of the growing impatience in Afrikaner nationalist ranks.

Television footage shows the reaction of Afrikaner nationalists to the alternative when Viljoen put it to them at the Pretoria rally. Their response was one of derisive anger, with Viljoen—who but a few months earlier had been

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AFRIKANER NATIONALISTS

AND ZULU ZEALOTS MAY ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE THEIR AIMS BY OVERTLY VIOLENT MEANS.

hailed as a folk hero by Afrikaner nationalists—having to suffer the indignity of being labeled a "traitor" and a "coward" by part of the crowd.

The crowd's angry mood was manifest in its bellowed preference for the rabid demagoguery of Eugene Terre'blanche, leader of the neo-fascist Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, over the rational approach of Viljoen. The former SADF chief, who believes that a thousand days of negotiations are better than a single day of war, has since warned that the temperament of the crowd at Pretoria is only the first rumble of growing Afrikaner nationalist anger.

That anger is matched by the stirring rhetoric used by Buthelezi. "We must stand together and fight the evil which is lurking in our midst," he exhorts his followers. The "evil" is the ANC and its Communist Party ally. "We must resist the ANC and their communist surrogates. We are the only force that stands in the way of their quest for total power."

But as the threat builds, the NPF that is meant to check it and keep the peace is in crisis. Conceived as a South African equivalent of the UN peace-keeping force which helped oversee the Namibian independence election of 1989, the NPF consists of the armed formations of political organizations and institutions in the multi-party Transitional Executive Council.

Its components include men from the SADF and the South African Police (SAP), soldiers from the armies of three nominally independent black "homelands," policemen from no fewer than eight homelands, and fighters from the ANC's underground army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, or MK as it is popularly known.

The task of welding these politically disparate units into a single comprehensive and neutral peace-keeping force in a mere six weeks has proved too great for the officers mandated to do so.

Still in its infancy, the NPF has already been marred by disquieting reports of disorderly conduct, desertion, drunkenness, and tension within its ranks (allegedly drunk MK volunteers have marched around the camps calling for the death of "settlers" and denouncing de Klerk).

As important, Ramushwana—who was a compromise choice after the government and the ANC each put forward different candidates for the post of commander—has confirmed that it is unlikely that his men will be ready for deployment in the last few weeks before polling day.

But the general's appointment may compound rather than solve the problem. His appointment is controversial

for several reasons, including the appearance of his name on the ANC election list, a fact which will certainly not help him project an image of political neutrality or reassure non-ANC recruits.

Ramushwana is also a key figure in a strike by civil servants in Venda, one of the homelands, over suspicions that he and many top officials in the Venda administration have plundered their pension fund.

The central facts can be stated briefly: Ramushwana came to power in Venda in a bloodless coup in March 1990; as chairman of the military council, he presided over the privatization of the pension fund; privatization was followed by huge "overpayments" to upper echelon civil servants, including Ramushwana; he reportedly received a sum of about \$175,000.

A charitable interpretation of these events is that the overpayment was due to miscalculations by the accountants involved. A more cynical reconstruction is that the pension fund was raided by audacious white-collar bandits. Either way, Gen. Ramushwana cannot evade responsibility: He was the man in charge of Venda at the time.

Faced with public accusations in Venda of benefiting unfairly from the payouts or, worse, of abusing power for self-enrichment, he is reported to have authorized the Venda Pension Fund Implementation Committee to recover the amount overpaid from the insurance fund where it is invested. But there has been no official confirmation that the money has indeed been paid back.

In the meantime, South Africa has to face the implications of not having a neutral peace-keeping force to hold the ring during the biggest and most important election in its history.

The first and immediate consequence is that the task of peace-keeping will devolve primarily on the two biggest armed formations: the SADF and the police. An interrelated problem arises from that.

Historically, the police and the SADF have served as the first and second lines of defense of the old apartheid order, a role which has involved covert operations against the ANC and its allies, including assassination of their leaders. The police and SADF are still suspect in the eyes of many blacks, particularly those who support the "liberation movements," a fact which prompted the ANC and its Communist Party ally to press for the formation of the neutral NPF.

Now, however, the ANC is in the uncomfortable position of having to rely on the police and SADF to protect the election process, which is widely expected to culminate in the election of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first black president.

The ANC is, in a sense, a victim of its own propaganda by being slow, or even loathe, to recognize that the SADF and the police have tried to escape the "burden of the past" since de Klerk began his quest for a negotiated settlement on February 2, 1990. By its repeated and ill-considered blanket condemnations of the security forces since then, it has reinforced perceptions which belong, in

the main, in the past. The ANC's role in encouraging the recruitment and politicization of black policemen by the vociferously radical Police and Prison Officers Civil Rights Union has not helped either.

These actions have accentuated, and even kindled, right-wing sympathies in the ranks of white police and SADF members and provided right-wing leaders with potential recruits if they opt for armed resistance to an ANC victory at the polls.

The chances of a concerted bid to disrupt the election or even of a right-wing putsch against de Klerk before the April election have increased with the breakdown in negotiations to persuade the FA to participate in the election.

The conjunction of these developments—hitches in the training of the NPF, dependence on the SADF and police to protect the election, and the collapse of negotiations with the FA—signal that the hour of maximum danger is at hand. It is a danger that threatens everyone, not least members of the FA.

Afrikaner history offers little comfort to the AVF: Past armed rebellions by Afrikaner nationalists have more often than not ended in defeat, most notably the 1914 revolt.

Under the new constitution, Buthelezi's power base of KwaZulu will be dissolved, and so will Mangope's quasi-state of Bophuthatswana. A dire consequence for them is

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that funding from the central government will cease.

Civil servants in these homelands are already nervous. They fear that Buthelezi and Mangope have embarked on a course of action which will see them without salary checks. The mere threat of that was enough to force one former FA partner, Brig.

Oupa Gqozo of Ciskei, to withdraw and to comply with demands that he accept the authority of the multi-party Transitional Executive Council and agree to participate in the election.

Buthelezi's nephew, the Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelithini, has entered the political arena to champion demands for "Zulu self-determination." The danger for Buthelezi, however, is that Zwelithini will realize that the holder of the purse strings after April will not be his uncle but the ANC, either in the form of Mandela as the new president or the ANC candidate for the premiership of KwaZulu-Natal, Jacob Zuma.

By withdrawing from the election contest, Buthelezi has virtually ensured that Zuma will become the prime minister of KwaZulu-Natal. He appears to have tilted the balance decisively against himself and thereby signed his own political death warrant. ○

A WING AND A PRAYER

When Cyril Ramaphosa and Joe Slovo went on a walk-about in the East Rand in early January, they intended to draw attention to the plight of families driven from their homes because of political violence in the area near Mazibuko Hostel.

Instead, the secretary-general of the African National Congress and the chairman of the South African Communist Party found themselves the targets of volleys of gunfire emanating from the hostel. Freelance photographer Abdul Shariff lost his life in the five to ten minutes of shooting that flashed across television screens around the globe, and cast a serious question mark over the elections scheduled for April 27-28.

"The only thing that is keeping the country from exploding is the prospect of elections," says the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) in a recent report on free and fair elections in South Africa.

The critical question is how to ensure that the current levels of violence do not discredit the elections. "It is not going to be a clinically free and fair election," says an official of the Human Rights Commission (HRC), a well-respected South African watchdog. "The best we can hope for is that the level of violence can be brought to a point where all South Africans have a reasonable chance to vote, and are seen to have exercised their freedom of choice."

With a reported 22,000 homicides in 1993, South Africa

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As South Africans are poised to vote on April 27-28—an election which for the first time will include the entire population—the major concern is that violence somehow can be reduced to a level that won't deter people from going to the polls. If the election proves to be relatively peaceful, the new government will get the legitimacy it needs to pull the country back from the edge of anarchy.

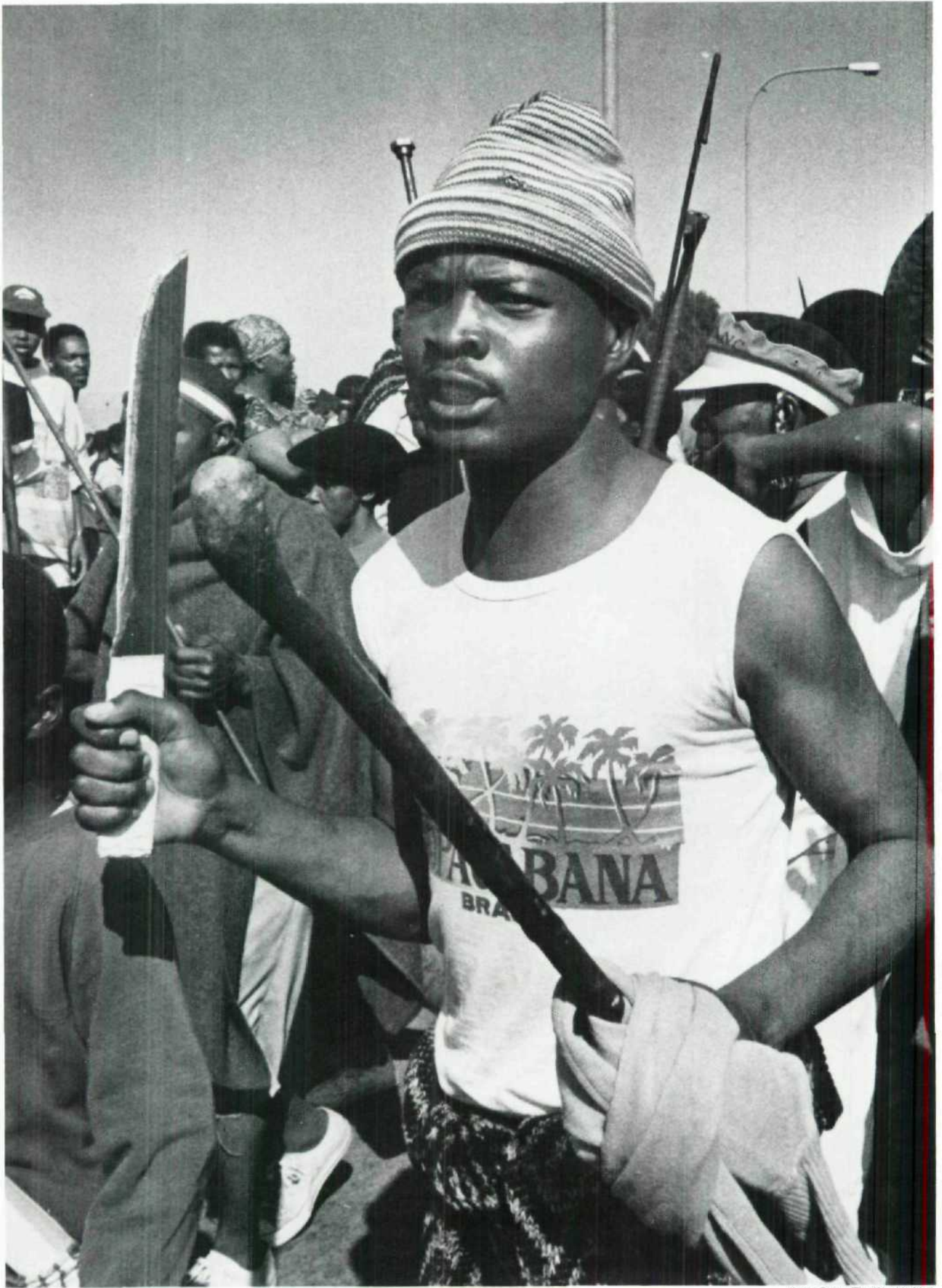
was classified as one of the most violent countries in the world. More worrying, according to figures compiled by the HRC, the number of politically related deaths climbed to 4,364 in 1993—a 25 percent increase on the year before. At the root of this violence are the gross socio-economic imbalances created by apartheid.

Security forces—through acts of omission and commission—have fueled the problem. People's intense hatred of the *Internal Stability Unit* (ISU)—the public order division of the South African Police (SAP)—in the East Rand is a case in point. Investigations by the Police Reporting Officer (a post created by

the National Peace Accord structures) in the East Rand late last year, showed that the ISU still makes extensive use of torture. Its negative image explains why Slovo and Ramaphosa did not request a police escort (although they later complained about the police not doing their duty).

Investigations carried out by the Goldstone Commission have revealed the existence of hit squads in the police force of the KwaZulu "homeland," where the *Inkatha Freedom Party* (IFP) has its roots. These are said to have assassinated at least nine people, including leaders of the ANC.

In its 1993 survey, however, the HRC finds a sharp overall reduction of hit squad activity, following revelations by the Goldstone Commission that led to a purge of



Kevin Carter/The Weekly Mail

the military intelligence wing of the South African Defense Force (SADF).

Undeniably, HRC researchers agree, the bulk of political violence in South Africa at the present time arises from political rivalry—and every indication is that this will get worse in the weeks leading to the April elections.

Party political competition, points out Chris de Kock of the Human Sciences Resource Council (HSRC), is part and parcel of an election, and by definition is conflictual.

Although opinion polls predict an overwhelming majority for the ANC, there are critical questions in the elections, such as whether the ANC musters the two-thirds majority necessary to finalize the new constitution on its own; whether small parties get the 2 percent vote which under the proportional representation system they would require to get a seat in the 400-person House of Assembly; whether they get the 5 percent they would require to secure seats in cabinet; and if—whether by garnering 20 percent of the vote or coming in second—a party can get one of the two vice president positions.

These political rivalries, points out Oscar Dlomo, executive chairman of the Institute for Multi-party Democracy, will be played out against the backdrop of extreme intolerance wrought by decades of apartheid. South Africans have been taught, he told a recent seminar, that they cannot live together; opposition was ruthlessly crushed and diversity discouraged. This in turn fueled the attitude among liberation movements that those not for them were against them, and branded as sell-outs.

Dlomo compares the unbanning of political parties in February 1990 to a "group of players suddenly flooding a playing field and attempting to play soccer, without the rules of the game having been spelled out in advance." The result has been numerous instances and evidence of intolerance. Efforts by President F.W. de Klerk to hold rallies in black townships, for example, have met with stiff resistance from angry black youth, telling him to "go home."

Although the radical Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) has officially declared a moratorium on the armed struggle, sporadic attacks in the name of its armed wing APLA have sown fear among whites and made certain black townships no-go areas for their campaigners.

Yet if de Klerk is to rid the National Party of its apartheid baggage, and indeed secure second place for his party in the election, he needs the black vote. Numerous complaints have been filed by the NP over its lack of access to various parts of the country.

On the other side of the racial divide, white right-wingers have assaulted and murdered black marchers in conservative towns. At the time of writing, talks had broken off between the Afrikaner Volksfront (a collection of right-wing groups) and the ANC on the demand for a separate white state.

It was not possible for the ANC to politically accede to this demand, which would be tantamount to endorsing an

apartheid enclave in the new South Africa. While some right-wing groups could be persuaded to contest the election, it seems likely that the most radical—notably the Conservative Party and AWB—will not. The prospect of sporadic right-wing attacks, some taking sophisticated and targeted forms, is likely.

While three of the four nominally independent homelands (Transkei, Venda, and Ciskei) have agreed to incorporate transitional legislation into their statutes so that the election can take place in the territories pending their reincorporation soon after the elections, Bophuthatswana has not done so.

The implication of this—already hinted at by the newly established Independent Electoral Commission—is that the territory's 3 million voters may have to be bused into South Africa to vote, without parties ever having had the chance to campaign in the territory. Reports of harassment and intimidation of opponents to the Mangope regime point both to political intolerance in Bophuthatswana and the potential for violence.

Political intolerance is particularly evident in Natal and the East Rand, where tensions between the ANC and the conservative Zulu-based IFP are strongest. These areas accounted for 90 percent of politically related deaths last year.

Natal is the traditional home of the country's 6 million Zulus (some 20 percent of the population), and of the "self-governing" territory of KwaZulu led by Chief Buthelezi. Polls indicate that voters are split between the two parties in the province, with the IFP steadily losing support among black voters since it joined forces with right-wing white groups demanding a separate white homeland under the umbrella of the Freedom Alliance.

The Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal (PWV) region is an ethnic potpourri of persons lured to the gold mines and cities by the promise of work. Tensions between the ANC and IFP are to be found in all parts of the region, but are especially marked in the East Rand, which has the highest concentration of hostels (major flash points of violence in the area) and where the peace structures which have forged fragile truces in other parts of the region have failed to take root.

As graphically described by a subcommittee of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) set up to investigate the situation in the East Rand following the incident involving Ramaphosa and Slovo, the East Rand townships of Katlehong and Thokoza have been carved into "no-go" zones for rival parties, in which simply crossing the street might become a death warrant.

If the IFP decides to contest elections—which would be a desirable option for those groups trying to block the ANC from getting a two-thirds majority—this could help to reduce tensions, although it would also increase the electoral competition between the two parties. With the prospect of a poor showing for the IFP in both national and regional polls no doubt a factor,

Buthlezi has decided to boycott the elections. The spoiler option will undoubtedly increase tensions in Natal and the East Rand.

A general factor that heightens tension at all times in South Africa is the huge availability of weaponry, and the failure to come up with a viable solution to the problem. The focus so far has been imposing stiff sentences on those found in possession of illegal weapons. This has angered blacks, who say they obtain weapons illegally because they cannot get licenses.

This focus also gives rise to ironies like right-wing groups being able to charge into the World Trade Center (where the political negotiations took place) heavily armed because their weapons were licensed. Following this incident in June, Judge Goldstone once more urged that the carrying of weapons—legal and illegal—in public be banned. Such legislation has still not been passed. Firing of shots at public gatherings is commonplace—and increasingly accepted behavior.

In addition to this generally explosive environment, several specific factors could spark outbursts of violence over the two days of elections from April 27 to 28, says the HSRC's de Kock. These include the likelihood that despite efforts being made now to ensure that all voters have enabling documentation, some may find they are turned back because they do not have sufficient identification.

Against advice by a special panel constituted by the Goldstone Commission on ways of avoiding violence during the election to allow a system of tendered voting (in which any questions relating to voter eligibility can be looked into after the election), this is not provided for in the Election Act.

For any forces bent on frustrating the election, de Kock adds, polling booths are a perfect target. Security of top officials will be a particular concern. The experience of Ramaphosa and Slovo illustrated how fine the line is for such persons. And the murder of Chris Hani last year demonstrated how the death of one leader can cause the whole country to erupt.

Unanswered questions about security arrangements for the elections have not helped to enhance confidence. Unlike Zimbabwe, where the British government took control in the final run-up to elections, and Namibia, where the United Nations took responsibility for transitional arrangements, there will be no external peace-keeping forces in South Africa.

The TEC Act makes provision for a National Peace-keeping Force (NPF) comprising elements of all "armed formations" in the country. But left- and right-wing forces refused to participate and the IFP is especially hostile toward the NPF. In addition, due to various delays, it now seems likely that there will only be 5,000 of these "blue berets" in the field in time for the elections.

The main brunt of providing security during the elections will continue to rest with the SADF and SAP. The SAP points out that just providing security for 9,000 polling stations on a round-the-clock basis will take up

70,000 of its 100,000-strong force, leaving many strategic points unmanned. Add to this the general lack of confidence in the police, and more possibilities of trouble emerge.

Against this gloomy picture, commentators say, is the overwhelming desire by South Africans, supported by the international community, to go ahead with the election, and for it to be certified—as required by the TEC Act—as "substantially" free and fair.

Ongoing efforts to get all parties to participate in the election underscore the desire for a peaceful vote. Leaders are also beginning to urge political tolerance, even if this is an ideal that is hardly likely to be achieved in South Africa's first democratic election. Launching the ANC's reconstruction and development program for example, ANC leader Nelson Mandela emphasized that it was not in the ANC's interests to prevent de Klerk from campaigning in black townships, and then have that used to discredit the election.

Specific measures by the TEC to bring peace to troubled areas could reduce tensions. An example of this is the insistence by the TEC on the SAP—regarded in Natal as far more neutral than the KwaZulu police—taking over in some of the most troubled spots, with a consequent reduction of violence in these areas.

At the time of writing, the TEC had just announced a major peace plan for the East Rand, which involves declaring it a disaster area, replacing the Internal Stability Unit with the SADF, and setting up an interdisciplinary task force with a broad mandate to mop up illegal weapons, return displacees to their homes, mediate conflicts, and initiate socio-economic reconstruction. While the plan has been rejected by the IFP, the spotlight on the area—largely brought about by Ramaphosa and Slovo's close shave—promised some respite.

On the actual day of the election, South Africa will be flooded with local and international observers who—though unarmed—will help to instill confidence in the process. The Independent Electoral Commission will have 9,000 monitors—one at each polling station—to act as its eyes and ears. Political parties are actively training their party agents and marshals, of whom there are likely to be several thousand in evidence on voting day.

Local NGOs plan to put up close to 30,000 observers, while between them the United Nations, Commonwealth, European Union, Organization of African Unity, and foreign NGOs will contribute an additional 5,000 observers.

The structures set up under the National Peace Accord, which have extensive experience of preventing outbreaks of violence at large public gatherings, have said that they will concentrate on holding the peace, rather than observing the election.

Their biggest prayer will be that South Africa's election is peaceful enough to render a new government the legitimacy it needs to take charge of a country bordering on anarchy, and nullify any excuse by those likely to question the result to go back to war. ○

SPY MASTER & SPY

Old spies don't die, they just...maybe continue spying when white governments become black majority-led (see Namibia). That's what former spy master Gen. Johan Coetzee is hoping for, but probably not his most notorious agent, Craig Williamson, who infiltrated the African National Congress and wrought havoc. Our correspondent talked to Williamson, now retired from spying, and Coetzee, the head of the Police Academy.

On the five-year-long Freedom Congress trial (1956-61), which ended in the acquittal of all 156 defendants—members of the African National Congress and allied organizations—a young police stenographer, Johan Coetzee, testified on speeches he had noted down at political rallies. "I think you'll find that my evidence was accepted," he recalls with evident pride 33 years on, "because my cross-examination lasted only half an hour." In time, Coetzee became a consummate spy master, South Africa's Smiley, infiltrating his charges into the heart of "enemy" territory.

His most daring operative was Craig Williamson, who rose to deputy director of the International University Exchange Fund, which educated thousands of South Africans. At the organization's headquarters in Geneva, he was at the core of the international anti-apartheid struggle. Williamson wrought havoc as spy and agent provocateur, until Coetzee was forced to bring him in from the cold to a white hero's return.

These days, in the twitchy interregnum between apartheid and people's rule, spy master and spy bide their time. General Johan Coetzee, later security chief (equivalent to head of Britain's Special Branch), then commissioner of police, lost his job amid improbable whisperings that he was a "liberal." These days, he is principal of the non-racial Police Academy, and remains close to the security establishment. He drops a hint that some of his plants are "still somewhere" out in the cold, but won't confirm or elaborate.

Is there a future for him under an African National Congress-led government, despite reports that he had celebrated with champagne when the liberation movement's London offices were blown up by South African agents in 1982? There is (for him) an encouraging precedent—Sam Nujoma, on becoming president of Namibia, made the BOSS man who had dogged him for years his head of security.

Denis Herbstein, a freelance journalist and author, lives in London and returns regularly to his native South Africa. He is writing a book on Canon John Collins' International Defence and Aid Fund.

Williamson quit the security police several years ago, though he too remains in touch. After an acrimonious foray into politics, he now does business with Mozambique and Angola, countries ruinously destabilized by South Africa. His interests, he says, cover air charter, commodity exports, and fishing boats. He lives down the road from the late Oliver Tambo's family house in the spacious Johannesburg suburb of Sandhurst. He talks defiantly of the future. "I don't have to make peace with the ANC. I've got no fear of them. Not of its leaders. If someone decides to kill me one day, then I think anybody, them as much as us, have got that to fear."

The trouble is that after returning home, he was blamed for many of the bad things that were happening in South Africa. He gave evidence in a series of trials in which activists who had thought he was one of them were sent down for lengthy periods. There was the bomb at the ANC London offices. Other charges were more sinister—someone was shot by an unknown hand or blown to pieces by a parcel bomb, and the finger was pointed at Williamson. He denies all.

But a question mark does hang over his indirect role in the death of Steve Biko, the black consciousness leader murdered by the security police. Williamson was by then "an OK guy" in Geneva. The Soweto uprising had put Pretoria on the defensive. It was known in very restricted exile circles in August 1977 that Biko was planning to leave South Africa clandestinely for a meeting with the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress in West Africa. Williamson's handler, Johan Coetzee, recalls the spy reporting that Biko would take part in an attempt to form a united front of the three movements.

Williamson is more cagey. He cannot recall whether he tipped off Pretoria, but admits "we knew about it the whole time. I just kept on telling them what was going on." Had the Port Elizabeth security police been instructed to find Biko and lock him up? The files are probably in shreds, but the fact is that Biko was arrested at a road block and effectively prevented from going abroad. The details of his death revealed at the inquest raised the

world's awareness of apartheid several notches. "A martyr caused for whatever reason," says Coetzee, "is a nail in your coffin."

As pressure on South Africa mounted in the 1980s, state assassination became a habit, though without reaching Argentine "desaparacido" levels. Coetzee speaks of an ongoing and apparently unresolved debate in the upper reaches of government about the merits of the "Argentinian route." He was a member of the State Security Council, where senior ministers and security chiefs plotted the survival of white rule by means fair or foul. Views were expressed at seminars, "often by overseas visitors, that a democracy—even if it was the type of democracy we had—is not able to defend itself effectively against this type of onslaught." He personally favored the courts. Williamson talks bluntly of the debate: "If you want an Argentina, fine. Take two weeks and kill everybody in the ANC. No problem. And then what? Might give you another 10 years."

Williamson was recruited into the police on leaving school, then posed as a radical at Johannesburg's Witwatersrand University, where, at one time, he was one of four spies on the same student executive. The route to Geneva involved befriending influential members of the ANC, and performing jobs for them in order to prove his credentials. On a student visit to England in 1975, he took time off to learn the art of bomb-making from Ronnie Kasrils of the London committee organizing underground resistance in South Africa. The chemistry lesson, in a room in the Russell Hotel, Bedford Square—a favorite haunt of American tourists—was "schoolboy stuff," recalls Kasrils. "A couple of teaspoons of potassium permanganate, with charcoal and sulphur." Williamson took back ANC leaflets for copying and they were scattered to the winds from buckets prepared by an "armed propaganda cell," which he ran. His "political action cell" also smuggled activists across the border. "There were 20 of us in the two cells," says Williamson, "all police spies. The ANC thought we were working for them."

Once installed in the IUEF office in Geneva, Williamson copied the key to the director's safe, and sent back a stream of documents to Pretoria. Despite suspicions about him, he worked craftily with most anti-apartheid agencies, though without perhaps having penetrated the ANC as deeply as he claimed. The end came in January 1980 when Arthur McGiven defected from BOSS and sold his story to *The Observer* in London. Williamson worked for the security police, but his reports to Coetzee were routed via BOSS, where McGiven was in communications. The two had been fellow agents on the university executive council.

Williamson: "Some bright spark in counter-intelligence found out he was gay. After that they abused him, said he was a security threat and were going to do this and that to him. He packed a suitcase of documents—including stuff relating to our operations—and flew to London. The worst thing was they didn't tell me." *The Observer* article made no mention of Williamson and the IUEF, but Coetzee decided to pull him out. He didn't want his man to be arrested at a conference in Moscow or stepping off a plane in Luanda. The panic was unnecessary. "It transpired that McGiven didn't know about the operation," says Coetzee. "We could have left him there."

After the revelations, the IUEF collapsed, but the student scholarships were in most cases looked after by other agencies. It was the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) which bothered South Africa rather more. Williamson calls it one of the few effective anti-apartheid organizations, "using the money it was getting in a way that had definite impact on the South African state and the security forces." The £100 million secreted in through cut-outs and bogus trusts saved untold prisoners from the gallows, and thousands from conviction or lengthier prison terms. This "financial underpinning" of the liberation struggle still galls Coetzee. "You committed a technical breach of the security laws, and three, four, five advocates would appear. Often, the prosecuting counsel was not competent, or he did not think it important enough."

He told Williamson he wanted "very close cooperation with Defence and Aid." If it could be shown to be the source of the legal fees, many defense lawyers would face prison and expulsion from their profession. But the spy was unable to break in. IDAF, he found, was "run like the Communist Party, on a cell and need-to-know basis." His *bête noire*, Phyllis Altman, deputy to the director, Canon John Collins, canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, saw through Williamson and refused to deal with him. She was so mindful of eavesdropping that discussions in her office would be conducted by exchanging slips of paper.

Ironically, Coetzee could not persuade the ministry of finance that IDAF was all that dangerous. Their attitude was, "if they want to send the money, let them." The general smiles. "At least they weren't boycotting us in this respect."

Soon after his return, an intercepted letter was put on Williamson's desk at Compol, security police headquarters in Pretoria. "It was from an old friend, Hugh Lewin, to someone else. Hugh wrote that his daughter had asked whether Uncle Craig was now 'a bad man'." That will have hurt. ○

Buthlezi has decided to boycott the elections. The spoiler option will undoubtedly increase tensions in Natal and the East Rand.

A general factor that heightens tension at all times in South Africa is the huge availability of weaponry, and the failure to come up with a viable solution to the problem. The focus so far has been imposing stiff sentences on those found in possession of illegal weapons. This has angered blacks, who say they obtain weapons illegally because they cannot get licenses.

This focus also gives rise to ironies like right-wing groups being able to charge into the World Trade Center (where the political negotiations took place) heavily armed because their weapons were licensed. Following this incident in June, Judge Goldstone once more urged that the carrying of weapons—legal and illegal—in public be banned. Such legislation has still not been passed. Firing of shots at public gatherings is commonplace—and increasingly accepted behavior.

In addition to this generally explosive environment, several specific factors could spark outbursts of violence over the two days of elections from April 27 to 28, says the HSRC's de Kock. These include the likelihood that despite efforts being made now to ensure that all voters have enabling documentation, some may find they are turned back because they do not have sufficient identification.

Against advice by a special panel constituted by the Goldstone Commission on ways of avoiding violence during the election to allow a system of tendered voting (in which any questions relating to voter eligibility can be looked into after the election), this is not provided for in the Election Act.

For any forces bent on frustrating the election, de Kock adds, polling booths are a perfect target. Security of top officials will be a particular concern. The experience of Ramaphosa and Slovo illustrated how fine the line is for such persons. And the murder of Chris Hani last year demonstrated how the death of one leader can cause the whole country to erupt.

Unanswered questions about security arrangements for the elections have not helped to enhance confidence. Unlike Zimbabwe, where the British government took control in the final run-up to elections, and Namibia, where the United Nations took responsibility for transitional arrangements, there will be no external peace-keeping forces in South Africa.

The TEC Act makes provision for a National Peace-keeping Force (NPF) comprising elements of all "armed formations" in the country. But left- and right-wing forces refused to participate and the IFP is especially hostile toward the NPF. In addition, due to various delays, it now seems likely that there will only be 5,000 of these "blue berets" in the field in time for the elections.

The main brunt of providing security during the elections will continue to rest with the SADF and SAP. The SAP points out that just providing security for 9,000 polling stations on a round-the-clock basis will take up

70,000 of its 100,000-strong force, leaving many strategic points unmanned. Add to this the general lack of confidence in the police, and more possibilities of trouble emerge.

Against this gloomy picture, commentators say, is the overwhelming desire by South Africans, supported by the international community, to go ahead with the election, and for it to be certified—as required by the TEC Act—as "substantially" free and fair.

Ongoing efforts to get all parties to participate in the election underscore the desire for a peaceful vote. Leaders are also beginning to urge political tolerance, even if this is an ideal that is hardly likely to be achieved in South Africa's first democratic election. Launching the ANC's reconstruction and development program for example, ANC leader Nelson Mandela emphasized that it was not in the ANC's interests to prevent de Klerk from campaigning in black townships, and then have that used to discredit the election.

Specific measures by the TEC to bring peace to troubled areas could reduce tensions. An example of this is the insistence by the TEC on the SAP—regarded in Natal as far more neutral than the KwaZulu police—taking over in some of the most troubled spots, with a consequent reduction of violence in these areas.

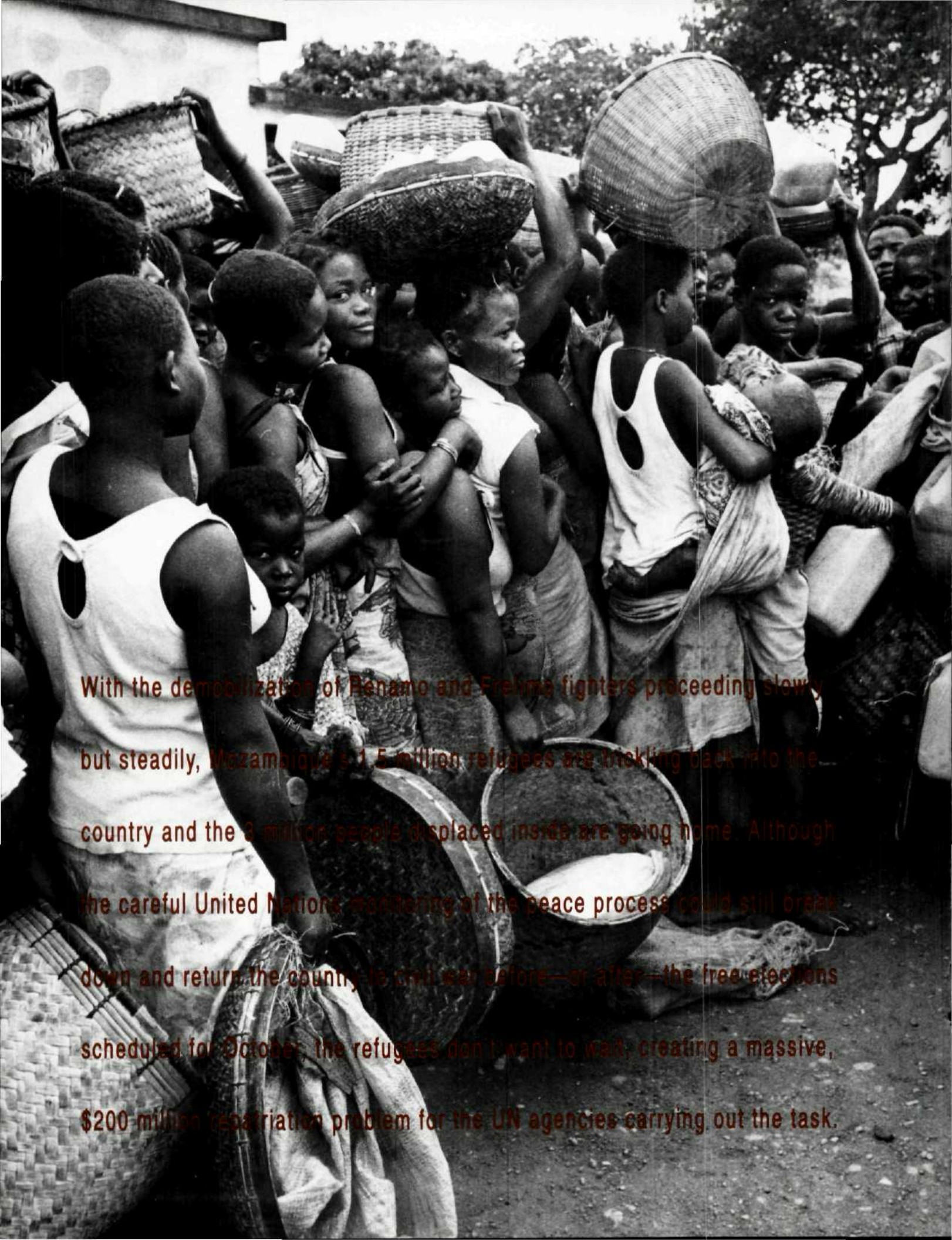
At the time of writing, the TEC had just announced a major peace plan for the East Rand, which involves declaring it a disaster area, replacing the Internal Stability Unit with the SADF, and setting up an interdisciplinary task force with a broad mandate to mop up illegal weapons, return displaces to their homes, mediate conflicts, and initiate socio-economic reconstruction. While the plan has been rejected by the IFP, the spotlight on the area—largely brought about by Ramaphosa and Slovo's close shave—promised some respite.

On the actual day of the election, South Africa will be flooded with local and international observers who—though unarmed—will help to instill confidence in the process. The Independent Electoral Commission will have 9,000 monitors—one at each polling station—to act as its eyes and ears. Political parties are actively training their party agents and marshals, of whom there are likely to be several thousand in evidence on voting day.

Local NGOs plan to put up close to 30,000 observers, while between them the United Nations, Commonwealth, European Union, Organization of African Unity, and foreign NGOs will contribute an additional 5,000 observers.

The structures set up under the National Peace Accord, which have extensive experience of preventing outbreaks of violence at large public gatherings, have said that they will concentrate on holding the peace, rather than observing the election.

Their biggest prayer will be that South Africa's election is peaceful enough to render a new government the legitimacy it needs to take charge of a country bordering on anarchy, and nullify any excuse by those likely to question the result to go back to war. ○



With the demobilization of Renamo and Frelimo fighters proceeding slowly but steadily, Mozambique's 1.5 million refugees are trickling back into the country and the 3 million people displaced inside are going home. Although the careful United Nations monitoring of the peace process could still break down and return the country to civil war before—or after—the free elections scheduled for October, the refugees don't want to wait, creating a massive, \$200 million repatriation problem for the UN agencies carrying out the task.

REPATRIATING THE REFUGEES

The drums pound out a catchy syncopated rhythm enlivened by the tinkling melody of marimbas (traditional wooden xylophones). Women sashay to the hip-twitching music, while athletic men punctuate their stomping dance with exuberant pelvic thrusts.

The performance by the Mozambican National Dance Company is watched with awe by a few thousand Mozambican refugees who crowd around a dusty field at Zimbabwe's Nyamatikiti refugee camp. Young children shout with glee at the onstage antics and toothless old women ululate and jump up to give impromptu versions of the dances onstage.

Others in the crowd show less enthusiasm as they watch the performance, however, and some of the refugees appear almost listless. Despite the carnival atmosphere created by the dancers, many of the thousands of refugees appear to be depressed.

"We are doing this as a kind of morale booster for the refugees," says Mozambique's ambassador to Zimbabwe, Lopes Tembe Ndelana, of the dance tour which went to each of the six Mozambican refugee camps in Zimbabwe last year. "The show features dances from all of Mozambique's provinces, especially from Tete, Niassa, and Sofala provinces, where most of these refugees come from. We want these people to know they are not forgotten and that we are planning to help them return to their homes."

Getting onstage with the dancers, the ambassador shouts, "There is peace at home and soon you will all be able to return to your villages and you will be able to dance there. Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and the United Nations are making plans to help you all return. We can provide transport and seed packs to help you resettle in an organized fashion. Don't just go back on your own,

because you won't get all this help. Wait and we can help you return with good organization."

There are about 140,000 Mozambicans in refugee camps in Zimbabwe, and many more who are living with Zimbabwean relatives or working on large farms. This number is dwarfed by the more than 1 million Mozambicans living in camps in Malawi. In addition, there are a few hundred thousand Mozambicans in Swaziland and South Africa.

As the truce in Mozambique has held since November 1992, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been scrambling to carry out the mammoth exercise of repatriating the then total of 1.5 million Mozambican refugees in six southern African countries. It is the largest repatriation ever undertaken in Africa.

A similar challenge is the need to resettle the nearly 3 million displaced Mozambicans, who fled their war-torn rural areas for squatter camps around the country's urban centers.

Despite the fact that the Mozambican peace has held for more than a year, full repatriation and resettlement has been delayed because of the country's uncertain state. As late as mid-February, neither Mozambique's government forces nor Renamo rebels had demobilized or disarmed the majority of their fighters. With so many armed fighters deployed throughout the country, a return to war is still very possible.

But refugees at Nyamatikiti camp showed little interest in waiting for a permanent peace or for international assistance to return home.

"We're not interested in staying here. We want to go back," said Jaime Bento, 27, holding his nine-month-old son, Ramalde. "We want to get back so we can grow crops in the next rainy season. We don't want to wait."

Bento has been at the Nyamatikiti camp for eight years since he fled the war in Tete province. While in the refugee camp, he trained to be a teacher at a Zimbab-

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wean institute and he teaches primary school students at the refugee camp. Other refugees learned skills as carpenters, blacksmiths, and tailors.

The peace may be uncertain in Mozambique, but Bento and several other refugees at the camp were adamant that they intended to return soon. "I don't care about politics. I don't care about Frelimo or Renamo," said Bento. "I just want to take my family back home."

Throughout 1993, thousands of Mozambicans trickled back home, mostly on foot to the devastated provinces of Tete, Manica, Sofala, and Zambezia. Most of the spontaneous returnees came from camps in Malawi and hiked to areas relatively close to the border. Many refugee families sent a few members ahead to check out the security situation, while the children and older members stayed back in the refugee camps.

As of January 1994, the camps in Malawi still cared for 650,000 Mozambicans, while South Africa had 250,000, Zimbabwe 100,000, Zambia 22,000, Tanzania 20,000, and Swaziland 18,000.

Over 600,000 more repatriates are expected in Mozambique in 1994, in time for the planting season, which normally starts in September, and for the national elections scheduled for October.

"The window of opportunity to accelerate the repatriation process before the rainy season begins again in September is very short," says David Lambo, UNHCR coordinator for southern Africa. "Therefore, it is vital that this operation is funded as soon as possible, so that UNHCR can get an early start."

In February, UNHCR appealed for \$102.8 million for the 1994 voluntary repatriation program. The total bill for the three-year repatriation program, stretching from May 1993 through 1995, is expected to be \$203 million.

Generally, those who returned in 1993 went to places close to the border and those going back in 1994 will be traveling further into the center of Mozambique. Therefore, UNHCR is planning to help by improving the road system and providing various forms of transport for the returnees. For example, UNHCR has deployed 41 heavy vehicles to help transport returnees and distribute food, seed packs, and fertilizer, and non-food items such as blankets, hoes, and other agricultural implements.

A large part of the \$102.8 million required this year will go toward expenses for transportation and other logistical facilities that have to be put in place by March. Transport and logistics are expected to cost \$27.2 million, shelter and basic infrastructure \$14.6 million, crop production \$6.7 million, and education and landmine awareness \$6 million.

Although formal repatriation lagged in 1993, UNHCR initiated a reintegration program to rehabilitate basic services such as water, access roads, and health and education facilities. The rehabilitation is set to be expanded this year. It could even include the repair of sections of the railways between Malawi and Mozambique.

An important part of the repatriation program is the availability of food in Mozambique. The World Food Program (WFP) is providing food rations to returnees for about one year, until they become self-sufficient. WFP delivered food throughout Mozambique in 1993 and food deliveries are continuing in 1994. The combination of peace and good rains and a good harvest in 1993 meant that the number of people requiring food aid decreased dramatically from 3.8 million in 1992 to 1.3 million in 1993. That number is expected to fall even lower in 1994 because hearty rains since November mean that the April harvest should be a good one.

In order to support Mozambique's struggling private markets, WFP is buying surplus grain and other foods locally and then distributing in areas of the country that are still hit by hunger. In a drive to get the returnees back on track to productivity, both WFP and UNHCR are distributing agricultural kits consisting of seeds and tools.

Currently, about 10 people are maimed or killed every week because Mozambique is littered with an estimated 2 million landmines. It is a terrible testimony to modern warfare, that even when peace is achieved, people will continue to be injured and killed because of the indiscriminate use of landmines. Neither side in the war has accurate maps of where they scattered the treacherous mines, which means Mozambique will be studded with the explosives for years to come.

A mine awareness campaign has been started to warn the returning population of the dangers. Of course, in addition to education programs, Mozambique badly needs a comprehensive de-mining exercise. De-mining has been started by some of the 6,000 United Nations forces in Mozambique, but a more thorough job is required. The most successful de-mining work is taking place in the Mutarara area of northern Mozambique near the border with Malawi. The Norwegian government has trained and equipped 64 demobilized Mozambican soldiers who are combing the region to rid it of mines so refugees coming back from Malawi will be safe. The Norwegian program provides badly needed employment to demobilized soldiers and is widely credited with being the most effective de-mining exercise, whereas the United Nations and Mozambican government are understood to have lagged behind in this dangerous but crucial job.

No matter how much planning is made to repatriate Mozambicans, the entire effort still hangs in the balance because of the ever-present threat that the country may be returned to war. Until the forces of both warring sides are demobilized and disarmed, there is a very real risk that Mozambique could plunge back into conflict, just as Angola did in 1993.

The crucial demobilization of Mozambique's two rival armies officially started in November, but progress has been hampered by lack of cooperation by both the government's Frelimo army and Renamo.

Renamo has thrown up the most roadblocks to demobilization by making outrageous charges against the United Nations' administration of the demobilization. For example, in December Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama furiously charged that the UN's "white foreign soldiers" enjoy airlifted bath water at the assembly points for demobilized soldiers, while Renamo fighters had to drink brackish water. The UN categorically denied that charge.

Despite the obstacles, the cantonment of Mozambique's 82,000 fighters is progressing but at a stumbling, slow pace. However, the very fact that it continues to limp along allows United Nations officials in Maputo to state that the demobilization will be successfully completed by June.

By then, according to UN optimists, all the nearly 60,000 government troops and 20,000 Renamo rebels will have been either integrated into a new, unified national army or disarmed and dismissed. The new army will be a more modest force of 30,000 troops and will be commanded by a group of officers, from both Renamo and Frelimo, who were trained together in Zimbabwe by a team of British officers.

Determined to avoid repetition of Angola's descent back to war, the UN has ruled that Mozambique's national elections will only take place in October if both armies are first demobilized.

At first, the numbers participating in the demobilization were small: At the end of January, only 17,838 soldiers had arrived at assembly points, against the 80,778 expected in the demobilization camps by the end of May. But the numbers picked up, so that by mid-February, more than 31,000 had entered the camps, representing 37 percent of the total expected by May. By mid-February, 9,836 Renamo fighters had entered the camps, representing 46 percent of the rebel total expected by May, and 22,052 Frelimo troops, equaling 34 percent. The dramatic increase in numbers gives cause for guarded optimism. If that flow continues, then the demobilization may well be a success by May, allowing elections to take place as scheduled in October.

Comprehensive programs including counseling and training are needed to get these hardened fighters to re-enter civilian society peacefully. The United Nations estimates that it has only received about 50 percent of the \$41 million needed to reintegrate the fighters into either civilian life or the new national army. Irascible Afonso Dhlakama keeps throwing barbed accusations at the demobilization process. Not to be outdone by the assassination attempt claims made recently by his fellow troublemaker in Angola, Jonas Savimbi, Dhlakama charged in December that there was a plot to kill him. UN officials also discounted that charge.

Then Dhlakama's Renamo troops got in on the act with a hunger strike to protest inadequate food at the assembly points. More than 1,100 Renamo fighters at the Mohiua assembly point in the central Zambezia province refused their meals just before Christmas to draw atten-

tion to their meager portions of food and the fact that they were getting no meat or fresh vegetables at all. The WFP began by providing maize, rice, pulses, cooking oil, and sugar to the demobbed soldiers, but the government dismally failed in its agreement to supply the contained troops with meat, fish, bread, and salt. Backed by a donation of \$200,000 from Sweden, WFP beefed up its supplies to the camps including rations of locally purchased dried meat and fish. The soldiers are now reported to be happy with their diets.

The comparatively large UN peace-keeping force in Mozambique bodes well for the future peace. Angola had just 1,000 UN monitors, compared to nearly 8,000 in Mozambique. But the UN forces in Mozambique have not entirely escaped blame. The 1,100 Italian troops stationed in the central city of Chimoio have been using young Mozambican girls and boys in child prostitution, according to detailed allegations by Redd Barna (Norwegian Save the Children), which has its Mozambican headquarters in Chimoio.

Many international observers are worried that Renamo will keep the core of its fighting force out in order to be able to return to war if it does not like the election results.

But the UN special representative to Mozambique, Aldo Ajello, has diplomatically dealt with Dhlakama's complaints. Ajello said that he hopes the demobilization will gather momentum so that all the troops will have been interned in the camps by the end of May.

To add impetus to the demobilization process, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali visited Mozambique in October 1993. He visited some of the thinly populated assembly points and he also met with both Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano and Renamo leader Dhlakama. The secretary-general's visit is credited with breaking the deadlock on the formation of a joint Renamo-Frelimo commission to oversee the elections.

After 16 years of brutal war, the Mozambican administration and the 8,000 members of the UN team are grappling with a daunting array of problems, including the return of the refugees still outside the country's borders. The country is also struggling to meet the conditions of a World Bank structural adjustment program. In December, the World Bank held a donors' conference in Paris and \$1.04 billion was pledged for the many needs of Mozambique, the world's poorest country, as it struggles to establish a lasting peace.

But it is the demobilization of the troops which remains key. "The Mozambican peace process is happening at its own pace and we must not rush it," said UN representative Ajello. "There can only be free and fair elections in Mozambique once the warring sides are demobilized. We learned from Angola's return to war that both armies must be neutralized before the elections can succeed. Only then can this country achieve lasting peace." ○

The Regressados Return from East Germany

Amid the turmoil and hope of post-war Mozambique, the plight of a small number of returning migrants has passed almost unnoticed. They are the 15,000 Mozambicans who were sent to the former East Germany as "solidarity workers," to learn industrial skills to put to use on their return for Frelimo's grand scheme of centrally planned development. Envisaged as the vanguard of Mozambique's proletariat, they are now an embarrassing reminder of those failed dreams. But, even before the Berlin Wall came down, their experience was not one of socialist brotherhood; instead it was closer to apartheid and exploitation. Summarily ejected from re-united Germany, former contract workers have now found life at home so tough that they remember Germany as the good times.

Following the example of other poor socialist countries, President Samora Machel signed a treaty of solidarity with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1979. The ministry of labor in Maputo was to select men and women to travel to the GDR for training. Exchanging their labor for German skills, they were to blaze a trail for Mozambique's industrial development, and demonstrate an enlightened alternative to the degrading conditions suffered by Mozambican migrant laborers in South Africa.

In reality, it became simply a cheap labor agreement—a treaty of exploitation and a formula for alienation and unfulfilled aspirations. The first Mozambican workers may have been treated well, but by the mid-1980s, when the largest number came, "socialist partnership" was a thin covering for an ugly reality.

The treaty stated that Mozambican workers would live and work at the same standard as their German colleagues. In reality, the workers were housed in isolated halls of residence in cramped and squalid conditions. Curfews were enforced, visiting regulations restricted. Pregnant women were automatically forced to abort, or were fired. Everyday contact with German colleagues was confined to official or state-organized meetings. Fear of racial attacks and day-to-day humiliations created a miserable existence akin to living under apartheid.

The Africans, working in the large labor-intensive industries such as coal mining, were given the

worst shifts and the most difficult and health-hazardous jobs. Despite working in modern industries, the majority, recruited after 1985, were never trained in any skills. They were lucky if they were taught German.

As with their German co-workers, deductions were made from their salaries for taxes, welfare, and union dues. Despite this, the authorities made no efforts to discourage a public perception that foreigners were privileged parasites living off "solidarity contributions."

The recent explosion of racist attacks in Germany exposed an underlying level of racism previously denied by GDR authorities. This denial of open debate about a real issue prevented the Africans from making complaints or taking action. One worker commented: "In the beginning, we tried. But we were up against so many prejudices. It was clearly apartheid and we could not appeal to anyone. In those years, we were not allowed to talk about skin-color problems, since officially there were no problems with racism."

German reunification and the subsequent collapse of East German heavy industry meant that jobs were no longer guaranteed. Mass sackings followed, and foreigners were the first victims. Thousands were dismissed and sent home, many before the "work cooperation" agreements had been officially broken. Between March and December 1990, more than 11,000 Mozambican contract workers were forced to leave. Manuel Alexandre Nhacutou, who had been in Germany for eight years, said: "Because we are no longer useful, they throw us out. They will use us again when they need cheap labor."

New regulations made it clear that foreign workers were no longer welcome. Compensation was only paid if the workers declared their willingness to return home immediately. This included a lump sum payment of \$1,764, plus 70 percent of the worker's former wage for three months. Workers who wished to remain lost all these rights, but even those who returned home rarely received their full entitlement.

Excluded from rights of citizenship, the status of those workers who chose to stay remained uncertain. A decision to grant legal residence to former contract workers was finally made only in June 1993, but conditions are so restrictive that most of

those remaining are again under threat of deportation.

Unfortunately, the situation facing the *regressados* on their return home has also been harsh. Ironically, the returnees now idealize their time in Germany, choosing to forget the racism and hardship they experienced there.

The hasty departure of 11,000 Mozambican workers within a six-month period made their arrival in Maputo chaotic. The expulsion took the government by surprise. Already burdened by war, economic collapse, and millions of displaced people, the Mozambican government was in no position to ensure the smooth reintegration of the returnees.

Those who had left before the start of the 1987 Economic Recovery Program were shocked at the sharp increase in the cost of living. They had expected to return with enough wealth to be able to support their families and set up small businesses. Their hopes were dashed. According to one returnee, "the worth of the money we saved is practically nothing."

Under the agreement with the GDR, the migrant workers received 40 percent of their wages in Germany. The remaining 60 percent was sent to Mozambique where it was to be paid to the workers in local currency, meticals, on their return—minus 10 percent deducted by the labor ministry.

On the return of workers, the Mozambican authorities found themselves unable to pay out the deferred wages speedily. The sharp devaluation of the metical since 1987 led to disputes over how much the workers would receive. In late 1990, the then-labor minister, Aguiar Mazula, explained that in cases where deferred pay was owed dating back to 1987, the money would be calculated on the basis of the average rate of that year. Since the exchange rate had risen from 200 to over 1,000 meticals to the U.S. dollar, this made a huge difference to the returnees, who felt cheated and resentful.

The lack of jobs and housing intensified the *regressados'* anger. In theory, the workers' experience in Germany should have made it easier for them to find employment. In practice, war and structural adjustment have ruined Mozambique's plans for industrial development, making their skills irrelevant.

Mozambique's economy has developed in a way

diametrically opposed to that envisaged in 1979. It is now the poorest country in the world, and the most aid-dependent. Its industry is at a standstill, and the main prospects for rehabilitation lie in agriculture. The immediate priority is assisting the tens of thousands of demobilized soldiers and hundreds of thousands of refugees returning from neighboring countries.

The needs of the former contract workers are somewhat lower on the agenda. Yet their plight is real. Most of them were forced to sell the consumer goods they brought back. Many complain of isolation and discrimination, on the basis that they are regarded as privileged and proud. According to Xavier, now living in Maputo: "We all have the same problems, those that stayed and those that left. But for us, it is even a disadvantage that we were abroad. Because we've got good clothes, people say, 'Look, you've got a nice shirt, nice trousers—what more do you want.' Yet for us, it is worse." Too often, they have simply been used as scapegoats for the rising crime rate in Maputo.

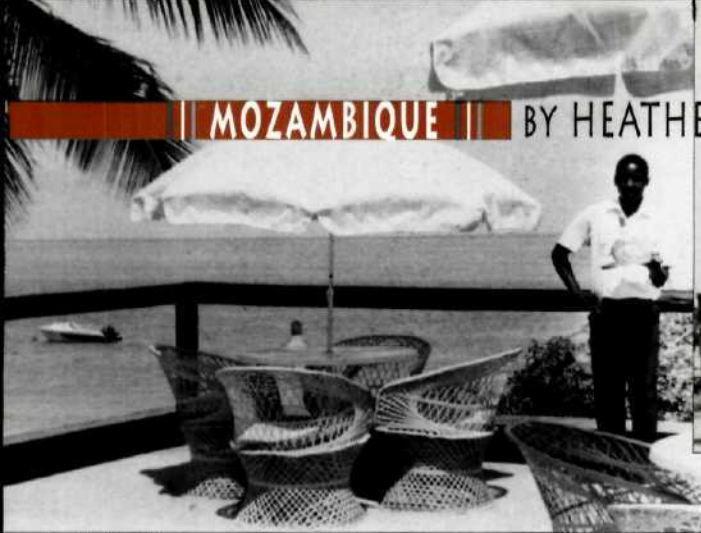
Amid the poverty of Mozambique, the smartly dressed *regressados* stand out as relatively well-off. Their shared experience has contributed to self-consciousness as a distinct group. This is heightened by the fact that many are stranded in Maputo without the support of their families—some have completely lost touch with their relatives—and they must rely on each other.

Recent schemes in Maputo run by the employment promotion office and financed by German technical cooperation and the ministry of economic cooperation have tried to provide assistance through credit and training schemes. Unfortunately, the lack of funds, a shortage of skilled manpower, and bureaucratic problems have limited their scope and effectiveness.

Putting Mozambique back together promises to be a long and difficult task. The *regressados* wonder what place they will have, and hope that they will not become victims again. One spoke of his hopes: "We find ourselves in a difficult time...We must work with all victims in order to avoid conflict."■

—Ondine Smerdon

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Heather Hill

Heather Hill



FANTASY ISLANDS

Barely before Mozambique's prolonged and violent civil war

was over, the tourism industry was up and running. Once a mainstay of the poorest country on earth's economy, tourism virtually ceased in 1978. Now, led by South African investors hoping to lure visitors to the country's paradise islands, tourism will have a rough ride against bureaucracy, shortages, corruption, and the lack of infrastructure.

When the six-seater Cessna swoops over the Indian Ocean bringing in the fun-seekers to the sun-kissed islands off Mozambique, it is a scene reminiscent of the television series "Fantasy Island." The plane alights on the narrow airstrip and the eager guests clamber out, to be met by smiling staff and a tray of frosty drinks. While their lives may not be changed by the plot twists of Hollywood scriptwriters, the holidaymakers will enjoy an island paradise unequaled by anything produced on a TV screen.

Benguerra, Bazaruto, and Magaruque, each with a small, rustic resort, are blessed with azure water, sugar icing sand, and an unspoiled coral reef. Flamingos congregate picturesquely in the shallows; further out, the deep water teems with fish that are every sportsman's dream—marlin, sailfish, grouper, bonito. And yet, the Bazaruto Archipelago is just one idyllic way-station along a 1,500-mile coastline that is arguably the most beautiful and abundant beach environment in the world. It is, without question, a tourism operator's dream.

Until independence in 1975, Mozambique was the playground for southern Africa, from the Arab-accented

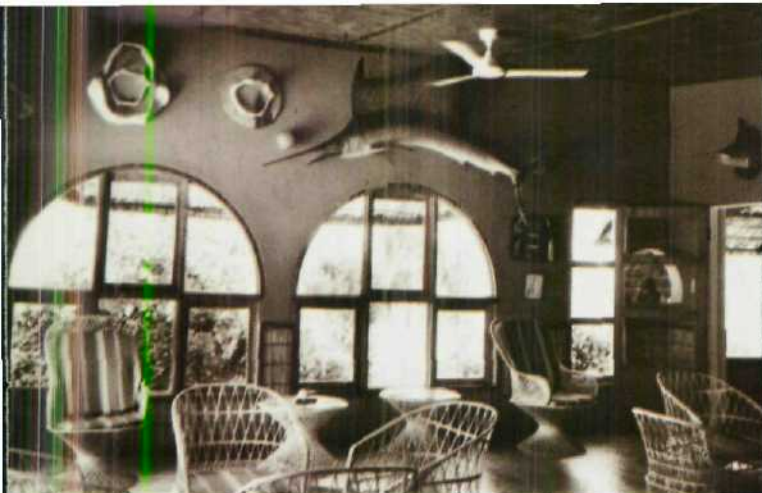
Pemba islands in the north to Inhaca Island off Maputo down south. During the 16-year civil war, however, the tourism industry died, along with the rest of the economy and more than a million Mozambicans.

Out of the ashes is emerging a new tourism industry that is barely waiting for the wounds of war to heal. In the vanguard are South Africans, who are piling by the thousands into their old backyard, the "prawn paradise" of the pre-war years. Restaurants and lodgings are springing up for the renewed road traffic along the coastal highway, especially between Maputo and Inhambane. Two South Africans, Mike Slater and Peter Kirchhoff, are currently compiling the first post-war travel guide to the poorest country on earth.

Hotel chains and business consortiums are also attracted to Mozambique, seeing in it the potential for luxury-class resorts. "International tourism is hungry for exclusive locations," said Rob Small, a Harare architect and partner in a new hotel promotion company for Mozambique. "The more exotic facilities will get the market, and Mozambique has them. Kenya's coast is burned out. So are Mauritius and the Seychelles."

Club Med Mozambique is still a long way away, however. The country is staggering under a huge population of

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displaced people, a byzantine government bureaucracy, breathtaking corruption, and an infrastructure so decayed it is almost nonexistent. And both government and investors are hedging their bets until elections, supposed to be held this year, give the country greater political stability.

"We're telling people that the only market for the time being is business people. Until the war is properly sorted out, there's not much hope for a major tourism industry," warns David Zausmer, managing director of the Beira Corridor Group, which represents private sector interests between Beira, Mozambique and neighboring countries.

The formidable obstacles notwithstanding, developers, particularly from South Africa, are moving in. Since the ceasefire agreement of October 1992, the government has stepped up its tendering for the development of beach-front resorts and inland safari camps and the rehabilitation of existing hotels.

That's what led to Small's venture. Small was in Maputo last December for an exhibition of his wildlife photographs, at which he met Carlos Pacheco Faria, the chairman of Enacomo, the former state trading company. Enacomo, representing a wide array of business interests set to be privatized this year, controls a tourism company, Promotur. Promotur has development rights to many choice spots on the coast, including Mozambique Island, recently declared a world heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

Because investors could easily founder on the shoals of Mozambican bureaucracy, the company will offer them a full package of beach-front sites, building design, hotel and management consultants, and construction facilities. All they have to do is put their money down.

But Small maintains that his company will ensure "sensitive development of Mozambique's abundant natural resources. Coastline development is often done without proper impact studies. There will be a rush to develop and I'm keen to see that the coastline of Mozambique doesn't end up looking like Palm Beach."

The experience of travel operators suggests that any development will be an uphill struggle. The resorts in the

Bazaruto Archipelago, the locus, for now, of Mozambique's tourism, are in a continual battle just to keep food on the table.

"We're fighting the impossible," said Trevor Landrey, manager of the 40-bed Benguela Lodge, which opened in 1988. "The remoteness of our area, the lack of infrastructure...to maintain a lodge of our standard is remarkable. If it were made easier, we could satisfy an overseas clientele."

Chief among the problems are exorbitant government levies. Airport landing fees are the highest in the world—\$50 for a six-seater aircraft compared to less than \$1 at the Harare International Airport. Then there is a \$25 fee to the immigration department, \$10 to customs, \$10 for each passenger entering Mozambique, and \$5 for each passenger leaving.

Once the guests have arrived, they want food, drink, ceiling fans, hot showers, boats, diving equipment, and the other amenities of a good resort. Since two-thirds of the materiel has to be imported, the hotel pays customs duties ranging from 80 percent to 110 percent. There are government officials who want to be appeased and others who demand permits which don't exist. Cargo can be impounded and charter flights delayed until an arrangement is reached.

"If we tried to run our operation in terms of our authorization, we could not do it," said Landrey. "You just couldn't provide the service. You could give people rice, fish, vegetables. That's it."

The ways around the maze are to pay the fees upfront, to smuggle in goods, and to offer the expected kickback. At the moribund Beira airport, for example, this journalist saw customs officials duly accepting several crates of alcohol with the witticism that the airport would be closed by noon because everyone would be drunk. On the return trip, an official took several frozen chickens and told the pilot that next time he wanted some bread.

All these costs filter down to the foreign traveler, who is also the target of a 23 percent sales tax on tourism-related spending. That factors into an average daily hotel rate of \$120 before you buy a single gin-and-tonic, step onto a fish-

ing boat, or rent diving equipment. First, of course, you have to get yourself there.

Another pitfall is government itself. Despite the introduction of a foreign investment code in 1984, the manifold layers of bureaucracy and the adherence to Marxism create a capitalist's nightmare. "Every time an agreement seems to be near, the government comes back with a new demand," explained Rob Small.

The saga of the Botswana-based Cresta Hotel group illustrates just how difficult dealing with Maputo can be. Cresta began negotiating in 1981 to rehabilitate the Dom Carlos Hotel in Beira. For the first few years, the Frelimo government dealt only with the Zimbabwe government; subsequently, Cresta was allowed to step in. It took 10 years, right up to the 1990s, to hammer out a package both sides agreed they could discuss.

Cresta's sole interest was the Dom Carlos, a rococo 100-room hotel which the group wanted to run for business people and vacationers from the region. "The hotel is terribly run down," said Paul Matamisa, Cresta's deputy managing director, who estimated rehabilitation costs at \$7 million. "But we would have been very happy to do it."

The Mozambique government, however, wanted Cresta also to take on the ravaged Hotel Estoril, a 300-bed establishment that has been home for many years to more than 700 squatter families. "No one wants to take responsibility for the families," said Matamisa. "[The government] allowed us to remove them but for a foreign-based company to evict them...What sort of relationship would you create for business in the future? You wouldn't survive in that environment."

In late 1993, Cresta pulled out. "It became apparent we would not be permitted to develop only the Dom Carlos," said Matamisa. "We're still interested in Mozambique, but the best route for us would be to build our own hotel."

Because organized tourism officially ceased in Mozambique in 1978, commercial activity since then has happened on virtually an ad hoc basis. In one such case, a Harare air charter company, Safari Transfers, under a contract with the government, was flying Zimbabweans to Paradise Island in the Bazaruto Archipelago for a "glorified camping trip."

"You brought your own food and there was a cook there who would cook it for you," said Frances Phillips of Safari Transfers. "You could get a room although it was very spartan. The big advantage was that you could pay us in Zimbabwe dollars [the fee was about \$20 a night]."

That little sideline ended last June, when the government accepted a bid from South African businessman Rick Makin to restore Paradise Island and the Dona Ana hotel in the mainland town of Vilanculos. Like Cresta with the Dom Carlos, Makin faces a formidable challenge: The Paradise Island complex, a once-elegant hotel and casino, is a mere shell.

In the tourism heyday, however, Paradise was the jewel in the crown of a Portuguese tourism king called Joachim

Alves. Alves also owned the Dona Ana (named after his wife), a small resort on Magaruque, and a hotel at Inhassoro, about 12 miles up the coast from Vilanculos. As war loomed and tourism dried up, Alves went under. The banks took him over and he returned to Portugal where he died.

Twenty years later, the archipelago constitutes a sort of microcosm of the future of the country's tourism industry. There are the three small operating hotels, which by hook or by crook manage to keep the show going. With only a closed circuit radio link for communication, the three resorts depend on each other for supplies and trade information. "There's nothing on the mainland," said Steve Anderson, the manager of Magaruque. "It's very difficult to run a business with the local administration. We can't rely on them."

Meanwhile, the contest between government and new investors who assault the islands and their fragile ecology continues. For its part, the government has declared the islands national parks which must conform to strict environmental regulations. Because Mozambique has no ministry of tourism, responsibility for resorts falls under the ministry of agriculture, which has delegated it to an expatriate adviser, Paul Dutton.

Dutton, who lives on Bazaruto, drew up a management plan for the islands, limiting the number of beds on each. Last year, all development was frozen, by a directive of President Joachim Chissano, until the plan is approved.

As the unofficial environmental watchdog, Dutton has his hands full. The manager of the 20-bed Bazaruto Lodge, Gordon Chacat, a South African, planned a second complex of 250 beds incorporating a golf course and marina. When the World Bank loan he was counting on fell through, Chacat scaled his plans down to a 30-bed lodge. That was stopped by the freeze.

But another project on Bazaruto is springing up. Said to have the late president Samora Machel's widow as a partner, the business group behind it has put in an airstrip for what is said to be a 60-bed resort and moved building materials onto the island. It appears that construction is going ahead.

On Benguerra, meanwhile, a lease for a new 40-bed lodge was approved by the government, completing the island's quota of 80 beds. Under the aegis of this approval, according to Trevor Landrey, a different consortium began selling time-shares in South Africa in a 200-unit complex on Benguerra. The investors had even shipped bulldozers and building materials to Vilanculos, when Dutton stopped them from being transported to the island. The original 40-bed plan is on ice.

Mozambique, sealed off from the world during the boom years for international holiday resorts, is one of the last travel frontiers. But the investment cowboys are in for a hard ride. Between the horrendous internal problems and the worldly demands of an independent state, the nascent tourism industry is already finding that paradise has its sting. ○



|| ANGOLA ||
BY CHRIS SIMPSON

There seems to be no hurry in reaching a peace agreement
between the Unita rebels of Jonas Savimbi (photo) and the

J. P. Lelloni/Syoma

PEACE OR WAR?

Angolan government. Mindful of the disastrous consequences of the hastily assembled and ill-supervised September 1992 elections, the United Nations is taking the patient approach to a new round of peace talks being held in Lusaka, Zambia. These latest talks were convened in November, following the breakdown of negotiations in Abidjan last May. Meanwhile, in fits and starts, the civil war goes on.

“It is far better to be patient and spend time working on a peace settlement that will last than to rush through something that will collapse immediately,” UN Special Representative Alioune Blondin Beye has remarked on more than one occasion.

Since taking over the notoriously tough Angolan dossier from Margaret Anstee in July last year, Beye has favored a softly, softly approach, low on rhetoric and high on discretion. Four months of painstaking diplomacy, both inside and outside Angola, went into the build-up to the Lusaka peace talks Beye convened in November and there has been no rush for a quick-fix formula at the negotiating table. Those delegates, observers, and journalists who emerged jaded and battle-weary after the abortive Abidjan peace talks in May 1993 did not know it at the time, but they had simply been in training for Lusaka, where Beye has indicated the talks can run and run so long as they produce some kind of meaningful agreement.

That, however, is far from guaranteed. It has been difficult throughout to ascertain just what progress is being made at Lusaka, not least because the UN, supposedly at the request of the two parties, has enforced a news blackout. The daily briefings given at Abidjan, which Unita seemed far more comfortable with than the Angolan government did, have not taken place. Contacts with the press have been largely frowned on, although Unita has been

more available for comment than the government, and it has been left to Beye himself to provide summaries when flying in and out of Luanda. He has restricted himself, by and large, to platitudes of the “patience is a virtue” variety, while occasionally scolding the Angolan state media for being so resolutely negative in its coverage.

Lusaka could, in theory, produce a peace settlement, but it is unlikely to prove comprehensive or durable. The more optimistic accounts of the Abidjan talks made much of the points on which the rival delegations had agreed as opposed to the points of divergence, the most important of which was Unita’s refusal to withdraw from the areas of the country it then occupied. The pessimists argued that it was only the differences which mattered, the rest was simply window-dressing.

The Lusaka agenda is broadly similar to that addressed at Abidjan—how to create a new national army and police force, how to accommodate Unita politically, defining a new role for the UN in Angola—and could be knocked off point by point. Indeed, as the talks broke up for Christmas, a break which the Angolan government claimed had been at Unita’s request, there was considerable satisfaction that the main military issues had supposedly been dealt with. These included the reintegration of both Unita’s high command and its ordinary soldiers into the Angolan national army and provisional arrangements for demobilization. Agreement was reached on the reorganization of a national police force in late January.

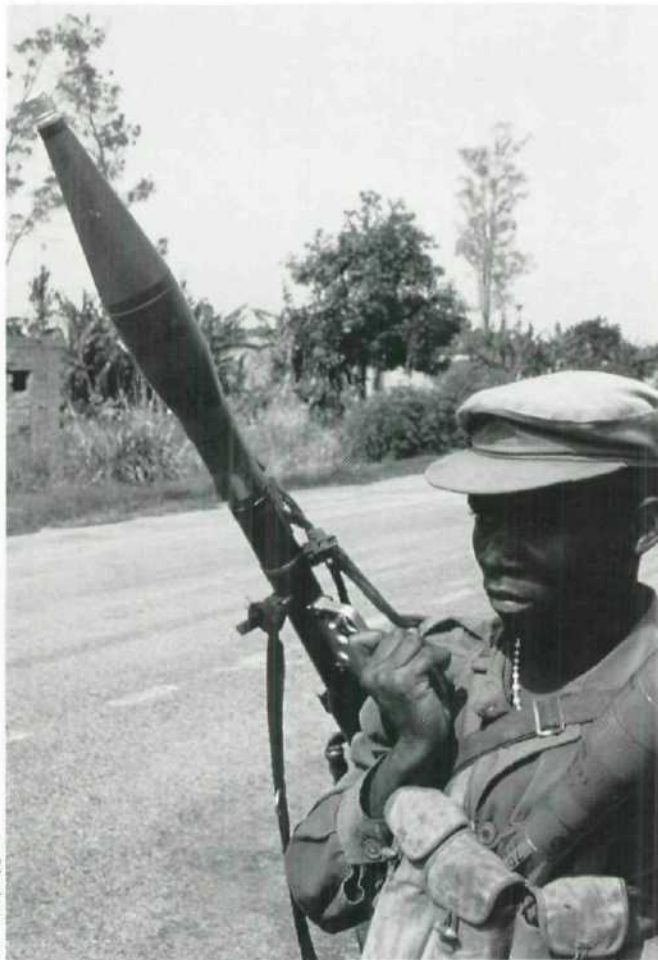
Get the men in uniform sorted out and the rest should surely follow seems to be the thinking. But even if the two sides could move rapidly on to getting an agreement on how many cabinet posts Unita can have, how many Blue Helmets the UN should send to Angola, how a second round of presidential elections should be staged, the real challenge will lie in making such an agreement viable on the ground.

Nearly three years on, it is chastening to remember the euphoria which greeted the Bicesse accords. There seemed at the time enough good reasons for Bicesse to succeed. There was a more favorable geopolitical climate in southern Africa with the Cold War over and South Africa reforming, while the protagonists seemed, at least at the time, genuinely weary of the fight. A permanent Angolan settlement was seen by many outside observers as an inevitable part of a southern African jigsaw.

But Bicesse failed and there seems little reason to sus- WFP/M. Sayagues



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Sam Kiley/Sygnia

pect that a redrafted version of the original agreement, plus a few thousand UN peace-keeping troops, will succeed any better. Both sides in the conflict maintain that there can only be a political and not a military solution and both certainly seem incapable of enforcing an outright victory. But there still seem to be more reasons for the war to continue than for it to stop.

The other theme pursued by Special Representative Beye, in addition to the need for patience, has been the need for "a climate of mutual confidence," a psychological entente between the two sides. But this is where conflict resolution moves away from the paper maneuvers of Abidjan and Lusaka and becomes altogether more complicated.

Listening to the account of this current phase of the conflict from the two warring parties, it is clear that two very different versions of the war exist and no easy formula will be found to bridge a frightening divide.

"Unita will never return here," is a constant refrain from Luandans. It is certainly difficult to envisage a repeat of the entrance Jonas Savimbi and his supporters made to the city back in 1991. Savimbi's former acolytes, like Norberto de Castro and Abel Chivukuvuku, sit in the National Assembly, distanced from Huambo. Others, like former Unita health chief Carlos Morgado, took their seats and then absconded, arriving in Huambo via Lisbon, bearing tales of house arrest and political manipulation.

Unita supporters in Huambo still insist that their side of

the conflict has never been heard. They still maintain not only that the elections were fraudulent, but, more pertinently, that the government used the election aftermath to systematically eliminate senior Unita cadres, not only in Luanda, but in provincial capitals like Lubango, Benguela, and Malange. The government's actions in this period serve, however implausibly, as the justification for all that happened afterwards. A Unita military commander in Cuito, a city which Unita laid siege to for nine months, vigorously maintained that "we are fighting a war of self-defense, the government pushed us out and we have been trying to let our people back in."

Security considerations dominate Unita's approach to the peace process, with constant warnings that there be no repetition of the killings of October-November 1992 and that large numbers of Blue Helmets are an imperative. Unita will not move out of its positions without them, if it will move at all.

Meanwhile, little is being said in Angola, be it by the president, the chief of staff, or any teenage recruit ordered to register, that suggests the government is making a swift end to the war. The state media has been so uniformly negative about the peace talks in Lusaka that some observers inevitably suspect a smoke-screen—that a very different position may be emerging at the negotiating table. The government consistently maintains that it is Unita which is upping the military tempo, with an offensive being staged or under preparation in practically every province. First-hand reporting of the war is still very limited, however. The fighting appears to go on in fits and starts, with some small towns still changing hands with baffling regularity.

*Opposite page,
children orphaned
by the war*

*Above, a soldier in
Cuito, after the
nine-month siege*

One of the many theories about the progress of the war in circulation a few months ago had a revitalized national army in hot pursuit of Unita, ready to push Savimbi's forces out of Huambo and other localities and back into the bush. It never happened and the war seems to have reached a stalemate with few major strategic gains to be made on either side.

The government still holds the capital, the coast, and a string of isolated provincial capitals, like Saurimo, Menongue, Malange, and Luena, but little else. Unita holds vast swaths of territory, administered nominally from Huambo.

This has enabled the UN to increase its aid operations, flying in food to most parts of the country and easing what had become a massive humanitarian crisis. The hope in some quarters is that the de-escalation of fighting, which has already taken the strain off cities like Menongue and Luena, will turn into a de facto ceasefire and a semblance of normality can return.

Lusaka, if it proves strong on modalities as well as broad declarations of intent, could help provide a framework for an end to hostilities. But the blunt consensus in Lusaka at least is that there are more reasons for the war to continue than for it to end. ○

CHILL FOR

Two years ago, Zambia was widely recognized as a model of a successful transition from autocracy to Western-style democracy. An authoritarian regime had just been ousted without a single shot being fired. The vastly popular Frederick Chiluba administration was effecting far-reaching reforms to consolidate basic freedoms and reinvigorate an economy stagnated by decades of socialism. Oppressive laws of the Kenneth Kaunda era were being dismantled, and an exercise to privatize over 150 state-run enterprises—effectively, 80 percent of the economy—was under way.

Zambia was living proof that a peaceful and effective transition to democracy was possible.

Today, however, Zambia is no longer the proud model of progressive change it once was. If anything, it represents a warning to other Third World countries contemplating a shift to Western-style democracy.

“Zambia’s bubble has burst,” a Western diplomat remarked recently. “It has failed to sustain the momentum necessary for meaningful change.”

To Zambia’s 8.4 million people, the first two years of the Chiluba presidency were characterized by dashed expectations. Chiluba’s government, which rode to power with the promise of transparency and accountability, quickly



Sarah-Jane Poole

proved to be anything but transparent and accountable.

From the onset, cases of high-level corruption and financial abuse, of which there were not a few, went unpunished, as did other excesses of senior government officials.

Only months into the Chiluba presidency, a parliamentary committee uncovered large-scale financial abuses involving several

cabinet ministers. To everyone’s surprise, Robinson Nabulyato, speaker of the National Assembly, inexplicably threw out the committee’s report.

However, subsequent investigations by the Anti-Corruption Commission established that the committee’s report was factual. Present Chiluba responded by sacking one member of his cabinet—Works and Supply Minister Ephraim Chibwe, who allegedly diverted millions of dollars meant for State House furnishings. The other culprits were spared.

Since then, cases of high-level corruption have persisted. The Anti-Corruption Commission, after investigating cabinet minister Michael Sata’s activities, sought to prosecute him for financial abuse. Again, the state blocked the course of justice: The attorney-general intervened, directing the commission to drop the case.

Seven ministers were reported to have abused their positions to benefit from a \$27 million Japanese non-project grant. Despite public pressure on the president to act and evidence provided by opposition leaders, the ministers remained unpunished.

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Drug-trafficking and corruption in the cabinet. It sounds like the discredited Kenneth Kaunda regime, which was replaced by the government of highly regarded President Frederick Chiluba. Only two years after the election of the popular Movement for Multi-party Democracy, Zambians have had their faith in Chiluba staggered. Confronted with testimony by cabinet ministers that others in the administration were engaged in corruption, the president fired the messengers, outraging many Zambians and dashing their hopes in the fledgling democracy.

CHILUBA

Meanwhile, persistent reports linked senior government officials to drug trafficking. Foreign Affairs Minister Vernon Mwaanga, Community Development Minister Nakatindi Wina, and her husband, Deputy Speaker of the Assembly Sikuta Wina, were rumored to be involved in the growing drug trade.

The allegations against them were nothing new. The three were named by a tribunal appointed by former president Kenneth Kaunda as leading drug traffickers in 1985.

Kaunda knew just who the people in Chiluba's Movement for Multi-party Democracy were. Half of them had worked in his cabinet, and been sacked for indiscipline or corruption. He tried to warn Zambians of the mistake they were making in supporting their quest for power. "MMD? Movement for Mandrax Dealer—that's all they are," he said when asked what he thought of the threat the emerging opposition presented to his government.

However, the electorate, fed up with 27 years of Kaunda's rule, was not too particular about who replaced his United National Independence Party (UNIP). They went out in droves to vote the MMD into power.

"The people just wanted change. They didn't really care who took over. Even a dog could have run against Kaunda and won," a Lusaka resident said.

Nor did Chiluba seem particularly concerned about the shady character of some of his colleagues. He chose to ignore their pasts, and appointed them to his team. Their appointment was met with mixed feelings by the public. Most people, who regarded them as heroes of sorts for having jostled Kaunda out of power, were more than ready to forgive and forget.

Others, however, were convinced that the appointment of discredited people to leadership positions would set a

bad political precedent. A prominent businessman, Maxwell Mwamba, sought a court injunction to restrain Mwaanga and Wina from executing their ministerial duties. In almost a predictable fashion, the court threw out the injunction.

Chiluba, a self-styled "born-again" Christian, meanwhile, continued to gloss over the excesses of his ministers. He turned a blind eye to shocking social transgressions of senior government officials. Several ministers were implicated in messy adulterous affairs last year, while several other married second wives in spite of the law. "Judge not," the president said, when challenged to arrest immorality in his cabinet, "and thou shalt not be judged."

Political analysts say Chiluba may have been compromised by his more sophisticated and moneyed backers, who funded and executed his campaign. They say he has also been unable to control them because he lacks the political refinement of the likes of Mwaanga and Wina, whose political history goes back at least 30 years. Most of Chiluba's ministers are successful businessmen, some of them tycoons by world standards. Chiluba, on the other hand, was a credit officer until 1991, when history propelled him to political center stage. He dropped out after two years in high school, to work at a sisal plantation in Tanzania as a clerical officer. He became a trade unionist, rising, as credit officer of Atlas Capco, an international engineering firm, to chairman of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions.

An eloquent and controversial speaker, the pint-sized unionist was detained briefly by the government for his fiery, anti-establishment speeches. He captured the public imagination, and was widely regarded as the antithesis of the aging and increasingly remote Kaunda.

But while the electorate saw a leader in him, political analysts say Chiluba lacks the stuff from which leaders are made. They say he is too weak of character and too limited in exposure to effectively run a country. Such theories inevitably get him hot under the collar.

"Behind this velvet glove," he declared recently, "lies an iron fist." There has been little evidence of the iron fist, however. The electorate which so overwhelmingly voted his ruling MMD into power is increasingly perturbed by his apparent failure to instill discipline in government.

Recently, three cabinet ministers, and over 10 other members of Parliament, resigned from the ruling party, saying they were unwilling to work in a system tolerant of corruption. Most of them subsequently formed a break-away party that promises to become the country's most formidable opposition.

Until recently, there has been little organized pressure on the president to clean up his government, thanks to the absence of either a meaningful opposition or an independent press.

The opposition has under 30 seats in the assembly. Most opposition parties are disorganized and lack the resources necessary for a viable role in national politics.

The independent media comprises two weekly newspapers with a combined circulation of under 50,000 copies nationwide. The *Weekly Post*, a fiercely independent, hard-hitting newspaper, has been the object of vicious attacks by cadres of the ruling party. Last year, unruly mobs stormed the newspaper's offices twice, only dispersing after riot police forcefully ejected them from the premises. A few months ago, its distributing van was waylaid by armed men, who burned copies of the newspaper.

The mainstream media—two daily newspapers, a radio and television station—are still state-run, and inevitably act as an extension of the ruling party's public relations department. The ruling party pledged in its pre-election campaign to privatize the media as a matter of urgency. Now, however, the government says it may not sell off the media organizations, after all.

Recently, however, increased public and donor pressure has forced President Chiluba to address the excesses of his ministers. Last December, the Consultative Group on Zambia threatened to cut aid unless he stopped high-level corruption and drug trafficking in the cabinet.

Finance Minister Ronald Penza promised the donors that government would address their concerns urgently. His action earned him the censure of the president, who has consistently vouched for his ministers' integrity.

However, other senior government officials, including Development Cooperation Minister Dean Mungomba and Health Minister Boniface Kawimbe, confirmed the presence of drug traffickers in the government.

As the pressure mounted, Mwaanga, and then the Winas resigned, to facilitate drug enforcement investigations into their affairs. Before they left, however, they spilled the beans on their cabinet colleagues, revealing

that several had swindled the country out of millions of dollars.

Their disclosures left Chiluba in an awkward position. For two years, he had insisted his cabinet was clean. Now, members of the cabinet were themselves making public statements in which they admitted the Chiluba administration was riddled with corruption.

An unprecedented political crisis followed. Zambians across the country demanded that Chiluba and his cabinet resign. The donor community maintained the pressure, reiterating, every other day, its intention to cut aid if its concerns were not addressed.

In the end, the president just had to act. But when he did, he left most observers unimpressed. He sacked Kawimbe and Mungomba for "washing dirty linen in public," and police inspector-general Darius Kalebo for failing to arrest the escalating crime wave. He also shuffled his ministers, transferring Home Affairs Minister Newstead Zimba to labor.

None of the ministers linked to corruption by the investigating wings of government were sacked, however.

His superfluous actions sparked off a national howl of outrage, with political pressure groups, including the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, opposition parties, and student groups accusing the president of glossing over critical political issues. They are outraged by the fact that the president sacked ministers opposed to crime, and spared those linked to it.

"The two ministers were dropped not for stealing, but for letting the people of Zambia know that the international community is concerned about the drug problem in the leadership," opposition leader Akashambatwa-Mbikusita Lewanika says.

Lewanika was one of several members of the Chiluba cabinet who resigned over a year ago, saying they were unwilling work in a corrupt system.

Increasingly, Zambians are beginning to feel they have been short-changed by the Chiluba establishment. Most are now beginning to regard the Kaunda years with nostalgia.

"Whatever one may say about the Kaunda era, there was more transparency then. President Kaunda never hesitated to sack erring ministers, even for such simple offenses as drunkenness," former foreign affairs minister Benjamin Mibenge says. "President Chiluba, on the other hand, not only tolerates corruption—he is the first to defend corrupt leaders," he adds. Chiluba says his resigning or dissolving the cabinet is out of the question. The crisis facing his government, he says, is of a temporary nature.

Observers now say the president will survive the corruption and drug trafficking crisis. The lack of an alternative, they say, means the ruling party will remain in power, at least to the end of the term in 1996, and probably beyond.

But while Chiluba may remain in power, he will probably never command the trust and support he enjoyed only two years ago. ○



Camerapix

MADAGASCAR

BY ANDREW MELDRUM

The end of the Didier Ratsiraka (photo) regime last year—he had presided over 17 years of Soviet-style rule and subsequent economic decline—exhilarated the citizens of Madagascar. A new constitution was written, a new president and National Assembly elected—and a year later, not much has changed. In fact, Ratsiraka, with his close ties to the security forces, is still ensconced in the former presidential palace. Now, the new government of President Albert Zafy is pinning its hopes on World Bank-regulated economic reform, which will undoubtedly prove unpopular.

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

With mountains, rain forests, beaches, rich and unique wildlife and plant life, Madagascar has enchanted visitors for centuries as a tropical paradise on earth. Yet no paradise, not even an island as remote as Madagascar, can escape the hard realities of the modern world.

In February, Madagascar was buffeted by Cyclone Gerda, the worst in a century, which virtually destroyed the island's biggest commercial port of Toamasina, on the eastern coast. More than 100,000 people were made homeless. Ironically, the torrential rains came as Mada-

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agascar was recovering from a severe drought, which parched the country in 1992-93.

But it is not natural disasters which have caused the most trouble to the island. Political misrule and economic mismanagement have also bedeviled Madagascar. It struggles, as all Third World countries do, to try to make ends meet in an international economy controlled by the First World. Like all Third World countries, Madagascar must sell enough of its basic commodities overseas in order to pay for imports of manufactured items from the industrialized world. Add to that nearly 20 years of mismanagement and it is easy to understand why Madagascar is rated as the world's 10th poorest country.

Although only 250 miles off Africa's eastern coast, sited alongside Mozambique, Madagascar seems much further away from the continent. It has that special world-of-its-own quality that many islands have.

There are many reasons why Madagascar appears to be part African and part something else. First of all, the island's population is of primarily Asian descent. According to archeologists, the island was uninhabited by man until about 2,000 years ago when, apparently, settlers arrived on rafts from the Polynesian islands near Malaysia. The Malagasy language is of Malaysian origin. Africans arrived later and the result is that today the Malagasy people display a fantastic mosaic of skin colors ranging from light brown, to bright gold, to dark black.

The Malagasy people do not like to consider themselves African, and do not follow African affairs closely. Little is known of Mozambique's current peace process, for instance. Instead, the Malagasy identify with fellow Indian Ocean islands: the Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Réunion. In that company, Madagascar, as the world's fourth largest island, rates as a giant, although its per capita income of \$210 makes the country poor even by African standards.

But whether the Malagasy people like it or not, Africa was the source of the democratic wind which blew away the fossilized "ancien régime" of Didier Ratsiraka in 1992 and 1993.

From 1975 until 1992, Madagascar was ruled by Ratsiraka and his Supreme Revolutionary Council. Ratsiraka cut off virtually all ties with the West and moved the island under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. French-controlled banks, insurance companies, and major enterprises were nationalized without compensation and French air bases were closed. Not surprisingly, there was an exodus of French settlers, as well as many skilled personnel. Development in the country ground to a halt and traditional exports of vanilla, cloves, coffee, and meat declined.

Unfortunately, the shift toward the Eastern bloc was one of the few really decisive policies of the Ratsiraka government. The education system, which had boasted good secondary schools and reasonable access to good universities, deteriorated to the extent that by the late 1980s, anyone seeking an education had to go to a private high school and travel overseas to university. The health sys-



Andrew Meldrum

tem similarly suffered. The island's road network fell into such a state of disrepair that four-wheel-drive vehicles are needed on the national highway, not to mention secondary roads. The telecommunications system also declined so badly that there are fewer phones in use today in Madagascar than there were in 1975. A military man himself, Ratsiraka kept on good terms with the army, navy, and police. Government critics charge that Ratsiraka, his family, and top officials enriched themselves with numerous schemes. More charitable analysts say that Madagascar was "under-governed."

In 1989, Ratsiraka was elected to a fourth seven-year term as president, but there was widespread rioting to protest vote-rigging and to show popular dissatisfaction. The fall of the Soviet Union and other Eastern European regimes left Ratsiraka with few allies and he began to re-establish Western links and to fall in line with the World Bank's economic policies. But it was too little change, too late for the Malagasy people. The democratic tide that swept through Africa in 1990 and 1991 stimulated the Malagasy people to bring about the end of Ratsiraka's rule. Prolonged strikes brought the government to a standstill and Ratsiraka eventually agreed to a referendum for a new constitution. Under the new system, he was voted out of office in mid-1993 and the new Third Republic of Madagascar was born with President Albert Zafy at its head.

Yet nearly a year after he was voted out of office, Ratsiraka continues to live in the presidential palace on the edge of the capital city, Antananarivo. Of course, state business is no longer conducted from the gargantuan, North Korean-built string of bunkers that make up Iavoloha Palace, itself a relic of Ratsiraka's rule. But rumor has it in Antananarivo that Ratsiraka takes advantage of President Zafy's frequent visits around the country to send state congratulations and condolences to other heads of state on behalf of the new government.

Prime Minister Francisque Ravony has been delegated to meet with Ratsiraka to discuss when the former president will move from Iavoloha. But so far no firm date has been set, perhaps because Ratsiraka still holds the allegiance of many top army and police officers.

While Ratsiraka's extended reign at the palace is essentially a cosmetic problem for the Zafy government, it

nonetheless highlights the unsettling feeling among many of Madagascar's 12 million people that although they have a new president, a new government, and a completely new constitution, political life is still dispiritingly the same. And as the new government re-enters negotiations with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the country's economic life looks the same, too.

What a change from the start of 1993, when the entire island was exhilarated by the open public debate of drafting a new constitution. People were optimistic that Madagascar, after decades of rot and maladministration, was poised to begin a new era of effective, efficient government that would return the country to prosperity.

"This is a rich island, we should not be such a poor country," said Michel Riafmany, a Malagasy botanist. "A year ago everyone was optimistic that we would begin a fresh period. Everyone was full of hope and plans for the future. Now people are beginning to worry that things are not so new, after all."

Madagascar's new National Assembly ended its first session at the end of December 1993, and, according to popular opinion, it accomplished little except a lengthy debate about its own salaries, the types of limousines members can use, and per diems and benefits for representatives who travel overseas.

The most serious blot against the new government, however, is the mysterious case of a \$2 billion loan. Throughout the start of 1994, the Malagasy media and much of the population were engrossed in discussing the many questions about the troubling loan.

In December 1993, the lively Malagasy press carried numerous stories about a massive \$2 billion loan taken out by either the transitional government or the new Zafy government. An extensive audit, carried out for the World Bank and the IMF, turned up a promissory note for a loan of \$2 billion. It has not been made public what bank or country issued the loan or what the loan was to be used for. What is known is that *the 7 percent interest rate on the loan will nearly double Madagascar's foreign debt repayments. And it is widely believed that those who authorized the loan received a whopping 10 percent commission.*

Frequently mentioned in connection with the loan are top officials of the newly elected government. Rev. Richard Andriamanjatoa, head of the National Assembly, made an unprecedented speech in a public park in Antananarivo in December in which he said the loan was only tentative and might never come to pass.

But such a shadowy loan makes a mockery of the hopes of the Malagasy people for an open, honest government. A

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full public disclosure of the affair has been demanded by the World Bank and the IMF, which both had delegations in Madagascar in December to negotiate a resumption of the country's structural adjustment program.

The most important items on the government's agenda are the reinvigoration of Madagascar's ailing economy and the rebuilding of the country's crumbling road and communications systems. A new round of development projects appeared to be the order of the day when the transitional government rallied the country with the "SOS South" campaign to channel help to the drought-devastated southern tip of the island. The UN's World Food Program (WFP) used both local and international aid to provide emergency relief to the 1 million people in the south. It appeared the government would launch an ambitious development program for the drought-prone south, but as yet WFP has been left on its own to follow up emergency relief with an innovative food-for-work scheme to make the transition toward long-term development.

But instead of designing and implementing regional development plans, the Zafy government is enmeshed in negotiations with the World Bank and the IMF. With the end of Eastern bloc aid, Madagascar's largest donor is the former colonial power, France, which along with other major donors like Germany, the U.S., and the EC, have stated publicly that any further economic aid will be forthcoming only if the Zafy government resumes relations with the Bank and the IMF. Those agreements were suspended at the close of the Ratsiraka regime and now the Zafy government is confronted with necessity of implementing painful measures that will undoubtedly be unpopular.

According to economic experts, the Zafy government is under heavy pressure to devalue its currency by as much as 40 percent. Madagascar is one of the few former French colonies in Africa that withdrew from the French franc zone, in 1973, and set up its own central bank. Unfortunately, that did not prevent the Malagasy franc from sliding to a current low worth of 1,900 to the U.S. dollar.

Other demands by the IMF and the Bank include that the Zafy government reduce its budget deficit and the size and cost of its civil service. This puts the Zafy government in a particularly difficult spot because it was extended strikes by the civil service which toppled Ratsiraka. At the end of 1993, Zafy criticized the World Bank and IMF in public speeches, but observers say he has little choice but to accede to their demands, as Madagascar's reserves of foreign exchange are at a perilous low of just seven days' worth of normal imports.

As a result of domestic political wrangling and international pressure, Madagascar's new government has little room for maneuver. The popular hopes for a "take charge" government which would dramatically change Madagascar's miserable poverty are beginning to fade.

"We don't want to believe that nothing is going to change," said Michel Riafmany. "We brought about a new government for Madagascar in 1993 and we must believe that in 1994 it will be more effective." ○

WILDLIFE

Dr. Richard Leakey (opposite page), head of the Kenyan Wildlife Service, has been credited with rehabilitating the country's national parks, eliminating poaching, and drawing foreign tourists and loans from overseas. Now, he is under fire, accused by a powerful Kenyan politician of favoring white ranchers, and improper management. Leakey has left his future in the hands of President Daniel arap Moi (above), who would assuage his political allies by letting the wildlife director go, but at the cost of tarnishing the image of Kenyan tourism.



Baty Press

The Kenyan government's environment policy has come under intense scrutiny in recent months as the well-known director of the Kenyan Wildlife Service, Dr. Richard Leakey, has offered his resignation and the British government has pulled out of a \$25 million forestry conservation project. The first event was far more significant since Leakey tendered his resignation to President Daniel arap Moi following accusations from senior politicians that he has mismanaged the country's game parks and is a racist.

Leakey was the most senior white Kenyan in the administration, the son of the prominent paleontologists Louis and Mary Leakey, who did pioneering work on the origins of early mankind in Tanzania. He was appointed by Moi to run the Kenyan Wildlife Service (KWS) five years ago, with a brief to save the country's wild animals from poaching and restore security in the parks. This was considered by the head of state to be essential for Kenya's image abroad, and its national coffers—the tourism industry generates about 40 percent of Kenya's foreign exchange earnings, and most

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AND POLITICS

visitors to Kenya come to see the animals in the parks.

In the mid-1980s, Kenya's elephant and rhino population was being decimated by poaching. Highly publicized cases of foreign tourists being attacked by bandits in the parks led to a tarnishing of the country's image. Leakey was appointed with a flexible brief and wide powers to rehabilitate the parks. In the five years he has headed KWS, he is widely believed by Kenyans and foreign creditors to have fulfilled the brief. Poaching has been reduced, security in the parks has been restored, and foreign lenders, including the World Bank, have advanced large loans to rehabilitate the parks.

However, Leakey apparently had several brushes with senior politicians who had other ideas about the way the parks should be run. In a statement issued at the time of his resignation offer, Leakey made it clear that he felt he needed the "political support that is essential" to resist the attacks on him by the senior politicians. In the Kenyan context, this means the support of the president, and Leakey's offer was effectively an ultimatum to Moi to "back me or sack me." Although the wildlife chief was at pains to point out that he did not want to put the president in a difficult position—indeed the Leakey family has over the years been closely associated with the president, and Richard Leakey and Moi are said to have a good rapport—this sort of move is highly unusual in Kenya.

The attacks on the KWS boss began when a group of local councilors from near the famous Masai Mara game park complained that wild animals were wandering out of the park and killing villagers. The councilors said KWS was not compensating the relatives of the vil-

lagers, that they were not benefiting from the tourist revenues generated by the parks. They accused Leakey of being aloof. The wildlife leader responded that it was the responsibility of another government department to pay compensation, that KWS had financed development projects to support the local people—though directly and not through the councils—and that his office door was always open if people wanted to discuss the management of the parks.

Some people have accused Leakey of being irascible and difficult to deal with—and he admits that he can be intolerant. But it quickly became apparent that wider issues were also at stake. William Ole Ntimama, the powerful minister of local government, accused Leakey of mismanagement and of favoring white Kenyan ranchers when it came, for example, to the granting of export licenses for culled game trophies. Ntimama said this sort of discrimination bordered on racism. He protested that the international community had come to think that Leakey was the only person who could protect wildlife, but that this was wrong: "We do not mind having any manager of the KWS, be he black, white, or yellow, provided that he is a good manager."

A more general charge made against the wildlife boss by Ntimama was that he had "been given more rights and privileges than any other parastatal. He was spending money without reference to anybody and the ministry was helpless." This was a reference to the fact that KWS was given the mandate, by Moi, to bypass certain government procedures and operate more or less like a private organization. Many people believe that it was precisely this flexibility and ability to avoid government

bureaucracy that made KWS a success. Many government parastatals in Kenya are tainted by corruption.

By homing in on Leakey's connections with white ranchers, Ntimama was onto a populist issue. Many descendants of white Kenyan settlers still own huge tracts of land in a country with a growing population and where good agricultural plots are at a premium. However, the Leakey resignation offer implied that there were more specific reasons for the attacks on him which he described as a campaign of vilification. He vigorously denied the charge of racism as "nonsense" and said he suspected that the attacks on him, were as a result of his insisting "that wildlife protected areas be protected from greedy people." Specifically, he said that "land grabbing" of KWS land had been stopped. "Land grabbing" is a commonly used phrase in Kenyan parlance and refers to the allocation of public land by politicians for private gain.

Leakey said part of the coastal wildlife park at Wataamu had been allocated to a private developer, a move which, with presidential assistance, he said he had stopped. He further alleged that efforts had been made to allocate part of Tsavo National Park on the road from Nairobi to Mombasa for mining and prospecting. Again, Leakey said no, and apparently made political enemies in the process.

Most Kenyans asked by this reporter about the "Leakey issue"—which was front-page news for several days—said it was obvious that politicians were out to get Leakey in order to make personal gain from wildlife parks at the expense of the national heritage (no such motive has been directly attributed to Ntimama). Although Kenya is broadly free of open racial tensions, some did express sympathy with the critique that white ranchers are privileged. But most had less sympathy for the critics of Leakey than for the man himself.

Moi has a difficult decision to make. If he accepts Leakey's resignation offer, there is bound to be, at least in the short term, a loss of confidence in the management of the wildlife parks. Kenya's powerful Association of Tour Operators has made its position clear, saying Leakey's departure would lead to "a very high risk of enfeebling KWS and greatly eroding global confidence in Kenya's commitment to wildlife and tourism." From an industry which earns 40 percent of Kenya's foreign exchange, this is a powerful argument for keeping Leakey on. It is understood that even while the president was considering the matter—having ordered an investigation into the affairs of KWS—some creditor nations had suspended parts of their cooperation with the wildlife sector.

However, Moi's reasons for accepting the resignation offer may also be strong. First, the politicians involved in the criticisms of Leakey are close allies of the president. But another reason for letting Leakey go may be to show that making "sack me or back me" ultimatums are an unacceptable way to deal with the head of state. Kenyan

political observers commented that Moi has never wanted to be seen to be pressurized into a decision, as this dents his powerful aura.

Hard on the heels of the Leakey dispute, a spotlight was shone on the country's forest reserves. The British government said it was canceling a \$25 million forest conservation project because of concerns about a lack of agreement on the way forest land was being used. Again the question of "land grabbing" came to the fore, with allegations that Kenyan forest reserves were being illegally allocated for commercial or political gain. The British didn't quite go so far as to say this—they tend to have a cozy relationship with the Kenyan government compared to, for example, the Americans, whose embassy makes public criticisms of the administration if they think they are justified—but most Kenyans could read between the lines.

There has been concern for many years that environmentally sensitive public forest land was being used for commercial purposes such as logging. The British-financed project—by grant, rather than loan—aimed to survey the forests and then design ways of allowing people to exploit the riches of the trees in a sustainable manner.

After \$7.5 million had already been spent on the survey, negotiations between the British High Commission and the Kenyan ministry of environment and natural resources broke down over the wording of a joint agreement. According to the British, the Kenyans declined to offer guarantees that they would inform Her Majesty's Government when an area of forest was "de-gazetted"—that is, officially notified in the *Government Gazette* that it was to be put to a use other than forest reserve. According to the Kenyans, this was an unacceptable demand because it infringed on Kenya's sovereignty. The ministry of environment and natural resources also pointedly complained that Kenyans had not benefited very much from the projects so far—a large proportion of the costs of the survey had been for expatriate British salaries, and cars and housing for the foreigners. Sources close to the project management agreed that this was the case, but said this was quite normal for a technical cooperation-style project.

The minister said he was committed to protecting Kenya's forests and that he would welcome offers from other donors to pick the conservation project up, especially, he said, if modifications were made to the financing so that Kenyans benefited from it.

Both the KWS and the conservation project disputes touch on sensitive issues of aid management and national sovereignty. Kenyan politicians want to be seen to resist outside pressure from creditors as a matter of pride. However, many representatives of the creditor nations in Nairobi have little confidence in the current administration's commitment to probity, whether it be in the environmental sector or in other areas where the government has a say. ○



|| GABON ||
BY JAMES BARNES

THE TAINTED WIN

Did President Omar Bongo manufacture a slim majority in the first round of December's vote so he would not have to face a run-off with his chief opponent, Paul Mba Abbesole? Many observers think so, believing that the Bongo regime was not about to let 27 years of power, prestige, and looting the treasury slip away. But the economic underpinning of the regime, oil, is a fragile support, making the political situation increasingly unstable.

Gabon's December 5 presidential election clearly lived up to its advance billing. Incumbent President Omar Bongo survived his first electoral challenge by executing what one observer described as an "electoral coup d'état." Bongo's abrupt declaration that he was the winner in the first round of the contest occurred before all the votes were counted. His "victory" was challenged by his major opponent and self-declared winner, Paul Mba Abbesole and a consortium of

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opposition candidates who, in protest, established a "parallel government" in direct defiance of Bongo's claim of winning 51.07 percent of the vote in the first stage of the French-inspired two-round electoral system. Following Bongo's inauguration on January 22, the opposition dismantled *le parallel*, replacing it with a "high council of the resistance" which has urged Gabonese to peacefully resist the Bongo regime.

According to the "official" results released by the national election commission, Bongo was the winner in the first round with 209,127 votes, or 51.07 percent; the second-place candidate, Abessole, reportedly received 112,548 votes, or 27.48 percent; and the third-place finisher, long-time Bongo opponent Pierre Louis Agondjo Okawe, received 19,565 votes, or 5.63 percent of the total national vote. The commission's count is clearly at odds with returns reported by the opposition. Abessole, the front-running opposition candidate, claimed 65 percent of the national vote in stark contrast to the 27.48 percent result arrived at by the commission.

The historic election—Gabon's first truly competitive presidential contest—was an important step for the Gabonese in a process of liberalization initiated in 1990. The enormity of Bongo's "coup d'état" warrants a serious look at the manner in which events unfolded and the environment in which the "victory" took place.

The agreement to hold Gabon's first competitive presidential election was arrived at in 1990 at the "democracy conference" following Bongo's heralded "welcome home" to exiled opposition leader Abessole, whose return to Libreville, the capital, after years of exile in Paris was understood to be a critical component of Bongo's promise to bring democracy to Gabon.

As the December 5, 1993 date for the first round of the multi-candidate election neared, ominous signs of the regime's uneasiness about the outcome of a truly competitive election appeared. In an amazing display of disregard for the "rules of the game," the Bongo government initiated a campaign to obstruct and discredit opposition candidates.

In October, Communications Minister Patrice Nzienguï banned the opposition press for its "personal attacks" on Bongo; and Bongo's appointment of his daughter, Foreign Minister Pascaline Bongo, as co-chair of the committee responsible for organizing the election confirmed the widely held suspicion that the regime and its allies were not prepared to see 27 years of power and privilege slip away.

While reports of fraudulent government practices continued well into the pre-election period, the announcement that a number of international observer teams would monitor the election suggested that the government could not exercise any electoral sleight-of-hand under the watchful eyes of observers from France, the United States, the African National Congress, the European Parliament, and a special representative of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In fact, that appears to be exactly what hap-

IN GABON'S DEVELOPING DRAMA, THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE UNITED STATES AND FRANCE WILL BE PIVOTAL.

pened, raising a number of important questions about the role of observer teams and the critical issues of legitimacy and conscious or unconscious collusion in fraudulent electoral outcomes.

The government's strategy appears to have been to suppress the vote in areas of opposition strength and to acquire substantial majorities in

regions loyal to Bongo. According to opposition accounts, these majorities were, in many cases, predictably fictional.

In an impressive display of solidarity, the opposition circulated its own analysis of the election results. Calling themselves the "Front for the Forces of Change," their report, signed by representatives of all the opposition groups that presented candidates, chronicled a long list of alleged governmental abuses in the conduct of the election. One widely publicized "irregularity" was the extraordinary practice attributed to electoral officials in the Estuary province (site of Libreville and a third of the nation's voters) of allowing unregistered persons or those without adequate identification to vote, obviously inviting fraud and irregularities. This practice, however, pales in comparison with reports confirmed by observer teams that in many jurisdictions, there were no voting lists at all even though the decision to hold the election in December 1993 was made in March 1990.

In a country of Gabon's size—perhaps a million inhabitants—organizing a national election is not a Herculean task. Gabonese have voted for years in national legislative elections and non-competitive presidential plebiscites established by Bongo's predecessor, Gabon's first president, Léon Mba. If the electoral apparatus was not in place, it was the responsibility of the government of Gabon and not, as some have suggested, the fault of poorly trained local or provincial polling officials. Bongo's refusal to allow the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs to supervise the election and provide training and assistance to "precinct workers" is ample evidence of the government's intent.

Opposition candidates found ample proof of their charges of systematic government efforts to sabotage the election in the now-celebrated case of Pauline Nyingone, the Bongo-appointed governor of Gabon's principal province, Estuary. Governor Nyingone, in a letter that circulated around Libreville's embassies and has now received international attention, appears to substantiate opposition claims that the government manufactured a victory in the first round to obviate the need for a possible Bongo-Abessole contest in the second round. Nyingone "testified" that Bongo's claim of victory was made before the final tabulation of the vote. Her statement included a

dramatic expression of concern for her safety and a plea to the "international community" for protection against possible reprisals by the regime.

In an analysis in the December 18/19 issue of the Paris newspaper *Libération* entitled "The Miraculous Election of Omar Bongo, continuation..." Stephen Smith adds an intriguing dimension to the story. According to Smith, Bongo's declaration of victory violated an agreement forged by the "good offices" of French counter-espionage (DGSE), French Ambassador to Gabon Louis Dominici, Elf Aquitaine (the French national petroleum company), and Bongo to undertake *une transition douce* (a soft transition) with the explicit agreement of Mba Abessole. Smith writes that Bongo panicked and proclaimed himself victor, destroying, according to Smith, "any illusion of democratization in Africa." While Bongo may have panicked, as Smith suggests, it is also apparent that Bongo had no intention of conducting this election on a level playing field.

While none of the official observer groups have as yet published a final definitive report on their observations, preliminary reports indicate tacit agreement with the conclusion of the U.S. State Department announced on December 20, that although many observers noted "organizational flaws," in State's opinion they did not invalidate the election results.

While it is admittedly difficult to assess the validity of democratic elections, focusing simply on the number of irregularities in an election obscures the critical distinction between a forest and its trees, and begs the fundamental question of legitimacy. Should observer teams agree to participate in circumstances where it is reasonably clear that the incumbent regime does not intend to play by the rules and possibly face a loss of its power? There is a profound difference between occasional "flaws" in an election and a systematic effort to alter the electoral outcome.

What is fundamentally at stake is an understanding of African regimes like those in Togo or Gabon where losing represents a death threat to systems of power that survive occasional challenges to their existence by force and intimidation. The fundamental democratic idea that losers can live to fight another day is anathema to regimes for whom power and privilege is their eternal reward. While the presence of observer teams possibly suppresses the most flagrant forms of coercion and, for a time, regime-sponsored reprisals, their presence may paradoxically reassure a regime that fully understands the significance of concepts like stability and order in the minds of those who take on the task of determining "fairness."

Ironically, a substantial segment of the French press has not felt it necessary to pull its journalistic punches. Perhaps responding to the embarrassment of the French government's endorsement of the outcome in Togo, several influential Parisian papers carried stories decrying the Balladur government's support of Bongo's "coup d'état."

At this point in the unfolding of events in Gabon, it is difficult to refute the argument that the French and Gabonese members of the *clan gabonais* have won another victory. Opposition hopes that the Constitutional Court might conceivably rule favorably on their appeal disappeared with the court's decision that the opposition forfeited its standing by establishing a parallel government.

The Constitutional Court's ruling came on the heels of a government decision to forbid an opposition delegation from leaving the country to visit France and the United States. Reports from Libreville state that the delegation was forcibly detained at the Léon Mba airport in an incident in which the government, probably without any sense of irony, invoked a French colonial statute regulating travel.

It is, nevertheless, unlikely that the Bongo regime can continue to ignore the political and economic realities of contemporary Gabon. For many years, the regime sustained its power through its ability to appear generous, even magnanimous, to its critics while maintaining a convergence of strategic interests with all of the governments of the fifth French Republic and the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations as well. It is, however, painfully apparent that the Gabonese treasury is virtually empty and that the devaluation of the CFA franc will only exacerbate current political and economic tensions. Reports that a 1993 IMF-prompted audit carried out by a Canadian firm was suppressed by the government confirms the repeated claims of the opposition and other observers that the Bongo regime has systematically looted the country for decades.

Gabon has survived the crises of the past two decades by relying almost exclusively on its petroleum income. At the moment, however, petroleum prices are at their lowest in years and despite increased imports of Gabonese oil by the United States and Canada in the past decade, the overall performance of the economy has been anemic, and the slim margin of survival provided by petroleum sales is now under extraordinary pressure. The situation in Gabon could easily lead to a major internal explosion; in this developing drama, the role played by the United States and France will be pivotal.

Bongo's initiative in forbidding travel abroad by opposition leaders can be easily imagined as an act by a regime emboldened by a vote of confidence, however qualified, by its friends. Bongo's actions demonstrate that he is willing to risk the criticisms of the press and even occasional reprimands to maintain his power. One must conclude also that the regime has the backing of a solid core of supporters who have derived tangible and intangible benefits from their association with the Léon Mba and Omar Bongo regimes.

At one level of inquiry, what transpires in Gabon is small potatoes in a world immobilized by the terror in Haiti and Bosnia. Yet events in Gabon should remind us that insensitivity to the small injustice allows the bigger ones to overwhelm us. ○

THE BACK PAGE

NEWS COMMENTARY AND OPINION

By VIVIAN LOWERY DERRYCK

The Clinton administration and Congress have turned their attention to rewriting the foreign assistance legislation—and not a moment too soon. Old rationales have crumbled in the post-Cold War international turmoil and new challenges demand immediate donor attention.

The collapse of the Soviet Union changed not only the overarching U.S. foreign policy equation, but altered the foreign assistance paradigm as well. Traditional foreign assistance had been a not-too-subtle policy instrument the U.S. used to counter the Soviets. We offered assistance to the Third World not so much in pursuit of economic and social development for the poorest of the poor, but to counter Soviet expansion from Afghanistan to Zambia.

The shift in the former Soviet Union knocked the conceptual underpinnings out from under U.S. strategic and foreign assistance policy, as a key provider of foreign assistance petitioned to become a chief recipient of aid.

The administration, challenged to rethink its foreign policy writ large, as well as its aid priorities, has enunciated an overall foreign policy based on development of market economies and enlargement of the number of democratic nation-states. Overall, foreign policy is still largely driven by attention to Russia, the Newly Independent States (NIS), Eastern Europe, and the Middle East—an optic that leads to development assistance programs that focus on economic reform and democratization.

Now, the administration is having second thoughts about both the costs and the rapidity of foreign assistance as a quick fix to Russia's problems. Policy-makers are beginning to see that to build foreign assistance policy around an old adversary-turned-ally may be short-sighted in the near term and unfeasible because of financial constraints in the long term.

The need for foreign assistance reform remains, however. The present exercise gives us an opportunity to rethink the meaning of sustainable development and reaffirm our commitment to helping those poor countries in the developing world achieve progress.

If we care about the future of 535 million people, Africa should be at the center of the re-thinking. Africa embodies the major development challenges of the 1990s. Expenditures on education are down, debt-servicing costs are up. Twelve million of the 18 million HIV-positive carriers reside in Africa. Eighty percent of the world's 35 million refugees are displaced on the continent. Attracting only 1.2 percent of global investment, Africa faces technological and geo-strategic isolation.

With Africa at the center, U.S. policy-makers must ask themselves three questions. One: Is the Third World—the two-thirds world in which 80 percent of the world's 5.6 billion people fight to survive—important to the U.S.?

There is a tendency among the "Wise Men" to relegate

the Third World to non-status, urging policy-makers to focus on what Brent Scowcroft and Richard Haass call "first magnitude issues." The U.S. ignores the Third World at its peril. Decisions to intervene or not to intervene in small states will ultimately impact on our geo-strategic interests. Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia are but three examples. In the interdependent world of CNN, global markets, and 24-hour financial centers, Third World concerns eventually will shape first magnitude issues.

Consequently, the U.S. must re-affirm that attention to the Third World is an integral component of U.S. foreign policy. We must find a way to retain support for traditional development as we meld the administration's foreign assistance goals of supporting economic growth and democracy with the sectoral development of traditional official development assistance (ODA) countries, as well as the new multinational challenges of endemic poverty, AIDS, environmental degradation, regional conflicts, refugees, and drugs. In the majority of ODA recipient countries, there is an enduring need to focus on traditional development concerns: education and human resources development; sustainable agriculture; population and family health services; infrastructure strengthening; and stemming environmental degradation.

Two: Given the expanded number of countries competing for U.S. assistance, whom are we going to help? Obviously, we must devise new categories of assistance to accommodate a broader range of countries with diverse needs. Recipient countries now include Russia, the other Newly Independent States, and Eastern Europe; new funds are proposed for Gaza and the West Bank. Victims of civil strife urgently need humanitarian relief, while traditional ODA recipients should not be neglected. This unprecedented expansion of foreign assistance calls for new strategies for service delivery, new measures of effectiveness, and new evaluation benchmarks.

Three: How much are we going to help? Russia will need a \$50 billion investment between now and the end of the century just to stabilize oil production at its current levels. In the next 10 years, Asia will need in excess of \$1 trillion in energy investment to sustain economic growth. How do you compare Angola and Kazakhstan? Botswana and Belarus? What is the time frame for our assistance? How do we determine an exit strategy for foreign assistance in all three categories? Can we afford to wait for countries to graduate?

Where does Africa fit in? First, assistance to Africa should be modeled on that offered to Russia. Planners are returning to their early four-part prescription: immediate food aid; design of coherent implementation plans to transform economies from inefficient, centrally controlled statist economies to demand-driven market ones; civic education to introduce concepts of accountability of democratically elected officials to the electorate; and massive train-

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ing programs to give Russian citizens skills applicable in modern, technology-driven societies.

Why not offer the same general remedies with the same stipulations to African nations? If economic reform is floundering in Russia, but succeeding in Africa, support Africa, too. Russia needs training, so does Africa. Russia needs help in building civil society, so does Africa. Russia needs to be protected in legislation through an authorization, so does Africa.

Second, new economic stimuli should be offered to encourage U.S. investment in Africa. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, 73 percent of all global investment originates in the U.S. Africa will not be reintegrated into the global economy until global markets—the majority of which are in the U.S.—see that they can make money in the continent.

Third, investment in higher education should remain a premium. Such an investment is not only in the interest of African capacity-building, but in the U.S. interest as well. In a time of reduced resources, the U.S. should play to our comparative advantages. The Agency for International Development's (AID) investment in education has yielded positive results. Almost 3,000 masters degree and Ph.D holders have returned to work in their countries, bringing new ideas, new work ethics, new skills. As prime ministers, cabinet officials, university vice chancellors, invariably they have helped to shape transitions to open, participatory governance and strengthened civil society as well.

AID has set forth four priorities: economic development; democratization; population and health; and environment. Economic development requires a literate labor force. Democratization requires a citizenry that can independently evaluate information. The correlation between literacy and lower birth rates, higher labor force participation, and higher yields per hectare are well-documented.

The new legislation should contain language resounding a ringing endorsement of the primacy of education in the development process.

Fourth, the legislation should contain a specific monetary authorization for Africa. Foreign aid reform that does not safeguard Africa is a betrayal of the purpose of development assistance. While other regions have advanced

beyond traditional ODA, Africa lags behind in virtually every human development indicator. Latin Americans are looking for trade partnerships and a plan for a hemispheric free trade zone; Asia is a development model and is seeking joint venture trading partners and major investors; but Africa must continue to concentrate on meeting the basic human needs of its citizens.

Africans recognize that their states, by and large, have failed them. Courageous leaders of a new generation are leading their people into a new political landscape of popular participation and government accountability. In the past four years, the U.S. has made a commitment to African nations that if political systems were to open and citizens allowed to participate, if the economic stringencies of structural adjustment and shifts to market economies were attempted, U.S. assistance would be forthcoming to support and undergird the changes.

Africans have done their part. From Benin to Zambia to Ghana to Mali, they have taken the risks, removed despots, reduced their militaries, and tightened their belts. Now we must do our part. The U.S. cannot guarantee our continued ability to deliver assistance without a fiscal authorization.

The U.S. is a thought leader within the OECD/DAC donor community. The new Foreign Assistance Act will be scrutinized as a blueprint for the next 20 years. The international community quickly will see that Russia, the NIS, Eastern Europe and the Middle East are priorities because they have spending authorizations attached. On the other hand, without an authorization, Africa, despite its cavernous development deficits, will be seen as a second order of priority.

Ultimately, the proposed "Peace, Prosperity, and Freedom Act" is a reflection of the values and priorities of the American people. Through it, we recommit ourselves to working to improve the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the developing world. Africa is central to our commitment and deserves to have monies committed to that goal protected with a legislated funding authorization. After all, such an action will reflect the best tradition of American democracy. ■

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