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French Policy in Africa: Old Wine in a New Bottle?

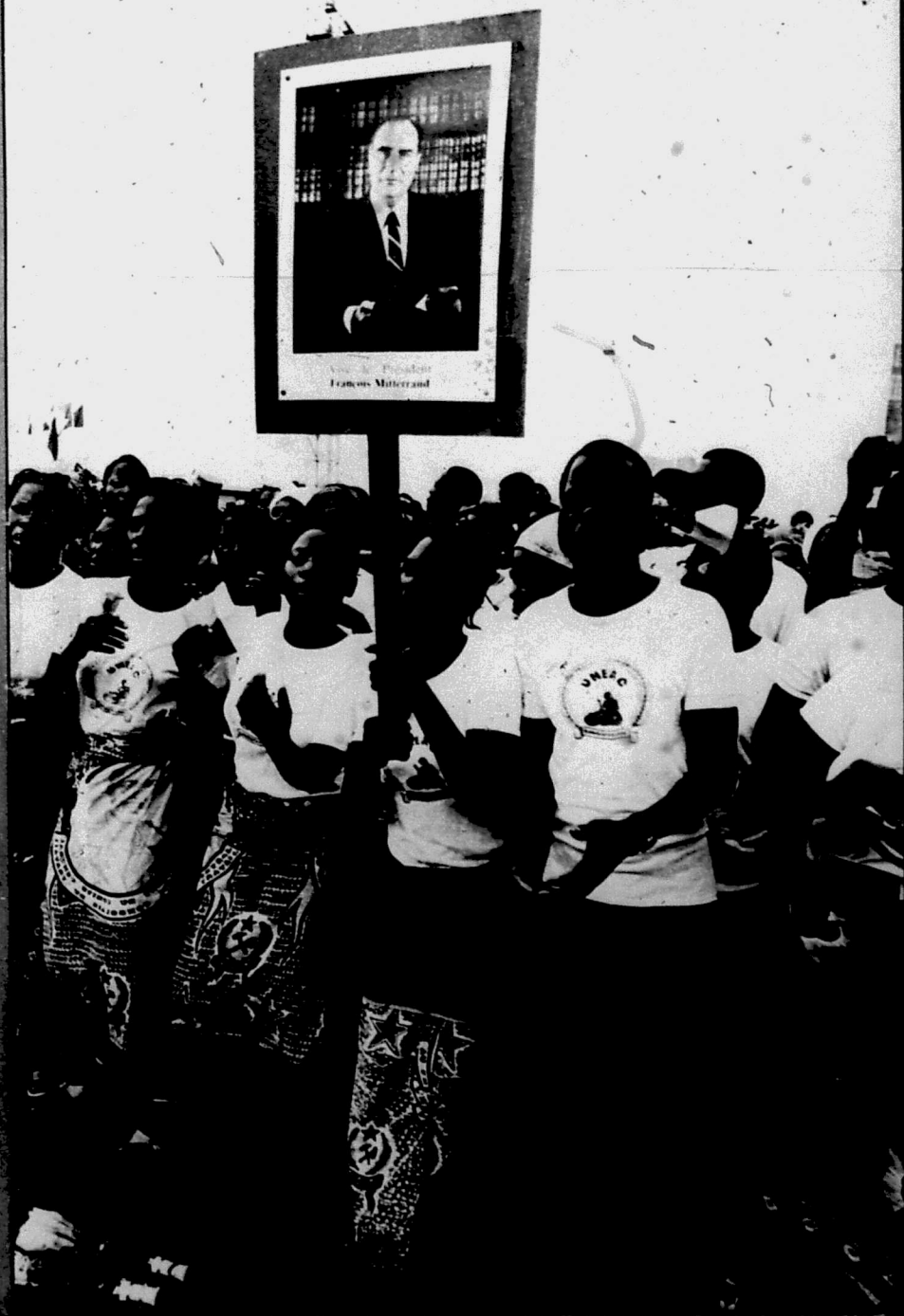
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IN THIS ISSUE

The 1981 election of Socialist President François Mitterrand was heralded in many African countries but was greeted with apprehension by some of France's more conservative African allies. Two years into the Mitterrand presidency, Alex Rondos assesses whether the Socialist government's Africa policies are marked more by change or by continuity with those of its predecessors. Jean-Pierre Cot, France's former minister for cooperation and development, left the government in December 1982 amid speculation that the "pragmatists" had won out over the "idealists" in the formulation of policy toward Africa. In what was the final official exposition of his views regarding Africa, Cot outlines how the axes of French cooperation policy have been redirected under Mitterrand.

The Maghreb and French-speaking Africa are given the highest priority in the allocation of French development aid. Tony Hodges looks at Mitterrand's strategy to balance France's relations with Maghrebi neighbors Algeria and Morocco. We also examine recent developments in three Francophone countries. Victor T. Le Vine discusses the circumstances that led up to Cameroonian President Ahmadou Ahidjo's resignation and succession by Paul Biya late last year. Mauritania and Niger, two Sahelian countries hard hit by drought and the international recession, are analyzed by Howard Schissel and Roger Wall, respectively.

Turning to southern Africa, we provide a candid interview with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, who visited Washington in late March for discussions with President Reagan. Mozambique's efforts to forge a nonaligned foreign policy are examined by Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, and John Edlin outlines the efforts of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference to reduce the region's dependence on South Africa.

Interview

Kenneth Kaunda,
President of Zambia
Interviewed by Margaret A. Novicki 4

France and Africa
Mitterrand's Two-Year Record
By Alex Rondos 8

France and Africa
What Change?
By Jean-Pierre Cot 12

France and Africa
Francois Mitterrand,
Master Strategist in the Maghreb
By Tony Hodges 17

Cameroon
The Politics of Presidential
Succession
By Victor T. Le Vine 22

African Update
Editor: Michael Maren
Editorial Assistant: Jason Zweig 27

SADCC
Key to Southern Africa's
Economic Independence
By John Edlin 43

Mozambique
In Pursuit of Nonalignment
*By Allen Isaacman and
Barbara Isaacman* 47

Mauritania
Saharan Sandstorm Blows On
By Howard Schissel 55

Niger
Politics and Poverty in the Sahel
By Roger Wall 59

Letter to the Editor 66

Photo Credit:

The cover photo was taken by Alain Nogue/Syigma during President François Mitterrand's official visit to the Congo in October 1982.

Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia

INTERVIEWED BY MARGARET A. NOVICKI

AFRICA REPORT: Mr. President, you came to Washington to meet with President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz, and you have also just come from meeting with two other members of the Western Contact Group on Namibia, France and Britain. Could you comment on your discussions with President Reagan on Namibia and whether you think anything of substance has been achieved by your talks in the three capitals?

KAUNDA: It is really very difficult for me to say whether anything has been achieved. The optimism we must have now is simply that man must believe in hope, otherwise he has no right to claim an existence in this world. My task has been to explain the situation as we see it in southern Africa to the leaders in London, Paris, and Washington, and then I leave everything in their capable hands. If my message is

not taken seriously, well and good. At least Zambia will have played its part in exposing the situation as we see it and this we are doing in view of the experience we have had, with the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique and the British settlers in Zimbabwe. We believe we have some credentials which would enable the leadership of the three countries to take seriously what we are saying.

AFRICA REPORT: To what do you attribute the impasse in the negotiations on Namibia?

KAUNDA: There is no doubt at all that the reason why there is no movement in this is the claim by the United States and South Africa that the Cubans must leave Angola before there can be any settlement of the Namibian issue. This is what has delayed the process toward the independence of Namibia.

AFRICA REPORT: Do you think that the Paris conference on Namibia in April, the OAU summit in June, and the possible convening of the United Nations Security Council in June will have any effect on breaking this impasse?

KAUNDA: I hope that we do not have to wait until these conferences have been held. These are important meetings because they are pressure groups, and in any democratic society you need pressure groups to operate and influence the thinking of leaders and others in finding a solution to any given problem. But certainly, in our opinion, these issues are straightforward, and it's a question of changing heart on the part of those who link the presence of Cubans in Angola to the independence of Namibia. This is how I see it.

AFRICA REPORT: The Reagan administration maintains that its policy of constructive engagement applies not only to South Africa, but to the entire southern African region. Do you see any evidence of the effectiveness of this policy in the region? Secondly, it appears that you have also followed a policy of constructive engagement, having met with Prime Minister Botha of South Africa last year. Is there a distinction between your policy of constructive engagement and that of the Reagan administration?

KAUNDA: It is not a correct comparison to make between a man flying a Boeing 707 and a man riding a bicycle.



Photo: Camerapix

President Kenneth Kaunda: "My task has been to explain the situation as we see it in southern Africa to the leaders in London, Paris, and Washington"

President Reagan wields power in the world. Kaunda wields no power except in Zambia. When President Reagan pursues constructive engagement, it has certain implications, it has meaning in terms of world affairs, while my meeting with Pieter Botha in the bush between Botswana and South Africa has meaning only to two countries in a very, very minor way because Botha cannot listen to me. Mine is just a moral power, while President Reagan's is more than just a moral power. His is effective and when he uses it to say to South Africa, "Move this way," South Africa will listen. If President Reagan says, "If you don't do this, I'm going to do this," Pieter Botha will tremble. Kenneth Kaunda cannot threaten Botha. In which way? Because he has nothing behind that approach. It is only a moral power, and moral power very often is begging power, nothing more.

Having said that, let me point out that constructive engagement by the United States is seen by South Africa—I'm not saying it's seen that way by the U.S., but by South Africa—there is no doubt at all that it is seen as an acceptance by the U.S. of South Africa's policies and support for them—of the so-called strategic importance of South Africa to the West. The United States must be very careful about how it approaches South Africa. At the moment, South Africa is engaged in a series of destabilization measures against neighboring states. It's really gone wild and this has been happening mainly after President Reagan's administration declared itself in favor of this constructive engagement. So there is a wide world of difference between President Reagan's constructive engagement and the humble efforts of Kenneth Kaunda.

AFRICA REPORT: What would you recommend as the most effective strategy to promote change inside South Africa? The South African government's current constitutional reforms? Western pressure? Armed struggle?

KAUNDA: What is taking place inside South Africa now is not change. It is something that I call cosmetic, designed to hoodwink the outside world, especially the West, into thinking that South Africa is making some moves toward something constructive. In fact, it isn't. It's important to understand that that move alone will make the black masses even more desperate and therefore it is going to help draw nearer and nearer the explosion I have always feared. The only way in which you can stop that from happening now is for the West to do what it has been saying it cannot do against South Africa, and yet did against Poland. I don't know what is happening in Poland now, but if it is truly a question of human rights and not just a confrontation of East and West, then the moral from there that we draw is that the West must conduct a self-inspection tour as to their moral stand on issues of international importance, such as South Africa.

South Africa is of great international importance, not only to Africa, but to mankind as a whole. The explosion that will take place there, and I believe it won't be in more than three or four years, will be a tragedy for mankind. I know of no case like that in history. I know of no parallel like that, where the haves are of one color and the have nots are of another color, facing each other in one country. Your guess is as good as mine as to what is going to happen. But I

tell you, what we warned the West about in Angola and Mozambique took place because they didn't act in good time, and what we warned the West about in Zimbabwe happened because they didn't act in good time. It is now happening in Namibia, and is going to happen in South Africa. When it does happen, it will have no parallel in history. So the West must act and act decisively. The only way they can do it is to apply economic sanctions against South Africa. If they don't and they continue to invest because the investors must reap fat rewards because of cheap black labor, when it does happen, and I've been saying this for years, that explosion is going to make the French Revolution look like a children's Sunday morning picnic. I'm sorry to say this; and I hope and pray, in the name of the good Lord, that I'll be proved wrong. But I wasn't proved wrong in Angola and Mozambique. I wasn't proved wrong in Zimbabwe. And I am sure that I will not be proved wrong over the issue of South Africa. The West therefore has a duty to act in the interest of mankind.

AFRICA REPORT: How do you reconcile your reliance on South Africa for transport routes, harbors, consumer goods, and food with your very forthright stand against Pretoria's policies and support for southern African liberation movements? Thus far, it seems that Zambia has suffered the least from recent South African destabilization activities, but do you not fear that this will be coming to Zambia as well?

KAUNDA: Let me put right the last part of the question. We have not suffered least, we have suffered a great deal from South Africa's program of destabilization. It is not very often known that as far back as 1969, South Africa trained 100 Zambians to come and overthrow us. We arrested those fellows and they were dealt with according to the law of the land. But we handled only the leaders; the rest we allowed to go scot-free because we knew they were just misguided by the so-called leaders. Second, the Portuguese trained about 100 Zambian dissidents to come and overthrow the Zambian government in 1973 and 1974. When the MPLA won the liberation war in Angola, 75 of those Zambian dissidents were flown to South Africa to be retrained, and they were well trained. Their gospel was to come back and preach Bantustanization. In all their documents (they were writing to chiefs in Zambia), they said they wanted each chieftainship to become a state, a republic, and then there would be a federation of all the chiefs, of 73 tribes, each tribe becoming a republic, exactly along the pattern of the bantustans in South Africa. These fellows came back to Zambia in 1975. It took us close to seven years before we could eliminate them. Their leader was killed by our security forces in November of last year.

Apart from that, the South Africans supported the rebels in Rhodesia. When they were bombing us—the capital, Lusaka—the South Africans were there. In fact, the first plane to bomb Lusaka was South African-piloted. There is evidence to that effect. They did not stop at that. In 1980, they supported a coup attempt against my government. The ringleaders were arrested; seven of them have been convicted and sentenced to death by our independent judiciary. They have appealed to the Supreme Court. This will take

some time, because it is an important case. I am emphasizing that our courts of law are independent. They operate independently of the executive and legislature. They have found these fellows guilty of high treason and have sentenced them to death. The South Africans were involved. The white Zambian who escaped to South Africa is still there, and we know what they are planning.

The next case is that of a rescue operation attempt to come and free these people. South Africans were involved. So you can see from all of this that South Africa has been trying to overthrow my government from 1969. All the other new governments are just coming in now and are facing destabilization that we have been facing all this time. So it is not correct to say that we have been left out by South Africa. We have been a major target. Long before others became independent, we were being attacked by South Af-

We were merely feeding them with copper. So it meant that we had to do a lot of work. We had to go back to South Africa because we could not boycott Rhodesian goods as well as South African goods at the same time. We had no other outlet anywhere else, except through South Africa. So ours has been a very difficult job, but we have gathered enough courage to fight this demon called apartheid. We continue to do so today. But we are forced to rely on South African goods because of the problems we face. Just now, we can't use the Angolan route, the Benguela, because South Africa is destabilizing Angola and destroying the Benguela railway. Just now, we can't use the Mozambican route because South Africa is destabilizing all routes in Mozambique by using dissidents. So now we are again isolated economically and have no choice but to buy from South Africa. But ours has been an economy under siege by racists



Photo: Len Kumalo

"The explosion that will take place in South Africa will be a tragedy for mankind"

ricans. They were not only attacking us as I have described, but were actually attacking Zambia and laying down mines that were killing our people on Zambian soil because of our support for SWAPO [South-West Africa People's Organization]. They did that, they've been doing that, they are doing that now.

You ask if it is a contradiction that we should be buying from South Africa. Soon after independence, we decided to withdraw from trade with South Africa. We were reducing this very quickly, when bang, right on our doorsteps came the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the rebels in Rhodesia. That brought in a new problem. Sanctions were ordered by the United Nations and as a loyal member of the UN, we went ahead full scale to apply sanctions against the rebels in Rhodesia. Don't forget that the two countries, Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia, were literally twins in the federation. Therefore all our trade was tuned to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. The settlers did not trust Northern Rhodesia. They had more confidence in Southern Rhodesia, and so they built all the industries there.

and their supporters. We have fought through courageously because we are fighting for the cause we have supported. The cause is the liberation of man, regardless of his color, regardless of his religion, regardless of sex—liberation that you people here in the United States fought for in your revolution. We are doing the same thing here.

AFRICA REPORT: What is your view of the recent events in Zimbabwe, and what kind of role should Joshua Nkomo play in the country's political future in light of recent developments?

KAUNDA: Mr. Nkomo is a Zimbabwean, so he must play the same role as any other Zimbabwean would play in that promising country. However, you must understand that the people of Zimbabwe fought their way to independence through a war of liberation. This meant training thousands of ZANLA [Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army] forces, thousands of ZIPRA [Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army] forces. Now the majority of them have had to be demobilized, with no hope of finding a job, apart from an allowance given. You can't blame the Mugabe government.

It's a difficult situation. Yet I believe myself that Robert Mugabe as prime minister has done extremely well. He is an intelligent man—courageous, committed, able—and I am sure he will find a solution to this problem; and all I can ask is that the outside world should see this as a problem but give it the right historical perspective before interpreting wrongly what is taking place there.

AFRICA REPORT: Some observers have commented recently that the state of the Zambian economy is worse now than at any time since independence. I understand that your economy is very vulnerable to trends in the world economy because of your dependence on copper and cobalt exports. Also, a drought is afflicting southern Africa now. But some critics maintain that the current problems are a result of your own domestic economic policies. What steps are you taking now to get your economic house in order and to convince donor and lender nations, banks and multilateral institutions that they should continue to assist you?

KAUNDA: To begin with, I don't know what they mean when they speak of bad economic policies of Zambia.

AFRICA REPORT: They say that there has been a lot of mismanagement, some of which stems from corruption within the central committee of the ruling party, that agriculture has not been given enough attention, and so forth.

KAUNDA: Any critic will find something to say about any given country. That doesn't worry us. But the fact is that if there is any country in Africa that fights corruption, Zambia is that country. It is part of our program to fight corruption, because we don't like it. But we know that at the present level of man's development, this is something that can be found in any society, but as long as the powers that be are determined to fight, it's well and good. That's what we are doing at the moment, and we will always do that.

In terms of the economy, there have been many problems. I've talked about the fight against Rhodesian rebels. We joined sanctions against the rebels. We lost according to UN calculations \$2 billion worth of trade, economic development, and everything else, because we had to reroute, our programs were upset, and so on. But nobody talks of this; they kept quiet about it. So, moving away from loss of human life—we lost a lot during that period—we have had oil price increases, which have affected everybody who is non-oil producing. At one stage in 1973, we were paying \$25 million for the quantity of oil we required. After the increases, it rose to \$200 million, and that was a big hole in our economy. And if that were not enough, we have lost a lot of money because copper prices have gone down because of inflation and recession in the Northern Hemisphere—a situation that affects the rest of the world. We don't stop there. Goods and services from the developed North have become very expensive, so that all around we have been losing. Nobody's talking about that.

I agree that there will be some mismanagement. I agree we have got some problems—this is human; but even on the World Bank reckoning, we have made tremendous improvement in this field. We have reached some agreements with the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and the World Bank, but we have also done a lot of things like controlling prices and withdrawing subsidies, and all are helping to re-



Photo: William Campbell

Destroyed bridge outside Lusaka during Rhodesian war: "South Africa supported the rebels in Rhodesia"

build the economy. We are cutting down on costs of production, for example, in copper and other of these enterprises, so really we are doing a lot and this has pleased the IMF and the World Bank. But we are not doing these things to please them. We are doing these to run our economy correctly. We are asking to reschedule debts because Zambia has honored its obligations to the rest of mankind. And because of these problems, we've been failing to do this, so we are asking to reschedule at the Paris Club in London; and with the help of the IMF and the World Bank, we hope to do this.

You have mentioned agriculture quite rightly. In the last six years, there has been either too much rain or too little. Either way the crop has suffered. Yet our people are working very hard to get it on line. The future of Zambia is promising. I'm optimistic about it and it will come right. I have no doubt about that.

AFRICA REPORT: Is there anything you would like to say to the American readers of *Africa Report*?

KAUNDA: To my American audience, I would like to say that yours is a great country. As I've said already, it was born out of revolution, a revolution for the love of man. Your founding fathers made very important declarations, which have influenced the rest of mankind. Can you Americans of today live up to the high standards set by your founding fathers, not only in terms of matters affecting America, but in terms of matters affecting the rest of mankind? In southern Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Latin America, please use the standards of your founding fathers and you can't go wrong. □

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Mitterrand's Two-Year Record

BY ALEX RONDOS

Two years after President François Mitterrand came to power amid proclamations from his Socialist party (PS) that change was needed in France's Africa policy, the debate on the nature of that change — and whether there has in fact been any — continues. *Marchés Tropicaux et Méditerranéens*, the highly respected weekly publication, reassured its readers that Mitterrand's January trip to Togo, Benin, and Gabon, his second official visit to the continent, was "a reminder of the priority attached to Francophone Africa and the reality of France's privileged relations with Africa." That such reassurance needed to be given to readers is significant, tempering the more facile argument that Mitterrand's Africa policy is marked more by continuity with that of his predecessors than by change.

Observers who emphasize continuity of policy point to the maintenance of military relations with former colonies and France's failure to suppress nuclear sales to South Africa. The responsive-

ness of the Mitterrand government to the more moderate or conservative French allies, such as Ivory Coast, Gabon, or Senegal, is also mentioned. Last October's visit to Kinshasa for the Franco-African summit was viewed as appeasement of Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko, of whom the French Socialist party had been particularly critical. The removal of Jean-Pierre Cot as minister for cooperation and development in December 1982 is ascribed to the ascendancy of a more cautious presidency and the declining influence of the Socialist party in policymaking with regard to Africa. Abroad, notably in the United States, the prevailing attitude is that the French preserve in Africa is intact, and that France under Mitterrand will fulfill its strategic responsibilities.

But France's current involvement in Africa is more complex. There are three interrelated layers of pressure on French policy. First, Mitterrand himself does believe in a different approach to Africa, although his view must be distinguished from that propagated by his party. Then there is the weight of past relations with the former colonies. Finally, there is France's broader role as an independent actor in Africa — a role critical to Western strategic interests. Evidence of how Mitterrand has responded to these pressures is found in some of the traditional pillars of French influence in Africa — the military, ec-

onomic, and cultural ties with the continent.

When it came to power, the Socialist party called for an end to the military interventions of the past, arguing that instability in Africa can only be preempted by a more equitable global economic system. A geographical expansion of French assistance away from concentration upon former colonies was called for. The confusion and rivalry caused by the multiplicity of institutions involved in policymaking was to end. In short, much was made of putting an end to "neocolonial" policies of the past, which, in their most unsavory manifestations, included the close identification of the French presidency under Giscard d'Estaing with some of the less palatable African heads of state like former Central African Emperor Bokassa and President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire. President Omar Bongo of Gabon had also been a frequent object of Socialist party criticism. Mitterrand, more cautious in his approach, simply said that he would put an end to personal relationships and emphasize the importance of links between states.

Two years later, what is there to show of the Socialist party's contribution to policy? While remaining a member of the Western five-nation Contact Group seeking independence for Namibia, France has disassociated itself from the U.S. position of linking

Alex Rondos, a writer on African affairs, is on the staff of the Center for Development Policy in Washington, D.C., which is forming a commission on U.S.-African relations.

under growing pressure. It has enabled France to remain the major trading partner with all its former colonies. French investment in these nations also outstrips all competitors.

What is it, then, that moves France to maintain links with Africa that are seen by many to be anachronistic and even neocolonial? Mitterrand, like de Gaulle, perceives an autonomous strategic role for France, with an independent nuclear deterrent. The former African colonies play a key role in giving France its autonomous clout among its Western allies. For the latter group, the assumption that French influence continues in an otherwise unstable part of the world is crucial in their own strategic planning. Under de Gaulle, strategic priorities reigned supreme, irrespective of the cost to France. This principle was diluted under Pompidou and later under Giscard d'Estaing, who moved France's commercial interests and the need to secure mineral supplies to the forefront of policymaking.

The basic underlying belief is that the Francophone countries compose a bloc whose fragmentation would have profound and unfavorable consequences on France's international role. Thus, French aid in 1983 will again be concentrated in Francophone Africa. There is still some debate, given the poor state of the French franc, as to the exact amount that will become available and whether in real terms it will be as high as last year. For the moment, however, the fear expressed by some Francophone leaders that a geographical expansion of French assistance will result in a dilution of the traditional concentration on Francophone Africa has temporarily been allayed.

The Franco-African summit in Kinshasa in October 1982 was a reflection of the confusion that reigns over the image of French policy. It sought to reconcile France's expansion of interest in eastern and southern Africa, while continuing to be an annual *tête-à-tête* among heads of state. But Francophone parochialism includes a certain element of mistrust of non-Francophones, which resulted in the failure to discuss a number of their important concerns. While the occasion provided Mitterrand with the opportunity to call for better economic treatment of Africa and

to reassure old friends, he was also given some heartache by President Mobutu, the official host. With his habitual gusto and unpredictability, Mobutu foisted Chad's newest leader, Hissène Habré, onto Mitterrand for a private meeting — a level of recognition for Habré that the French president wanted to avoid. The upshot of the meeting was the Francophones' private agreement that the next meeting should consist of Francophone countries only.

It can be argued that France remains the most powerful Western country in Africa, influencing a massive, contiguous group of countries by a mixture of sophisticated monetary guarantees, high levels of financial assistance, and, in many instances, military support. Can France afford the system? How many of the African governments want it, particularly those faced with a more restive younger generation who do not have atavistic leanings toward France? The signs are that some profound structural changes are taking place with regard to the French presence in Africa, raising vital questions about the coherence of Western policy in the continent.

The issue for France, as with most Western states, is how to make less money go a longer way in Africa. The problem is particularly acute for France, beset with serious domestic budgetary constraints, twice obliged to devalue the franc since May 1981, and faced with having to help out African allies with growing balance-of-payments crises. The franc zone is now in a global deficit. Whereas France was able in the past to use surpluses deposited in the French treasury by franc zone members to help countries with deficits, now France cannot rely on the self-financing mechanism of the zone. Nor can it afford to pour out more francs of its own. The two devaluations have considerably raised the already substantial debt service payments of zone members with dollar debts. A point raised by critics of the zone is that the discretion required in the exercise of devaluation means that the African countries have no real foreknowledge of the event. Moreover, under the franc zone rules, member-states have little leeway to practice their own monetary policies.

The reaction has been twofold. First,

France has turned to the International Monetary Fund to do "its dirty work," as one IMF official has put it. Togo, Ivory Coast, and Senegal are three cases of franc zone members who are negotiating with the IMF although under normal circumstances France would supplement their deficits. Second, discussions about the future of the franc zone have been resurrected. For France, the issue is how to relinquish some of its financial obligations without losing influence. The countries that could be liberated to float their currencies, such as Senegal, Ivory Coast, or Gabon, are the very ones that are pivotal to French influence. Others argue that allowing Ivory Coast, for example, to float its currency by removing the guarantee of the French franc would undermine the basis of monetary stability, which has been a major factor in Ivory Coast's economic growth.

Though it is difficult to envision any abrupt change in the nature of the franc zone, France is currently hard pressed to prevent the entire system from becoming something of a fiction, increasingly bankrolled by international financial agencies.

What is at stake is the internationalization of previously jealously guarded economic links. The United States has set great store by the project it has led to rehabilitate Sudan's economy by bringing together donor nations. Will the French be prepared to do a similar thing within their own domain and therefore implicitly lose some of their traditional influence?

Also significant is the psychological, political, and ultimately strategic impact of signs of hesitation in French commitment within Francophone Africa. With much of western Africa satisfied with Mitterrand and his policies, problems have arisen in relations with the central African states of Gabon, Central African Republic, Chad, and Zaire. In each instance, the Mitterrand government is confronted with political regimes that had been criticized by the Socialist party and supported by the Giscard d'Estaing government. President Omar Bongo of Gabon, often given to threatening that he will turn to the U.S. if French support for his regime declines, has played his cards carefully. By acting as an in-

termediary in the Chad civil war throughout 1982, he won considerable credit from the French government. Gabonese uranium and manganese are vital to French interests; therefore, Mitterrand is irresistibly drawn to cooperation with Gabon.

Throughout 1982, General André Kolingba of the Central African Republic sought increased assistance from France for recurrent government costs. Help was slow in coming, and when it did arrive he was not entirely satisfied. Jean-Pierre Cot sought to reduce the amount of aid, while Kolingba resorted to working through Mitterrand's son, an adviser at Elysée, to get the ear of the president.

A little-publicized dispute over payments to Chad raises serious questions about France's future commitments in Africa. Since mid-1982, Hissène Habré has been appealing for assistance to pay civil service salaries. France has been reluctant to do so. The U.S. maintains that Chad falls within the French sphere of influence and, therefore, France should assume its responsibilities there. In the late summer of 1982, letters were exchanged between Secretary of State George Shultz and his French counterpart, Claude Cheysson, and the matter has still not been resolved. Part of the problem centers on differing interpretations of the Libyan threat in Chad. The French government remains ambivalent towards Habré, but is nevertheless embarrassed by former President Goukouni Woddeye's evident dependence on Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qaddafi.

The astonishing fact that emerges from the Chadian issue is that France cannot be taken for granted to assume its traditional role of intervention or influence, even in a country that has symbolized French military, political, and economic influence in postcolonial Africa. Indeed, Chad has now come to typify the current contradictions in French Africa policy. France cannot afford the cost of retaining Chad. Yet it fears what effect signs of French ambivalence in its African commitments might have upon other Francophone regimes similarly dependent on its assistance.

In the short term, therefore, no dramatic change can be expected from

French policy. The legacy of past obligations and the significance of Africa to France's independent strategic stand in international politics will see to that. Recent evidence, however, does suggest that some of the underlying assumptions of French policy are changing. Mitterrand is obviously reluctant to commit France to further military interventions in Africa. His distaste for cer-

lute the role of the former colonies. Even the franc zone, as we have seen, is under pressure, and France is forced to bring in other agencies to help out Francophone countries in economic crisis. Moreover, given France's diminished resources, the consensus is that efforts among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) states to coordinate assistance still do



Franco-African summit in Kinshasa: "A reflection of the confusion over the image of French policy"

Photo: Alain Nguessa/Bygma

tain regimes considered close to France is clear. There is a genuine desire, in spite of differences between Socialist party ideals and *raison d'état*, to change the "neocolonial" policies of the past.

More significant, but out of Mitterrand's hands, are the growing financial constraints on France's cherished but costly bilateral links with its former colonies. The commercially motivated push beyond the Francophone horizon (Nigeria is France's main trading partner in black Africa) will inevitably di-

not measure up to the gravity of Africa's economic problems.

The case made here is of an incipient, yet very protracted shift in French Africa policy that will eventually lead to an unraveling of the Francophone knot. For the West, which has shown the most interest in Francophone Africa, the strategic assumption that France will spring to the defense and ensure the survival of every "friendly" or "moderate" Francophone regime can no longer hold true. □

What Change?

BY JEAN-PIERRE COT

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Over one and a half years after the presidential elections in France, what most commentators stress with regard to African policy is continuity. President François Mitterrand seems to have taken on himself the policy of his predecessors who were fascinated with Africa. Some are delighted, while others find it regrettable.

It is true that the weight of history, geographic proximity, and community of language and culture create bonds that no one would think of untying. Solidarity between France and Africa is a fact that inscribes itself within a larger

scheme of things: the building of Euro-African relations. Africa is the place where the voice of France is listened to with the greatest attention and where its message is the best received, transmitted, and amplified.

The truth was solemnly reaffirmed by the French cabinet in June 1981 when, establishing the priorities of French development aid, it designated as France's privileged partners, first, the Maghreb and French-speaking Africa, then Africa as a whole, and finally the Caribbean. This does not mean that France is not present elsewhere, but that it is concentrating its aid where history and geography dictate.

This privileged relationship is brilliantly illustrated by Mitterrand's trips to Africa, which underlined even more clearly the strength of the attachment, both with progressive and moderate countries. The spontaneous warm welcome given is an expression of a deep-rooted reality — a reality reflected in the success of the conferences of French and African heads of state.

But to conclude that there is identity or immobility in French policy would be a mistake. While there can be no question of rejecting the legacy of relations, they need to be renewed and developed within a new framework —

that which emerged as of Mitterrand's May 1981 election. The underlying forces at work continue without disruption, yet with determination. Though changes may be less conspicuous than elsewhere, they are no less real, and are reflected in the renewal of the instruments of our African policy as well as in a change in the axes of cooperation policy in Africa.

African policy fits within the context of a fresh start in France's entire relationship with the Third World, which Mitterrand announced when he took office on May 21, 1981. It was confirmed in his speech at the Cancún conference, and again at the summit of industrialized nations held in Versailles. France is taking a stand in favor of the building of a new international economic order. It has proclaimed itself in favor of entering into global negotiations, and proposes that forward steps be taken without delay in certain essential areas, including energy. The Versailles summit made it possible to outline these ideas, if not to secure victory for them.

Going hand in hand with this, our diplomacy ensured the success of the Paris conference on the least-developed countries. It made sure that our voice was heard in Mexico City, at the UN-

ESCO Conference on culture. It contributed toward the saving of the cocoa agreement in Geneva, and STABEX in Libreville.

Indeed, France pays what it preaches by undertaking to reach a goal of 0.7% of gross national product (GNP) committed to development aid by 1988. This goal is calculated, obviously, without including the development aid that our country grants to its own overseas territories and departments. After starting with 0.38% of GNP in 1980, we should reach 0.52% in 1983, following a regular progression. The pace must be stepped up through aid to the least-developed countries, which is to reach a rate of 0.15% of GNP by 1985. At a time when the efforts of most of the industrial countries are stagnating or declining, we intend to follow this course not only out of duty, but also out of clearly understood self-interest.

Turning specifically to Africa, there are two dominant trends: support for political nonalignment and support for nationally based economic development. France supports nonalignment. Not for itself, of course. Our country is engaged in an alliance and intends to remain faithful to it. But the Washington treaty covers only the North Atlantic region. Elsewhere, we feel that the best way to defend our interests and our ideals alike is to support nonalignment, particularly in Africa. The crystallization of blocs and the superpower rivalry in the Third World do not serve the interests of peace and development. They often backfire against the purported designs of those responsible for them.

In Africa, this means reestablishing ties with the progressive countries. This trend was started with some timidity; today it is vigorously under way. It is our intention to erase the mistakes of the past and to establish trustful relations on an equal footing with all the regions of Africa, and in particular with those governments of French-speaking Africa that were held at a distance only a short while ago. The rapprochements reached with Benin, Congo, and Madagascar and the quality of the political dialogue developed on those occasions are not deceptive. Our relations with Algeria, following Mitterrand's visit, are being renewed in every field. We

are also signing cooperation agreements with Angola and Mozambique.

The success of this diplomacy is made particularly clear by the Franco-African summits held over the last 18 months. The 34 governments that were present in Paris in November 1981, and the 36 in Kinshasa in October 1982, represented Africa in all its political, cultural, and linguistic diversity. The extent of attendance in turn poses a problem, since there is a tendency to move away from the formula of the French-speaking club and toward a classic international conference. The heads of state met the challenge by stressing the informal character of the summit: direct encounter between participants, without constraints, taboos, or agenda. Can the formula be perpetuated in this way? Should we maintain the "club" idea? The opinions are divided. However, if a line must be drawn, it will not be between the "progressives" and the "moderates."

The dialogue that has been reestablished with Africa as a whole pivots around a few major issues: the struggle against apartheid in southern Africa; the joint effort to institute a new international economic order by, as a first step, stabilizing prices of raw materials; strict respect for the independence of each nation; and the rejection of bloc logic. These points do not imply our agreement on everything. Thus, in the Falklands affair, for example, France's position was opposed to that of the majority of its African partners. And in the disputes that concern, first and foremost, the African states, such as the Western Sahara issue, we have taken care not to choose sides, confining ourselves to recalling to mind fundamental principles and facilitating contacts.

There is one government with which our relationship is complicated, owing to the fact that agreement on these above-mentioned principles is unclear. Relations between France and Libya have never been simple. We have sought to defuse tensions by making it known to Tripoli that we mean to be respected — first at the level of our embassy — and that we have no grounds for hostility toward the Libyan government. However, Libya's scheme for Africa worries even our strongest partners and creates in the continent a

discord in which we are involved, inasmuch as we support the principles of territorial integrity, sovereign independence, and nonintervention in any country by a foreign power, even an African one.

Preaching nonalignment is not enough; Africa must also have the means to put it into practice, to insure its independence and its security outside of the pressure of the blocs. I shall come back at a later point to the economic side of the problem, but at this juncture I shall simply mention its importance: economic independence cannot be divorced from political independence.

For the preservation of the political side of nonalignment, the preferred instrument is the Organization of African Unity. The OAU does not enjoy the prestige of these days. Prey to periodic crises, threatened with breaking up over the Saharan question or the Chadian conflict, the OAU has been unable to attain a minimum of cohesion that would enable it to function properly. And yet, without it, the Africans would no longer have available a framework that permits them to settle their issues among themselves and promote the advancement of their common interests.

It is for this reason that France has consistently upheld the OAU's efforts and has constantly deferred to its positions and its actions. It is for this reason that we cautioned the governments that were tempted to abandon the Tripoli summit as to the consequences of such a decision. Of course, it was up to the host country to create a climate favorable for healing the previous year's wounds, which was not altogether the case.

The fact is that despite its imperfections, the OAU is helpful. In connection with the Chadian conflict, at Lagos, the organization defined the terms of national reconciliation. It sent a peacekeeping force into the field, which stood between the combatants and unquestionably reduced the extent of the fighting and the suffering of the civilian population. Finally, when the defeat of the Goukouni government appeared inevitable, it made an appeal for negotiation, which was unfortunately not heeded by the principal interested party.

With regard to the Western Sahara issue, at Nairobi, the OAU spelled out the process of peaceful settlement of the conflict on the basis of self-determination of the Sahrawi people in terms honorable for all parties. Here again, one cannot envisage any solution without attention to these principles.

The paralysis or breakup of the organization leaves the continent open to every kind of foreign meddling. One cannot see how the African states, either individually or regionally, will be able to prevent this from leading to expansion of conflict. Africa's delicate balance will not be able to withstand it. The territorial ambitions of the different members, wisely curbed by the OAU Charter, will be reawakened. The superpowers will necessarily support their protégés. And we know the rest of the story, since there are precedents,

the foremost among them being the Near and Middle East.

Support for individual countries' security cannot make up for the deficiencies of collective security, yet it is a must. France is obligated to give its partners the military means to maintain their nonalignment. The network of military cooperation and defense agreements is aimed at meeting this need. We have reaffirmed the value of these commitments and certain of our partners have had the occasion to gauge the reality of this support.

But the presence of French troops in Africa, critics might say, is incompatible with the principles of sovereignty and independence upon which we pride ourselves. It is true that the existence of foreign bases is a regrettable legacy of the past, a financial burden for France, and an admission of impotence for Af-

rica. It is my wish to put an end to this situation at the earliest possible date. Yet, as long as Africa itself is not in a position to take over, any unilateral withdrawal would result in a destabilization of the region, plunging our very partners into chaos, and then into servitude. What is more, it is at the Africans' request that we are in Africa. It is at their request that we shall withdraw from it, being respectful of both their sovereignty and of our commitments.

Where is the change, then, on this last point? It is in the strict prohibition against any intervention in the domestic affairs of our partners. We refuse to meddle in what does not concern us. This implies a change in behavior, habits, the instructions given to our ambassadors, and the responsibilities of both partners. We no longer intend to exercise powers that should not belong to us in the area of maintaining order. These changes cannot be made overnight, so tightly interwoven are certain security systems. Withdrawing our people precipitously in order to provide assistance of purely a technical nature is liable to have an unsettling effect and would amount to an intervention of another kind. We do not want this. Yet the direction of our policy has been clearly understood and the process of change is under way, albeit quietly.

Furthermore, the line separating domestic security from foreign security is not a clear one. Mitterrand openly explained the difficulty involved at his press conference in Niamey, Niger, in May 1982: "Presence, yes, interference, no. This has political significance, but it is in the field and in actual practice that it has to be observed. . . . France must speak clearly to its partners and tell them: 'Military cooperation does not mean that France is going to take the place of your own political responsibilities, as may have happened in the past.' This security applies to the unity of the country in question, its independence; it is not posed in terms of domestic policy, and I recognize that sometimes this is not easy, for it is government policies that determine what the security of a country may be."

How, in fact, can one reconcile the principle of nonintervention with the diplomacy of human rights? The African nations are jealous of their



Jean-Pierre Cot, France's former minister for cooperation and development

sovereignty in this area as well. And with regard to human rights, France's colonial past in Africa is far from compatible with its republican and revolutionary traditions — our partners do not fail to remind us of that. France's ambition is not to transform itself into a global judge of the rights of man, but to state what is right, as required by its history and the image that Africa has formed of it, in spite of the colonial period. France's political intention is not to act so as to spare the consciences of its leaders and gratify the militants, but to seek maximum efficacy in the respect for human rights that coincides with our idea of humanity, and not to our itinerary of economic, social, and cultural development. Today, in other words, a massacre of children will not be considered a "pseudo-incident" by the minister of cooperation and development.

In keeping with this perspective, what I not long ago called a "graduated defense of human rights" must be applied. A violation of the basic rights of humanity — ones that our predecessors grouped under the term "security" — calls for intervention by France in all places and at all times. There is no compromising on that point. As far as the rights connected with our pluralistic conception of democracy are concerned (freedom of press, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, political pluralism), we must take into account the diversity of situations and constraints, including the argument of sovereignty, for example. We have not forgotten the difficulties met with some time ago by the European Economic Community's commissioner in charge of development problems when he proposed inserting a clause on worker's rights in the Lomé convention. Naturally, we encourage every development, every reinforcement of human rights in Africa — whether it is the model provided by the Senegalese democracy or the adoption of the African Charter of Human Rights.

I referred earlier to this obvious fact: political independence cannot be divorced from economic independence. How is it possible to guarantee the security of populations living under precarious conditions, fearing that the slightest quirk in weather might bring

famine, and compelled to undertake long migrations in search of food? How is it possible to insure political stability when more than half of the budgetary receipts depend on world prices that fluctuate erratically?

The tragic economic impasse at which Africa south of the Sahara finds itself renders it indispensable to make a critical analysis of the "mal-développement" with which the continent is stricken and which necessitates the emergence of a new conception of development.

The facts are known: the bond of dependency created by the colonial past and continuing down to the present is a major cause of the destitution of the Third World. The good intentions of cooperation have too often given way to openly flaunted mercantilism, with the main aim being to cooperate in order to export — hence the frequent progression from intolerable underdevelopment to "mal-développement" whose consequences, in all likelihood, will be just as intolerable. In this same context, we have long exported our turnkey plants, our industrial system to the detriment of rural development, our model of urbanization with its sprawling cities, our education and health systems that are at odds with the recipient country — resulting in the drain of graduates into the cities or abroad.

It is the catastrophic situation of the Third World, in large measure the heritage of that bond of dependency, that has led us to situate the new French approach to cooperation within a framework referred to as "self-centered development" strategy.

To me, self-centered development is not a theology outside of which all aid is to be considered pure imperialism or simple good faith. If we adhere to this principle, it is out of a desire for efficiency and in answer to the will expressed by the Third World itself at the numerous economic conferences of the nonaligned, the Group of '77, UNCTAD, and certain regional organizations, including the OAU (in particular, the Lagos and Monrovia declarations).

Self-centered development (endogenous development centered around internal needs, which sometimes requires a break with the international market), underlines both the im-

portance of the basic economic communities and the strengthening of South-South cooperation in line with major regional groupings. Within this perspective, France's efforts are aimed at tailoring its cooperation for operations corresponding to the priorities expressed by the Third World itself: first, food self-sufficiency; then the satisfaction of other essential needs (health, training, etc.), efforts aimed at energy independence (the cornerstone of all development), and appropriate industrialization.

Along these lines, French cooperation is no longer trying to launch projects that are not related to one of these priorities. In agriculture, our cooperation is no longer aimed at systematically aiding those commodities intended solely for export — first of all, one must produce in order to feed. With this in mind, researchers and planners are striving to promote integrated patterns of production (that is, complementary efforts among agriculture, livestock breeding, irrigation, industry, and energy). Similarly, we accord priority to "developing" industries, those geared toward satisfying domestic needs linked with national traditions.

This implies a new way of implementing our cooperation, to which our partners are now accustomed. We choose our investments starting from the principle that not every investment is necessarily good. We are gradually moving away from cooperation via easy solutions to problems, which may have detrimental long-term consequences.

This desire for discipline in the implementation of French cooperation policy corresponds to several objectives: first, the wish to be responsible to the French taxpayers, who have been skeptical in the past as to the utility of the financial strain placed on them in order to relieve others' misery; and secondly, toward our partners, with whom we have ended the commercial blow-by-blow approach, financed out of public aid. Not that I consider the equilibrium of our trade balance (in which, moreover, the Third World participates to a considerable extent) as secondary, but because the best guarantee of sure markets for France is

precisely the development of the Third World. Here again, French cooperation is endeavoring not to sacrifice the long term for the short term.

Thus, it is easy for me to answer the charge that I am being imperialistic by making French aid dependent upon a certain conception of development. To criticize the government's actions since May 1981 in such a manner is to subscribe to another conception of development that consists of a "laissez faire" attitude — letting the logic of the market have free play. I feel that it is not only France's right, but also France's obligation, not to be the silent, shameful, and ultimately scornful accomplice to projects that we deem harmful. To me, noninterference is not the same as demagoguery.

First and foremost, strengthening Africa's agricultural fabric and playing a large role in adult education and training will be the matrixes of France's action within the framework of cooperation for self-centered development. Yet this action must also take into account the worldwide debate on development that is unfolding and is sadly illustrated by the difficulties with which a number of international organizations are struggling. France, for its part, will appreciably increase its multilateral activities in 1983.

I must not omit from this picture the maintenance of sizable budgetary aid to our partners, regarding which frequent criticisms have been leveled against its continuity with prior policy. I readily acknowledge that it is not pleasant for a minister in charge of aiding development to serve as a fireman rather than a mason. But I must immediately add that the world situation dictates it. When commodities prices drop, international currencies undergo erratic fluctuations, export revenues fall off due to speculation, and the non-petroleum-producing countries take the full brunt of the increased cost of this vital energy source, how can one conceive of development aid without first of all warding off the bankruptcy of our partners? To take only one example, how can the efficiency of a government be improved if the employees cannot be paid?

Here again, taking the state of the world economy into account, we have endeavored to institute a realistic and

effective policy. The financial rescue of all of France's friends who are in difficult straits is beyond our means. That is why, whenever possible, we try to bring our friends to the negotiating table with the major international financial institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF). We provide them with technical aid by sending in experts to prepare the negotiations. At the same time, we approach the international financing agencies concerned, we promote meetings of lenders, and we attempt to turn our bilateral aid into a catalyst for multilateral aid. As an example, Madagascar, whose situation was viewed as desperate by the IMF, managed to correct this state of affairs through the implementation of these procedures.

Nor can cooperation ignore the purely commercial aspect. Even if it is not its essential purpose, France's aid to Africa contributes toward limiting the principal imbalances from which our economy suffers, contrary to an unfortunately widespread wrong idea. Proclaiming that "helping the Third World is helping oneself" is not a mere propaganda slogan. The Third World creates jobs and keeps the factories in France running. Thus, between 1975 and 1980 contracts representing 650,000 jobs were signed by France with developing countries (nearly one-half of them being with non-petroleum-producing countries); similarly these countries represent the only area of the world with which our foreign trade balance remains structurally positive. It goes without saying, therefore, that to allow the distress of Africa — our main partner in the Third World — to worsen is to limit our own prospects for emerging from the economic crisis. If this deterioration is to be prevented, we must ensure a more coherent and more effective mobilization of all the partners involved (ministries, nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, etc.).

It was with this in mind that the reorganization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was decided upon. The purpose was to provide our administration with a specific, coherent instrument that is capable of clearly defining and rapidly implementing French development cooperation policy. The administration

of the ex-Ministry of Cooperation, today an integral part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is now the competent organ for handling development questions pertaining to the Third World as a whole, and not merely the 26 countries that emerged, for the most part, from the former French colonial empire. Yet this desire for openness toward new fields, which is intellectually enriching for the Cooperation and Development Departments and administratively rational and efficient, will by no means bring with it a dispersion of means, which are still limited. This very concern for effectiveness, added to the historical and cultural bonds woven by history, implies maintaining Africa as the top priority in French cooperation policy.

These, therefore, are the main axes of French policy concerning development cooperation in Africa. Managing the apparent contradictions between noninterference, security agreements, and action in favor of human rights, and between respect for the development options of each partner nation and opting in favor of self-centered development, can only give rise to new problems and difficulties — I do not deny it. But in my eyes these are fully warranted by our fundamental choice for true nonalignment in Africa and the Third World.

This choice goes hand in hand with an increase in our public aid for development, despite present economic difficulties. This means that France's overall action in support of the Third World is not limited to a mere quantitative effort, that is, to what would be nothing more than the debt of a guilty conscience.

I repeat, all ineffectual aid must be dropped, especially today, especially during a time of crisis, when the priorities are many, when emergencies are multiplying, and when it becomes more and more painful to draw the line between equally just causes. Doing things for show, "the cult of the noble soul," budgetary hypocrisy — these are not — are no longer — for us. The path is no doubt strewn with obstacles, but it is the only one capable of fostering this new type of North-South relationship that constitutes a major ambition for France today. □

François Mitterrand, Master Strategist in the Maghreb

BY TONY HODGES

Two years into his presidency, François Mitterrand is well on his way to chalking up a major foreign policy success in Northwest Africa, the part of the continent that matters most to France but has often proved particularly taxing to its diplomatic strategists. With much greater creativity than his predecessors, apart perhaps from Charles de Gaulle, Mitterrand has succeeded in forging a pragmatic, mutually beneficial entente with Algeria, France's largest export market in Africa, without losing the friendship of King Hassan of Morocco, Algeria's regional rival.

Improving relations with Algeria has been one of Mitterrand's foremost foreign policy objectives. Algerians' emotions about France are still colored, understandably, by the past. France's 130 years of settler colonialism left a deep imprint, and hundreds of thousands of Algerians lost their lives in the bitter, bloody struggle for inde-

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Algerian President Chadli Benjedid and French President Mitterrand: "A pragmatic, mutually beneficial entente"

pendence between 1954 and 1962. Since independence, moreover, there have been serious clashes of economic interest, highlighted by France's protectionist measures against imports of Algerian wine in 1969 and 1970, Algeria's nationalization of French oil interests in 1971, and the ensuing retaliation by French oil companies, which switched their oil purchases to Saudi Arabia.

In April 1975, Mitterrand's forerunner, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, tried to turn a new page by becoming the first French president to visit independent Algeria. However, hopes of molding a new, less-strained relationship soon disintegrated.

First, Giscard infuriated Algeria's late President Houari Boumediene by supporting Morocco and Mauritania against the Polisario Front, the Algerian-assisted guerrilla movement fighting for the independence of ex-Spanish Western Sahara. In December 1977 and April 1978, French air force Jaguars flew bombing missions from a base in Senegal against Polisario guerrilla forces in northern Mauritania.

Second, the Giscard government decided in 1977 to renegotiate the status of the 850,000 Algerian immigrants in France, who had been granted automatically renewable residence permits under a bilateral agreement signed in 1968. Racist assaults on Algerian immigrants, some of them fatal (like the shooting of a guardian at the Paris offices of the Amicale des Algériens in December 1977), added to the tension.

A third cause of friction was a hefty imbalance in Franco-Algerian trade. While sharply reducing its purchases of Algerian oil, France had remained Algeria's principal foreign supplier. By 1977, Algeria was importing \$1.79 bil-

Photo: Philippe LedruBygma

lion worth of French goods a year while its exports to France totaled only \$794 million.

In December 1977, Boumediene retaliated by sending a memorandum to the directors of Algeria's huge state companies advising them to avoid awarding contracts, wherever possible, to French firms. In consequence, French exports to Algeria fell to \$1.53 billion in 1978.

French industry could not afford such discrimination in as historically important a market as Algeria's; and so, during the last three years of his presidency, Giscard put great store on repairing relations with the Algerian government. At the same time, the impossibility of shoring up Mauritania's war effort against Polisario prompted Giscard to adopt a more neutralist stance on the Western Saharan conflict after the military coup in Nouakchott in July 1978.

In January 1980, Giscard's foreign minister, Jean François-Poncet, set up six joint commissions with the Algerian government to examine outstanding matters of contention; and the following September, he sealed an important agreement on immigration with his Algerian counterpart, Mohammed Benyahia, providing for the automatic renewal of existing immigrants' residence permits. French exports to Algeria revived, reaching \$2.6 billion in 1980, though differences remained over Algerian demands for a substantial increase in contract prices for its natural gas sales to France.

Upon taking office in May 1981, Mitterrand strove to establish a special relationship with Algeria that went far beyond anything attempted in Giscard's day. For their part, the Algerians, who have prided themselves as leaders of the Third World's struggle for a new international economic order, regarded Mitterrand's election as an opportunity both to put Franco-Algerian economic relations on a more equitable basis and to achieve a greater measure of understanding on such political matters as immigration and the tension in Northwest Africa.

During a trip to Algiers in October 1981, Mitterrand's foreign minister, Claude Cheysson, convinced President Chadli Benjedid's government of

France's good intentions by announcing a new deal for immigrants, including an amnesty for "illegals." Then, after meeting Chadli at the Cancún summit in October 1981, Mitterrand himself flew to Algiers on November 30, 1981, for a two-day state visit and struck an astute, informal deal, by which France would pay much higher prices than hitherto for its imports of Algerian gas in return for the awarding of major Algerian contracts to French firms.

The upshot of this understanding was the signing of a huge 20-year contract in February 1982 for the delivery of 9.1 billion cubic meters of liquefied natural gas a year to Gaz de France, at a much higher price than before, indexed against a basket of light crudes. Included in the price was a "development subsidy" paid by the French government rather than Gaz de France.

Even before the gas agreement, there had been a substantial rise in French imports from Algeria, due to increases in the volume and value of oil and gas imports. French imports from Algeria rose by 57 percent in 1980 and by a further 76 percent in 1981, eradicating France's traditionally large surplus on its trade balance with Algeria. In 1982, when Algeria passed from being France's third gas source to its first, supplying 26 percent of the French market, Algeria's total exports to France roughly doubled in value, to an estimated \$3.8 billion, while France's exports to Algeria declined marginally, to less than \$1.83 billion.

Algeria is not the only winner, however. French industry anticipates a dramatic increase in exports to Algeria, which was its ninth-largest export market in the world in 1981 and by far its largest in both Africa and the Arab world, where Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, respectively, rank second. Despite the slide in oil prices, Algeria has been able to sustain its export earnings by increasing exports of gas. External trade remained in surplus in 1982, to the tune of about \$2.13 billion, and the government has been able to proceed with its ambitious \$104 billion development plan for 1980-84 without having to borrow heavily from abroad. Indeed, as René Thomas, the president of the Banque Nationale de Paris, re-

marked during a visit to Algiers in February, "Algeria is one of the very rare countries that have brought about a reduction in their foreign debt during the past three years."

Scores of valuable contracts have been won by French firms under a series of economic agreements signed by the Chadli and Mitterrand governments. During a visit to Algiers by the French planning minister, Michel Rocard, on January 18-19, 1982, the Algerian government agreed in principle — even before the signing of the gas agreement — to award contracts for 14 major projects, with a combined value of \$3.04 billion, to French firms. This was confirmed on June 21, 1982, when Cheysson and Algeria's new foreign minister, Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim, signed a framework agreement for economic cooperation.

Sectoral agreements then followed. First, on June 30, 1982, an agreement on housing was signed. After concentrating on heavy industry for many years, Algeria is embarking on huge construction projects to provide sufficient housing, hospitals, and schools for its population of 20 million, which is growing at the alarmingly high rate of 3.2 percent a year. The government plans to build 100,000 homes a year and has commissioned French construction firms (which have been hit hard by the recession in France) to build 60,000 over the next three years.

The Algerian government is also investing heavily in transport infrastructure, the second sector for which a special intergovernmental agreement was signed on November 6 by the French and Algerian transport ministers, Charles Fiterman and Salah Goudjil. This agreement encompasses projects for the construction or improvement of roads, railways, ports, and airports, with a combined value of \$2.43 billion. Among them are the construction of the first 12-km section of the Algiers Metro (due to open in 1985), the building of a new 350-km railway line across the High Plateaux, the modernization of the railway line from Algiers to the Moroccan border, the modernization and extension of the airport at Constantine, and possibly the sale of 35 Airbus A-310 jetliners to Air Algérie.

A third sectoral agreement, con-

cerning agriculture, forestry, and agroindustry, was signed during a visit to Algiers by the French agriculture minister, Edith Cresson, on January 7-11, 1983. This is another priority sector for the Algerian authorities, because Algerian agriculture has registered no real growth for years, landing the country with a mounting food import bill as the population soars.

Overall, about \$1.5 billion in contracts were won by French firms during 1982, compared with only \$736 million in 1981. However, French companies are only just beginning to reap the first fruits of the new, reinforced relationship with Algeria. Many of the contracts projected under the intergovernmental accords are still under detailed negotiation.

The Algerians have insisted on the inclusion of clauses on training in many of these agreements and contracts, so that there is a real transfer of technology. This theme predominated at a meeting of the Franco-Algerian cultural, scientific, and technical commission, held in Paris on December 20-22. The transport agreement, by way of example, projects the construction of a civil aviation school at Constantine for the training of pilots and air traffic controllers.

While business is booming between France and Algeria in a new aura of camaraderie, Mitterrand has skillfully avoided a deterioration of relations with Morocco. King Hassan had understandably feared the worst when the Parti Socialiste (PS) took power in Paris in partnership with the communists. Besides planning a privileged relationship with Algeria, the PS had supported Polisario since 1976 and had close ties with the main Moroccan opposition party, the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP).

Initially, indeed, the king had some cause for concern. On August 5, 1981, just three months after the socialist-communist government's inauguration, the French foreign ministry received a Polisario official for the first time. Then, on December 1, 1981, Cheysson announced that Polisario had been authorized to open an office in Paris, on the same basis as the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the Palestine Liberation

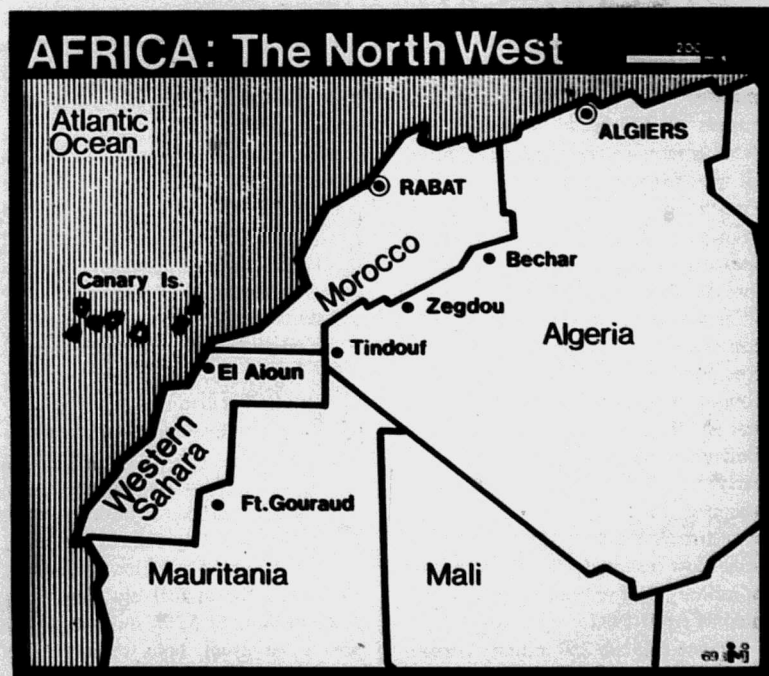
Organization (PLO). Meanwhile, the PS had been forthright in condemning the massacres in Casablanca on June 20, 1981, when the army shot dead about 600 slum dwellers to suppress riots against rises in food prices. The PS took particular exception to the ensuing wave of repression against the USFP and its allied trade unions, many of whose leaders — including USFP First Secretary Abderrahim Bouabid — were thrown into jail. "The freeing of the USFP's leaders is a precondition for today's France to be able to have normal relations with Morocco," declared the president of the socialist group in the National Assembly on September 11, 1981. Polisario's new Paris office was finally opened on March 29, 1982, in a ceremony attended by a minister of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), Mohammed Ould Sidati.

However, both Hassan and Mitterrand took care to keep Franco-Moroccan relations on an even keel. The king flew to Paris on January 26, 1982, for a two-week stay, during which he held several meetings with the French president. The following March, he ordered the release of Bouabid and two other USFP politburo members, to Mitter-

rand's evident satisfaction, though some 200 other, lesser-known USFP and trade union leaders stayed in prison and the socialist press (including the daily *Al-Moharir*) remained banned.

Whatever the PS's inclinations as a party, the Mitterrand government appreciated that it could not afford to alienate King Hassan. Though the Moroccan economy is much smaller than Algeria's and is in far poorer health, Morocco remains France's third main export market in Africa, buying \$1.2 billion worth of French goods in 1981, compared to \$2.36 billion in Algeria's case and \$1.69 billion in Nigeria's. France is still Morocco's principal economic partner, buying 21.8 percent of Morocco's exports (including 34.7 percent of its agricultural exports and about 2 million tons of Moroccan phosphate) and providing 24.7 percent of its imports in 1981. French business retains large investments in Morocco, and 42,000 French citizens — the largest French expatriate community in the world — live there.

Furthermore, Mitterrand and Cheysson have strategic reasons to keep on good terms with Hassan. Morocco's geographical location, overlooking the



Straits of Gibraltar, matters to them and the French navy as much as it does to President Reagan and the U.S. Sixth Fleet. Likewise, they cannot ignore Hassan's pivotal role in Arab diplomacy as president of the Al-Qods (Jerusalem) Committee and, since last September's Arab summit in Fez, as head of the Arab League's Committee of Seven on the Middle East. Additionally, the growing U.S. presence in Morocco since the Reagan administration's inauguration has encouraged the French government to take special care to safeguard its influence and interests there.

In fact, French influence is sustained by a whole nexus of historical ties. Apart from the economic links noted above, there is the enormous weight of French culture. Due in part to the expansion of education since independence and the presence of some 500,000 Moroccan immigrants in France (few of whom are permanent), far more Moroccans speak French now than at the end of the French protectorate. Jacques Morizet, the French ambassador in Rabat, has estimated that 5 million Moroccans (a quarter of the total population) speak French, compared with a mere 200,000 when Morocco achieved independence in 1956.

Among the 42,000 Frenchmen living in Morocco are over 4,000 French teachers, working in secondary schools, technical colleges, and universities; and in France the 25,000-strong contingent of Moroccan university students comprises no less than a fifth of all the foreign students enrolled in French universities. Last but not least, France is Morocco's single-largest source of foreign tourists, accounting for 350,000 visitors in 1981.

To reassure King Hassan of France's constancy, the Mitterrand government continued arms sales to Morocco after coming into power, despite the Saharan war and the PS's Polisario sympathies. Deliveries were only briefly interrupted early in 1982 when the financially strapped Moroccan government fell into arrears on its military debt: the arms flow resumed when \$304 million of military debt to France was rescheduled in April 1982.

France still has 250 military personnel — far more than the United States

— in Morocco, providing training and other technical assistance to the Moroccan armed forces; and, on November 25-26, 1982, two French warships, the aircraft carrier *Clemenceau* and the helicopter-carrying frigate *Dusquesne*, held joint maneuvers with the Moroccan navy after calling at Casablanca. The French government has naturally refrained from recognizing the SADR, despite pressure to do so from some PS deputies, and it has pragmatically abstained in the UN General Assembly on all resolutions concerning Western Sahara. "We are very surprised to see a socialist government continuing a policy against which it campaigned," the head of Polisario's foreign relations committee, Mohammed Salem Ould Salek, complained at an Algiers press conference on February 27.

Nonetheless, while maintaining France's traditional military relationship with Morocco, Mitterrand is hoping for a speedy negotiated settlement of the Saharan conflict, which, besides compounding the economic crisis that is undermining Morocco's stability, has tended to complicate France's relations with the two largest countries of the Maghreb by fueling their rivalry. Mitterrand was doubtless gratified by Hassan's summit meeting with Chadli near the Algerian-Moroccan border on February 26, which, as the first such encounter at heads-of-state level since the start of the war in 1975, seemed to offer the first real ray of light in over seven years.

Meanwhile, Mitterrand has underpinned his Moroccan policy with a strong dose of French financial aid. In April 1982, during a visit to Morocco, the French finance minister, Jacques Delors, signed three aid agreements — one providing \$198 million of financial aid in treasury loans and credit guarantees during 1982, a second pledging \$913 million of medium- and long-term credit for the development of the phosphate industry over the following five years, and a third (noted above) rescheduling Morocco's military debt. The financial aid agreement for 1983, which was signed by Delors on January 14, raised the annual aid flow from \$192 million to \$266 million. Comprising, as usual, both treasury loans and credit guarantees tied to contracts

awarded to French firms, the deal was primarily intended to lubricate French commerce with Morocco. It complemented the efforts of a Franco-Moroccan working group that met in Rabat on January 18 to discuss French firms' involvement in the implementation of projects scheduled under Morocco's current five-year plan, for 1981-85.

However, the increase in financial aid also set an appropriate tone for Mitterrand's first state visit to Morocco a fortnight later, on January 27-29. During his stay, the French president visited the site of a dam at Ait Chouarrit, which is to be built by a French company; promised to speak up for Moroccan agricultural export interests during the negotiations on the entry of Spain and Portugal to the European Economic Community; and responded favorably to Hassan's requests for French assistance in building nuclear power stations, using uranium extracted from Moroccan phosphate rock, on the proviso that this be proven to be a viable strategy for reducing Morocco's energy dependence and that Morocco accept International Atomic Energy Association controls.

The king also urged Mitterrand to take measures to reduce France's large trade surplus with Morocco, which has been growing steadily from \$34 million in 1970 to almost \$580 million in 1981 and \$322 million in the first half of 1982, though it is offset by the remittances sent home by Moroccan immigrants in France, worth over \$664 million in 1982. Morocco wants France to increase its purchases of Moroccan phosphate, which totaled 2 million tons in 1981 and an estimated 3-3.5 million tons last year, to at least 5 million tons by reducing phosphate imports from the United States.

Another problem has clouded France's relations with all three of its ex-colonies in Northwest Africa over the past year. With the aim of curbing illegal immigration, the French government issued a decree in May 1982 requiring visitors from many Third World countries to produce proof of their accommodation arrangements in France. As a consequence, French border police refused entry to 17,292 Algerians (more than twice the number normally turned back in Giscard's day)

during the first 11 months of 1982, as well as 4,903 Tunisians and 4,375 Moroccans. Hundreds of thousands of Maghrebi tourists travel to France every year to visit friends and relatives, and so there was an immediate and angry reaction, especially in Algeria, as disappointed travelers returned home with stories of humiliating and often arbitrary treatment at French ports and airports.

The Algerian government promptly accused France of violating a 1968 agreement providing for unrestricted travel between the two countries. On December 15, the Algerian ambassador to France, Djamel Hamoud, described the treatment of Algerian visitors as racist and said that the issue could threaten broader bilateral relations. The implication was that a political issue of such sensitivity could harm France's new commercial offensive across the Mediterranean.

Chadli himself expressed Algeria's

concern when he flew into Paris on December 17 for a lunch meeting with Mitterrand on his way home to Algiers from a visit to Brussels. This was Chadli's fourth summit meeting with Mitterrand in little more than a year, but it was the first time since Algeria's independence 20 years earlier that an Algerian president had made an official visit to France.

Mitterrand, it would seem, reassured Chadli about the border controls during their tête-à-tête. "Bilateral relations are excellent," declared Chadli, on leaving the Elysée Palace. "Some people talk of clouds in the sky. There may be a few mists, but they will be dissipated by the political will that already exists." Indeed, Chadli accepted an invitation to make a full state visit to France in the autumn of 1983.

A French delegation, headed by the *directeurs de cabinet* of the ministries of foreign relations and the interior, visited Algiers, Tunis, and Rabat at the

end of December to discuss ways of streamlining entry procedures for tourists from the Maghreb, and a firm pledge was given not to introduce visa requirements.

Mitterrand had a compelling incentive to resolve a dispute of this kind, which could easily have soured the spirit of cordiality he has carefully nurtured in his dealings with all the governments of the Maghreb. In particular, Algeria and France have so much to gain from their new, better-balanced and greatly expanded economic relationship that both Mitterrand and Chadli attach great importance to consolidating and developing their entente. Aided, perhaps, by a developing mood of detente in Moroccan-Algerian relations, the Mitterrand government will push ahead with its subtle two-tracked regional strategy, coupling an ambitious, prioritized Algeria policy with complementary initiatives to promote the French stake in Morocco. □

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The Politics of Presidential Succession

BY VICTOR T. LE VINE

Though the question of the successor to President Ahidjo had long been a favorite topic of political conversation within and outside Cameroon, the manner and timing of his departure from office apparently took everyone, or virtually everyone, by complete surprise. The back stairs of Cameroon's presidential palace are as leaky as any in Africa, but during the year preceding his retirement announcement on the evening of November 4, 1982, no rumor, no whisper, no hint of his intentions had reached even those ears considered most attuned to developments at the highest official levels. There was, admittedly, speculation about the



Former President Ahmadou Ahidjo: "A careful, deliberate man" who "must have been planning his departure for some time"

Photo: Camerapix

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president's health. He had made at least two "private" (read "medical") visits to Europe during 1982, and there was a good deal of concern over the fact that he smoked too much and took too little exercise. There was also the occasional private word from one of Ahidjo's intimates, or the off-the-record report from someone who had just spoken with the president, that Ahidjo looked weary or had even confided as much to his visitor. Moreover, from time to time in the past, Ahidjo had leaked reports that he was contemplating retiring or

was about to do so, all of which would send ripples of uneasy speculation throughout the country. There were no such reports in 1981 or 1982, but that fact did not make the subject any less interesting as a topic of discussion. Nonetheless, the consensus in Cameroon and among the "experts" was that Ahidjo was still relatively young and had no intention of relinquishing power, particularly since he had not yet designated a dauphin (a good many names were mentioned at one point or another, including Paul Biya's, but he seldom appeared among the top candidates).

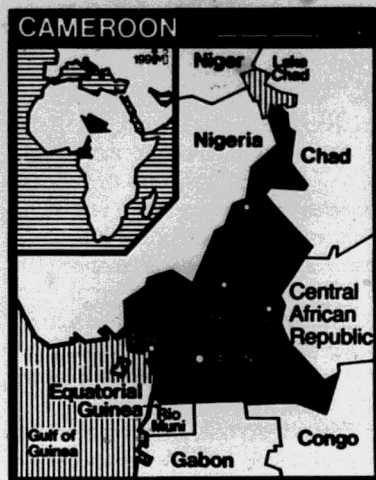
Yet Ahidjo, if he is anything, is a careful, deliberate man and must have been planning his departure for some time. That this was the case was confirmed by Ahidjo during an interview reported in the Cameroon press on January 30, 1983: "In 1975, I had already decided to leave power." Certainly there is no evidence of a major health or personal crisis or of some overwhelming national exigency that could have forced his hand. Again, given his personality, in the latter circumstances — *force majeure* excluded — he almost certainly would not have resigned without a fight. If so, then it makes sense to examine the last two or three years for events and actions that could

retrospectively suggest a pattern whose logic indicates a deliberately planned, rather than a precipitate, resignation. It is worthwhile drawing cautious inferences from the circumstantial evidence in this case if only because the manner of Ahidjo's leaving is not inconsequential to Cameroon's political future.

The pattern is easily visible and confirms the image of a man putting his house in order before leaving it. There are at least six events in the pattern, and the suggestion that they do form a pattern is strengthened by the uncontested fact that Ahidjo had the time, the means, and the power to make each happen — and happen in sequence.

The first event, previewed in 1975 and effected in 1979, clarified the formal constitutional aspects of the succession itself while at the same time finessing some real and potentially troublesome political problems. The constitution was amended to permit the prime minister to succeed to the presidency with full powers in the event of the incumbent's death or incapacity. The change came as no surprise; Ahidjo had already announced his intentions on the subject at the February 1975 congress of the Cameroon National Union (CNU) in Douala.

Under the terms of the amendment, the new president is required immediately to choose a new prime minister and cabinet, and serves until the expiration of his predecessor's term. Next in line if the prime minister cannot serve as president is the president of the National Assembly, followed by a minister "in the order of precedence," with the proviso that if either of these two becomes president, he serves only on an interim basis until the next presidential elections are held — "not more than 50 days after the [initial] vacancy." Under the previous dispensations, the first successor was to be the president of the National Assembly, who could only serve in an interim capacity until new elections were held 50 days later. The amended version of the succession law thus enabled Paul Biya, who had been appointed prime minister first in 1975 and had been reappointed in 1980, and who owes his political life almost entirely to Ahidjo, not only to assume the full powers of the presidency but, equally important,



to serve until April 1985, when Ahidjo's own mandate would have expired.

Ahidjo's gift to Biya in 1982 was two and a half years in office as his own man, during which time — with Ahidjo watching from the sidelines as national president of the single party, the CNU — he could either sink or swim in the position. In December 1982, Biya was also made a vice-president of the CNU and given "general powers" to run the party.

The amendment had another practical, and undoubtedly intended, consequence. By removing the prospect of early elections after the vacancy, it both put a damper on a possibly dangerous scramble for power and removed an incentive for preemptive action by those who might have been impatient to secure the prize by other means. Further, the 1979 amendment effectively postponed indefinitely the possibility that an Anglophone — in this case Solomon Tandeng Muna, the former federal vice-president and still the assembly president — would become national president, even on an interim basis. Muna is generally liked and respected in Cameroon and is needed in high office as tender of the Anglophone Cameroonians' equal role in the unitary state, but it was unlikely in 1979 and even more so in 1982 that a Muna presidency would have enjoyed the full support of the country's Francophone majority. The possibility of a Muna

presidency is still distant since Biya at once appointed as his prime minister Bello Bouba Maigari, a 35-year-old Francophone from the North. The North-South balance between the president and prime minister, which Ahidjo had created by appointing Biya, a southerner, to the prime ministry, has been preserved by Biya, only in reverse. In sum, it is now clear that the 1979 succession amendment did anoint a successor to Ahidjo, ensuring first and foremost that he be named by Ahidjo himself, as indeed Biya was. Under the circumstances, no other form of dauphinage was necessary, speculations to the contrary notwithstanding.

The second event, in November 1981, was the promulgation of Cameroon's fifth five-year plan, notable in two respects. It was the product of an unusually frank (for Africa) and lengthy exercise in socioeconomic self-criticism, and it set Cameroon firmly on a path in which rural and agricultural priorities were given primacy over all other development concerns. The choice unquestionably reflected Ahidjo's own strong feelings about permitting the country's growing petrochemical sector to overshadow the longer-term potential of the economy. The point is that the new plan put the pragmatic Ahidjo stamp on the next five years of Cameroon's economic future, making it much less likely that his successors would try to deflect the economy from the course he had chosen for it.

The third event, a cabinet reshuffle, took place on January 8, 1982. Following a pattern he had set some time ago, one that gave him maximum leverage over the people and events involved, Ahidjo moved without giving prior warning to most of the principals concerned. (The noon and evening broadcasts over Radio Cameroon have long been obligatory listening for Cameroonian officials; almost all major personnel changes up to and including ministers of state are first announced via this medium.) This time, instead of simply shifting ministerial positions — the object of the preceding shuffle in 1980 — the changes affected the presidency itself. In all, eight ministerial and vice-ministerial positions changed hands, of which the most significant

was the transfer of Sadou Daoudou from minister of public service to deputy secretary-general of the presidency. Sadou is Ahidjo's oldest and most faithful friend and political ally in the government. He was born and educated in Garoua like Ahidjo, was Ahidjo's first chief of staff when the former became prime minister in 1958, and served as his minister of armed forces from 1961 to 1980. Moving Sadou into the presidency did not make him dauphin to Ahidjo; it did serve to dilute the very considerable powers accumulated by the secretary-general, Samuel Eboua, who was said to have presidential ambitions of his own. Eboua had become, in the Cameroonian context, a figure that combined the powers of presidential gatekeeper, hatchet man, and chief of a burgeoning presidential staff, a combination that made him the second-most-powerful man in the country. It is not going too far afield to suggest that by moving Sadou into the Office of the Presidency Ahidjo put his own eyes and ears into the heart of the administration, a presence whose implied threat undoubtedly helped the transition by providing a monitor over any who might have had independent ideas about the succession. When Biya took over, Sadou was appointed secretary-general and Eboua was moved to the Ministry of Agriculture.

The January shuffle also confirmed Maikano Abdoulaye, another Ahidjo *fidèle*, in the Ministry of Armed Forces (he was elevated from minister to minister of state) and moved Bello Bouba Maigari, one of the bright, younger technocrats, into the critical Ministry of the Economy and Plan. Further confirmation of Bello Bouba's rising status came when Biya appointed him prime minister. Finally, the reshuffle had the additional effect of being a tactical maneuver to keep the November 1982 reshuffle to the barest minimum.

Events four, five, and six came close together in 1982. There was a set of official presidential visits abroad — first to France, then to Canada, and later to Britain and the United States — which taken together had all the earmarks of a farewell tour. (It was on this tour that Ahidjo's health problems were remarked upon by the press; he apparently needed occasional help from his aides to get into and out of planes and automobiles.) Then there were the May celebrations marking 10 years of the unitary state, during which Ahidjo's speeches dwelled at length on past accomplishments and the country's excellent prospects.

Finally, there was the inauguration of the new presidency buildings on one of the hills overlooking Yaoundé. Conceived and built by the Parisian firm of

Olivier Clement Cacoub — whose architectural credits include Houphouët-Boigny's new presidential mansions in Yamoussoukro and a number of similarly lavish palaces for Persian Gulf potentates — the presidency is a complex of imposing buildings surrounded by a 15-foot wall (with guard posts every 160 feet), dominated by a 15-story glass and marble structure resembling, in the words of a local dignitary, "a combination American corporate headquarters and modern art museum." The building has an enormous reception-ballroom and a vast marble-paved veranda and is garnished with huge outdoor chandeliers and a series of handsome fountains modeled in the style of Paris's Palais du Trocadero. (I was among the 7,000 guests invited to attend an inaugural cocktail-dinner at the new presidency. Among the first persons I encountered at the affair was a bemused English-speaking diplomat who proceeded to quote Coleridge: "In Xanadu did Kublai Khan a stately pleasure dome decree . . .") There are no official figures on the cost of the project, but insiders offer a range of estimates from \$300 million to \$800 million. Ahidjo was not, apparently, unaware of the widespread grumbling and criticism of both the magnificence and possible cost of the new presidency. During an official interview, he assured the country that the new structures were a "legacy" to the country, not an extravagance on his behalf. At the time, few people believed him, but given both his subsequent retirement and the fact that as of his resignation he had not moved into the new buildings, his disclaimer takes on added weight.

If these events constitute, as is here suggested, a pattern depicting a carefully prepared and premeditated retirement, then the further questions about the manner of Ahidjo's departure and its implications for Cameroon's political future take on additional importance.

By African standards, the Cameroonian succession is a rare event. On only five other occasions since 1960 has the top leader of an African country been succeeded in office according to constitutional plan (see Table 1). The latest previous such event was the res-



Photo: C. Redemius/United Nations

Market at Eboua: The needs of the rural population must be met

ignation of Senegal's president, Leopold Sedar Senghor, on December 30, 1980, in favor of his then prime minister, Abdou Diouf. It is certainly possible, even probable, that the success of the Senghor-Diouf transition may have helped persuade Ahidjo to make up his mind about how and when to leave.

For Cameroon, the peaceful constitutional transfer of the presidency from Ahidjo to Biya has wide-ranging and serious implications, not the least of which is that it served to silence, and silence abruptly, a quiet but growing chorus of potentially corrosive criticism of Ahidjo's actions, the conduct of his presidency, and, according to his critics, the increasingly dictatorial manner of his rule. The attentive visitor to Cameroon could not be there long before becoming privy to passionate confidences about "the need to find new leadership for the nation" before, the source adds ominously, "it is too late." It is not impossible that Ahidjo, aware of the dangers inherent in an indefinite perpetuation of his rule, prudently decided to retire with his laurels intact.

Philippe Decraene, *Le Monde's* senior observer of African politics, recently characterized Ahidjo's conduct of the presidency as follows:

If the comparison can be made, it is undoubtedly in terms of an "African Louis XI" that Ahidjo can be discussed. A monarch thus described has the following traits: a heightened sense of the *raison d'Etat* and of its primacy over all other considerations, a taste for undivided authority, and a passion for national unity. Reserved, even secretive, visage perpetually impassive, he preferred, during his successive presidential terms, to inspire fear rather than seek a popularity that he was visibly unable to achieve.

Decraene may have overstated the case slightly — Ahidjo sought respect as much as he inspired fear. With the possible exception of his most implacable enemies (the Paris- and London-based remnants of the old *marxisant* UPC [Union of the Peoples of the Cameroons]), his detractors conceded that he was sincere in his search for national unity. However, all that is now moot, unless of course it turns out, as some

TABLE 1
Regular Constitutional Succession in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960-82

Date	Country	Incumbent President	Successor	Circumstances
Nov. 28, 1967	Gabon	Leon Miba	Omar Bongo	Death of Miba
July 23, 1971	Liberia	William Tubman	William Tolbert	Death of Tubman
Aug. 22, 1978	Kenya	Jomo Kenyatta	Daniel arap Moi	Death of Kenyatta
July 13, 1980	Botswana	Seretse Khama	Quett Masire	Death of Khama
Dec. 30, 1980	Senegal	Leopold S. Senghor	Abdou Diouf	Senghor retires
Nov. 6, 1982	Cameroon	Ahidjo	Paul Biya	Ahidjo retires

Note: Not included is succession by way of national elections, since in all instances in which a new national leader took power by way of elections, the elections themselves were either the direct consequence of an irregular overthrow of the preceding regime or were organized by coup makers.

observers have already suggested, that he will continue to wield power but from behind the scenes. This is possible but improbable, given Ahidjo's personality and, more important, his undoubted stake in the institutions which he himself was instrumental in putting into place.

Biya, as noted above, now has almost two and a half years during which he can put his own imprint on the presidency. That task is no easy one, given the visible, watchful presence of his predecessor on the sidelines; the legacy of Ahidjo's policies, which Biya has, at least for the present, little choice but to follow; and the continued presence in the government and the top levels of the bureaucracy of many holdovers from the Ahidjo regime. The latter circumstance may prove the most testing, because Biya, a man without a national or institutional constituency (except in the prime ministry), must now bring to heel not only the remaining Ahidjo *fidèles* (including Sadou Daoudou and Maikano Abdoulaye), but also a group of ambitious politician-bureaucrats (such as Youssoufa Daouda, Guillaume Bwele, Hayatou Ahmadou, Samuel Eboua, Christian Bongwa, and Victor Ayissi Mvodo), some of whom probably harbor considerable resentment over the fact that the manner of the transition deprived them of the opportunity to influence the shape of the new administration. This group undoubtedly found the case of Moussa Yaya instructive. In mid-January 1983, apparently on Ahidjo's order, Moussa, one of Ahidjo's oldest friends and a high-level party official, was sacked from the CNU and thereby from the National Assembly. Three other par-

liamentarians were similarly dismissed. Moussa, who seems to have harbored presidential ambitions, was said to have been dissatisfied with the Biya succession and expressed his feelings openly. That Ahidjo was willing to sacrifice one of his ranking *fidèles* "pour encourager les autres" must have given Biya considerable heart.

Biya also begins his presidency with some strong cards in hand. The succession amendment required him to name his own government immediately, which he did by elevating Bello Bouba Maigari to prime minister, shifting Sadou Daoudou and Samuel Eboua, and shuffling three of the 30 portfolios plus the deputy secretary-generalship at the presidency. There is one newcomer, Tori Limangana, who became vice-minister at the Ministry of the Economy and Plan. Admittedly, Biya's initial reshuffle was not very extensive, but the fact that he can now hire and fire advisers and ministers at will serves to strengthen his position and permits him to place "his" people in key slots. And if Ahidjo, who obviously will retain considerable influence, sends the right signals to his former troops (e.g., as in the case of Moussa Yaya) and the proper threats to the uncooperative, then Biya ought to be able to manage both the *fidèles* and the frustrated opportunists. And there is every reason to expect Ahidjo to continue to be helpful in this respect. If he did indeed prepare his departure with as much care as the record suggests, and if he does in fact have a vested interest in the proper functioning of the country's constitutional structures, then he can ill afford not to support Biya if the need to do so arises again.

The fact that the transition took place as smoothly as it did must also be counted among Biya's new assets. To the extent that Ahidjo, probably with Biya's and Sadou Daoudou's help, preempted others who might have had their own ideas about the succession, the more secure Biya's position becomes. Furthermore, the longer Biya remains in control, the more time he will have to master the levers of power, and the less likely it will be that a successful challenge to his rule can be mounted.

Finally, even though Biya has committed himself to continue Ahidjo's policies and must work within the constraints noted earlier, he does have the opportunity to establish his own personality and style in the presidency. This is no small matter, in view of the way in which Ahidjo for 23 years managed to impose his will on Cameroonian politics and the conduct of Cameroonian governmental affairs. Moreover, the constitution, written under Ahidjo's direction, in effect defines a strong presidency à la Ahidjo. In one sense, Biya has no choice — he is no Ahidjo and has not yet imposed himself on the system. Ahidjo's political-constitutional shoes are still too large for him. In another sense, however, he can now open up a regime that had over the years become increasingly repressive, hypersensitive to criticism, inbred, and isolated from the public. Biya's conduct as prime minister does not offer many clues about how he will conduct the presidency — he was quiet and efficient and apparently made few enemies. But he is an intelligent, relatively forceful man in his own right, and could, if everything goes well for him, gain some of the popularity and public support Ahidjo self-consciously denied himself. Ahidjo ruled by carefully controlling the respect and fear he evoked. He preferred the distance of ceremony and formal inaccessibility to the cultivation of a charismatic connection with his people. Biya, himself a secure and restrained individual, is certainly unlikely to seek popular adulation and ceremonial props to his ego, nor could he, even if he so wished, copy Ahidjo's style. The presidential office will be a totally new experience for Biya, as will a Biya presidency for Cameroon. What is important is that if

he so wishes, he can change the political climate of the country, and appreciably for the better.

By comparison with most African countries, Cameroon works — and works quite well. Its economy is growing at a rate of 6 percent per annum in real terms (after inflation, the rate is over 4 percent gross domestic product per capita). The overall trade balance is in surplus, and with oil exports rising, the country has become one of the more attractive African credit and investment platforms. Cameroon not only manages to feed its population from domestic production but even exports food to its equatorial neighbors, Gabon in particular. It has a diversified export economy, producing cocoa, cotton, tropical woods, and coffee, and a growing industrial base. It should easily be able to absorb the approximately 50,000 Cameroonians forced to leave Nigeria in January and February of this year. All this must be accounted to the credit of the Ahidjo regime, whose prudent and pragmatic economic policies have kept the system operating with minimum strain.

Another aspect of the Biya government's future, Cameroon's excellent political and economic relationship with France, was recently and positively reaffirmed. Biya's first official state visit, on February 15 and 16, was to France to meet with President François Mitterrand. Although Cameroon, because of its bilingual character, has not taken part in the annual meetings of Francophone heads of state, Ahidjo as well as some of his ministers had been in close personal touch with every French president from de Gaulle onward. France's economic links to Cameroon leave no doubt about the weight of the relationship. Among other connections, France is Cameroon's principal supplier (providing 43 percent of its imports); French banks and franc zone institutions fortify Cameroon's financial position; and French companies, in conjunction with Cameroonian parastatals, are the main participants in Cameroon's petrochemical industry. As if to underscore the point, Biya took no less than six ministers — all decision makers on economic matters — with him to Paris, and there is every indication that the French appreciated the gesture. Certainly the fact that Mitter-

rand agreed to return the visit and apparently plans to travel to Yaoundé in June this year speaks to both the impression made by Biya and the importance the French accord the Franco-Cameroonian links.

The Biya government, however, also inherits some worrisome problems. It must somehow amortize some expensive investment failures: the new CELLUCAM (cellulose pulp) plant, overcapitalized and poorly planned; the SOCAMÉ fertilizer plant; and the experimental growing of wheat in the highlands, among others. It must also answer for the almost certain loss of a projected \$2.5 billion gas liquefaction plant at Kribi, an enterprise that might have radically transformed the economy of the whole southern coastal area. (The oil and energy consortium that was to finance the plant backed off because of the uncertainties of world energy markets and because, according to French and American oil company sources, it found the Cameroonian negotiating position too inflexible.) Unresolved and growing sociopolitical problems also face the new government, including notably those of a burgeoning, hyperinflated, unresponsive bureaucracy; increasing urban unemployment, particularly among rural immigrants and school leavers of all ages; extensive cumulating official corruption; and the presence of a restive, largely frustrated intelligentsia denied a voice by what it saw as an unsympathetic regime. In the longer term, there are the unmet needs of Cameroon's rural populations and the political time bomb represented by the northern Kirdi (pagan) populations, whose increasing numbers and gradually improving educational qualifications must eventually make them unwilling to accept the continuing domination of their traditional Fulani overlords.

On balance, however, Biya inherits more successes than failures. He has acquired the controls of a governmental machine that operates well above African standards and a political and economic system that still enjoys a considerable margin for error and is able to absorb the costs of unresolved problems without notable damage to the whole. If he can handle the opportunity so carefully prepared for him, Biya's and the country's prospects are excellent. □

Africa making more sacrifices to meet Western aid conditions

In recent months, a growing number of African states have been looking to the West for economic aid. Socialist Algeria, Sékou Touré's Guinea, and revolutionary Ethiopia have all indicated their willingness and desire to attract Western investment, and the list of countries that are turning to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for balance of payments relief is growing steadily. Though many Western press reports have seen in this trend an ideological shift toward the West, it is more likely that these changes have come out of desperation as Africa's economies have suffered in the wake of world recession.

The continent is \$50 billion in debt to Western private banks and lending institutions. Prices for commodities—the mainstays of many African economies—have fallen dramatically and in some cases are still falling. Prices for Niger's uranium, Zambia's copper, Maurita-

nia's iron ore, Ghana's cocoa, and even Nigeria's oil have plunged, smashing past hopes for prosperity.

To avoid dependence on the West, African states have sought solutions via regional cooperatives such as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Though hopes remain high for SADCC, other such attempts at cooperation—notably the disbanded East African Community—have not met with much success. One problem is that many of the countries are producers of primary goods, and neither they nor their neighbors have the means to process them, nor any desire to accept each other's weak and overvalued currencies as payment. In the end, it has usually been cheaper and more efficient for African countries to trade with their partners in the West.

Recently Zambia and Tanzania

tried to avoid these obstacles by arranging a barter agreement through which goods would be traded directly. Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda has appealed to other SADCC countries to join in the arrangement. If successful, this could be a small step in reducing dependency on the West, but this kind of cooperation is rare in Africa. In another unique arrangement, Tanzania and Mozambique settled their trade accounts in local currency last year—the first instance of its kind in Africa—but the idea doesn't seem to have caught on.

African economic cooperation is also burdened by accumulating debts to the West. Debt service requires that foreign exchange be earned. Therefore, exports to Western countries are encouraged at the expense of potential intra-African trade.

As their debts grow, African states have been lining up for rescheduling. Zambia, Senegal, Uganda, Malawi, Sudan, Zaire, and Togo have all approached the IMF for a rescheduling of their debts. In addition, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, and Botswana have accepted IMF conditions for receiving loans, which usually include devaluation, wage freezes, decreased imports, and the end to subsidies on food and other essential items. Despite the reluctance of all of these countries to accept the conditions, more countries are certain to look to the IMF in the near future.

The official line in Africa is that the IMF loans are to hold them over until the West's economic recovery prompts a rise in commodity prices. But ironically, some analysts believe that the West's recovery is dependent upon the economic health of the Third World. This view is voiced in a report by Willy Brandt's Commission on International De-

Continued on page 29

Namibia discussions still deadlocked

The impasse over the Namibia independence negotiations continued in April, while the front-line African states were reported becoming more impatient at the lack of progress.

A UN conference on Namibia was scheduled to be held in Paris April 25-29. South Africa said it was prepared to attend the conference if the UN met certain conditions, among them that Namibia's internal parties be "treated on equal footing" with SWAPO, the insurgent movement fighting for independence, and that references to SWAPO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Namibian people be scrapped.

The South Africans also said that prospects for an internationally ac-

ceptable settlement were "not promising." Inside the territory, some black politicians reportedly believe there is no hope of an international solution and that South Africa will begin holding a series of ethnic elections to replace the national assembly, which was disbanded when the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance resigned in January.

If the deadlock continues, the African states will probably press for a UN Security Council meeting in June to impose sanctions on South Africa for its failure to comply with Resolution 435. A sanctions resolution would likely be blocked by a U.S. veto. (*Christian Science Monitor*, March 31, 1983; *Sowetan*, March 29, 1983; *Johannesburg Radio*, March 22 and 29, 1983.) □

Ciskei tries and fails again to crush independent black union

The Ciskei homeland made yet another attempt to cripple the 100,000-member South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) with another round of detentions without trial during March.

SAAWU's president, Thozamile Gqweta; the vice president, Sisa Njikelana; two organizers, Geoff Wuabena and Humphrey Maxegwana; the vice chairman of a workers' committee, Bangumzi Singo; and four others were detained in security police swoops in mid-March.

It was the eight detention for Gqweta and the sixth for Njikelana by either the Ciskei or South African security police, who cooperate closely. Neither union official has ever been convicted of, or even charged with, breaking any security law.

But Lennox Sebe, the Ciskei's leader, and his brother, Maj. Gen. Charles Sebe, the security police chief, insist that SAAWU is a "front organization" for the banned African National Congress. Lennox Sebe said an "ANC cell" had been uncovered in Mdantsane, the black township near East London which is actually located in the homeland made "independent" by Pretoria in November 1981. Gen. Sebe said the union officials would eventually be charged with "engaging in ANC activities."

In late March, however, all the detained unionists were released. Gen. Sebe said the decision followed a ruling by the Ciskei attorney-general, who declined to prosecute.

In a brief and unusual court appearance, Gqweta testified as a defense witness in the trial of four men charged with being ANC members. Gqweta detailed a series of tortures inflicted by security police during one detention in 1981 and testified that his interrogators were mostly interested in possible ANC connections. Gqweta denied dealing with the ANC.

Black trade unions and other organizations met in Johannesburg late in March to condemn the Ciskei detentions, calling the move "a pretext to attack the democratic trade union movement."

SAAWU, however, is expected

to weather the attack on its leadership, because it has continued to organize and negotiate recognition agreements despite the frequent and disruptive detentions. After his fourth detention, Njikelana said: "We have a duty to our members not to let things like this interfere with our work."

Herbert Barnabas, SAAWU's national organizer, said the union is structured differently from others, stressing "worker democracy and mass participation." He said, "Workers themselves are in a position to perform the duties of senior officials." And Barnabas said the

Ciskei authorities would have to work harder because SAAWU intended to begin organizing in other South African towns near Ciskei besides East London, specifically King William's Town and Queenstown.

Ciskei's battle against SAAWU can be traced to the union's emergence two years ago as the rallying point for deep-seated opposition to homeland "independence," which stripped Xhosa-speakers of their South African citizenship, turning them into "migrant workers." (*Sowetan*, March 18, 23, 24, 28 and 30, 1983.) □

Africa-Israel trade ties remain intact

Israel has expressed the hope that its recent economic and military agreements with Zaire will lead to improved relations with other African countries. However, even though no other African government seems willing to make formal and public agreements with Israel—and despite the fact that only Malawi, Botswana, and Lesotho maintained diplomatic relations with Israel after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war—a substantial but secretive trade already exists between Israel and Africa. Israeli sales of machinery, chemicals, and other exports to African countries totalled \$125 million in 1981, according to Israeli figures, and Israel's imports from Africa reached \$15 million for the same period.

Furthermore, Israel continues to share its experience in irrigation, low-cost construction, agricultural technology, and solar power throughout Africa.

Research, construction, and development projects are being carried out with Israeli consultation and assistance in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Togo, and Upper Volta.

Although Israel's military assistance to South Africa is considered morally reprehensible by the black African states, several of them are allegedly seeking to obtain military equipment or expertise from Israel, including Chad and the Central African Republic. *The Economist's* in-

telligence weekly, *Foreign Report*, also claimed that Israeli officers and technical advisers are serving in the Ethiopian army and intelligence division.

Despite the extent of Israeli assistance to Africa, it remains unlikely that many African countries will follow Zaire's lead and formally embrace Israel. The Palestinian issue and the African perception of Israel as South Africa's ally are strong deterrents to closer diplomatic ties with Israel. However, it is worth noting that in 1981, although Egypt had diplomatic relations with Israel, Nigeria's imports from Israel surpassed Egypt's and Gabon, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Nigeria each exported more to Israel than Egypt did.

These statistics indicate that, although African countries are reluctant to establish diplomatic ties, they are willing to trade privately with Israel. Zaire's rapprochement with Israel has already led Arab financiers to cut off their funding to Zaire, and that example, coupled with the unpopularity of President Mobutu Sese Seko in the rest of Africa, makes it unlikely that other African countries will follow his lead. They seem content to trade with Israel more discreetly, leaving their Arab support unjeopardized. The Israeli hope of an "African opening" remains remote. (*African Business*, April 1983; *CSIS Africa Notes*, March 21, 1983; *Washington Post*, March 7, 1983.) □

WESTERN AFRICA

Benin

● In the aftermath of Nigeria's expulsion of over a million illegal aliens in January, Nigerian Interior Minister Ali Baba visited Benin to discuss the refugee problem. Shortly thereafter, President Mathieu Kérékou of Benin met in Lagos with Nigerian President Shehu Shagari. At the end of his visit, Kérékou said the expulsion seemed "to be an imperative for the Nigerian government" and would not disrupt relations between Benin and Nigeria. As chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Kérékou accepted a check from Nigeria for \$1 million in aid, to be distributed among the member countries affected by the expulsion.

Earlier in the year, Benin announced its second five-year plan for economic and social development to cover the period from 1983 to 1987. The program is expected to cost \$1.8 billion, half of which Benin is seeking from foreign sources. Benin, already self-sufficient in agriculture, is focusing the new plan on the production of food for export to neighboring countries, particularly to the expanding urban areas of Nigeria. (*West Africa*,

Aid continued

velopment Issues:

"In this crisis, the fate of the rich and the poor countries are inextricably linked. If the [poor countries], which buy 30 percent of the exports of the United States alone, cannot find more resources, the [rich nations] will be unable to revive their industries."

A.W. Clausen, the head of the World Bank, expressed a similar view: "The U.S. can't worry about domestic concerns and turn its attention to the global economy later. The world doesn't work that way any more." Clausen also said the bank had been constrained by the "wavering support" of the U.S. in its efforts to help the world's poorest nations.

Concern over the world economic crisis, and over the Third World's debt problems in particular, was evident at the non-aligned

March 14, 1983; Lagos Radio, February 16, 1983; Cotonou Radio, February 11 and 16, 1983.)

Cape Verde

● Luis Cabral, the former President of Guinea-Bissau, arrived in the Cape Verde islands in early February to take up permanent residence. He had been in exile in Cuba since his release by the current leaders of Guinea-Bissau in 1981. The Cape Verde government said that it would welcome him in a manner that would "take into account the role he played in the common liberation struggle." Cabral plans to write his memoirs. (*West Africa*, March 7, 1983; Lisbon Radio, March 3, 1983.)

Chad

● The forces of ousted President Goukouni Woddeye have made advances in northern Chad, according to sources in that country. Other reports have described "serious defeats" suffered by the army of President Hissene Habré.

Speaking in Benin in mid-March, an adviser to Woddeye's "Government of National Salvation" (GSN) claimed that Habré's troops had suffered 142 fatalities and 252 men were taken prisoner in one battle. He also reported that the GSN had

conference in New Delhi. There was the traditional call for a "New International Economic Order" (NIEO), but this time, it was devoid of its usual rhetoric. The discussion, many observers noted, focused more on the practical issues involved in instituting a North-South dialogue. Though characteristically little was accomplished, it is hoped that the poor nations' new focus on pragmatism will set a different tone for the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), scheduled for Belgrade in June. There is also the hope that the Third World's pragmatic approach will be matched by a corresponding willingness by the West to reevaluate its position on the issues of the NIEO. (*Wall Street Journal*, March 21 and April 12, 1983; *Financial Times*, March 15, 1983; *Christian Science Monitor*, March 14, 1983; *African Business*, March 1983.) □

captured heavy arms and equipment.

In late February, a delegation from Libya went to Ndjamena, reportedly to discuss ways to ease tensions between the two countries. Habré has accused Libya of aiding the rebel forces, and Libya is currently occupying a 39,000-square mile strip of land in Chad along their common border. The talks appeared to have accomplished little.

Habré later sent a delegation to Libya. "We think we must exhaust all efforts towards a peaceful solution," he said. Later he added that he doubted that Libyan leader Col. Muammar Qaddafi was prepared to withdraw support for the rebels.

Earlier, Habré had discussed the matter with President Gaafar al-Nimeiry in Sudan. He denied that any military pact was concluded between the two countries but he said that their views on the regional situation were identical. While in Khartoum, Habré also met with President Reagan's special envoy, Gen. Vernon Walters, who was there discussing the Libya-Sudan border crisis.

Efforts to rebuild war-ravaged Chad have been further hampered by drought and the threat of famine in some regions. Habré has said that over a quarter of a million people are threatened by the food shortages and the forecasted shortfall for this year is around 260,000 tons. Relief agencies which have begun to respond have been slowed by the absence of passable roads in the north and by the fighting in some of the affected areas. (*West Africa*, February 7 and March 21, 1983; *Africa Research Bulletin*, March 15, 1983; *London Guardian*, March 11, 1983; *New York Times*, March 1, 1983; *London Times*, February 19, 1983.)

Gambia

● The state of emergency which has been in effect since the abortive coup attempt of July 1981 was extended for the remainder of this year. The reason given was that many of the plotters are still on trial while others remain in detention in connection with the uprising.

The Movement for Justice in Africa-Gambia (MOJA-G) has said that those in prison are there

because of "legitimate political sympathies," and that the "secret killings and widespread torture in the prison camps are too persistent to be ignored." There has been no corroboration of these charges from other sources.

In early March, President Dawda Jawara made a two-day visit to France, his first since coming to power in 1965. During his stay, he met with President Mitterrand and received a promise of increased French economic aid. (*West Africa*, March 7, 1983; *Africa Research Bulletin*, February 15, 1983.)

Ghana

● A late February coup attempt, the third in five months, was foiled when nine soldiers were arrested and a house full of arms and ammunition was seized in Accra. A government radio report said that there were possible links between this attempt and the abortive coup of last November.

The report also claimed that government troops found a list of the names of people that the plotters had planned to assassinate—among them Ghanaian head of state, Flight Lieut. Jerry Rawlings. Other officials of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) were also said to be on the list.

Two people were wounded during the seizure and other plotters were still being sought after the incident.

Meanwhile, the trials of those accused in last November's coup attempt have been continuing. Twelve of the 24 people charged in that attempt appeared in court when the trial opened in mid-March. Twelve others were ordered to appear and the government said that those who did not turn themselves in would be tried in absentia. Among the accusations is a charge that foreign troops were to be used to consolidate the new government. All 12 pleaded not guilty. (*Accra Radio*, March 7, 1983; *West Africa*, March 7, 1983; *London Times*, March 4, 1983.)

● Ghana's persistent economic problems, along with the additional burden of more than a million impoverished refugees from Nigeria, have forced the government to seek

help from Western banks and aid organizations.

In mid February, Ghana reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan of \$300 million. The main obstacle in the negotiations was the IMF's insistence that the Ghanaian currency be devalued. Rawlings, who overthrew the government of Hilla Limann as he was about to devalue to meet IMF conditions in 1981, has adamantly resisted all pressure to follow that course.

The result of the overvalued currency has been black market exchange rates that are 15 to 30 times higher than official rates. Many staple items which are sold on the black market are consequently priced well beyond the means of the average worker. Imports of food at the inflated rate have made local agricultural produce uneconomical and the effect on domestic agriculture has been devastating.

The final agreement with the IMF included a multiple-tier exchange rate and a surcharge on foreign exchange transactions which amounted to a de facto devaluation. (*Wall Street Journal*, March 28, 1983; *Financial Times*, February 23, 1983; *London Guardian*, February 23, 1983.)

Ivory Coast

● Plans are being completed for the transfer of Ivory Coast's capital from Abidjan to Yamoussoukro, a small town 150 miles to the north of the present capital. The plan to move the capital to Yamoussoukro, the birthplace of President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, had been discussed informally for many years but in February and March it received the official support of the ruling Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast (PDCI) and of the Council of Ministers.

One reason for the move is to ease some of the population pressure on Abidjan, which is growing at an annual rate of 11 percent. Since independence, the population of Abidjan has grown from 50,000 to 1.8 million, of whom 26 percent are said to be living in shantytowns.

The new capital already boasts an international class hotel, an airport, and wide boulevards, all currently under-utilized. It has been the site

of many international conferences and Houphouët-Boigny usually greets visiting heads of state there. No timetable for the move has been announced. (*West Africa*, February 7 and March 21, 1983; *London Times*, February 15, 1983.)

● The Soubre hydroelectric power scheme, described as "the most important development project since independence," received full financing in late February. The final \$100 million of the \$266 million project came from four Arab groups, making Soubre the first major Arab-financed project in the Ivory Coast. Work will begin on the dam at the end of this year and the first generators are expected to be in operation by 1987. (*Financial Times*, February 24, 1983.)

Liberia

● Liberia closed its border with Sierra Leone in late February in reaction to an article in an independent Freetown paper which said that Liberian head of state Samuel Doe had shot and killed his wife after learning that she was involved in a plot to overthrow Liberia's government. The article alleged that Mrs. Doe had planned to poison her husband. Doe reacted by recalling his ambassador from Freetown and deploying 2000 troops along the border.

President Siaka Stevens of Sierra Leone said that he too was astonished by this "very grave allegation" and the editor of the newspaper quickly admitted that the story was without foundation. Mrs. Doe was soon seen riding through the streets of Monrovia in a jeep with her husband at the wheel. Still the borders remained closed and the troops stayed in place. Mediation efforts by Guinea's Sékou Touré, who tried to arrange a summit meeting in Conakry, failed to ease the tensions when Stevens refused to appear.

Doe reopened the borders and called back the troops when he returned from the non-aligned conference in mid-March but the incident further weakened the bonds between the countries of the Mano River Union (MRU), a loose economic alliance between Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, which had long been ineffective due to alleged

disinterest on the part of Stevens. In late January, Doe had been cheered in Freetown as he attended a meeting of the MRU and called for stronger ties between the three countries.

Stevens' decision not to discuss this latest incident with Doe received widespread support in Sierra Leone and the consensus across Africa was that Doe was overreacting. The *Kenya Daily Nation* asked, "When will Mr. Doe grow up?" and Zimbabwe's *Sunday Mail* accused Doe of "both mental and emotional immaturity." (*West Africa*, March 14, 1983; *Kenya Weekly Review*, March 4, 1983; *London Guardian*, February 23 and 24, 1983.)

Mali

• The government of Mali has often had difficulty meeting the monthly public payroll, inspiring the joke that "the Malian month is 80 or 90 days long." Recently, however, Mali has undertaken major economic reforms. The International Monetary Fund, as a precondition for further aid, is requiring Mali to encourage free enterprise and to trim back state corporations.

President Moussa Traore, at the party congress in Bamako in early January, announced that Malians seeking employment would henceforth be encouraged to turn to private business rather than to the government. The national council of the party followed up Traore's speech by recommending a cutback in state employment and a campaign against bureaucratic inefficiency. In addition, Mali's first private bank, the Bank of Africa-Mali, was established in Bamako in December.

These economic reforms are tied in with Mali's 1981-1985 development plan, which is comprised of 60 projects totalling \$1.3 billion. Apparently encouraged by Mali's new mood of austerity, various underwriters, including the World Bank, UN agencies, and the EEC, pledged approximately \$200 million to the five-year plan during a donors' conference in Bamako this winter. Shortly thereafter, France announced amnesty on \$10 million of pre-1978 debts owed by Mali.

In foreign affairs, Mali reached an agreement in February with Algeria

on the demarcation of the border between the two countries, a formality which was quickly followed by more plans for cooperation. Algerian technical schools will admit Malians; physicians will be exchanged; and a justice commission was established to coordinate mutual legal concerns. (*West Africa*, January 31, February 14 and March 28, 1983; *Afrique-Asie*, February 14 and 28, 1983; *Africa Research Bulletin*, January 15, 1983.)

Mauritania

• Mauritania's faltering iron ore industry received a boost early this year when Algeria agreed to buy 2 million tons of ore per year starting from the end of 1984. The ore will come from the new Guelbs mining project which is due to begin operation in July, 1984.

The Guelbs project is a second-generation mine which will replace the older high-grade mines at Kedia d'Idjil which are rapidly being depleted. The first phase of this \$500 million scheme has been financed principally by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Abu Dhabi.

The Gulf states have contracted to buy half of Guelbs' first-year production of 6 million tons. Negotiations have also been held with Japanese buyers for the continued purchase of ore from the Kedia mine.

Despite the new contracts, officials of the state-controlled Société Nationale Industrielle et Minière (SNIM) are worried that major European buyers will continue to reduce purchases as Western economies remain in recession. Iron ore accounts for 80 percent of Mauritania's exports. (*Africa Research Bulletin*, February 27, 1983; *African Business*, February 1983.)

Nigeria

• Nigeria's expulsion of illegal aliens in January has, ironically, worsened the economy. A labor shortage has resulted in the ports, in construction, and in manufacturing. Employers are having difficulty finding Nigerians who are as willing to work for low wages as the foreigners were, and some plants have been forced to close down.

In response to the continuing economic crisis, Nigeria announced in

February the formation of the National Economic Council, a panel of experts drawn from each of Nigeria's states and chaired by the government's special adviser on economics. Despite concerns that further import curbs would hamper the influx of raw materials essential to production, the government instituted additional restrictions in an attempt to control the depletion of foreign exchange.

The Central Bank of Nigeria also announced that plans are being made to reduce the backlog of Nigeria's foreign trade payments, now in excess of \$2 billion. Assistance in refinancing the foreign trade deficit will be provided by the "troika" of giant economic firms, S.G. Warburg, Lazard Frères, and Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb.

As the July polling date approaches, Nigeria's national election campaign is growing in complexity and intensity. Emeka Ojukwu, leader of the Ibo people in the Biafran civil war, has declared his support for the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) which is predominantly supported by the Hausa and Fulani peoples. If Ojukwu can draw votes for the NPN using his great influence in the Ibo states of Anambra and Imo, he may win concessions from the NPN and its leader, President Shugu Shagari. Shagari's presidential bid is being challenged most strongly by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Yoruba leader of the Union Party of Nigeria (UPN), and by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP).

The winning presidential candidate must attain a simple plurality nationwide and 25 percent or more of the vote in at least two-thirds of the 19 states. If Shagari does not win on the first ballot, the strongest of the other candidates will face him alone on the second ballot. Nigeria's economic difficulties, coupled with Yoruba and Ibo opposition to the NPN, mean that Shagari and his party must make a strong showing to retain their incumbency, and an NPN victory is by no means a foregone conclusion. (*Wall Street Journal*, March 9 and 25, 1983; *West Africa*, March 21, 1983; *Jeune Afrique Economie*, February 17, 1983; *Africa Economic Digest*, February

Senegal

● President Abdou Diouf and his Socialist Party (PS) won an overwhelming victory in the February 27 election. The final count gave Diouf 84 percent of the presidential vote while his party captured 80 percent of the parliamentary vote and 111 of 120 seats. The remaining seats were won by Abdoulaye Wade's Senegalese Democratic Party and the National Democratic Assembly of Cheikh Anta Diop.

Both Wade and Diop said that they would not take their seats in the new assembly to protest the elections which were called a "farce". They pointed to allegations of "voting card fraud at the highest levels of the state."

Despite some alleged and confirmed irregularities, it is apparent that Diouf and the PS were the clear choice of the 60 percent of eligible voters who went to the polls. There was considerable freedom during the campaign, during which candidates were allowed to canvass and criticize the government. Each was given equal time on the television and radio.

Diouf, however, took advantage of his party's financial superiority and the position that it has held as Senegal's only governing party for the last thirty years. He was also able to gain the unqualified support of Senegal's Moslem leaders in a state where Moslems make up 85 percent of the population.

Diouf's predecessor, Leopold Senghor, had allowed only four political parties since 1975. The parties represented Marxist, socialist, liberal, and conservative views. After becoming president in December of 1980, Diouf removed the restrictions and watched the opposition splinter into thirteen separate parties.

Diouf has recently been fond of saying that pluralism is an indication of national strength. In the last election, that translated into the strength of his Socialist Party. (*West Africa*, March 7 and 21, 1983; *Jeune Afrique*, March 16, 1983; *London Times*, March 2, 1983.)

Sierra Leone

● The immediate effect of the bor-

der closure between Sierra Leone and Liberia was the sharp reduction in prices and increased availability of basic commodities in Sierra Leone. The goods which had previously been taken to Liberia and sold for dollars, subsequently began showing up in Freetown's markets. A woman in Freetown was quoted as saying, "This closure issue is a blessing in disguise. I wish Doe will decide to keep his door closed for a while."

The border closure followed the publication of an erroneous article in *Progress*, an independent Freetown daily, which alleged that President Doe had killed his wife. Soon after the article was published, the paper's editor, Fode Kande, was detained along with the editors of two other Freetown newspapers. All three were soon released without being charged and the reasons for their detentions were never clarified. (*West Africa*, March 7 and 14, 1983.)

● The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced the approval of a \$22.5 million loan to Sierra Leone in mid-February. The loan was to help offset a 22 percent loss in export earnings from diamonds, coffee, bauxite, and cocoa over the last two years.

Earnings from diamonds, which account for nearly 60 percent of the country's exports, have fallen over 40 percent since 1980. The loss is due to a drop in diamond prices, depletion of deposits, and smuggling. This led the government to adopt a two-tier exchange rate at the end of last year.

Under the new system, business transactions will be carried out under a higher exchange rate which is more closely tied to supply and demand. Planners expect that this will discourage the use of the black market and direct money into the banking system.

In a further effort to increase exports, the government reopened the Marampa iron ore mines which in January. When the mine was closed in 1975, iron ore was second only to diamonds as a foreign exchange earner. It is expected that the reactivated mine will initially employ 1000 people and add \$15 million per year to the country's export reve-

nue. (*Africa Now*, March 1983; *West Africa*, February 7 and March 7, 1983.)

Upper Volta

● A group of soldiers was arrested in Ouagadougou in early March "as they were making preparations for a forceful move aimed at the overthrow of the present government." According to radio reports from the capital, the rebels had intended a "commando-type raid against the assembly of the People's Salvation Council (CSP)." The report went on to say that the assembly chamber was to be cordoned off and "machine-gunned by the putschists who planned to take prisoner as few people as possible."

The rebels were said to be supporters of Col. Saye Zerbo who was overthrown in a coup last November. The radio report said that there were five or six men involved, but other sources have claimed that there were as many as twenty.

The government has tried to play down the incident, giving the impression that there was never any chance of the plot succeeding and stating that the CSP had known of the soldiers' activities in advance.

Since the new government came to power, there has been much speculation about its ideological basis. The speculation increased when President Jean-Baptiste Ouedraogo's first trip abroad took him to Libya and it was noted that three Libyan delegations had already been received by the new president. Ouedraogo dismissed the significance of his trip as "simply a matter of agenda" and called the visits of the Libyan delegations "routine".

In a mid-March radio interview, he said that free enterprise was a reality in Upper Volta and that it would be encouraged since the public sector cannot absorb all of the available manpower and because the state does not have the means to take over the private sector. "To talk about nationalization now, I think, is an aberration."

Ouedraogo promised to "allow the people to choose their leaders and regime" in two years. (Ouagadougou Radio, March 7 and 15, 1983.)

EASTERN AFRICA

Ethiopia

● A drought in northern Ethiopia is threatening the lives of a million people in Tigray, Wollo, Eritrea, and Gondar regions. Though large amounts of relief food are now reaching the victims, officials estimate that three million tons will be needed to avert mass starvation during the next year. Some people have estimated that as many as 3.5 million people could be affected if the drought and food shortages continue.

Many of the drought victims are moving into famine camps in Ethiopia but a growing number are crossing into Sudan to avoid the fighting in Ethiopia as well as to escape famine. The relief operations have been complicated by efforts by the Ethiopian army to root out Tigray Liberation Front guerrillas.

A late March report in the London *Sunday Times* claimed that donated relief food was being diverted to the Soviet Union and to the Ethiopian army. The source of the information was a senior government official who recently defected from Ethiopia. There was an immediate response from relief agency representatives, Ethiopian officials, and British members of parliament who labeled the allegations "blatant propaganda." Despite the dubious nature of the claims, the EEC began an investigation of the charges.

An EEC official said, however, that food shipments to Ethiopia would continue. "We have no evidence of abuses with the food aid given to Ethiopia." (London *Times*, March 22, 27 and April 3, 1983; *Washington Post* March 18 and 29, 1983).

Kenya

● President Daniel arap Moi granted clemency to 124 ex-servicemen who had been held in connection with last August's attempted coup. The release brought the number of freed military personnel to 512. It is not known how many more accused servicemen remain in jail, but the number is believed to be small. Moi had earlier freed 70 students who were being held on charges of sedition.

Not all of those accused in the plot have received presidential clemency. In early March, a 25-year-old cook in the disbanded air force became the eleventh man sentenced to death. A civilian, Didacus Ollack Diego, was sentenced to 12½ years in prison on charges of having prior knowledge of the coup plot. Diego was allegedly in the company of the self-professed leader, Pvt. Hezekiah Ochuka, who had told him of the plans more than a week in advance. Ochuka is now in Tanzania where he has been granted political asylum.

Raila Odinga, the son of former vice-president and political pariah Oginga Odinga, was released and then rearrested again minutes after being cleared of treason charges in late March. Also with detained Odinga were Otieno Mak'Onyango, a journalist, and Prof. Vincent Otieno of the University of Nairobi. The three are being held indefinitely.

Nine other men, including five university lecturers, are also believed to be in detention without trial. Among them is Al-Amin Mazrui, a professor of linguistics at Kenyatta College, who has been held since last June. According to an Amnesty International report, Mazrui is in poor health and is being kept in continuous solitary confinement. He was accused by Moi of "teaching subversive literature aimed at creating disorder."

Detainees in Kenya can be held under the Preservation of Public Security Act, which allows detention for an indefinite period of time without trial. (London *Guardian*, March 24, 1983; *Kenya Weekly Review*, March 4 and 11, 1983; *Washington Post*, March 10, 1983; *Amnesty Action*, March 1983.)

● Kenya's ruling party, Kanu, launched its own newspaper in early April. President Moi said that the new paper, *The Kenya Times*, would not be a propaganda organ and that it would not avoid issues affecting the government or public institutions. The paper is to be an alternative to the two independent newspapers, the *Nation* and the *Standard* which have come under fire from government officials who claimed that they emphasized the negative and the sensational. (Lon-

don *Guardian*, April 6, 1983; *Kenya Weekly Review*, March 18, 1983.)

Mauritius

● Eleven of Prime Minister Aneerood Jugnath's 19 cabinet ministers resigned in late March as an expression of their lack of confidence in the government. The 11 are members of the Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM) which forms a part of the ruling coalition. Jugnath appointed a new cabinet which contains ten MMM members, five Socialist Party members, and one member of a small left-wing party.

Despite continuing Mauritian protests, the U.S. is moving ahead with its plans to expand its military bases on the island of Diego Garcia, over which Mauritius claims sovereignty. The facilities are being expanded to accommodate a larger number of B-52 nuclear bombers and C-151 transport planes. (London *Times*, March 29, 1983; *London Observer*, March 6, 1983.)

Somalia

● Somali military officials have claimed that Ethiopia is planning to mount a new offensive into Somalia. Recently there has been only sporadic fighting along the borders and Ethiopia has denied all involvement, claiming instead that the clashes have been between the Somali army and guerrilla forces of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) which is striving to overthrow the regime of President Siad Barre. Somalia has insisted that the "SSDF do not count for anything," and "that the Ethiopian regular troops are occupying two sectors within Somalia and in each pocket they control they have between 10,000 and 12,000 men."

A military spokesman criticized the West, and the U.S. in particular, for not providing Somalia with weapons and training comparable to what Ethiopia is receiving from the Soviets. (*New York Times*, March 27, 1983.)

● The Somali government has placed a ban on the growing and use of qat, a drug commonly used by Somalis as a stimulant. The government said that it was a health hazard

and a financial drain on its users, but a more likely explanation is that it was a financial drain on the country. Most of the qat used in Somalia is imported from Kenya and Ethiopia, where cultivation of the drug has become a multi-million-dollar business. The government has imposed stiff fines for importers and growers, and offered a share of the fines as rewards to anyone who assists the authorities in apprehending violators. (Mogadishu Radio, March 21, 1983.)

Tanzania

• The details of last January's abortive coup attempt are slowly surfacing as the trials of the accused plotters continue in Dar es Salaam. So far 28 Tanzanians, including two lieutenant-generals and other high-ranking military officers, a university professor, a former ambassador, and some prominent businessmen, have been brought before the court. According to one source, the plotters had planned to assassinate President Julius Nyerere.

Officials in Tanzania are worried that many sympathizers may still be at large. Some people connected with the prosecution have received death threats and the government has been forced to place tight security around the court house.

The loyalty of the army is also in question and this has caused the consideration of proposals to supply soldiers with free cigarettes, soft drinks, and beer, which are difficult for the average Tanzanian to obtain. In mid-March, the new Prime Minister, Edward Sokoine, went to the Lugalo military barracks where he received a pledge of loyalty from the troops. (*The Economist*, March 26, 1983; *Kenya Weekly Review*, March 4, and 18, 1983.)

• About 300 people were arrested in Tanzania in early April and charged with "economic sabotage." Three senior government officials were also dismissed for failing to properly carry out government directives against the saboteurs.

The moves are believed to be the beginning of a stepped-up war against Tanzania's parallel economy. Those arrested, were said to

have been involved in smuggling of foreign currency, cattle, medicine, sugar, coffee, and other crops and scarce items.

The government had not yet decided how it would deal with the saboteurs but assurances were given that they would be fairly and humanely treated. (*London Times*, April 8, 1983; *London Guardian*, April 7, 1983.)

Uganda

• President Milton Obote has dismissed as wishful thinking claims by guerrilla groups that they control large parts of the country. The Ugandan government's official line is that the guerrillas are simply bandits who have been terrorizing civilians in a few isolated areas.

The main guerrilla group, the National Resistance Army (NRA), which is headed by Yoweri Museveni, a former Defense Minister, has been fighting in Uganda since February 1981. In early March, they claimed to have "sealed off three of the six main roads leading to Kampala." At the same time they issued a warning to all expatriates to leave the country. "The sooner they find their exit from Uganda, the better for their families," the statement signed by Museveni said. "We are not giving a warning that we are going to step up our activities."

The warning was followed by sporadic incidents of violence, including an attack on a Uganda Railways train which killed three passengers, attacks on trucks near Kampala, and a reported massacre of 30 people in two villages on the outskirts of the capital.

The guerrillas are fighting for the downfall of Obote's government, claiming that he rigged the December 1980 election which brought him to power.

In late March, a permanent secretary in the Interior Ministry was murdered in Kampala. The NRA denied responsibility and claimed that the man, Dalton Turyagenda, was shot by government soldiers. (*London Times*, March 2, 19 and 31, 1983; *Washington Post*, March 23, 1983; *London Guardian*, March 4 and 5, 1983.)

CENTRAL AFRICA

Cameroon

• President Paul Biya met with French leaders in Paris in mid-February, making his first state visit since he became President in late 1982. His primary concerns were Cameroon's trade deficit with France, which in 1982 reached \$200 million, and French approval of Cameroon's new five-year development plan.

The 1981-1986 program calls for diversification away from petroleum with new emphasis to be placed on agricultural improvements, strengthening of domestic industry, development of the Benue River Valley, and construction of a liquefied natural gas plant with a harbor complex to service it. Speaking to French investors, Biya stressed that Cameroon's political stability "assured the inviolability of private property, open competition, a just return on capital, and free transfer of profits."

Biya's trip seems to have been successful, for the French Chamber of Commerce declared that "Cameroon is one of the 20 safest countries in the world" for French investment.

Biya assumed the presidency from Ahmadou Ahidjo, but his predecessor still retains the chairmanship of the Cameroon National Union (UNC), Cameroon's political party. Ahidjo, as party chief, remains at the power center of Cameroonian politics, but his resignation split political loyalties within Cameroon.

Ahidjo, a Moslem, is from the northern part of the country while Biya is a Christian from the south, and some regional tension has resulted from Biya's succession. Moussa Yaya, the Moslem Vice President of the National Assembly, accused Ahidjo of "betraying" the north when power was turned over to Biya. To minimize Moslem dissension, Ahidjo himself, rather than Biya, dismissed Yaya in January for making the comments. By taking such actions Ahidjo apparently hopes to discourage northern resentment of Biya and to ensure stability within the country. (*Jeune Afrique Economie*, March 18, 1983;

Paris Radio, March 1, 1983; *Jeune Afrique*, February 16, 1983.)

Central African Republic

• The Central African Republic has been host to approximately 100 Chadian exiles who are loyal to ousted Chadian President Goukouni Woddeye's "Government of National Salvation" (GSN). A five-day meeting between Chadian and Central African officials in mid-March raised speculation that the Central African Republic was preparing to extradite as many as 300 of the exiles to Chad in exchange for prisoners being held in Ndjamena.

Central African Foreign Minister Jean-Louis Gervil Yambala said that the meeting dealt with matters of communication, trade, and security, but he added, "The influx of Chadian refugees into the Central African Republic at the moment that President Habré is trying to achieve national reconciliation and reconstruction, is not without problems for the stability which should figure in our relations."

Reports from the Chadian rebels which claimed that an agreement on the extradition had already been reached, were promptly denied by the Central African government. (Bangui Radio, March 17, 1983; *West Africa*, March 14, 1983; Radio Bardai, March 9, 1983.)

Congo

• Brazzaville has recently played host to a growing number of foreign firms which are interested in doing business in Congo. This is a result of the publication of a report by a British trade mission which visited Congo last October.

The report identifies three major factors in the country's economic potential: its oil reserves which could result in the production of 200,000 barrels per day by the end of the decade, the diversity of its export base, and the planning that is now underway to prepare for a post-oil economy. The report also praises the pragmatic outlook of the government of President Denis Sassou-Nguesso.

Congo's five-year plan for 1982-86 calls for the decentralization of the economy away from Brazzaville and emphasizes the construction of

roads and infrastructure.

Essential to this plan is the forestry industry which, before oil, was the mainstay of the economy. Congo began to ignore this resource as the oil revenues came in but now, in an attempt to avoid the errors of other African oil-producing states, they are re-emphasizing this high-potential industry. (*Africa Now*, March 1983; *African Business*, February 1983.)

Equatorial Guinea

• The formation of a government-in-exile was announced in mid-March by the Democratic Rally for the Liberation of Equatorial Guinea (RDLGE). The Paris-based RDLGE was organized in 1981 and its recent announcement was prompted by "the failure of different mediation attempts to form a coalition government" with the ruling Supreme Military Council. The government-in-exile will be headed by Manuel Ruben Ndongo. The remaining composition of the government was not announced at that time.

A second opposition party was formed in Madrid in late February. It is headed by Severo Omoto, the former Minister of Information and Tourism under President Teodoro Nguema Obiang. Severo said that the purpose of the party was to "embark again on a course of resistance and denunciation and, above all, to invite Obiang to reconsider the situation in the country and engage in an open dialogue with the opposition." (Madrid Radio, March 1, 1983; Agence France-Presse, March 9, 1983.)

Gabon

• In early March, the cabinet was reshuffled at a congress of Gabon's only political party, the Gabon Democratic Party (PDG). The new post of third deputy prime minister was given to Emile Kassa-Mapsi, former head of the Economic and Social Council. The Ministry of National Orientation was eliminated and its chief, Leon Auge, was named instead to a prominent post in the party. Gen. Georges Nkoma became Minister of Justice, making him the third military officer in the government, while the commanders-in-chief of the security

forces became full members of the PDG Central Committee.

In a speech at the congress, President Omar Bongo declared his continuing opposition to the legalization of political parties other than the PDG, saying that the single party had put an end to the "anarchy" of "political pluralism." (*West Africa*, March 14 and 21, 1983; Libreville Radio, March 3, 7 and 9, 1983.)

Rwanda

• A meeting between Rwandan and Ugandan delegations to discuss the problem of Rwandan refugees ended in mid-March without any progress toward a solution. The estimated 100,000 refugees are Rwandan nationals who left their country to escape ethnic violence in 1959 and 1973 and settled in Uganda. They have again fled from violence, this time in Uganda, and are now living in camps on both sides of the Uganda-Rwanda border.

Uganda denied allegations that the refugees had been forced from their homes under government orders but insisted nonetheless that they should all be resettled in Rwanda. Rwanda considers the refugees, many of whom were born in Uganda, to be Ugandan citizens and the government has agreed to settle only those refugees that it recognizes as its own citizens.

Though the two delegations did issue a joint communique recognizing the problem and pledging to work through the UN High Commission for Refugees, they were unable to come to an agreement on the resolution of specific problems. (Kampala Radio, March 12, 1983; London *Times*, March 10, 1983.)

Zaire

• Less than two years after it severed relations with De Beers, the South African mining giant, Zaire announced in early March that a new agreement had been signed giving De Beers' marketing division, the Central Selling Organization, exclusive rights to sell diamonds from Miba, Zaire's largest mine.

When Zaire broke away from De Beers after accusing the company of interfering in its production plans, it was seen as a step toward reducing the dependence of black

African states on South Africa. But declining revenues, and the fear of losing its market share as new mines in other countries come into production, prompted Zaire to return to the De Beers conglomerate. If diamond prices rise this year, as they are expected to, the economic gains for Zaire could be significant.

In order to combat losses of diamond revenues from smuggling, the Zaire government will begin allowing authorized diamond dealers to operate at the black market exchange rate. The result is a de facto devaluation. (*Financial Times*, March 15, 1983; *The Economist*, March 12, 1983; *London Guardian*, March 9, 1983.)

• A report published in March by **Amnesty International** accused the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko of gross violations of human rights. According to the report, "Most political prisoners in Zaire are held without charge or trial, and many are tortured. a number of them have been killed deliberately while others have died of brutal treatment or lack of food or medical care."

The report charged that over 200 hundred people were arrested last year, often for doing as little as criticizing the government in private conversations.

Many of the violations were attributed to the Military Intelligence and Security Service which "appears to be answerable solely to Mobutu." Also accused of torture were the civilian security police, the National Intelligence Service, and the National Center of Research and Investigation.

An Amnesty International report was published in May 1980 but according to an Amnesty official, the authorities in Zaire "have made no attempt to carry out any measures suggested by Amnesty International to safeguard detainees." (*Amnesty Action*, March 1983; *London Times*, March 2, 1983.)

Zambia

• President Kenneth Kaunda went to Paris, London, and Washington in late March to explain and seek support for black Africa's positions on Namibia and South Africa, and to solicit aid for Zambia's bankrupt

economy. (For details of the South Africa and Namibia discussions, see the interview with Kaunda on page 4.)

In London, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher personally authorized \$14.6 million in aid for Zambia. Observers noted that Thatcher felt indebted to Kaunda for his role in helping to bring about one of her early political successes—the Lancaster House negotiations—which led to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. Zambia was also among the states which criticized Argentina for the invasion of the Falklands last year.

In Washington, in addition to discussions with President Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz, Kaunda met with Peter McPherson, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), who told him that the Reagan administration may ask for an increase in aid beyond the \$29 million that has already been requested from Congress this year. McPherson praised Zambia's recently instituted austerity measures which included currency devaluation, limits to wage increases, and an end to food subsidies.

Later the Reagan administration announced that some types of Zambian copper would be given duty-free status in the U.S.

On his last day in the U.S., Kaunda met with officials of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and received indications that the IMF would approve a \$230 million loan this year.

Even if all of the expected assistance reaches Zambia, the country's economic recovery will remain a tenuous prospect. The economy is still completely dependent on the copper industry which continues to lose between \$600 and \$800 for every ton that it sells. The devaluation of Zambia's currency may help to absorb some of the losses but unless copper prices rise substantially, the effects of the devaluation will be largely negated. Though copper prices are expected to rise by the end of this year, there is no certainty about how much the increase will be, nor are analysts discounting the possibility of a further drop. (*London Times*, April 4, 1983; *Christian Science Monitor*, March 30, 1983; *Financial Times*, March

24, 1983; *African Business*, March 1983.)

NORTHERN AFRICA

Algeria

Though it appears that increased cooperation will result from the late February meeting between Algerian President Chadli Benjedid and Morocco's King Hassan, the issue of prime importance in their relationship remains the Western Sahara. Algeria stressed in the **summit meeting** that it could not speak on behalf of the Polisario front while Morocco has not changed its position of insisting that it will only negotiate directly with Algeria.

Despite the apparent intransigence on both sides, the possibility for a settlement has been improved as a result of the summit meeting. Algeria has emphasized that it still wants self-determination, not necessarily independence, for the Sahrawi people. If there were a legitimate vote in favor of confederation with Morocco, Algeria has stated that it would be acceptable. In 1981, Hassan also agreed to hold a referendum in the Western Sahara on the issue and although this has not materialized, it is hoped that this will provide a basis for further negotiation.

The negotiations with Morocco are only one of the diplomatic initiatives that Chadli has taken recently. Diplomatic and economic relations with the U.S. and other Western nations have been rapidly and steadily improving as a result of his efforts.

Algeria has recently been involved in trade discussions with France, Spain, Italy, and the U.S. An official U.S. economic brief stated that Algeria now "offers excellent business prospects for U.S. exporters."

Most of the trade negotiations involve the export of Algerian liquefied natural gas, which is playing a more important role in the economy as planners have sought to decrease dependence on oil exports during the last few years. Because of this policy, Algeria is not expecting the recent oil price drops to have much effect upon its development plans.

Despite a drop in the price of natural gas, Algeria expects its export

earnings to rise because of the recent agreements concluded with Italian and American firms to sell increased amounts of the resource. (*Financial Times*, February 25 and March 23 and 30, 1983; *Africa Research Bulletin*, March 15, 1983; *Christian Science Monitor*, March 1, 1983.)

Egypt

● President Hosni Mubarak made a five-day trip to China at the beginning of April, the first visit ever by an Egyptian head of state. Mubarak came at the invitation of Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang, who had made Egypt the first stop on his African itinerary in December. China agreed to supply Egypt with fighter planes while the talks in Beijing explored other areas of potential cooperation.

In Cairo, the trial of several hundred members of Al Jihad, the Moslem fundamentalist group, resumed in mid-February. In March, 176 of the defendants were indicted on charges of conspiring to overthrow the government after the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in October 1981.

The February conviction of Sadat's half-brother Esmat on charges of corruption is continuing to affect Egyptian politics. In March, a Cairo court of ethics found that three cabinet members had been part of the "Mafia-style" network allegedly headed by Esmat. A cabinet shake-up resulted within 48 hours.

The Minister of Supplies, Ahmed Noh, was replaced by Dr. Mohamed Nagi Shatlah, and the Minister of Industry, Fuad Abu Zaghla, was succeeded by Mohamed el-Ghoury. The third minister accused of graft, Soliman Metwalli Soliman, has claimed to be innocent and has thus far been allowed to keep his post. In the reshuffle, Mubarak named Saad Maamun to fill the newly-created post of Minister of Local Government. The dismissal of the high officials is meant as a signal that, in Mubarak's "war on corruption," no one is above the law.

Meanwhile Egypt announced several important agreements on financial assistance. The World Bank will double its loans to Egypt over the next five years to \$600 million annually, while Canada has com-

mitted itself to increase trade and to finance more development projects in Egypt. In addition, the U.S. allocated Egypt \$1.25 billion for improvement of water systems in Cairo and Alexandria, and Great Britain signed a memorandum of economic cooperation providing Egypt with a \$25 million grant and \$75 million toward trade. (*New York Times*, February 20, March 11, 15 and April 1, 1983; *Le Monde*, March 25, 1983; Cairo Radio, February 15 and March 15, 22 and 24, 1983; *London Times*, March 15, 1983; *London Guardian*, March 11, 1983; *Washington Post*, March 11, 1983.)

Libya

● In March, Libya signed a treaty of "peace and friendship" with the Soviet Union. The Russian treaty is apparently a reaction to the American show of force in the region only weeks before. In February, the U.S. had dispatched AWACs surveillance planes to Egypt and placed the aircraft carrier *Nimitz* off the Libyan coast in response to intelligence which indicated that Libyan leader Col. Muammar Qaddafi was plotting to overthrow Sudan's President Nimeiry and to invade Chad.

The American moves put Qaddafi "back in his box," in the words of American Secretary of State Shultz, but the Libyan leader may have gained more than he lost. Qaddafi's unpopularity with the conservative Arab states had long discouraged the Russians from signing any formal agreements with Libya, but the American show of force apparently disquieted the Soviets enough that they agreed to a treaty with Qaddafi. Furthermore, Qaddafi claimed that Washington had "set a trap" for Libya by attempting to provoke a confrontation, and this charge gained considerable sympathy for Qaddafi at the non-aligned conference in New Delhi.

Meanwhile, Egypt and the Sudan, both embarrassed and fearing further isolation from their neighbors, played down the entire issue and asked the U.S. to withdraw its forces.

After the incident, the Department of Commerce turned down

Boeing's proposed \$600 million sale of passenger jet airliners to Libya. (*Jeune Afrique*, March 23, 1983; *Financial Times*, March 21, 1983; *Economist*, February 26, 1983; *Wall Street Journal*, February 25, 1983; Cairo Radio, February 22, 1983.)

Morocco

● Since the late February meeting between King Hassan of Morocco and Algeria's Chadli Benjedid, the two countries have made steady progress toward full normalization of relations.

In early April the border was opened to allow Moroccans in Algeria and Algerians in Morocco to return to their homes. The move has also inspired talk about a Maghreb common market and the construction of a gas pipeline between the two countries.

Relations were severed in 1976 when Algeria began backing the Polisario guerrillas who have been fighting against Morocco for Western Sahara's independence. For the last two years, however, the conflict has been at a stalemate with Morocco holding about 10 percent of the country and the guerrillas in control of the rest.

While Morocco and Algeria still differ on the resolution of the Sahara crisis, they are willing to lay the issue aside in the interest of forging economic and political links.

Other meetings between leaders of the two countries are being planned. (*Middle East*, April 1983; *Financial Times*, March 3 and April 7, 1983; *Christian Science Monitor*, March 28, 1983.)

Sudan

● While the debate continues in Sudan about whether last February's "Libyan threat" was genuine, there are growing fears that a series of violent incidents in the southern part of the country present a more serious problem which could lead to a renewal of the Sudanese civil war.

A guerrilla group, called Anya-Nya II, after the original Anya-Nya which waged war against the Khartoum government for 17 years until 1972, has been involved in an increasing number of attacks in recent months. They are believed to be responsible for the killing of 11 mer-

chants from the north in the southern town of Awil in January and for robbing a group of expatriate oil workers after accusing them of stealing the south's oil wealth. There was also a report of a skirmish between a northern and a southern garrison of the Sudan army.

Joseph Lagu, the leader of Anya-Nya during the civil war, said that the new guerrilla group is "a bunch of outlaws" without connection to his former army. Other sources, however, believe that Anya-Nya II has widespread and growing support.

The incidents of violence were followed by the arrests of a number of southern officials in mid-March. Among them were Dol Acuil, the regional vice president, and Matthew Obur, the speaker of the regional assembly. Acuil had previously spoken out against proposals to divide the south into separate administrative regions and against another move to bring Sudan into confederation with Egypt.

The southerners, who are black and predominantly non-Moslem, oppose these proposals, which they fear would increase the dominance of the Arab-Moslem north. Despite more than ten years of relative peace, and the attainment of semi-autonomous status by the southern region, the southerners still feel victimized and discriminated against by the government in Khartoum. Open opposition to the regime of President Gaafar al-Nimeiry has been increasing in the south and on his last visit to the region he was confronted by rock-throwing demonstrators.

It was against this background that Nimeiry was nominated for another six-year term of office in early March by the Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU), Sudan's only legal political party. He was due to stand unopposed in a national plebiscite in April.

Observers noted that party unity may have been strengthened by the "Libyan threat" which coincided with the opening of the SSU convention. "An external threat is always a convenient theme for Nimeiry," said a senior Sudanese politician.

The Libyan crisis also helped Su-

dan secure increased military aid from the U.S. The aid package, which was due to be reduced to \$25 million from \$100 million, was subsequently raised to \$60 million.

The "threat" has also resulted in increased economic aid for Sudan. Total aid from Western donors is expected to reach \$900 million this year despite the country's \$8 billion debt and its proven inability to pay. An American who was a member of the team which rescheduled Sudan's debt last January said, "Sudan is just as broke this time around as last time. . . If the rescheduling payments are not met this time, the country will collapse."

In fact, it is unlikely that the Western nations will allow Sudan, which is precariously perched between unfriendly Libya and Ethiopia, to collapse. (*Financial Times*, March 23, 1983; *The Economist*, March 19, 1983; *London Guardian*, March 5 and 14, 1983; *New York Times*, March 10, 1983; *Washington Post*, February 19, 1983.)

● Two men were arrested in early April in connection with the alleged Libyan plot to overthrow the Sudanese government. The arrests in eastern Sudan brought to 64 the number of people being held.

Six men, including three Libyans, were arrested in late March in connection with the plot. A government spokesman reported that all six confessed to being Libyan agents who were sent to engage in subversive activities in Sudan. State security reports have also claimed that arms and ammunition had been seized. (*London Guardian*, April 5, 1983.)

Tunisia

● At the end of President Chadli Benjedid's mid-March visit to Tunisia, he and President Habib Bourguiba signed several agreements on improving relations between their two countries. The leaders approved a "treaty of fraternity and concord," an agreement on the demarcation of their common border, commitments to establish industrial projects under mutual ownership, and programs for scientific, technical, and military cooperation. Chadli and Bourguiba also scheduled a late April meeting in Algiers

to discuss coordinating the central banks and treasuries of the two countries.

Relations between Tunisia and Algeria had reportedly soured following Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali's visit to the U.S. in early 1982. Algeria saw the visit as an indication that Tunisia was joining with the U.S. and Morocco to oppose the Polisario movement which Algeria supports. But Chadli's recent talks with Morocco's King Hassan, and the selection of Tunisia as the headquarters of the PLO, provided new ground for agreement. (*Algiers Radio*, March 20, 1983; *Jeune Afrique*, March 2, 1983.)

Western Sahara

● Recent events, especially the thaw in relations between Algeria and Morocco, have led to increased optimism about the possibility of a negotiated settlement of the Saharan crisis.

Though the improved Morocco-Algeria relations prompted some speculation that Algeria was decreasing support for the Polisario movement, the notion appears to be without foundation. A Polisario official, speaking on Algiers radio, said that his organization was "receptive to, and supported every initiative to revive direct negotiations between the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic and Morocco to find a peaceful settlement of the crisis" which exists between them. He reiterated Polisario's full confidence in Algeria.

The war in the Western Sahara has been at a stalemate for the last two years and all of the parties involved seem to have come to a tacit agreement that the time has come to push for a negotiated settlement. In April, plans were being made for a Moroccan-Algerian-Mauritanian summit to lay the groundwork for future negotiations. (*Christian Science Monitor*, March 28, 1983; *Algiers Radio*, March 2, 1983; *Washington Post*, February 24, 1983.)

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Angola

● In mid-March, guerrillas of the

Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) kidnapped 64 Czech and 20 Portuguese civilian nationals from a paper mill where some of them were serving as technicians. Also among the hostages were 21 wives and 21 children of the Czech technicians.

Angolan troops attempted to pursue the captors but were called off after being warned by UNITA that the hostages' lives were being placed in danger. UNITA said that the children would be released to the Red Cross as soon as they reached a "liberated area" and the others would be held in exchange for one Irish and six British mercenaries who were being held in Luanda.

A Luanda radio report said that "this action could not have been possible without Western countries' complicity, and support from South Africa . . ." Johannesburg Radio countered by reporting that a British journalist from the *London Times* had found "irrefutable proof" that UNITA was receiving support from Zambia, Zaire, Ivory Coast, Tunisia, and Egypt. It was also reported that Nigeria had been approached for assistance.

In mid-March, an Angolan delegation met with U.S. officials in Paris to discuss issues regarding Namibia's independence. Angola also reported that there were discussions about the normalization of relations with the U.S. During the discussions, Angola reaffirmed its position that the presence of Cuban troops within its borders should have no bearing on the Namibia discussions. (Luanda Radio, March 18 and 26, 1983, *London Times*, March 22, 1983, Johannesburg Radio, March 16, 1983.)

Botswana

● Botswana has claimed that about 50 refugees per day are arriving from Matabeleland in Zimbabwe and settling in a camp at Dukwe near the border. Botswana has notified Zimbabwe that the acceptance of the refugees does not mean that Botswana is trying to interfere in Zimbabwe's internal affairs.

Zimbabwe has charged that many of the "refugees" are fugitives and army deserters who plan to use the camp to stage raids across the bor-

der. A reporter from a London newspaper observed that most of those crossing the border were young men between the ages of 20 and 30 and that Zimbabwe's suspicions were well-founded.

Botswana has insisted that the refugees do not carry arms and a spokesman has pledged that any refugees found plotting against Zimbabwe would be repatriated. (Johannesburg Radio, March 28, 1983; *London Times*, March 8, 1983.)

Lesotho

● Tension has increased between Lesotho and South Africa after claims by the Maseru government that four raids were carried out in late March by South Africa, whose territory completely surrounds Lesotho.

Pretoria denied the raids and Lesotho's allegations lost some credibility when it was claimed that seven captured South African policemen had been freed without the knowledge of Lesotho's police commissioner, Maj. Gen. Shadrack Matela.

Ever since South African commandos raided Maseru last December, killing 42 banned African National Congress exiles and Lesotho citizens, Prime Minister Leabua Jonathan has stepped up charges that Pretoria is trying to destabilize his government. Last month, Jonathan said it "appeared that South Africa would be satisfied only if Lesotho turned into a bantustan."

Throughout March, Lesotho claimed that an attack by South Africa was imminent. The government also said Pretoria was waging a "smear campaign" against South African refugees living in Lesotho, charging that letters were being circulated by the South African security police with the aim of giving the impression that some exiles were police agents.

One target allegedly was Thozamile Botha, founder and former leader of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization, who fled South Africa after being detained and banned and is now an ANC member. The Lesotho government said the letters were ploys by Pretoria's security police "to sow confusion and mistrust among the refugees."

(*Sowetan*, March 29, 1983; Maseru Radio, February 23, March 20, 23 and 27, 1983.)

Malawi

● Dr. Attati Mpakati, the exiled leader of the Socialist League of Malawi (Lesoma), was assassinated in Zimbabwe in late March. Mpakati, who left Malawi after it became independent in 1964, and has served as Lesoma's leader ever since, survived an earlier attempt on his life in 1979. The police in Zimbabwe said that they have no idea who the assassin is.

There are two other Malawi opposition groups in exile; the Malawi Freedom Movement (Mafremo) and the Congress for the Second Republic. Mafremo's leaders have been on trial in Blantyre since 1981 on charges of subversion. (*London Guardian*, April 4, 1983.)

Mozambique

● Guerrillas of the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), with the backing of South Africa, have been steadily increasing their activities aimed at the destabilizing the Mozambique government. In the last three years, the MNR has grown from being a small band of rebels to what was recently described as "a disciplined guerrilla army of about 10,000 men, operating in most parts of Mozambique."

Mozambique's Foreign Minister, Joachim Chissano, said recently, "If international measures are not taken to stop South Africa from escalating its aggression, Mozambique may require more military assistance from socialist countries." There has been some speculation that Chissano was hinting that Cuban troops might be called in. Mozambique is expecting additional troops from Zimbabwe, perhaps as many as 2000, and there are already 400 Tanzanians and 500 Soviets, Cubans, and other East Europeans serving as advisors.

MNR activity is exacerbating the effects of a drought which is beginning to take its toll in Mozambique. A Western agronomist predicted, "There will be starvation in Mozambique." The MNR has consistently raided and looted food stores, mined the roads and railways which are needed for food transport, and

harassed farmers. According to government estimates, the drought will reduce food supplies by 105,000 tons this year, and guerrilla activity will be responsibility for the loss of 145,000 tons. (*The Economist*, March 26, 1983; *New York Times*, March 18, 1983; *Kenya Sunday Nation*.)

Swaziland

• The Swazi Prime Minister, Prince Mabandla Dlamini, was dismissed in late March by order of Queen Dzeliwe and replaced by Prince Bhekimpi Dlamini. Though the details of the dismissal remained sketchy for some weeks after the incident, the story slowly emerged.

Mabandla, who was appointed to the post of Prime Minister by the late King Sobhuza in 1979, had upset some members of the Supreme National Council (Liqoqo) by launching investigations into corruption. More importantly, he had doubts about a land deal with South Africa which would have increased the size of the kingdom by 40 percent by adding 3000 square miles of territory which is now controlled by South Africa and inhabited by ethnic Swazi and Zulu populations. Under the proposed land transfer, the people would be forced to become Swazi citizens. In exchange, Swaziland would agree to crack down on ANC activity within its territory.

The land deal was supported by the late king and it has the support of the traditional members of the Liqoqo. Mabandla and some of the "modernist" members of the cabinet felt, however, that the agreement with South Africa would further isolate Swaziland in the African community. The new Prime Minister is a staunch supporter of the land deal.

For several days, Mabandla refused to believe that his dismissal had the approval of the queen, but upon receiving the word from her, he and his family left Swaziland for South Africa. He has not announced his future plans. (*London Times*, March 21, 22, 28 and 30, 1983; *London Observer*, March 27, 1983.)

South Africa

• Police said that Tembuyise Simon Mndawe, who they alleged was a

banned African National Congress insurgent, "apparently hanged himself" in detention in March. He had been detained last February under the Internal Security Act after police said they found him in possession of a Soviet-bloc submachine gun, ammunition and ANC literature.

Police said Mndawe, who was the 57th person to die in security police custody, had made a confession before a magistrate the day after his detention. The police said they were holding him while they prepared a case involving Mndawe and five other alleged ANC insurgents who had infiltrated South Africa to carry out sabotage.

Also during March, a 20-year-old woman awaiting trial on a pass law offense died in Soweto's Baragwanath hospital.

Louisa Mareme was a diabetic and died ten days after her arrest, on the day she was admitted to hospital. Mareme family members, knowing she did not have her insulin, made a frantic but vain attempt to locate her.

Black community leaders expressed outrage at the death, calling it "a political incident" and "a maddening reminder of what the pass laws are all about." (*Sowetan*, March 9, 10, 17, 24 and 25, 1983.)

• The banned African National Congress has claimed responsibility for a bomb explosion that damaged the new Natal province supreme court building in Pietermaritzburg in March. The old supreme court building, where political trials are held, was damaged by a bomb in February.

The bomb went off after the building was closed to the public and a night watchman was slightly injured by glass splinters. (*Sowetan*, March 23, 1983; *Addis Ababa Radio Freedom*, March 22, 1983.)

• The leader of the black village of Driefontein, whose 5,000 residents have been outspokenly campaigning against forced resettlement to the impoverished homelands, was killed by the police in early April.

Saul Mkhize, 48, was shot dead during an argument with police at a protest meeting. In March, Mkhize said the presence of the police, in camouflage uniforms and heavily armed, had been used to "intimi-

date people."

Driefontein's villagers had made it clear to the government that they would not move from what Pretoria considers an unacceptable "black spot" in white South Africa, 200 miles southeast of Johannesburg.

"We paid for our land and wish to keep it," Mkhize told the *New York Times*. "We will not own the new land to which we are supposed to move . . . Would they move white people in this way—by buses to barren land with no roads, no water, no schools, no shops, nothing?"

Driefontein is one of the few places in South Africa where blacks own land, having purchased it before the 1913 law which banned black land ownership. (*New York Times*, March 6 and April 4, 1983.)

• There were more than 29,000 roadblocks set up by the police last year, and quantities of arms and explosives were seized, according to the Minister of Law and Order, Louis le Grange.

The announcement came as the Police Amendment Bill was passing through parliament. This legislation will give the police absolute power to search anyone or any vehicle on any public road in South Africa at any time, without a warrant. Currently, the police can conduct warrantless searches only within six miles of the country's borders.

An opposition spokesman asked in parliament why the government did not just remove all restrictions on police search powers. "Why not let them have carte blanche to move into your house?" he said.

Le Grange said roadblocks were important for "detecting and preventing . . . communist-made terror weapons from reaching their destination." He said that in addition to the weapons seized, police also made 4,000 arrests last year and recovered hundreds of stolen vehicles. (*Johannesburg Star*, March 5, 1983; *London Guardian*, March 4, 1983.)

• Prime Minister Pieter Botha's announcement of a referendum for white voters on the proposed constitutional reforms was seen as a maneuver to defuse the extreme right, which is challenging the ruling National Party in three critical by-elections in May.

The draft constitutional bill was due to be published in April, before the by-elections. Although the outlines of the scheme are well known—a tricameral parliament of whites, Coloureds (mixed-race) and Indian MPs with the power in white control—the specifics are not.

In particular, the government will have to spell out whether the appointment of Coloured and Indian ministers is just theoretical or actually planned. This issue was a major reason why Dr. Andries Treurnicht and other diehard MPs left the National Party.

The referendum is scheduled for September or October, long after the constitutional reform bill will have passed parliament.

The Coloured Labor Party, which by accepting the reforms has split the Coloured community, has demanded a similar referendum. A recent poll conducted by the South African Human Sciences Research Council showed that 62 percent of Coloureds endorsed negotiations with the government on the basis of the constitutional proposals. A majority also said, though, that urban blacks should also eventually be included in the limited power-sharing plan. (*Christian Science Monitor*, April 4, 1983; *London Times*, April 2, 1983; *Johannesburg Radio*, March 14, 1983.)

- Southern Sun Hotel Holdings, which runs the Sun City casino complex in BophuthaTswana, intends to develop a similar venture in Atlantic City, N.J.

Southern Sun has already paid an American company \$26 million for 8.2 acres of land, development plans, permits and licenses for a proposed 1,000-room hotel-casino center. But the agreement is subject to fulfillment of certain conditions, such as approval by the New Jersey authorities and the securing of loan financing for the \$250 million development.

The Sun City complex in the BophuthaTswana homeland made "independent" by Pretoria is considered controversial, partly because of the enormous fees it has paid American and other foreign artists and athletes to entertain in South Africa. (*Johannesburg Star*, March 12, 1983.)

- The Ciskei homeland made "independent" by Pretoria claims that it is to receive "special weapons and know-how" from Israel despite denials by Israel's Foreign Ministry and its embassy in South Africa. The embassy said Israel did not recognize the so-called independent homelands and had no dealings with them.

But Ciskei's leader, Lennox Sebe, refuted Israel's denial. On his return from a trip to Israel in March, he said Israel and Ciskei would have closer cooperation. He said Israel had donated a police dog to his brother, Lieut. Gen. Charles Sebe, the security police chief.

Sebe added that Israel had sold to Ciskei, at a "nominal fee," a twin-engine jet previously used by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. (*Sowetan*, March 10, 1983; *Johannesburg Radio*, March 4, 1983; *Israeli Radio*, March 4, 1983.)

Transkei, another "independent" homeland, has rejected South African attempts to persuade it to accept 1,000 Cape Town-area squatters. Transkei's prime minister, George Matanzima, said Pretoria had tried to link the issue of taking the squatters with a multi-million rand Transkeian employment project.

- The drought devastating a broad swath of southern Africa has been termed an "economic disaster" in South Africa, the region's agricultural giant.

South Africa's maize, or corn, crop has failed, down to an estimated 4.7 million tons this year, compared with about 14 million tons last year. Because the yield is so low, South Africa, which usually exports maize to neighboring black nations, will actually have to import the food this year. As for the neighbors, because their harvests are also down, they will have to import far more than in previous years and seek international aid. Pretoria's foreign exchange loss on maize exports will be more than \$800 million.

The effect on South Africans, particularly blacks, will be harsh. The price of maize has already been raised 26 percent.

Another drought-related problem is an expected increase in the financial collapse of many farmers. Total farm indebtedness is currently

some \$6 billion, an average of about \$90,000 for each farmer.

In the impoverished homelands, the drought could lead to starvation. Pretoria is providing a total of \$91 million in drought relief to six homelands—Lebowa, Gazankulu, KwaZulu, QwaQwa, KwaNdebele and KaNgwane—and the army is transporting about 260,000 gallons of drinking water weekly to Ciskei and Transkei.

The homelands have been described as "almost unbelievable misery" because of the drought. There is not enough feed for livestock and an estimated 800,000 head of cattle have died of starvation.

In Namibia, the agricultural sector called the effects "catastrophic" and the territory may need more than \$100 million in drought relief. Thirty percent of Namibia's farmers were described as fighting for survival and 80 percent of the 2.5 million sheep were said to be facing starvation. (*Wall Street Journal*, April 1, 1983; *Johannesburg Star*, March 5, 12 and 19, 1983; *Johannesburg Radio*, March 8, 18, 21 and 24, 1983.)

- The government has decided to sell about 400,000 state-owned houses it built in the 1950s and 1960s to the present low-income black tenants. Another 100,000 homes will be offered to poor white and Coloured (mixed-race) tenants.

The houses are being sold at a 40 percent discount and blacks can own their homes in the townships, but not the land—they can only lease the land for 99 years. So far, the 99-year leasehold has proved disappointing from the government's point of view, with only several thousand houses sold on that basis.

The sale, which includes 40,000 houses in Soweto, will be financed privately or by the government and apparently signals Pretoria's intention to phase out state-subsidized housing. However, critics say the scheme could collapse if the finance costs turn out to be significantly higher than rentals. They also say the plan does not relieve the government from the responsibility of building new houses at a time of massive housing shortages.

In Soweto, electrification is expected to be completed next year, but at a price to residents. To pay off the \$191 million loan for the project, every township household, whether it has electricity or not, will have to pay an \$18 a month surcharge. By 1987, though, Soweto will have its own \$54 million privately built entertainment complex. (*Sowetan*, March 3, 11 and 23, 1983; *South African Digest*, March 11 and 18, 1983.)

● South Africa's budget of \$19.3 billion this year includes a 15.9 percent increase in military spending, to about \$3 billion.

Education for all races will also receive about \$3 billion this year, a 13 percent jump. There was no breakdown on the expenditures for black education, but total education spending has risen 283 percent since 1976.

The government also abolished, beginning in March 1984, separate income tax rates for black taxpayers, who were paying more than whites. Finance Minister Owen Horwood said that all South Africans, irrespective of race or color, would be taxed on the same basis.

● The South African army has proposed a lengthy alternative service for religious objectors rather than jail, as is the case now.

The army does not recognize conscientious objection on any grounds, religious, moral or political, and in February, for example, 66 Jehovah's Witnesses were jailed at an army base for three years when they refused to do military training. At present, virtually the only way COs can avoid the draft is by leaving the country.

The new proposals include four categories of objectors: noncombatants, who would wear uniforms but not carry weapons and serve the same term as draftees; nonmilitarists, who would not wear uniforms and serve 1½ times regular military service; nonmilitarists, who were unwilling to serve the army in any capacity, would work in hospitals and serve twice as long as regular conscripts; and political objectors, who would be put in civilian jails for twice the length of regular service, probably eight years. (*Johannesburg Star*, March 5 and 19, 1983.)

● An analysis of the Johannesburg stock exchange reveals that the giant conglomerate, Anglo American Corp., controls more than half of all the listed shares.

Anglo controls (defined as owning 30 percent or more of the company) 70 listed firms, a market value of \$42 billion, or 52.5 percent of all the shares on the exchange. Anglo owns outright \$20.5 billion worth of shares in domestic companies.

The next largest controlling company, Sanlam, an insurance firm, lags well behind, with a control stake of \$7.4 billion in 38 companies.

The report by *McGregor's Who Owns Whom* also discloses that foreign individuals and companies control 58 South African firms with a market value of \$4.3 billion. (*South African Digest*, March 3, 1983.)

Zimbabwe

● The Zimbabwe government's tough measures to stamp out "dissident" activity in the Matabeleland province came under fire from the country's Catholic bishops, who in an Easter pastoral letter, accused the army of killing "hundreds and hundreds of innocent people" in a "reign of terror."

Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, defending government policy on the treatment of dissidents, told an annual meeting of heads of Christian denominations in Harare in early April, "We shall proceed with ever-increasing vigor to crush [the dissidents.]" The bishops' allegations were dismissed by the government as "irresponsible, contrived and propagandistic."

The Catholic church was the first independent body to corroborate reports in the foreign press in February and March that the army's North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade had killed numerous civilians in an attempt to eliminate the dissidents. The dissidents have been blamed for a continuing cycle of violence, including the deaths of up to 200, robberies and kidnappings, in Matabeleland, the stronghold of Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU).

The government has consistently denied that the Fifth Brigade killed innocent people who were neither

dissidents nor collaborators, although, following a late March meeting with the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Mugabe pledged that the alleged atrocities would be investigated.

Although many observers doubt that the dissident movement takes its orders from ZAPU, Mugabe, in a tough-worded speech at a late March rally in Harare, said he was giving the party "final warning to disarm its dissidents." If it did not, he said, "We will disarm it as a party." Dissident activity began early last year when Nkomo and several senior ZAPU officials were dismissed from the cabinet after the discovery of arms caches on ZAPU-owned property, which was cited by the government as evidence of a coup plot.

Nkomo fled Zimbabwe for London in March, alleging that the government was planning to have him assassinated. Meanwhile, other ZAPU leaders, including Josiah Chinamano, acting president in Nkomo's absence, said that a merger between ZAPU and Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) would be the "shortest way of welding" the Shona people, who overwhelmingly support ZANU, with the Ndebele. Mugabe aims to eventually institute a one-party system of government in Zimbabwe, however, he ruled out talks with ZAPU as long as it played a "double game"—appearing to cooperate with the government while organizing insurgency in Matabeleland.

The Prime Minister also maintained that Nkomo is free to return to Zimbabwe without fears for his safety, but said, "My government is not going to take any steps to bring him back. It is not our duty or responsibility."

Meanwhile in late March, charges against six of the seven men accused of treason were dropped. The high court ruled, however, that Dumiso Dabengwa, once head of intelligence in Nkomo's now-disbanded army, still had to answer the treason charge. All seven men will stand trial on the second of the government's charges—illegal possession of arms. (*The Economist*, April 9, 1983; *London Guardian*, March 31, 1983; *Financial Times*, March 23, 28 and 30, 1983.)

Key to Southern Africa's Economic Independence

BY JOHN EDLIN

Let us now face the economic challenge. Let us form a powerful front against poverty and all of its offshoots—hunger, ignorance, disease, crime, and exploitation of man by man. Let us form an African movement to wage a militant struggle against poverty... sharpening new tools, forging new weapons, working out strategy and tactics for fighting poverty and improving the quality of life of our peoples.

—Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, opening a 1980 summit conference of southern and central African heads of state.

The tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho, host for this year's annual conference of Africa's newest and perhaps most adventurous regional club, is a microcosm of how newly independent majority-ruled states are locked in an economic stranglehold by the country they want to break free from — white-ruled South Africa. Independent from Britain since October 1966, Lesotho is enveloped by economically and militarily powerful South Africa in more ways than one. The kingdom is a

John Edlin, Zimbabwe correspondent for the Associated Press, has reported from most countries in sub-Saharan Africa over the past two decades.



Photo: Mike Williams

Edgar Pisani, development commissioner for the EEC, told delegates that the EEC would "respond constructively" to SADCC needs

veritable island in a sea of apartheid, surrounded on all sides by South African territory. And its own economy is dominated at all levels by its big neighbor. South Africa is Lesotho's main trading partner, as it was when the kingdom was the Crown Protectorate of Basutoland. The earnings of some 140,000 Lesotho men working in South Africa's mines constitute 40 percent of the country's gross national product. And Lesotho's share in a customs union with South Africa and two other former British Protectorates, Swaziland and Botswana, provides three-quarters of the government's income.

It was to Maseru, Lesotho's capital, that several hundred delegates from nine African nations, another 30 countries, predominantly Western, and some 20 international aid organizations converged late in January to discuss how to break South Africa's armlock on southern Africa. The nine African nations — Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe — comprise the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), a regional grouping pledged to loosen ties with South Africa and strengthen links between each other.

The other nations and the aid agencies, anxious to see whether SADCC will prove to be a model for other developing regions of the world, or just another African disaster like the defunct East African Community, are the sponsors of some \$660 million in pledged aid of the estimated \$3 billion required through the 1980s.

SADCC, launched three years ago to coincide with the independence of Africa's newest nation, Zimbabwe, is seen by Western powers as a test-case for what delegates at Maseru were calling "South-South" cooperation, albeit not without considerable help from the developed world. And it is not merely bent on shrugging off the South

Milestones on the road to the creation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference:

- May 1978:** Frontline foreign ministers, meeting in Botswana, decide that with Zimbabwe's independence imminent, the time is right to "give high priority to increasing regional economic cooperation."
- July 1979:** Preliminary SADCC conference is held in Arusha, Tanzania. Studies presented covering agriculture; employment and skills; energy, water, and minerals; forestry and fisheries; trade and industry; transport and communications.
- April 1980:** Frontline states meet in Lusaka, Zambia, to sign the Lusaka Declaration formalizing SADCC. They are joined by Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe, the latter scheduled for independence on April 18.
- November 1980:** A summit meets in Maputo, Mozambique, with potential foreign government and international aid agency sponsors. Pledges of \$650 million form the foundation for SADCC.
- July 1981:** Heads of state and government meet in Harare, Zimbabwe, to approve a memorandum of understanding for the institutional framework — the summit, council of ministers, and a permanent secretariat.
- November 1981:** Senior government officials meet with donors to review progress.
- July 1982:** Heads of state and government meet in Gaborone, Botswana, and approve the appointment of Zimbabwean Arthur Blumeris as first executive secretary.
- October 1982:** Blumeris takes up his post and the Secretariat opens in Gaborone.
- January 1983:** Council of ministers and heads of state and government meet in Maseru, Lesotho.

African-tailored economic straitjacket. According to Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere, "Our purposes are not simply greater independence from South Africa. If South Africa's apartheid rule ended tomorrow, there would still be the need for the states of southern Africa to cooperate, to coordinate their transport systems, to fight foot-and-mouth disease together, to rationalize their industrial development . . ."

From the luxury Hilton Hotel on the side of a mountain in Lesotho, dele-

gates were constantly reminded of the sort of challenges that face them, for spread out before them on the plains of South Africa below were the neatly fenced and irrigated farms stretching to the horizon. From such farms, owned by wealthy whites and worked by impoverished blacks, the wheat, corn, and other foods that flood black Africa are harvested, keeping those countries reliant on the hated republic for man's most essential commodity and blunting the black governments' ability to force change in Pretoria.

Only six weeks before the conference opened, South Africa chose to remind its neighboring states of the folly of supporting black nationalist movements pledged to end minority rule in the republic. South African commandos crossed into Lesotho, infiltrated Maseru, and killed 42 people in one of their bloodiest raids ever against alleged African National Congress (ANC) targets.

The SADCC delegates, in speech after speech, made it clear that the club is strictly "an economic, not a political organization," as a published overview of the Maseru gathering characterized it. "But dependence on South Africa, compounded by South African economic and military hostility against SADCC member-states, is an economic fact that it must face," the publication, produced by SADCC's year-old permanent secretariat in the Botswana capital of Gaborone, observed. "SADCC is not organized to threaten anyone. Self-reliance and coordinated action in pursuit of common interests, not economic aggrandizement or economic sabotage, are its goals. It is clear, however, that South Africa has acted . . . to hamper the achievement of self-reliance and the pursuit of common interests within SADCC member-states."

Indeed, coincidental or not, cross-border raids by South African troops and sabotage blamed on South African agents have stepped up since SADCC was born out of the ashes of the bloody seven-year war for Zimbabwe's independence. "South Africa does not want SADCC to work," said a Western diplomat who attended the January conference, called to review the progress of projects and to plead for more aid to

launch additional ones. "A SADCC success story will hasten the end of the story of white South Africa."

Although the nine member states are among the world's poorest, they comprise 60 million people, or one-eighth of sub-Saharan Africa's population; cover five million square miles of territory studded with mineral riches and scattered lush agricultural growth; and yield a gross domestic product beyond \$20 billion a year. But together, they survive with the help of one-fifth of all Western aid to Africa, and, with the exception of Zimbabwe and Malawi, have moved from food exporters to importers since independence.

Food security, the responsibility of Zimbabwe, which despite two years of drought continues to produce corn for export, is a key to shaking off dependence on South Africa. But like other projects commissioned by SADCC, it will not be an easy task. "There is no way in the short term that we are going to meet the local food demands of this region," notes Zimbabwe's agriculture

Pledges made by individual countries to the Southern African Development Coordination Conference at its annual donor conference in Maseru, Lesotho, January 27-28, 1983:

- Canada:** Unspecified amount for agriculture, food, security, energy, training.
- Denmark:** \$25 million over three years for agriculture, transport, communications.
- Finland:** \$9 million for Nacala (Mozambique) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) port improvements.
- Greece:** \$1.2 million for agriculture, energy, infrastructure.
- Italy:** \$50 million for Maputo port (Mozambique), Mozambique-Swaziland railroad, telecommunications.
- Netherlands:** \$11.3 million for Beira port (Mozambique), food security.
- Norway:** \$17 million for energy, transport, communications.
- Sweden:** \$47 million over three years for transport, communications, agriculture, energy, education.
- United Kingdom:** \$3.1 million for Maputo port management, Lake Malawi fisheries, regional manpower training college.
- United States:** Unspecified amount for transport, communications, training.
-

minister, Denis Norman, who is one of 5,500 white farmers who produce most of the country's food, hire most of its labor force, and earn most of the foreign exchange. "But if some of the 34 proposed projects are accepted, then we will be on our way to meeting those requirements."

Each member has its own field for research and action. Angola is responsible for energy; Botswana, crop research and animal control; Lesótho, soil conservation and land utilization; Malawi, fisheries, wildlife, and forests; Mozambique, transport and communications; Swaziland, manpower; Tanzania, industrial development; Zambia, development funding and mining; and Zimbabwe, food security and security printing (banknotes).

By the end of 1982, more than 50 projects — improving ports, rebuilding roads, streamlining rail systems — were completed or underway, signaling significant progress in the efforts of SADCC. As a result, Mozambican harbors and railroads were handling about one-half of all rail traffic from Malawi and Zimbabwe, as well as daily trains from the copper mines of Zaire and Zambia — countries that two years ago moved most goods through South Africa. "We have moved a step further in our march toward economic liberation," says Botswanan President Quett Masire.

But just as Mozambique has become pivotal in the SADCC's vow to divert transport and communications routes away from South Africa, so have the former Portuguese colony's railroads, ports, and other strategic installations become vulnerable to sabotage, allegedly from South Africa and/or from antigovernment rebels of the Pretoria-backed Mozambique National Resistance. Saboteurs regularly blow up the railroads linking Zimbabwe with the Indian Ocean ports of Maputo and Beira. Oil storage tanks at Beira were destroyed in December, causing landlocked Zimbabwe's most serious fuel shortages. And locomotives are often attacked with rockets, mortars, or machine guns as they chug through the African bush.

Yet South African efforts to thwart SADCC's goals are not seen as a major setback for the region. "It's disruptive,

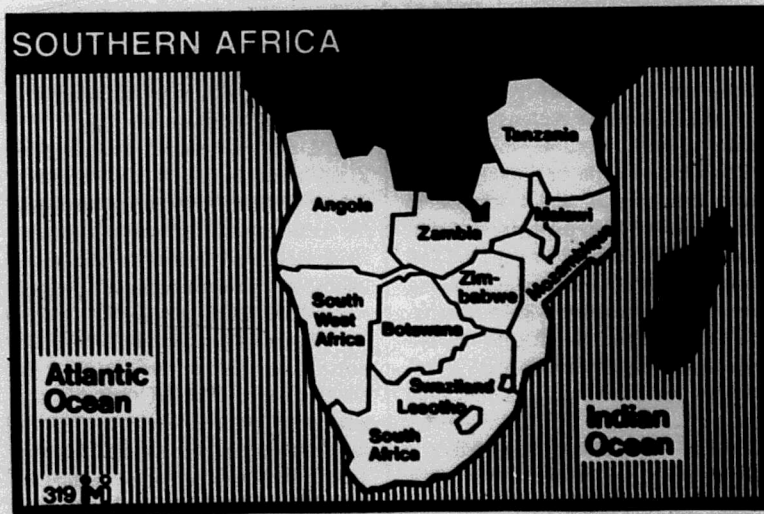
it's costly, but it's not going to set us back by years," asserts Bernard Chidzero, Zimbabwe's minister of finance, economic planning, and development. What worries SADCC members more is the whiplash of the global recession that has drawn more blood in the Third World than in developed nations. Zambian copper, Zimbabwean iron and steel, Malawian tea, Botswanan diamonds, Tanzanian coffee, Mozambican cashew nuts, Swazi sugar, and Angolan oil have all suffered from externally fixed falling prices. But at the same time, prices for imports from industrialized nations have soared. And two years' crippling drought, aggravated by alleged South African destabilization, have not helped.

However, while many of SADCC's ambitious projects have not gone beyond the blueprint state, its potential as a regional economic powerhouse is staggering. Angola, for example, produced 7 million tons of oil last year, and has offered to sell to fellow members — many of which spend up to 40 percent of export earnings on fuel — at preferential rates. Sixty percent of Africa's coal is buried in southern Africa, notably in Botswana, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. One-fifth of the continent's hydroelectric power is generated from SADCC states, 85 percent of it by the Cabora Bassa and Kariba dams straddling the Zambezi River.

Easing of trade barriers would theoretically open doors to a collective market of 60 million people. But old trade patterns in Africa are difficult to break down. Zambia, for example, sells a mere 2 percent of its exports to other African countries. Instead, Zambia prefers to trade with South Africa. "The awful truth is that South Africans pay on the nail and supply whatever we ask for," a Zambian government trade official confides. "But African countries are notorious for not paying their bills and for ignoring orders."

The region sits atop treasure chests of raw materials that could fuel an industrial revolution. Apart from the energy, there are vast untapped reserves of uranium, iron, copper, nickel, zinc, cobalt, chrome, lead, gold, and diamonds. And much of the land is either arable or potentially rich with the help of irrigation. And that potential wealth will be boosted, SADCC administrators say, when Namibia wins its independence from South Africa and becomes the tenth member of the bloc.

What is remarkable is that SADCC member states have not allowed the club to become a forum for disagreements existing among them — disagreements that doomed the East African Community to the detriment of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. Malawi plays a key role in the organization, yet remains, in the eyes of most nations in the 51-member Organization of African



Unity (OAU), a pariah for being the only black African country with diplomatic links with South Africa, as well as with Taiwan, North Korea, and Israel.

Swaziland angered fellow Africans by negotiating with Pretoria on the handing over of the Ingwavuma region. Botswana hasn't made neighboring Zimbabwe happy by giving sanctuary to dissidents loyal to opposition leader Joshua Nkomo, and then in March giving Nkomo himself refuge (before his departure for London) when he fled the country, charging that Prime Minister Robert Mugabe had sent government troops to assassinate him. And both Zambia and Tanzania have often been at loggerheads with Life President Kamuzu Banda's conservative government in Lilongwe, Malawi.

Most SADCC enthusiasts maintain that such differences are transcended by the envisaged benefits to the region. "We . . . view the evolution of SADCC as part and parcel of our own history," says Prime Minister Mugabe of Zimbabwe, whose country is cornerstone in both transport and food production. "SADCC to us is but a part of the unfolding manifestation of the historic spirit of pan-Africanism. More immediately, SADCC represents the expression in more sharply focused and telescoped form of the ideas of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East Central and Southern Africa (1958-63), the Conference of East and Central African States (1966-74), and the Frontline states." The Frontline states encompass Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia, and aimed at coordinating efforts to secure Zimbabwe's independence.

SADCC member nations see their strength, obviously, in unity. "We made it known at the beginning that we were launching an uphill struggle to free ourselves from the legacy of economic colonialism, a struggle to promote economic cooperation among ourselves," President Masire asserts. "We must pursue this struggle until our objective is achieved. Our need for economic independence is compelling and we cannot afford to fail."

But not every country in the region is welcome to join the club. Zaire, dismissed as too corrupt and too West-

ern-oriented, has repeatedly been barred from membership by the founders. "Zaire has a bad track record in international and regional organizations, including the OAU," maintains one SADCC adviser. "The consensus is that Zaire would be more hindrance than help to us."

But for a purely regional grouping, SADCC has won, in its short three years, significant qualified support from its mainly Western sponsors. "We are all committed to development for the benefit of our peoples," says Peter Mmusi, Botswana's finance minister. "Because of our different experiences, histories, and situations, the particular means we use, including the balance of state, public enterprise, joint venture, cooperative, private enterprise, and peasant contributions, vary. Each of us has sought to develop policies, approaches, and institutions appropriate to the development needs and political aspirations of our people. . . . but the final decisions on appropriate policies and institutions rest with our people."

Most foreign governments and international agencies share the view that SADCC is a worthwhile target for financial and technical assistance and an important bridge between the developed North and the struggling South. The commissioner of the European Economic Community (EEC), Edgar Pisani, describes the role of external cooperation: "Every country has to define its own future . . . to define their policy, and the EEC then has to say that, in implementing their policies, they may come up against problems. 'Define your policy,' it should say, and the EEC will help you continue it and make a success of it."

SADCC enthusiasts, including its Zimbabwean-born executive secretary, Arthur Blumeris, former ambassador to the EEC, see their efforts as a guiding light for other regions to strengthen themselves through economic partnership. "SADCC is a building block in the movement toward continental economic cooperation envisaged in the OAU's Lagos Plan of Action," says Blumeris. "Our progress in SADCC will, to an extent at least, determine the speed with which those continental goals are achieved. Moreover, the suc-

cess we achieve in this regard . . . bring nearer the realization of the objectives of the New International Economic Order."

The next SADCC summit is set for July in Maputo, followed by a donor conference in Lusaka in November. Both delegates and donors left Maseru in January confident that the SADCC club is moving in the right direction. Donor nations and agencies continue to support SADCC's efforts — at least \$150 million more was raised in Lesotho — and an important new donor, Italy, which contributed \$50 million, was added to the roster.

The organization's Western supporters were impressed by progress reports from Zimbabwe on food security, from Lesotho on soil conservation, and from Angola on energy. But donors and delegates alike threw up their hands in horror over a half-baked, nonviable, and rambling report prepared by Tanzania on industrial development — a key to trimming member states' vast import bills. "It was like an eccentric's shopping list," said one African delegate. "It was totally unworkable and unacceptable." A major criticism of the Tanzanian effort was that it failed to point out how to attract private investment to fund industrial projects. But the Tanzanians are expected to revise and rewrite their report for the next donors' conference. Another area demanding SADCC's urgent attention is the complex web of bureaucratic laws and regulations inhibiting trade between member countries. Most of the nine do the majority of their import and export business with developed Western nations. Delegates from the United States lobbied vigorously to make simpler intra-SADCC trade a priority.

SADCC supporters are quick to concede that while they are striving to break ties with South Africa, they have had necessarily to place themselves in a position of dependence on donor nations and agencies, but that hasn't cooled their enthusiasm. "South Africa is an enemy state and dealing with it is like supping with the devil," a Zambian delegate observed. "But SADCC's supporters are all friends and we don't expect any complications from them in moving towards our stated goals." □

In Pursuit of Nonalignment

BY ALLEN ISAACMAN AND BARBARA ISAACMAN



Photo: William Campbell/Sygma

Reopening of Mozambique-Zimbabwe border shortly before Zimbabwe's independence

Commenting on his January 1983 meeting in Maputo with high-level Mozambican officials, Congressman Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), chairman of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa, em-

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phasized that "they stated in as explicit a fashion as possible their desire for improved relations with the United States." Wolpe's characterization, coming on the heels of a flurry of diplomatic activity, adds credibility to Mozambique's claim that it is trying both to pursue a socialist path to development and to forge a nonaligned foreign policy. Such a policy runs counter to the images of Mozambique as a "Soviet satellite" commonly evoked in the press and reinforced by global analysts who point to the bilateral treaty of friendship signed in 1977 with the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) supported the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) rather than Moscow's ally, the

Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), in the Zimbabwean struggle; concluded major aid agreements with England, France, and Italy; and is now receiving military assistance from Portugal.

Such examples suggest the shortcomings of the "cold war" analysis, which fails to comprehend the fiercely nationalist roots of Frelimo's foreign policy and its commitment to avoid all new forms of dependency. As Mozambican leader Marcelino dos Santos stressed to us, "We did not fight for 15 years to free ourselves to become the pawn of yet another foreign power."

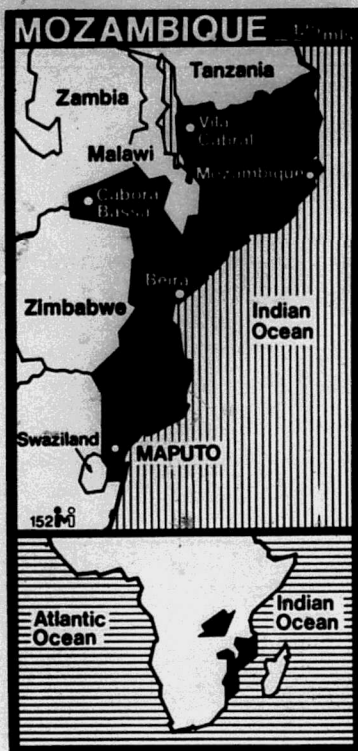
Autonomy, nonalignment, and a special relationship with the socialist countries are all principles derived from

the concrete experiences of the 10-year struggle for Mozambique's independence. It was, after all, the nonaligned nations, especially Egypt, Algeria, Zambia, and Tanzania, that provided Frelimo guerrillas with their first arms and training. And, as the conflict intensified, the socialist countries, primarily the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union, became the major source of financial aid, weapons, and diplomatic support, while the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance provided massive assistance to the Portuguese colonial regime. This configuration of international alliances helped to radicalize Frelimo and shape its view of the international arena.

In practice, Mozambique has operated in four distinct international arenas. Predictably, policymakers assign the highest priority to reinforcing relations with neighboring Frontline states in order to reduce South African military and economic hegemony. As a member of the Organization of African Unity and the larger nonaligned movement, Mozambique has joined with states it considers "progressive" in attacking imperialism and defending the proposition that nonalignment should not be equated with neutrality. It has also reinforced ties to the socialist bloc, while simultaneously attempting to expand economic ties and improve diplomatic relations with the West, thereby diversifying policy options. Although for purposes of analysis Mozambique's involvements in each sphere will be treated separately, in reality they are interrelated, and the available options and policies implemented are often conditioned by considerations that transcend events in a particular international arena. Moreover, the overarching principles of autonomy, nonalignment, and ties to "natural allies" sometimes conflict, further complicating the direction of foreign policy.

MOZAMBIQUE AS A FRONTLINE STATE

Since independence, Mozambican policymakers have emphasized the need to forge a strong political and economic alliance with neighboring independent countries and southern African liberation movements. Frelimo had



concluded during its liberation struggle that Mozambique's ultimate independence required that South African-Rhodesian regional domination be broken, and it vigorously endorsed the formation of an alliance that came to be known as the Frontline states (Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana, and Mozambique) in 1974. This alliance, which Angola joined two years later, committed the member nations to help Zimbabwean nationalists to free Rhodesia and to aid the African National Congress (ANC) and the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO).

Shortly after the Frontline alliance was created, Frelimo opened its 750-mile frontier with Rhodesia to the insurgents, invited ZANU and ZAPU to establish joint military bases, transferred a substantial amount of modern weapons to ZANU forces based in Mozambique, and resettled more than 150,000 Zimbabweans in refugee camps. Machel's government also tried to bridge the gap between the two nationalist movements by encouraging the formation of the Patriotic Front, a tentative alliance of ZANU and ZAPU.

On the economic front, Mozambique supported the United Nations against the Rhodesian government by closing its borders with Rhodesia and denying Salisbury the use of its principal international outlet, the port of Beira. This action ultimately cost Mozambique more than \$500 million in rail and transit fees — hard currency desperately needed for economic development.

Since the victory of the Patriotic Front and the election of Robert Mugabe as prime minister of Zimbabwe in March 1980, the two nations have consolidated and deepened bilateral relations. The most immediate effects of Zimbabwean independence were the removal of a hostile regime from Mozambique's borders, coordinated military activity against South African-backed guerrillas operating along the Zimbabwean-Mozambican frontier, and renewed Zimbabwean trade through the ports of Beira and Maputo.

Mozambique's direct involvement in the campaigns against the South African regime and its illegal occupation of Namibia have been more limited. In part, this reflects the inherited economic dependence on South Africa and Mozambique's extremely vulnerable military position, evidenced by the ease with which South African forces penetrated the outskirts of Maputo in January 1981, by the assassination of Ruth First at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in August 1982, and by their continued violation of Mozambican air space. Both Maputo and Cail, the major agroindustrial complex in the Limpopo Valley, are within easy striking distance of Pretoria's forces; and despite a Soviet-installed air defense system, Mozambique would be hard pressed to defend these strategic positions against South African Mirage jets and helicopter-borne troops.

These constraints have forced Mozambique to eschew any direct military confrontation with its powerful neighbor, whose military budget for 1981-82 was estimated at \$2.75 billion (as compared to Mozambique's allocation of \$150 million), and whose arsenal includes some of the most advanced weapon systems in the world. At the Tenth Session of the Central Commit-

tee, held in August 1982, Samora Machel was quite clear on this point.

The South African regime, a few days ago, alleged that Mozambique threatens it by concentrating sophisticated arms on its frontier. What are the arms to which they refer? Neither economically nor militarily do we represent a threat to anyone. No reasonable person can think that an underdeveloped country as poor as us, still bloodied from the wounds of war, can pose a threat to the sovereignty, the territorial integrity, the stability of another state, particularly one as powerful as South Africa. In fact, the only thing which that regime can fear is our example.

Frelimo officials also dismiss as premature and unrealistic an economic boycott of South Africa. Such a boycott would cost Mozambique well over \$100 million per year in lost port revenues and loss of income to thousands of Mozambicans working in the South African mines. High-level government officials do not rule out, however, participation in a UN-sponsored boycott at some future date when Mozambique becomes less dependent on the South African economy and when the struggle of the ANC has intensified. Mozambique has reluctantly refused to allow the ANC to establish guerrilla bases on its territory for fear that granting such permission would give South Africa a pretext to launch a major invasion.

For the moment, therefore, Mozambican aid to the ANC is largely political. The ANC has offices in Maputo; Oliver Tambo, the ANC leader, is accorded full honors as a head of state; and Mozambique has given sanctuary and support to a number of South African refugees as well as to exiled members of the South African Congress of Trade Unions. Although the substantial escalation of ANC military operations in the Transvaal and other areas adjacent to Mozambique suggests that Frelimo might be allowing guerrillas operating in small bands to pass through its territory, this allegation is officially denied. Instead, Mozambican leaders stress that the success of the revolution in South Africa depends on the ability of the ANC to organize popular support internally and that until such support is a reality the role of Mozambique and other Frontline states can only be peri-

pheral. Maputo has also supported the struggle of SWAPO, although its geographic distance from Namibia prevents much practical assistance.

Recently, Pretoria has raised the specter of direct military intervention if Mozambique does not accede to its security demands. In a rare interview published in the *New York Times*, Prime Minister Botha was quite explicit: "We say two can play this game. We say two can make war. But two can also create peace. If Mozambique's leaders will say, 'We are a socialist state but we won't fight against South Africa militarily and we will cooperate economically,' and they mean it — that they won't undermine South Africa by letting their country be used by people who are fighting against South Africa — then surely we can cooperate."

On the economic front, Mozambique has sought to strengthen its relations with its independent neighbors. In July 1979 at the Arusha Conference, the Mozambican delegation played a significant role in enlarging the political alliance of Frontline states into an integrated regional alliance that included newly independent Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Malawi plus Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, and Tanzania. The long-term objectives of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), will help not only Mozambique, but the other member states to reduce their structural dependence on South Africa.

Immediate priority has been given to strengthening the transportation and communication network, without which all other forms of regional cooperation are impractical. Of the \$800 million pledged to SADCC in 1980, \$650 million has been spent on transportation projects, primarily in Mozambique.

Preliminary indications suggest that through the SADCC transportation network international commerce is gradually being redirected away from South African ports. Zimbabwe, for example, which was totally dependent on South African ports during the Smith regime, exported 30 million tons through Maputo in 1980 and 203 million tons in 1981 as well as an additional 166 million tons through the adjacent port of Matola. Exports to Beira,

although a fraction of what they were before the 1976 international boycott, nevertheless jumped from 15 million to 60 million tons in the same period. For Mozambique, the port duties and transportation fees from Zimbabwean commerce have already replaced those from South Africa as the country's principal source of invisible income. With ties to Swaziland, Botswana, and Malawi expected to increase, the beginnings of a regional transportation system have been set in place.

Mozambique's attempt to restructure southern African economic and political relations has been costly. Before the regime of Ian Smith fell, Rhodesian forces working with the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR), an anti-Frelimo fifth column organized by Rhodesian security, had launched more than 350 military attacks destroying important economic projects and infrastructures. With the independence of Zimbabwe, South Africa has been providing the MNR with direct logistic and military assistance on a progressively increasing scale. Under Pretoria's direction, the MNR intensified its military activity in the southern half of Mozambique, repeatedly sabotaging the two railroad lines from Zimbabwe to Maputo and Beira in an effort to sabotage SADCC, and has also sought to paralyze the country's fragile rural economy. In December 1982, saboteurs, thought to be South African commandos, blew up 34 oil tanks in Beira valued at more than \$20 million. The destruction of these installations, representing two-thirds of Beira's storage capacity, created a fuel crisis in Zimbabwe, where supplies were reportedly reduced by as much as 40 percent. In November, the Mugabe government had dispatched 500 to 1,000 more troops to Mozambique to help protect the 188-mile pipeline linking Beira to Mutare, Zimbabwe.

MOZAMBIQUE IN THE OAU AND THE NONALIGNED MOVEMENT

Mozambique has used the OAU and the nonaligned movement as international arenas in which to generate support for southern African liberation struggles and to articulate broader anti-imperialist positions. Its non-

aligned posture rests on two deeply held principles that, to many analysts, appear difficult to reconcile. On the one hand, Foreign Ministry officials insist that nonalignment demands autonomy from all foreign powers. On the other, they reject as specious the equating of nonalignment with neutrality and the formation of a "third force" hostile to both power blocs and have called for closer ties to the socialist countries.

This radical redefinition of nonalignment has informed all substantive foreign policy positions Mozambique has taken. The government in Maputo has vigorously criticized Western intervention, supported guerrilla movements fighting colonial or neocolonial regimes, and voted with governments it defines as progressive. Thus, Mozambique attacked Washington-Pretoria ties, French intervention in Zaire and Chad, and British support for the Rhodesian regime, although in last year's Falklands crisis Maputo remained conspicuously silent. Consistent with its self-proclaimed "internationalist" commitment, Mozambique has supported the Palestine Liberation Organization, the guerrillas in El Salvador, and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, with whom extremely close relations have subsequently developed, and has been the leading international defender of the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN), which has been waging a war against the Indonesian occupation of East Timor for more than a decade. It has also embraced the cause of Polisario and, along with Algeria and Libya, advocates immediate Saharan independence.

Maputo's most controversial international position was its muted support for Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Only two other African countries — Angola and Ethiopia — voted against the UN resolution deploring the Soviet action, while a number of Mozambique's closest allies, including Guinea-Bissau, Zambia, Algeria, and Congo-Brazzaville, abstained and Tanzania voted in favor of the motion. Foreign Ministry officials took the position that Afghanistan, a sovereign nation, had the right to seek assistance from whatever source it chose, and suggested an analogy with the Angolan government's decision to invite Cuban

troops to help protect it against South African invasion. Privately, some Mozambicans close to the situation have suggested that Mozambique's decision may have been affected by increasing South African troop movement along its border and into Zimbabwe plus intelligence reports of a likely preemptive strike against ZANU troops in southern Mozambique. After all, it is the U.S.S.R. on whom Mozambique depends for its air defense system, and in the final analysis support from the socialist countries represents the only possible counterbalance to South African might.

Mozambique's ideological affinity with more militant Third World nations has provided a basis for economic cooperation with such countries as Iraq, Libya, Algeria, and India. Iraq, Mozambique's principal supplier of oil, agreed in 1978 to provide petroleum at subsidized prices to ease Mozambique's balance-of-payments problem; and when Iraq's war with Iran disrupted exports, Algeria and Libya replaced Baghdad, offering petroleum at below the world price. The bilateral agreement signed with India in 1982 called for \$14 million in credit, technical assistance to upgrade Mozambican railroads, and a joint aluminum project under which Mozambique would smelt Indian-supplied bauxite using power from Cahorra Bassa Dam.

MOZAMBIQUE AND THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

A long history of support, a shared ideology, and increasing military and economic links have deepened Mozambique's ties to the socialist countries. The signing of the Twenty-Year Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union in 1977 and Maputo's decision three years later to open an embassy in Moscow, only its second outside of Africa, underscore the high priority Mozambique places on relations with its "natural allies." Although its ties to the socialist countries, especially to the Soviet Union and East Germany, have grown, the relationship is a complex one, punctuated by periodic disagreements on questions of vital national interest to the young nation.

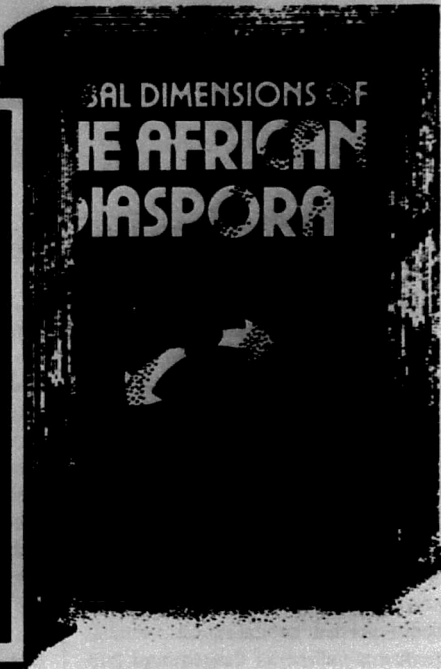
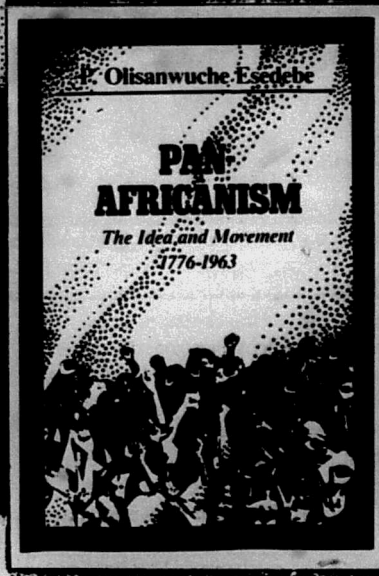
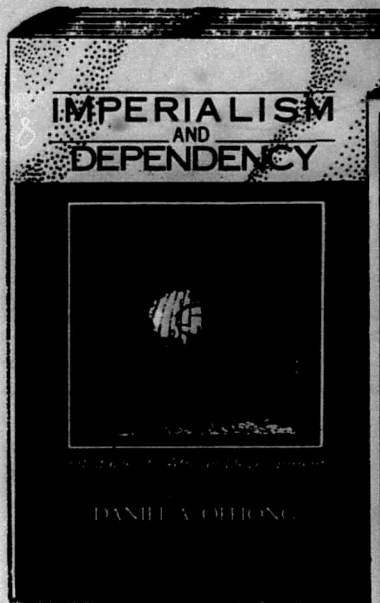
From the days of the armed struggle, Mozambique has been receiving exten-

sive military aid from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Shortly after independence, the U.S.S.R. replaced China as Mozambique's principal supplier of war materiel — a surface-to-air missile (SAM) defense system to protect the capital and other strategic locations, tanks, artillery, MiG-17 jets, and military training. Although these Soviet weapons are costly and often outdated, a fact not lost on Mozambican leaders, they nevertheless represent the main line of defense against South Africa. East Germany has provided military equipment and a radar and telecommunications system and has helped to reorganize the country's security forces, while Hungary and Bulgaria have made more modest contributions, often as gifts. It is also estimated that there are a few hundred military advisers from Cuba, although the majority of Cubans are employed in economic sectors, especially agriculture and planning.

The South African attack on the suburbs of Maputo in January 1981 revealed the potential significance of Mozambique's security ties to the Soviet Union. Within days of the incursion, the U.S.S.R. had sent two warships into the port of Maputo and the Soviet ambassador had warned of military reprisals "if anyone attacks us or our friends." Because of increased South African support for the MNR, Moscow promised in May 1982 to upgrade substantially the quantity and quality of weapons it provides to Mozambique. Thus, a continued escalation of the conflict in southern Africa may ultimately increase Mozambique's dependence on the Soviet Union and reduce its freedom of action in the international arena. It most certainly will require using an increasing proportion of scarce resources to pay for the arms.

Economic support from the socialist nations in the form of direct aid and capital investment has been far less significant than their military assistance. Nevertheless, through long-term barter agreements, Mozambique has acquired heavy industrial equipment, trucks, tools, and badly needed spare parts in exchange for deliveries of cashew nuts, citrus fruits, coal, cotton, sisal, shrimp, and fish. Details of the financing are secret, but the agreements transform

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Photo: Ricardo Rangel

Early Frontline heads-of-state meeting. SWAPO's Sam Nujoma (left) is in attendance.

Mozambique's annual deficits from these exchanges into long-term hard-currency loans at rates somewhat below international levels.

This barter arrangement, beneficial to the East European countries as well, has enabled Mozambique to acquire badly needed capital goods without having to utilize its limited hard currency, has provided it with new markets, and has helped Mozambique to reduce, if not reverse, its dependency on South Africa. Whereas in 1975, trade with the Warsaw Pact nations was negligible, in 1979 it accounted for approximately 15 percent of Mozambican commerce, and by 1982 East Germany had become Mozambique's fourth-largest trading partner. During the same period, imports from South Africa have declined significantly.

Since 1980, the U.S.S.R. and East German socialists have increased Mozambique's nonmilitary aid, which had been negligible up to that point. Both have helped to fund mineral explorations, the development of Mozambique's fledgling textile industry, and some heavy industry, including a truck and tractor assembly plant. Technical assistance from the socialist countries is more substantial. Bulgarian agronomists play a critical role in the state farm sector; Soviet technicians are helping to build agricultural workshops in Beira and Nampula as well as a fac-

tory in Beira to produce farm implements; East German mineral engineers are involved in coal production and geological exploration; and Cuban technicians have helped to resuscitate the sugar and chemical industries. As of 1982, more than 900 students were studying in East Germany, and 1,200 were in Cuba, with whom Mozambique has developed an increasingly close relationship.

The ideological affinity, friendship treaties, and material assistance notwithstanding, Mozambique's foreign policy does not mirror that of the Soviet Union or, for that matter, that of any other socialist country. Mozambican leaders insist that foreign policy be guided by national interests. The U.S. ambassador to Mozambique, Willard DePree, confirmed its commitment to pursue authentic self-defined objectives: "Sure, Frelimo's Marxist, but they keep their distance from Moscow. They're very independent, pro-Third World."

President Machel's plea for the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean, first made at the 1976 Conference of Non-aligned Nations in Sri Lanka and repeated with regularity and vigor, is aimed at both the Soviet and the American naval presence. One Foreign Ministry official put it quite bluntly: "If the U.S. and the Soviet Union want to fight, they can fight in their own

house." Mozambique has refused to provide Moscow with a requested naval base, which would have increased the Soviet Union's military capabilities in this strategic zone; and at a diplomatic reception at the Soviet Embassy in Maputo at the end of 1975, Foreign Minister Chissano is reported to have publicly chided the Soviet ambassador for pressuring Mozambique on this issue, which Maputo considers an infringement on its national sovereignty. Several senior members of the Western diplomatic corp have subsequently suggested that Mozambique's refusal to permit the naval base helps to explain the relatively modest Soviet military assistance in comparison to that given to Ethiopia and South Yemen.

Mozambique and Eastern Europe have been at odds on several African issues, most notably the Zimbabwean struggle. Whereas Frelimo developed close ties to ZANU, whose military tenacity it came to respect, the Warsaw Pact countries strongly preferred ZAPU and rejected Mozambican appeals for Soviet military assistance to ZANU because of the latter's historic ties to China. Machel's government also played an active mediating role in the British-orchestrated Lancaster House agreement, to which the socialist countries were not a party, after concluding that the Zimbabwean liberation forces would win any fairly conducted elec-

tion. Similarly, Mozambican diplomats, since 1978, have supported UN Resolution 385, calling for an election in Namibia even though the Soviet Union agreed to support it only in 1981. Regarding Ethiopia, where the Soviet Union and Cuba are backing the Marxist government against Eritrean rebels, Mozambican newspapers and state radio have been sympathetic toward the Eritrean People's Liberation Front while calling for a negotiated settlement of the crisis; and the foreign minister recently suggested that his country could support a progressive independent Eritrean nation if such an agreement were reached through negotiations (see *Africa Report*, January-February 1983).

Tensions also periodically surfaced around perceived socialist "paternalism." Mozambican officials acknowledge privately that they were angered when the Soviets rejected their request to build a steel mill on the ground that it was not appropriate for Mozambique's level of development. The reluctance of East European ideologues to accord Mozambique standing as a legitimate socialist country undoubtedly inspired President Machel's acerbic comment that "some people seem to think that the development of Marxism ended in October 1917." Finally, Mozambican officials could hardly have been pleased with the Soviet Union's support of a coup attempt against long-time ally Angolan President Agostinho Neto in 1977 or the reported decision of the socialist Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) in 1981 to turn down, at least for the moment, Maputo's bid for full membership.

Mozambique has also refused to take sides in the Sino-Soviet split. While explicitly criticizing China's misguided Angolan policy and its invasion of Vietnam, the Frelimo leadership nevertheless affirmed, "We will never forget those who supported us when times were hard." Despite continued disagreement over specific issues, the People's Republic of China provided important assistance in health, agriculture, and the military sphere and has agreed to help finance construction of the largest textile factory in northern Mozambique. In the middle of 1982, Mozambique and China signed a far-

reaching commercial agreement, a pointed reminder of Mozambique's autonomy within the socialist camp.

MOZAMBIQUE'S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST

Mozambique's relations with the West, as with the socialist countries, cannot be reduced to one-dimensional clichés. In some respects, because of Mozambique's attempts to balance historical commitments and contemporary needs, they are more complex, multifaceted, and fluid than those with its "natural allies." Mozambican leaders have also always carefully distinguished among Western nations as well as between particular governments and their "peoples."

Predictably, relations with the NATO countries, who supported the Portuguese colonial presence, were severely strained at the time of independence and remained unchanged through 1977. Military and economic links between the NATO countries and South Africa, the presence of Western mercenaries in the Rhodesian army, and a U.S. congressional ban on economic assistance to Mozambique heightened animosity toward Western Europe. On the other hand, Mozambique welcomed hundreds of *cooperantes* (expatriates) from Western Europe, the United States, and Canada, who came to help fill the void created by the flight of Portuguese technicians, doctors, teachers, and engineers. For their part, the Nordic countries responded to Mozambique's appeal for aid with a \$55 million grant for agricultural development — the single largest grant they gave to any Third World country — and Sweden's additional bilateral assistance made it the most important Mozambican donor.

By 1978, Maputo had become interested in establishing better relations with the United States and its allies. At a meeting between President Machel and President Carter in New York, the Mozambican leader offered "to wipe the slate clean" and forget the long history of American support for the Portuguese colonial regime. In an interview somewhat later, he reiterated his hope for improved bilateral relations and acknowledged that President Carter had, in sharp contrast to his predecessors, "tried to initiate a new

American policy toward Africa, which for once would disassociate the U.S. from the injustices of colonialism, racism, and apartheid."

Several factors seem to have contributed to Mozambique's "opening to the West." A growing recognition that the West's positions on the illegal Rhodesian regime and the South African occupation of Namibia were not necessarily incompatible with those of Mozambique helped to create a framework for improved relations. Mozambique also hoped to expand extensive commercial ties, and diversification of its international network would avoid dependency on any one bloc. Undoubtedly, the most significant factor, however, was the realization that the socialist countries were either unable or unwilling to provide capital and advanced technology on the scale required by Mozambique to achieve its ambitious billion-dollar development projects.

Since 1978, Mozambique has sought increased economic cooperation with the West. In quick succession, Maputo signed a \$40 million loan agreement with Great Britain, negotiated a \$15 million aid package with Holland, and, despite a congressional ban, received a U.S.-guaranteed Export-Import Bank loan to purchase General Electric locomotives manufactured in Brazil. Among the major new accords entered into between 1980 and 1982 were a ten-year agricultural and industrial agreement with Italy worth more than \$140 million, a \$450 million French loan to help fund a truck factory and cotton project, a \$170 million railway rehabilitation pact with Canada, Portugal, and France, assistance from Greece and Holland in rehabilitating the port of Beira, and the recent agreement with Brazil for aid in oil prospecting, coal mining, and natural gas development. In 1981, Mozambique and Sweden signed a trade pact giving the two countries most-favored-nation status in their bilateral commerce, and a year later Mozambique signed a commercial agreement with West Germany that included a modified version of the Berlin clause. While the agreement is not likely to please East Germany, it has opened the way for increased economic agreement with the Bonn government and has removed an important

barrier to closer relations with the European Common Market countries.

Despite these agreements, Mozambique has not as yet obtained sufficient foreign capital to implement many of its major development projects. Government officials believe that many multinational corporations are reluctant to make firm commitments until the security problems the MNR poses are resolved, and they fear that the Reagan administration is orchestrating an undeclared economic boycott.

Besides the economic agreements signed with Western countries, Mozambique has accepted an offer of military assistance from Portugal to help thwart MNR attacks and South African incursions. As part of a broader agreement signed on April 27, 1982, Portugal's military pledge, in the aftermath of President Eanes' successful visit to Mozambique six months earlier, signals a dramatic improvement in relations with the former colonial power and marks the first time that Mozambique has turned to the West for any military assistance. Although the details of the agreement have not been spelled out, it is reported to include war material, logistic support, and training for Mozambican officers in Portugal. In late October, the minister of defense, Alberto Chapande, went to Lisbon to continue negotiations with his Portuguese counterparts.

Asked by a Mozambican journalist if this agreement with a NATO country would not compromise Mozambique's socialist integrity, Chipande responded:

We are not going to be prevented from cooperating with the Portuguese merely because we are a socialist country. They left infrastructures and equipment here that could be used for military objectives. We cannot spend millions and millions of dollars merely because we do not want to buy a part from a country that is a member of NATO.

In addition, the Portuguese military possesses maps and other strategic information collected during the armed struggle that would be of invaluable assistance to Mozambique. For its part, Lisbon is anxious that its citizens working in Mozambique, who have been the target of MNR attacks, be protected. Portuguese officials also see



Zambian President Kaunda (left) arriving in Mozambique for talks with President Machel (right)

Photo: Ricardo Rangel

this as an opportunity from which to rebuild economic and cultural relations with their former colony.

Although relations with the West have generally improved, they have deteriorated markedly with the United States since the Reagan administration came to office and adopted a tough, anticommunist, pro-South African posture. The February 1981 exposure of CIA activity in Mozambique, including charges that agents passed on information that facilitated the South African attack on the Maputo suburbs, resulted in the expulsion of several American Embassy officials. When pressed on the expulsion, the Mozambican foreign minister, Joaquim Chissano, responded emphatically, "While my government is aware and disapproves of all foreign intelligence branches operating in Mozambique, when their covert activity jeopardizes national security the government must take the appropriate actions. We would do the same if it were Soviet intelligence." The Reagan administration subsequently refused to replace the American ambassador (who had departed several months earlier), causing a further deterioration in bilat-

eral relations, as did Washington's refusal to allow Mozambique to purchase Boeing 707 airliners and badly needed agricultural equipment.

Recently, however, there have been indications of a small but perceptible thaw in relations. Precipitated in part by Mozambique's desire to mobilize Western condemnation of the South African-MNR attacks and in part by the Reagan administration's recognition of the productive role Mozambique has played in the Namibian question, there has been a discernible increase in diplomatic activity between Maputo and Washington. During the past year, three senior Mozambican ministers visited the United States, including Foreign Minister Chissano, who met with Secretary of State Shultz in November. Two months later the assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Chester Crocker, had what informed sources characterized as a very useful meeting with President Machel, and shortly thereafter a delegation led by Congressman Wolpe met with leading members of the Frelimo central committee.

This activity seems to have produced some tangible results. The United States condemned South African aggression against Lesotho, and subsequently the Reagan administration, through a State Department spokesperson, acknowledged and tacitly criticized Pretoria's support of the MNR (see *Africa Report*, January-February 1983). According to official Mozambican sources, the U.S. chargé d'affaires in Maputo joined in January with representatives of England, France, the Soviet Union, and China to "condemn South African aggression and define ways of individually and collectively guaranteeing Mozambique's territorial security."

Whether such pronouncements from Washington will produce more concrete results remains to be seen. There are reports that the American government is speeding up food aid to Maputo, and possibilities exist for increased assistance through SADCC. But the critical issue remains whether the Reagan administration at long last is prepared to condemn publicly South African aggression and to pressure privately the Pretoria regime to cease its policy of destabilizing Mozambique. □

Saharan Sandstorm Blows On

BY HOWARD SCHISSEL

Mauritania's fragile political and diplomatic equilibrium is still dominated by the uncertain evolution of the Western Sahara conflict. Having suffered most from the war until a peace treaty was signed in August 1979 with Polisario, the government of President Mohammed Khouna Ould Haidalla is now fearful that the country could be on the losing end of any regional peace arrangements. In fact, the meeting in late February between Algerian President Chadli Benjedid and King Hassan of Morocco only exacerbated Mauritanian apprehension on this score. Nouakchott fears that a compromise solution to the conflict worked out by its more powerful Maghrebi neighbors could possibly involve the creation of a Polisario ministate federated to Mauritania — a prospect that could upset its tenuous ethnic balance.

In spite of the question marks raised by the Algerian-Moroccan talks, Mauritania's regional diplomatic position

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Algerian President Chadli Benjedid (left) greets Mauritanian President Ould Haidalla (right) as Polisario Secretary-General Mohamed Abdelaziz (center) looks on

Photo: Cameraph

has markedly improved over the past few years. Relations with Polisario, for example, are close, but Nouakchott has yet to recognize officially, like 26 other Organization of African Unity (OAU) states, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), the front's self-proclaimed government. The reason for Mauritania's caution is the desire not to further alienate Morocco and keep all options open for future negotiations.

Mauritania withdrew from the southern third of the ex-Spanish Sahara in mid-1979 but still maintains a garrison in the small port city of La Guera. Mauritanian officials maintain that they will continue to occupy this strategic location, just opposite their iron ore and fishing port of Nouadhibou, until an internationally recognized solution has been found to the Saharan imbroglio. In

this way, Mauritania hopes to assure its neutrality and guarantee its longer-term interests.

The exchange of fire between Moroccan and Mauritanian forces in January near the town of La Guera underscored, however, the precarious nature of Mauritania's security. Moroccan diplomats never lose an occasion to stress that Polisario forces utilize Nouadhibou for military supplies and Mauritania as a rear base for attacks against Cherifian troops in the Sahara. However, Western diplomats in Nouakchott rule out the possibility that Nouadhibou serves as a transit point for Polisario military supplies. By the same token, they point out that Polisario guerrillas do not really need Mauritanian territory as a staging area for military operations, for the liberation front has free run over 90% of the Western Sahara as well as bases in Algeria and southern Morocco itself.

There is little doubt, however, that Polisario fighters and cadres are present in northern Mauritania, even procuring food, medical supplies, and spare parts in the few urban centers in the area. It must not be forgotten that most Mauritians remain favorable to Polisario's cause, given the ethnic and linguistic affinities between the Mauritanian and Sahrawi people. Moreover, it would be practically impossible for Mauritania to

control effectively the vast stretches of its territory bordering on the Western Sahara.

To the south, the retirement of President Leopold Senghor at the beginning of 1981 and his replacement by Abdou Diouf was warmly welcomed in Nouakchott. Senegal's first president, a staunch supporter of Morocco and personal friend of deposed President Moktar Ould Daddah, intermittently threatened to reactivate secessionist sentiments among the black population living along the Mauritanian bank of the Senegal River. Even though Diouf continues to back the Moroccan claim to the Western Sahara, his regime has never sought to menace Mauritania's ethnic stability. In addition, Diouf has put a damper on the activities of the Mauritanian opposition movement, l'Alliance pour une Mauritanie Démocratique (AMD), which used Dakar as a base for its abortive coup attempt in March 1981.

Since Mauritania pulled out of the war, relations with Algeria have been normalized. Algeria now provides substantial economic aid as well as military supplies for the Mauritanian armed forces. Nevertheless, Mauritanian diplomats want to avoid the errors of the past, when their country was first allied with Algeria and then swung towards Morocco for the partition of the Western Sahara in 1975. The longer-term objective is to establish and maintain balanced ties with its two powerful neighbors in the Maghreb. This might prove a difficult task. Mauritania still does not have diplomatic relations with Morocco, even though indirect contact has been opened up through France. Mauritanian officials still reckon that King Hassan's regime hasn't given up its intention to destabilize their country.

President Haidalla is counting on French influence in Rabat to prevent such a move. Since the election of President François Mitterrand in May 1981, Franco-Mauritanian relations have markedly improved. Under former President Giscard d'Estaing, ties were hardly cordial, for France was then openly supporting Morocco. Over the last two years, as Paris has attempted to better balance its Maghreb connections, particularly by improving links with Algeria, Mauritania's secu-

arity and national unity has again become an important concern in Paris.

Indeed, Mauritanian authorities greatly appreciated Mitterrand's brief "technical" stopover in Nouakchott in May 1982, the first ever of a French head of state. France has substantially boosted its economic assistance and also provides military training as well as arms for the Mauritanian army.

As the Reagan administration has thrown its support increasingly behind Morocco, Mauritanian diplomats have become outspokenly critical of American policy in northeastern Africa. It is felt in Mauritanian diplomatic circles that Washington's backing of King Hassan through massive arms sales could harden Morocco's diplomatic position in the Western Sahara and thereby actually prolong the conflict.

After a period of instability following the toppling of President Ould Daddah in July 1978, Lieutenant-Colonel Ould Haidalla now appears to have a firm grip on power. He has survived two coup attempts. The first in March 1981 involved exiled officers belonging to the AMD. The second in February 1982 was led by former President Mohammed Ould Saleck and former Prime Minister Ahmed Ould Benijara. Since that time, there has not been any organized threat to the Haidalla regime.

Mauritania remains even at the best of times an extremely difficult country to govern. Not only are there ethnic cleavages between the Moors of

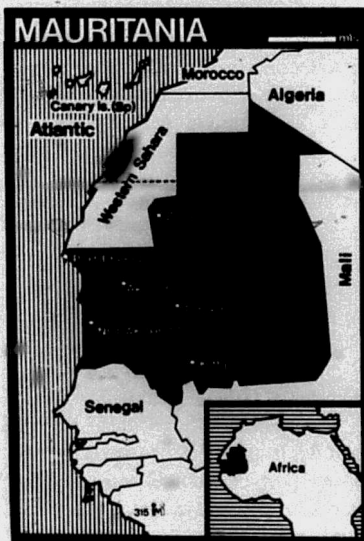
Arab-Berber descent and the black Africans in the southern part of the country, but regional and tribal rivalries are also still intense. What is more, the Moorish population is influenced by the diverse ideologies emanating from the Arab world. Thus, there are Nasserite Arab nationalists competing against pro-Iraqi Baathists, who in turn are opposed to fundamentalists more attuned to Saudi Arabia than to Iran.

The president, from a small tribe on the Mauritanian-Sahrawi border, has attempted to play an arbiter's role among all the different forces that compose the Mauritanian body politic. Respected for his integrity and religious fervor, the Mauritanian head of state has managed to neutralize these centrifugal tendencies by playing one off against another and by cutting down to size any clan that has emerged as a contender for power.

Ould Haidalla's principal ally within the ruling Military Committee for National Salvation (CMSN) is Prime Minister Maaouya Ould Taya. Other leading officers in the military committee include Yall Abdoulaye, commander-in-chief of the armed forces; Breika Ould M'Barack, the commander of the Nouakchott military region; Moulaye Ould Boukreiss, deputy commander-in-chief of the armed forces; Ahmed Ould Minnih, foreign minister; and Ann Amadou Babaly, minister of planning.

If a decision on a return to civilian rule or an institutionalization of the military regime has yet to be made, it seems that the latter choice is gradually emerging in the CMSN's actions. Over the last year, an organization known as the Structure for the Education of the Masses (SEM) has been set up in the towns and the countryside. The idea behind the SEM is to gather the different segments of Mauritanian society into one grouping that will enable ethnic and tribal rivalries to be overcome and provide the military committee with a tool to widen its social base.

The SEM functions in a pyramid structure with 10 families composing a cell, and 10 cells, in turn, forming a quarter. An elected coordinator at the cell level is to mobilize the population to handle daily problems, such as



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health, education, and supplies of basic foodstuffs. One thousand families make up a zone, which elects representatives to regional commissions. A national secretariat in Nouakchott coordinates the regional commissions. Four national secretaries supervise specific activities like economic questions, ideology, and adherence to the precepts of Islamic law.

Ould Haidalla has also been wooing Islamic forces in Mauritania. Islam is viewed as a means of papering over the cracks in national unity caused by the multiethnic composition of the society. Unlike the situation in Sudan and Chad, there are no religious cleavages between the Arabic population and black Africans in Mauritania. Thus, by declaring the Islamic *charia* as the official law a few years back and making Friday the official day of rest at the beginning of 1983, the head of state is seeking to play up a common heritage.

The Islamic thrust could be a double-edged sword if nationalists within the Moorish community turn it into a drive to Arabize Mauritanian life. The movement has been a constant source of friction in the country because the black population views it as a means of consolidating Moorish hegemony over the state apparatus. The move to make Arabic the sole official language has been opposed by black Africans, who want French maintained as a second official language and their own languages promoted in the educational system.

The ethnic question is certainly Mauritania's Achilles' heel. The last official census was completed in 1977, but the results have never been officially released. Black African critics of the regime, some of whom dream of setting up an independent black state in southern Mauritania, claim that the census has been kept secret because it revealed that the Moors are actually a minority in the population of 1.4 million. In any case, due in part to polygamy common among the African population, their birthrate far surpasses that of the Moors.

The ethnic equation is further complicated by the Haratine community, who are former slaves of black African origin but speak the Moorish Arabic dialect, Hassanyia. Both the Moors and

the black Africans claim that the Haratine are part of their community and that each, respectively, therefore constitutes the majority. The Haratine, for their part, have started to organize on their own behalf. El Hor (Free Man) was set up in 1978 to act as a Haratine pressure group.

This movement threw its weight behind Ould Haidalla when his government abolished slavery in July 1980, the third time it has been declared illegal since 1905. The emancipation of the Haratine is a long-term affair, as much an economic question as a legal or political one. As Mauritanian sociologist Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh says: "In contemporary Mauritania, it is the economic system that keeps people enslaved, for alternatives are limited."

In the meantime, a new elite of educated Haratine has come to the forefront. Many presently occupy important posts in the armed forces, state administration, and the commercial sector. It is expected that one of the Haratine will soon be named to a cabinet post. Their future role in Mauritanian politics could be crucial. El Hor itself has slowly evolved from a narrow racial position to a clearly political one, considering the Haratine as an oppressed community whose natural allies are the poor members of both the African and Moorish ethnic groups.

The Haratine issue also involves sensitive political factors. To enable them to own the land they cultivate, it would be necessary to carry out sweeping land reforms. Since the largest landowners are the Moorish amirs and their followers, such a move would undoubtedly sharpen tensions between the government and the still-powerful feudal leaders and their allies. Successive land reform projects have been pigeonholed for over 10 years, but sooner or later this issue must be faced squarely.

To further complicate the picture, the Sahel drought since the early 1970s has totally altered Mauritanian society. Only 25% of the population lived in the urban areas in 1970, but by 1983 this figure had jumped to around 70%. Nouakchott, designed to house a population of around 50,000, currently has at least 350,000 inhabitants and is continuing to grow by 10% a year. As the hinterland is drained of its life-

blood, Mauritania becomes increasingly unable to meet even a fraction of its agricultural needs.

The drought's renewed onslaught in 1982 is likely to have extremely serious consequences for the country. Rainfall last year was down 40-80%, and meager crops were further devastated by hordes of voracious grasshoppers. The result was that the 1982-83 cereal crop was only 20,000 tons, against 78,000 tons in 1981-82. This year, the cereal shortfall will be on the order of 120,000 tons. Despite international food aid, malnutrition will be the lot for the majority of Mauritians.

The sparse rain has meant that pasture for the country's herds is limited. Mauritanian officials estimate that as much as 70% of the country's 7 million goats and sheep, 1.2 million cattle, and 700,000 camels will not survive until the next rainy season in July. Such massive losses will impoverish even further the rural economy and push nomads toward the towns in even greater numbers.

Mauritania's principal export, iron ore, has been affected by the slowdown in the world economy as its main clients in Europe have cut back orders. In 1981, 8.9 million tons of iron ore were exported; 7.6 million left the country last year, and probably less than 7 million will do so in 1983. Since these exports procure around 80% of Mauritania's hard-currency earnings, the economy is likely to suffer severely, and the economic stabilization plan will be set back. A money spinner of high potential for the imperiled economy is the fishing industry. Until now, however, Mauritania has been able to earn only a fraction of the estimated \$1 billion worth of fish netted a year — legally and illegally — in its territorial waters, because of corruption, speculation by local businessmen, and the incapacity of the state to control illegal fishing.

In many ways, Mauritania's economic and political future remains cloudy. As a leading Mauritanian intellectual is fond of saying, "The Saharan sandstorm is still far from over, and as nomads we are fully cognizant of the fact that as long as the wind continues to kick up sand, it is practically impossible to see in what direction you are advancing." □

Politics and Poverty in the Sahel

BY ROGER WALL

Landlocked and located at the far eastern edge of Francophone West Africa, Niger is positioned between Islamic black Africa and Arab North Africa. As a Sahelian country, Niger has suffered with its western neighbors, Mali and Upper Volta, from a history of drought. The drought of the early 1970s decimated Niger's herds and crops, brought in a massive international emergency relief operation, and along with reported rampant government corruption set the stage for a 1974 military coup that ousted Hamani Diori, president of Niger since independence in 1961.

Today, under President Major General Seyni Kountché's rule, Niger has seemingly recovered from the last great Sahelian drought. But another one always looms on the horizon, and each agricultural season is awaited with the apprehension that it will bring famine. Even in good years, the harvest rarely brings feast. In 1980, after a season of well-spaced and well-timed rains, Niger boasted of having attained self-sufficiency in food. Later, Western of-

Roger Wall is a reporter with the *Ipswich Chronicle* in Massachusetts. He lived in Niger in 1981 and 1982.



President Seyni Kountché does not govern a united country

Photo: Camerapix

ficials debated that claim because of questionable agricultural statistics.

In 1981, the rains were late and poorly timed. With the help of international donors, Niger imported more than 120,000 tons of food. Although the harvest deficit was officially cited at 6%, the amount of food being imported suggested that the deficit was much higher. Some people even talked of the beginning of another drought. That prediction appeared to be coming true as early rains in the 1982 agricultural season dropped off. Hot summer suns burned up crops and killed cattle at wells. In other parts of the Sahel, pests

plagued crops. But at the last minute, heavy rains fell and allowed farmers to harvest an estimated 1,650,000 tons of millet and sorghum, Niger's staple crops. Despite a better than marginal harvest, Niger, along with Mali, was reported to be purchasing grain from Upper Volta. And President Kountché, in his 1983 New Year's speech, characterized the previous year's yield as a deficit, officially estimated at 18,000 tons.

The water level is foreboding this spring. The state olympic-sized pool wasn't filled after its winter cleaning, and water rationing in Niamey, the capital, is a possibility. The Niger River is a full meter lower than it was during the worst year of the 1970s drought. The low level of the river forced Mali's state-operated riverboat company to dock its vessels earlier than usual last fall.

A prolonged drought, critical at any time, would be particularly damaging to Niger now. Its economy is stagnant from the drop in world uranium prices. Libya threatens its security. And a growing urban population, whose expectations rose with uranium prices in the 1970s, is still seeking prosperity. Together, these elements will challenge Kountché's government in the 1980s.

Though considered a poor Sahelian country, Niger has powerful neighbors

to the north — Libya and Algeria — and to the south it is dwarfed by wealthy and populous Nigeria. Although the two nations have vastly different forms of government, colonial traditions, and national languages, Westerners still confuse them, demonstrating Niger's relative obscurity in the West. Nigeria, along with Togo and Benin, is one of the port countries where imports begin the 1,000-kilometer overland trip to Niger's markets. Nigeria supplies many consumer goods, and its own markets are attractive to Nigeriens living along the border. Consumer goods, before customs duties are imposed, are cheaper and more plentiful in Nigeria, and farmers and merchants from Niger sell cattle and millet over the border at higher prices than at home.

Most recently, Nigeria's importance as a market for Nigeriens was demonstrated in January when Lagos expelled about two million illegal aliens. Some 100,000 of these were Nigeriens, many of them Tuaregs who had gone south to work as security guards in Nigerian households. When the Nigeriens were sent home, temporary refugee camps were set up in Niamey and Maradi, Niger's agricultural center near the border with Nigeria.

Niger shares an ethnic group, the Hausa, with Nigeria. One of the largest ethnic groups in Niger, the Hausa live predominantly in the agricultural zone along the border. But despite the similarities, Niger's economic and environmental features are more like those of its neighbors Upper Volta and Mali, also former French colonies. Niger differs from them in one important respect: it has 160,000 tons of uranium reserves, which in the mid-1970s, when the world price of uranium rose, helped Niger's economy expand rapidly.

Until 1979, the price of uranium grew regularly, in some years more than doubling. By 1979, the price hit a high of \$70 a kilogram, and the country's second mine, Cominak, which opened in 1978, was operating at nearly full capacity. Along with the first mine, Somair, which opened in 1968, it helped boost production by 75% to 3,616 tons.

But in 1980, as nuclear power was challenged over its safety and economic



feasibility, the demand and subsequently the world price for uranium dropped by 35%. Because Niger negotiates with its mining partners every January over the price of the mineral, it was able to maintain its high of \$70 through 1980 before it fell 18% to \$57 in 1981. Since then, Niger has sought to negotiate a higher price each year. For 1983, the price is up to \$80 a kilogram. But Niger will cut production by 700 tons in 1983 from the 4,300-ton high in 1982.

The fall in prices has been serious for the Nigerien economy. In 1979, total receipts from uranium made up 43% of current government revenue and 90% of its foreign currency revenue. The loss represented a \$22.9 million reduction in the 1981 annual budget and a \$25.7 million loss in forecasted receipts for 1982. Besides providing employment, the uranium industry spurred a surge of other economic support activity. To the casual observer, the most obvious evidence of growth is the expanded international airport, dual-lane highways leading into Niamey, and the skyline of moderate high-rises at the foot of the Kennedy Bridge spanning the Niger River.

Building cranes, once visible throughout Niamey, are now slowly coming down. Where a village of mud houses once stood are now the international-class Hotel Gaweye, a conference center, the new industry and mines ministry, and a dual-lane road leading to the ministerial plateau and the presidential palace, appropriately named after French President François Mitterrand, one of Niger's largest benefactors. Ironically, many of these con-

struction projects were completed just as Niger's economy plunged, causing observers to conclude that Niger had foolishly squandered its uranium revenues.

In all, construction and public works grew from \$52.3 million in 1978 to \$102.9 million in 1980. Mining companies producing uranium in Niger alone financed half of the \$48.6 million Uranium Road, which stretches 650 kilometers through Sahelian and Saharan countryside to the Arlit mining fields. The road, though a major building feat, services little traffic except for mining trucks, commercial taxis, and seasonal tourists crossing the Sahara.

Public investments have perhaps suffered the most from the drop in uranium revenues. Development programs are carried out through the National Investment Fund (FNI), which in the past received tax revenues from uranium production. Thanks to uranium revenue, expenditures on agriculture grew from 8.5% to 20% of the FNI between 1977 and 1980, according to a 1981 International Monetary Fund report. Health, education, and general public services made up nearly half of the FNI. The fund has remained at the 1980 level, \$74.3 million, for 1981 and 1982 largely because of a \$54.3 million contribution by Saudi Arabia. But this year it dropped to \$21 million, below its 1979 level.

The Five-Year Plan (1979-83), which got off to a slow start in many sectors, fell short of completion from lack of investment revenue. In its place is a new 10-year Ministry of Plan report, "Indicative Program for the Development of Niger 1981-90," which readjusts Niger's investment plans to a future with fewer internal resources.

The economic slowdown forced Kountché to announce publicly on the eighth anniversary of his 1974 coup that there would be a two-year period of reflection on and consolidation of development and construction projects. Officially, this pause is regarded as an intermediate step between the ambitious Five-Year Plan and a renewed effort later in the decade when, analysts hope, the price of uranium will be higher and the state of the world economy improved. How Niger will pass the interim remains to be seen. To compen-



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Rice distribution during Sahelian drought in early 1970s: Another drought?

sate for its lack of uranium revenues, it has borrowed money from France and Saudi Arabia and is seeking more foreign aid.

As its former colonial power, France still maintains a strong commercial, military, and developmental hold on Niger. French expatriates, numbering about 5,600, are present in nearly every town large enough to have a school or development project. Many of them are employed in the uranium mines. In Niamey, military advisers, driving Citroëns that appear to have been in service since the colonial times, are highly visible.

Excluding food aid, France has doubled the amount of aid it provides Niger, from \$115 million in 1977 to \$240 million in 1981. Before his visit in May 1982, Mitterrand's government injected badly needed revenue into Niger's economy by donating \$14.3 million to the FNI. During his visit, Mitterrand promised to double French development aid by 1988. A portion of that would be earmarked for less-developed countries like Niger.

Mitterrand and Kountché discussed maintaining France's high subsidy of uranium prices, investment assistance for the third uranium mine, continued economic support, and security assurances. But behind the expressions of good will and support were France's own economic realities — a recession necessitating the third devaluation of the French franc and high unemployment — making additional aid increasingly difficult for Mitterrand's government. This year, Nigerien government spokesmen claim aid will increase modestly. France has offered food assistance, but is also making clear that aid to Niger is not without limits. One option for French assistance to Kountché's government is for it to buy up the unsold uranium from 1982, some 800 tons. Niger has also approached France about rescheduling bank loans.

Niger, like other franc zone countries, is feeling the effects of a devalued French franc. The cfa, guaranteed by the French franc, has a constant rate of exchange with the French currency.

When the franc falls, so does the cfa. Given that half of Niger's public foreign debt is owed in dollars, the weak French franc exacerbates the economic problems resulting from falling uranium revenues. Although Niger ranks tenth among France's African trading partners, it provides uranium, an important strategic product required by the French nuclear development program. Protecting that source through subsidized uranium prices and military and economic aid is the price France must pay.

Kountché has, however, increasingly sought the assistance of his allies in the Arab world. The fact that Saudi Arabia has become a major funder of Nigerien development programs demonstrates two dimensions of Niamey's relationship with the Islamic world. Pragmatically, Niger can use the aid that Arab countries have to offer. Philosophically, Niger takes its role as an Islamic country seriously, embracing such issues as the plight of the Palestinian peoples and the disruptive effects of the Iran-Iraq war on the Arab world. Niger's support of these issues is not simply rhetoric. Although it is a relatively small, nonaligned country, Niger has a surprisingly strong voice in international quorums, due to its membership in the UN Security Council (1980-81), where it supported the United States by denouncing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; its responsibility for the Islamic Conference, held in Niamey in August 1982; its economic and religious ties with both Arab and African countries; and the respect Kountché commands in West Africa.

Situated on the edge of North Africa, Niger must maintain relations with the powerful Arab countries of Algeria and Libya. Kountché officially characterizes relations with Algeria as a model of cooperation and fraternity. However, there is a tenuous, give-and-take relationship with Libya. Kountché has managed to bolster his image in the region by mediating between Arab and black Africa.

In the case of the recent split in the OAU over whether to admit Polisario's self-proclaimed government as a member-state, Kountché supported the position of Morocco, rather than that of Algeria and Libya, and called for a ref-

rendum to determine who would represent the Western Saharan people. Yet he did not boycott the Tripoli conference, as some black African countries did. Niger's delegation attended the abortive summit, trying to persuade other African countries to do the same.

At the second Tripoli meeting in November 1982, the OAU again failed to attain a quorum, although that time the divisive issue was the seating of Hisène Habré as president of Chad. Niger walked out of both summits and did not remain for the informal talks held after Tripoli II failed.

Relations with Libya are hardly healthy, despite Niger's conciliatory gestures. They reached a low point in January 1981 when Niger suspended diplomatic relations. Though the suspension was widely viewed as Niger's protest over Libyan involvement in Chad, some observers indicated it was the climax of Niamey's anger over Libyan meddling in its affairs. Libya has carried out several campaigns damaging to Niger, ranging from broadcasting propaganda over the border in Nigerien national languages, to buying nomadic herders' loyalties, to reportedly sending commando teams in April 1982 to sabotage the Arlit uranium mines and hold French technicians hostage.

Perhaps the greatest shock came at the end of August 1981 when 12 government employees of Tuareg origin, including Kountché's *chef de cabinet*, defected to Libya. The Tuareg, a group of nomadic herders in Niger's pastoral zone, have little to do with Kountché's government. Although there are efforts to include them, there are proportionately few at high levels. Highly independent, they are also geographically distant from the central government in Niamey. Their exodus caused Niger to tighten airport security, searching even diplomats' luggage, to enforce new visa and residency regulations for foreigners and to monitor movements in Niger closely.

The shake-up also caused a government reorganization, with Kountché assuming the portfolio of minister of interior. The former minister, Tandja Mamadou, was moved to the *prefet* post of the Tahoua department, where he personally oversees the activities of the Tuareg in the pastoral zone. Several

other minor officials were moved as well.

Despite the perceived threats to his government, Kountché attempts to coexist with Libya. In March 1982 he reestablished diplomatic relations, although diplomats still have not been exchanged. Kountché also sold uranium to Libya through 1981, but since then Libya has not made any offers to buy, according to State Department spokesmen. Still, Niger remains wary of Libya and has attempted to strengthen its relationship with Algeria as a buffer.

Niger maintains an independent and pragmatic policy on uranium sales. Western outcries over Libya's growing capability to manufacture nuclear weapons either singly or in conjunction with Iraq or Pakistan has not prevented Niger from selling uranium to all three. In an interview with the French magazine *Europe Outremer*, Kountché said: "As long as we have the imperatives for national construction, uranium will represent for us an eminently marketable product. . . . I specify and reaffirm that Niger has always respected and required of its partners the guarantees prescribed in the international plan for the utilization of uranium towards strictly peaceful ends."

Niger has not signed the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) but is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). According to *Europe Outremer*, when Niger sold uranium to Pakistan in 1978 the two countries submitted a signed accord to the IAEA advising it of the purchase. When Niger began selling uranium to Libya in 1979, Libya had already signed the NPT, and Niamey advised the IAEA of the sale. Libya did not.

Niger's relationship with Libya is of concern to, among others, the United States, and is an element in American policy toward Niger. The Reagan administration has set forth the image of Libya as a source of international terrorism, a Soviet proxy in North Africa, and a threat to the sovereignty of African states. Although his visit to the United States in November 1981 did not receive the status of a presidential meeting, Kountché has not gone unnoticed in the Reagan administration policy of favoring countries whose se-

curity is threatened by Libya. To the United States, Kountché's government is a source of stability in West Africa and is worth supporting.

However, Niger's economy represents a limited market for U.S. exports, which consist mainly of technology for the mining industry. U.S. interest in the mines themselves has fallen from modest to almost nonexistent. What support the United States does give Niger has its history in the emergency relief and development programs that began during the Sahelian drought. American aid to Niger has grown to a \$17.9 million package in fiscal year 1982. Included in that is development aid from the Agency for International Development that totaled \$15.5 million in 1982, including 15,000 tons of cereal under PL 480 drought emergency food assistance, to help Niger offset its poor 1981 harvest. Other aspects of aid include a small-scale self-help loan program and military aid that totaled \$372,000 for training and \$2 million in credits in the Foreign Military Sales program. In 1983, training levels will be increased to \$400,000, military credits to \$2 million, and economic support to \$2 million.

Niger, though ruled by a military government, spends relatively little on its military establishment. In 1981, according to Ministry of Finance sources, the government spent only 6.3% of the budget on defense. Ultimately, Niger's own weaknesses — ethnic differences, problems with the Tuareg in the pastoral zone, a deteriorating economy, and food shortages — are probably more significant than outright threats from Libya. Kountché admitted as much when he spoke with *Jeune Afrique* during Mitterrand's African tour: "With a healthy economy, I do not fear any subversion from wherever it comes. If one doesn't help surmount the bad times that we are going through, that can be serious. For if the Nigerien state falls, then all of West Africa will fall."

If prospects of a stagnant economy, poor harvests, and threats from Libya are cause for alarm in Niger, there is one government policy that holds promise — the Development Society. Long in the planning stages, the Development Society was officially launched

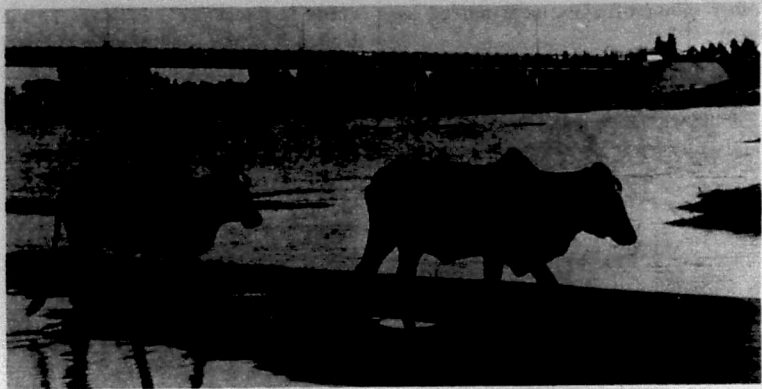


Photo: Roger Wall

Cattle grazing along Niger River, at a lower level than during the 1970s drought

in January 1982. Messengers, from Kountché himself to regional administrators, traveled throughout the country to explain how the new concept would work. Fabrics, school notebooks, T-shirts, and posters in government offices advertise the Development Society symbol and its themes — consultation, concentration, participation.

The Development Society, a blend of political representation, youth nationalism, and agricultural development, may eventually give Niger a constitution and a chance for a democratic government. Kountché affirmed that in an April 1982 speech. He said: "Once in place... the National Development Council will erect in the name of the nation a constituent assembly with a mandate to elaborate on and submit to the sanction of the people a charter or constitution."

The constituent assembly was scheduled to be formed in April. The core of the Development Society, however, is the village. Through its Samariyas (youth organizations), rural cooperatives, and development councils, villagers participate in the pyramid structure leading up to the National Development Council. At each level — village, local, regional, and national — representatives form the organizational body of the next.

What is most emphasized in speeches given around the country is how the Development Society rejects models of both capitalism and socialism, and that it is a structure uniquely Nigerien, stressing traditional

values. Rural villagers are expected to utilize local Development Society structures to express their development needs to the national government and to be responsible for organizing their own development programs, in line with the national interest. With economic conditions as severe as they are in Niger, this is particularly important.

Any attempts to carry out so far reaching a social policy are bound to be fraught with difficulties, and the consensus on the Development Society is not yet in. In many ways, its themes evoke Kountché's personality. Serious, self-disciplined, and moral, Kountché embodies what it takes to lead a country set in the Sahel's harsh environment. Unfortunately, his virtues are not shared by all of his countrymen, or even his ministers. Kountché controls their performance by periodic government shake-ups. When ministers do not meet his high standards, he either kicks them upstairs where they're no longer responsible, exiles them as ambassadors, or jails them, says one diplomat.

Most recently, a government reshuffle boosted Oumarou Mamane, former youth, sports, and culture minister, to the new post of prime minister. His promotion is an important step for the Development Society. In his previous post, he was key in organizing the Samariyas and promoting youth nationalism. Mamane, a bureaucrat for 37 years, is now second to Kountché and will coordinate the activities of technical departments in the government.

In the same governmental reorganization, the former head of the Development Society's national council, Public Health and Social Affairs Minister Moumouni Djermakoye, was dismissed. A former minister of foreign affairs and cooperation and a leading spokesman for the Development Society, Djermakoye was one of the few military officers who stayed in the cabinet from the original group who came to power with Kountché in 1974. Only three military officers remain.

The number of civilians assuming cabinet posts does not necessarily mean that the military is abdicating control. Kountché denies rumors that the military government will be dissolved when the Development Society's constituent assembly is installed. Instead, the purpose of the assembly, Kountché says, is to give "all the children" of Niger a chance to play a role in the country's affairs. The army, operating under the Supreme Military Council, which Kountché heads, will still have the primary role in running the country. According to the president, an "introduction to the exercise of power is one thing, the responsibility of the army is quite another."

Kountché's control of the power center, more reliable harvests since the drought, uranium revenues, and the lack of any other choice have all helped him stay in power. His opposition has little broadbased political support, and his officers are generally loyal, not because of a personality cult, but because the president gets the job done.

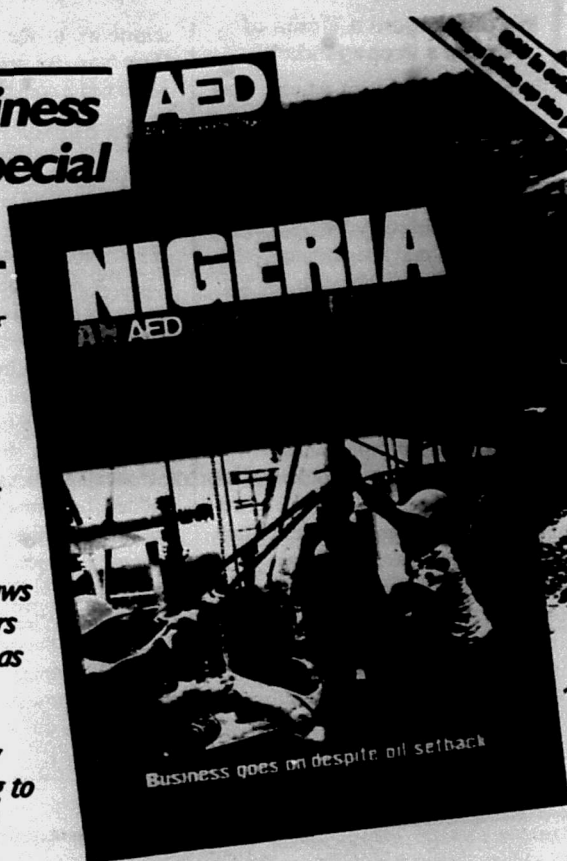
Western diplomats give Kountché high marks for taking regular trips throughout the country to communicate with different regions. The Western press has generally supported him as a respectable military leader. But Kountché does not govern a united country. Public expectations for growth and prosperity have not diminished, even though Kountché rebukes those who do not lead lives of moderation. And though policies such as the Development Society are a start, they have a long way to go before they bring democratic participation to Niger. In the meantime, Kountché faces the challenges of governing his country while it rides out the world recession and a future of uncertain harvests. □

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Is Colin Legum a Victim of Obote's Propaganda?

Recently a number of articles from the prolific pen of Colin Legum have appeared in internationally reputed papers like the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *London Times*, and *Africa Report* [January-February 1983]. Legum contends that the international press has been slantedly unkind to the current powers that be in Kampala, and he seems determined to straighten things out for his friend of 30 years, Milton Obote. It is this situation that causes me to ask the question, "Is Colin Legum a victim of propaganda?"

Urged on by what he describes as "slanted and otherwise one-sided" reporting about Uganda since Milton Obote returned to power two years ago, Legum evaluates the situation and concludes that "the blame for what has gone wrong has been placed on the wrong shoulders." Legum, like Obote, would place the blame on the "paranoid" Baganda who have, conversely, victimized Obote.

Are these the "paranoid" Baganda of whom Obote spoke in April of 1981 when he said, "I want to send a message to the Baganda . . . that I am to see loose my forces upon them and spill more blood than has ever been spilt." Is this the same Obote who in 1960 said that "African nationalism hates small states. . . . It will crush Buganda." This is not paranoia. It is a reasonable and justified fear.

When Legum sings Obote's praises, calling him "a leader who generally cares about human rights," one wonders upon what he is basing his assessment. Journalistic integrity would require that he rely on Obote's past record, a record that does not support this conclusion.

Is he basing this on Obote's rhetoric? To say that Obote is a promoter of human rights because of his rhetoric shows a failure to maintain a rational

sensitivity to the untold suffering of Ugandans. By proclamation, even Idi Amin had a committee that was said to be engaged in matters pertaining to human rights. For some years too, his government's policy was one of reconciliation.

Ugandans have suffered much because of the double-talk of such politicians. A responsible journalist should assess their words in light of their actions.

Innumerable instances show that under Obote's rule, dissent has been equated with sedition. His responses to divergent ideas show that he believes that social problems can be solved with military hardware. Legum appears to agree, stating that "Uganda's return to tranquillity depends on two factors: the speed with which the army and police can be properly trained and disciplined, and the rate of economic recovery." Legum seems to be saying that only through further oppression can there be peace in Uganda.

Legum's visit to Luzira prison shows again that he has been a victim of Obote's propaganda, for Luzira is indeed a showplace. He should have visited the so-called Argentina near the Silver Spring Hotel, the Park Hotel, the various warehouses that are used as prisons, and the prisons that are dispersed throughout military bases and police barracks.

Colin Legum would be doing a better service to Uganda if, instead of whitewashing the degenerative influences in the "Pearl of Africa," he would join in developing a public opinion conducive to the return of sanity to Uganda. Instead of being taken in by his friend's propaganda, he should take his own advice and equip himself with "an adequate knowledge of Uganda's history."

Professor Aloysius M. Lugira
Boston College

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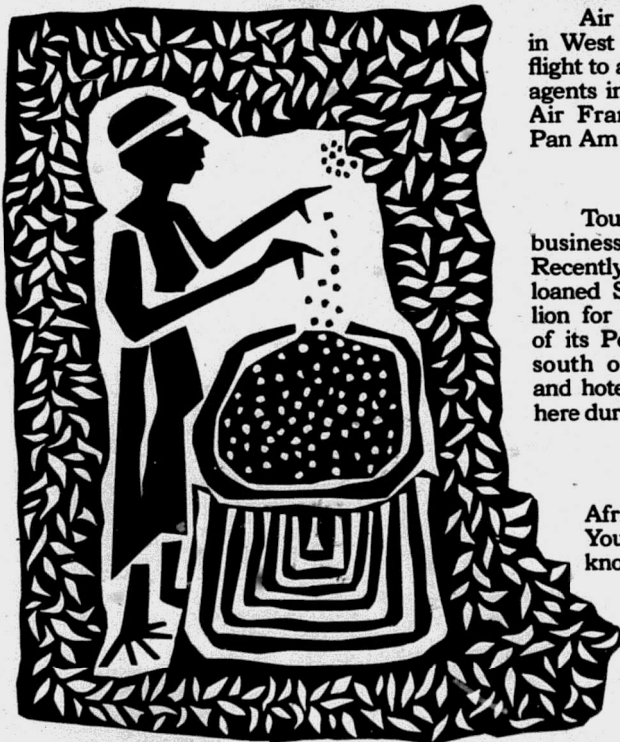
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