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To the Editor:

Further to Makau wa Mutua's article, "Ticking Time Bomb," (Africa Report, July-August 1993), and the exchange of opinion over the conduct of the December 1992 Kenyan elections that followed in your November-December 1993 issue, I would like to add further evidence. In his letter, Richard H.O. Okwaro defends the Kenyan election results by bluntly stating that they were observed by "a large number of international observers" who concluded that "the elections were free and fair, and represented the will of the Kenyan people." This assertion, which has gained some currency, needs urgent clarification.

The election coverage by international observers was not as pervasive as Okwaro likes to make out. Some 190 persons attached to a plethora of distinct observer groups were on polling day faced with over 7,000 polling stations with a total of 10,500 polling streams spread over an area more than double the size of Britain. The largest team of just over 50 observers managed to visit no more than 2.3 percent of polling stations in a quarter of all constituencies. The international coverage of election phases other than voting, such as the registration of voters or the counting of the vote, was even more patchy or non-existent.

The conclusions of international observers were, moreover, by no means as uncontroversial or uniform as Okwaro would have us believe. Two weeks prior to the elections, the observer group of the International Republican Institute (IRI), for example, considered the electoral process severely damaged by the government's "centralized and systematic manipulation of the administrative and security structure of the state to the ruling party's advantage." Two days after election day, the IRI did not rule out the possibility that the delays and lapses that marked the counting of the vote were systematic and that there "may have been efforts to manipulate the process." Even the Commonwealth Observer Group, widely rumored to be the most pro-government of the international contingent, deplored one day later "the widespread perception of a lack of real commitment on the part of the government to the process of multiparty politics" exemplified, for example, by "the harassment and intimidation of candidates and voters right up to polling day."

These expressions of doubts about the freeness and fairness of the electoral process and the commitment of the government to democratic reform were subjected to an almost total turnaround one day later, when the three main opposition parties announced their intention to reject the elections on grounds uncannily similar to the complaints voiced by international observers. Only a few hours later, the Commonwealth group released its conclusions which contradicted its opinion barely 24 hours earlier. The results suddenly reflected "the will of the people" and represented "a giant step" toward multi-partyism. Subsequent statements of observers and diplomats confirmed that the reaction of the opposition had turned into the most decisive factor in the international assessment of the elections—it was suddenly their lack of unity and their lack of responsibility towards the electorate, rather than unwillingness of the government, that had compromised the elections. The chairman of the Commonwealth group went so far as to tell the press that the opposition could after all also win an election that was not free and fair, and that therefore "the emphasis which is being put on the freeness and fairness of elections is a bit too heavy."

Even more worrying, however, is the rather different conclusion of a large number of Kenyan observers has continued to be completely ignored. The domestic monitors, in contrast to their international counterparts, performed impressively. Between 7,000-10,000 Kenyans observed polling and counting and their organizations monitored all phases of the controversial electoral process. The National Election Monitoring Unit (NEMU) alone could base its conclusions on the evidence of some 5,000 poll watchers and was able to compile statistical evidence of irregularities during voting and counting. This broad basis led NEMU to conclude in its final report, "that the December 1992 elections were not free and fair" although they "could be said to be the most competitive elections in independent Kenya's history."

Rather than blaming the opposition for losing a rigged election, NEMU criticizes them for having "unwittingly, perhaps, allowed Kanu the opportunity to pour scorn on multi-partyism and to manipulate the electoral process to its advantage."

It is at once sad and encouraging that in Kenya, it was Kenyans who applied to their elections democratic standards closest to what might be held to be internationally accepted.

Ultimately, international observers inspired the confidence of the Kenyan government—such as its foreign minister who in September 1993 in an interview with the BBC expressed his certitude that since Kenya's donors had believed that the 1992 elections were free and fair, they would also believe that his government's human rights record is without blemish. Given the escalating ethnic clashes which are said to be government-instigated victimization campaigns against ethnic groups held to be sympathetic to the opposition, international observers might still learn that in their endeavor to safeguard Kenyan national security, they hunted the wrong witch. As a final irony, the international observers, prior to the election initially rejected, and then scorned and obstructed by the ruling party and members of the electoral commission as pro-opposition agents, are now praised by the same forces as their most powerful defense.

—Gisela Geisler, Chr. Michelsen Institute Bergen, Norway

[Editor's Note: Ms. Geisler was a member of the Scandinavian-Canadian election observation team for Kenya's 1992 elections.]
Legacy of Côte d'Ivoire's 'Old Man' Is Uncertainty

"Côte d'Ivoire is orphaned. The one who has embodied our people for almost half a century—the father of the nation, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny—passed away...this morning," then Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara announced on December 7, the country's independence day.

Indeed, Houphouët-Boigny, affectionately known as le vieux or “the old man," will be remembered for the role he played in securing Côte d'Ivoire's independence and defining the country in the post-colonial era. But a row between rivals in the ruling Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) over who should succeed the nation’s patriarch underscored that his immediate legacy was a turbulent political landscape.

While Houphouët-Boigny avoided the question of succession, an amendment to Côte d’Ivoire’s constitution was clear on the matter. Article 11—approved by the National Assembly in 1990—states that the speaker of the assembly will assume the functions of the presidency in the event the post is vacated. And the speaker at the time of Houphouët-Boigny’s death, 59-year-old Henri Konan Bédié, wasted little time in declaring himself head of state until the end of the presidential term in 1995.

Within hours of the December 7 announcement of Houphouët-Boigny’s passing (rumored to have taken place a few days earlier), Bédié—accompanied by an entourage of commandos—made his way to the state television station to address the nation. “At this tragic moment, our supreme law, the constitution, confers on me weighty responsibilities which I fully appreciate—the responsibilities of head of state. I am assuming them as of now...

“May Côte d’Ivoire rally together in sorrow and mourning, in affection and remembrance, in union and collective responsibility...in the name of our dear and illustrious deceased,” he said.

But Bédié's constitutional claim to the presidency was challenged long before Houphouët-Boigny's death. Ivorians began debating the once-taboo subject of succession months earlier amid widespread speculation that the president's days were numbered. The debate reached a fever pitch after Houphouët-Boigny failed to make a public appearance on his November 19 return from Europe, where he had undergone treatment for prostate cancer.

As the president lay dying in his hometown, Yamoussoukro, the fiercest arguments over who should succeed him took place within his own PDCI. The infighting pitted Bédié against his chief rival in the party, Prime Minister Ouattara. The prime minister—who handled the day-to-day running of the government and was also the country’s economic policy chief since 1990—campaigned for the formation of a broad-based transitional government, which he would lead.

Some of the prime minister's backers argued that it was time for a northerner to head the country. Ouattara is a Muslim who hails from the northern Dioula ethnic group, while Bédié is a Catholic from Houphouët-Boigny’s southern Baoulé group.

The succession debate was not limited to the PDCI, however. The country’s main opposition party, the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), also rejected article 11 of the constitution and called for the formation of a transitional government (not necessarily headed by Ouattara) to lead the country to fresh presidential elections.

But when the only president Côte d'Ivoire had ever known finally died, the FPI's leader, Laurent Gbagbo, used the occasion to highlight the PDCI's divisions. “Let these men...stop brandishing their swords so that we may bury President Houphouët-Boigny," he said.

In the days following the president's death, however, it became clear that the rift between Ouattara and Bédié would not be easily mended. Ouattara's camp argued that Bédié's self-appointment as head of state was not legal because the Supreme Court lacked the quorum necessary to confirm it. (The vacancy of a key post on the court was due to Houphouët-Boigny’s failure to fill it.)

But the international community was unimpressed by Ouattara’s supporters’ arguments. Diplomats in the capital, Abidjan, reportedly believed that quickly rallying around Bédié offered the best chance to avoid a constitutional crisis, which they feared could lead to a military coup. Indeed, when France's President François Mitterrand sent a message of condolence shortly after Houphouët-Boigny’s death, it was addressed to Bédié as president.

On December 9, the prime minister, who had said earlier that he would not serve under Bédié, kept to his word and resigned along with his cabinet.

In the meantime, Bédié continued to consolidate power. On December 11, he appointed a new prime minister, Daniel Kablan Duncan, who was the minister-delegate responsible for economy, finance, and planning during Ouattara's tenure.

In selecting Duncan—who has the reputation of being a technocrat, rather
than a politician—to head the new government, Bédié was looking to demonstrate a commitment to addressing the country’s continuing economic decline.

Since 1987, when world prices for Côte d’Ivoire’s primary export crops, cocoa and coffee, began their long decline, per capita income in the country has dropped by some 25 percent, according to the World Bank.

Despite an economic reform program implemented by Ouattara in 1991 with the financial support of foreign donors, the economy has shown few signs of picking up. Unemployment continues to soar, while the country’s more than $17 billion in external debt grows.

In November, France added to the country’s economic woes by ending the practice of paying Côte d’Ivoire’s $350 million-a-year debt service bill to the World Bank, according to the Financial Times.

Duncan has not shied away from the daunting task of fixing Côte d’Ivoire’s broken economy, however. When the government was announced on December 14, he kept the finance portfolio for himself and economic reform was called the major concern of the new regime.

But if Duncan is to undertake unpopular austerity measures, Côte d’Ivoire needs political stability. And although the new government retained several of Ouattara’s key ministers—including Foreign Minister Amara Essy, Interior Minister Emile Constant Bombet, and Defense Minister Léon Konan Koffi—it also left many challengers to Bédié’s rule on the outside.

In mid-December, observers said Ouattara’s supporters in the PDCI would likely form a new party. And the country’s two main opposition parties, the FPI and the Ivorian Workers Party, which were not included in the new government, promised to pressure Bédié to hold early elections. (And it is basically the same opposition which helped to force Houphouët-Boigny to accept multi-partyism in April 1990.)

Houphouët-Boigny, the Historical Figure

Although Houphouët-Boigny’s refusal to groom an heir compounded the political uncertainty now facing Côte d’Ivoire, history will remember le vieus as one of the exceptional figures of Africa’s independence era.

According to official accounts, Côte d’Ivoire’s patriarch was born in Yamoussoukro in 1905 (although it is thought that his birth was at least a few years earlier). The son of a wealthy chief, he worked his way up through the French colonial education system to study medicine in Dakar, Senegal.

In the 1930s, he earned a reputation as a rebel against French colonialism by campaigning for higher cocoa prices for African farmers. In 1944, he helped found the African Agricultural Union to fight against settlers’ domination of the farming industry.

By 1946, he had transformed the union into the PDCI and was elected to the French constituent assembly, where he successfully promoted a law to abolish forced labor in France’s colonies. It was then that he took on the name “Boigny,” meaning “the ram.” He also allied the PDCI with the new regional political grouping, the African Democratic Movement (RDA), that year.

But by the late 1950s, Houphouët-Boigny—who eventually served as a minister in six French governments—endorsed close ties with France and Western economic policies.

After Côte d’Ivoire gained independence in 1960—with Houphouët-Boigny at the helm and the PDCI the sole legal party—his pro-Western slant put him in frequent opposition to other independence era leaders such as Guinea’s Sekou Touré and Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, who advocated pan-Africanism.

Indeed, Houphouët-Boigny had been strongly opposed to other leaders’ proposals for the formation of an independent federation of West African states.

For some 20 years, Houphouët-Boigny’s model of economic development seemed to work. Unlike the rest of the region, the country remained relatively stable over the next decades as per capita gross domestic product rose an average of 11 percent between 1960 and 1970, and almost 7 percent over the next 10 years.

But as the coffee- and cocoa-dependent economy unraveled in the 1980s, Houphouët-Boigny’s tight grip on power began to loosen and he came under increasing fire.

Critics pointed to the $200 million Roman Catholic basilica Houphouët-Boigny had built in Yamoussoukro as the most obvious testament to his abuse of power. But Houphouët-Boigny insisted it was built with his own funds and was proud of what is the world’s largest Christian church by some measures.

By the time Houphouët-Boigny was forced to open up the country’s political system in the face of mass demonstrations at home and donor pressure from abroad, Côte d’Ivoire’s reputation for stability was lost.

Houphouët-Boigny’s funeral was scheduled for February.

Ugandans to Elect Constituent Assembly

Uganda is scheduled to hold elections for a 214-seat constituent assembly on March 28. The assembly is expected to debate the issue of implementing multi-party democracy in the country which has been ruled by President Yoweri Museveni’s National Resistance Council (NRC) since 1986.

For the March elections, however, multi-partyism will have to wait. Candidates for the assembly are required to run as individuals and not as political party members. The nomination of candidates for the assembly, which was originally set for January 3 and 4, is now scheduled to be carried out on January 17 and 18. Radio Uganda reported that the postponement was to allow more time for voter registration, which was scheduled to be completed by December 23.

The new assembly is also supposed to replace the ruling council. But “Can the NRA [National Resistance Army] Be Trusted?,” read the front-page headline of the Monitor, based in Kampala. According to the commentary which followed, “Reports from the constituencies indicate that some soldiers want—almost demand—to be elected to the constituent assembly...because they ‘fought for this democracy.’”

For his part, Museveni is well-regarded—especially by the West, which has not applied the same pressure to democratize as it has on corrupt regimes elsewhere on the continent.

Still, Western donors—who pledged $825 million in aid to Uganda in 1993—are watching the country’s democratization process closely.

“Given the present state of affairs, I consider a multi-party system to be completely unsuitable for Africa,” Museveni has said. The president Continued on page 11
EQUATORIAL GUINEA

As many as two-thirds of Eritrea's 2.7 million people were expected to be in need of food aid in the beginning of 1994, the result of last year's massive crop failure.

An October-November joint mission to Africa's newest nation by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) found that 70 percent of the harvest failed. An October survey of 276 villages by the Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, Eritrea's ministry of agriculture, and the country's grain board put the figure at 80 percent.

The dismal harvest—which had been expected to be a good one earlier in the year—was primarily the result of dry spells in the fertile highlands, where Eritrea's main crop, sorghum, is grown. Virtually no rain fell in the highlands in August and little in September, usually the last two months of Eritrea's long rains.

But there were other factors which led to the poor harvest, including infestations of tree locusts, army worms, and grasshoppers. In addition, excessive October rainfall and hailstorms led to a loss of crops in certain regions.

Overall crop production dropped from 260,000 tons in 1992 to 86,000 tons in 1993.

According to the FAO/WFP mission, 255,000 tons of food aid were required for 1994. The mission estimated that 400,000 people were most at risk of starvation and would need food assistance throughout the year, while some 1 million others would require aid for nine months. Eritrean officials, who estimated that two-thirds of the population needed some form of food aid, asked donors for at least 300,000 tons of food.

Compounding the problem of feeding the current population is Eritrea's plan to repatriate some 30,000 refugees from Sudan this year.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

On December 2, President Teodoro Obiang Nguema's Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) announced a landslide victory in the country's first multi-party legislative elections since independence in 1968.

But the November 21 vote was boycotted by seven opposition parties and called fraudulent by the U.S. and Spain.

Nonetheless, according to December 2 returns, the PDGE won 68 of the 80 seats contested. The opposition parties that participated in the poll, the Democratic and Social Union, the People's Social Democratic Convention, and the Liberal Party of Equatorial Guinea (PLGE), received five, six, and one seat, respectively.

While the government did not release figures on turnout, international observers present at the poll—including representatives from the OAU, Gabon, and Burkina Faso (the U.S. and Spain refused to send observers to protest the poor preparation for the elections)—estimated that only half of the country's registered electorate voted. The opposition claimed the figure was less than 20 percent.

Among the various irregularities reported by observers and opposition party members on election day were voters with more than one identification card, falsification of returns, children voting for the ruling party, and polling stations without electoral rolls.

Following the release of preliminary election returns which showed the PDGE out in front on November 23, the main opposition parties that boycotted the elections formed a Joint Opposition Platform (POC). The coalition considers itself the winner of the poll—claiming that the large number of voters who stayed away from the polls should be counted as its supporters—and was demanding the formation of a new government.

The POC called on the international community to apply trade sanctions and diplomatic pressure on Equatorial Guinea to force Obiang to annul the results.

The Spanish government claimed that the elections did not meet the "minimum requirements of objectivity and democratic participation," according to RNE Radio 1 in Madrid. As a result, Spain promised to reconsider aid to Equatorial Guinea in early 1994.

The PDGE said that the statements made by the former colonial power were "inappropriate" and would have a negative impact on diplomatic relations between Spain and Equatorial Guinea.

Indeed, relations between the two countries took a turn for the worse on December 11 when Obiang ordered the expulsion of the Spanish consul-general in Bata (Equatorial Guinea's second city after the capital, Malabo), prompting Spain to recall its ambassador to the country.

On December 20, the government banned broadcasts by Radio Africa 2000, the cultural station which had been sponsored by Spanish aid since 1989. The Spanish Office of Diplomatic Information said the closure was recognition by Equatorial Guinea's government that an aid cut-off was imminent. (Spain has promised to maintain humanitarian aid, however.)

By late December, the PDGE had shown few signs of reversing the election results and a December 6 ban on opposition protests without prior authorization by the "competent authorities" remained in effect.

TUNISIA

Tunisia's presidential and legislative elections will be held on March 20, President Zine Abidine Ben Ali announced in a November 7 speech marking the sixth anniversary of taking power from Habib Bourguiba.

The president also said that there would be changes in the country's electoral laws to allow for greater participation by opposition parties in parliament. Indeed, the "rubber stamp" National Assembly is frequently criticized by opponents of the government.

The new electoral laws will continue to guarantee that the highest vote-getter—expected to be Ben Ali's Constitutional Democratic Rally—is given a working majority in the 141-seat assembly. But the new laws also set aside seats for other parties which gain a large share of the vote at the national level, according to an article in The Christian Science Monitor.

The amended electoral laws also disallow independent candidates from being counted together, which is seen as a way of preventing Islamic fundamentalist candidates from gaining seats in the legislature, according to the article.

Independent fundamentalist candidates won roughly 13 percent of the vote in the country's last legislative elections in 1989, but Ben Ali maintained his refusal to recognize the banned Islamic party Ennahdha (Renaissance) and the fundamentalists took to the streets.

7 January/February 1994
Gabon’s President Wins Contested Election

"We do not have two governments in one country," Prime Minister Casimir Oye Mba replied to a reporter’s question about the opposition’s parallel government, formed in the wake of Gabon’s first multi-party presidential election on December 5. Indeed, despite the opposition’s actions described as “posturing” by one international election observer—the poll left incumbent President Omar Bongo very much in power.

The head of state since 1967 was able to secure 51.07 percent of the vote—greater than the requisite majority needed to avoid a run-off—and his Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG) already controlled more than half the seats in the National Assembly. The runner-up from a field of 12 opposition candidates was Paul Abessole Mba, a Roman Catholic priest, who took 27.48 percent of the vote. No other candidate received more than 5 percent.

But the election was marred by chaos and numerous irregularities, bolstering opposition claims that the PDG, once the sole legal party, is not committed to the democratization process begun in 1990—a charge fervently denied by Bongo.

In a development that has become increasingly common in African elections, both the opposition and PDG were able to draw on conflicting international interpretations of the poll in attempts to validate their positions.

In all, some 100 international election observers trekked throughout the country as more than 85 percent of Gabon’s registered voters went to the polls under relatively peaceful conditions. The vote watching—which observers said suffered from the absence of a local independent election monitoring group, considered an integral ingredient of other African elections—was conducted under various auspices, including the European Parliament, the International Commission of Jurists, the African-American Institute (AAI), and the Organization of African Unity.

The strongest endorsement of Bongo’s victory came from Gabon’s former colonial ruler, France, which sent a small parliamentary delegation to monitor the vote in addition to its representation in other observation groups. In an election day interview on Radio France International, one French poll-watcher from the European Parliament’s delegation said, “Everything was in disarray this morning, but things got better later in the day.” The observer’s sentiments were indicative of France’s position that, at the end of the day, the vote was basically fair.

But the opposition charges that France’s assessment of the election—which reportedly had a profound effect on other observation groups, including the European Parliament—was based more on its interests in Gabon than on anything the observers saw. France has an enormous stake in Gabon’s oil industry and there are some 50,000 French citizens living in the former colony. Reports of open bias on the part of some French observers added credence to the opposition claim.

In the week following the election, editorialists in French newspapers, including Le Monde, accused the government of propping up le système Bongo in the name of stability. Over the last year and a half, France had blessed other contentious election wins by incumbents in former colonies Togo and Cameroon, despite strong objections to the results by other international observer groups.

In the case of Gabon, however, France’s approval of the vote was not directly challenged by other delegations. The most critical post-election statement by an observer group came from the U.S.-based AAI. The 17-member mission said it “witnessed considerable chaos, misadministration, and irregular procedures during the vote.”

But the December 15 statement of preliminary findings added that AAI “cannot make a judgment as to whether those events were organized or purposeful.”

Still, the statement said, “the arbitrary and ad hoc manner in which the election was administered provided multiple opportunities for the process to be manipulated in a fraudulent manner.” In the capital, Libreville—where, one observer pointed out, it was to Bongo’s advantage for the polling to be administered loosely—an absence of electoral rolls or incomplete lists at the polling stations meant Gabonese were allowed to vote as long as they carried an “acceptable form of identification” or a receipt showing that they had registered. In the rural areas “and in particular the northern provinces where the opposition received its strongest support,” only incomplete lists were available and there was stringent administration of the voting, according to the AAI statement.

Other irregularities cited by AAI included confusion over which forms of identification were required to vote, as only half the voters had received registration cards by election day, inadequate delivery of election materials, untrained and unprepared election officials, “a large and significant” number of polls opening at least three hours late, and officials who did not know how to mix indelible ink used to prevent individuals from voting more than once.

Notwithstanding the catalogue of concerns voiced by observers, the failure of the international community to substantiate charges of electoral fraud was seen by many Gabonese as tacit approval for the results.

But in the days following the December 5 vote, the opposition coalition, the Convention of Forces for Change, charged that Bongo had rigged the election. When the results were released on December 10, the Convention—which groups eight of the opposition candidates, including Abessole—announced that it did not recognize Bongo’s victory. Three protesters were killed in clashes with police in Libreville.

The opposition said that it recognized Abessole’s claim that he was president and set about forming a parallel government, Abessole—who heads the National Rally of Lumberjacks (RNB) party, which draws its support primarily from the Fang ethnic group in the north of the country—named Pierre L. Agondjo Okawo of the Gabonese Progress Party (PGP) prime minister of the alternative government on December 11.
The opposition also announced that it would petition Gabon's constitutional court to have the election results reversed. But this seemed unlikely as the court had already validated the results on December 13.

Still, on the same day that the court accepted the returns, the opposition's charge that the vote was rigged was given a boost by the former governor of Estuaire Province, Pauline Nyingone. The government official, who denounced the election results, released a statement saying that her life was in danger as a result.

Critics of the opposition's maneuvers said that even taking into account rigging—which both sides were accused of—Bongo's overwhelming margin of victory in the election suggested that his win represented "the will of the Gabonese people." And arguments that a united opposition would have fared better in a run-off were countered somewhat when at least one of the four opposition candidates not aligned with the Convention, Adrien Nguema Ondo, called on the Gabonese "people to accept the verdict of the ballot box."

In addition, critics pointed out that the opposition had agreed to stand in the elections after a campaign which was considered generally fair, notwithstanding Bongo's advantages of incumbency.

But claims that the trappings of democracy—welcomed or not by Bongo—would force a new era of openness and accountability were made harder to justify by attacks on two of Gabon's radio stations in December. According to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, the independent Radio Frequency Libre in Libreville was forced to close on December 16 after a group of armed men stormed the station and poured acid over its equipment. The station had been on the air for only a month and a half.

Another Libreville-based station, Radio Liberté, received warnings that it would be destroyed and had its signal jammed, beginning on December 16. Observers had cited the uninterrupted broadcasting of the opposition's Radio Liberté during the campaign period as strong evidence that the government would allow alternative views to be heard. (The opposition was also given access to state media during the campaign.)

For his part, Bongo described the opposition's parallel government in a December 15 address as "an insurrection, a revolution, and an anti-constitutional act." But he also promised a "broad consensus government" and made a plea "to all political parties, whatever their creed, to join...so that we can all work for our country."

The president—who is limited to one five-year term by the constitution—added that the government would be formed, "bearing in mind the reduction of inequalities." Indeed, an unequal distribution of Gabon's considerable wealth—per capita income is reportedly around $4,000, sub-Saharan Africa's highest—among its roughly 1.2 million people helps fuel opposition support in the country.

### Violence in Congo Continues

Fighting broke out between armed supporters of President Pascal Lissouba's coalition Presidential Movement and opposition militias in the capital, Brazzaville, on December 10, only two weeks after the latest agreement to end violence there. The official death toll was 81, but police said many more had died.

By mid-December—following radio and television appeals by government and opposition leaders to end the fighting—an uneasy calm prevailed in the capital's southern districts where most of the violence has taken place. But residents of at least one suburb, Mounjali, fled the capital amid rumors of an imminent attack, according to a December 20 Africa No. 1 radio report. A growing portion of the hostilities involved score-settling and conflict between ethnic groups.

The violence was rooted in a seven-month-old dispute over election results. The opposition charges that the first round of legislative voting, held on May 2, was fraught with fraud and irregularities.

The official results of that round of voting for Congo's 125-seat National Assembly gave 62 seats to the presidential group, 49 to the opposition Coalition Union for Democratic Renewal-Congolese Workers' Party (URD-PCT), and three to two independent parties. In 11 constituencies, no candidate took the 50 percent of the vote needed to secure a victory, forcing another round of voting.

But the opposition demanded that fresh elections be held in 12 constituencies. With the demand unmet, the URD-PCT boycotted the second round of voting on June 6 and called on its supporters to undertake a "civil disobedience" campaign to continue the protest two days later.

The result was near anarchy in the capital and elsewhere as looting sprees broke out. Demonstrators threw up barricades in the opposition stronghold of Baco, where the Lari ethnic group dominates. Battles engaged militias allied with political leaders and Congo's army, which was sent in to restore order. In all, two waves of violence in June and July left at least 30 people dead.

On July 26, however, it appeared that the crisis would be resolved when the URD-PCT leader, Bernard Kolelas, and a representative of the Presidential Movement signed a communiqué pledging to dismantle unauthorized militias and "resort exclusively to dialogue" as a means of ending disputes.

The communiqué was followed up by a week of talks in Libreville, Gabon, under the auspices of Gabonese President Omar Bongo. Under the terms of the resulting "Libreville Accord," signed by both sides on August 4, the parties agreed to abide by the May election results, but challenges could be brought before a seven-member international arbitration college. In addition, the two sides agreed to re-run the June 6 elections.

The fresh voting was held in the beginning of October, giving the URD-PCT an additional eight seats in the National Assembly. But the opposition militias were never disarmed and relatively minor incidents between security forces and opposition supporters continued.

Fierce fighting erupted in the capital following the November 1 kidnapping of two government officials by opposition militia, reportedly in retribution for the arrests of two opposition supporters charged with stealing munitions.

After the two officials were released the next day, the opposition attacked an army patrol in Baco, district, according to a Radio Nationale Congolais report.

The Congolese Armed Forces cited "the acts of extortion committed on peaceful citizens in recent days, as well as the firing on regular patrols of the security forces" on November 3 when an operation to root out the "armed gangs that are
To Tell, the Truth Is Risky Business in Nigeria

Ever since Gen. Sani Abacha seized power in a bloodless coup d' état on November 17—ending Nigeria's less than three-month-old experiment with a military-installed civilian government—the country's journalists have wondered if and when the new regime would crack down on the press.

The general had, after all, banned virtually all political activity and democratic institutions in his first national broadcast as head of state on November 18. But in the same speech, Abacha also surprised critics by lifting a proscription order which was placed on a number of major media houses in July by the previous military ruler, Ibrahim Babangida. In a subsequent move, Abacha brought the publisher of the country's leading independent newspaper, the Guardian, into government.

Through mid-December, Nigeria's newspapers and magazines published without the harassment that had marked the Babangida regime.

But Abacha also offered words of caution to Nigeria's journalists, asking them in the "spirit of national reconciliation" to "show more restraint" in their reporting. And publishers remain concerned that, if threatened, the general could resort to attacks on the press.

One publication which tested the limits of Abacha's predecessors' tolerance for a free press—and which reportedly remains under surveillance by Nigerian security forces—is the weekly magazine, Tell.

Tell was established by five journalists who left Nigeria's first weekly news magazine, NewsWatch, in October 1990. The popular NewsWatch was renowned for reporting on the Babangida regime's transgressions and had been the target of repeated government assaults. In 1986, the magazine's outspoken editor-in-chief, Dele Giwa, was killed by a parcel bomb purportedly sent at the behest of the regime and the following year the weekly was proscribed for six months by the government.

But, between 1989 and 1990, some journalists at NewsWatch became disgruntled with the "coziness" which had developed between the magazine's "founding editors and the government," according to Tell's editor-in-chief Nosa Igiebor, who was then a NewsWatch deputy general editor.

Six months after Igiebor and four of his colleagues left NewsWatch, their new magazine hit the newsstands in April 1991. After struggling to stay afloat financially in its first year, Tell gained a reputation as a leader in questioning Babangida's willingness to hand over power to a civilian government.

Tell's popularity soared in the run-up to the June 1993 presidential election and in the turbulent aftermath. The magazine's print run was as high as 100,000 copies a week at the time, according to Igiebor. But success came at the price of government intimidation and harassment.

Tell became one of the Babangida regime's favorite targets in April after the magazine published an interview with former head of state Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo. The cover of the issue featured a quote from Obasanjo in large red block letters, which read, "IBB's Regime Is a Fraud."

Over the next four months, state security forces kept the magazine's offices under constant surveillance, occupied them on more than one occasion, seized thousands of copies of the magazine, and assaulted its journalists. Igiebor told Africa Report that, due to the harassment, the magazine was forced to print underground beginning last July. During this time, Tell changed printers from week to week and split up each print run among a few printers to avoid having entire editions of the magazine confiscated by security forces.

One result was that Tell was forced to print in tabloid form.

But the Babangida regime's attacks on the press were not limited to Tell. Editors of Nigeria's independent newspapers and magazines—many of whom had been more tolerant of Babangida in the past—became hostile toward the head of state after he annulled the June 12 election results, considered by many to be the freest and fairest in Nigeria's history. "Many of them [independent publications] were terribly disappointed. They had believed so much in the man [Babangida] and in what he was trying to do, only to realize that the whole thing was a fraud," Igiebor explained.

In the aftermath of the election, Igiebor said the government tried in vain to employ its monopoly on radio and television and ownership of two-thirds of the country's newspapers to explain why Moshood Abiola, who had won the election, was denied power. "The state-controlled media was not credible, there was no way they could counter the campaign by the free press to show that what happened was not acceptable to the people...So the logical reaction was to shut down as many newspapers and magazines as possible, or use force to intimidate the ones that remained, in the hope that they would pipe down," Igiebor said.

Among other actions taken by Babangida against the independent press was the issuance of a decree proscribing four major media houses—Concord, Punch, Sketch, and Observer—on July 22. But, Igiebor said, the government's actions were ineffective in silencing the press. "The Nigerian media was genuinely radicalized by the annulment of the election," he said.

Meanwhile, matters went from bad to worse for Tell. On August 15, state security operatives and police ran-sacked the magazine's offices and detained Igiebor, executive editor Kola Ilori, managing editor Onome Osifo-Whiskey, and senior associate editor Ayodele Akinwunso for 12 days.

Even with the senior editors in detention, the attacks on Tell continued. "Two or three days after we were arrested...they came to our office during production...and assaulted our reporters—took them away and tortured them," Ilori said.

According to the executive editor, after a magistrate heard the case against the editors—and "knew it was a phony holding charge"—they were supposed to be released on bail before Babangida handed over power on August 26 and left Abuja the next day. But they were detained an additional few days because "they thought it would be safer to keep us in Abuja while the man [Babangida] is still there," Ilori said.

When the editors were finally released on August 27, Ernest Shon-ekan was Nigeria's president. The end of the Babangida regime was a welcome respite for Tell. All told, 500,000 copies of the magazine had been seized from printers, distributors, and vendors in the streets during the last four months of Babangida's rule, according
Troops Target Civilians in Djibouti

On November 30 and December 1, the Djibouti government and the rebel Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD), which have been at war for two years, released 95 prisoners under an agreement brokered by the International Committee of the Red Cross with cooperation from the Ethiopian government.

But the prisoner of war exchange—which followed four months of negotiations—appears to have done little to bring about an end to the war, which has become increasingly bloody in recent months.

The conflict began in November 1991 when FRUD—which was formed by three armed Afar groups six months earlier—launched an insurgency in the north of the country. The Afar, who make up roughly 40 percent of Djibouti’s population of 500,000 and originate in the north, have historically been the opponents of the Issas, who hail from the south and dominate President Hassan Gouled Apiton’s Popular Rally for Progress party. Multi-party elections were held in May, but FRUD—which came to control some two-thirds of the country—chose to boycott the poll and continue fighting.

The war got worse in the beginning of September when the government launched a fresh offensive, which apparently targeted civilians. In mid-September, the local human rights organization, the Association for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms, reported widespread incidents of rape, torture, and executions carried out on civilians by government troops during operations in the north and south-west. Wells were also poisoned in Afar villages. The claims were backed up by a September 20 Amnesty International report.

The former colonial power, France—which keeps some 4,000 soldiers in the country—has reportedly put pressure on Apiton to negotiate an end to the war. The president says he is ready for dialogue, but rejects outside mediation.

In a concession to FRUD in mid-December, Apiton pardoned Ali Aref Bourhan, the pre-independence vice president of the council of ministers who had been imprisoned in January 1991 along with 100 other Afars for allegedly plotting to overthrow the government.

Congo Continued

sowing terror” in Bacongo and other southern districts of the capital was announced.

But the operation was aimed at more than “armed gangs.” One of the initial targets of the armed forces’ exercise was Radio Alliance. The opposition radio station had only been broadcasting for a few days when government forces fired shells at the building it was housed in on November 3, the first day of the operation. The station has reportedly been moved across the Congo River to Zaire.

Kolelas’s house in Bacongo was also damaged by a shell, according to Radio France International.

But the main target of the security forces’ siege was the militia of the opposition leader’s Congolese Movement for Development and Integral Democracy, the dominant party in the URD-PCT.

Opposition forces answered government shelling with machine gun fire and the launching of a missile. Despite heavy shelling by the government forces, the opposition militia fought back for a month and was not forcibly disbanded.

On November 26, Congo’s national mediator, Gen. Raymond Damase Ngolo, announced an agreement between the Congolese government and the URD-PCT to end the violence. Under the accord, Prime Minister Joachim Yhombi-Opango agreed to order security forces back to the barracks and Kolelas called for calm. By official accounts, the fighting in November left 43 dead.

The December violence reportedly began when backers of the presidential coalition attacked suspected opposition supporters in revenge for the previous month’s clashes (although Agence France-Presse reported that observers in the capital said the attacks were retribution for the kidnapping of a presidential group supporter on December 10).

But the spark which set off the conflict in the first place—the dispute over the May election results—may also soon re-emerge: The international commission charged with reviewing appeals to the May 2 vote was expected to pronounce its findings early in the new year.

Uganda Continued

believes that multi-partyism would rekindle ethnic and religious differences in Uganda, and instead champions a “no-party democracy,” which is outlined in a draft constitution to be debated by the assembly.
Congo

In early December, Congo's National Assembly passed a law granting the country's leading oil producer, Elf-Congo, the exclusive rights to sell the oil it produces at its Nkossa off-shore oil field.

Past agreements allowed the company to sell only 85 percent of its yield, with the remainder sold through a state concern, according to Radio France International.

The new favorable terms for Elf—which is 80 percent owned by the French company Elf-Aquitaine—are seen as a sign that the strained relationship between the company and the government is on the mend.

In the meantime, however, President Pascal Lissouba's government—which accused the oil company, as well as France, of supporting Congo's opposition—has encouraged other foreign oil companies to invest in the country.

In May, the government reportedly granted the American company Occidental Petroleum the rights to 75 million barrels of oil per year in a contract worth $150 million.

But Elf's dominance of the industry does not appear to be seriously challenged by new foreign interests in the country. Elf is currently responsible for three-quarters of the 56 million barrels of crude oil the country produces each year, and its dominant position will only be bolstered by its Nkossa oil field.

In September, Elf announced that the Nkossa field is expected to produce 14 million barrels of crude oil a year by 1996—a quarter of the country's current output.

The law granting Elf the exclusive sale of the oil it draws from Nkossa runs at least until the year 2000, according to Radio France International.

Liberia

In the latest sign that Liberia's economic reconstruction is under way despite setbacks in the peace process, the country commissioned a national airline on November 7 in a ceremony attended by interim President Amos Sawyer.

The airline, ADC Liberia Inc., is a joint venture with ADC Nigeria.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Liberians reportedly own 51 percent of the new airline, while ADC Nigeria has a 49 percent stake.

ADC Liberia has already begun operating routes between the capital, Monrovia, and Lagos, Nigeria; Conakry, Guinea; and Banjul, the Gambia, according to a December 6 article in the Nigerian magazine NewsWatch.

ADC Liberia also has agreements to begin service to the capitals of Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Mali, and Senegal, as well as London and New York.

World Bank

Over the past few years, private resource flows to developing countries have increasingly been regarded as a barometer of economic success and as key to development. And those flows reached a record level in 1993, according to the World Bank's 1993-94 edition of World Debt Tables.

But the expansion in capital flows has been limited to only a few—mostly middle-income—developing countries.

Indeed, resource flows to low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa have remained stagnant, coming mostly from official rather than private sources, according to the report, which was released on December 15.

In addition, the report said that the debt load of the world's severely indebted low-income countries—including Ethiopia and Zaire—had tripled to $200 billion over the last 10 years. Some $22 billion of mostly bilateral debt forgiveness to the severely indebted countries had been offset by capitalization of interest and accumulation of arrears, the report concluded.

"For some of these countries, external viability cannot be restored without a deeper reduction of bilateral debt," said Michael Bruno, the World Bank's chief economist and vice president of developmental economics.

The overall net flow of external finance to all developing countries was $157 billion in 1992 and was projected to rise to $177 billion in 1993.

GATT

While trade representatives from France and the United States were putting themselves on the back at the conclusion of the seven-year-old Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) on December 15, many developing nations felt dissatisfied that negotiators granted more trade concessions to the rich nations than the poor.

Still, details of the 400-page "Final Act" of the negotiations with significance for developing countries were left to be worked out in the months following the completion of the eighth round of GATT. And it will be some time before developing nations have a clear sense of the gains—and losses—resulting from the accord.

One contentious issue which remained to be settled was the extent to which developing nations must open up fabric and clothing markets in order for the developed countries to do the same.

And while separate studies by the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development estimate that the overall increase in yearly global output as a result of the accord will be $213 billion and $274 billion respectively, developing nations—and especially sub-Saharan African ones—feel left out of the expected benefits.

Indeed, while the U.S. and the European Community agreed to slash the tariffs they impose on one another in half, the two were expected to cut average duties on the rest of the world by less than a third.

Among the concessions the developing world granted to the industrialized nations was the acceptance of the need for tougher intellectual property protections. The agreement, which protects patents for 20 years and copyrights for 50, requires governments to enact legislation to implement global intellectual property protection rules.

Developing nations are expected to push for greater access to the rich countries' markets in the run-up to the final signing of the world trade liberalization agreement, scheduled to take place in Morocco in April. The accord—which was agreed to by 117 nations—takes effect in 1995.
In nine months of civil war following the breakdown of peace and the disputed elections of September 1992, at least 100,000 Angolans have died in the carnage. Now, more people are dying of starvation, cholera, and other diseases despite a massive relief operation mounted by the United Nations and dozens of NGOs. Many observers expect that the situation will worsen because aid funds are scarce, with most of the world’s attention focused on higher-profile, if less devastating, conflicts.
There is this anguish of being human when reptiles entrench themselves in the mud and worms prepare to devour a lovely child in an indecorous orgy of cruelty

—Agostinho Neto, first president of Angola

Relief comes in many forms, and the man behind the counter at the Pharmacy of Hope in Menongue’s market knows just how badly his customers want it.

Many of his clients have starved, stepped on landmines, and lost children and parents in a nine-month rebel siege on the southern Angolan city, and they don’t care that his medical credentials, kept readily in his front shirt pocket, consist of an aspirin ad picturing a man with a headache.

The prescription drugs, vitamins, alcohol, broken syringes, and other supplies he sells likely were skimmed from relief supplies that first reached Menongue’s hospital in October. Since then, the United Nations and dozens of non-governmental organizations have been carrying out a massive relief operation in Angola, flying food, medicine, personnel, and other assistance to nearly every corner of the country to help an estimated 3 million people affected by the war.

It’s a window of opportunity that hasn’t been open for long and a breakdown in peace talks between the government and rebels in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, could slam it shut and worsen the existing humanitarian disaster. Even if peace talks are successful, one UN official warns that the worst could be yet to come. “If this harvest season is as weak as the last one, and the donor support for Angola continues to be as weak as it has, you will probably see more human suffering in Angola than you have ever seen elsewhere before.”

Relief workers only had limited access to Angola’s interior until Jonas Savimbi’s National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita) declared a unilateral ceasefire—which has been violated often by both sides in the conflict—in September. Savimbi, who was blamed for the failure of peace talks last May and became increasingly isolated by the international community, made the gesture after the UN imposed a largely symbolic oil and arms embargo against him. He and the government of President José Eduardo dos Santos also gave relief workers guarantees they could enter areas held by the factions, unhindered.

Aid workers, however, have proceeded cautiously. They remember an incident last spring when a Russian cargo plane was fired on over the eastern city of Luena. It made a spectacular crash landing, and all the crew members survived until they emerged from the plane and stepped on a landmine. Two of them were killed. Planes still descend to and ascend from besieged cities in a spiral, making it tougher to be shot down.

The formerly Marxist government and Unita, which was supported by the United States for years, had already fought a 16-year war that ended with peace accords in 1991. The country’s first democratic elections in September last year were to cement the truce and lead the country into a peaceful era unknown to Angolans since the fight for independence from Portugal began 30 years ago. Instead, Unita rejected its loss at the polls and fighting broke out.

The United Nations bears part of the responsibility for the carnage that followed. Strained by other peacekeeping missions around the world, it sent an embarrassingly small number of personnel to help carry out the disarmament that was supposed to precede the elections. Given the intensity and scope of the conflict that ensued, both sides had arms readily available, though Unita appeared to be better prepared and was able to capture provincial capitals for the first time.

The result has been catastrophic. Medical workers say the past year of fighting has been much worse than the previous 16 years of warfare. Battles switched from rural skirmishes to urban sieges that made cities the targets of both rebel and government troops trying to win or maintain political leverage. The surrounding countryside was sown with landmines, hemming starving civil-

Cindy Shiner is a freelance journalist based in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, who travels frequently to Angola.
ians into the cities with no hope of escape. Civilian militias were quickly reactivated, but it wasn't ideology that inspired them. It was fear and hunger.

Kuvango Samba, 69, is a member of the civil defense in Menongue. Ask him why Angola is at war and he has no idea. Ask him what the former Marxist ideology of his city government once meant or what democracy is and he hasn't a clue. "We don't know how to describe this war," he says. "We just know that we are dying and we have to eat."

Government Communications Minister Pedro Vain Neto sees people like Samba as heroes rather than victims. He says that the central highland city of Cuito, where up to 30,000 people died, had become "a symbol of resistance for freedom and democracy" for Angolans. "They were not just caught" in the city, he says. "They decided to stay, most of them." It's a baffling idea. Choosing to stay in Cuito would be choosing to see one's friends and relatives starve to death or get shot, watching their burials in the streets and gardens, and hearing the screams of land mine victims undergoing amputations without anesthetic.

The government and Unita both destroyed and then occupied the city; a piece of string marks the front-line—a symbolic reminder of how fragile bouts of peace are in Angola. So delicate are peace talks in Lusaka that on December 13 Unita boycotted the negotiations, claiming government planes bombed their positions near Cuito and narrowly missed killing Savimbi. The dispute was a major setback after the two sides had agreed on steps to implement a joint ceasefire and to merge their two armies.

There are a few possible scenarios regarding the alleged bombing. First, the government could have done it as an indirect way of getting out of the peace talks— unlike Unita, Luanda has the green light to buy weapons on the international market and might have decided to gamble for a military solution to the conflict. Second, it could have been a stupid mistake by the air force and Savimbi was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Third, Unita could have made up the bombing story to use as an excuse to bow out of peace talks and make the government look bad to the international community.

As the political bickering plays out in Lusaka, people continue to die back home. The UN estimates that up to 1,000 people are dying daily in Angola, making it the world's worst conflict, and that at least 100,000 people have perished since the fighting resumed. An accurate toll is impossible to calculate, because aid workers don't have access to areas outside the cities.

"Now conditions are much worse," says Aguiar Vicente, the only doctor in Menongue for the nine months it was besieged and cut off from outside assistance. "I could say that the deaths produced in these nine months were more than who died here [in Menongue] during the entire 16 years." He says at least 500 people died in the hospital alone during the siege and perhaps thousands of others perished in and around the city.

Other cities have suffered much worse. Relief workers estimate that 15,000 people died in the central city of Huambo as rebels drove out government troops earlier this year. In the northern city of Malanje, relief workers say there are between 7,000 and 10,000 orphans whose parents died trying to find food for them.

"The mothers have gone out to the country to get food and have either been killed or blown up by mines," says Sean Lee, with the Irish-based relief group Concern in Malanje. Before food aid arrived in September, up to 50 mothers per week were killed while searching the countryside for manioc, a starchy root with little protein that has helped keep many alive in Angola, said Maria José Fernandes, with the Catholic aid group CARTAS.

On one recent evening outside a food aid warehouse
in Malanje, the hunger of some of the children the parents left behind went wild. All the bags of food aid had been loaded into the warehouse, and the guards finally stopped slapping the children back as if they were rambunctious dogs. Spasmodically, little hands flurried through the dirt and slid across the truck beds in a frenzy for the powdered milk that had sifted from the bags. Others spooned the white dust from the ground into their mouths, as if sitting down to a regular meal.

Angola's infant mortality rate, at 300 per 1,000, is the highest in the world, according to the British-based aid group Save the Children. In October alone, 600 children in Malanje died of malnutrition, says Fernandes. Three of Eliza Cataeno's five children perished of starvation after fighting forced the family to flee from their village. "It was Savimbi who did this," she says, gesturing to the fragile condition of her two babies. "When Unita came, the government soldiers ran away and we ran with them."

Some of the malnourished and injured in Malanje make it to the hospital, but life there often isn't much better than it is on the streets. Food is available through international relief agencies, but three or four children still die at Malanje's hospital each day, says Dr. André Kambulo, the government's provincial health representative in the city. Medicine delivered to the hospital usually ends up at the market downtown for resale to the patients it was destined for—Kambulo openly admits this—and the hospital rooms heave with the stench of people rotting in their beds. Kentena Katuse is among them. She is lying under white sheets stained ocher and pink from the infection of her abdominal wound. Her husband stands beside a magazine in his hand, fanning the flies swarming over her. She says government soldiers robbed her of the bags of dried meat she was getting the flies swarming over her. She says government soldiers robbed her of the bags of dried meat she was trying to sell at an outdoor market and then shot her. The callousness of the soldiers and government officials to the plight of those living in their territory is a constant complaint by relief workers in a country that one UN official says has set aside only 0.3 percent of its budget for health care. "We don't have any support," says one relief worker. "UNITA and the government, they have the war in mind, that's all. The international community took full responsibility" for the humanitarian crisis.

The UN appealed for $226 million in assistance to Angola's war victims, but has received only $60 million, partly because most international attention has been focused on the high-profile crises in Bosnia and Somalia. "Ten speeches or 10 appeals are less important than five minutes on the BBC or CNN," says Manual da Silva, who heads the UN relief operation in Angola.

International aid groups working in Angola have also had a bit of tunnel vision. They have focused most of their attention on the besieged cities in the interior, where 30 percent of the nation's people reside, says a relief worker with Save the Children. In the meantime, the capital, Luanda, where aid groups have their offices, has deteriorated into a disaster waiting to happen.

Seventy percent of Angolans live in Luanda and along the government-controlled coastal strip to the south. Luanda's infrastructure was built to support about 400,000 people, not the 2 million who live there now. The population has swelled by 40 percent in the past year due to the influx of about 600,000 war refugees. But they find little respite in Luanda, where annual inflation has hit 1,300 percent, cholera and measles are epidemic, and the only housing available is in abandoned buildings or squalid shantytowns. The number of severely malnourished in at least two of those neighborhoods is double what it was six months ago, says the UN's da Silva.

"We are getting concerned that this is increasing very fast," he says. "It's very significant. The different aid agencies are getting very worried, including the World Bank, and people are trying to find means and plans of action to address this situation."

Vall Neto, the communications minister, denies that the government isn't doing what it can to help the impoverished and says officials are trying to develop "a liberal type of economy."

"In England, America, in France—all over the world it is like that. If you have your money, you buy it, luxury or not, you buy it because you have the money to do it. If you don't have the money to do it, you don't buy it because you can't," he says. "If we start controlling that type of buying, how is the Western world going to react? They will be saying that we are going back to controlling the people again."

Not really. Just ask Humberto Domingos da Costa, general director of Angola's industries. He would probably appreciate a little control from the state as he tries to keep the TeXtang fabric mill in Luanda running. Instead, he says, he often trades the local currency, the kwanzo, on the black market to obtain the dollars he needs to buy spare parts for his machines. "We are a state company, but we don't depend on the state to function," he says. "We are at 10 percent of production capacity. We are still a bit satisfied because there aren't many factories in Angola that still function. But we do."

As bad as things are now in Luanda, aid workers say the situation will likely get worse before it gets better. The rainy season is about to begin and is expected to bring a cholera epidemic with it that health workers fear will infect more than 1,000 people per week by next spring. Cholera exists in the city's piped water system, which is often unchlorinated, as well as in open sewers and streams that cut through the shantytowns.

"It's just going to be horrific in January, February, and March" as the epidemic peaks, says the Save the Children worker. "You have a very fit child in the morning who would be dead by the evening."

If Agostinho Neto were still alive, he would see his poem come to life in Angola today.

Africa Report 16
THE SIEGE OF CUITO

Nine months of siege by Unita rebels and air bombardment by government forces ended in September, leaving Cuito, the once-charming capital of Bié province in central Angola, in ruins, hardly worth rebuilding. Our correspondent reports on the hardiness of Cuito's citizens, who braved mortar shells...
...and sniper fire to band together and eke out a shaky existence while the city around them was being transformed into a graveyard of at least 18,000 dead.

The survivors had not yet had time to bury the skulls and bones and the leg still clad in Unita's dark green uniform alongside the burnt-out playground in downtown Cuito.

Although weakened by hunger and malnutrition, Cuito's people have been clearing up rubble and burying their dead since shelling stopped and an uneasy truce settled in. At 6 pm on Tuesday, September 21, Unita troops began firing tracer bullets into the air across the street that divides government and rebels areas of Cuito, in central Angola. "War is over!," the soldiers shouted. "Ceasefire!"

Only a few of the war-weary residents dared to believe and ventured outside. But the following day, when the shelling had not recommenced and Angola Radio confirmed Unita's unilateral ceasefire, the people of Cuito celebrated wildly in the rubble-covered streets, mingling freely with Unita soldiers, even crossing the dividing line to see the houses they had fled months before, now destroyed.

Two days later, traffic across the line was halted. The government controls the airport and the city center, to the east. Unita controls the road from the airport and the rest of the gutted town. Men armed to the teeth guard each side a mere 20 yards apart.

Cuito, the once prosperous capital of Bié province in central Angola, had been under a deadly, devastating siege since January 1993. The city, which had escaped destruction during the 16 years of civil war, has been ruined by renewed fighting after Unita rejected the results of the October 1992 elections.

After nine months of siege, not one building in Cuito had escaped either Unita's shelling or the government's bombing to flush out the rebels. Seen from above, not one roof is intact. The lovely pink and white colonial buildings that housed the provincial government are crumbling façades. One of the most charming cities of Angola has been reduced to ruins not worth rebuilding. The only undamaged thing I saw was a small bronze statue of a mermaid by a pond in a park, near a destroyed church. Nearby lay a few bones and charred remains of bodies.

Paradoxically, the siege of Cuito has razed a city that voted solidly for Unita in the 1992 elections. But when Unita rejected the results and went back to war, many in Cuito changed sides. After Unita's surprise attack on Cuito on the night of January 5, residents took up arms and joined the beleaguered police and military in defending the city.

Huambo, 90 miles away, had fallen to Unita in early March, after a bloody 56-day siege. Crack Unita troops moved toward Cuito, expecting an easy victory. Capturing Cuito, close to Jonas Savimbi's birthplace, would solidify Unita's control of the rich central highlands, its Ovimbundu ethnic base. Cuito—its defeat or resistance—became a symbol for both warring sides.

With conservative estimates of casualties running to a minimum of 18,000 (and some as high as 30,000), the town has become a graveyard. Because the cemetery remained on Unita's side, the dead are buried in gardens, sidewalks, and front yards. When constant shelling did not allow people to go outside for days, the dead were buried in balconies and roofs by scattering straw, dirt, and rubbish over them. At Vila Miseria, an unfinished building taken over by some 1,000 displaced people, three dirt mounds on a balcony mark the graves of children who starved to death during weeks of heavy shelling when people could not venture outside to fetch food and water.

Inhabitants of Cuito, left and right: Children starved to death because people could not venture out to fetch food and water.

Mercedes Sayagues is the World Food Program's regional information officer based in Harare, Zimbabwe.
"Mothers had no tears left," said Mario Antonio Manuel, one of three World Food Program (WFP) local staff trapped in the city since last January. "People died and were buried, if we could, and that was it, there was no time for crying."

When people did go out, they risked sniper fire of deadly accuracy that didn't spare children, the elderly, or even dogs. To avoid it, people tore holes in walls, connecting all houses in each block. But they still had to cross the streets to fetch water from the river: Many hundreds, especially women and children, were killed by snipers.

"The corpses of friends and neighbors remained on the street for days, half-eaten by hungry dogs, piece by piece, because we couldn't go out to fetch them," remembers Carlos Farla, who lives along a street dominated by a Unita sniper perched atop the cinema and famous for his accuracy.

"The sniper seldom missed, but if a person was only wounded, we could throw her a rope and if she still had strength left to hang on, we could pull her in," said Farla. "But often the sniper just finished her off before reaching safety."

Thousands of people died on batidas, desperate expeditions of up to 500 hungry men and women who would shoot their way across Unita lines to fetch food in the countryside. Sometimes they lost one-third of the party in fighting—but they returned with maize, feilao, and potatoes for the starving city. People say piles of corpses are rotting in the countryside along the paths taken by the batidas.

As food grew more scarce, people ate a glue-like paste of banana leaves and roots, dried mushrooms, mice, rats, and brittle toasted maize. When the makeshift hospital went without food for days, the wounded and amputees crawled into the yard to eat ants, grass, and leaves. There are few shrubs and leaves left in Cuito, certainly no cats, and I saw only two anemic dogs whose owners kept them inside the house. Adults have lost between 20 and 35 pounds each. Children are pitiful bundles of bones and loose skin.

In fact, it was hunger that allowed Unita to enter the town in June. As the batidas had to be larger and venture out further, soldiers had to abandon their positions to go search for food, weakening the city's defense. Since June, Unita inched its way into Cuito, fighting block by block, building by building, until some 40,000 people, including non-combatants, soldiers, and civilian militia, were trapped in an area of 10 blocks.

The survivors huddled in homes, shops, hallways, and abandoned buildings. Horacio and Clara Faria sheltered 160 people in their house, sleeping 35 to 50 in each room—none on the street side because of the cinema sniper. About 70 families slept and cooked for many
months among the shelves of a warehouse. Because Unita advanced slowly into town, many fled with mattresses, clothes, even stereo sets. And, because a few generators and car batteries still work, the sounds of merengue and lambada music could be heard.

Also heard was the propaganda blared from a UN Verification Mission (Unavem) Land Cruiser taken over by Unita, repainted and mounted with a megaphone, that cruised the town a couple times a day.

As Unita advanced toward the hospital in May, residents brought its medical supplies and equipment into their side of town, but a rocket hit the shop where it was kept. A school was turned into a hospital for the seriously wounded, while first aid posts sprung up all over town, staffed by volunteers often equipped with little more than cotton and disinfectant, but ready to treat fresh casualties from the street.

Foreign doctors had been evacuated with Unavem in the first week of last January. The one Angolan doctor remaining in August was driven by hunger into the countryside, where he was allegedly kidnapped by Unita. Since then, paramedics and nurses perform amputations and complex surgery without anesthetics and with rudimentary instruments. The "surgical bloc" was set up in an office about two blocks from the makeshift hospital. It consists of a bed, one lamp, one plastic bucket, and the generator from the WFP office. Often those operating would have to dive for cover because of shelling, leaving the patient unattended until they could come out from under the desks.

Until now, the unskilled is obvious in the stumps of limbless men and women, the skin pulled up tight and sewn with thick thread like a mended maize bag. Wounds were treated without painkillers. Several patients, all mine casualties waiting for an amputation, have developed gangrene and have worms coming out of their swollen feet.

Although acute malnutrition is obvious among children, only one skeletal child gasped for breath on a narrow wooden bench at the hospital. "Why would they come?" said a nurse bitterly. "We don't have anything to give them. They stay home and die at home."

Occasionally, the hospital received medicines from the military, especially after an accurate airdrop by the government's C-130s. Throughout the siege, Cuito received some food, medicine, and military supplies from the sky. But the airdrops had to be done at high altitude, losing accuracy. Many of the parachutes floated gently into Unita's side.

The military forbade civilians to grab the packages, but eventually some of the food appeared in the small markets that sprang up in the bowels of the city, far from the streets. Residents exchanged clothes, watches, batteries, and radios for rice, salt, sugar, and cans of sardines and tuna. "The parachutes helped a lot," said Mario Antonio Manuel. "They also brought trouble because people would risk landmines to fetch them."

Because of snipers, water was precious—and dangerous. "That was the worst, fetching water, always running to cross the street, dodging bullets with a jerrycan on my head," said Teressa Santos, 31, one son dead, one daughter alive.

Clothes were washed once a month if there was a lull in fighting. A bath could be taken, with luck, every two weeks, with a half-gallon of water per person. Firewood came first, from the green belt of 40,000 trees that surrounded Cuito; when the siege got tighter, from the doors, windows, and roofs of bombed houses.

The defense of Cuito was a collective feat. While men took up arms, women and older children performed life-sustaining tasks. "Women saved Cuito," said Serafim Coelho, 32, the director of a building firm who came from Luanda to do the annual accounts and was trapped by the fighting. "Women found food, water, and firewood."

For months in a row, Cuito knew complete darkness at night: Not even cooking fires could be lit after dusk because the light attracted enemy fire. People would huddle around the few radios to listen to the news, visit through the corridors opened in each block, and count the number of rockets and mortars fired every hour. Some days they counted by the thousands. The majority of people in Cuito have bullets, shrapnel, or fragments of metal in their bodies. Just ask around on the streets, and both children and adults laugh and pull up their clothes to show scars.

Abel Abrião is an Angola Radio reporter who never stopped broadcasting during the siege. Only after the ceasefire, when through a megaphone Unita threatened to kill him, his wife, and their child, did Abrião go into hiding for four days. The television reporter, Faria Horacio, took over until Abrião felt safe enough to return. Now Horacio is also a marked man, threatened with death.

"During nine months, I wasn't able to cry," said Abrião. "Only now I wake up in the middle of the night crying, remembering: I would arrive in a house hit by a mortar and see people I knew, without legs, bleeding to death, asking for help, and we couldn't do anything. Or I would see people die of hunger, 20 in one day, and we couldn't do anything. People would hug me in the streets, sobbing, and tell me their stories, and all I could do is broadcast it, every day, four times a day."

These days, Abrião does not have to dodge sniper bullets to reach the radio transmitter and broadcast. He is careful, though, not to get too close to Unita's side. Troops are but 30 yards away. People who live near the dividing line sleep with their AK-47's by the bed. One man said that before going to bed, he drinks a quart of water so he will wake up frequently to urinate—and watch any movements in the next house, where a handful of Unita soldiers live. For protection, all the yards on that street have been mined.

At dusk, armed men take up positions on roofs and doors, keeping watch. Cuito lives a tense vigil, waiting for war to begin again, at any time.
Clinton's Policy Priorities

The Clinton administration's assistant secretary of state for African affairs has had a long and varied career focused on African issues in the Department of State, having served most recently as ambassador to Senegal from 1988 to 1991 and to Benin from 1983 to 1986.

Secretary Moose was appointed at a critical juncture in Africa's history—with the demand for democracy ever growing and Cold War considerations no longer distorting policy options.

In this wide-ranging interview, the assistant secretary discusses not only the highly visible Somalia issue, but also the chances for democracy in Angola, Sudan, Zaire, Kenya, and South Africa.

Africa Report: Apart from Somalia, which has eclipsed all other Africa policy issues at least in the public perception, what have been the major Africa policy challenges of the Clinton administration? How does your administration's approach to Africa differ from your predecessor's?

Moose: It is easy to generalize when one tries to make contrasts between one administration and the next. The vast majority of our policies in any area of the world frankly reflect a great deal of continuity, which is normal when you consider our governmental process and the fact that, regardless of the administration, there is a consultative process between the administration and Congress and public interest groups.

But I do think that there is a whole range of things happening worldwide which influence Africa and the way we will do business in Africa for the foreseeable future. It gives us an opportunity to reevaluate some of the relationships that we have had with countries and sometimes with individuals. There may have been good and sufficient reasons for doing certain things in the past when put in the context of our global interests and our adversarial relationship with the Soviet Union. Those things under current scrutiny don't stand up very well and I think it does mean that we can be more objective about the way we decide to use our resources so that we are making the most effective use of those resources to achieve stated policy goals. That is beginning to happen.

There is also an expectation that some of this can happen far more quickly than is possible, because we are a nation of bureaucracy and it does take time to turn things around. The Agency for International Development is going through a major restructuring, in the context of a whole new look at the budgeting process, so those things will take time. I am persuaded that Africa will benefit in the sense that we will have a much better focus on the kinds of issues that should be addressed for Africa's long-term developmental interests. At the end of the day, we will probably wind up with a better mix of resources to deal with those developmental issues, better processes for deciding how to use our money, and better coordination with other donors and institutions which are involved in Africa. In the short term, we are facing—like every other government in the world—significant budget constraints, but that notwithstanding, I think we have managed to hold our own fairly well in the budget process.

This bureau has long been identified with crisis management and conflict resolution. That has to continue precisely because we have as a legacy a number of major conflict situations on the continent—Angola, Liberia, or Somalia. It is obvious that we need to try to be involved to resolve those conflicts because they are so damaging and draining of energies, resources, etc., but beyond that, to look at the question of conflict prevention as well, looking ahead to potential crisis situations and what can be done to avert them from becoming full-blown crises.

I think what we need to do now—and this is a reflection of the post-Cold War era and this administration's priorities—is to begin to focus on the longer-term trends and issues, the so-called global issues, the things that if not addressed over time, do really threaten to undermine the significant achievement and progress that is being made in other areas—democratization, economic reform, and strengthening local institutions. If you don't deal with the long-term environmental trends, desertification, destruction...
Africa Report: What lessons would you say the administration learned from the Somalia experience? Do you think the policy has been a success on any level or a failure as other people say, and what is the solution to the Somalis of this world?

Moose: To pick up on the question of what have been the successes, it is easy to lose sight of that and to downplay it in the current environment, but to those who recall those images of little more than a year ago and recall the circumstances in Somalia, it clearly has been a major achievement that those images are no longer on the screens. And the fact that throughout 95 percent of Somalia—which is not to say that there are not difficulties or security problems—for the most part life is getting back to normal, that within six months after our intervention, people were actually beginning to harvest a crop, that agricultural production was back up to 60 percent of normal. That is a major achievement.

What we haven't been able to crack and indeed perhaps set ourselves a very ambitious agenda in trying to deal with is the whole issue of the structure of Somali society and Somali politics. And I think what we have all recognized and is one of the key lessons of this experience is, yes, there is a role and indeed a responsibility that the international community—and the United States is part of that community—has for situations like the one we encountered in Somalia a year ago. And we bring to that our concern and our desire to be helpful, but ultimately, in the final analysis, there are things that no one can do for the indigenous people.

We have given them an opportunity, and it is really their opportunity to seize. We have seen a number of signs over the last several weeks and months, and in particular since the president announced his course correction—everybody accepts that the events that led to the fighting in Mogadishu distorted the overall UN effort and led to a focus on one aspect, the focus on security in Mogadishu as opposed to what is the larger context. But having made that correction, over the last several weeks, Somalis are beginning to understand that this really is an opportunity for them, that they can't sit back on the sidelines and assume that we or others are going to solve their problems or fight their battles for them. Somehow or other, they are going to have to come up with the solutions and to the extent that they do so, they can certainly expect continued cooperation, support, and assistance from the international community. What we are beginning to see on the part of the Somalis is a concerted attempt to take advantage of that opportunity.

Africa Report: But are there any signs that there won't be a repeat of the chaos once the troops are out?

Moose: I think there are some, I do, and I don't want to be overly Pollyannish about this, but if there is a hope in the situation, it is precisely that Somalis, including many of those who up until now supported Mr. Aidid, do not want to see a reversion to the chaos and tragedy that they experienced over the last couple of years. There are a great many people with a very strong stake in seeing that that doesn't happen and they are beginning to work to constrain those who might to do something contrary to that.

Africa Report: Do you have signs of a positive response to the offer of $150 million that the United States made?

Moose: It's $100 million overall—it's sort of a ballpark figure of what we are prepared to put on the table in terms of a whole range of assistance and activities. Yes, indeed, I think part of the effort here was to show the Somali people that there was a willingness, a commitment on the part of the international community to respond to their needs, but at the same time to say to them that this only works if you are willing to create the security conditions which will enable international relief or aid organizations to operate, if you are willing to work to deal with the security issues around the countryside, if you are willing to begin working now on creating those political structures which are going to be necessary in order to allow you to resume control over your own country. So that is the message and that message seems to resonate.

Africa Report: What has been the impact of the Somalia experience on the possibility of further peace-keeping efforts in Africa? Do you foresee other conflicts where the use of force might be necessary on such a level or has the Somali experience jaded everyone against getting involved in this sort of effort?

Moose: Jaded may be one term, chastened too in a way. I think we have the recognition that indeed we do have to be constantly conscious, as we have had to be elsewhere in the world, that no matter how much we would like to go in and help solve problems for people, you can't really do that. I have no doubt that there will be other situations in which the magnitude of the crisis and the suffering is such that people feel an obligation to do something. But I think we are going to want to look at the will of the people themselves to be engaged in the solution to that problem.

It is interesting that even as we have been going through this difficult period in Somalia in terms of UN peace-keeping and peace missions in the world, at the same time we have gone forward with new commitments, in Rwanda, for example. The UN, in the middle of all this, voted the establishment of a new peace-keeping force in Rwanda and one of the reasons it did so is because that peace-keeping operation was the culmination of two years of negotiation among the parties themselves, throughout which they have demonstrated a fairly firm commitment to the implementation of the peace agreement that they have signed. So in other words, it is responsive to the ideas that the president enunciated in his address to the United Nations General Assembly about the kinds of situations where we feel it is appropriate and right for the United Nations and the international community to support. We have also made a significant commitment, at least in monetary terms, to supporting a regional peace-keeping initiative in Liberia, so I don't think people have become jaded on the notion of peace-keeping per se, but I do think and...
rightly so, people are going to be more circumspect in looking at the specifics of a situation before getting deeply involved and certainly before putting American personnel in a situation where they might be exposed to danger.

Africa Report: What is the alternative? There are so many countries in Africa that are experiencing some level of turmoil. Burundi wanted a peace-keeping force, Sudan is in a terrible state. What are the U.S.'s policy options in those situations, if they don't meet the criteria for peace-keeping?

Moose: Part of the problem of the focus on peace-keeping is that it has tended to deflect attention away from the very important traditional roles of diplomacy in all kinds of situations, including conflict situations. Burundi is a case in point. Yes, initially for reasons which are entirely understandable the government had asked for a major international presence to come and help them secure the government and enable them to resume their operations. At the same time, it was quite evident that any attempt to do that would have encountered strong resistance on the part of the military. That simply was not on.

On the other hand, we have seen a somewhat more modest proposal from the OAU for a presence on the order of maybe 200 people or so that would address the immediate concern of providing some greater security and confidence to the government that is not perceived by the military as threatening. It may well be that this smaller, more modest approach, coupled with other diplomatic efforts, will provide a viable solution. So I think always questions of expense, of practicality—all of those things—have to be part of our consideration when we are talking about alternatives to major peace-keeping operations and here is a case where it seems to me that this alternative proposal has a very good chance of success and is one which frankly I would like to be able to support.

Africa Report: What is your assessment of the situation in Sudan?

Moose: Sudan is one of the most difficult situations the continent faces right now and it is complicated by the fact that Sudan is such a vast country with terrain that is extremely difficult, with divisions not only between Muslim north and Christian south, but also among southerners, which complicates any effort to establish a ceasefire or a meaningful peace. From the perspective of the United States, we are perhaps not the best placed because our relations with the regime in Khartoum have been strained for a whole range of reasons—because of our concerns about their involvement with terrorism, our concerns about what often appear to be efforts to upset or destabilize the neighboring states, our concerns on human rights, and then not least, our concerns about their actions in the south and the humanitarian implications of those actions.

Nevertheless, I do think that we have tried to play a responsive role mainly by trying to encourage regional efforts, to try to achieve some sort of reconciliation among southerners that would lay the foundation for a meaningful dialogue with Khartoum. There are a lot of people who are not terribly sanguine about the prospects of either part of that. But it does seem to us that that is the only approach that is likely to work. You will recall the meeting that took place here in Washington recently under the sponsorship of Harry Johnston and the House Africa Committee and the Institute for Peace, which seemed to further the effort to bring about a reconciliation between the southern factions. We are looking now to see how that is followed up and to support that follow-up with the governments in the region. So there is an effort to be made here to try to get all of the parties to honor the undertakings that they have given about the access of international relief organizations so that at least there is a capacity to respond to the immediate humanitarian crisis. But Sudan and Angola are probably the two most frustrating and difficult situations we may encounter.

Africa Report: Let's turn to Angola, one of the most tragic legacies of the Cold War. What is the prognosis for the success of the peace talks between the government and Unita?

Moose: The peace talks have been under way for about a week or so and they are continuing. [Editor's note: Peace talks began in mid-November and stalled in mid-December over an alleged attempt on Jonas Savimbi's life. They were scheduled to resume in early January.] They are under way under UN auspices and chairmanship in Lusaka, and progress continues to be made in those talks, and we have been involved. We have appointed our own special envoy to the talks. We think that we can make a contribution both in terms of our diplomatic effort, but also by bringing to bear some expertise to deal with some very difficult technical as well as political issues—the cantonment and demobilization of the military and how you arrange a meaningful ceasefire and how you assure security to both sides during a transition process. I think all of those are things where we have some experience that we can bring and some credibility, so we are actively involved there.

We are early days yet. I think the real tragedy in Angola was that frankly we all tried to get an agreement on the cheap.
handled prior to the elections a year ago September.

One of the things that was clearly missing from that process was any meaningful discussion among the parties about what happened after the elections: what kind of a government they were going to participate in, what their respective roles were going to be post-elections, and what assurances each would have that, win or lose, they would still have a meaningful voice in the governing of the country after those elections. The difficulty now is having gone through that experience and both sides feeling that they were in one way or another betrayed by that process. Unita has now agreed in writing that they will abide by the results of that election, but if you talk to them, they still believe that that election was fraudulent and they will still talk with great emotion about what happened to their supporters in Luanda and elsewhere. Those are very deep wounds which, added to the other history of the Angolan conflict, are going to make this new effort at negotiation and compromise even more difficult.

We have a lot of discussion to go forward with. My real hope is that in the meantime, at least, we can convince the parties to cement the ceasefire and the arrangements for maintaining that ceasefire, such that international relief organizations can get in and, first and foremost, determine the magnitude of the problem—at this point, we don’t even have a clear sense of that—and to begin to respond to the needs of the Angolan people. Even that contributes to an atmosphere in which the talks themselves stand a greater chance of success. But up until now, at least we were encouraged that for whatever reasons—a combination of pressure or encouragement—both sides have come back to the table and they have come back with what appears to be some greater seriousness than in the past.

**Africa Report:** Does the U.S. continue to have leverage on Savimbi, or did American recognition of the Angolan government make him more recalcitrant?

**Moose:** Pressure was always partly in the eyes of the beholder, but I do think we have leverage with both sides and it is not the kind of leverage where you can force anybody to sit down and do whatever you want them to do, but it is not inconsequential. I do think that both sides are concerned about how they are perceived by us and by others. I think they are concerned about actions that can be taken by the international community that would directly affect their well-being and their future and their interests, their legitimacy, and that all of those things have played a role. Certainly the actions in the Security Council over the last few months have played a role in convincing Unita that it could not simply stand aside and not participate in negotiations. So I do think that there are elements of leverage that we individually and collectively have and we have to use those judiciously, but they have to be used to our best advantage and I think we have tried to do that.

**Africa Report:** Let’s talk about American support for democratization in Africa. You and others have made strong statements saying that the U.S. will not support Africa’s dictators and calling for the strengthening of democracies. What are the U.S.’s policy options in countries where dictators remain entrenched and are even manipulating the democratic process to stay in power?

**Moose:** We have a whole range of circumstances and different levels of cooperation with governments and the democratic process and one of the things we have to learn to do better is to calibrate our responses and recognize that there are differences and nuances that are important here. I think we have done it in a variety of ways and we’ll be able to do more as we refine both our policy and our policy instruments.

Clearly, how and where we use our foreign assistance is an instrument and it is one that most reasonable people pay attention to and they do because they have needs and requirements as well. It is sometimes a fairly blunt instrument, but it at least says these are concerns that you need to pay attention to and if you don’t, then you can’t count on us for our continued support. Using that in cooperation with other donors magnifies greatly that influence and I think we have seen a number of cases where that has made a big difference. To be very candid, everyone has been very much aware of our concerns about Kenya over the years. But I think the fact that Kenya confronted a united group of donors that expressed a common concern about Kenyan politics and the management of the economy has gotten the Kenyans’ attention and what we see now in response to that is an attempt by the government to acknowledge and respond to these concerns.

**Africa Report:** Does the U.S. intend to resume aid to Kenya?

**Moose:** I think there is a fairly firm consensus among donors: one, a recognition that the Kenyans have done a number of things right certainly in their recent actions—if you recall, they had broken off discussions with the Bank and the Fund, and resumed those in the summer. I don’t say we take credit for that, but we did encourage them to do so when I was there in April. So they have resumed those discussions, and as part of that dialogue have undertaken a whole series of steps which are at least responsive to the concerns that were expressed by the donor community. There has to be some way to acknowledge that.

**Africa Report:** But those are economic management concerns as opposed to the bigger human rights issues.

**Moose:** I would argue that the two are increasingly difficult to separate—that governance concerns are also economic concerns and the donors have increasingly tended to see them that way. So on the one hand, we want to recognize the positive steps that have been taken and the efforts that
Moose: There are a number of measures that we have already taken that have had an impact. They have gotten people’s attention. The fact that there is a renewed dialogue taking place in Kinshasa is a consequence of actions that have been taken. Yes, there are other measures that might be envisaged or contemplated. But there has to be a careful decision as to where and under what circumstances one uses those and to what purpose. Simply to apply a measure in the absence of an objective is not from my perspective a terribly useful or profitable course of action.

Without getting into a great deal of detail, our leverage is greatly enhanced by the fact that we can work in harmony with others including the French and the Belgians, but we also have to recognize that they have their own constraints on what they can do and under what circumstances, so sometimes it is a choice between acting independently but having those actions be less meaningful or trying to work in harmony in recognizing that anytime you collaborate with somebody, you have to work with the constraints that your partners are under.

Africa Report: How big a role is the United States prepared to play in supporting the first democratically elected government in South Africa?

Moose: South Africa is one of those cases where there certainly is a role and contribution to be made. We have done that already, we are doing that now in the run-up and preparation for the elections and that is critical. There is no more critical challenge at the moment than ensuring that those elections, when they take place, are deemed by all concerned, starting with the South Africans themselves, as being a meaningful expression of their opinion and a reflection of their will. That is first and foremost.

Beyond that, on the economic side, I think there is a recognition that in South Africa, we have possibilities that perhaps don’t exist in other parts of the continent, in that here is a society which in very substantial degree is able to generate resources in ways that other African countries cannot. It does need assistance. It certainly is going to need injections of new resources, energy, activity, a reintegration into the international financial and trading circuit. I think that really is where our role and the role of others lies. It is in using public funds to leverage private sector interest and investment in South Africa. It is in breaking down barriers that have grown up over the years to South Africa’s involvement in the international trading system so that they can benefit fully from their participation in that trading system. It is in taking our public assistance and targeting it specifically to those who have been most affected by apartheid, giving them a stake and an opportunity in this new dispensation so that they feel that multi-racial democracy in South Africa holds hope and promise for them. It is absolutely critical and I think that we can do that. We are not going to do it alone. There are a lot of other people who will play a role in that, but here is a case where there is a critical role to be played by the private sector in helping to realize the promise of multi-racialism in South Africa.

Africa Report: But working in concert with France and Belgium, couldn’t Mobutu’s assets be frozen, which would surely have an impact on him?

Moose: Let me start by saying that this administration has certainly for us to solve a Zaire. It would take a major commitment not only in resources, but in terms of an actual presence.

Africa Report: The U.S. has stopped short of calling publicly for Mobutu to get out of the picture and instead has encouraged a compromise with the Zairian opposition. Why is that? Why isn’t there a harder line on Mobutu?

Moose: I am going to pursue is one that tries to encourage players who are well-established on the playing field in Zaire to sit down and try to resolve their differences in the higher interests of the people of Zaire. That is further reinforced by the fact that we see under way a serious and rapidly accelerating deterioration, which is a consequence of the political impasse in Kinshasa. Therefore in my view and shared in the administration, which is a consequence of the political impasse in Kinshasa. Therefore in my view and shared in the administration, we need to try to see whether we can’t resolve that impasse. The second thing is that we are often torn between policies which are hortatory and policies which try within the limits of our influence to move parties to do something meaningful.

Up until now, the policy we have sought to pursue is one that tries to encourage players who are well-established on the playing field in Zaire to sit down and try to resolve their differences in the higher interests of the people of Zaire. That is further reinforced by the fact that we see under way a serious and rapidly accelerating deterioration, which is a consequence of the political impasse in Kinshasa. Therefore in my view and shared in the administration, we need to try to see whether we can’t resolve that impasse so that we can deal with that deterioration.

Thirdly, there has been at least over the past several weeks a dialogue going on among Zairians and we need at least to take into account what they themselves are talking about. There may well come a time when there is a sense that none of these elements is leading us anywhere and then we will be forced, I’m afraid, to consider other measures. But there is a tendency and particularly in the United States to expect an awful lot of ourselves. We expect that we are going to solve these very difficult problems and at the same time, there is an understandable reluctance to take the kinds of actions that would be necessary for us to solve a Zaire. It would take a major commitment not only in resources, but in terms of an actual presence.

Africa Report: But working in concert with France and Belgium, couldn’t Mobutu’s assets be frozen, which would surely have an impact on him?
Barely three months after his inauguration as Burundi's first-ever president from the long-subordinate Hutu majority, President Melchior Ndadaye (photo, right), was brutally murdered by putschists from the army, dominated by the Tutsi minority that had run the country since independence. The assassination reverberated throughout the tiny country (and across the border in ethnically divided Rwanda), plunging its two antagonistic peoples into another round of score-settling massacres. Will it ever end?, Burundians are asking themselves, Will the country always be divided? It will take a long time—and a lot of reconciliation—before the answers are found.
n Thursday, October 21, 1993, in the barracks of the 11th battalion in Bujumbura, the darkest dreams of Burundians came true. Soldiers removed Melchior Ndadaye's watch, emptied his pockets, and stabbed him to death.

The last words of Burundi's first president from the Hutu majority, the political moderate and rural credit expert who was elected on June 1, 1993, and inaugurated on July 10, are said to have been: "Be careful of what you are about to do, it is very, very dangerous."

But there was no stopping the putschists, men and officers from the almost exclusively Tutsi army: The country was already on auto-pilot, acting on ethnic reflexes toned by years of massacres and division.

In strongly Tutsi neighborhoods, like Musaga and Ngagara, there was celebration. Tutsi hugged soldiers, drank, and promenaded in the hats and scarves of the Union for Progress and National Unity (Uprona), the former ruling party which Ndadaye's Front for Democracy in Burundi (Frodebu) defeated with 71 percent of the vote in the June elections.

Amid the Tutsi's general excitement that their ethnic group had apparently retaken power, only a very few immediately foresaw what would befall their kin in the countryside. "At 2 am, I heard the attack on the palace and I started to vomit," recalled a policewoman. "I heard the shooting and thought: C'est la catastrophe," recalled an army officer.

By midday, the catastrophe had begun. With state radio ominously silent, peasants turned to Radio Rwanda. Seizing a chance to castigate Tutsi—the guerrilla Rwandan Patriotic Front, with which the government had been forced to reach an accord, is largely Tutsi—it announced the coup with a mix of glee and indignation. It also broadcast calls by surviving Frodebu ministers for the masses "to rise up as one man and defend Burundi's democratic institutions."

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The ministers did not say how peasants should rise up. But tens of thousands of Hutu began frantically digging trenches and felling eucalyptus trees across roads to block the army, as they had done in Ntega and Marangara communes during the massacres of 1988.

"In the countryside, they thought all the Hutu in Bujumbura were already killed," explained a Hutu electrician who fled to the hills above the city. "They thought: 'Now it's up in the interior.' People understood it was the last war. It wasn't going to be like 1972 when if you wanted to kill a Hutu you summoned him. This time, Hutu said: 'If they want us, they have to come find us where we live.'

"There were panic rumors. People heard that Hutu were being loaded into trucks and killed, so they threw their anger on the Tutsi. Everyone decided massively that the soldiers would come and get them only after the Tutsi were dead."

By Friday, the killings of Tutsi, who make up about 13 percent of the population, were under way with intensity across Kirundo, Ngozi, Gitega, Muyinga, Ruyigi, and Karuzi, and in parts of Kayanza, Muramvya, Rutana, and Bujumbura Rural. Out of Burundi's 15 provinces, only Makabola Ba and Bururi in the south were spared. Cibitoke and Bubanza in the northwest and Cankuzo in the east also stayed relatively calm. One theory is that these provinces had suffered the most in the 1972 and 1991 massacres and knew the consequences of insurrection.

Forty-year-old Ndadaye had preached nonviolence and nonsectarianism, but his followers had either never absorbed it or forgot it in their rage and pain over his murder, for them the ultimate denial that a Hutu could ever amount to anything in his own country, unless he was a "good Hutu" under the patronage of Tutsi.

"The people who killed my family were Hutu from Frodebu," recounted a Tutsi man in a displaced persons camp in Karuzi. "We used to have no problems with them. But when they heard the news from Radio Kigali, they said Tutsi must be massacred. We peasants don't know why the putschists killed Ndadaye. But we are paying for what they did. They provoked the revenge of the Hutu on the Tutsi."

"I can't go back to my village. I feel so isolated," said a 31-year-old Tutsi agronomist, who lost his wife, two children, mother, brother, sister-in-law, and six nieces and nephews in a village in Karuzi.

Such decimation is common and, though no precise estimates exist, the massacres may have claimed as many as 100,000 or 200,000 Tutsi lives, possibly a quarter to a third of all the Tutsi in Burundi. Thousands of Hutu have also died, but, for the first time in Burundian history, it is the Tutsi who have suffered the greatest death toll. In the massacres of 1972, about 2,000 Tutsi died compared to 150,000 to 250,000 Hutu.

The massacres were carried out not only by peasants, but in places also by local Frodebu officials and Frodebu members who headed the provincial and communal administrations. Probably the most notorious case comes from Butezi commune in Ruyigi province, where the administrator is said to have incinerated over three dozen Tutsi civil servants. As with most of the thousands of houses burned in Burundi during the two months after the putsch, the fire lifted off the roof. From a helicopter, the only visible remains are charred walls, blackened floors, and overturned chairs.

The "opposition"—Uprona, a handful of small pro-Tutsi parties and Tutsi civil society at large—is making much of the involvement of Frodebu cadres in the massacres, saying it proves that Frodebu was always a racist party seeking to destroy the Tutsi.

Some radical Tutsi parties like Inkinzo say the Frodebu government should be tried for crimes against humanity—for fanning killings, for refusing for weeks to leave the safety of foreign embassies, for allegedly being more concerned with its own safety than that of the population on the hills. "It is a dirty and dangerous game," observed one diplomat. "They are aiming this discourse at the petits soldats, effectively encouraging them to complete the coup they began on October 21."

In a report on a commune where scores of Tutsi civil servants were killed, Le Citoyen, which before the putsch was Burundi's most balanced newspaper, wrote in late November: "So this is how the 'Final Solution' for Tutsi and the Hutu Uproniens of Rutegama was carried out. They were the victims of a politico-racial ideology whose roots go back to Hitler. The butchers of Rutegama are members of Frodebu. Rutegama is the birthplace of the president of the Frodebu parliamentary group."

But the post-putsch violence was not one-sided, becoming swiftly, in the words of one diplomat, "more messy and complex." Whenever they were numerous
enough, Tutsi initiated their own massacres. In one instance on October 24 in Ruyigi town, Tutsi murdered 78 Hutu civil servants sheltering in the bishop's compound, including senior staff of the charity Action Aid. Tutsi students from the lycées of Buhiga and Rusengo slaughtered Hutu as they made their way to the nearest towns.

There were also massacres by the army. Almost the sole account of military valor came from Karuzi where the commander, Major Martin Nkurikiye, went unarmed with two Frodebu parliamentarians into villages to try to reason with 2,500 Hutu armed with machetes. Far more often, officers allowed or encouraged soldiers to hunt down Hutu, burn Hutu homes, and eliminate local leaders, including priests, nuns, and hospital workers.

"It was on October 31," recalled a Red Cross worker. "We were trying to reach Nyabibuye. Soldiers were burning houses, and people ran toward us. I asked the commander what he was doing, especially now that the government had called soldiers back to barracks. He smiled and said he couldn't control his men.

"The soldiers went to the house of the communal administrator in Shombo, looted it, and killed a bystander when they didn't find him. This is an administrator who tried to stop the inter-ethnic killings. All the wounded we evacuated from his commune were wounded by bullets and bayonets, so that means by the army."

Burundi saw massacres in 1965, 1969, 1972, 1988, and 1991, but the country now seems torn as never before. The events of mid-1993—the free and fair elections, Frodebu's landslide win and modest acceptance of power, President Pierre Buyoya's graceful acceptance of defeat—now seem like an age of innocence.

"The campaign was excellent," recalled Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, foreign minister and now president of Frodebu. "It was during that time that a large majority of the population showed at last that it existed. There was an exuberance. We had such hope, although it was nuanced hope. We knew we'd have to go step by step."

For five years, the reformist Tutsi president Buyoya tried to reconcile the ethnic groups with his philosophy of national unity. Now it seems at best to have been a well-intentioned papering-over of ethnic cracks or, as Frodebu always argued, a cynical attempt to bury the real issues so as to exculpate Uprona and the Tutsi military elite from the sins of their 30 years of rule. Either way, no one in Burundi believes anymore in its central tenet—that they are all Burundians. They are Hutu and Tutsi, with very many past and future differences to resolve.

Nor does anyone believe anymore that a government can rule without an army. Recalled a Hutu bookkeeper, shaking his head in sadness: "We used to ask Ndadaye, 'But you don't have the support of the army?' And he'd say, 'We don't need soldiers for democracy. The guarantee is you, the people. They can kill Ndadaye, but they can't kill all 5 million Ndadayes.'"

"You could say that Ndadaye was too trusting. He'd been in exile for 11 years, then working in Gitega with the peasantry," observed communications minister Jean Marie Ngandahayo, the leading Tutsi in Frodebu. "He didn't realize the depth of the intrigues of Bujumbura and la classe politique, the way Burundians can look at you and smile and be thinking something else altogether."

In the heat of the moment after the putsch, as the surviving ministers made their way out of hiding and into foreign embassies, they spoke of demobilizing the army altogether. It had acted on behalf of the Tutsi. Not a single soldier had died protecting Ndadaye. Not a single unit had rushed to reinforce his guard.

It had murdered, in addition to Ndadaye, intelligence chief Richard Nzikumwami, interior minister Juvenal Ndayikeza, parliamentary president Pontien Karibwami, and parliamentary vice president Giles Bimazubute. It had allowed the leading putschists—Lieut. Col. Sylvestre Ningabga, Buyoya's former permanent secretary; Major Busokoza, Major Rumbete, and others—to leave the country. "It was difficult to arrest them," one colonel advanced as an explanation. "They had armed escorts."

Now officially the government talks about "working with loyal elements" but it does not know how to identify them and certain key members think they do not exist. "There are no loyal forces. It's naïveté to believe it," said minister of repatriation Leonard Nyangoma. "The only loyal force is the people."

The army insists it is loyal as well as hurt and insulted by the government's call for a foreign protection force: The OAU is promising 180 soldiers from North Africa and Senegal; 20 French close protection experts arrived on November 5. But Frodebu's "big three," who barely escaped death in the putsch, are nevertheless still in peril. Ntibantunganya is slated to become the next presi-
Burundi's Refugees: A Catastrophe for Rwanda

When Hutu flee ethnic violence in Burundi, most of them come to Rwanda. In 1964, 1972, and 1988, southern Rwanda was home to entire villages which escaped attacks by the Tutsi-dominated military. This time, the numbers are even larger and Rwanda's own difficulties more severe.

Before the coup, as many as 300,000 people displaced by civil war were living in southern Rwanda. Following the last major rebel offensive on the capital in February, two months of international airlifts were needed to feed the country's internal refugees. Late rains prompted area members of Parliament to call for federal emergency food aid in the prefectures of Butare, Gikongoro, and Kobo lone.

When news of rebellious paratroopers and rumors of Ndadaye's death reached southern Rwanda, local authorities braced for a situation similar to 1988, when 50,000 refugees crossed the border. But within days, 150,000 people fled to southern Rwanda; regional totals eventually approached 700,000.

"It's a different refugee situation for Rwanda than in 1988 because there are more demands on domestic resources," said Carlos Rodriguez, director of UNHCR operations in Kigali. "It is a catastrophe of unprecedented proportions that could not have come at a worse time for Rwanda, considering its own displaced population."

While the size of the exodus dwarfed worst-case scenarios drawn up by relief workers ahead of June's election, stories of wholesale slaughter were frighteningly familiar.

Most of the refugees in Akanage came from Kiremba, a village about a mile away across lush fields of rice and coffee along the Akanyaro River. They said Tutsi soldiers celebrated news of the coup by executing communal leader Rlobi Bucumi and killing Hutu students and teachers at the lycee and patients in the hospital, including children in the nursery.

Appolinaire Simpozenkira, 27, was the Frodebu party’s area leader. He said army officers accused him of planning to kill all Tutsi in Kiremba if the coup leaders did not prove Ndadaye was still alive. Simpozenkira denied the plot, but said Tutsi in the commune were rounded up by soldiers for protection. When Hutu gathered to demonstrate against the coup, they saw government troops approaching with machetes and ran.

Miburo Nazar, 30, said he hid in nearby bushes when he saw soldiers leaving his compound. His wife and three children, ages five, three, and one, were dead. Nazar said his wife appeared to have been stabbed repeatedly in the neck and shoulders with a bayonet.

Pascaline Ndimurwanko, 32, waited through three days of gunfire for her husband to return home. When soldiers attacked a neighboring compound, she fled to Akanage with their five children ranging in age from 10 years to nine months. Crouching in a banana palm hut, she said Hutu in Kiremba had been hopeful that Ndadaye’s election would end this cycle of flight.

Patrice Ndururutse, 35, said he would like to go home but is afraid of government troops, who killed his wife and four children. If soldiers were withdrawn from Kiremba, he said, he could trust that security had been restored. On hearing this, a man in a crowd around Ndururutse and a reporter shouted, "Without killing those soldiers, security will never be restored."

This appetite for vengeance was widespread in interviews at the Akanage camp. Cross-border reprisals have heightened fears that the shadowy, Hutu-supremacist Palipehutu movement may gain a wealth of new recruits following Ndadaye’s death.

"President Ndadaye gave us a good example by fighting for democracy," Kiremba Frodebu leader Simpozenkira said. "We will continue to fight for democracy with all our strength until the Tutsi respect everyone's rights and stop thinking they are better than us."

—Scott Stearns

dent: The talk on the street is that soldiers will give him just two months in the job. Ngendahayo is considered a Tutsi traitor, Nyangoma a Hutu hard-liner.

Attempts to reform the army, always thorny, now are fraught with danger. As a stopgap, the government wants to build up a special force, drawn from Burundians of both ethnic groups, to protect it.

But a force may come from outside and sweep aside all these considerations. Before the current crisis, 300,000 Burundian Hutu were already refugees in Rwanda, Zaire, and Tanzania. Armed guerrilla groups—ineffective, poorly armed, badly led—already existed, among them the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (Palipehutu) and the Front for National Liberation, which
attacked Makomba in southern Burundi on December 1. Now 1 million Burundians out of a population of 6 million are refugees; 700,000 new refugees have joined the original ones, bringing in new recruits.

A new, more effective guerrilla force might emerge. Among the thousands of Frodebu cadres now in exile are many who are uncomfortable with Palipehutu's sectarian line. The Rwandan Patriotic Front as well as aid workers in Rwanda say President Juvenal Habyarimana is training Burundian refugees for an eventual attack.

But what went wrong in the first place? Why did Ndadaye have to die?

Most Tutsi say that, while Ndadaye should not have been killed, the putsch was justified. They say his government made serious errors, replacing too many Tutsi in government with Hutu, bringing back refugees too fast, trying to bring under-qualified Hutu into the military academy, trying to raise the Hutu intake into the police. All these smacked, they say, of the "Rwandan syndrome"—so dreaded by Burundian Tutsi since the late 1950s, when Rwandan Hutu rose up, overthrew the Tutsi monarchy, killed and expelled hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Tutsi, and marginalized those who remained. "I reproach very much the government for not going more slowly," lamented a retired colonel. "It's natural that they wanted to bring more Hutu into the army, but they should have been more subtle."

"The fact is that the Tutsi never really accepted democracy. They accepted it initially when they thought Uprona was going to win," said a diplomat. "Yes, Frodebu did make a few mistakes. They were the mistakes of inexperienced people who had never had a chance to hold power before. It's similar to what is happening in South Africa. The Tutsi suffer from a delusion born of fear. It's the blaming-the-victim psychology. The Tutsi look at the people they have wronged and transfer on to them all the bad things they themselves have done."

"How was Frodebu to govern if it didn't change officials in government? It was totally normal," said a foreign church worker. "The fear of the Tutsi is that the country doesn't have many resources and the only way to get something is through the civil service. They don't want to compete with Hutu. That's why they are frightened of the returning refugees. They say: 'All they did when they were abroad was study. They'll do better than us.' The Tutsi want Hutu who are good peasants, who don't go to school."

Among Tutsi, there is grim satisfaction about the massacres of their kin, noted the church worker. "When you read between the lines, it's as though the Tutsi are saying: 'You see, we were right to keep power the way we have been doing. The Hutu are naturally bad, have a wild nature unless groomed by the Tutsi.'"

But the Hutu are the creation of the Tutsi who have led Burundian society since 1965, controlling the army, civil service, banks, businesses, schools, and press. The Tutsi have had the monopoly on self-confidence and refinement. When Hutu murmured meekly that their children were blocked from secondary school, they were told that they were demanding and accused of belonging to Palipehutu. During the debates on national unity, the Tutsi castigated the Hutu for being savage and the source of Burundi's crimes.

The Tutsi eliminated the Hutu's leaders. The deaths of Ndadaye, Karibwami, and others in 1993 follow the deaths in the 1960s and 1970s of two Hutu prime ministers, three parliamentary presidents and vice presidents, almost all Hutu parliamentarians in the 1965 national assembly, trade unionists, a party president, and thousands of army officers, senior civil servants, doctors, judges, teachers, headmasters, and businessmen. Today there is one Hutu lawyer: He trained abroad. There are no Hutu doctors over the age of 45.

Now, say some analysts, the Tutsi are reaping the bad feeling and violence they have sown. "Look at the Tutsi now. They are even more of a minority than before," says Burundi's ambassador to Uganda, Leonidas Hayarimana, one of the few Tutsi in Frodebu. "I am horribly disappointed in Tutsi civil society. For the love of God, why didn't they do something to show they were against the putsch? They were the best placed to demonstrate in the streets. The putschists wouldn't have shot at them. But they did nothing."

For Hutu the explanation for the putsch is racism and hate. They say most Tutsi never accepted Ndadaye or Frodebu. They point to the demonstrations by Tutsi university students after the presidential elections, the coup attempt by Lieut. Col. Ningaba and others on July 3, and little signs like Uprona refusing to have drinks with Ndadaye after the opening of Parliament.

"It's not that we provoked the coup. It was in the head of certain people that they refused to be ruled by a Hutu," said Frederick Ndayegameye, Ndadaye's chief of cabinet. "They looked at Ndadaye with repugnance. It was the talk of the bars that a Hutu can't govern the country. We thought it was language that would pass."

The message is simple, said a Tutsi Frodebutiste: "It's not a Hutu's place to lead."

Now Burundians are in despair over what lies ahead. After so many deaths can Hutu and Tutsi live together again? Can Frodebu, bereft of five of its top leaders, manage to rule? Will there not be more killing, attacks from outside, and starvation?

The Frodebutistes want an inquiry into the deaths of its leaders, the opposition into the massacres of Hutu Upronistes and Tutsi. But who will punish the wrongdoers, and when will it ever end? The foreigners who were so enthusiastic about the elections in June have abandoned Burundi, despite the chaos the rapid political change has sown. Burundians are killing each other with almost no outside witnesses.

"A kind of terror is entering people's minds, and moderates are becoming extremists," noted one senior aid worker. "It's going to take a long time for reconciliation. It's not often that brave men emerge," said Ambassador Hayarimana. "The future is hate," said an army colonel.
Rwanda's fragile peace still faces the test of developing a democracy after years of civil war. Disputes about the make-up of the transitional government and entrenched ethnic rivalry lend a certain shakiness to Rwanda's democratic experiment, but foreign observers express confidence in the sincerity of the peace process. As the putsch in neighboring Burundi showed, national elections must accommodate the Tutsi minority as well as the majority Hutu.

Rwanda's fragile ceasefire faces serious challenges—without a transitional government fully in place or a single soldier disarmed. With ethnic unrest in neighboring Burundi and a series of politically motivated civilian murders at home, the government of national unity is also waiting for the full deployment of United Nations observers.

As the cornerstone of August's Arusha peace accord, which ended three years of civil war between government troops and predominantly Tutsi rebels, a transitional government was to have brought the country to multiparty democracy by 1995. But like the formation of a new national army, the seating of this provisional administration has been repeatedly postponed by delays in the arrival of the UN observer force. In the interim, Rwanda's post-war politics have gotten off to a scrappy start.

At the center of this political scrap is transitional Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu. Senior members of his Republican Democratic Movement (MDR) say he hijacked the peace process in Arusha and installed himself as head of the transitional government against the wishes of the party. President Juvenal Habyarimana's
National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND) and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) agreed in Arusha that the MDR would hold the post, and they chose Twagiramungu.

Leading the fight against Twagiramungu is MDR second vice president Froduald Karamira. In court, Karamira is seeking to establish the legitimacy of an extraordinary party congress at which the MDR voted to expel Twagiramungu. He argues that if Twagiramungu were no longer a member of the party, he could not become prime minister.

“It is not wrong to use what democracy gives us to fight a man who is not a democrat,” Karamira said. “We know the peace agreement gives us the right to occupy the position of prime minister. It does not belong to the RPF nor to the government to give the positions accorded the MDR to someone who does not belong to the party.”
Twagiramungu's support lies chiefly in the south, and it is there, to the university town of Butare, that he regularly travels. He says the MDR split is the result of party members who have allowed jealousy and ambition to come before the interests of a population recovering from war. He says he is interested only in implementing the Arusha accord and bringing the country to multi-party elections.

"We are in a democratic process, so we have to give those people a chance to try to sell their ideas, but I think it is simply the propaganda of a minority of people who oppose me," he said. "I have the support of all political parties. It is a faction of a few people who oppose the peace. We are going to try and handle them and find a positive solution."

Unless members of a transitional national assembly pass a vote of no confidence against Twagiramungu, the MDR case is unlikely to have an effect on the transitional government whatever the courts decide. MRND and RPF negotiators agreed on Twagiramungu. If their delegates stick with him, the national assembly cannot pass a vote of no confidence.

But the cautious optimism at Arusha that these former combatants could work together in a transitional national assembly in which they share the largest number of seats has met the political reality of self-interest and mistrust.

In addition, mutual suspicion surrounding recent attacks on civilians behind RPF lines and near the border with Burundi has fired already smoldering post-Arusha belligerence between the parties. RPF chairman Alexis Kenyarengwe let loose a volley of attacks against Habyarimana for touring Western capitals claiming credit for success in Arusha. And blaming the RPF for starting the conflict, Kenyarengwe said Habyarimana still failed to understand the plight of a generation of Tutsi refugees driven from Rwanda by the majority Hutu.

When arrests of RPF supporters were shown on television, they triggered another round of accusations that the government was detaining rebels in violation of the Arusha accord. Prime Minister Agatha Uwilingiyimana publicly apologized for the arrests and promised to turn over all remaining detainees to the Red Cross.

Both sides maintain they are committed to preserving the peace agreement. But this series of disputes sets a tone for MRND-RPF electioneering that in many ways is inseparable from the country's deeper Hutu-Tutsi rivalry. For all the various public assurances that neither party was ethnically based nor intended to use ethnicity as an electoral wedge, when neighboring Tutsi paratroopers killed Burundi's first Hutu president, many Hutu in Rwanda looked to blame the RPF.

Government troops closed off sections of the capital. A Tutsi shop owner was beaten up. Tutsi traders were chased from the market. A nominally independent radio station falsely reported that RPF military commander Paul Kagame was in Burundi helping overthrow the Hutu president.

"Normally what is happening in Burundi should not affect events in Rwanda," Kagame said in a later interview, "but there is also the possibility that some people in the first place who are not interested in the success of the peace agreement may use the events in Burundi to derail the very process we are starting."

Immediately following the attempted coup, diplomats in Kigali worked to allay fears that the Arusha accord might be jeopardized, while those at the fringes of Rwanda politics called for reprisals. Every day that the peace held and rumors of a new RPF offensive fizzled, paranoia in Kigali slowly yielded to mistrust.

International mediators had used the election of a Hutu in Burundi to persuade the Habyarimana government to be more accommodating to RPF demands in Arusha. With the failure of Burundi's democratic experiment, diplomats in the country were mindful of the challenges that lay ahead, but remain confident in the sincerity of Rwanda's peace process.

"If Rwanda can get through the tensions raised by Burundi's coup attempt, they have a good chance of this political transition leading to a new democratic government," said the U.S. ambassador, Robert Flaten.

With broad regional and Western support for the Arusha accord, Organization of African Unity Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim is optimistic that Rwanda's ceasefire can weather sporadic violence.

"Quite frankly, all the major obstacles have been overcome," Salim said during a visit to RPF headquarters at a former tea factory near the Ugandan border. "There is goodwill on the part of the government. There is goodwill on the part of the leadership of the RPF. There is a clear disposition on the part of the parties to the conflict for peace."

Twagiramungu believes the biggest threat to peaceful elections may come from members of the military who oppose the Arusha accord because, he says, they fear an alliance between the RPF and other political parties could result in an embarrassing loss for MRND candidates.

Political analysts agree the threat exists, but say it has more to do with Hutu soldiers wary of Tutsi in office than campaign concern for MRND fortunes. They believe that because the country's electoral mathematics clearly favor the Hutu majority, a national election under the current constitution is more likely to pass power back into Hutu hands. Tutsi may not win a single seat.

In an effort to head off election results that could pitch the country back into civil war, there is talk of amending the constitution to allow for some degree of proportional representation where minority candidates, including women, might be guaranteed as many as 30 seats in a new parliament.

Without something to gain from a new government, diplomats fear the RPF may have more interest in preempting a vote with military force or attempting to prolong the transitional national assembly in which it is guaranteed a prominent voice.

Anticipating obstacles to lasting peace and laying the foundation of a military capable of defending it will be the
The OAU's Peace-Keeper

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) put its new conflict resolution mandate to the test in Rwanda and won praise from both sides of the civil war.

August's peace agreement and the successful deployment of a Neutral Military Observer Group (NMOG) are achievements Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim hopes will help overcome long-standing apprehension about OAU involvement in the internal conflicts of member-states.

In a final review of NMOG troops before handing over peace-keeping operations to the United Nations, Salim said the 130 soldiers from Senegal, Congo, and Tunisia had demonstrated that Africans are not dependent on the international community to resolve their conflicts.

Rwanda's transitional minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation, Anastase Gasana, thanked the secretary-general for his role in the peace process. In a separate meeting, Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) chairman Alexis Kenyarengwe said NMOG served the Rwandan people admirably under difficult conditions.

Amid the congratulations was a feeling that much of NMOG's success lay in the ability of African soldiers to relate to the parties in the conflict better than troops from outside the continent might have.

"African brothers are in a position to understand the very problems that cause such a conflict as we have had in Rwanda better than forces from countries that are a bit far off," said RPF military commander Major Paul Kagame. "The countries that understand better such problems should be the ones to get involved first and foremost, but this does not mean that other countries cannot get involved in giving support."

Clearly pleased with NMOG's success, OAU officials admit the intervention force got off to a rough start. The first NMOG deployment in August 1992 failed to secure a lasting ceasefire. French troops in Kigali heightened RPF mistrust of the Habyarimana government. A February offensive by the RPF brought the war home to many in the capital who had previously considered it a northern affair.

The second NMOG contingent built a fragile ceasefire agreement around its enforcement of a demilitarized zone between the combatants. Political observers credit the rapport established along the DMZ with helping to bring about the trust needed to begin negotiations in Arusha.

Most NMOG troops remain in Rwanda following the expiration of their October mandate and now serve with the Canadian-led United Nations force charged with implementing the peace accord. Their experience with military leaders on both sides of the conflict is expected to give the UN mission a head start in uniting rebels and government troops in a new Rwandan army.

The force commander, Nigerian Maj. Gen. E.B. Opaleye, believes NMOG's success is a boost to peace-keeping operations across Africa and should make it easier for the OAU to raise a similar intervention force in the future.

"We have proven that we are capable of doing what we came here to do with very little logistic support," Opaleye said. "We don't crumble easily under pressure and have proven our resilience. Even having to face the ordeal of these high mountains here, coming from places where there are lowlands, is something we can learn from."

"We were guinea pigs, if you like, because this was the first time the OAU, per se, managed this kind of thing on its own," Opaleye said. "It was quite difficult, but we were comfortable at home and that promotes understanding. You break down the difficulty of strangeness among your brothers."

Canadian-led UN observer group's chief priority. Joining former combatants in a new national army will be further complicated by differences in language and military training. French-speaking government soldiers are organized along French and Belgian military structures. Predominantly English-speaking RPF troops serve in units arranged on British and Canadian models.

Add to this Rwanda's endemic ethnicity, and the UN faces a military integration as fractious as the country's ongoing political realignment. Arusha guarantees the RPF half of the officer corps and 40 percent of the enlisted men. Because Tutsi account for less than 10 percent of Rwanda's population, many Hutu feel the government went too far in offering them such a large share of military power.

"These rebels burned my father's compound and made my family run for their lives," said a young Hutu recruit from Ruhango, who joined the government army after the start of the war. "If this man is my commanding officer, he cannot look at me straight knowing what they have done."

---S.S.
The breakaway Republic of Somaliland, the northern region of Somalia which "liberated" itself in May 1991, settled all its security problems within two years through cooperation between political leaders and clan elders—an arrangement that could serve as a model for Somalia and elsewhere. Now, the region is eager to demobilize some 50,000 men under arms, but lacks the resources not only for disarmament, but also for running the region, where most officials have not been paid for months.

Assembled at a few minutes' notice, they march and wheel tirelessly in the crushing afternoon heat. All are thin, ragged, and poorly shod. Some have laces in their shoes; many don't. At last, they halt and stand at attention while their commander, a man of impeccable military bearing, tells them: "We have won the first war. Now we are fighting to win the second—the war for demobilization."

Everyone in the breakaway Republic of Somaliland, the former British Somaliland, is agreed on one thing: Somaliland will stand or fall here at Mandera, a British army camp abandoned for the last half-century and now the site of the first of six camps planned for 50,000 men.

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needing—and for the most part wanting—demobilization.

If it stands, it will not be thanks to the community of nations. The United Nations, which is spending $1.5 billion on the forcible disarming of the rest of Somalia, has so far promised much but delivered little. Non-governmental organizations can help, but cannot rehabilitate 6,000 men—far less 50,000.

Unless this pattern of neglect changes, Somaliland risks sinking back into the insecurity and violence against which it has set its face. Today’s success could be tomorrow’s tragedy.

Two and a half years after Somaliland’s unilateral declara-

tion of independence, a small miracle is taking place on the southern shore of the Gulf of Aden, unseen and so far unappreciated by those whose armed humanitarianism has turned Somalia’s famine into slaughter.

Unlike Somalia, Somaliland is begging to be disarmed. It is mending its division by discussion rather than by arms. It has even permitted a token presence of Unosom, the spearhead of the UN’s “pacification” operation, despite the fact that it does not need pacification. And it is not breaking the financial back of the international community. It should cost relatively little and, because of neglect, is costing less.

More than a month after the first recruits arrived at Mandera, the UN, which had promised food, uniforms, and latrines, had provided little food, no uniforms, and no latrines. There is no electricity in the camp. No lamps. Officers dig into their own pockets to buy flashlights.

“We are asking for $25,000 a month to disarm all our men,” exclaims Vice President Abdirahman Aw Ali. “And what have we had? Some food from the World Food Program. We asked for rice and they sent us maize—and rotten maize at that. It’s not even good for donkeys.”

For the moment, the mood at the camp is upbeat. Despite bad conditions, a dreary diet, and no indication as yet of future employment, the men are confident. Too confident, perhaps. The other side of high hopes is crushed expecta-

tions.

“Unosom promised to fulfill all our needs and so far has given nothing,” says the camp commander, Mohamed Handnie. “But our government has supplied food—rice and tea—and we are satisfied. That’s how we liberated Somaliland—on rice without sauce.”

Somaliland “liberated” itself within months of the over-
throw of Mohamed Siad Barre, the dictator who con-
demned the northwest of his country to political insigni-
cance and economic underdevelopment before launching a genocidal clan war against the civilian support base of the rebel Somali National Movement.

At “independence” in May 1991, Somaliland was in ruins. Its capital, Hargeisa, was three-quarters destroyed. Towns and villages were sown with mines that still bring two or three victims a week to Hargeisa’s rundown general hospital. Soviet-American rivalry had turned the country into a vast arms dump littered with ammunition stores and unexploded ordnance. Siad Barre had set clan against clan.

For the first two years of independence—two wasted years—security deteriorated steadily under president Abdi-

rahman Ahmed Ali “Tur,” a former SNM chairman whose political leadership was both inert and incompetent. (The current president, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, makes excuses for his predecessor. Tur’s problem, he says, is that he never really believed in independence.)

The turning point for Somaliland came in October 1992, when clan elders negotiated an end to clashes in the Berbera area. Six months later, the Council of Elders—the Guurti—met in the town of Boroma and within five months had negotiated a comprehensive peace agreement for the whole of Somaliland, drawn up a new constitution with a two-tier government, and chosen Egal as president.

Many believe this collaboration between ancient and modern forms of government could provide a model for other parts of Africa. The Boroma conference not only cost a fraction of the internationally sponsored Addis Ababa conference for Somalia. It also succeeded where the first Addis failed.

In Somaliland at least, the collaboration seems set to con-
tinue. The Guurti’s septuagenarian chairman, Sheikh Ibrahim, has nothing but praise for Egal, a veteran politi-
cian and two-time prime minister.

“Since 1991,” he says, “the elders have been successful in preventing an all-out war. But we felt we were not supported by the previous administration. Boroma took place in a govern-
ment vacuum. Then Egal came and so far we are satisfied with him. In three months, he has accomplished things that weren’t even tackled in the two preceding years. He is very hard-working and he began with nothing. We feel we handed him many problems, many of them hidden.”

The greatest of those problems, deriving in part from Somaliland’s failure to win international recognition, is the government’s near total lack of resources. Even today, the few officials who have telephones jump when they ring. The president is the only man in government with an interna-
tional connection—a satellite telephone paid for by a charity. Faxes are sent from the offices of the few organiza-
tions, invariably non-governmental, which believe in build-
up up local structures rather than bypassing them in the name of the fictitious Somali unity officially invested in Mogadishu.

The vast majority of government employees are still unsalaried, relying either on personal finances, remittances from abroad, or income from herds, wells, or small busi-

nesses—as are most teachers. Ministers’ offices have noth-
ing more than a few sticks of furniture and perhaps a filing cabinet.

With no home of its own, Parliament meets in the law
courts, sitting when the courts are not. The bank is the street, where huge amounts of dollars change hands every day. (Safely, so far.) Primary schools are run in abandoned buildings, ruins, and the open air. Omar Bobe, mayor of Hargeisa, surveys his city through shell holes in his office wall. His staff of 120 has worked without pay for the past year.

Like most others, Bobe remains cheerful. "I am not only optimistic," he says. "I am 400,000 times optimistic. My people have been oppressed, killed, looted, and raped. Their economic infrastructure has been destroyed, but now they have their freedom and are ready to build their country without help from anybody."

Some—few admittedly—are less optimistic. Interior Minister Musa Bibi, an SNM veteran, is one. "Nothing has changed," he says. "This is still a country where nobody goes to work."

Some things, however, have changed—thanks to the improvement in security brought about by the elders' patient work of reconciliation. As Somalia descended into madness, Somaliland has been putting conflict behind it.

In the six months since his appointment, Egal has established a government and begun building an administration that not only has a wide clan base but includes many of the SNM leaders sidelined by Tur. There are still pockets of resistance to legality, but Egal is confident they will in time surrender—not by force, but by persuasion.

Hargeisa already has a police force dressed in green uniforms (Unosom's sole contribution to security). Police officers receive rice, oil, and powdered milk in place of salaries and recently acquired their first vehicle: a second-hand Toyota loaned by a concerned citizen, one of a group of volunteers who supply food for Hargeisa jail. The Supreme Court has been reconstituted and Islamic law replaced by the 1962 penal code with minor amendments to make it acceptable to Muslim leaders. (Under the 1962 code, the penalty for murder was death. Now there is the possibility of compensation and even forgiveness.)

Hargeisa has its first 150 telephone lines. Local businessmen run a small electricity grid using two bulldozer engines and give free current to police stations, courts, mosques, ministries, and main streets. All vehicles must be registered and traffic police are beginning to confiscate cars without papers. Primary schools are open for children under eight and there are plans to begin secondary schooling in 1994 for Somaliland's "lost generation"—the children who, because of war, have never been taught.

Most importantly, the government has begun establishing a revenue base. Taxes are being levied on Berbera port, where tariffs are being lowered in an attempt to compete with neighboring Djibouti, and on the leafy narcotic qat, which has become cheaper since government dues replaced militia extortion. Virtually all the money raised is being poured into the demobilization experiment at Mandera. While the UN thinks almost exclusively in terms of relief, Somaliland has one overriding aim: security.

"We must put all our effort into security," says Education Minister Suleiman Adam, one of six ministers overseeing demobilization. "Some of these boys are threats to security today; some are potential threats. We must ease them back into productive civilian life. Everything else must be secondary—even schools."

So far, however, the government is fighting a lonely battle. Far from supporting Somaliland's attempts to build a peaceful, productive society, the UN persists in seeing everything through the prism of Mogadishu, giving little importance to much-needed development aid and slow to deliver even relief.

When food finally arrived for Mandera, weeks late, it consisted of 600 tons of grain so dry it crumbled at the touch, 200 tons of vegetable oil oozing from rusty cans, and 12 tons of powdered milk with no expiry date.

Infuriated by this nonchalance, and by a recommendation by a senior Unosom official that "it is time to dismantle Somaliland and bring this nonsense to an end," Egal ordered Unosom's expulsion in mid-September.

"Somaliland is endeavoring to pull itself up by its bootstraps," he said in a letter to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. "This should be a classic situation where the United Nations Secretariat appears to be intent on putting the Republic of Somaliland in the closet like a bad skeleton."

The rift between Somaliland and the UN has been patched up for the time being, with Boutros-Ghali reaffirming the UN's commitment to contribute to reconstruction and asserting that the world body does not mean to interfere with "the Egal administration"—the UN's first bow to the de facto independence of what it has always called the "northeastern region" of Somalia.

The reconciliation is still tenuous. "We've got to deliver fast and visibly to restore confidence," says Steen Tandrup, Unosom's acting director in Hargeisa. "Although $200 million has been pledged, only $2 million has been given. We strongly feel this region deserves a lot of credit because it is doing very much with little help."

The Egal administration is not counting its chickens before they are hatched. Somaliland, already littered with arms, is now littered with broken promises too.

"Unosom cheated us," says a Somali relief worker. "They come here with their planes, but with no activities and no programs. If only they would stop strutting around and show people what to do. We've got the raw materials, but we don't have the expertise. What Somaliland needs is jobs, not food."

Any jobs, says Bihi. "The masses understand the bad effect of the gun. We have all campaigned against the gun—in the mosques, at meetings, with the elders. Now people are asking us, Where's the job?"

Egal seems confident Somaliland will make it—whether it is helped or not. "I think we will somehow survive," he says. "It will not be an attractive survival, but we will survive. We have really good people. Committed people. And the decision to secede is final and irrevocable."
PRESSURE FOR CHANGE

The government of President Daniel arap Moi reluctantly agreed to liberalize trade, streamline parastatals and the banking system, and institute multipartyism under pressure from the World Bank and donor nations. Kenya's reward was a resumption of $850 million in foreign aid. Unlike 1991, when the government punished its prominent critics, lawyers, journalists, and democracy advocates—and was in turn punished by the World Bank—it is now, without the worldwide media glare, going after the peasants in the rich Rift Valley (photo), who happen also to be supporters of opposition parties.
n November 22, 1993, the World Bank and Kenya’s bilateral donors returned to Paris to decide whether to resume the foreign aid being withheld pending economic and human rights reforms. Two years ago, at a similar Consultative Group meeting in Paris, they had suspended all foreign aid to the government of President Daniel arap Moi. The 1991 decision came after increasing discontent with the government’s lack of accountability and its dismal human rights record.

Within one month of that suspension of the over $1 billion a year Kenya received, the Moi government repealed a 1982 amendment to the constitution barring a multi-party system. Prominent political prisoners were released and the government stopped its practice of holding critics in indefinite detention under the Preservation of Public Security Act.

At the conclusion of the 1993 Consultative Group meeting in November, Kenya’s donors pledged $850 million in new aid for 1994. Some $170 million of the promised $850 million is balance of payments assistance from the World Bank, which would go directly to the Kenya treasury.

The decision to announce an aid renewal appeared to be motivated by several factors, including the fact that the Moi government had taken several steps to meet donor conditions, such as the establishment of a multi-party system, liberalization of trade and the foreign exchange markets, and the streamlining of parastatals and the banking sector. Donors were also influenced by Foreign Minister Musalia Mudavadi’s articulate plea for support to reform-minded elements in the Moi government as well as donors’ concerns that continued suspension of aid would contribute to the economic collapse of one of the few remaining nations in the sub-region with a viable economy.

However, these concerns were also strongly offset by skepticism on the part of several donors who recognize that the Moi government is still not committed to political liberalization. Donors made it clear that the Moi government would see little in the way of immediate cash unless further economic and human rights reforms were implemented. The donors cautioned that “the translation of these indications of new commitments into disbursements in 1994 depends on progress in implementing the economic reform agenda, as well as strong positive steps on human rights, governance, and corruption.”

The Consultative Group statement acknowledged Kenya’s December 1992 multi-party elections and attempts to introduce economic reforms. However, they noted with concern “the recent incidents of ethnic clashes”; “the need for the government to respect the basic freedoms of political expression and assembly”; and the need to take “prompt legal action...against those involved in corruption.” One U.S. State Department official summarized the Consultative Group decision by saying, “We have gone from a flashing red light to a flashing yellow light.”

Officials in the president’s office were quick to hail the decision as a seal of approval from the international community. But their assessment appears overly optimistic. Unless President Daniel arap Moi and his associates introduce a fundamental change in the manner in which they rule, it is unlikely that they will see this money in 1994. Almost one year after the multi-party election victory of Moi and the Kenya African National Union, the government’s actions have indicated a continuation of the same style of leadership, characterized by repression and lack of accountability.

Economically, Kenyans have been subjected to rising unemployment, a sky-rocketing rate of inflation, and numerous currency devaluations since the election (caused by the government’s printing money to distribute to voters prior to the election). Moreover, a major government corruption scandal (the Goldenberg Scandal) was exposed in 1993, indicating that President Moi and his associates were still misappropriating the country’s wealth.

Although the political system has been opened up to some extent by the elections, the government has remained intolerant of domestic criticism. To avoid international censure, Moi’s government has begun to rely on different tactics than it did in the past to silence and disempower critics. A growing culture of state-sponsored harassment and vigilante violence against opposition supporters and other critics is being encouraged and fostered.

One manifestation of this violence has been the ethnic conflict which has plagued Kenya since the introduction of a multi-party system. The ongoing attacks pit Moi’s ethnic group, the Kalenjin, against those ethnic groups identified with the political opposition—the Kikuyu, Luhya, and Luo. A report entitled “Divide and Rule,” released by the human rights group, Africa Watch, one week before the Consultative Group meeting, said that the ethnic violence has been deliberately manipulated and instigated by Moi and his inner circle in order to undermine political pluralism. The report estimated that these ethnic clashes have left at least 1,500 dead and 300,000 displaced. The report also found that the government has failed in its duty to punish those responsible for the violence and has exhibited outright hostility against those who seek to help the victims.

The Africa Watch report concluded that the Moi government has benefited economically and politically from the violence. The government has been able to generate continued Kalenjin support and has destabilized areas where the political opposition would have been able to garner considerable political support. The violence has also

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allowed the government to gradually transform the Rift Valley area into a Kalenjin land-owning area. This has significant political implications as the Rift Valley Province is Kenya's most fertile area and is allocated the largest number of seats in Parliament.

Embarrassed by the exposure shortly before the Consultative Group meeting, the Kenyan government issued an angry response to the human rights report, accusing it of being “malicious, derailing, misrepresenting, distorting, and sabotaging the good intentions of the government” as well as being “exaggerated and grossly misrepresented.” In anticipation of the donor meeting in Paris, the Kenyan government had been downplaying the extent of the violence and its inaction in ending it. Last September, two years after the violence began, the government had declared three of the worst-hit areas “security operation zones,” effectively sealing them off. Government statements on resettlement and restoring peace would have had greater credibility if the violence had not flared up elsewhere and if the security zones had been opened to scrutiny by journalists, human rights monitors, and the international community, all of whom are excluded to date. The government has also pointed to an October 1993 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) program report, which proposes a $20 million plan for reconciliation and resettlement of the displaced, as a sign of its good faith efforts to end clashes.

The success of the UNDP proposal for resettlement, though, is dependent on the active involvement of the government to provide security. The government has in the past deployed extra security forces for short periods of times to assert that it is taking action. Never in the past two years has it undertaken a sustained program of action or found a political solution to end the violence. These sporadic pockets of extra security stop the violence in those areas only for as long as the extra security is deployed. In the meantime it flares up elsewhere.

For example, the government was quick to claim that it had ended the ethnic violence with its creation of the three security operation zones in September. Instead, throughout the month of October, ethnic clashes raged south of the security operation zones in Enosupukia, Narok District. On October 12, houses of Kikuyu at Gatima farm were torched by Masai—an ethnic group that shares the political aspirations of the Kalenjin—in the early morning, leaving four dead. Police reinforcements were deployed in the area; violence has continued.

On October 15, approximately 500 armed men wearing traditional Masai dress and carrying knives and sharpened sticks attacked Enosupukia. Kikuyu who sought refuge from the attackers in the nearby mission church were also attacked by the Masai. The district officer ordered the police reinforcements that had been sent to Enosupukia to return to Nakuru district on the grounds that Narok district was not their area of jurisdiction. After the police left, there was a second attack which left 17 Kikuyu dead. The Catholic church estimated that the clashes had left 30,000 people displaced. The government has not provided any food relief for the displaced. Large areas of land currently remaindeserted by the thousands of Kikuyu who have fled in fear for their lives. The flare-up of violence in Narok District, which left over 20 Kikuyu dead, indicates that Kenyans have not yet seen the end of the clashes.

Until there is clear, convincing evidence that the Moi government has taken effective and verifiable steps to fully investigate allegations of the involvement of government officials in the violence, to resettle the displaced, and to speedily prosecute all individuals responsible for violent acts, all non-development aid to Kenya should continue to be withheld. The 1991 decision to withhold aid played a positive role in prompting the Moi government to end some human rights violations.

This year, as the World Bank and donor nations continue to evaluate Kenya's human rights record, they will find that the victims of human rights violations are no longer the prominent lawyers, journalists, and multi-party proponents that the government was harassing in 1991. This year, the targets of government intimidation are the hundreds of thousands of peasant farmers from ethnic groups identified with the political opposition. Hopefully, the World Bank and donor nations will consider these Kenyans as important as those they sought to protect in 1991.
THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS

For Algerians of a certain age, it is déjà-vu—paramilitary police conducting sweeps of the Casbah in search of insurgents—just like 30 years ago in the war of independence against France. Only this time, it is Algerian vs. Algerian. The government is cracking down on Islamic militants who are targeting foreigners for death in a campaign to make the military-controlled government unable to govern. The government is trying to include Islamic moderates in an effort to put in place the illusion, at least, of democracy. But it may be too late, as extremist measures by both sides have helped to radicalize the fundamentalist movement.

The “ninjas” went into the narrow streets of the Casbah in Algiers under the cover of the night. Dressed in black, with hoods to hide their identity, the special anti-terrorist units swept through the winding alleys of the old town, raiding houses in their search for Islamic guerrillas. The night’s silence was broken by intermittent bursts of automatic gunfire. People were prevented from leaving or entering the poor neighborhood during the 11-hour operation by heavily armed police in battle fatigues, while an army helicopter circled overhead at low altitude.

The operation by the security forces was reminiscent of the Algerian war of independence, more than 30 years ago. At that time, the Casbah was a stronghold for nationalist guerrillas, fighting the colonial power, France. Now the maze of streets has become home to Muslim insurgents.

The echoes of the past are not lost on Algerians who lived through the independence struggle. “When I hear shooting in the night, I can’t get back to sleep. I have to take sleeping pills to get me through the night,” says Khadija Belcambour, who as a teenager smuggled weapons for the independence fighters. The tragedy for her is that, now, Algerian is fighting Algerian.

“I feel a hate that I have not felt for some 25 years. I don’t understand the aim of this violence. It saddens me deeply. At least during the independence war, we had a clear aim,” she says.

The conflict between the military-backed government and the Islamic guerrillas has degenerated into an undeclared civil war. The violence, which started in 1992 as a fight between armed militants and the security forces, has taken on new forms. Factories, schools, and forests have been set ablaze by the militants in their campaign to undermine the government. Opposition politicians, intellectuals, and journalists considered anti-Islamic have been assassinated.

The sweep of the Casbah in mid-November was part of a vast security operation against the militants. Similar actions were mounted in Islamic fundamentalist strongholds in Algiers, where families share tiny flats in towering apartment blocks, in an attempt to flush out the militants. Hundreds were killed or arrested in the operations which were prompted by the kidnapping of three French consular officials in Algiers city center at the end of October.

The foreigners were freed after a week in captivity, following a massive manhunt by the security forces. One of the hostages was given a message for the French government. The note gave the foreign community in Algeria until the end of November to leave the country.

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“Anyone who exceeds that period will be responsible for his own sudden death. There will be no kidnappings and it will be more violent than in Egypt,” said the hastily scribbled note in French.

The campaign against foreigners began in September, when two French surveyors working in the west of Algeria were found with their throats slashed. They were the first foreigners to be killed in Algeria and a further five were assassinated in the next few weeks.

The attacks, coupled with the warning, created a climate of anxiety among the 75,000-strong expatriate community in the country. Three thousand of the 24,000 French nationals left the country in three days at the end of October. France ordered a reduction in its embassy staff as a security precaution and, like other diplomatic missions, took additional security measures and advised its nationals to avoid non-essential travel, especially to isolated areas. Several foreign companies pulled out the families of employees in the country and moved their workers from homes in the suburbs of Algiers to hotels in the city center.

The decision to target foreigners was the latest twist in the militants' campaign to overthrow the government and set up an Islamic state. Foreigners play a vital role in the country's oil and gas industry, which is the government's main source of income and the key to reviving the ailing economy. A mass exodus would seriously weaken the government and undermine its plans for economic recovery.

The country's economic malaise is at the root of support for the Islamic fundamentalists. The 3 million votes cast for the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in the December 1991 elections were more a reflection of widespread discontent with the mismanagement and corruption of the past 30 years than a sign of support for an Islamic state. The fundamentalists' promise of social justice won over many of the youth, most of whom are unemployed.

The government has so far failed to win back the youth, who make up two-thirds of the country's population. Its economic program has been hampered by a lack of political and economic direction, reflected in the constant change in prime ministers—Algeria has had five in as many years. The latest to be sacked was Belaid Abdessalam, who was replaced in the summer. A former industry minister from the 1960s and 1970s, Abdessalam alienated foreign companies by his anachronistic emphasis on state control of the economy.

The new premier, veteran diplomat Rehda Malek, appears more committed to abandoning the socialist ideals of the past and moving toward a free-market economy. His government is largely made up of technocrats, rather than bureaucrats. But Malek's hands are tied by the need to prevent living standards from falling any further and fueling support for the fundamentalists. The government continues to inject huge sums of cash into state companies and maintain subsidies on many staple goods.

The inertia on the economic front is matched by
stagnation on the political front as politicians try to talk their way out of the crisis. Talks were held under the umbrella of the National Commission for Dialogue, a body set up by the government in mid-October to try to reach a consensus among political parties about the return to democratic elections.

Made up of five civilians and three military officers, the commission brought the army directly into the political process. Up until then, the army had played a behind-the-scenes role, leaving civilians to take center-stage. But the talks were hampered by divisions over the timetable for new elections and the participation of Islamic parties in the dialogue.

The delays in reaching a common platform forced the authorities to cancel plans for a referendum on the transition to democracy, which was due to be held before the end of December. The mandate of the High State Council, the collective presidency created by the army in January 1992, expired at the end of 1993 and the poll was supposed to contain proposals on its replacement. The referendum had been seen by the generals as a safe way of seeking some kind of popular mandate for the new presidential body to be set up to replace the High State Council.

In a further attempt to widen support for the military-backed presidency, the authorities hope to include opposition parties in the surrogate parliament, the National Consultative Council. The 60-member Council has no executive powers and can only advise on government policy. By doubling the size of the interim parliament and including opposition members, the authorities hope to go some way toward at least creating the illusion of a functioning democracy.

Opposition parties have hesitated to associate themselves with the authorities. Leading parties repeatedly insisted that any dialogue would be meaningless if it excluded the main political force, FIS. The party was banned in March 1992 and its leaders and supporters arrested. The authorities rejected any notion of negotiations with FIS, accusing it of masterminding the wave of violence rocking the country.

The collective presidency bowed to opposition pressure in November, when it hinted it was willing to open talks with moderate Islamic leaders, possibly FIS. The presidency said it was willing to widen the dialogue to movements which had so far been excluded from the multi-party talks on the transition to democracy. But it qualified its offer by saying that only those who had not broken the law would be invited to participate in the talks.

Among FIS leaders who fit the criteria set by the authorities is the party’s provisional president, Abdelkader Hachani. He is being held in preventive detention, but has yet to be brought to trial on charges of defamation of the army. Rumors of talks between the two sides were further fueled by press reports of a secret meeting between Hachani and a member of the National Commission for Dialogue. The Commission denied any contact with Hachani.

The offer to widen the dialogue was accompanied by an olive branch to the fundamentalists. The presidency announced plans to relax the dusk-to-dawn curfew in force in 10 regions, including the capital, Algiers, and to lift certain house arrest warrants. There were also unconfirmed reports that the authorities suspended the death sentences of around 400 Islamic militants convicted of subversive activities.

But the offer of talks may have come too late, as the two-year struggle has radicalized the Islamic movement. “The FIS announces to the Algerian people and the entire world that it rejects all dialogue, reconciliation, or truce offered by the putschist junta, which cannot be trusted,” read a statement issued in November by FIS leaders in hiding in Algeria. “In accordance with shari’ah law, we will accept nothing less than an Islamic state.”

The two main guerrilla groupings in the country, the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA) and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), have also rejected the idea of talks, warning FIS officials against seeking an accommodation with the authorities.

The MIA is considered to be the military wing of FIS, as many of its leaders are former party officials, while the GIA is largely made up of “Afghans,” the name given to Algerian fundamentalists who fought alongside the mujahedeen in the struggle against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The Afghans are believed to be behind the attacks on foreigners. On the margins of the two main movements, there are dozens of smaller bands of militants roaming the country, attacking civilians and holding up banks.

Moderate Islamic leaders who might be willing to enter talks with the authorities are in danger not only from the Muslim militants, but also from extremist anti-fundamentalist groups. The attacks on the moderates started in November, when a university lecturer and founding member of FIS, Mohamed Tedjini Boudjelka, was abducted at gunpoint and held for a week. A previously unknown anti-fundamentalist group, the Association of Young Free Algerians, claimed responsibility for the attack. Later in the month, a founding member of the moderate fundamentalist Hamas party and president of a charitable Islamic association, Mohammed Boulimani, was also kidnapped by gunmen. Both the Young Free Algerians and the Armed Islamic Group said they were behind the abduction.

The confusion surrounding these kidnappings reflects the general disorder in the country. Many Algerians suspect that some of the killings may simply be a settling of accounts between rivals in towns and villages across the country. The country appears to be slowly sliding toward lawlessness, despite a state of emergency, widespread arrests, and large-scale army sweeps. The iron-fist policy of the authorities has failed to put an end to the Muslim conflict which neither side seems able to win.
ETHNIC CLEANSING

After years of discrimination culminating in executions and mass expulsions in 1989-91, black Mauritanians living in exile in neighboring Senegal want to return, although not to meet the fate of other returnees—stripped of their land and living as second-class citizens. The refugees want the return of their land or jobs, restoration of their civil rights, and United Nations oversight for the repatriation. Mauritania is in no hurry to see them return, rejecting the conditions and denying that they were ever expelled in the first place.

Long before “ethnic cleansing” entered popular parlance, its pernicious effects were painfully apparent in Mauritania. Between 1989 and 1991, tens of thousands of black Mauritanians were stripped of their citizenship and forcibly deported, and hundreds more were tortured or killed. An undeclared military occupation of the Senegal River Valley subjected those who remained to harsh repression. The campaign to eliminate black culture in Mauritania, orchestrated by the white Moor rulers, continues today, yet authorities in Nouakchott flatly deny that any of these abuses have ever happened.

Mauritania is ripe for government manipulation of ethnic conflict. Straddling the seam between the Arab world and black Africa, the population consists of white Moors of Arab-Berber descent who have ruled the country since independence in 1960; black Africans of the Pulaar, Soninke, and Wolof ethnic groups; and black Moors, or haratines, who are freed slaves remaining culturally and economically linked to their former masters. Each group constitutes about one-third of the population, although that information is apparently so threatening that the government refuses to release census figures. To complicate matters further, most of the black Africans have traditionally lived along the Senegal River Valley, an area that is crucial for the country’s economic well-being.

In order to rid the country of the independent-minded black population and to consolidate control over the River Valley, the regime of President Maaouya Ould Sid’Ahmed Taya carried out systematic human rights violations against the black ethnic groups, including arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial executions, expropriation of land, and denial of cultural identity. Two campaigns were particularly shocking: the massive deportations of some 70,000 blacks from Mauritania in 1989-1990, which targeted professionals in the cities, land-holders along the Senegal River, and nomadic herders; and the massacre of over 500 blacks in late 1990/early 1991. This latter group was among the 2,000-3,000 black Africans in the military and civil service who were arrested without charge, held incommunicado detention, and subjected to vicious physical abuse.

After siding with Iraq in the Gulf War, thereby losing the economic support of the Gulf states and much of the West other than France, the Taya regime was desperate to rebuild its international credibility. Accordingly, in April 1991, the government announced that it was following the path of democratization. Presidential elections were held in January 1992, but were marred by serious irregularities and fraud. The regime clearly hoped to regain foreign aid and to conceal responsibility for human rights abuses.

Since the elections, attacks against black Mauritians have continued, though the government no longer needs to resort to large-scale deportations and killings; it is now institutionalizing its control over the black population.
"The fear is visceral," explained Samba, a Mauritanian exile in Dakar. "Despite the democratization, there is no sense of security. The blacks live in fear that at any moment they could be repressed. It's always there."

Since the Mauritanian government began its campaign to gain control of the Senegal River Valley, the area has been transformed. Houses formerly inhabited by blacks have been emptied and are now occupied by Moors. Fields that had been tended for generations by black villagers are now owned by white Moor businessmen and are frequently worked by haratines and even the names of some of these villages have been changed, erasing the last traces of the former proprietors. While the rate of killings has clearly diminished, the remaining black populations face great difficulties in getting birth certificates, identity cards, jobs, bank loans, and land. An unofficial curfew is in force along the River Valley, making a return to normal ways of life impossible, especially for the farmers and herders.

The deportees—now refugees—have been in Senegal for nearly five years. At the start, they pinned their hopes for return on the Senegalese government, never believing that diplomatic relations between Mauritania and Senegal, which were broken off during the deportations in April 1989, would be reestablished three years later, in April 1992, despite failure to resolve the issue of the refugees. The government of Senegal, like that of Mauritania, apparently succumbed to pressure from France to reestablish relations in the interests of defusing the tensions along the border and reinstating the status quo ante.

According to a survey conducted in January-February 1993 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a clear majority of the refugees wants to return to Mauritania. Also in 1993, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) began progressively reducing the food rations for the refugees, thereby increasing the pressure on them to return. Current discussions with individual refugees reveal that they want to go back only under certain conditions: the return of or compensation for their belongings, jobs, and lands; the restoration of their civil rights, including their citizenship; and UNHCR responsibility for their repatriation.

A number of refugees also demand that those responsible for human rights violations against blacks be brought to justice. "What happened [in Mauritania] can't ever happen again," a refugee from Selibaby explained. "There has to be a total change. But under these conditions, I can't go back." The same point was made even more strongly by a widow of one of the soldiers killed in the 1991 massacre. "The material things are secondary," she said. "What matters most is justice."

The Mauritanian authorities have made it clear that the refugees should return quietly, without conditions and without international attention. After all, the government still denies that the refugees are Mauritanians who suffered at the hands of the government. As then Prime Minister Sidii Mohamed Ould Boubacar said in May 1992: "Now I am anxious to affirm here that Mauritania has never expelled any of its citizens. The events of April 1989 constituted a real tragedy for both of our peoples...[T]his situation has now been put behind us. We believe that all Mauritanian citizens who are in Senegal or elsewhere are free to return to their country. This has always been the case."

Some refugees have gone back; in 1992 and 1993, UNHCR registered 1,400 refugees who returned. Thus far, none of these cases constitutes a model for repatriation. A group of villagers from Dabaye, for instance, returned due to the intervention of a marabout, a religious leader, in Mauritania. Still, they went back without any guarantees concerning the restoration of their lands or their rights. Reports indicate that they are now farming some land that belongs to the marabout, but have not been able to recover rights to their own land.

Repatriation is also inhibited by the fact that some blacks continue to flee Mauritania because of ongoing abuses. In the region of Bakel alone, an estimated 547 black Mauritanians crossed over to Senegal between April and October 1993, a clear signal that problems remain. Amadou, the chief of a village in the Guidimakha region, fled Mauritania in May 1993 with 50 others. He described continual problems with the military, ranging from demands for payments, effectively taxes to be paid in the form of money, cows, or goats, to arbitrary arrests and killings of Peulh herders. "They all want to leave—not because they want to, but because of the conditions."

Despite abundant evidence directly linking high-ranking government officials to human rights abuses against black ethnic groups, the Mauritanian government refuses to acknowledge responsibility or to allow any independent investigation. In order to guarantee immunity for those responsible and to block any attempts at accountability for past abuses, an amnesty was declared in June 1993 covering all crimes committed by the armed forces and security forces between April 1989 and April 1992. It is no coincidence that this period corresponds to the height of the abuses against Mauritania's blacks.

The refugees' fate now rests with the international donor community—the bilateral donors, especially France, and the World Bank. If the donors who cut off assistance during the Gulf War choose to resume lending, they must condition resumption on resolution of the refugee issue and meaningful progress on the human rights front. It is in the donors' interest to address the issue of human rights in Mauritania, since future economic and social development in the Senegal River Valley hinges upon the resolution of the refugee question, which in turn depends on human rights conditions in the country. Unless those conditions are reversed, the refugees will constitute an ongoing source of tension and instability in the region, and the Mauritanian government will have succeeded in its campaign to cleanse Mauritania of the black African population.
Nigeria's military has governed for 10 straight years, except for a civilian front that lasted three months when a new strongman, Gen. Sani Abacha, seized power in November. Now, democracy campaigners and ordinary Nigerians are waiting to see if Abacha will restore multi-partyism, as the general, having purged supporters of the previous strongman, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, and having dissolved all political parties and elected institutions, makes cautious moves toward political reform and economic stabilization.

Nigerians have got used to their military rulers' broken promises of democracy over the past decade, yet Gen. Sani Abacha's plan for a constitutional conference and a cabinet with some respected civilians is buying the new head of state valuable time. Civilians will support Abacha's slow moves toward reform if he can restore stability after last June's election crisis nearly split the country apart.

Although civilians have been telling the military to go back to the barracks since Gen. Ibrahim Babangida started extending his handover in 1990, there was an air of resignation and relief in November when Abacha seized power and swept aside all elected democratic institutions. Tolerance of military rule and distrust of civilian politicians remain strong despite the armed forces' habit of praising democracy but failing to retreat from government. Just as Babangida's transition to democracy was flawed so that he could stay in power, the interim government was designed to fail in every respect but as a front for the military.

Ernest Shonekan's interim government had been illegally formed, according to a High Court ruling, and seemed to have no idea how to get Nigeria out of the political deadlock which followed Babangida's annulment of the presidential election in June. The interim government was accused of heading toward disaster for promis-
ing a fresh poll in February under a discredited electoral system, and branded a puppet of Babangida which kept the military in power after the handover to democracy was due on August 26.

Six months after prominent army officers stood up to their commander, Babangida, and told him that it was time the military got out of government, they are back in power and the man who forced Babangida out is establishing as firm a grip as his predecessor.

Abacha is no stranger to power. He played a key role in the 1983 military takeover which ousted Nigeria's last civilian head of state, Shehu Shagari, and was Babangida's right-hand man since the palace coup which ousted Gen. Muhammadu Buhari as head of state two years later.

When Babangida set up the hapless interim national government (ING) in August, Abacha was the only member of the Babangida regime to remain in office. Reviled by democracy campaigners as a puppet of the military and accused of being manipulated by Babangida, the ING's leader, former industrialist Ernest Shonekan, gave the military hierarchy time to regroup under Abacha, who used his post as defense minister to neutralize the lingering influence of the retired head of state. When Shonekan tried to cut the fuel price subsidy, the people took to the streets of Lagos in protest at the 600 percent gasoline price rise, a general strike weakened the ING, and the military took over again "to save the nation from chaos."

Abacha quickly strengthened his position as Nigeria's new head of state by purging senior army officers loyal to Babangida, while forming a civilian cabinet which lays to rest the presidential claims of Moshood Abiola, but balances ethnic loyalties and includes some respected economic ministers.

Leading critics of military rule have joined the new military regime and the international outcry at November's military takeover has given way to a wait-and-see policy.

Shortly after the forced retirement of Lieut. Gen. Aliyu Mohammed as head of the army in December, the removal of 17 army officers, including nine brigadiers, was seen as the decisive blow to the retired Babangida's residual support in the armed forces. A big reshuffle in September by the interim government had failed to stop pro-Babangida factions at the senior level or to quell unrest in the lower ranks.

The early retirement list includes Brig. Haliru Akilu, former head of the secret service, Brig. John Shagaya, commander of the West African force in Liberia, his predecessor Brig. Adetunji Olurin, former communications minister Brig. David Mark, and former commanders of two units close to the presidency, the Brigade of Guards and the National Guard.

Even for a country which has had half a dozen successful military coups and only a decade of civilian rule in its 33-year history, Nigeria is adapting smoothly to Abacha's seizure of power on November 17.

Some of the fiercest critics of military rule, the Campaign for Democracy, are waiting to see if the constitutional conference now set for March produces the regional autonomy and multi-party democracy which they have been demanding. In the Yoruba-speaking southwest, many of Abiola's brethren are relieved to see the departure of the ING, which they saw as a betrayal of the June election campaign and controlled by Babangida.

"The real struggle in Nigeria is still to suppress the power of Babangida," says a Yoruba banker in Lagos. "Abacha is the only man strong enough to do the job and he has a Yoruba chief of defense staff, Gen. Oladipo Diya. That is why we support this new regime."

In July, a former chief of the armed forces, retired Gen. Theophilus Danjuma, warned the civilian politicians of the risks of disunity. "The political class is now facing the last test set by Ibrahim Babangida," he warned after the former military ruler had annulled the victory of Moshood Abiola in Nigeria's first presidential poll for a decade. "After banning and then dangling the presidency, Babangida wants to divide the political class and if they yield, we can say goodbye to democracy."

Shortly after those words, the two army-backed political parties began to self-destruct. The national executives of the National Republican Convention refused to admit that they had lost and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) failed to insist that they had won. The rank and file of the SDP threatened to boycott the re-run election set for February and Babangida, in a last-ditch attempt, nearly persuaded the National Assembly to vote in favor of his staying in office. The nationwide support Abiola had won disintegrated in an ethnic split between the mainly Hausa north and the Yoruba southwest. The old rivalries and the dominance of the military were restored.

Although Babangida's program for democracy was an exercise in manipulation, Sam Mbakwe, former civilian governor in the mainly Ibo southeast, expresses widespread contempt for the new breed of Nigerian politician.

"What happened was that the wrong people came into politics...they lacked age, experience, or integrity. This was part of the Babangida game plan," said Mbakwe recently. "Good Nigerian politicians have never been lacking. Instead, people who should have been doing high school were encouraged to come rule this country. That is the tragedy of our time," he concluded.

Abacha has tried to build up confidence in the political class while co-opting some natural opponents into his new government, while finally ending the struggle to uphold Abiola's claim to the presidency. The 33-member cabinet, known as the executive council, includes some of Abiola's stronger allies.

Abiola has declared his mandate sacred, but has shown neither courage nor leadership since being deprived of victory in June, fleeing to Britain and the U.S. when he got scared and expecting those left behind to keep his chances alive. Babagana Kingibe, vice presiden-
tial foil to Abiola, maintained an eloquent defense of the June 12 stand until he abandoned his old running mate and accepted the foreign ministry post in the provisional ruling council.

Kingibe is joined on that council by two distinguished opponents of recent military oppression: Olu Onaguruwa, who defended pro-democracy campaigners arrested by Babangida in 1992, and Alex Ibru, the publisher of the leading independent newspaper, the Guardian, which carried on criticizing the annulment of the June polls after some of the press had been banned.

Iyorchia Ayu, who was ousted from leadership of the National Assembly for his pro-Abiola views, became education minister. Lateef Jakande and Abubakar Rimi, respected ex-governors who led opposition to Babangida and helped Abiola win in the states of Lagos and Kano, are also in the government.

The new finance minister, Kalu I. Kalu, has served in the same post before, earning respect both at home and abroad as an advocate of market reforms. Together with Paul Ogwuuma, a recent appointment as central bank governor, Don Etiebet, who is retained from the interim government as oil minister, and Adamu Ciroma, another respected former finance minister, Abacha has put together an economic team which, if allowed a free rein, could achieve the reforms which the IMF and the Western donors are seeking in return for debt relief.

The new cabinet contains several of the presidential candidates banned by Babangida in 1992, who saw Abiola as an opportunist rather than a real leader and criticized the two army-created political parties as anti-democratic. Ciroma believes that the army-created NRC and SDP lacked any grassroots support, and that democracy cannot flourish unless Nigerians can form their own parties independent of a state budget.

The two official parties, abolished along with every other democratic institution the day after the soldiers took over, have not been mourned, nor are most of the civilian governors of the 30 states missed by their constituents after their replacement by army officers. The National Assembly, which kept two international hotels in Abuja in business but never passed a single law in nearly 18 months, was an expensive irrelevance, while the state assemblies were seen by their electorate as a rabble, shouting, fighting, and sacking their speakers instead of looking after the running of the states.

Local government councils, disbanded by Shonekan to stop them from emptying the coffers in the run-up to re-election in February, have also been replaced by government appointees amid accusations of mismanagement and theft of government funds.

Although real power lies with the mainly military legislative council, Abacha is giving prominence to the executive council as a source of decisions. His other trump card is the constitutional conference. The idea was put forward under Babangida to find the right system of government for Nigeria before committing the country to a flawed civilian handover. Abacha has adopted the plan as a solution to the top-heavy federal structure of government, the absence of local autonomy despite the creation of new states, and the discrimination against the minority ethnic groups who lack representative government at any level.

The conference, and implementing its decisions, could take years to accomplish and provides an excuse for overlooking the result of the June presidential poll.

The Abacha regime has less leeway for solving its economic problems, which are in part the result of military misrule. People expect military government to be tough and decisive where the interim government was seen as weak and lacking in direction. The 600 percent fuel price rise, which was the pretext for Shonekan's downfall, was a measure to curb the budget deficit and the deterioration in the domestic oil industry, which had become acute under military rule. Yet, the military did not support Shonekan when he put the price of fuel up and reduced the price in order to buy off the unions, storing problems for the future.

The military has less obvious qualifications than the Shonekan team to solve the most acute problem facing Nigeria: the decline of the economy. Much will depend on whether the new finance minister is allowed to take the harsh decisions needed. Unemployment and inflation are high and rising, manufacturing industry and non-oil exports have failed to pick up, the public sector is bankrupt and private investment in the productive sector has almost dried up. As a result of the widening budget deficit, the currency is sliding and Nigeria has not serviced the greater part of its $30 billion external debt for two years. The prospect of early debt relief has vanished with the cancellation of the IMF's scheduled annual check-up and six weeks before a budget which was meant to be the start of an era of accountable and transparent government.

The state of the economy underlines the record of failure during a decade of military rule in which the head of state is the only leading figure still in power. Since 1983, Nigeria's income per capita has fallen from nearly $1,000 to around $300 a year and theaira is worth only 10 percent of its value against the dollar under the Shagari regime, and social services have almost collapsed.

The first time Abacha addressed the nation was in December 1983, when he listed the failings that made the removal of the Shagari regime necessary. "You are all witnesses to the grave economic predicament and uncertainty which an inept and corrupt leadership has imposed on our beloved nation in the past four years," he said. He chided the deposed government for the decline of state-funded social services and the mismanagement of the economy which had made Nigeria a "debtor and beggar nation."

After 10 years of military rule, Abacha could have made almost the same speech.
ORPHANS
OF THE
STORM
Financially wracked governments of southern Africa, unable to cope with the drain of resources caused by the effects of AIDS, especially the orphaning of children, are leaving the burden of care where it has traditionally belonged—to the extended families. Rather than spend money on building orphanages, governments are cooperating with social workers and NGOs to strengthen communities in caring for AIDS orphans and to combat prejudice against those with the disease.

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AIDS in the Gambia

Researchers and health workers in the Gambia, a country where until recently HIV-2 predominated, are concerned at the increase in HIV-1—the virus most commonly associated with AIDS.

According to the latest National Aids Control Program (NACP) figures, 42 percent of Gambia’s AIDS cases tested positive for HIV-1, 53 percent for HIV-2, and 5 percent for both.

“In the first five years...some 60 percent of full-blown AIDS cases were due to HIV-2 and 36 percent were due to HIV-1, with 4 percent combined HIV-1 and HIV-2,” explained Dr. Tumani Corrah, the country’s premier AIDS clinician.

Medical opinion overwhelmingly supports statistical evidence that the pattern is changing fast, with HIV-1 full-blown AIDS catching up very fast with HIV-2. Surveys of sex workers, who have a prevalence rate of 30 percent, show a 60:40 HIV-2 to HIV-1 ratio, compared to 90:10 five years ago.

Since the virus was discovered in the mid-1980s, the Gambia—together with Guinea-Bissau, southern Senegal, and Cape Verde—has been a member of the exclusive HIV-2 club, closely monitored by the UK-based Medical Research Council (MRC) from its state-of-the-art laboratory in the Gambia.

A report of HIV-1’s discovery in a British newspaper after its correspondent sat in on a closed MRC meeting caused a storm of protest from the government, which dismissed the article as a scare story and blamed it for a loss of tourism revenue. The incident also led to a virtual news blackout on information about the prevalence of the viruses.

Now, concern is being expressed that a constant stream of foreign visitors, nationals living abroad, and sex workers attracted by tourism and the cross-border trade have helped spread HIV-1—the cause of the lion's share of global AIDS cases—in the tiny West African country.

Citing the results of a sample survey on blood from the early 1980s, Corrah backs the widespread view that HIV in general and HIV-1 in particular are likely to have been imported to the Gambia from abroad.

“There was a point when looking at serum taken and stored from sexually transmitted diseases (STD) patients in the early 1980s, none was found to be positive for HIV-1 and HIV-2...[which makes] a case for AIDS not having been around before 1982.”

Corrah however warns: “HIV-1 may be coming in, but it’s also here and spreading from within.” He points to evidence gathered by MRC, where he works alongside a multinational team of researchers, that shows people catch HIV-1 faster than HIV-2, a fact that underpins predictions that full-blown AIDS will become more visible.

Data gathered from continuous surveillance shows the disease, though not spreading as fast as in other parts of Africa, is on the rise. Some 2.2 percent of the Gambia’s 1 million-plus residents are now carriers of HIV, compared to a 1.7 percent rate in 1986.

As of June 1993, 12 cases of perinatal (mother-to-child) transmission had been recorded; 161

Landsberg said, “I’m aware of this thing coming toward us, but how to cope—I don’t know. There is need for heavy thinking in this country but I’m afraid no one is ready for that. It’ll be a big disaster.”

A disaster, however, is exactly what many social workers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and state officials insist will not happen if they work together today to avert it tomorrow. They’re all mobilizing, but not to boost state financial assistance dramatically or to build new orphanages. Their aim is to help caregivers and strengthen communities to play that role.

Such a goal is a tall one. Elderly women so regularly assume the role of caregivers—tending their dying son or daughter, possibly his or her spouse, and then the children left behind—that AIDS is now known as “The Grandmother’s Disease” in many southern African countries. If a grandmother doesn’t inherit the orphans, then an aunt almost always will.

The numbers of relatives caring for newly orphaned children can be seen in Zimbabwe’s Manicaland Province, where Mutiti and her three new children are not alone in their situation. The province of 1.5 million people has 47,000 children who have lost one or both parents; institutions care for only 170. But as Mutiti found, some NGOs are doing more than just talking about the need to help.

The Mutare-based Family AIDS Caring Trust recently began assisting Mutiti and 29 other families with basic necessities, such as food, clothes, and school fees. One ben-
males and 94 females had contracted full-blown AIDS; and although demographic distribution was found to be roughly even, rural trading centers and border transit points had a higher concentration of cases.

The Gambia’s diminutive size affords it some advantages in combating the virus’s spread. Since October 1986, all blood has been subjected to a sophisticated screening process that medical professionals insist virtually eliminates the chance of tainted blood being used for transfusions or of false positives.

“It’s a small country so it’s relatively easy to gather, keep tabs on samples, and collate information,” says Dr. Fred Oldfield, the country’s only pathology specialist who heads a 52-member Pathology Services team.

But Cynthia Eledu, a World Health Organization (WHO) AIDS awareness specialist working with NACP, identifies complacency as the biggest problem in the fight against AIDS. It persists, although studies show 99 percent of people in the Gambia have heard of AIDS/HIV and 85 percent know how it is transmitted and how to prevent it.

“We are at the denial stage of dealing with AIDS, where people who know the facts don’t wish to change their behavior and are not taking precautions,” says Eledu.

Recent reports have quoted Phillipe and Evelyne Krynen—who worked for five years as volunteers in an area of the Tanzania-Uganda border where the epidemic is said to have devastated communities—as saying the AIDS pandemic has been over-stated.

The Belgian couple argued that most of the people reported to be dying from AIDS in Africa were in reality suffering from diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and chronic intestinal illnesses.

WHO’s Eledu dismisses the Krynen theory: “Those researchers who say AIDS isn’t so much of an epidemic in Africa are talking hogwash and should know better.”

Corrah agrees. “I believe there’s an epidemic in Africa and that it’s going to get worse before it begins to get better.”

Through largely successful information, education, communication (IEC) campaigns, the NACP has attempted to tackle sensitive cultural issues. Among its strategies have been meetings with religious leaders and local elders.

But certain AIDS-risky practices continue to cause concern. Corrah points to a “small but growing” number of cases of men contracting AIDS from their dead brothers’ wives, a result of the age-old tradition of wife-inheritance.

Other socio-cultural phenomena serving as potential time bombs include circumcision rites practiced by ethnic groups in the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, which often involve multi-partner sex; and prostitution by young rural wives to supplement the meager “fish money” of husbands often 30 to 40 years older.

With no vaccine cure for AIDS in sight, IEC, deployed to combat ignorance, is seen as the only effective tool at the NACP’s disposal. But, as one researcher put it, “IEC can be like water off a duck’s back.”

Anti-AIDS campaigners concede attitudinal change is ultimately up to the individual, and warn that with HIV-1 expected to overtake its less aggressive cousin, the sight of full-blown AIDS may shock people into more responsible behavior.

“The Gambia is a small place and we haven’t really seen AIDS hitting communities so much,” says Corrah. “But when people start burying their close relatives, they’ll know they have to change their practices.”

——Peter da Costa

...
plies to produce enough food and with skills training to earn incomes and meet their cash needs.

The formation of the task force, which includes Unicef and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, followed a national consultation on the plight of children orphaned by AIDS. The ministry has since launched a countrywide survey to determine the number of orphans and Unicef began a project to identify their needs. Both moves could bring assistance to these families.

In Zambia, NGOs are taking the lead on the orphan issue. They must. As one health official said: “Our budgetary capacity just couldn’t cope.” At least 250,000 of Zambia’s 8.1 million citizens are infected. Patients with AIDS-related illnesses occupy up to 70 percent of hospital beds.

Children in Distress (CINDI) is one organization doing what Zambia’s government cannot. The program helps set up committees of neighbors, friends, and teachers of orphans to serve as foster parents along with the children’s relatives. These additional “parents” assist families with their day-to-day needs.

“CINDI is only a catalyst to increase awareness of orphans and also to increase care for them,” said Dr. Shilaalukey Ngoma, a pediatrician at Lusaka’s University Training Hospital who founded the program with help from the Family Health Trust. “Communities themselves are central to the care of these orphans.”

Maybe so. But the sheer number of orphans is not the only challenge that must be met by CINDI and others working throughout the region to help children in need. In most communities, AIDS is still the best kept secret of many households because it brings with it a heavy stigma, which the public often transfers to the surviving offspring regardless of their health status.

Efforts are under way regionwide to convince communities that those whose lives have been affected by AIDS should not be social outcasts. Dozens of programs educate the public through their peers, from prostitutes to schoolchildren. The infected are also beginning to speak out. In Botswana, where 90,000 of the 1.3 million people carry the virus, three HIV-positive people went public in October in a national campaign against discrimination.

Attitudes are changing, but slowly and not in all communities. A Zimbabwean newspaper profiled one HIV-positive woman, who then found her property full of villagers. They didn’t come to offer support. They came to see an AIDS victim, and their persistence included peeping through her windows at all hours. In another area of Zimbabwe, a social worker told of peeping close and whisper, “Show me someone with AIDS.”

But perhaps the greatest challenge in helping orphans and their caretakers is to convince authorities to act—fast. As governments and donors undertake studies or plot strategies, some young female orphans are turning to prostitution to help their families survive. This leads to tragic irony, possibly exposing the girl to the same disease that robbed her of her parents.

Abandoned children are becoming more common. Some relatives give up; others never even tried. The newest phenomenon emerging in southern Africa is child-headed households, in which the eldest orphan becomes the parent because no relative can or will. In addition, hospitals have become dumping grounds for the young and their lengthy stays indicate just how overstretched orphanages really are.

In Zimbabwe, some health experts estimate that there are up to nine abandoned children living in each of the major hospitals at any time. They were often admitted with their mothers who later died and no relatives subsequently stepped forward to take the children home. In some cases, the foster caregivers admit ill orphans to the hospital and never return to reclaim them.

In Parirenyatwa Hospital in Zimbabwe’s capital city, there are eight orphans living in the children’s ward. Among them is 3-year-old Angelica, whose mother died there a year ago. It’s been seven months since 4-year-old Tafadzwa’s mother died in the hospital, but a relative has yet to come for him. “For them, it’s like being in prison,” the matron told one local newspaper.

It’s prison virtually ignored by the government and all the programs to help families caring for orphans. In
Across Africa, the AIDS epidemic is eroding development gains already made and presenting millions of people and their governments with a tragic reality: the disease is not only a health problem, but an economic and social one as well.

The financial impact of AIDS, from the national to the individual level, is forcing an already bad situation to worsen. The debt burden drains millions annually from the continent. Harsh economic reforms under way in many countries have caused health care costs to rise and also left thousands of citizens more impoverished than ever before.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the hardest hit. The region has suffered social and economic decline for more than a decade, and is home to 8 million of the 14 million HIV-positive people worldwide. Two-thirds of the region’s cases are in East and Central Africa, but the World Health Organization (WHO) says that statistics show southern and West Africa are fast catching up.

The AIDS death toll in sub-Saharan Africa has accounted for a majority of the world’s 2.5 million deaths from AIDS-related illnesses and may soon triple in some countries, said Michael Merson, director of WHO’s Global Program on AIDS.

In some urban areas, such as Ethiopia’s capital of Addis Ababa, AIDS patients fill 80 percent of the hospital beds. This means non-AIDS patients are pushed out. The entire country of Ethiopia has only 11,000 beds for a population of more than 50 million. A hospital in Zaire is now admitting only the most desperately ill of non-AIDS patients.

Across the continent, health care costs alone threaten to overrun already inadequate budgets. But the economic backlash includes more than medical bills. A new World Bank report warns that AIDS will slow per capita incomes and hurt industries by further shrinking the pool of skilled labor.

In Zambia, one example cited in the report, the government has long tried to recruit local professionals and technicians to its mining industry, which provides 85 percent of total exports. Now many of those Zambians are ill or dying, so mining efficiency could decline and foreign labor will have to be recruited.

The report by Martha Ainsworth predicts high socio-economic costs to families. Losing relatives to AIDS reduces the income in a household and, as families struggle, could result in children being kept out of school to work. The World Bank estimates that primary school enrollment could fall 22 percent in Tanzania alone. AIDS could also ultimately kill 27,000 of its teachers.

Despite the gloom, there is hope on the horizon. Groups throughout the world have come to the assistance of governments, communities, and individuals mobilizing against AIDS. The World Bank and WHO are now helping countries design national programs of action to involve all sectors of society.

They’ve realized the fight against the pandemic must include everyone, not just health officials. WHO, for example, sponsors programs to train former prostitutes as peer educators who give out AIDS information and condoms to former colleagues and clients. In Zimbabwe’s second largest city, Bulawayo, 75 women are participating and have reached more than 8,000 prostitutes.

In addition to prevention, the continent’s greatest hope, like the rest of the world’s, still lies with a hoped-for vaccine. If the disease is to be eradicated worldwide, Africa can’t be ignored. Several African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, will be the site of large-scale vaccine trials in 1994 and 1995 by WHO and the U.S.-based National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

AIDS, recognizes that social disruption caused by AIDS is fast eroding the strong family life inherent in many African societies. Most alarming, she said, is that the repercussions aren’t temporary.

“Even if we have good progress today and are somehow guaranteed an AIDS-free youth in 10 years’ time, these women and children will still be deprived, still suffering because of their situations,” Ngcongco said. “We are going to feel the impact of AIDS well beyond the existence of it in our countries.”

—B.J.K.
For the past couple of years, Malawi's army has tacitly backed growing opposition to Life President Kamuzu Banda's ruling Malawi Congress Party. This has helped restrain the militance of Banda's paramilitary Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), which have not been disarmed despite an agreement in September to do so. When violence instigated by the MYP and other pro-government bodies erupted in December, the army moved in forcefully to squash the militia. However, the army is not a unified force and it is unclear whether its intervention will reduce the possibilities of conflict leading up to elections in May—or increase them.

Fourteen-year-old Dorothy Mussa was on her way home from a meeting of the opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) when supporters of the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP) set upon her. They beat her with bricks and left her needing hospital treatment. This happened only yards from her home at Nkhwazi in Mchinji district, in the central region, on November 28.

It was not an isolated incident. The previous day, in Dedza, also in the central region, members of the paramilitary Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) had threatened violence against UDF members who were trying to hold a public meeting. They called the meeting off.

Later the same day at Kapesi, some 20 miles from Dedza, members of the MCP youth wing ambushed Lusitico Mkwapatira, the local UDF chairman, beating him and putting him in hospital with head injuries. Like Dorothy Mussa, he reported the incident to the police. As in her case, they took no action.

On November 16 in Dowa, again in the central region, MCP supporters armed with spears, catapults, and iron...
bars attacked UDF members trying to hold a public meeting. Fifteen were injured; one, July Mandala, had his chest crushed with an iron bar and was vomiting blood. Eyewitnesses said that the attackers were ululating in the style of members of the secretive Nyau dance cult.

The ferocity of the political violence which exploded in Lilongwe on December 3 took everyone by surprise. However, the overwhelming popular support for the army against the Young Pioneers is explained by this catalogue of incidents of political intimidation.

Two days earlier, in the northern town of Mzuzu, a barroom argument between soldiers and members of the MYP ended up in a one-sided shoot-out which left two soldiers dead. However, the cause of the conflict was the failure of the government to honor an agreement made in September to disarm the MYP—a paramilitary body several thousand strong which has operated as both a militia and an intelligence arm of the ruling party.

Army units in Lilongwe attacked and burned the MYP headquarters, the Kamuzu Institute for Youth, and houses belonging to MYP members in the townships. By evening, soldiers and civilians were looting shops and had occupied the MCP headquarters, taking away many files.

It was clear that the officers responsible for the action against the MYP were more inclined to take orders from the army to disarm the MYP—after the event. The NCC also took the opportunity to press its claim for the appointment of an interim president. In early October, President Kamuzu Banda underwent brain surgery and power passed to a three-person Presidential Council composed of MCP leaders.

Within three days of the army intervention, a clearly ailing Banda was pronounced fit to resume his duties and broadcast feebly to the nation.
reports of joint military training between Renamo and the MYP. At the same time, the Malawian army was deployed for several years guarding the corridor to the port of Nacala against Renamo attacks. When Malawian soldiers died at the hands of Renamo, this did little to improve Tembo’s popularity.

Nonetheless, the army is not a unified force. Its commander, Gen. Isaac Yohane, refused to endorse the action against the MYP. The middle-ranking and junior officers went ahead anyway. The NCC echoed the demands of the lower officers by calling for Yohane’s removal.

Until violence erupted in December, many diplomats and outside observers thought that Malawi was on course for fair multi-party elections on May 17. Development aid which had been suspended in May 1992 because of gross human rights abuses was likely to be restored at a donors’ meeting in Paris on December 19. Already Britain, one of the most important donors, had resumed balance of payments support in September.

Parliament had passed an important series of reforms in November, enshrining the transition to a multi-party state in law. It also abolished the government’s powers to detain without trial and to confiscate the property of political opponents. It amended the sedition provisions of the penal code and several other laws restricting freedom of expression.

Nevertheless, the reform program is far from complete. For example, the Censorship Act remains in force, with the effect that thousands of books, films, and records are still banned. Under the Preservation of Public Security Act, the government still has powers to put opponents under house arrest, ban newspapers, and imprison journalists for up to five years for threats to “public order.”

The feeling in the diplomatic community was that the MCP was in the political running. The opposition looked increasingly divided, creating the danger that the UDF and the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) would hand the election to the MCP by default.

The MCP succeeded in wooing a number of prominent figures from the opposition. Gwanda Chakuamba Phiri—once head of the Young Pioneers, then a political detainee, and briefly a UDF luminary—was appointed secretary-general of the MCP. He became acting head of state when the Presidential Council was formed. Chakuamba is believed to have an important following in the north, where the UDF is strongest.

Donton Mkandawire was head of the Malawi Examination Board until 1988 when he was forced into exile during one of the government’s periodic purges of Tumbuka-speakers from the northern region. He has now returned as minister of information.

Most dramatically, the controversial young playwright Du Chisiza, Jr. was appointed minister of youth, sport, and culture. Chisiza is the son of Dunduzu Chisiza, the first secretary-general of the MCP. He had written a play accusing the MCP leadership of responsibility for his father’s death in 1962. For some, his appointment seemed to mark a decisive change in the nature of the party. Ironically, his ministerial portfolio included responsibility for the Young Pioneers.

The government’s electoral strategy is to win as many seats as possible in the central region. It is believed to have arms cached throughout the country. In any case, much of the violence before the referendum was carried out not by uniformed Young Pioneers, but by members of the MCP Youth League. In recent weeks, the Nyau secret society has come into increasing prominence, as in the attack on the UDF in Dowa. After that incident, Foreign Minister Hetherwick Ntaba—usually the urbane face of the new model MCP—praised local village headmen in the central region for mobilizing the Nyau against political parties who were trying to “confuse” the people.

In the speeches of MCP leaders, there are frightening echoes of the violence in the Kenya’s Rift Valley and Western Province. The government is orchestrating violence as a means to fulfill its own predictions that a multi-party system would bring ethnic division. Invoking the “traditional” Nyau dancers is also reminiscent of the Kalenjin “warriors” of the Rift Valley. The entry of the army onto the political scene only increases the possibilities for conflict. Hundreds, if not thousands of Young Pioneers have fled into the bush and could threaten further violence.

The government’s arsenal of repressive laws is severely depleted (if not quite empty). A vigorous and critical independent press is freely available on the streets of Lilongwe and Blantyre. Even the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation is moving, somewhat haltingly, with the times. All these are important gains for the democratic movement. Yet until the 90 percent of Malawians who live in rural areas are free to express their political views without intimidation, these changes are not fundamental and could be reversed.
CHAKUFWA CHIHANA

BY FRANCIS A. KORNEGAY, JR.

Dissident for Democracy

A long-time leader of the trade union movement in southern Africa, Chakufwa Chihana is one of Malawi’s most prominent advocates for democracy and human rights. Having spent much of the past few decades either imprisoned or in exile, Mr. Chihana was arrested most recently in 1992 on sedition charges when he returned to Malawi and gave a speech calling for democracy.

Africa Report: What is happening in Malawi in terms of the transition to democracy and what are the remaining steps to be taken?

Chihana: After the referendum on May 14, it was necessary for the opposition parties and the government to sit together to create democratic structures that would look after the transitional phase of democracy. We agreed to create the National Consultative Council, which is the policy formulating body, and the National Executive Council, which is a loose form of cabinet. So far, the transition has been handled smoothly, of course with obstacles, smoothly in the sense that there hasn’t been any major confrontation between the opposition and the government.

The opposition parties and the government have agreed to amend several provisions of the old one-party constitution. The government has repealed article 4 in the constitution, and registration of parties is allowed. The government has repealed the Decency and Dress Act. In Malawi, women were not allowed to wear dresses above their knees, but now they are allowed to do that.

The other important thing is the Forfeiture Act. In the past, the government used the Forfeiture Act to drive away those who were imagined as potential enemies. Their properties were confiscated, and therefore they were eliminated. That has been repealed.

A bone of contention which I think is going to lead to major confrontation between the opposition and the government is the reluctance of the government to repeal the legislation that created the Young Pioneers, the militia that Dr. Banda has used as an instrument of violence in Malawi.

Africa Report: In Kenya, President Moi was able to successfully exploit a divided opposition and manipulate his way to an election victory over the democratic opposition. What is your answer to those who see a chance that the ruling Malawi Congress Party will do the same, given the divisions that are reported in the opposition parties, the Alliance for Democracy [AFORD] and the United Democratic Front [UDF]?

Chihana: I am not certain whether the Kenya scenario could be transplanted to Malawi. Kenya has a very clear affinity to divisions, in fact the conflict among the tribal groupings is rife in Kenya and tribal affiliations are very strong. That is a weakness which has left the Kenyan opposition unable to wrestle for power, which they should have done in normal circumstances. In Malawi, we have a loose tribal affiliation, which is not very strong at all. The Alliance for Democracy cuts across tribal lines. For instance, I am the leader of AFORD, and I come from the north. My deputy is from the central region; the secretary-general is from the central region; the treasurer is from the south; and three-quarters of the members of the National Executive Council are divided equally between the south and the central. We are only eight or 11 out of the 42 members of the National Executive Council, therefore this explains clearly that AFORD is a national party rather than a tribal party.

AFORD is a party for change. It’s a party that was cre-
ated by the young generation of all walks of life—academia, journalists, the clergy, the Muslim community, the business community, the Law Society of Malawi. So, AFORD is a party identified with the people and it is for the people of Malawi. AFORD is for change, and this change inevitably will lead to the Alliance being the first party to form the new government.

**Africa Report:** Is there a possibility that the ruling party could play off differences between your party and the UDF, or perhaps since a number of the leaders of the UDF were formerly in the MCP, is there a possibility that there could be an alliance between the two that could affect the outcome of the transition in Malawi?

**Chihana:** I don’t expect the Malawi Congress Party to effectively divide the opposition. I think you have put it correctly. The UDF leadership came from the Malawi Congress Party, and therefore it is identified as Malawi Congress Party “B.” The difference between the MCP and UDF is very little indeed. It is a party formed by businessmen and women, people who were either expelled from the MCP or fell out of grace with Dr. Banda. So the country is quite aware that the UDF is part of the Malawi Congress Party. The MCP and the UDF are the oppressor, whereas AFORD is a party of the oppressed. Therefore, the oppressed have a mission to change the oppressive regime and this includes the UDF and the MCP.

The second point is that the MCP is largely disintegrated. For the MCP to form the next government, even if it divided the opposition, a miracle must happen or the opposition must blunder. At the moment, thank God, we haven’t done so. Another very important issue is that Dr. Banda is incapacitated. And in Malawi, Dr. Banda is the country and the country is Dr. Banda. This was the case before, but now that he is incapacitated, I cannot see how the MCP can present a leader to replace Dr. Banda who would sell, in order for them to form the next government. The situation in Kenya was very different. Moi was leader of KANU until after the election. But in Malawi, we are amputating the powers of the government slowly. In fact, we are escorting them into oblivion. So, there is a difference between us and Kenya.

**Africa Report:** In terms of the current ruling situation in Malawi as it goes through transition, could you comment on the role of the Presidential Council that has been set up, which is made up of three members of the ruling party including John Tembo? How do you assess their role at this point, and how do you see them interacting with the other elements in the transition as things unfold?

**Chihana:** The incapacitation of Dr. Banda has presented us with an awkward situation. Tembo, Chakuamba, and Chirwa, who are forming the Presidential Council, happen to be the undesirable elements in the country. We in the opposition are asking that the Presidential Council be replaced by an interim president agreed by all parties. This interim president should be able to form his own cabinet which will preside over the transitional period until the presidential and general elections in May. The government is saying no.

Under the old constitution, the president could appoint a presidential commission if he goes on holidays and then the presidential commission falls off when he returns from holidays. And then there is another provision which says that when the president is incapacitated or dies, the appointment committee under the old constitution would appoint a presidential council. Now, since Malawi did not have a new constitution, it so happened that the Presidential Council had to be appointed under the old constitution. I think that is where the weakness lies, and that is where the opposition was taken unaware. If we had amended the old constitution beforehand, maybe the Presidential Council should not have been formed. But nevertheless, we are saying that the old constitution is null and void because the will of the people was expressed on June 14, 1993, that there should be a multi-party, plural democratic society. I think very strongly that the Presidential Council is unconstitutional. This is the feeling of the people of Malawi. We don’t recognize the council, and we will fight for it to be replaced by an interim president.

**Africa Report:** Is there a possibility that these tensions can lead to violent conflict or is there the prospect that these will be played out more non-violently relative to other transition situations in Africa?

**Chihana:** I hope so. The ball is in the court of the government, which is largely not recognized by the people of Malawi. I think the government ought to know that the will of the people has been expressed and that the government ought to recognize the will of the people. I hope they will wake up with some sense to recognize this, because any confrontation between now and May could definitely delay the peaceful transition to change—it could bring Malawi back to 1964. I hope this can be stopped.

**Africa Report:** Is there a possibility that these tensions can lead to violent conflict or is there the prospect that these will be played out more non-violently relative to other transition situations in Africa?

**Chihana:** We hope we can persuade the government to see the importance of a peaceful transition to democracy. All of us—the opposition and the government—should be interested in peace, because any violent confrontation would render Malawi into a very nasty and unwarranted situation. I think that can be avoided if both the opposition and the government seek wise counsel. But as far as the Alliance for Democracy is concerned, it has been our wish to create a peaceful transition to democracy. We have said it repeatedly that Malawi should not slide into anarchy.

**Africa Report:** What role would you recommend for the U.S. to play at this critical stage in the transition, and given what has been happening with various transitions in other parts of the world, are you hopeful that the U.S. can play a constructive role?

**Chihana:** We are all aware that the United States played a
leading role in the calling of the referendum, the release of political prisoners, the general amnesty which has now taken place in Malawi, and then the current talks about talks in order to have a new constitution leading to general elections. Now we would like the United States to do more than what they have done. The first thing they could do with relative speed is to put conditions before aid can be resumed in Malawi, conditions that the government must respect the decisions arrived at in the National Consultative Council. The disarming of the Malawi Young Pioneers, that is a very important issue, as is the convening of a constitutional conference to draw up a new constitution, and the repeal of Articles 13, 14, and 15, which deal with the office of the president. After these have been repealed, the issue of the presidential council would fall out. This means that Malawi would have an interim president who would preside over the transition to a free and democratic Malawi. I think if the United States did put pressure on the government, there is a likelihood that it would succumb to this pressure. So, we hope that the United States will take the lead.

Africa Report: What about the wider international community? What kind of role do you see them playing between now and the May elections, in terms of the OAU, the Commonwealth, the European Community, and so forth?

Chihana: I think they have worked together with the United States very well since 1992. I do hope that they will send international observers; I do hope they will create structures that will monitor a free and fair general election in Malawi. In addition to this, the EEC is a major contributor to Malawi’s balance of payments. The World Bank and the Commonwealth have tremendous influence, because Malawi is a member of the Commonwealth. And then the same thing with the OAU. Put together, they have a similar obligation to exact in Malawi what the United States has been doing for the last two years. So I hope they will follow the lead of the United States.

Africa Report: Human rights and democracy are the main issues in the election campaign in Malawi. What other national issues and concerns do you see affecting the outcome of the vote in May next year?

Chihana: I think AFORD will be pressing home that the bill of rights must provide common security to all Malawians, that no Malawian shall be put in detention, that no Malawian shall be molested, that no Malawian will live in fear. We are mindful that a constitution replacing the old constitution must guarantee not only political rights, but also civil and social rights. But above all, the elections will be fought on socio-economic issues. Malawi has very high unemployment. In a country of nearly 10 million, you have 3 or 3.5 million who are unemployed. And these are between the ages of 15 and 30. We feel that the next government is likely to sit on a time bomb. So we would like to approach the elections with an agenda of how the issue of unemployment can be resolved in Malawi, but this can only be done when Malawi has the resources, and Malawi hasn’t got the resources. We may have to attract international investment into Malawi perhaps with attractive conditions. And the issue of modernizing our education system, which is very much British, to be employment-oriented, that might also be an issue to be discussed. Health care definitely will be very prominent during the election.

Africa Report: In terms of these socio-economic issues, are there major differences in the platforms of your party and the other parties in the election? Is there a consensus about what the future is, or are there differences between your constituency and, say, those who belong to the UDF and MCP?

Chihana: Yes, the differences are quite open. AFORD believes in human rights and democracy, because you cannot have democracy without human rights, whereas the other parties are talking about democracy. I think they are talking about democracy from a very abstract nature, maybe not appreciating the meaning of democracy. We feel that democracy must be man-centered, in that it must take into consideration the concept of a man must come from the governed and that the governed must have a lasting say on whatever the government of the day has to do. Human rights should transcend the career, the profession, tribal bonds, and therefore constitute the very central theme or the very core of the survival of the human race. This is why we prefer to have human rights and democracy as a priority before we can go to the presidential and general elections. So, it’s true there is a division between us and the other parties including the ruling Malawi Congress Party. This is why we, AFORD, have said that Malawi must have a two-tier system of government: a House of Representatives and a Senate. In addition, we are asking for the House of Traditional Chiefs, so that there can be checks and balances between the structures and all kinds of government, so that security of the people, liberties of the people, can be guaranteed under the new constitution.

Africa Report: As a trade union leader, what do you think is the future of the labor movement in Malawi? How can trade unions enhance democracy and at the same time promote the economic welfare of workers? Is there a contradiction?

Chihana: No, there is no contradiction. Throughout history, the labor movement has been an advocate of modernization. Its mission has been that democracy must reflect the values of individual liberty as distinct from the wage movement. Wage movement has something to do with the improvement of the conditions of living not only of the workers, but of the welfare of the people generally. Now the two become the integral part of the trade union tradition, because you cannot only improve living conditions without guaranteeing the security of the society. I think the trade unions feel that without democracy you cannot guarantee the security of members of the trade unions. The trade union movement is for the welfare of the individual and believes that the welfare of the individual must encompass the narrowness of the interests of the working class. I think the labor movement in Malawi will have a dominant role to play in a new Malawi.
with the start of the year, the signs are more auspicious for South Africa than at any time since President F.W. de Klerk's speech on February 2, 1990, heralding the beginning of a new era.

The political center, made up primarily of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress and de Klerk's ruling National Party, has held; the radical zealots on the left and right flanks seem for the moment to have been reduced to vociferous impotence.

A transitional constitution, providing for an interim government of national unity, has been drawn up with the support of 21 of the 26 political parties and institutions that sat down to renew negotiations for a settlement on April 1, 1993.

A Transitional Executive Council, or TEC, representing 20 of the 26 delegations at the negotiating council, is in place and working to fulfill its main objective: leveling the political playing field to ensure that the April 27 elections for a national government and a constitutional assembly—which will draw up a "final" constitution—are free and fair.

Even the economy looks healthier. Inflation is down, having dropped below 10 percent during 1993. Positive economic growth, as measured by GDP, seems assured, having crossed the zero line during the second quarter of 1993. The average level of wage settlements is down to 10 percent, raising the prospect of greater restraint by trade unions in the months ahead.

There are further propitious signs: rising confidence in the business sector, with the business confidence index, as charted by the South African Chamber of Business, spiraling upward as the prospects of a durable political settlement improved.

But gloomy shadows still flit across the political landscape, forcing even the most buoyant of optimists to qualify their sanguinity.

Violence continues to stalk the country, particularly in the turbulent townships on the eastern edge of greater Johannesburg, and across large areas of Natal Province, where it reached record levels in late 1993.

The chances of an inclusive settlement embracing all...
The African National Congress seems assured of winning the April 27 election, the nation’s first-ever to include all its people, and Nelson Mandela is poised to become the first president of a post-apartheid South Africa. But after a deft job of negotiating an end to apartheid since his release from prison four years ago, Mandela will face the truly daunting task of reconciling left and right voices both within and outside the ANC. It will take all the political skills he has honed in his 75 years.

major political parties seem remote. With the Afrikaner Volksfront and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) still holding out for a more definite federal constitution, the long-awaited political settlement seems likely to be born amid enmity rather than unanimity.

The implications are potentially dangerous: The settlement itself may become the focus of political resentment and acrimony rather than a framework for containing and regulating political rivalry.

For historians, that recalls an ominous echo from the past: the 1910 constitution which excluded the black majority, and whose repeal became the major objective of black nationalists. Afrikaner nationalists and Zulu traditionalists may campaign for the abrogation of the present constitution.

But for the immediate future, that appears to be a theoretical rather than a real threat: Afrikaner nationalists seem to have settled for rhetoric and symbolic protest, while Mangosuthu Buthelezi’s IFP is racked by internal division over whether or not to participate in the April 27 election and struggling to maintain its morale in the face of a rampant ANC.

Opinion polls point to a huge ANC victory. It is no longer a question of whether the ANC will win an outright majority, but whether it can win two-thirds of the vote.

The ANC looks invincible as its leader, Mandela, strides confidently into the future, the anxieties caused by his willful wife—whose conviction for kidnapping was upheld by the Appeal Court—apparently firmly behind him (although her surprise election in December as president of the ANC Women’s League will force him to work with her politically).

Next to him, de Klerk, Constand Viljoen, leader of the Afrikaner Volksfront, Clarence Makwetu, president of the Pan Africanist Congress, and Buthelezi look puny, destined for subordinate roles only in South Africa’s immediate future, the more so since Mandela has the backing of the leaders of big business as well as the vast majority of black people.

Mandela is a man with great reserves of fortitude, patience, and wisdom, having finely honed these qualities during his 28 years in prison.

Almost four years have elapsed since his release from prison in February 1990, but Mandela, who has been exposed to the full and frequently critical glare of the media, continues to impress as a leader of immense ability.

His occasional lapses—flashes of irritability when he is tired or anger when he is provoked—do not detract from his stature as a leader who has endured oppression and who carries the hopes of millions of South Africans of all colors on his shoulders.

If there is one predictable development in South Africa’s present complex, volatile, and bloody political situation, it is that Mandela will—barring death or severe illness—be South Africa’s first black president.

With political and criminal violence running at record levels, with the country still recovering from prolonged recession, and with black impatience and white fears still at dangerous levels, Mandela will have to mobilize all his considerable talents if the post-apartheid era is to fulfill the hopes that it has aroused.

Mandela is periodically criticized, particularly in South Africa, for putting his position as ANC president ahead of his status as a South African leader.

His hair now white rather than gray, he makes no secret of the fact that he feels bound by the discipline and constraints of the organization which he has served faithfully for decades. He is a good party man, not in the sense of being a party hack, but in accepting that he is accountable to the ANC membership.

Mandela, who turned 75 in July, two years after he was unanimously elected ANC president in succession to Oliver Tambo, is a political patriarch. His immediate duty is to hold the ANC together as a coherent, disciplined, and stabilizing force in the turbulent years ahead. That may prove more difficult than meets the eye.

The ANC is not a political monolith. It is made up of various and, in some ways, disparate elements. Its growing ranks bristle with potential dichotomies. To mention a few: nationalists and communists, capitalists and socialists, chiefs and commoners, pragmatists and ideologues, guerrillas and intellectuals, whites from affluent suburbs and blacks from impoverished squatter camps. Each of these contrasts is a potential fault line, which could develop into a major fissure.

Mandela has acknowledged that there will be a parting
of the ways “after apartheid is destroyed” between the ANC and its ally of many years, the South African Communist Party (SACP).

“The SACP has declared that their cooperation with us is only up to the point of the overthrow of the apartheid state. After that they will take their own line...We won’t follow socialism. We have got our own program.”

Tensions between the ANC’s pragmatic, if not bourgeois, leadership and the doctrinaire socialists in its ranks seem likely to increase in the months ahead because of the decision by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) at its special congress in September to nominate 20 candidates to ANC’s 400-strong election list.

The candidates include top trade union officials, notably the Cosatu general secretary, Jay Naidoo, and the general secretaries of three affiliated unions. The nominees—which Cosatu has insisted must be in the top half of the ANC’s list—include two members of the SACP’s central committee: Moses Mayekiso and Chris Dlamini. The presence of the Cosatu bloc on the ANC list ensures that socialism will not be quietly downgraded on the ANC agenda.

These are the kind of tensions Mandela will have to resolve. They will require the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job. Another major problem is looming for Mandela: the growing anger and impatience of black youth. The median age of the numerically dominant black community is 17, meaning that a significant segment of black society—the politicized youth between the ages of, say, 12 and 17—will not have the vote.

They will be passive witnesses to the April election. Their sense of exclusion will be more acute for one primary reason: During the 1980s and even before that, it was the black youth—the “Young Lions”—who spearheaded the struggle against apartheid.

Since the unbanning of the ANC, the release of political prisoners, and the return of exiled ANC leaders, the youth have been relieved of their places at the frontline, if not actually pushed aside. Their sense of exclusion has bred anger and made them—in the words of black sociologist Steve Mokwena—“a potential menace with a capacity to commit indescribable crimes against their own people.”

Mandela is sharply aware of the “potential menace.” It explains his call for the qualifying age for the vote to be lowered from 18 to 14. His thrice-repeated exhortation is not, as some commentators have suggested, a sign of impending senility. It is a bid to tap the energies of the youth, to bring them into mainstream politics.

Mandela’s problems do not end here. He is almost certain to head a government of national unity, in which all parties that receive between 5 and 10 percent of the vote—the precise figure hasn’t yet been agreed—will qualify to serve in the cabinet.

If there are discordant notes in the ANC because of its ideological, racial, and class heterogeneity, then the sounds emanating from the government of national unity are likely to be positively cacophonous.

Mandela may find himself struggling to reconcile the competing and sometimes conflicting interests of the ANC, de Klerk’s National Party, and Buthelezi’s IFP. To find a middle course between alienating his governing partners and a paralyzing compromise will require great sagacity.

These political circumstances and the economic recession may impose severe restraints on policies designed to improve the lot of poor black people in the townships and villages. There is a great danger that their expectations will disappoint and that their disappointment will turn to anger.

As Mandela himself has acknowledged, there is more than a whiff of suspicion in the townships that negotiations are a betrayal of the revolution, that they are another stratagem to prolong the life of the white regime rather than facilitate the transfer of power “to the people.”

Mandela knows that if disillusionment sets in, if the ANC is seen to be collaborating with the “oppressor,” then—as he put it after the Bisho massacre—“those who are demanding the resumption of armed struggle are going to prevail.”

Already, as ANC national executive member Jeremy Cronin has observed, many township radicals suspect that the ANC leader is a ploy, a “Manchurian candidate.” They fear that the “real Mandela” was murdered by his jailers and replaced by a pliant prisoner of the same build and looks, programmed to preach pragmatism and moderation in the interests of the white regime.

Watching and waiting to exploit the situation is the Pan Africanist Congress, with its demands for the return of the land to the indigenous owners and its chorused cries of “one settler, one bullet.”

Mandela’s ability to cope with these problems will depend on his health and stamina as much as his political skills.

He is astonishingly alert and strong for his age, largely because of his healthy lifestyle. He eats and drinks frugally, exercises as regularly as his punishing schedule permits. He knows how to pace himself, how to “switch off” to get that vital half-hour of recuperative rest.

But at his age he remains vulnerable: He contracted tuberculosis while in prison. Shortly after his release, he had “minor surgery” for the removal of a cyst; later in the same year he was laid low with pneumonia; most recently, last February, he was ordered to bed for complete rest by his doctors.

If he is incapacitated by—or dies because of—his heavy load, two men are poised to succeed him: Thabo Mbeki, 51, whose fortunes have been advanced by his election as national chairman to replace the late Oliver Tambo, and the ANC secretary-general, Cyril Ramaphosa, 41.

They will inherit the problems waiting to confront Mandela’s skill, strength, and stamina. A testing time lies ahead for whoever leads the ANC.
The enormous disparity in land ownership in South Africa—86 percent was set aside for whites, who comprise about 13 percent of the population—has not yet received the attention it undoubtedly will get. The World Bank has suggested a market-based land distribution program that would lead to 30 percent of white farmland being turned over to black farmers during the next five years.

Among the statistics most frequently reeled off to illustrate the legacy of apartheid are those relating to land. They are indeed startling.

Simply put, under apartheid laws, 86 percent of South Africa's agricultural land was reserved for whites, who comprise about one-eighth of the country's population. The country's majority black population was forced into ethnic reserves (the so-called homelands)—fragmented bits of the worst agricultural land accounting for 14 percent of the land surface.

Yet surprisingly—apart from the occasional demonstration by peasant farmers outside the World Trade Center where South Africa's political leaders recently agreed on transitional arrangements for the country's first democratic elections—the land issue has hardly grabbed the headlines in South Africa.

The subject is indeed an emotive one. As Cyril Ramaphosa, ANC secretary-general and chief political negotiator, noted at a recent conference in Johannesburg...
on land distribution options: "The oldest continuing call of the ANC is... Mayibuye iAfrica! Come back Africa. The dispossession of the majority must come to an end. Unless we settle the land question, we do not have a country. If we handle it badly, we tear South Africa to pieces. If we manage it well, we create the foundations for a truly united nation."

But, as Ramaphosa went on to admit: "Most of us in the leadership have an urban bias. We belong to the towns and have a deep sense of involvement with the urgent problems of the cities. The land question appears so difficult, so laden with emotion, so ridden with layers of competing interests, that we wait for a more convenient time to deal with it."

In the interim constitution agreed at the World Trade Center, the ANC wrested from its negotiating partners the concession that a land claims court be established for those dispossessed of their land after 1913 to seek redress, on the basis that the present owners of the land are compensated.

At the conference addressed by Ramaphosa, the World Bank released a report titled “Options for Land Reform and Rural Restructuring in South Africa,” compiled with input from a number of South African experts. The report suggests that South Africa could affordably embark on a market-based land distribution program that would lead to 30 percent of current white farmland being turned over to small-scale black farmers over the next five years.

Whether or not this sort of figure is ever achieved, comments David Cooper, coordinator of the Land and Agricultural Policy Center, an umbrella for NGOs concerned with land issues which convened the land options conference, "will very much depend on political will."

According to the parastatal Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), there are presently 1.2 million subsistence farmers occupying about 16 million hectares of farmland in the homelands, in contrast to about 60,000 white commercial farmers on 82 million hectares of farmland in South Africa. The bank estimates that there are half a million families in the homelands who own no land at all.

Some $567 million of the $700 million agricultural budget is allocated to white agriculture. Black farmers lack access to agricultural support services, finance, and productive infrastructure.

In its belated efforts to redress the wrongs of the past, the F.W. de Klerk government established an Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA) that has been hearing land claims and grievances around the country.

However, the commission is restricted to considering claims by communities only if the disputed land is still owned by the state and has not been developed or allocated for a specific basis. This has rendered it virtually impotent.

Under the interim constitution to come into effect after elections scheduled for April, a new commission is to be set up to hear all claims relating to forced removals after 1913. The Land Act of 1913, and subsequent laws introduced after 1948 when apartheid was formally legalized, led to a number of forced removals in several different categories, including:

- **Black spot removals**: These were pockets of black-owned land that remained in non-black rural race zones after the coming into operation of the act.
- **Homeland consolidation**: removals which took place in the course of extending or altering the boundaries of the homelands.
- **Betterment schemes**: This involved the relocation of hundreds of thousands of people from their dwellings into consolidated settlements on the pretext of reorganizing rural areas in order to provide them with better amenities.
- **Labor tenants and squatters**: Thousands of such people were evicted from white farms, especially after a change of ownership.

Legally, according to Cooper, the first two of these categories (black spot removals and homeland consolidations) probably have the strongest case, but constitute the smaller number of claimants. Conversely, the latter two categories (betterment schemes, labor tenants, and squatters) constitute by far the larger number, yet are likely to have more difficulty in proving a legal case.

Whatever the category, seeking restoration or compensation for land expropriated decades ago is likely to be long and costly. As the director of the non-governmental Legal Resources Center, Geoff Budlender, pointed out at the conference, it cost $11 million to establish the validity of claims by 162,000 home-owners in Soweto, with a view to transferring ownership to them. Unlike rural land claimants, these all came from one area; they had official records and they were all literate.

Nothing is said in the interim constitution about setting up a fund to help claimants or availing them legal assistance. The result, says Cooper, is that those most likely to benefit from the new provisions on land restoration are the few who were forcibly removed, went into business, have the money, clout, and know-how to press their claims.

The majority of aggrieved will probably never get to court, or have to rely on the help of overstretched NGOs. They will be up against a formidable and well-organized white farming community, which will look for every loophole. "Word of mouth about ownership of land is no substitute for a title deed," a spokesperson for the white South African Agricultural Union (SAAU) reminded Africa Report.

Even if a claim is proven, the constitution requires that
compensation be paid to the current owner. In arriving at this figure, the courts are required to take into account “all relevant factors, including the history of its acquisition.” However, most of the current land owners are unlikely to be those actually involved in the dispossession.

The interim constitution also stipulates that compensation must be “just and fair,” which, according to Cooper, is taken internationally to mean market price.

A clause deemed necessary to enhance investor confidence, this has raised the ire of left-wing political groups in South Africa. The Pan Africanist Congress, for example, argued vociferously at the World Trade Center that it was unacceptable for a new black government to have to pay for disposessions by the white government as part of its gross social engineering under apartheid laws.

As messy as the whole restitution process is likely to be, most agree that if a more equitably distribution of land is to be achieved, righting the wrongs of the past must be accompanied by a proactive, demand-led land redistribution program.

“Restoration is an important national issue, and we can’t fudge it,” says Cooper. “But if we don’t look for other ways of redressing imbalances, land reform will sink under its own weight.”

Central to the World Bank report is the assumption that most land reforms in South Africa will occur as a result of redistribution and not restoration. Pointing to examples such as Zimbabwe, where investor confidence has been negatively affected by government interference in fixing land prices and designating zones for resettlement, the Bank argues for a market-based land redistribution program.

Key features of the proposal include:

• Purchase by the government of land freely available on the market. At the moment, there is a sizeable amount of such land, as a result of white farmers quitting due to the drought, recession, and political uncertainties. Based on calculations of current land transfers, the bank says it is reasonable to assume that 6 percent of current white farmland could be purchased each year over five years on the open market. This would lead to a transfer of 30 percent of medium and high-quality land, creating 1.5 million jobs.

• The report estimates the cost of the project, including contingencies, at about $5.3 billion. Of this, beneficiaries would be asked to pay 8.2 percent, and borrow an additional 12.3 percent, bringing the government cost down to $4.3 billion.

• Beneficiaries could also be required to contribute to unskilled labor costs (sweat equity) for setting up resettlement schemes, reducing government costs by a further $333 million. Further suggested reduction in the fiscal burden include allocating 320,000 hectares of state land to the project and reducing remaining state subsidies to large scale farmers from $166 million to $133 million a year. According to the Bank, this would bring project costs down to $700 million per annum.

• The Bank suggests that half of this could be met from donor sources and proposes that a multilateral agency such as the United Nations Development Program, the European Community, the African Development Bank, or the World Bank be asked to coordinate donor financing.

The proposals have raised criticisms both to the left and the right of the political spectrum. SAAU, the white commercial farmers union, is perturbed by the implications in the report that white farmers have been pampered and are inefficient, and that small-scale black farmers—if given adequate back-up—can be equally efficient.

Lambasting the suggestion that there be a further cut in subsidies to commercial farmers, a spokesperson for SAAU points out that by Western standards, South African farmers, who get a 10 to 15 percent subsidy, are not highly subsidized.

The efficiency argument, he adds, is a subjective one. While small-scale farmers may be mathematically proven to be as efficient as large-scale farmers because their inputs are much lower relative to their outputs, the fact that they produce on a small scale means that overall they are not as efficient as large unit producers, SAAU argues.

To the left of the political spectrum, many are suspicious of the World Bank’s intentions. Cynics say that having failed to find a lead role for itself in the economy generally (which is in poor state, but not as devastated as many other African economies), the Bank is looking for a niche for itself in the new South Africa. In his speech, Ramaphosa reflected the sensitivity to the Bank’s role when he said the ANC reserved the right to examine its proposals critically.

More concretely, ANC-aligned economists question the insistence of the Bank that beneficiaries of the scheme contribute by paying something themselves and taking out loans. They say this will again exclude the poorest people in the rural areas, and especially women, who account for the highest percentage of the rural dispossessed.

An overriding theme of the World Bank report, and indeed the land option conference, is that if land reform is to succeed, it has to be undertaken speedily, or not at all.

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At the close of his speech, Ramaphosa posed a series of rhetorical questions, such as what land should be made available for redistribution; who should the beneficiaries be; how should the process be financed; and what can be done to ensure that women have meaningful land rights. If there is to be any hope of eradicating this cruel legacy of apartheid, these questions will have to be answered soon.
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