

People, power, poverty and Africa's thirst for democracy

BY KOFI A. ANNAN

We have learnt that democracy begins at breakfast — that power has to be shared in the home, between women and men, and from there on up to the highest levels of the state, and indeed of the international system



There is a saying among my people in Ghana: one head alone is not enough to decide.

I often think of that when I hear people say that democracy is alien to Africa, or that Africans are "not ready" for democracy.

In reality, African communities from the village upwards have traditionally decided their course through free discussion, carefully weighing different points of view until consensus is reached. So Africans have much to learn from their own traditions, and something to teach others, about the true meaning and spirit of democracy.

We need to understand that there is much more to democracy than simply which candidate, or which party, has majority support.

Of course, even that is not always easy, as one of the world's most successful democracies has recently shown us. But the US's current difficulties should not cast

doubt on the value of democracy itself.

On the contrary, they remind us how important it is that elections are held within a broader context of democratic institutions and culture.

Democracy depends on the rule of law, because without respect for law it is not possible to hold free elections, to conduct them fairly, or to settle disputes about the electoral process.

Yes, democracy implies majority rule. But that does not mean minorities should be excluded from any say in decisions.

Minority views should never be silenced. The minority must always be free to state its case, so that people can hear both sides before deciding who is right.

How can people learn about those ideas? At the level of the village, they may learn directly, by face to face contact. But in today's mass societies they depend above all on mass media.

For an election to be truly fair, different parties and candidates should have equal access to the media. Neither state power nor the power of money should determine that one party gets a hearing while another is denied it.

The media must actively seek out the truth on the public's behalf, and be free to tell it as they see it.

Often, especially in times of conflict, that requires journalists to take real risks. Many have lost their lives in the quest for truth. We owe them an enormous debt. Even more, we owe it to ourselves to give them better protection. It is our interests, and our freedom, that they are upholding.

In mature democracies, parties alternate between power and opposition, as opinion shifts, and minorities become majorities.

But not all societies are like that. Not all minorities are composed simply of people whose views are out of fashion. Many are structur-

al minorities — people who in some sense form a separate group, defined by race, colour, culture or creed.

If parties are formed on the basis of such group identities, a winner take-all election offers minorities no security. A minority in power

will not risk losing it, and a minority without power will have no hope of winning it. Democracy can only work if all groups in a society feel that they belong to it, and that it belongs to them. Often this means ensuring that minorities are given a permanent share of power.

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In some places that can be done by decentralisation, so that national minorities can win local power, in regions where they form the local majority. In others it may be done by provisions giving minorities guaranteed representation at national level — in the legislature, or the executive, or both. What is important is not the particular device used, but the outcome.

It is easy to state such principles, but not always easy to practise them, especially in a country that has just emerged from conflict, or one whose people are desperately poor and hungry. People in such conditions are easily manipulated by those who use force to seize power, arguing that constitutional rights are a luxury which a poor country cannot afford.

How often we have heard those arguments: "Democracy begins with breakfast" or "The hungry stomach has no ears".

But over and over again we have learnt, especially in Africa, that poor people's stomachs are not filled by rulers who refuse to submit themselves to the people's judgment.

We have learnt that democracy begins at breakfast — that power has to be shared in the home, between women and men, and from there on up to the highest levels of the state, and indeed of the international system.

Oppression is not an alternative to poverty. Nor is development an alternative to freedom. Poverty and oppression go hand in hand, while true development means freedom from both.

My generation of Africans has learnt, the hard way, that no state can truly be called democratic if it offers its people no escape from poverty; and that no country can truly develop, so long as its people are excluded from power.

The building of African nations has been one long struggle against poverty, ignorance, disease and conflict. It is hardly surprising that African democracy has known many setbacks. What is striking, rather, is the fierce and ever-growing thirst for democracy that Africans have shown; their indomitable courage in defying oppressive regimes; and their success, in so many countries, in insisting on accountable government.

My generation saw its dream of independence come true, but our dream of democracy shattered. Thank God we have lived long enough to see democracy spreading again through Africa today, and taking root.

KOFI ANNAN is the Secretary-General of the United Nations. This article is based on the address he is to give today at the Fourth International Conference of New and Restored Democracies in Cotonou, Benin (West Africa).

Seven in race for Ghana President's post

By M. S. Prabhakara

ACCRA (GHANA), DEC. 7. Long lines of laughing, jostling voters formed at ballot stations in Ghana's presidential elections on Thursday that mark the end of an era for this West African nation.

For two decades, a charismatic former fighter pilot who staged two coups and led a brutal military government before embracing democratic ideals, has embodied Ghana's Government.

But the President, Mr. Jerry Rawlings, is barred by the Constitution from running for another four-year term.

Though he seized power in what may be called a two-stage coup (June 4, 1979 and Dec. 31, 1981), he successfully civilianised his military regime with the adoption of the new Constitution, the revival of free political activity and the holding of the elections, all in 1992. These in effect mark the coming into being of what is called the Fourth Republic in Ghana.

Since then, the problem for the revived political parties is how to secure power which they once wielded. They have not been able to match the skills of Mr. Rawlings in this regard. Another imponderable is what would Mr. Rawlings, who is only 53, will do after the polls. He is too young, energetic and full of ideas, to walk away into a political sunset after dominat-



Jerry Rawlings

ing Ghanaian politics for two decades. He makes no secret of his resolve to ensure that "the gains of June 4, 1979" and of the PNDC/NDC government over the last two decades, are further consolidated and advanced. Even more interesting to see is what role if any, Mrs. Nana Rawlings, who has been campaigning for the NDC, may have in the event of a NDC victory.

Seven candidates are in the fray for the post of President. Those (with the names of their parties within brackets) are: Prof. John Evans Atta Mills (National Democratic Congress), Mr. John Agye-

kum Kufor (New Patriotic Party), Professor George Hagan (Convention People's Party), Dr. Edward Mahama (People's National Convention), Mr. Dan Lartey (Great Consolidated People's Party) Mr. Gossie Tanoah (National Reform Party) and Dr. Charles Yves Wereko-Brobby (United Ghana Movement). Their running mates are all men, which has caused some resentment among women groups. Some women groups have called on women voters to vote for women candidates in the 200 parliamentary constituencies, irrespective of the candidates' political affiliations, though it is not clear how this choice will be exercised if there is more than one woman candidate in any constituency.

The two clear front-runners are Mr. Atta Mills and Mr. Rufor, both established politicians. Mr. Atta Mills is the incumbent Vice-President, while Mr. Kufor had contested against Mr. Rawlings four years ago. Strictly speaking, Mr. Atta Mills is the candidate of Progressive Alliance which comprises the NDC and two other political parties — the Democratic People's Party and the fetchingly named EGLE party, standing for "Every Ghanaian Living Everywhere." The political and ideological origins of the NDC go back to the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) set up fol-

lowing the second Rawlings coup of 31, December, 1981. The Progressive Alliance, forged before the 1992 elections, has survived eight years, though individuals have walked in and out of the alliance.

The NPP is the political inheritor of the historic opposition politics in Ghana, with a strong base in the central Ashanti region. Indeed, it was only in this region, the home of the famous Asante people, that the NDC failed to win a majority of votes both in 1992 and 1996. This was also the home of the first organised opposition to Kwame Nkrumah, the National Liberation Movement representing regional interests and more broadly a federal polity as opposed to the unitary state under Nkrumah. The NPP is acknowledged the political inheritor of these political tendencies.

Though the CPP bears the name, and claims the political inheritance of the party founded by Kwame Nkrumah, at least two other parties in the fray, the PNC and the GCPP, also claim to be more truly Nkrumaist than the CPP. It is indeed amazing how many, including those who support the ruling party, claim to be the true political heirs of Nkrumah, truly a tribute to a man who continues to be blackguarded by the western media and political establishments.

THE HINDU

8 DEC 2001

A peek into a complex scenario

In Daphne du Maurier's novel, *Rebecca*, the deceased wife of the owner of the estate cast her powerful shadow over what happened after the widower had brought home a second and bashful wife, "feeling woefully inferior to the predecessor and desperately eager to please". The novel and the Hitchcock-made film based on it proved so compelling that when somebody, though physically absent, made his presence felt in later developments, the syndrome came to be termed the "Rebecca complex".

In the just-concluded parliamentary and presidential elections of Ghana, a similar syndrome seems to have been at play. This may be christened the Kwame complex, after Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, whose fiery leadership earned Ghana, the first black independent country of Africa, world attention.

Three of the seven parties that contested the elections swore by Kwame Nkrumah's legacy, thus illustrating the Kwame complex. Between them they took over the name of Nkrumah's party, the Convention People's Party, his motto — "Forward ever, backward never" — and the electoral symbol, a cock. Yet failing to fight the elections in concert, together they could muster just above five per cent of the votes — a fact that reminds us that even a compelling charisma has its limits. Understandably to young voters, jobs are more important than the memory of the powerful presence of Nkrumah, who stayed around till 1966 when he was overthrown by a military coup.

The fragmented Kwame complex did not constitute the principal focus of the opposition to the ruling party, the National Democratic Congress. The mantle fell on the New Patriotic Party whose leader, John Agyekum Kufuor, just missed the 51 per cent mark in the elections that would have given him a straight victory. Like the Nkrumahite parties, NPP also looked back to the past, but to a different rallying point, to J.B. Danquah, a liberal intellectual whose claim to leadership was demolished by Nkrumah's radicalism on the eve of independence.

Pitted against Kufuor was John Atta Mills, the protégé of Jerry Rawlings, the outgoing president. Starting life as an academic, Atta Mills later joined the public service and was picked up as vice-president by Rawlings. To the extrovert Ghanaians, the style of the intellectual vice-president, said to be "a man with the demeanour of a parson", might have appeared too insipid next to the flamboyance of Rawlings. *The Economist* sums up the latter as "a colourful fellow of uncertain temper" (who) "has beaten up his ministers, and fallen on his knees in front of crowds".

Rawlings was born in 1947. His mother was from the Ewe ethnic community and his father was a Scotsman. Jerry joined the air force as a cadet at a young age. After an earlier coup that failed, in June

The recent presidential elections in Ghana shows the country is yet to come out of the shadow of its former rulers, writes Ansu Datta



John Agyekum Kufuor: hired glory

1979, Rawlings and his friends finally toppled the ruling Supreme Military Council that had on its turn ousted Nkrumah in 1966. The coup leaders had eight generals, including three former military rulers, executed by the firing squad on charges of corruption.

From June to September 1979, Rawlings ruled Ghana at the head of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council. He ceded power to an elected civilian regime that lasted until Rawlings's second successful coup staged on the New Year's Eve, 1981.

Rawlings legitimized his rule through general elections in 1992 and 1996, although his detractors allege that the voting on both occasions was rigged. His actions against corrupt leaders and officials, euphemistically called "house cleaning", drew popular applause, so much so that he was hailed as a "hero, lord, saviour, and

Junior Jesus (sic)".

In the early days of their rule, Rawlings and his colleagues used a lot of socialist rhetoric. "They wore sandals made from car tyres, says an observer, and applauded Che Guevara. Later, with the decline of international communism, Rawlings increasingly leaned on the West.

"I don't know any law," he is supposed to have said on a pragmatic note, "and I don't understand economics, but I know it when my stomach is empty." Analysts say that in search of the wherewithal to satisfy hunger, Jerry managed an uncanny diplomatic balance between the Nigerian dictator, Sani Abacha, the Libyan leader, Muammar Qaddafi, the United States president, Bill Clinton, and the queen of England. Friends admired his instinct for survival, and attributed it not merely to his sixth sense, but also to what they called

"an extra pair of nostrils".

Without substantial difference in ideology and programme, Atta Mills and Kufuor, both inducted into politics from the legal profession and neither being a fiery orator, fought a neck and neck battle, called by the media as "the battle of the two bores". Obviously, this was with reference to the grandiosity of Nkrumah in the Fifties and the Sixties, and of Rawlings during the last two decades.

Kufuor, probably the lesser of the two bores, was helped in his campaign by the government's mismanagement of the country's economy with inflation running at 35 per cent and a low rate of economic growth. Eventually, he clinched a narrow win with just one less than half of the 200 parliamentary seats, and slightly below 49 per cent of the presidential votes. This means that he will have to prove himself in the presidential run-off due to be held on December 28.

There is some suspicion that Rawlings may hold an ambivalent attitude to the idea of giving up power. At a pre-electoral public meeting, he reportedly said that the country's constitution is not after all a Bible. He would do well to remember that unfortunately for him, the constitution does not allow a third term for the president. Rawlings has already completed two terms as president.

What is more, the man Rawlings might have liked to use as a proxy, Atta Mills, is unlikely to win in the run-off, because four of the five remaining "no-hoper" candidates have urged their supporters to vote for Kufuor in the second round. However, the resourceful Rawlings may think of other ways of influencing the course of events in Ghana.

In fact his powerful presence behind the scene may in future give rise to a fresh syndrome — the Jerry complex. Already the sprouting Jerry complex can claim partial responsibility for the defeat of the NDC's presidential candidate because Rawlings's campaign for Atta Mills created, unwittingly, the confusing impression that he in fact was the candidate. It is reported that feeling disappointed that the ballot paper did not carry Rawlings's picture, many supporters of the NDC did not vote correctly.

Complexes can surface inexorably: but powerful personalities often lend weight to their emergence. With Ghana reaching a historic turning-point, one has to assess the relative weight of Rawlings in power and Rawlings out of power.

In the words of Gyimah Boadi, a political analyst, "I believe there is a lot to love Rawlings for and there is also a lot to hate him for and the two are in some sort of a balance. I think as far as the public is concerned what will happen to Rawlings out of power has a lot more to do with what Rawlings himself does out of power".

Without substantial difference in ideology and programme, Atta Mills and Kufuor, fought a neck to neck battle, called by some as "the battle of the two bores". Obviously, this was with reference to Nkrumah in the Fifties and Sixties and Rawlings in the last two decades

S. African economic policy comes under fire

By M. S. Prabhakara

CAPE TOWN, NOV. 3. An alliance of the trade union movement and civil society organisations has made some fundamental criticism of the Government's macroeconomic policy, an issue that continues to remain contested over three years after it was adopted as the Government's policy.

Launching a "People's Budget" campaign at a media conference here yesterday, representatives of the South African Non-Government Organisations Coalition (SANGOCO), the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), identified the current macroeconomic policy as an obstacle to development, indeed as "a burden on the economy".

This policy, informed in a very fundamental sense by the orthodoxy of the market and in its operation by an emphasis on fiscal discipline to the exclusion of almost every other consideration, has been subjected to relentless criticism by COSATU and the SACP, both partners of the tripartite alliance under the ANC. But all this criticism has been of little avail till now, though occasionally one also hears voice from within the Government apparently questioning some aspects of this orthodoxy.

Earlier this week, the President, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, himself questioned "market fundamentalism" in his address to the International Ombudsman Institute Conference in Durban, though his spokesperson "clarified" soon thereafter that Mr. Mbeki was actually quoting the criticism of "market fundamentalism" by Mr. George Soros.

According to its critics, the Government's economic policy, "shaped not by social and economic needs but rather by restrictive and ultimately macroeconomic ratios", ignored the fact that apartheid left enormous backlogs in skills and social structure. "In these circumstances, higher social spending — on education, health, welfare, safety and security and infrastructure — is a necessary precondition for development and rapid economic growth. In short, we need to take the returns on social spending more consistently into account when determining Government spending."

One of the points highlighted during the media briefing related to the process of budget making, as well as the very limited role that Parliament has in modifying budget proposals. The point, made repeatedly, is that Parliament cannot amend money bills, a restriction characterised by the critics as "unconstitutional". It is on this, among other grounds, that COSATU has refused to take part in the Government's pre-budget consultative meetings for the last three years.

It is not a coincidence that these differences have become sharp since the adoption of Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) as the macroeconomic policy of the Government in mid-1996.

The launching of the "People's Budget" campaign, which at some point may also include some form of "mass action", comes in the wake of the release early this week of the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement by the Finance Minister, Mr. Trevor Manuel, an exercise now invested with almost as much of mystique as the budget exercise itself.

While welcoming the proposed increase in spending in real terms in the forthcoming budget — "a welcome reversal of the pattern of the past three years" — the critics, however, maintain that the proposed increases are entirely contingent on rapid growth in the economy, setting even tighter controls than envisaged in GEAR.

The linkage seems to take away by one hand what is offered by the other. As the critics put it, "If that growth does not materialise, we could again end up with declining budgets, with devastating consequences for development and employment, as experienced in the past three years."

Peru launches probe against Montesinos

LIMA (PERU), NOV. 3. The Peruvian Government has launched a probe into allegations that a former spy chief laundered money through Swiss bank accounts, fuelling demands for the arrest of the former power broker who is now the country's top fugitive.

The Justice Minister, Mr. Alberto Bustamante said the Government was notified by the Swiss Embassy in Lima "about the existence of three bank accounts totalling approximately \$48 million, belonging to Mr. Vladimiro Montesinos." "There could be the existence of money laundering using these unknown accounts," Mr. Bustamante told reporters on Thursday evening as he left a meeting with the President, Mr. Alberto Fujimori.

A special investigator, Judge Jose Carlos Ugaz, was immediately assigned "specifically to begin legal action," Mr. Bustamante said, and to "initiate measures to shed light on these presumed criminal activities." He said he and Mr. Fujimori had not been previously aware of the bank accounts. Mr. Montesinos was said by many to be the real power behind Mr. Fujimori for years, with control over the military and the judiciary. But when Mr. Montesinos was shown in a video in September apparently bribing a Congressman to defect to the ruling party, Mr. Fujimori was forced to announce he would step down as President.

Mr. Montesinos fled to Panama in a failed asylum bid, but returned to Peru and has remained in hiding. The former intelligence chief has been accused of crimes ranging from arms dealing and drug trafficking to torture and directing death squads. Peru's Congress approved a constitutional change on Thursday that would cut Mr. Fujimori's Presidency short, clearing the way for elections on April 8. Mr. Fujimori, who was elected to a third five-year term this year in a controversial election, has promised not to run in the new vote.

Peru's judiciary has shelved two investigations of Mr. Montesinos' personal wealth in the last three years. — AP

THE HINDU

4 NOV 2000

Zimbabwean court declares land seizures illegal

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HARARE (ZIMBABWE), NOV. 11. Zimbabwe's Supreme Court said on Friday that the Government's land reform plan and the occupation of white-owned farms were illegal in a ruling that poses a serious challenge to the President, Mr. Robert Mugabe.

In the past, Mr. Mugabe has indicated that he will go ahead with a plan to seize white-owned land for redistribution among landless blacks, no matter what. Government officials were not available for comment after the ruling on Friday evening.

In the ruling, the five judges also ordered police "to use all means and authority available" to end the occupations of 1,700 white-owned farms. Police have ignored previous court orders to remove the occupants. The Supreme Court ruling said police commanders could be charged for contempt if they do not obey the new order within 48 hours.

Six farmers have been killed and dozens of farm workers beaten since the occupations began in February. The occupations have disrupted farming, raising fears of food shortages.

Authorities plan to seize 3,000 white-owned farms by the end of the year under Mr. Mugabe's "fast track" land

reform plan, which began in June. According to law, the Government must assess how much land improvements, such as irrigation and roads, on the farms are worth, and pay accordingly. It doesn't have to pay at all for the land.

The Supreme Court said the Government has failed to carry out the assessments, and it has failed to give landowners three months advance notice of the takeovers, as legally required.

Mr. David Hasluck, head of the Commercial Farmers Union, which represents Zimbabwe's white farmers, said he was "absolutely delighted" with the Supreme Court order.

Zimbabwe's independent court system has often issued rulings declaring Government moves illegal. Ruling party legislators have called for the resignation of all five Supreme Court judges.

Opponents accuse Mr. Mugabe of using land seizures to improve his diminishing popularity. His party won parliamentary elections held in June, while the main Opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, won 57 of the 120 elected seats. Mr. Mugabe's party controlled all but three seats in the previous Parliament. — AP

THE HINDU

12 NOV 2000

Mugabe defies court order, seizes 50 more farms

Asia
BINDURA (ZIMBABWE), NOV. 13. Black settlers swarmed on to white farms across Zimbabwe on Sunday as the President, Mr. Robert Mugabe's Government pressed ahead with its land grab in open defiance of a Supreme Court ruling.

At least 50 farms were seized over the weekend, bringing the total to more than 300, after the court ordered a halt to the "fast track" resettlement programme on Friday.

Although the judges ruled that no properties could be taken without all legal procedures being observed, Mr. Joseph Made, Agriculture Minister, told state radio he would press on with the programme to seize 75 per cent of all white-owned farms.

"There is no going back on the land redistribution exercise, regardless of the Supreme Court ruling," he said.

Mr. Tim Henwood, the president of the Commercial Farmers' Union, whose own

farm was illegally seized on Saturday, responded by threatening contempt of court charges against Mr. Made and his officials.

"That's the next move," he said. "We will do that across the board."

On Insingisi farm near Bindura, nine lorries, some bearing the insignia of the ruling Zanu-PF party, entered a field beside the grain silos. Chanting "Forward with Comrade Mugabe, forward with Zanu-PF", 80 black settlers pegged out the land they now claim as their own, before the approving gaze of local officials.

Farm workers watched nervously from their houses. At least 400 people live on Insingisi and all stand to lose their jobs and homes.

Mr. Colin Taylor, the farmer, evacuated his family and took refuge on a neighbouring farm. Yet, he is set on staying on the land his family has tilled since 1932.

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"We're determined to hang on," he said. "This is totally illegal. It's just like stealing. If you can ignore the Supreme Court, that's total anarchy, isn't it?"

An hour later, a convoy roared on to neighbouring Pimento Park farm, 64 km north of Harare.

Like Mr Taylor, owner Mr. Oliver Newton has not been served with an "occupation order" as required by law, so local officials again presided over an illegal resettlement, allocating land to 70 people.

"They don't seem to understand that this is illegal," said Mr. Charles Newton, who manages the farm. "You just can't get through to them." More than 700 people live on Pimento Park and by seizing it, Mr. Newton said, the Government will displace 10 times as many people as it will resettle. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2000

THE HINDU

14 NOV 2000

Zimbabwe Opposition plans mass strike ^{AD-18}

HARARE, SEPT. 30. Zimbabwe's Opposition leader has vowed to launch a campaign of general strikes and demonstrations to force the President, Mr. Robert Mugabe's resignation.

Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, president of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), announced an escalation in his attack on the Government.

After becoming the most powerful Opposition force in Zimbabwean history by winning 57 seats in June's parliamentary election, the MDC had planned to oust Mr Mugabe at the presidential polls due in 2002. However, with Zimbabwe's economic crisis worsening, Mr Tsvangirai has said this strategy had been abandoned.

"We cannot afford Mugabe for one day longer, let alone until 2002," he said. "The objective of our action is very clear. It is to say to Mugabe, 'You have become a national liability, this country is suffering because of your recklessness. We are not going to sit by and watch Zimbabwe go down the drain. We are going to take action to get rid of you'."

Calling Mr Mugabe "a rabid racist and a rabid dictator", Mr Tsvangirai said a general strike and daily demonstrations would be staged until the President resigned.

"It's going to be massive, it's going to be countrywide and, for

the first time, it's going to be in the rural areas," he said. "This is the moment. If we miss this historical opportunity, we would betray the people."

Previous anti-Government protests have failed to shut down the entire economy or draw mass support. A general strike held in August was opposed by employers' organisations and scaled down to a single day's stoppage at the insistence of some trades unions.

But Zimbabwe's economic crisis has assumed such proportions that Mr Tsvangirai believes mass action with the sole objective of removing Mr Mugabe will have the backing of both employers and trades unions, despite the risk of a violent backlash from the Government.

Independent economists forecast a fall in national output of 15 per cent this year, giving Zimbabwe one of the world's fastest-shrinking economies. Tourism has declined by 70 per cent since last year, inflation runs at 53.4 per cent and the crucial agricultural sector has been thrown into turmoil by the invasion of white farms by militant supporters of Mr Mugabe's Zanu-PF Party.

"Everything is collapsing all around us," Mr Tsvangirai said. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2000.

THE HINDU

1 OCT 2000

African freedom leaders review where they stand now

By M.S. Prabhakara

CAPE TOWN, OCT. 19. The meeting of five liberation movements of Southern Africa over the weekend marks the first positive indication of their concern about the broader agenda that is at work in these countries — the delegitimisation of these very liberation movements.

The four-day meeting, hosted by the African National Congress (ANC), was attended by the delegations representing the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). The ANC, MPLA and FRELIMO delegations were headed by the respective Secretaries General while the SWAPO delegation was led by the Deputy Secretary General. The ZANU-PF delegation was led by the National Chairperson of the party.

All these were engaged in both political and armed struggle against colonial rule; and are ruling parties in their countries. The earliest to attain independence was Mozambique (June 25, 1975), followed by Angola (November 11, 1975), Zimbabwe (April 18, 1980), Namibia (March 21, 1990) and, last and most recently, South Africa (April 27, 1994).

Though described as 'elections analysis seminar', the purpose of the gathering was to "strengthen party-to-party relations and co-operation to deepen the gains of the revolution in the region; and analyse the balance of forces in Southern Africa as well as consolidate progressive forces in the region".

Thus, central to the get together is the undeniable historical reality that these are all liberation movements, whose struggle in every case consisted of armed struggle. Indeed, all these liberation movements were themselves closely involved with one another, those countries which attained independence earlier providing crucial material support to those still struggling to be free. The apartheid regime, the last to surrender, targeted all these countries by direct and indirect intervention, financing and sup-

porting forces opposed to the liberation movements both in Angola and Mozambique. Indeed, the apartheid regime invaded Angola, but had to beat a retreat after being defeated on the battlefield.

These are well-known facts, though reading the utter poison that passes for 'analysis' of contemporary political developments in much of the media in South Africa, one would be amazed how utterly historic revisionism has triumphed. This revisionist view, in essence history in a nutshell, maintains that the liberation movements have all now become utterly corrupt, with the leaders simply feathering their own nests, totally devoid of the virtues of 'transparency and accountability', bent upon perpetuating themselves. Thus, to summarise an all too typical editorial in a Sunday newspaper excoriating the meeting, the MPLA leadership now comprises "generals who are perpetuating their country's savage war to keep their grip on illegal diamond industry"; ZANU-PF has become "one of the most brutal and corrupt regimes in Africa"; and SWAPO "grows more authoritarian and corrupt by the day".

The clinching argument establishing the corrupt linkage among these three parties is that they "have committed their respective governments to fighting a futile and destructive war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and have been among the prime saboteurs of the Lusaka peace accord."

How or why Angola's nationalised diamond industry has become 'illegal', the historic role of UNITA even now nurtured by influential elements in South Africa, the current linkages between the murderous Renamo of Mozambique (whose leader, just like Dr. Jonas Savimbi of UNITA for years, has refused to accept the outcome of the elections), the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance of Namibia and apartheid political parties, all in the name of nourishing 'multiparty democracy', the role of Rwanda and Uganda, themselves fighting each other, in sabotaging the Lusaka accord — none of these is part of this ported history of the 'corruption and authoritarianism' of what are routinely described as 'erstwhile' liberation movements.

Efforts to ease W. Asia tension

JERUSALEM, OCT. 19. Facing a self-imposed deadline to end violence within 48 hours, Israelis and Palestinians sought to ease tensions on Thursday — but fresh gun-fights threatened to undermine the U.S.-brokered accord.

Jewish settlers and Palestinians exchanged fire on Mount Ebal, one of the hills cradling the northern West Bank hub of Nablus. One Palestinian was killed and three were wounded, according to hospital officials. The army said six settlers were shot, though it said none appeared to be in serious condition.

Clash in U.N. session

At the United Nations, Palestine and Israel have clashed in an emergency session with Israelis saying that the deliberation in the session might disrupt the effort to put an end to violence in West Asia. But the Palestinian U.N. observer, Mr. Nasser al-Kidwa, said it would be a "very dangerous development" if "rumours" that Israeli security forces had abducted a number of Palestinians proved correct.

Gadhafi spills the beans
Meanwhile, the Libyan leader, Mr. Muammar Gadhafi, has embarrassed Arab governments by revealing in advance the 'shameful' final declaration drafted for next weekend's Arab summit.

The summit was called by Egypt to respond to Arab anger at the death of almost 100 Palestinians during three weeks of violence. There is strong pressure for harsh measures against Israel.
— AP, PTI

THE HINDU

20 OCT 2000

40-19
'56 p.c. Indians favour apartheid'

By M.S. Prabhakara 26/10

PRETORIA, OCT. 25. South Africans of Indian origin come at the very bottom in respect of their commitment to democracy and their future in a democratically-transformed South Africa.

This is among the findings that emerges in a survey, 'Views of Democracy in South Africa and the Region', conducted by the Southern African Democracy Barometer, described as 'a regional component of the continent-wide Afrobarometer'.

The survey was carried out in association with the Public Opinion Service of Idasa, a Cape Town-based NGO which traces its origin and its acronymic name to the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa, founded in 1986. The findings were released last week.

The survey is informed by a belief and an ideology according to which there is a 'growing international consensus since 1989 on what constitutes 'democracy'; and the 'structured questionnaire' on which the survey is based is constructed on the premise that there are two kinds of this 'democracy' - the 'classic liberal democracy' whose most important components are 'majority rule, regular elections, multi-party competition and freedom of speech and dissent', and 'social democracy' where the emphasis is on 'universal access to basic necessities, full employment, universal access to education and income equality'.

There is little doubt where the Democracy Barometer's predilections lie. The year 1989 is a

dead give-away. The responses were canvassed from 'a random, disproportionate, stratified-nationally representative sample of 2,206 South Africans... from 550 randomly-selected sites around the country'. The various indicators about which opinions were canvassed, and categorised in terms responses from six other countries in the region (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and of the four major 'group identities' in South Africa (Black, White, Coloured and Indian) are: support for and commitment to democracy; conceptions about what constitutes democracy and its components; non-democratic alternatives to the present system, including views on a (hopefully notional) return to apartheid; elections and governance, political freedoms and related issues. In respect of each of these, the response from the 'Indian' respondents has been uniformly negative.

Thus, only about 35 per cent of the South African Indians supported and showed a commitment to democracy in 2000, a sharp decline from the 54 per cent who showed a similar commitment five years ago. As much as 28 per cent of Indian respondents were willing to live under an 'effective authoritarian regime' compared to the 19 per cent that showed such willingness five years ago. As much as 20 per cent of the Indian respondents, only marginally lower than the 24 per cent of Whites, considered that the last elections were not free or fair, compared to only three per cent of Blacks and two per cent of Coloureds who held such views.

While Black South Africans have consistently exhibited the greatest levels of satisfaction with the operation of democracy in the country, Whites and Indians have showed the least satisfaction. Indeed, the survey categorically notes that "no Indian respondents interviewed felt that South Africa is governed in a wholly-democratic fashion".

Perhaps the most startling of the findings is that there is a dramatic increase in 'apartheid nostalgia' among all South Africans, and not merely Whites, between 1995 and 2000. Compared to 13 per cent of South African Indians who shared this 'apartheid nostalgia' in 1995, five years later 56 per cent of South African Indians responded positively about the apartheid regime.

The corresponding percentages in respect of the other 'groups' was: Blacks from 8 per cent to 17 per cent; Coloureds from 11 per cent to 41 per cent; and Whites from 39 per cent to 59 per cent.

This relative lack of commitment on the part of the Indians and to a lesser extent of the Coloureds to the democratic transformation, and apprehensions about the future and all that is implied by majority rule, can be traced to the deep entrenchment of the apartheid mindset across the racial spectrum, and the success of the apartheid regime in co-opting sections of the Indians and Coloureds in the so-called power sharing arrangements. The findings are undoubtedly a wake-up call for all those genuinely committed to democracy in South Africa.

THE HINDU

26 OCT 2000

Heal wounds of racism, Mbeki tells whites

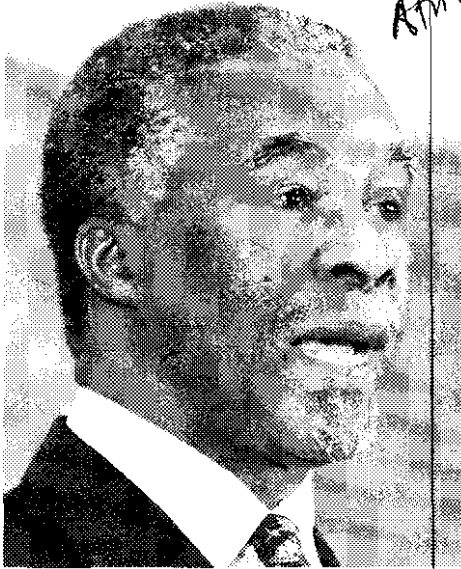
10/19 By M. S. Prabhakara 1/19
JOHANNESBURG, AUG. 31. Institutionalised apartheid may be dead, but racism continues to thrive in South Africa. Indeed, seven years into freedom, racism remains the most important challenge facing the country.

This is a reality that is evident to anyone residing in this country, South African or foreigner, unless one chooses not to exercise the senses. The majority of blacks continue to experience racism at some point or the other every day, in subtle or not-so-subtle ways. Degraded poverty and deprivation, and terrific levels of crime and abuse, both direct agencies of racism and apartheid, define every moment of the existence of this majority. It would indeed be most surprising if things were otherwise, given the history of institutionalised segregation and apartheid going back to the very beginning of the European settlement.

As in everything else, the endless debate on the nature and extent of racism in post-apartheid South Africa, too, is marked by a clear even if not, fortunately, an absolute racial divide. The controversies that have surrounded the National Conference on Racism under the aegis of the South African Human Rights Commission, whose recent publication of its report on "Racism in South African Media" evoked entirely predictable and near-absolute race-specific responses, are simply one more instance of the tendencies noted above.

The plain fact is that while the majority of South Africans who have historically been victims of racism to such an extent that many of them have internalised that mindset, are willing to discuss the idea and reality of racism, the minority which materially benefited from racism are reluctant to face this issue, preferring to go into their all too typical "denial mode", or after a gesture of seeming acknowledgement, insist that it is "time to move on".

In his opening address to the Conference (Aug 30-Sept. 2) which began on Wednesday at the Sandton Convention Centre, the President, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, touched on all these issues. He called for an end to this "denial mode" and an acknowledgement that racism exists, and continues to define the lives of South Africans — "a fundamental defining feature of the relations between black and white, a directive principle informing the



The South African President, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, delivers a speech at the opening of the national conference on racism in Johannesburg on Wednesday. — AP

structuring of these relations".

Addressing the situation more directly, Mr Mbeki said: "Racism has been a fundamental organising principle in the relations between black and white in our country, ever since Dutch immigrants settled at the Cape of Good Hope. As the dominant group in our country, the white minority worked to structure all aspects of our national life consistent with the objective that the whites should always remain the dominant group and the black majority, the dominated. Throughout this period of 300 years, this work, focused on the deliberate construction of a racially divided society, was done explicitly on the basis of a racist ideology, legitimised by its open and consistent adoption as official state policy".

Describing racism as both anti-human and a gross violation human rights, Mr Mbeki noted racism as has been practised through the centuries has meant that black people have been the victims of racism than the perpetrators. "Accordingly, what we have to deal with is white, anti-black racism, while giving

no quarter to any tendency towards black, anti-white racism, whether actual or potential, as well as anti-Semitism".

He said that the white population, even if they viewed themselves as "involuntary beneficiaries of racism", had a particular obligation, not so much as to make "propitiatory gestures" but to heal the wounds.

Racism, Mr Mbeki noted, manifested itself in a variety of ways: ideological, existing in the world of ideas, the socio-economic where it manifests itself in political, economic and cultural power relations of domination of discrimination against the victims of racism.

He also noted the disturbing resurgence of racism and xenophobia in some of the developed countries of the North, "countries (that) pride themselves as the home and repository of the ideas and practices of human rights, democracy equality and human solidarity." Acknowledging that "no country anywhere in the world has succeeded in creating a non-racial society", Mr Mbeki, however, insisted that South Africa had no option but to strive for the emergence of a just and non-racial society. He also said that while creation of a constitutional and legal framework for the suppression of racism was necessary, that by itself was not a sufficient condition to end this violation of human rights.

Expressing his Government's view that any abandoning or postponing of these issues would be a "serious mistake" that would simply exacerbate the danger of social instability inherent in the racially divided society, Mr Mbeki called upon the delegates to have a free, frank and open discussion, ready to "take the pain" that will be an inevitable part of any such discussions.

The National Conference on Racism, a preparatory conference to the International Conference on Racism meeting in Durban next year, is being attended by about 700 delegates, South African and foreign, representing Government and civil society structures.

The delegates will discuss, over the next few days, the issues relating to the nature, meaning, forms, structures, manifestations and consequences of racism in South African society; and the strategies to combat racism.

A meet on racism removed from reality

Africa By M.S. Prabhakara

10-17

9/9

CAPE TOWN, SEPT. 8. Recommendations to the Government seeking declaration of the current decade as the "Decade against racism" and of December 16 as "Day of National Racial Reconciliation" were part of the draft document, the millennium statement on racism, adopted at the end of the four-day National Conference on Racism organised by the South African Human Rights Commission in Johannesburg.

The conference deplored xenophobia, describing it as an expression of racism. Xenophobia is an everyday experience of African migrants from other countries. One of the many ironies of South Africa is that the same majority of its people, who were denied their very existence and personality under apartheid, now in turn seek to deny the same to African migrants who are also subjected to physical attacks. Interestingly, the white migrants seldom face such problems, perhaps because they do not inhabit the same universe as the African majority — citizens and migrants. The contradictions inherent in the situation where the majority of the people now see the African migrant as a rival and competitor for jobs are yet to be resolved.

Other recommendations included a programme of anti-racism training in educational institutions, supported by the Ministry for education and programmes aimed at transforming

the police and judiciary. Also envisaged are some kind of "voluntary reparations" to redress the effects of racism. This is expected to be made by the white community in general, and business in particular, both of which undoubtedly did well under apartheid.

However, many of these recommendations are still at a tentative stage. According to the SAHRC Chairperson, Dr. Barney Pitso, the declaration was a "draft document" which required to be "finetuned". The final declaration is expected to include many other recommendations as well. Did the conference achieve anything or was it merely an expensive talk shop, apparently costing the Government around Rands four million?

As with everything else in this country, opinion on even the holding of the conference is divided on racial lines. The political voice of the white community, the Democratic Alliance found the conference a waste of time and money and a platform for ANC supporters. For the black majority, however, the conference provided a platform for voices not heard thus far.

It would be inaccurate to see the conference as a means to locate racism in South Africa. To paraphrase the inscription below the bust of Christopher Wren in St Paul's Cathedral in London, if one wants to see racism in South Africa, one has only to look around. While this is evident to the black majority, it is only the whites,

barring honourable exceptions, who are unable to see what is blindingly obvious. Perhaps the most gruesome evidence of this all-pervasive racism was that even as delegates were debating the issue in the conference centre in up-market Sandton, there were two incidents of racist oppression and murder: a black man in the rural community Zamdela near Sasolberg in the Free State was killed after being dragged with his leg tied to the back of a van by his white employer — a form of torture and murder not unique in the rural communities. In another incident, a young black girl had her body covered with paint by a white store owner on being caught allegedly stealing from the store.

And yet, one has to acknowledge that the conference failed to meet the expectations in a practical sense. What does one make of the proposal for "voluntary reparations from people of goodwill who have resources" — this from persons who know the history of the country only too well, this when the Government has all the instrumentalities and the popular backing to impose some form of wealth tax to raise such additional funds for this specific purpose. But then, the "mechanisms" to distribute the legally provided money by way of reparations to identified victims of human rights abuses who appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are yet to be put in place nearly two years after the TRC submitted its report.

THE HINDU

10 SEP 2000

HD-21
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Accord sans peace



Beckoning an end to hostilities... The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, and the former South African President, Mr. Nelson Mandela, extending their hands to Burundi peace negotiators in Arusha, Tanzania.

THE IMPLEMENTATION of the 'Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi', signed in Arusha, Tanzania, on August 28 is likely to be problematic. The accord, culmination of a process that began over two years ago under the aegis of Julius Nyerere, was made possible by the former South African President, Mr. Nelson Mandela, who took over as facilitator after his death. Its signing was marked by uncertainties upto the last moment. Some of these, result of a rather crude media manipulation by those eager to have an accord on board and on a pre-set schedule, persist even now.

Not all participants in the talks signed the final document. Indeed, the two major rebel groups actually involved in fighting against the government did not even take part in the talks though the political formations in which they had their origin and with which they are still vaguely associated signed the accord. (Four so-called 'pro-Tutsi' parties, whose 'consent' to sign was announced have reiterated their resolve not to do so.)

Further, the Arusha accord, despite its detailed provisions comprising, apart from the main body, five protocols and five annexes is only a general statement of principles of an agreement to ensure 'peace and reconciliation'. There is no agreement on a 'permanent ceasefire and cessation of hostilities', whose provi-

sions and 'general principles' are set forth in Chapter 3 of the third protocol dealing with 'Peace and Security for All'. This is also clearly acknowledged in paragraph 2 (c) of Article I of the Agreement: "Pending the negotiation and agreement of a comprehensive ceasefire agreement with the armed wings of non-signatory parties, Chapter III of Protocol III to the Agreement shall not come into effect; following the conclusion of the ceasefire agreement, it shall be deemed amended so as to be consistent with the provisions thereof".

Indeed, there is not even a 'temporary' ceasefire, let alone a 'cessation of hostilities'. Not a day has passed since the signing of the accord without some news of fighting involving the rebels and government troops. According to Burundi's Minister for Peace Process, Mr. Ambroise Niyonsaba (who signed the accord on behalf of the government), "if the peace accord is not followed by a signing of a ceasefire agreement in the next few weeks, we will experience difficulties".

There is also a lack of clarity on the nature and composition of the transitional authority, and even about the time allowed for transition. Perhaps the most problematic is the restructuring of the defence and security forces (Article 14 of Protocol III), according to which 'not more than 50 per cent' of both the national defence force and the national police, both now and historically

The Arusha accord is supposed to end the long-prevailing civil conflict in Burundi but not a day has passed without reports of fighting since it was signed on August 28, says M. S. PRABHAKARA.

dominated by the minority Tutsi group, shall be drawn from any one particular ethnic group.

Altogether 19 political parties, groups and structures took part in the negotiations. These comprised the present government led by the President, Mr. Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi, who came to power in a military coup in July 1996; the Hutu-dominated National Assembly, elected in June 1993 and still existing though the civilian government elected then is no longer there; 10 'pro-Tutsi' political parties and seven 'pro-Hutu' parties, the distinction not always clear. In the event, while all 'pro-Hutu' parties signed the accord, only six of the 10 'pro-Tutsi' parties did so.

The Arusha accord is supposed to bring to an end the civil conflict which has been prevailing following the assassination of the first democratically-elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, along with six political leaders, all Hutu,

during an attempted military coup in October 1993. (Ndadaye won the presidential elections held less than five months earlier; and also led his FRODEBU, French anagram which, roughly translated into English, means Front for a Democratic Burundi, to victory in the elections to the national Parliament. FRODEBU won 65 of the 81 seats.)

The assassination of Ndadaye triggered a chain of ethnic massacres involving the Hutu majority and the Tutsi minority. In these and subsequent conflicts during the last seven years, nearly 2,00,000 persons have been killed in Burundi, it is estimated.

Historians as well as political leaders endlessly debate whether the ethnic distinctions between the Hutu and the Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi are real or are merely colonial constructs. As adumbrated in Chapter I of the First Protocol to the Arusha accord, before the advent of colonial rule, all 'ethnic groups' inhabiting Burundi owed their allegiance to the same monarch, believed in the same god, and shared the same culture and language and territory — a clear acknowledgement that even during the pre-colonial period, the people constituted different 'ethnic groups' — for long identified as Hutu (Bahutu), Tutsi (Batutsi) and Twa (Batwa) — the last an insignificant minority physically distinguishable from the other two by its short stature. However, it was the colonial administration, first German and later Belgian, as part of its 'divide and rule' strategy which "injected and imposed a caricatured, racist vision of Burundian society, accompanied by prejudices and cliches relating to morphological considerations designed to set the different components of Burundi's population against one another on the basis of physical characteristics and character traits". The colonial administration also introduced a system of identity cards indicating the ethnic origin of all Burundians, "reinforcing an ethnic awareness to the detriment of national awareness".

This is sterling stuff. However, the Arusha accord, of which this bit of a historical wisdom forms part, is informed at every stage, in each of its clauses, provisions, protocols and annexes, by an awareness, if not acknowledgement, of this distinction. Indeed, all parties and groups which attended the peace negotiations or stayed away are routinely identified, and indeed they derive their very legitimacy from being representative of one or the other of the two major groups.

THE HINDU

9 0 SEP 2000

Tutsi parties agree to sign peace accord

By M. S. Prabhakara

CAPE TOWN, SEPT. 14. Leaders of three pro-Tutsi political parties met Mr. Nelson Mandela, the facilitator of the Burundi peace process, in Johannesburg yesterday and agreed to sign the Burundi peace accord which they have been refusing to endorse till now.

However, the two main Hutu rebel groups fighting against the Government, the Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD) and the National Liberation Forces (FNL) have not only not endorsed the accord but did not even take part in the peace process, though political parties with which they were once associated, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD) and the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (PALIPEHUTU), took part in the peace process and signed the accord.

The accord, signed on August 28 at Arusha after a prolonged "process" in which 19 political parties and structures took part was facili-

itated initially by the late Julius Nyerere and later by Mr. Nelson Mandela. The parties comprised the Government of Burundi and the National Assembly, the former Tutsi dominated and the latter elected in June 1993 and Hutu dominated; seven pro-Hutu political parties and 10 pro-Tutsi parties. However, when the accord was clinched, only 13 of the 19 participants were ready and willing to sign the document: the Government and the National Assembly, all the seven pro-Hutu parties and four of the ten pro-Tutsi parties. Two other pro-Tutsi parties signed the accord soon after.

Indeed, all the 10 pro-Tutsi parties, including those four (six) which were persuaded to sign, as well as the President, Mr. Pierre Buyoya, publicly expressed reservations about the accord. These, among other issues, are related to the acceptability of the new electoral system to all ethnic groups, the institution and duration of the transition period, the provisions on the reconstitution of the security

forces and the police ensuring that neither of the two major ethnic groups would have more than 50 per cent representation, and the terms of the cessation of hostilities and a permanent ceasefire.

The latest phase in the serial signing of the accord began with the leader of one of the four pro-Tutsi parties which did not sign the accord on August 28, Mr. Godefroy Hakizimana of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), signing the accord in Dar-as-Salaam two days ago.

The remaining three whose leaders met Mr. Mandela yesterday and who are expected to sign the accord on September 20 in Nairobi are Prof. Patrice Nsababaganwa of the National Alliance for Law and Economic Development (ANADDE), Prof. Nicephore Ndimurukundo of the Independent Workers' Party (PIT) and Mr. Joseph Nzeyimana of the Union for Democracy and Economic Social Development (RADDES).

THE HINDU

15 SEP 2000

Mbeki changes tack on globalisation

By M.S. Prabhakara

CAPE TOWN, SEPT. 20. Bejying the 'self-fulfilling prophesies' of the opponents of the Tripartite Alliance who have been gleefully anticipating 'the mother of all battles' among its components at the Seventh National Congress of Cosatu which began its four day session in Johannesburg on Monday, the President, Mr. Thabo Mbeki, speaking in his capacity as ANC president said that the 'first and most important task' facing the Alliance is to strengthen each of the Alliance partners. The strength of the Alliance depended on the strength of each of its components, he said.

Mr. Mbeki's conciliatory approach was in sharp contrast to his polemical attacks on the stand of Cosatu and the SACP on the government's macroeconomic policy, as well as what he sees as their unfair, indeed ill-informed, criticism of the Government on globalisation. Barely two months ago, he was admonishing critics of globalisation in his address to the ANC's National General Council, endorsing globalisation unreservedly as "an objective outcome of the development of productive forces that creates wealth". On Monday, however, he spoke of the need to ensure that "the process of globalisation does not further impoverish all of us and create an even wider gap between Africa and the rest of the world in terms of the standard of living, levels of education and technological development and humane conditions of life".

Earlier, the President of Cosatu, Mr. Willie Madisha, in his address reiterated Cosatu's stand on these contentious issues: the 'conservative economic policies' incorporated in the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), the macroeconomic policy adopted by the Government in June 1996, globalisation which, "contrary to what its salesmen want us to believe is increasingly proving to be a force of destruction than development".

Differences over the economic and political direction of a future

democratic South Africa, deeply rooted in the different perspectives of history and ideology, very broadly a socialist perspective and a capitalist perspective, have always co-existed in the ANC. This is even more so with the components of the Tripartite Alliance which, despite the overlapping of membership in a manner not very easy for those outside the Alliance to understand, remain independent entities. However, these could be reconciled when the most important task of the liberation movement was the defeat of the apartheid regime and its replacement by a democratically elected government. That task, having been accomplished in April 1994, it was inevitable that these differences would again come to the fore.

But have they become so irreconcilable of the national democratic revolution that an end to the Alliance is inevitable? For the partners of the Alliance, that stage has not been reached. Indeed, the two lines continue to be in contestation not merely between the ANC and its other two partners, but even within the ANC itself. This is something that every component of the Alliance understands only too well.

For one observing the events since the country attained freedom, it seems that the dissolution of the Alliance, demonised by the apartheid regime, remains even now a top priority for a variety of forces, including a powerful and resourceful section of the media, united by one strategic objective — the delegitimisation of the liberation movement. Much has already been achieved in this regard in terms of the dilution and discarding of some of the founding principles of the liberation movement; and the dominant position that the ideologues of the old order have retained in the direction of the economy. However, a most dramatic advance in this process will be the break-up of the Alliance itself. Mr. Mbeki put his finger on the nub when he spoke of those who "want us to become a house divided against itself".

Out of Africa

FOR A country like India which has a longstanding tradition of peacekeeping, having so far participated in 29 such operations in four continents, the decision to suddenly pull out its entire 3,000-odd contingent from Sierra Leone must have been an unusual experience. India's commendable role in the peacekeeping operations the world over has been widely acknowledged. The mission in Sierra Leone was no exception. However, given the recent differences between force commander Major General V.K. Jetley and his Nigerian deputy and the Nigerian criticism against him, the withdrawal of troops was the only dignified course left for the Indian Government. Since Maj Gen. Jetley had allegedly charged the Nigerian peacekeepers with profiting from Sierra Leone's diamond deposits, Nigeria publicly called for Gen. Jetley's replacement. It was the latter, however, who had succeeded in disarming the armed brigands during the earlier operations. The recent kidnapping of the UN troops, including Indian peace-keepers in which India also suspected Nigeria's covert role, was probably aimed at frustrating such efforts at restoring order.

After the fiasco of the UN operation in Somalia and its inability to prevent a genocide in Rwanda, the global body has been becoming increasingly wary about peace-keeping in areas ravaged by tribal wars. Only strong lobbying by the African countries has convinced the UN to persist with such operations. It was believed by many that the presence of a large regional contingent will have a restraining effect on the rival gangs in Sierra Leone. But recent experience suggests the contrary. The crisis in Sierra Leone has been compounded by the greed for easy money fuelled by ruthless mercenaries who have ravaged the country and plundered diamonds. Rich deposits of the precious stones have proved to be Sierra Leone's curse, standing in the way of peace deals. The charges against the Nigerians that they are hand in glove with the rebels, who are involved in diamond smuggling, are serious and need to be thoroughly probed.

The role of some of the African countries in the simmering conflicts in their neighbourhood has left much to be desired. The reluctance of many non-African countries to become involved in the continent is necessitated by the intractable nature of the conflict situations. More and more countries are unhappy with UN rules that restrict the role of the peace-keepers. They have to work under strict limitations, must be impartial, can fire only in self-defence and the countries involved must agree to their presence. That India, with its impeccable credentials, has found it virtually impossible to continue in Sierra Leone, will make others even more reluctant to don the mantle of peace-keepers in the future.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

23 SEP 2000

PEACEKEEPING IMPONDERABLES ¹¹⁹⁻¹²

INDIA TOOK THE only honourable option open to it when it decided to pull its soldiers out of peacekeeping operations in civil war-torn Sierra Leone in western Africa. The explanations by official spokesmen and their elaborate attempts to deny that this was a protest action sound unconvincing and even seem unnecessary. Particularly considering the timing, with the assigned task incomplete and the beleaguered host nation in even greater need of support, the pullout was far from a routine exercise as made out by Government spokesmen. It was clear that the Indian contingent was caught in the regional play of forces. Faced with the demand for the recall of its commander for totally unacceptable reasons, Delhi opted to pull all its soldier-volunteers out. The decision, which must have surprised the United Nations headquarters as much as member-nations, was in fact fully justified and should serve to deliver a note of warning to all sides concerned. The ineptitude of the U.N. leadership and the inherent weaknesses in the U.N.'s peacekeeping operations contributed to the Indian decision. There were enough compelling circumstances to force such drastic action by a nation that has a commendable record of service on the peacekeeping arm of the world body. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan's office launches an immediate search for other potential contributors, there will be opportunities to assess the reasons that impelled the Indian action. Not the least of the factors is the total absence of proactive leadership at the U.N. headquarters even in relatively non-controversial matters like the operations in Sierra Leone which have the full and unambiguous support of all the powerful members, including those on the Security Council. This in turn reflects the lack of commitment on the part of a majority of the member-nations, a failure that came under the spotlight during the millennium summit earlier this month.

The U.N.'s peacekeeping operations have from the very beginning suffered from an inherent instability arising from several factors. The political, military and financial obstacles were born with the organisation. In half a century the world body has built for itself other hurdles. A disparate group of soldiers from different nations, lacking in training for coordination action — which is of the essence in such operations — and steadily worsening conditions for the performance of the prime duty, shortage of required equipment and support and, most vitally, an absence of motivation have made the task unenviable. These have over the years been compounded by a lack of will to empower the U.N. to organise and train a unified force ready on call to respond to impending and actual emergencies.

India's unprecedented action was provoked by the unjustified insistence of the Nigerian contingent in the peace force that the U.N. recall the Indian commander from Sierra Leone. He had invited the Nigerians' wrath by exposing the fact that sections of their soldiers were undermining the peacekeeping operation, tempted by the "blood diamonds" that were financing the rebels. If the U.N. had had a choice of countries from whom to draw the soldiers and had built up a robust military force, adequately trained and under one command, the predicament in Sierra Leone might have been averted with the organisation declining the services of the men in khaki from Nigeria, Sierra Leone's big brother across the border. The proximity created the peculiar problem and an ugly confrontation. The millennium summit resolved to add muscle to the peacekeeping arm of the U.N. and strengthen its capacity to respond to conflict situations. The shock that India has just delivered must help to strengthen that resolve to empower the U.N. as the preserver of peace.

THE HINDU

27 SEP 2000

MISSION ABORTED

The ceasefire in Sierra Leone

PULLING out of the UN mission in Sierra Leone was on the cards ever since the Nigerian army chief, General Victor Malu, said the rebels would not function under Unamsil command. The Indian contingent, ostensibly sent by the Indians to help in monitoring the state of affairs, however, has been accused of doing nothing. A number of members of the Security Council, as well as to Secretary General Kofi Annan in which he directly accused the UN Special Representative, the Ecomog force commander and his deputy, all Nigerians, of colluding with the rebels in illegal diamond mining and sabotaging the peacekeeping operations. Jetly's accusations will have to be independently corroborated for his case to stand before the UN establishment. What is certain, however, is that there has been a clear difference in perceptions between him and the United Nations over the scope of his mission. Jetly has made no bones about the fact that if Unamsil is to succeed it will have to drive the rebels out of the diamond mining areas, an operation which calls for a type of intervention not envisaged in his brief.

There is the usual debate over whether peacekeeping should turn into peace enforcement and all sorts of sensibilities have to be managed before a precedent is allowed to be set. The question to ask in such cases is whether there is any indigenous force willing and capable of accomplishing the only realistic objective on the ground. The Lome Accord has no chance of being revived and Foday Sankoh himself is in prison in Freetown, awaiting trial for war crimes. The British are training the Sierra Leone Army, but nobody knows when and if it will be ready to take on the rebels in their strongholds. Khukri and Thunderbolt, incidentally, are said to be the only successful operations carried out in rebel territory in the last seven years. So, it is something of a pity that the Indians are pulling out, but if they can't work with the West African contingent and their brief asks them to hang around just in case the rebels want to indulge in some target practice — how do you disarm an armed man who doesn't want to be disarmed? — then that is the only sensible course of action. The fact that we earn foreign exchange out of this is a despicable consideration, which should not even be mentioned.

POOR MAN'S HERO

But Chamling must promote teamwork

SIKKIM chief minister Pawan Chamling has reason to be upbeat. The state received Rs 80 crore more than last year for its annual plan. Another Rs 80 crore will come from the non-lapsable pool of the North Eastern Council. Three Sikkim Sangram Parishad legislators defected and joined the Sikkim Democratic Front, raising the ruling party's tally to 28 in the 32-member Assembly. This should put paid to Nar Bahadur Bhandari's threat to topple the government. Chamling dreams of making "a new Sikkim, a sukhi Sikkim" and setting up a model village in every constituency. His seriousness is reflected in the earmarking of 70 per cent of the annual budget for the agricultural poor. But it would be wrong to assume that a bigger allocation is an index of the quality of progress. Besides, there is the ambitious promise of making Sikkim free from corruption and poverty, a difficult task. The emphasis on rural prosperity is yet to acquire a momentum. Desired changes can be achieved if the employment aspect is given priority. Much depends on political will and Chamling's ability to work as a team, a spirit lacking during his earlier tenure.

More important is the need to preserve communal harmony. Vested interests are at work. Those responsible for the recent distribution of communal pamphlets must be dealt with firmly. There is resentment over the reduction of the number of reserved seats for Bhutia-Lepchas from 15 to 12 during Lhendup Dorji Kazi's rule in the late '70s. Reservation for Nepalese of Sikkimese origin was abolished. All political parties are vocal and the sooner restoration is made the better. This apart, there are delicate issues like declaring a cut-off year to identify migrants and inclusion of ethnic Nepalese among OBCs. Chamling may be riding several horses but his one-party government has four more years to produce results.

S. Africa's foreign policy trapped in the past

By M.S. Prabhakara

CAPE TOWN, AUG. 24. Seven years into freedom, the new South Africa's foreign policy perspectives sometimes appear to be still trapped in the old mode, especially in so far as these relate to relations with other countries which too were under colonial rule, the so-called Third World countries.

In this perspective, South Africa is a Western country, part of the civilised West, only where good and credible government systems exist. As for the rest of the world, it is a jungle out there. Over a period of time, as hard apartheid ruled, even the West came to be viewed as unreliable at best, overrun as its political system was with liberals and closet communists. Nothing else can explain the curious combination of presumption and amateurishness that has marked the initiatives to resolve the prolonged hostage crisis created by the abduction of over 30 individuals, among them a young South African couple, by rebels of the Philippines rebel movement, Abu Sayyaf, over four months ago from a Malaysian holiday resort. While nine of the hostages have been released, 24 of them continue to be held.

It is natural that South Africa's primary objective is to bring to an end the harrowing time that two of its citizens have been undergoing

for over four months. However, the way in which the hostage crisis has been viewed and projected, both officially and in the media, suggests an inability to even see that there are issues and passions outside the fate of its citizens, which South Africa may not be able to manage and control. This is even more so in the case of the media which has projected the whole crisis as something solely arising out of the abduction of the two South Africans, and its resolution too solely in terms of securing their release, for which it even unilaterally set its own timetable.

Thus, when there were the remotest suggestions, not for the first time, that the hostage crisis might be coming to an end when Libya announced that it would pay ransom to the rebels, a Cabinet Minister and the second highest ranking official of the Department of Foreign Affairs rushed to Tripoli, with a media contingent in tow, to welcome the two young South Africans. Though officially South Africa maintains that it did not pay any ransom, it seemed to be willing enough to allow Libya to do so without ever questioning why Libya was willing to pay millions of dollars to Abu Sayyaf to secure the release of hostages, none of whom is a Libyan. The ransom that the rebels are demanding is \$1 million per hostage. The impending release did not take place appar-

ently because Libya insisted on its bargain offer of \$700,000 per person. Rather more complex is the concern of the Abu Sayyaf rebels for their own security when once they let their hostages go free.

The approach clearly reflects a perspective deeply rooted in the old mindset which viewed the rest of the world outside the civilised West as something bad and unruly that had to be ordered to do its bidding. The achievement of the liberation movement was to persuade the apartheid regime that it could not always have its way, that it had to listen to voices and demands totally alien to the regime's political culture. However, that mindset seems to persist even in the new South Africa.

A similar impatience with the bad, unruly world outside bent upon persecuting honest South Africans seems to have influenced the former President, Mr. Nelson Mandela's initiative to secure the release of four members of the British TV company, Channel 4, one of whom is a South African citizen. They were detained in Liberia last week on charges of espionage. Despite the personal appeal of Mr. Mandela to the Liberian President, Mr. Charles Taylor on Monday seeking their release, a magistrate in Monrovia denied bail application.

THE HINDU

25 AUG 2000

King spells doubt on key witnesses' stance

CAPE TOWN: An interim report released on Friday by a commission investigating corruption in South African cricket appeared to cast doubt on the testimony of many of the key witnesses in the worst sporting scandal in the nation's history.

The scandal broke in April after the Delhi police said they had tape recordings of South African cricket captain Hansie Cronje's conversations with an Indian bookmaker during the team's tour of the sub-continent earlier this year.

Cronje initially denied any wrongdoing, but later told the commission he had taken about \$100,000 from gamblers for providing match information. He was fired as captain in April.

Several players of the team told the commission that Cronje had conveyed to them a bookmaker's offer in 1996 of up to \$350,000 to lose a one-day game against India.

Players Herschelle Gibbs and Henry Williams told the commission that Cronje had relayed to them separate offers of money if the cricketers would underperform in matches. They said they accepted, but later reneged on the deals.

Cronje has adamantly denied ever throwing a match, but the interim report implied the commission had doubts about Cronje's truthfulness. The commission, headed by retired judge Edwin King, made no recommendations on Cronje's fate or how the game should be cleaned up, saying it was saving those recommendations for its final report.

"It will be appreciated that until all the

evidence has been heard, no aspect of the inquiry can be ... regarded as finalised," Mr King wrote in the 66-page report, which was published on the Internet.

The report mainly summarises the testimony given to the commission in public hearings in June. More hearings are scheduled to begin on October 2.

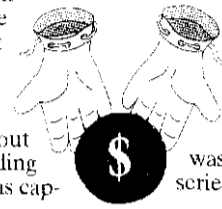
The commission can recommend that Cronje be given immunity from criminal prosecution if he is found to have come clean about his shady deals.

In his testimony, Cronje claimed he had deceived bookmaker Sanjay Chawla when he said he was prepared to lose a game during a series played earlier this year. Mr King cast doubt on whether Cronje was being honest.

"It was apparent to Cronje from his first meeting with Sanjay that merely supplying him with information would not be sufficient for Sanjay who wanted Cronje to lose matches and to get other players to assist him in this," Mr King wrote.

"In fact, Sanjay said he needed a match where there was a certainty of South Africa losing. Sanjay told Cronje there would be a further sum of money coming to Cronje if he could give Sanjay the 'right' result," Mr King continued. "These facts are reiterated with the thought that they are not readily reconcilable with the notion of Cronje spinning Sanjay along."

Elsewhere in the report he wrote: "It is interesting that the first time Cronje was approached to fix a match, he was prepared to, and did, entertain the suggestion." (AP)



OUT OF CREASE

- Cronje denies ever throwing a match
- Commission has doubts about Cronje's truthfulness
- Panel disputes accuracy of testimony by Cassim

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